

Covid-19 Hits the Unsung Heroes: The Encountered Hardships of Farmers in Times of Pandemic

Bobby B. Dela Cruz, LPT, MEd Practical Research

Virgin Milagrosa University Foundation Special Science High School, Martin P. Posadas Avenue, San Carlos City, Pangasinan

DOI: 10.29322/IJSRP.13.01.2023.p13328
<http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.13.01.2023.p13328>

Paper Received Date: 14th December 2022
Paper Acceptance Date: 15th January 2022
Paper Publication Date: 24th January 2023

Abstract- Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected the agricultural sector in the Philippines. As the production of rice is affected by the lockdown, the Filipino farmers also suffered. The pandemic and the lockdown imposed in response to it have added to the burden for farmers and traders, whose movements are now restricted. In this study, the researchers aimed to give light to the experiences of the local farmers during the pandemic. These experiences are mainly focused on the effect of the pandemic on their livelihood, financial status, and their mental health. The data was collected through interviews by giving them questionnaires. The responses from the 16 respondents were analyzed to answer the study's research questions. The data showed that person aged 41-45 were more dominant in farming than the person who aged 26-40 and 60 years old and above of the key-participants of the conducted study. The findings showed that most of the farmers have the same struggles experienced during the pandemic. These struggles are due to lack of equipment, drying of crops, pests, and the added burden of strict protocols that were implemented by the government. Many of them also expressed that their income became lower during the pandemic because of the low production of goods since there are less farmers that are working due to quarantine. The farmers have also expressed their worries on the low income which became a source of their stress. In conclusion, the pandemic has affected the livelihood of farmers which also affected their mental health.

Index Terms- Farmers, Covid-19 Pandemic, Agricultural Sector

I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is the world's eighth-largest rice producer. Its arable land totals 5.4 million hectares. Rice area harvested has expanded from nearly 3.8 million hectares in 1995 to about 4.4 million hectares in 2010 (ricepedia, 2013). However, the country's rice area harvested is still very small compared with that of the other major rice-producing countries in Asia.

More than two-thirds (69%) of its rice area is irrigated. The country's production increased by a third, from 10.5 million t in 1995 to 15.8 million t in 2010. Seventy-one percent of rice production came from irrigated areas. Although yield improved from 2.8 t/ha in 1995 to 3.6 t/ha in 2010, it was still way below the

yield potential of modern varieties. Rice is a staple food for most Filipinos across the country. The nation's per capita rice consumption rose from 93.2 kg per year in 1995 to 123.3 kg per year in 2009. Similarly, per capita caloric intake from rice rose from 917 kcal per day in 1995 to 1,213 kcal per day in 2009. Protein requirements from rice, on average, increased from 29.7% in 1995 to 34.8% per person per day in 2009.

The Philippines imports about 10% of its annual consumption requirements. In 2010 and 2011, the country was the biggest rice importer. Its rice imports amounted to 2.38 million t in 2010, mostly coming from Vietnam and Thailand.

Despite these imports, rice prices for consumers are some of the highest in developing Asia (as are farm-gate prices for farmers). The high prices are enforced through an import control by the National Food Authority (NFA), a government agency, which also procures paddy from farmers at a government support price.

As worried consumers turn to canned and processed food instead of looking for what's fresh from the farms and wet markets, incomes have begun to dry up for small-scale farmers and fishermen (WWF-Philippines, 2020). The pandemic and the lockdown imposed in response to it have added to the burden for farmers and traders, whose movements are now restricted. They see the problem lasting until May 15, when the Philippines transitions into a "new normal," or even beyond. President Rodrigo Duterte has placed the entire Philippines under a state of calamity until the end of the year 2020. Under the ECQ, however, farming activity shouldn't be impeded. It is important to understand how Covid-19 affects our country and fellow Filipinos. In an attempt to gain a level of understanding on the farmer's encountered hardships during this pandemic.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study will know the Encountered Hardships of Farmers in Time of Pandemic which conducted to the farmers in different areas of San Carlos City, Pangasinan during the school year 2020-2021. This study aims to determine the Encountered Hardships of Farmers in Time of Corona Virus.

General question. What are the Encountered Hardships of Farmers in Time of Corona Virus?

Specific Problems:

This study will sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. Age
 - b. Sex
 - c. Duration of Farming
 - d. Number of farmers in the family
2. What are the livelihood struggles of farmers on natural disasters amidst pandemic?
3. What are the short-term consequences of Covid-19 pandemic to Small farmers with regards to:
 - a. Crop Production
 - b. Finance
 - c. c. Agricultural Goods
4. How does the crisis affect the mental health of farmers during pandemic?

Conceptual Framework

The input is San Carlos City , Pangasinan The Encountered Hardships of Farmers in Times of Pandemic. The process indicates that the researchers will be using Convenience Sampling Quota sampling, Method, Phenomenological study, Profile form and unstructured interview, Frequencies and percentage, Thematic analysis,and Probability sampling

III. SCOPE AND DELIMITATION:

This study was conducted to determine the different hardships encountered by farmers during this pandemic.

The research study conducted at research at San Carlos City, Pangasinan. The researchers will use their knowledge and their connections on the farmers to answer the survey questionnaire to gather the data about the Encountered

Hardship of Farmers in Time of Pandemic.

Significance of study

This section, the researchers expressed the value of the research study and this is where the significant contributions of the study are enumerated.

The result of this study will be of benefit to the following:

Students... This study will provide knowledge of all the students doesn't know to value the products of the farmers during the covid-19 pandemic.

Teacher...The result of this study will help the teachers to approach their students to value the products of the farmers during the covid-19 pandemic.

Society... This study will help the society to know how important is this in our economy. Agricultural activities is the one who make way to the industrialization.

Future Researchers... The data collected can be a guide for the future researchers. They will also know the encountered hardship of farmers in time of corona virus.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This chapter briefly discussed the Encountered Hardships of the Farmers amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic at the different places here at Pangasinan . This included the Research Design, Method of Research and Procedure, Research Instrument, Data Gathering Procedure, and the Treatment of the Study.

Research Design

In the space of a few weeks, life around the globe has been upended in the wake of covid-19. Industries of all kinds have been forced to rapidly change how they work, and agriculture is no different. Farmers are used to adapting to circumstances whether its droughts, floods or infestations of pests. Agriculture requires people. Whether its harvesting vegetables, de- tasseling corn, or pursuing vines, people are vital in many aspects of farming.

Method of Research and Procedure

In this study that investigated the Encountered Hardships of Farmers in Times of Pandemic, 16 farmers from San Carlos City, Pangasinan were selected to be the respondents. Non probability sampling was used to gather the sample data needed by the researchers. As defined by (Baraceros 2016), to the method or process of selecting respondents or people to answer questions means to yield data for a research study. Non probability sampling or biased sampling is a form of sampling method where in the subjects are selected based on the purpose of the study. The type of non- probability sampling used was quota sampling where the researchers pursued to identify participants who could correspond to the strict objectives and criteria of the study. Quota sampling method was also used in this study to get the agreeable representative and number of respondents. Foley (2018), defined the quota sampling technique is a type of non- probability sampling in which researchers look for a specific characteristic in their respondents, and then take a tailored sample that is in proportion to a population of interest.

Research Instrument

A research instrument is a tool used to collect measure and analyze data related to your subject. Research instrument can be tests, surveys, scale, questionnaire, or even checklist.

For this particular study the researchers used questionnaires to gather the data about the Encountered Hardship of Farmers in Time of Corona Virus. The researchers ask suitable questions to our farmers in the group that represent the whole population of the farmers in San Carlos City, Pangasinan.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data gathering procedure is defined as the procedure of collecting, measuring and analyzing accurate insight for research using standard validated techniques.

In this study, data were gathered through research by conducting survey to the group of farmers that can represent the whole population of the farmers in San Carlos City, Pangasinan.

Treatment of the Study

About the research will be done determine on how can we help these affected farmers. The government especially the Department of Agriculture (DA) has conducted several programs aiming to help farmers. Financial assistance giving free seedling

and fertilizer to somehow help affected farmers with this pandemic. Hopefully his study more will be aware of the situation the farmers are currently facing now.

Data Analysis

The data gathered were collected and tabulated based on the format required in the specific problems of the study. Descriptive aspects of the findings will be presented with the help of tables and other descriptive statistical indicators.

For Statement of the Problem No.1

Composed of respondent's personal data such as the sex, age, duration of farming and number of farmers in the family were determined using frequency counts and percentages.

For Statement of the Problem No. 2,3 and 4

The results for the livelihood struggles of farmers on natural disasters amidst pandemic, their experiences on the short-term consequences of Covid-19 pandemic with regards to crop production, finance, and agricultural goods, and on how does the pandemic affects their mental health as a farmer were interpreted by using the short answer type on google forms that lets the respondents to answer freely.

Profile of the Respondents with Regard to Sex

The table 1 indicated that out of sixteen (16) respondents, eleven (11) respondents were male, which is 68% of the population and five (5) respondents were female, which is 32% of the population. Therefore, the table showed that males were more dominant in farming than females of the key-participants of the conducted study.

Profile of the Respondents with Regard to age

The table showed that there were zero (0) respondents in 20 years old and below, representing 0% of the population, there were also zero (0) respondents in 21-25 years old, representing 0% of the population, two (2) of the respondents were aged 26-30 years old, representing 12% of the population, three (3) of the respondents were aged 31-35 years old, representing 18% of the population, three (3) of the respondents were aged 36-40 years old, representing 18% of the population, five (5) of the respondents were aged 41-45 years old, representing 34% of the population and three (3) respondents were aged 60 years old and above, representing 18% of the population.

Profile of the Respondents with Regard to Duration of Farming

The table showed that there were six (6) respondents that have 2-3 years experience in farming which is 37% of the population, seven (7) respondents that have 4-5 years experience in farming which is 43% of the population, and three (3) respondents that have 10 years and above experience in farming.

Profile of the Respondents with Regard to Number of Farmers in the Family

The table showed that six (6) of the respondents have 1 farmer in the family, representing 37% of the population, three (3) respondents have 2 farmers in the family, representing 18% of the population, three (3) respondents have 5 farmers in the family,

representing 18% of the population and four (4) respondents that have 6 farmers in the family, representing 27% of the population.

Livelihood Struggles of Farmers amidst the Pandemic

Based on the gathered data, four major livelihood struggles amidst pandemic were shown by the participants. The key-participants expressed that they experienced Effects of Pandemic to Crop Production, Effects of Weather to Crops, Effects of Community Quarantine, and Crop Parasites. The key-participants who experienced Effects of Weather to Crops have (6) responses in less rain, (2) responses in overheat, and (5) responses in drying of crops. They also experienced the Effects of Pandemic to Crop Production with a total of (7) responses on its sub-categories. The key-participants who experienced the Effects of Community Quarantine have (1) response in lack of time management, and (1) response in Protocols implemented by the government. The key-respondents experienced Crop Parasites with (1) response in Pests on crops on its sub-categories.

The Short-term Consequences of Covid-19 Pandemic to Crop Production

Based on the gathered data, five major livelihood struggles towards financial status in amidst of pandemic were shown by the participants. The key-participants expressed that they experienced Decreasing Crops Productions cause by the Pandemic, Effects of Pandemic towards Financial, Crop Parasites, Work Efficiency, and All right. . In majority, key-participants expressed that they experienced Decreasing Crops Productions caused by the Pandemic brought by the Covid-19 crisis; a total of (4) response on its sub-categories. Others also claimed that they also experienced Effects of Pandemic towards Financial brought by the Covid-19 Pandemic; a total of (1) response on its sub-categories. Some key-participants expressed that they experienced Work Efficiency brought by pandemic; a total of (1) response on its sub-categories. Other key-respondents claimed that they experienced Crop Parasites brought by Covid-19 Pandemic; a total of (1) response on its sub-categories. The key-respondents also claimed that they experienced All right in Times of Covid-19 Pandemic; a total of (1) response on its sub-categories.

The Short-term Consequences of COVID-19 Pandemic to Financial Status

The gathered data showed that the respondents expressed three major negative effects on their financial status. It is clearly that pandemic had an effect on their financial status, impacts on their capital and struggle on buying equipment that they needed. It shows that farmers are really struggling to sustain their profits, their resources, and their ability to invest in this pandemic. The pandemic had Effects on their Financial Status, according to the majority of key-participants; with total of (4) responses on its sub-categories. Others also indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had an Impact on their Capital; a total of (2) responses on its sub-categories. We all do have struggles in this time of pandemic crisis, however farmers also have Struggle on Buying Equipment that they needed for farming; a total of (1) response on its sub-categories.

Short-term Consequences of Covid-19 Pandemic to Agricultural Goods

Based on the gathered data, four effects on agricultural goods to the farmers were shown by the participants. The key-participants expressed that they were affected on the Effects of Pandemic towards Agricultural Goods, Effects of Pandemic towards Financial Status, Pest problem, and others claimed that they are All right. In majority, key-participants expressed that they were affected by the Effects of Pandemic towards Agricultural Goods; a total of (7) response on its sub-categories. Others also claimed that they also affected on the Effects of Pandemic towards Financial Status brought by the Covid-19 Pandemic; a total of (3) response on its sub-categories. Some key-participants expressed that they were affected on Pest problem brought by pandemic; a total of (1) response on its sub-categories. The key-respondents also claimed that they are All right, they were not affected by the Covid-19 in their agricultural goods; a total of (1) response on its sub-categories.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global health crisis (WHO) that is already having devastating impacts on the world economy – both directly and through necessary measures to contain the spread of the disease. These impacts are also being felt by the food and agriculture sector. While the supply of food has held up well to date, in many countries, the measures put in place to contain the spread of the virus are starting to disrupt the supply of agro-food products to markets and consumers, both within and across borders. The sector is also experiencing a substantial shift in the composition and – for some commodities – the level of demand.

The Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic to the Mental Health of the Farmers

Based on the presented data, four major negative effects on mental health to the farmers were shown by the participants. The key-participants expressed that they were affected on Mental Health, Body Health, Spiritual Health, and Crops Production. In majority, key-participants expressed that they were affected by Effects on Crops Production brought by the Covid-19 Pandemic; a total of (7) response on its sub-categories. Others also claimed that they also affected on Mental Health brought by the Covid-19 Pandemic; a total of (5) response on its sub-categories. Some key-participants expressed that they were affected on Body Health brought by pandemic; a total of (2) response on its sub-categories. The key-respondents also claimed that they were affected in Spiritual Health brought by Covid-19 Pandemic; a total of (1) response on its sub-categories.

The COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2020) has disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93% of countries worldwide while the demand for mental health is increasing, according to a new WHO survey. The survey of 130 countries provides the first global data showing the devastating impact of COVID-19 on access to mental health services and underscores the urgent need for increased funding.

The survey was published ahead of WHO's Big Event for Mental Health – a global online advocacy event on 10 October that will bring together world leaders, celebrities, and advocates to call for increased mental health investments in the wake of COVID-19 (WHO, 2020).

V. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provided the summary of the research work and its findings, and discussed the conclusions based on the study findings and limitations. and the recommendations made as an outgrowth of this study was presented.

Summary

This study was focused on investigating The Encountered Hardship of Farmers in Times of Pandemic. It was conducted in order to determine the Encountered Hardship of Farmers in Times of Pandemic. There were 16 farmers in San Carlos City, Pangasinan who became the respondents of the study

The research designed and conducted by surveys. Frequency and percentage distribution were used in presenting the demographic profile of the Respondents, thematic analysis and tallying assessed the dominant indicators and factors of key-respondents' answers.

Findings

Considering the data gathered and the objectives of this study based on the statement of the problem, this study came with the following summarized findings based on themes:

1. Profile of the Respondents

a. Gender

From the data gathered, 5 were females and 11 were males. Majority of the farmers who participated the research were males.

b. Age

The 2 participants were aged 26-30 years old, 3 participants were aged 31-35 years old, 3 participants also were aged 36-40 years old, 5 participants were aged 41-45 years old, while 3 participants were aged 60 years old and above.

c. Duration of Farming

There were 6 farmers who responded that they were farming for 2-4 years. 7 farmers also responded that they were farming for 4-5 years, while 3 farmers responded that they were farming for about 10 years and above.

d. Number of Farmers in the Family

Based on the collected data they were 6 participants who stated that they only have 1 farmer in their families. 3 participants indicated that they had 2 family members who were farmers. 3 participants answered that they had 5 family members who were farmers, while 4 of the participants reported that there were 6 farmers in their families.

2. Livelihood Struggles of Farmers amidst the Pandemic

Majority of the key-participants, effects of weather to crops; 13 responses. Next to this were the effects of pandemic to crop production with 7 responses. Effects of community quarantine with 2 responses, and crop parasites with a total of 2 responses also.

3. The Short-term Consequences of Covid-19 Pandemic to Crop Production

The short-term consequences brought by COVID-19 to crop production was indicated by the key-respondents were categorized. The top four Short-term Consequences brought by COVID-19 to crop production were decreasing crops productions

caused by the pandemic with 10 responses. All right with 2 responses and work efficiency also with 2 responses. Followed by 1 response on effects of pandemic towards financial and 1 response also to crop parasites.

4.The Short-term Consequences of Covid-19 Pandemic to Financial Status

Based on the data gathered the short-term consequences of COVID-19 to financial status were categorized. First is the effects on financial status with a total of 14 responses. Second is the impacts on their capital with a total of 5 responses. Third is the struggle on buying equipment with a 1 response.

5.Short-term Consequences of Covid-19 Pandemic to Agricultural Goods

Key-participants stated that their agricultural goods were also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. There were 8 responses on effects of pandemic towards agricultural goods. All right got 5 responses, next was the effects of pandemic towards financial status with 3 responses, while 1 response only on the pest problem.

6.The Effects of Covid-19 Pandemic to the Mental Health of the Farmers

Key-participants expressed that COVID-19 Pandemic has an impact to their mental health, body health, spiritual health and to their production. The first effect was the effects on mental health with a total of 12 responses, and the effects on body health also got 12 responses. Followed by the effects of pandemic in production with a sum of 4 responses. 1 response only on effect of spiritual health.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study and the specific research questions, the researchers constructed the following conclusions comprehensively.

1.The respondents have the same struggles experienced amidst the pandemic.

- a.The farmers struggles due to lack of rain that causes drying of crops.
- b.Lack of equipment to use in farming.
- c.Pests that damages the crops.
- d.Protocols implemented by the government due to pandemic.

2.Most of the farmer's crop production decreased because of lack of workers due to the community quarantine implemented by the government during pandemic.

3.The farmers have less income than before because of the pandemic. The low price of agricultural goods when sold in market results in the low income of farmers.

Recommendations

With thorough and in-depth conclusions of the study, recommendations were made for the different sector. These recommendations were as follows.

1. It is recommended that governments should develop a new and expanded policy agenda for agricultural extension and Communication for rural development focusing national attention on food security and income generation of the rural poor.
2. Be patient if there are glitches. No one has done this kind of transformation before on such a scale.
3. Waste no food. This was a vital action before the crisis as wasted food means wasted, land, water and green house gas emissions. Were understanding the vital importance of this in real time.

REFERENCES

- [1] Byrne, J. (2020, July 08). The economic impact Of covid-19: Time for the US ag sector to play offense. <https://www.feednavigator.com/Article/2020/07/08/The-economic-impact-of-Covid-19-on-the-US-farm-sector>
- [2] CIDA-LGSP (2003). Fact sheet. Agriculture plays a significant role in the Philippine economy. Involving about 40 percent of Filipino workers <http://www.fao.org/3/ae946e/ae946e03.htm>
- [3] Conde, M. (2020, May 07). For Philippine farmers reeling from disasters, lockdown is another painpoint. <https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/for-philippine-farmers-reeling-from-disasters-lockdown-is-another-pain-point/>
- [4] Conde, M., (2020). They see the problem lasting until May 15, when the Philippines transitions into a "new normal," or even beyond. <https://news.mongabay.com/>
- [5] Evangelista, S. (2020, August 24). Planting seeds of growth: Plight of filipino farmers in the midst of covid-19 pandemic. <https://philippines.makesense.org/2020/08/20/planting-seeds-of-growth-plight-of-filipino-farmers-in-the-midst-of-covid-19-pandemic/?fbclid=IwAR1EGDbfCshvDXjAfCtqxjx2k1HRvjUvKOWKGZwP-xreP7wg-fY1keMPgqc>
- [6] Hinay, M. (2020). In this time of pandemic, we need to help feed those who feed us. <https://wwf.org.ph/resource-center/story-archives-2020/pandemic-fishermen-farmers/>.
- [7] Johansson, R. (2020, October 13). America's farmers: Resilient throughout the covid pandemic. <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2020/09/24/americas-farmers-resilient-throughout-covid-pandemic>
- [8] LABline (2020, October 08). WHO survey shows COVID-19 disrupting mental health services in most countries. <https://www.mlo-online.com/disease/infectious-disease/article/21157566/who-survey-shows-covid19-disrupting-mental-health-services-in-most-countries>.
- [9] Litkowski, C., & Law, J. (2021, January 07). COVID-19 working paper: A Timely tool for Evaluating financial conditions in agriculture: USDA forecasts of the value of production in the face of covid-19. <https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/309398/>
- [11] Llorito, D. (2020). Transforming Philippine Agriculture: During Covid-19 and Beyond (June 2020) <https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/transforming-philippine-agriculture-during-covid-19-and-beyond-june-2020?fbclid=IwAR3sch2VEEvniHDOGUCUMx0XdDyy8NyzJoK2cxtJaCNp5nGMBj9NffXuJSU>
- [12] Martin, A., Gould, S., Nierenberg, D., John, J., Churchill, S., Berger, S., . . . Martin, D. (2020, March 31). Support farmers through the covid-19 crisis. <https://foodtank.com/news/2020/03/remember-your-farmers-during-the-covid-19-crisis-well-need-them-the-next-time-around/>
- [13] Pak, A., Adegboye, O., Adekunle, A., Rahman, K., McBryde, E., & Eisen, D. (2020, May 18). Economic consequences of the covid-19 outbreak: The need for epidemic preparedness. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2020.00241/full>

- [14] Palo, A. M., Rosetes, M. A., & Cariño, D. P. (2020). COVID-19 and Food Systems in the Philippines. https://aciarc.gov.au/publication/covid19/7-covid-19-and-food-systems-philippines?fbclid=IwAR0vMpRBokeBjfpTysIhSdfyXWjP9iudNE0cxd3IYj1qMyI2qIhpTz_0vXw
- [15] Puglia, D. (2021, January 06). COVID-19 affects farmers and the food supply chain. <https://www.bayer.com/en/news-stories/how-farmers-are-keeping-us-fed-through-the-global-crisis>.
- [16] Ricepedia, (2020). The Philippines is the world's eighth-largest rice producer. Its arable land totals 5.4 million hectares. Philippines.(n.d.). <https://ricepedia.org/philippines#:~:text=The%20Philippines%20is%20the%20world's,4.4%20million%20hectares%20in%202010>.
- [17] Rice production in the Philippines. (2021, May 01). Rice production in the Philippines is an important aspect of the country's food supply and economy. The Philippines is the 8th largest rice producer in the world, accounting for 2.8% of global rice production. The Philippines was also the world's largest rice importer in 2010 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rice_production_in_the_Philippines.
- [18] Tomko, M. (2020, June 10). AFBF calls on lawmakers to help FARMERS through food System Shockwave. <https://www.fb.org/newsroom/afbf-calls-on-lawmakers-to-help-farmers-through-food-system-shockwave>
- [19] Tomko, M. (2020, June 18). Americans support COVID-19 aid to FARMERS; trust remains high. <https://www.fb.org/newsroom/americans-support-covid-19-aid-to-farmers-trust-remains-high>

AUTHORS

First Author – Bobby B. Dela Cruz, LPT, MEd Practical Research 1, Virgin Milagrosa University Foundation Special Science High School, Martin P. Posadas Avenue, San Carlos City, Pangasinan