



ECONOMIC IMPEDIMENTS AND SOCIAL NARRATIVES BROUGHT BY THE PANDEMIC: “A NAVIGATION OF CHANGE”

By

*Alex Labial Señara, D.M., Juvelyn L. Hayag, MBM
Faculty of the College of Business Administration (BSBA) of Tagoloan Community College
Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, Philippines, 9000*

Abstract

*The economic impediments and social narratives brought by the pandemic: a “navigation” of change such as, 1) **Inflation** reveal that the government needs to strive more in finding strategic approaches so that effective and efficient solution of controlling the evidence of a general increase in the price of a commodity can be achieved right in time, in such a way, the promising economic recovery gradually be attained, 2) **Unemployment** suggest that government should explore all possibilities to facilitate those victimized by the occurrence of this pandemic who lost their source of living and struggling to the environmental adjustment, while they are focusing on controlling the virus spread. It is imperative that since employment is the major source of people in any field, addressing this constraint will somehow bring a threshold of societal future hope 3) **Earning factor** is more likely recommended that government agencies will regroup and brainstorm so that in-depth structural analysis can be drawn among them. The overstaying pandemic crisis will derail all valued government resources in which allowing this to happen tantamount to a draining economic slope and a major recession, 4) **Business constraints** found out that the existence of these eventualities will result in a feeling of being dormant when it comes to creating further development. Although they remain pragmatic in their views that business will somehow prosper and reborn the possibilities if decisions will not be procrastinated, 5) **Social services** are viewed as temporal but affect their endeavor and the meaning of business existence. While it is true that the whole universe experiences the same claims of different degree, it is a must for the government to limit its provision although it is vital and primordial but rather, concentrate on finding long-term, ultimate, and sustainable but friendly mechanisms in solving this shortcoming we had, 6) **Travel restrictions** draw a negative perception by them as this initiative hampers the normal and natural being of every individual. Businesses alike find it unfavorable for them since the prolonged classifications of essential and non-essential instead of giving time and space to play in the environment lose its hope and become incapable of having time to explore. This restriction from the government is a very human initiative but on the contrary, many are made to be sacrificial lambs in their quest. Travel ban activity and the like cripples downs some domestic sources.*

Short Title: Economics impediments and social narratives brought by the pandemic: navigation of change

Introduction

History recalls that whatever favorable or unfavorable occurrence of an event, economics is always the shock absorbers. It creates a domino effect to many aspects such as business, employment, society, and other sectors like industry and farming. In every nation, it is the economy that often speaks and is used as a yardstick in determining its stability. It is a broad term (economy) that denotes a summative societal spread of various activities. As the whole world experienced a tremendous test and its sustainability is being challenged by this pandemic, uncertainties were born to an extreme degree. People nowadays feel the

traumatic distress as it seems they are moving forwards and face a heavy cloud that causes a sightless and resulted to miss the ultimate target. Business is likewise experiencing the same since there long been stated goals of their business seem unrealistic as they also challenge by the new norms of the business. Adjusting to change is somewhat difficult for this time since industry and society are both unaware of the sudden appearance of this pandemic. These constraint factors are considered as imperative of knowing its impact on the economy such as 1) Inflation, 2) Unemployment, 3) Earning factors, 4) Business constraints, 5) Social services, and 6) Travel restrictions. As this pandemic spread in the environment, the whole universe was shaken by immeasurable economic sway where environmental activity moves to a path with no designed directions. Different levels of states like government, religion, judiciary, and even media feel the same gravity of obstacles experienced. The trajectory downtrend of economic perpendiculars has nothing to blame, the pandemic spread. As reported by the Department of Health (DOH), countless casualties disclosed all over the world. Cripples down the economy resulting to create a “gap” due to the presence of government-imposed precautionary measures. The presence of continuing business and industry closures, the retrenchment initiatives make the economy as a whole drop to point beyond historical review in memorial times. Society nowadays aside from being crippled, uncertainty arouses, afraid of deciding to explore since living the normal life is becoming abnormal. The business sector, on the other hand, carries the same predicaments as they also have the feeling of being in doubt to the decision making they made, thinking if whatever it may bring in some future times.

More than a million marks in the Philippines alone, (recent update of 7,204 new COVID cases brings a significant impact to different economic sectors in terms of their decision in building some potential sort of business displays due to the presence of this environmental challenges. Every day and a day after the other, updates are worsened and it seems the government has fallen short on the control measures imposed. There are a lot of government control measures imposed during the first wave of this pandemic such as adherence to the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) mandate, however, these measures did not show convincing figures of their effectiveness. As reported by all print and media sources, the bigger contribution of disciplined people that somehow reduce the number of virus spread is keeping away from the influx in the environment. With that study, government nowadays declares the so-called “Sunday lockdown”, which means that all activities usually done by families were banned. The family bondings are temporarily restricted due to the increasing number of cases brought by COVID-19. In short, from the time of its implementation until such a positive indication is evident, the said order remains in full force. This move is somewhat sound as it is designed to protect the masses from potential infections, however, the adverse effect it may bring could be unfavorable to businesses alike. Malls had been affected by disallowing people to get in, so with the religious activity are restricted to do their regular rituals; hence the interest of this study is to determine whether how those cited areas are affected and what remedial actions be made, the government should unleash people with this trying times.

Methods

Since the environment still faces uncertainty, the old research concepts were set aside as it seems their applicability, practicability, and effectiveness are not possible as of now. Research enthusiasts cannot be strained from doing study since as “Frontliner” in the field, strategic and remedial approaches can be made especially so that we are into the digital arena in life. By using the multimedia platforms, the internet sources, the researcher used Google met, Skype, Calls, and Text to link respondents in a different area of coverage. This study uses a total of 200 randomly selected respondents composed of businessmen and consumers in the upper and middle-class levels. A survey questionnaire was floated using digital platforms and observation was done using the period of one (1) year from March 2020 to February 2021. Data gathered was carefully collected, tallied, and tabulated using different statistical tools. Supplement information was taken from a reliable source like the Department of Labor and Employment for information related to employment and retrenchment, while some reinforced data coming the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) was analyzed to check its contribution as an information source of this study over and above the survey made.

Some vital information taken from a limited face-to-face interview was done with the authority from the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) were religiously follow. A one (1) meter distance was strictly observed and the interview process was made through an appointment. This study is limited only to selected businessmen and consumers within the area of Northern Mindanao, Philippines. Thus their executive reports received descriptively were triangulated to the ethnographic notes of the field researchers on the period specified. Since the study deals with the economic impediments and social narratives brought by the pandemic: a “navigation” of change, the element of “truth” on the qualitative and quantitative data, exchange of ideas, and other methods of generating prepondering shreds of evidence were carefully recorded.

Findings and Discussions

The study on economic impediments and social narrative brought by the pandemic: a” navigation” of change are amongst the factors required an assessment on its impact to the economy such as 1) Inflation, 2) Unemployment, 3) Earning factors, 4) Business constraints, 5) Social services and 6) Travel restrictions believe to be a factor contributory to some economic impediments which draw the following findings:

Inflation

The term is expressed from an economic point of view as the rising general level of price. Inflation can be normal or abnormal. Normal inflation is caused by a sudden increase in price due to scarcity that brings forth subsidizing the cost of production. Abnormal inflation is influenced by an occurrence of an unexpected event like this COVID-19 pandemic. Comparatively, its abnormality damages many aspects of the economy as a whole as it does not give even quite exemption to anyone. Whether it is normal or abnormal inflation, the affected ones are the people in the society. It signifies higher spending of the households for food and even transportation since its monetary equivalent diminishes vis-à-vis the price of commodity acquisition. In times of inflation, the spending pattern for everyone changes as the presence of economic imbalance is evident in the economic arena. However, as the pandemic strikes, this inflation problem affects both the industry sector and the consuming public in many ways. Firms sell a commodity at a bit higher due to the cost incurred from the point of producers to end-users. The struggle between the economic players is sellers offer goods and aspires to have more sales by buyers, although they have the desire to acquire goods, limits due to its purchasing power. As the pandemic continues to increase, the cost of living affects largely from low to average earners and creates some gap between sellers and buyers. This inflation problem is experienced by the whole world therefore, crucial adjustment is needed to surpass this test of time.

The National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), in coordination with the Banko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), made a consensus as to what strategy to implement that will pave the way for this inflation problem. One of the foreseen factors contributory to this inflation is the tax reform which is expected to increase. On top of this, some price manipulation is sometimes appearing that counts for economic sabotage where government leaders like the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) should forcefully run after those who are taking advantage of the situation. Respondents were interviewed, for the business sector, they are concern about the welfare of the consuming public, however, they are also protecting their business interests. Buyers, on the other hand, are just being contended of what capacity they had since their need is just limited and depends on their earnings. This condition that inflation brings might open the eyes of the government to invest more in finding ways to help the consuming public "People" so that temporary recovery is achieved while the environment of uncertainties is evident.

Unemployment

A society whose armor is manpower severely affected by this pandemic. The livelihood defines the activity to survive lies largely to employment as an element that provides the source for survival. History recalls that more than a year now, this pandemic devastated the labor industry brings forth by the closure of major industries worldwide. No exemption as to its category of working nature since the economic downturn is inevitable. As reported by Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) the unemployment rate rose to 17.7% or its equivalent of 7.3 million unemployed Filipinos since April 2020. A record-high is merely brought by the COVID-19 pandemic which results in economic shutdowns of the labor market. The environment nowadays suffers from this uncontrollable spread of this virus that hinders every economic activity from a mere decision to its implementation. The government has no clear directions to focus with considering that there are different economic responsibility that needs to be embraced despite many challenges they faced. Day-by-day, business closures often noted, the continual increase in unemployment figure. The major businesses that operate on air, sea, and ground are among the many affected since capitalization demands equity in terms of earning which is impossible to attain due to some noticeable constraints. A large volume of the Overseas-Filipino Workers (OFW) is returning home for nothing. This volume of manpower added to the existing unemployment rate the country had. It has been noted that this pandemic continues to its spread thereby, a solution addressing the unemployment problem seems to be difficult to find. Many of the economic activity such as the health and industry sector has crippled down resulting in carrying a heavy load to every household. Secretary Bello once said that when the global pandemic hit, feared to have employment impacted badly.

With the strong mandate from the Inter-Agency Task Force like community quarantine, hundreds of thousands of establishments closed. Limiting the income of households due to flexible time arrangements and even reduction of working hours per week. Many establishments surveyed were asked if they are still willing to continue business despite the presence of this pandemic? Most of them showed a positive response however, as to hiring employees, they bear no promises. On the part of the working force or the manpower, the majority of them show some unconditional interest in working since their living is very much affected. Some Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) when interviewed, they are more than willing to return to work if allowed since they feel the agony in life with their family seeing much basic need unserved due to shortage of resources. However, even if their desire demands to, the government restriction disallows things they opt to do even if there is a need for security assurance. With this painful experience that the government and the labor force experience, a win-win solution is needed to facilitate those gaps between the labor force and its mandate. The government is exploring all possibilities, however, they cannot just decide if safety and security will be at stake. The problem is becoming complicated and it is safe to suggest that branches of government should find an urgent solution in cooperation with the labor force to temporarily solve this problem as the government continues to find remedial action to the occurrence of the COVID-19 as the culprit of all these discomforts we have.

Earning Factors

Restrictions imposed are the hindrance that crushing out earnings of businesses and individuals. The stay-at-home policy, the quarantine and curfew hours are among the many that create a diversion to income-generating instruments for survival. Since closures of the major industry appear, unemployment rise from an extraordinary level, people shifted to any form of economic activity to supplement their daily needs. Even those giant industries to name some like Jollibee, PLDT, Puregold amongst other bleeds while others remain stable and outperform each of them, but overall draws the condition of loss during the pandemic. The earning factors do not only point out the group of the labor force but more so with those large business corporations as well. Capitalism as a business nature comes changing and foresees permanent nature due to this pandemic. Those companies that are known to be unstoppable in income-generating are currently down on their knees and are reinforcing strategic exposures not seen before the crisis based on the latest earning report. That known provider of food items like malls, leisure venues, and tourism that rank in billions of earnings every quarter before the pandemic, now becomes to categorize as non-essentials terms that stripped off the economic contribution of these industries.

The downfall of these iconic businesses alike reduces the revenue-generating arm of the government where a portion of the proceeds will go to social services now face some tremendous test. In the micro-level of businesses, the increasing number of small scale affect in the wider scope. People who lost their jobs because of the pandemic shifted to business as a means of supplementing the needs for day-to-day subsistence. It comes to the point where the societal element (the people) turn to be businessmen and women. This activity restricts themselves and people from going out somewhere just to acquire their needs resulting to reduce earnings in some large-scale businesses alike. In an interview conducted by the researcher, it came out that every day, sales trends are going down and it is mainly affected by many intervening factors imposed by the government aimed at controlling the spread of the virus. As this pandemic evident and becoming worst, much other economic activity that its implementation added to the crisis of the people. Aside from the coronavirus, the SARS CoV – 2 restricts farmers to use household waste for feeding contributes Calvary to those who are engaged in that backyard kind of business. The delay of the logistics due to inspection contributes to the increasing prices of essential products in the economy. Surveys reveal that, for the people to sustain in these pandemic times, a full control and discipline lifestyle should be adopted up to the maximum, and in the process, a domino effect comes out.

In the advent of this constraint brought about by the pandemic, it's about time that all government agencies will regroup together and find a solution to this global crisis that affects everyone. This is a call for urgency as it derailed the economic vision and its long-term goals towards sustainable development. It is suggested that a plan of action should be defined to effectively address the tremendous effect of this pandemic. Although its impact is global, different levels of problems in the economic platforms are affected, therefore, an urgent and defined railway to recovery should be acted before it's too late.

Business constraints

One of the major constraints experienced by businesses is being not ready for this pandemic. It derails the company strategy since its occurrence is not foreseen in the environment. The stated goals of the organization hampered due to this pandemic that forced them to shift the application of their strategy. The continuing spread of this pandemic creates an atmosphere of many uncertainties thereby plan of action is on a temporary status. Businesses nowadays concentrate much on how to sustain their operation since the mandate of the government is immeasurable. The strict implementation of a stay-at-home policy reduces the volume of people in the economy where businesses relied on. With this, growing constraints arise, their marketing strategy is affected. The plan of having an expansion of business was curtailed because of fear that investment might not give them the appropriate return on its time frame. The condominium owner has 100 unit capacity and only 40 percent of them are occupied comes now a problem. The marketing intent is to block by the environmental factors and it is all due to the pandemic. At present, the increasing number of virus infections continues to increase day by day, and responding to it is somewhat difficult. The business environment is surrounded by many unpredictable changes and creates hesitations to enthusiasts in discharging some monetary equivalent for investment as this situation comes to severe chaotic nature. Most businessmen in an interview revealed that for as long as the pandemic is evident, they are restrained from making further business development initiatives. Moreover, the stand of most businesses today is to embrace the situation and continue finding some strategic move sustaining their daily requirements. Events are very hard to predict and making a decision is tantamount to putting things in endanger. Since the environment is embraced with different levels of challenges, one way of sustaining is to further forecast some possibilities across the business venues.

Social services

Social services are the most challenged in these particular times as the environment traverses to uncertainty. Despite the continuing health crisis brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) continues to facilitate the provision of livelihood support. This move sounds essential since the country suffers difficulty in driving out the test of time. With the tremendous effect of this challenging affair, people tend to embrace the resemblance despite the absence of the likelihood of having no assurance of what may come. The opinion of the stakeholders (the people) reveals an unfathomed difficulty hence the role of social services is indeed seem very vital. Different programs and projects are implemented by this agency purposely to enhance the life of the people. Some of the social services are accorded to them like technical assistance and resource augmentation (TARA) aimed at reinforcing people's activity and provide space and time while they hurdle the different levels of uncertainties. Assisting individuals with this crisis and a lot more are delivered by the government agency to supplement the gap brought by this pandemic. Food assistance is also provided by the government to unleash the steadfast task imbued as their overall moral obligation.

On the other hand, the department supports strengthening the social pension system for indigent senior citizens in the country to better protect the elderly amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In the advent of the increasing needs for health and daily subsistence, a bill was passed by Congress that aim to increase the monthly social pension for indigents. The department further emphasizes that indigent seniors in the country require more assistance, especially in these trying times. Businessmen find very discomfort in handling their day-to-day business activity amidst this disturbing phenomenon. They also confirmed that the social services provided by the government seem to affect their endeavor and its meaning of existence. All over the world, the environment experience the same sufferings as they face the challenge however, these social needs can be addressed even though the economic gateway faces turbulence in nature, suggest to be sustained and government should continue finding a solution to meet the need of starving people with this paranormal occurrence of events.

Travel restrictions

In the recent update, a total of 162,531,874 recorded cases with 3,371,346 death and 140,388,391 recovery shows a very critical figure which triggers the government to revert the safety protocol imposed by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF). Travel restriction from an economic point of view contributes a larger portion of damages in every business endeavor. It will bury out the countries financial and revenue generation mechanism which result to fall short in providing basic services to society in general. However, this cannot be avoided considering that the government needs to balance the situation. While it is true that the major obligation of the government is to protect the people, hunger cannot be set aside. The old concept using the exit pass system now on its active implementation. The non-pharmaceutical facility as a minimum health care tool, machinery in combatting, attacking, and fighting the COVID 19 is back to its implementation. The wearing of face mask, washing hands, and feet, physical distancing, staying at home, curfew hours, sleeping habits, and eating vitamin source foods are now on strict implementation. The mandatory possessing the Quick Response code (QR) for easy tracing strategy is in effect. These are the restrictions evident in the community. This initiative imposed by the government is an ultimate strategy that focuses on controlling the movement of people which affects the affair in business.

On the other hand, travel bans and trade restrictions will undoubtedly aid the government's trust in controlling the spread of this virus which contributes to affect the business and industry. A large number of financial capabilities foregone due to these measures. Different sectors in the economy also suffer as this situation is prolonged. This all creates an increased level of uncertainty which will prejudice the attainment of individual mission to all their endeavors. Businesses like small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are challenged to venture beyond their usual activity just to survive. The underlying question for every organization is how they can act strategically with this pandemic test. Nowadays, only those authorized persons outside residence (APOR) are given the chance to go out for their basic essential requirements.

This initiative brings forth full control over the pandemic situation. Businesses and consumers find their unanimous feelings and experience in restoring the travel restriction. Those business classified as non-essential for the past year finds no hope of playing the same hope as this restriction comes to effect. These control measures bring a profound effect to the economy and therefore, it is suggested that to cater to both economic and health concerns, the government should strengthen their stand towards the maximization of the vaccination program by acquiring enough unit for the people so that the economy can resume normal even if the situation is abnormal. This further brings hope for economic recovery and in one way or the other, contributes to pleasant environmental well-being at large.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The economic impediments and social narratives brought by the pandemic: a “navigation” of change such as, 1) **Inflation** reveal that the government needs to strive more in finding strategic approaches so that effective and efficient solution of controlling the evidence of a general increase in the price of a commodity can be achieved right in time, in such a way, the promising economic recovery gradually be attained, 2) **Unemployment** suggest that government should explore all possibilities to facilitate those victimized by the occurrence of this pandemic who lost their source of living and struggling to the environmental adjustment, while they are focusing on controlling the virus spread. It is imperative that since employment is the major source of people in any field, addressing this constraint will somehow bring a threshold of societal future hope 3) **Earning factor** is more likely recommended that government agencies will regroup and brainstorm so that in-depth structural analysis can be drawn among them. The overstaying pandemic crisis will derail all valued government resources in which allowing this to happen tantamount to a draining economic slope and a major recession, 4) **Business constraints** found out that the existence of these eventualities will result in a feeling of being dormant when it comes to creating further development. Although they remain pragmatic in their views that business will somehow prosper and reborn the possibilities if decisions will not be procrastinated, 5) **Social services** are viewed as temporal but affect their endeavor and the meaning of business existence. While it is true that the whole universe experiences the same claims of different degree, it is a must for the government to limit its provision although it is vital and primordial but rather, concentrate on finding long-term, ultimate, and sustainable but friendly mechanisms in solving this shortcoming we had, 6) **Travel restrictions** draw a negative perception by them as this initiative hampers the normal and natural being of every individual. Businesses alike find it unfavorable for them since the prolonged classifications of essential and non-essential instead of giving time and space to play in the environment lose its hope and become incapable of having time to explore. This restriction from the government is a very human initiative but on the contrary, many are made to be sacrificial lambs in their quest. Travel ban activity and the like cripples downs some domestic sources.

References

Social impact of the COVID-19

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_impact_of_the_COVID-19_pandemic

Inflation Measurement in the Era of COVID-19

<https://www.nber.org/digest/aug20/inflation-measurement-era-covid-19>

NEDA considers TRAIN having little effect on inflation

<http://www.neda.gov.ph/neda-considers-train-having-little-effect-on-inflation/>

Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)

<http://ro7.dole.gov.ph/default.php?retsamlakygee=1258&resource=084243855820f9ca47f466f645784636>

Philippines-Unemployment Rate

<https://www2.staffingindustry.com/row/Editorial/Daily-News/Philippines-Unemployment-rate-hits-record-high-17.7-in-April-due-to-pandemic-54065>

How pandemic is Crushing Company Earnings

<https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/how-coronavirus-pandemic-crushing-company-earnings>

Economic Impact on COVID 19 Pandemic

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_impact_of_the_COVID-19_pandemic

The Special Economic Impact of Pandemics

<https://www.investopedia.com/special-economic-impact-of-pandemics-4800597>

Program Project and Services

<https://www.dswd.gov.ph/programs-projects-and-services/>

COVID 19 CUORUNAVIRUS PABDEMIC

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

© GSJ