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A Post Pandemic Analysis of the Spirituality of Adolescents in South Central Mindanao, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Spirituality is a driving force that capacitates adolescents to overcome challenges and adversities and allows them to develop a sense of hope, meaning, and purpose. The study determines the level of spirituality of adolescents in South Central Mindanao, Philippines after the COVID-19 pandemic. A quantitative non-experimental method of research was utilized. The respondents were selected using a non-probability sampling technique. The study utilized an adapted, contextualized, and validated survey instrument. In analyzing the data, mean, standard deviation and Analysis of Variance were used. The results revealed that the level of spirituality of adolescents is very high. Furthermore, there is a significant difference in adolescents' spirituality level when analyzed according to City.

INTRODUCTION

Spirituality is the awareness of the concept, familiarity, and knowledge which establishes connection to the holy, providing individuals a sense of tenacity, significance, purpose in life, value for the living, and sense of harmony (Fisher 2011). Spirituality is considered to be a vital factor that protects individuals against the negative effects of adversities (Cotton *et al.* 2006; Lee and Neblett 2017). Literatures suggested that spiritual progress in adolescents are underexplored but researchers agreed that adolescence is a crucial period for developing spiritual growth and experiences (Benson *et al.*, 2003; Good and Willoughby, 2008). The COVID-19 impacted adolescents' spirituality, since they experienced unusual things like isolation, anxiety, and stress at home and in the community (Weaver & Wiener, 2020). Spirituality is considered to be an important factor that safeguard from stressors but most often than not, declines during the period of adolescence (Wright, Yendork, & Klierer, 2018). Furthermore, Desmond *et al.* (2010) emphasized that in spite of the affirmative role of spirituality, activities related to spiritual exploration and growth declines during adolescence. Adolescence is a sensitive period for the development of spirituality (Good and Willoughby, 2008). With the assistance of a strong social network, spirituality can be a source of strength that can't be achieved when pursued alone (King, Vaughn, and Merola, 2020). Therefore, there is a need for a study that will assess the spirituality of adolescents after the pandemic, hence this study. Consequently, this study contributed to the existing literatures on the spirituality of adolescents.

Statement of the Problem

The research determined the Spirituality of Adolescents in South central Mindanao, Philippines after the Pandemic.

Specifically, this study sought to determine the following:

1. To determine the level of spirituality of adolescents in terms of:
 - i. belief in God;
 - ii. search for meaning;
 - iii. mindfulness; and
 - iv. feeling of security.
2. To determine if there is a significant difference in the level of Spirituality of Adolescents when analyzed according to City.

Hypothesis

The null hypotheses below was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the level of Spirituality of Adolescents when analyzed according to City

LITERATURE REVIEW

Spirituality

Spirituality is a person's sense of intimacy or connection to the holy (Georgia State University, 2020). Varkiani (2021) maintains in his paper entitled "The role of resurrection in human spiritual health from the perspective of the Holy Quran" that spiritual health is comfort for the body and tranquillity for the soul. It will not be possible until man has a connection with God, which relieves him of tension, worry, and trepidation. It provides him with spiritual stability, and in the meantime, trust in the resurrection is essential to man's redemption and spiritual health. Shevchenko *et al.* (2020) contend that it is feasible to safeguard society's and each individual's spiritual security by adhering to native cultural traditions and expanding them with the Spirit of responsibility, trust in justice, human rights, and truth, establishing good and beauty. Spiritual culture and spiritual ideals, which form the

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structure of a person's Spirituality, may be the cornerstone of spiritual security.

Spirituality is the perception and personal experience that allows individuals to develop a sense of awareness and belief to the holy and the sacred which gives them a sense of direction in life, meaning for existence, and develop sense of responsibility for others as they build relationships (Fisher 2011). Literatures suggested that spiritual progress in adolescents are underexplored but researchers agreed that adolescence is a crucial period for developing spiritual growth and experiences (Benson *et al.*, 2003; Good & Willoughby, 2008). Additionally, during adolescents' spirituality can be a protection against adversities and distresses in life (Lee and Neblett 2017). Several researches suggest that the spirituality of adolescents positively influences their health and well-being at some degree (Cotton *et al.* 2006).

The development of relationship and interpersonal perspectives can help adolescents develop a sense of spirituality as they grow (King, Vaughn, & Merola, 2020). Furthermore, spiritual awakening becomes possible during adolescence since there is an essential improvement for the development of metacognition, abstract reasoning, and the development of personal identity (Templeton and Eccles, 2006). On the other hand, facing stress and other negative emotions or experiences may prompt adolescents to engage in spiritual exploration and develop a commitment towards spiritual development (Zinnbauer and Pargament, 1998). Studies further suggest that when adolescents are engage in spiritual activities and exploration, are able to develop sense of spirituality with spiritual commitment, belief, and practices that persist in life (Good and Willoughby, 2008).

Additionally, adolescents perceived Spirituality as a vital factor in overcoming the adverse effects and impact of the pandemic, especially by averting depression and hopelessness (Ozawa *et al.*, 2017; Gray, 2017; Levin, 2020). Spirituality improves resilience among individuals who have experienced traumatic events to restore meaning and reduce the development of post-traumatic stress disorder, including the pandemic (Park *et al.*, 2017; Hayes *et al.*, 2017; Aten *et al.*, 2019). Social relationships, ideological perspectives, and multifaceted resources contribute to the promotion of spirituality and help adolescents develop a sense of purpose, meaning of existence, and purpose that motivate them (King, Vaughn, & Merola, 2020).

Consequently, previous researches stipulated that higher spirituality level contributed to good well-being and controlled behavior and help decreased cases of suicide (Cotton *et al.* 2005; Holder *et al.* 2000; Greening & Stoppelbein 2002). Furthermore, spirituality have been related to several life-indicators including satisfaction, hope, happiness, and quality of life (Holder *et al.* 2010; Kim *et al.* 2012; Sawatzky *et al.* 2009; Souza *et al.* 2015).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This research utilized the quantitative non-experimental

method in order to determine the Spirituality of Adolescents in South Central Mindanao, Philippines after the Covid-19 pandemic. A quantitative research method examines variables (Creswell, 2014) in this study the level of Spirituality of Adolescents. A non-experimental design is characterized by how a researcher observes phenomena as they naturally occur without externally introduced variables and no variable manipulation is done (Radhakrishnan, 2013).

Research Locale

The study was conducted in South Central Mindanao, Philippines. The locale is also called Region 12 (SOCSKSARGEN), composed of South Cotabato Province, Sultan Kudarat Province, Sarangani Province, and General Santos City. The study was particularly conducted in the Three (3) major Cities in the Region.

Population and Sample

The research used convenient sampling to gather the needed data from 400 adolescents from four Cities. Convenience sampling is a type of purposeful sampling that aims to use the researcher's personal judgment based on the prescribed and identified characteristics of respondents and place of the central phenomenon with the respondents readily available (Creswell, 2012.). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child explains adolescence as "the period between 10 and 19 years of age" (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 1986). In this study adolescents between 15-19 years old were considered as the respondents since they are one of the most vulnerable group during the pandemic based on related studies and this age bracket of adolescents are the most accessible during the pandemic because they can access the internet and can manipulate computers and other gadgets. They must have resided in Region XII for at least one (1) year prior to the conduct of the study. Must be enrolled in an academic institution. Respondents were given the option to withdraw at any time if they are uncomfortable, afraid, or there is a real or apparent harm to their bodily, mental, or emotional regard for security. Respondents who will withdraw from the survey will be allowed and will be replaced by an equally qualified respondent with the same age, sex, and location.

Research Instrument

The study utilized the gathering of primary data about the spirituality of adolescents. The questionnaire was adapted and contextualized. Its Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was also determined (0.834). The survey instrument for spirituality was adapted from Hardt, et.al (2012). The research tool is structured to quantify the spirituality of adolescents based on four factors, namely: belief in God, search for meaning, mindfulness, and feeling of security. Responses of the study participants were interpreted using the scale:

Data Collection

The researcher visited offices of the three (3) local

Range of Means	Descriptive Level	Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	Very High	The measures on spirituality are always manifested.
3.40 – 4.19	High	The measures on spirituality are often manifested.
2.60 – 3.39	Moderate	The measures on spirituality are sometimes manifested.
1.80 – 2.59	Low	The measures on spirituality are seldom manifested.
1.00 – 1.79	Very Low	The measures on spirituality are never manifested.

government mayors in South Central Mindanao, Philippines to ask permission to conduct the study. Upon its approval, the preparation of Google Form to serve as survey questionnaire was facilitated. A timetable for the floating and retrieval of questionnaires was created. Continuous management and collection of data and tabulation were carried out, with information screening performed to identify outliers during the analysis. Finally, data analysis and interpretation from 400 respondents, in which the results were evaluated and interpreted based on the study.

Statistical Treatment

The mean was utilized to identify the degree of interpersonal

support, spirituality, self-efficacy, and resilience of adolescents. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized to determine if there is a significant difference on the Spirituality of Adolescents when analyzed according to City. The Analysis of variance (ANOVA) as a technique is often used to compare groups that may have differences in mean in a quantitative measure including ratio and interval (Klugkist, 2008).

RESULTS

Level of Spirituality of Adolescents

The table 1 shows that all of the items got a description of “Very High”. The highest mean rating is received by

Table 1: Level of Spirituality of Adolescents in terms of Belief in God

Item	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
1. I trust in the power of God/Allah/Supreme Being to make things better	0.55	4.76	Very High
2. My faith helps me cope with the everyday problem.	0.58	4.67	Very High
3. I entrust my decisions in God/ Allah/ Supreme Being.	0.58	4.72	Very High
4. I feel the love of God.	0.60	4.75	Very High
Section Mean	0.51	4.73	Very High

item 1 with 4.76 and an SD of 0.55. The lowest mean rating is received by item 2 with 4.67 and an SD of 0.58. The section mean is 4.73 with an SD of 0.51 described

as “Very High”.

Table 2 shows that most of the items got a description of “Very High” with the highest mean rating of 4.47

Table 2: Level of Spirituality of Adolescents in terms of Search for Meaning

Item	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
1. My life means searching, probing, and examining	0.70	4.31	Very High
2. I look for insights and reason in life	0.81	4.13	High
3. I try to open my mind to things	0.79	4.31	Very High
4. I try to grow my soul	0.75	4.43	Very High
5. I search for the spirit of everyday living	0.80	4.25	Very High
6. My life has a purpose.	0.77	4.47	Very High
7. I am clear about the purpose of my life	0.79	4.31	Very High
8. I look for opportunities to for growth in every difficult situation that I encounter	0.82	4.41	Very High
Overall	0.60	4.32	Very High

received by item 6 with an SD of 0.77. The lowest mean rating of 4.13 with an SD of 0.81 is received by item 2 described as “High.” The section mean is 4.32 with an SD of 0.60 described as “Very High”.

Table 3 shows that all of the items got a description of “Very High” with the highest mean rating of 4.46 received

by item 3 with an SD of 0.62. The lowest mean rating of 4.16 is received by item 5 with an SD of 0.71. The section mean is 4.35 with an SD of 0.44 described as “Very High”. Table 4 shows that most of the items got a description of “Very High” with the highest mean rating of 4.66 received by item 6 with an SD of 0.67. The lowest mean

Table 3: Level of Spirituality of Adolescents in terms of Search for Mindfulness

Item	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
1. I try to deal consciously with others.	0.63	4.31	Very High
2. I deal consciously with the environment.	0.63	4.42	Very High
3. I try to help others to the best I can.	0.62	4.46	Very High
4. I try to be patient and tolerant of others.	0.64	4.42	Very High
5. I try to be empathetic with others.	0.71	4.16	Very High
6. I am oriented to the present moment	0.71	4.33	Very High
Overall	0.44	4.35	Very High

rating of 4.11 with an SD of 0.84 is received by item 2 described as “High.” The section mean is 4.27 with an SD of 0.65 described as “Very High”.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the Spirituality of Adolescents

The table shows the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of

Table 4: Level of Spirituality of Adolescents in terms of Search for Feeling of Security

Item	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
1. I still feel peace deep inside of me.	0.87	4.30	Very High
2. My life has been peaceful and joyful.	0.84	4.11	High
3. I feel one with the world.	0.84	4.31	Very High
4. I see a friendly world around me.	0.90	4.08	Very High
5. I feel there is a lot of love in the world.	0.95	4.15	Very High
6. With God, I am safe	0.67	4.66	Very High
Overall	0.65	4.27	Very High

the spirituality of adolescents when analysed according to City. It can be noted that since $F=38.078$ with $p\text{-value}=0.001$ which is less than the level of significance ($\alpha=0.05$), means that at least two of the Cities differ significantly on the spirituality of adolescents. This implies that students from each City have different spirituality concepts and

experiences after the pandemic.

This shows which two cities have significant difference on the spirituality of adolescents. Based on the analysis, there is significant difference between City A and City C and City A and City B. Adolescents in City C has the highest spirituality since the $P\text{-value}=0.000$. Further, there is no

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the Spirituality of Adolescents when analysed according to City.

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value
Between Groups	12.917	2	6.968	38.078	0.001
Within Groups	26.551	165	0.178		
Total	39.468	167			

$\alpha=0.05$

significant difference between school B and school C ($P=0.05$). Consequently, since the mean difference between

City B and C is 0.776, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, there is no significant difference between

Table 6: Tukey Kramer (*Post Hoc Test*) Analysis on Spirituality of Adolescents when analysed according to City.

Comparison	Mean Difference	Standard Error	P-value
City A vs City B	0.251	0.082	0.713
City A vs School C	0.526	0.045	0.000
City B vs City C	0.776	0.051	0.000

the two schools.

Even if there is no significant variance is established between City b and c, the results still postulates that the spirituality of adolescents may vary depending on the City as affected by environmental and other factors. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected.

DISCUSSION

Spirituality of Adolescents

The generally significant level of spirituality is the result of the ratings of the respondents regarding the variable’s measurement, specifically: belief in God, search for meaning, mindfulness, and feeling of security that all acquired very high ratings, hence, “always manifested”.

This implies that adolescents in South Central Mindanao, Philippines have strong spiritual foundation despite of their negative experiences during the covid-19 pandemic. Adolescence is a sensitive period for the development of spirituality (Good & Willoughby, 2008). On the other hand, according to Wright, Yendork, and Klierer (2018), adolescents' spirituality usually declines during this life period. Some researches posited that a lot of adolescents are engage in spiritual journey and growth and these spiritual experiences, beliefs, and practices acquired in this stage tend to manifest and persist during adulthood (Good and Willoughby, 2008). Since spirituality help alleviate the effects of stressors it can be a protection against negative and stressful life events like the pandemic (Cotton *et al.* 2006; Lee and Neblett 2017). Furthermore, Clark and Hunter (2019) emphasized that spirituality can help in managing stressful events and coping from distress as it helps to preserve a sense of purpose, life meaning, and interconnection in the face of adversities.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the Spirituality of Adolescents

The null hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected. Moreover, the spirituality of adolescents varied according to City. This may be a result of the difference in cultural contexts and environment to which the adolescents grow and gain experience. Consequently, relationships and perspective are sensitive relationship factor together with some sociocultural stimuli during the period of adolescents can contribute to the development of spirituality (King, Vaughn, & Merola, 2020). Moreover, several researches suggest that the spirituality of adolescents positively influences their health and well-being at some degree (Cotton *et al.* 2006).

CONCLUSIONS

The spirituality of adolescents in South Central Mindanao, Philippines is very high. Additionally, there is a significant difference on the spirituality of adolescents according to City. Adolescents perceived Spirituality as a vital factor in overcoming the adverse effects and impact of the pandemic, especially by averting depression and hopelessness (Ozawa *et al.*, 2017; Gray, 2017; Levin, 2020). Spirituality improves resilience among individuals who have experienced traumatic events to restore meaning and reduce the development of post-traumatic stress disorder, including the pandemic (Park *et al.*, 2017; Hayes *et al.*, 2017; Aten *et al.*, 2019).

RECOMMENDATION

The very high level of spirituality of adolescents must be maintained. This can be done by providing safe and caring environment at home, in school, and the community. This will help adolescents grow as strong individuals who are able to cope with distress and succeed in life despite adversities. Moreover, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), may frame policy to create an environment in which spirituality can be developed

despite religious differences among adolescents.

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