

Causes of Population Growth in the Poorest Communities in Samar, Philippines

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Abstract

It remained a quest to identify the causes of population growth. The 21st century is the era of globalization and exposure to social media which is believed to be one of the influential factors that contribute to population growth. However, there are poor areas in the Philippines which are not oriented with technology and media yet pose an increasing number of the populace. This study examined the causes and consequences of population growth in the poorest communities of the Province of Samar, Philippines. This research applied an extreme case purposive sampling since it focuses on participants who have more than five children. With the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches in a form of cross-cases analysis and descriptive design utilizing a guided questionnaire as sole instrument, the study found out that causes of population growth in the said research environment are early marriage, lack of education, and bad family planning which disproved that technology is part of the problem. Along with the causes are consequences such as poverty, scarce services from the government and educational opportunities. With the salient findings, it is recommended that the local government units should strengthen family planning, address problems to the authorities, and provide equal livelihood opportunities to the residence as means of alleviating poverty. Moreover, the academe should conduct values reformation to lessen the incidence of teenage pregnancy and early marriage. It should also seek linkages to support the schooling of out-of-school members of the communities.

Keywords: *causes, consequences, population growth, Philippines*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Asian Development Bank (2009) revealed that a larger family size had been associated with vulnerability to poverty. Moreover, the increase in population relevant to high fertility rates limits the economic growth of the country (Gupta et al., 2011). Corollary, if these factors are unceasingly dominant then environmental, social and economic consequences will become an enormous concern (Lutz et al., 2001). If population growth is multiplying, there will be a scarcity of resources like food and water; high pollution; poor education for children; less financing health care systems; and unprofessional workers (Vörösmarty et al., 2000; Bloom et al., 2010 & Lutz and KC, 2011).

In the theory of epidemiologic transition, Omran (2005) has emphasized that mortality and fertility are major factors that affect population dynamics. It is closely associated with the demographic and socioeconomic transitions that constitute the

modernization complex. Another theory that could be moored is the unified growth theory of Galor (2005). It suggests that the transition from stagnation to growth is an investable outcome of the process development. This underlined that technology advancements have something to do with the fertility rates and population growth.

Evidently, the world continues to increase its population. From the World Development Indicators database (2017), Philippines ranked 13 out of 195 countries in the world which is populous but ranked 121 as world's richest country (Greason, 2017). Moreover, in the Asian Development Bank (2009) basic statistics report, even when the Philippines has numerous manpower, it ranked third on poverty incidence, out of 48 countries in Asia.

Looking at the local setting of the Philippines, Region 8 is one of the regions with

a high population growth pegged at 4.440 million. However, most of the areas with high poverty incidence are located in this region which includes three provinces: Eastern Samar which ranked two with a poverty incidence of 55.4, and Northern and Western Samar in top 10 with a similar poverty incidence at 43.5 percent (PSA, 2016).

The main reason why Samar is included in the top ten poorest provinces in the Philippines is its association to population growth (Sabornido, 2015 & Simeon, 2016). In the 2010 survey of formerly National Statistics office which at present known as Philippines Statistics Authority, Samar recorded a population 733, 377 and it continuously grew by nearly 1.26 percent or an average increase of 9,225 persons per year. By 2017, the predicted population is more or less 790,000 thousand (PSA, 2015).

With the aforementioned discussion and the anchored theory, it remained a quest in identifying the authentic determinants of population growth. The 21st century is the era of computer and exposure to social media which is believed to be one of the influential factors that contribute to the population growth. However, there are poor areas in the Philippines which are not oriented with technology and media because of their distant location and the unaffordability of the said resources yet pose an increasing number of population. This study has been conducted to prove that causes and consequences go hand in hand and that technology is not the main determinant of population growth, there are factors other than that.

This study examined the causes and consequences of population growth in the poorest communities in the Province of Samar, Philippines. Specifically, it aimed to compare cases from mobilized knowledge of the participants coming from the urban and rural communities to produce new knowledge common among them.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used qualitative and quantitative approaches. The research design is in the form of cross-case analysis (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008) using a qualitative approach. This was done by conducting focus group discussion (FGD) to draw out mobilized knowledge, then confirmed through follow-up

structured interview taken from the results of the FGD.

Descriptive design using quantitative approach was also employed in this study to reflect the number of respondents with common answers to come up with similar decisions. This is presented in the study through the use of frequency counts and percentages.

Research Locale

The locale of the study included the four municipalities with the highest poverty incidence in the province of Samar (formerly called Western Samar) as reported in the latest survey of Small Area Estimates (SAE) of Poverty conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority last 2012. These are the municipalities of Daram, Matuguinao, Zumarraga, and Santa Rita (PSA, 2012). Specifically, this involved one urban barangay and one rural barangay that are poorest in each municipality. Thus, there were eight (8) barangays: four poorest urban communities and four poorest rural barangays.

Participants

This research employed an extreme case purposive sampling as it focuses on participants with unique or special characteristics (Stephanie, 2015). Since the scope of the study is on population growth, the informants should have more than five children. The Philippine Commission on Women (2014) reported that the average number of children in the Philippines is five, more than that is already a large number. In addition, based on the work of Orbeta (2005), larger family size reduces household savings, hampers investment and prevents children from attending school which becomes a great contributor of poverty. Thus, there are ten participants from the poorest urban barangay and ten participants from the poorest rural barangay that were drawn from each municipalities of Daram, Matuguinao, Zumarraga, and Santa Rita which totalled to 80 participants. This is done to equally represent the different research environments.

Data-gathering

The researchers wrote a letter of intent to the mayors of the four municipalities for approval. The researchers sought an endorsement from the mayors to the barangay captains of the research environment. Upon approval, the researchers asked the

assistance of the barangay captains to identify ten bread winners who would be included in the FGD.

The FGD started by informing the participants the statement of the purpose, which was done by one of the researchers who acted as the moderator. It was followed by the engagement questions like the introduction of the participants and asking for their personal data to make them comfortable with the topic discussion, then the exploration questions. This was done by the researcher who acted as an interviewer. The researcher who kept the pertinent documents recorded the discussion using a cellular phone. Another researcher noted the answers of the participants on the Manila paper to reflect what had been said and what were still missing.

Since this study used a mixed method, the cross-case analysis examined the similarities and differences across the answers of the participants. The researchers also employed descriptive analysis with the use of frequency counts and percentages for the determinants and consequences identified by the respondents as drawn from their interview. Causes and consequences that both prevailed in the rural and urban are considered the major determinants and consequences of population growth, while the individually found cases are minor determinants.

Instrumentation

The researchers utilized a guided questionnaire as the instrument. This is constructed both in English and vernacular in an exploration format to confirm if the identified factors and consequences of population growth taken from the literature are also evident in the research environment. Answers of the research participants were recorded using a cellular phone, which were later transcribed to ensure that the researchers did not miss any information. The guided questionnaire was verified using expert validation wherein experts reviewed the said instrument, and then the researchers incorporated suggestions for implementation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Participants

It can be gleaned from Table 1 that of the 40 respondents from urban communities, there were about 23, or 57.50 percent, females with a mean age of 57.8 years, and standard deviation of 10.56 years. The male

counterpart was 17 or 42.50 percent, with a mean age of 49.74 years and a standard deviation of 9.15 years. Their combined years of residency pegged at 40.65 years. They had 6-12 children at an average number of eight and a family size of eight.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

Variable	GROUP	
	Urban Communities	Rural Communities
Sex	Male - 17 or 42.5% Female - 23 or 57.5%	Male - 15 or 37.5% Female - 25 or 62.5%
Age	Male Mean Age is 57.18 years old with S.D. of 10.56 years.	Male Mean Age is 52.27 years old with S.D. of 8.93 years.
	Female Mean Age is 49.74 years old with S.D. of 9.15 years.	Female Mean Age is 46.44 years old with S.D. of 8.36 years.
Years of residency	Mean=40.65 years	Mean=38.48 years
Number of children	Minimum number=6 Maximum number=12 Average number=8	Minimum number=6 Maximum number=11 Average number=7
Family size	8 members	8 members

For the rural communities, there were about 25, or 62.50 percent, females with a mean age of 52.67 years and standard deviation of 8.93 years. The male counterpart was 15 or 37.50 percent, with a mean age of 46.44 years and a standard deviation of 8.36 years. The years of residency of the respondents was 38.48 years, with 6-11 children pegging at the mean number of seven and a family size of eight.

Causes of Population

Figure 1 shows the cross-case analysis results on the determinants of population growth using a Venn diagram.

The participants from urban and rural identified common determinants of population growth which are in the center of the Venn diagram. These were early marriage, lack of education, and bad family planning. However, the two groups of participants differ in some

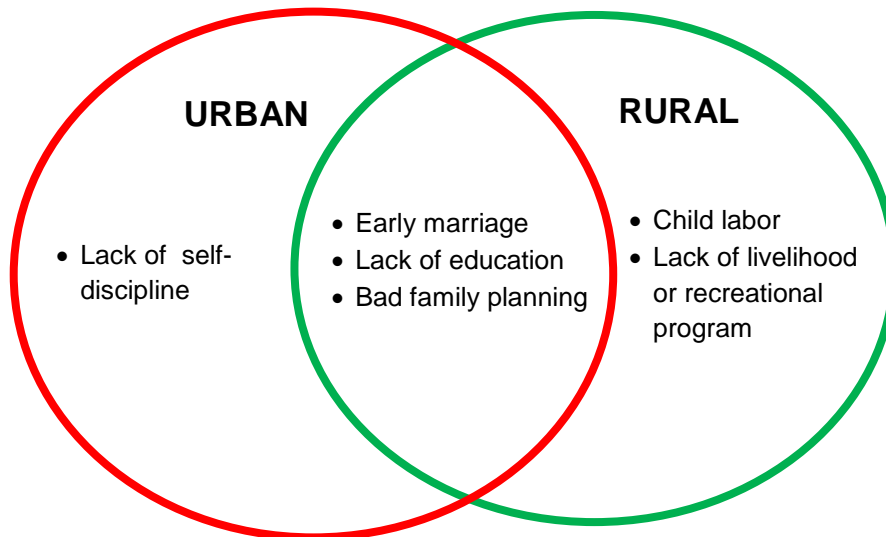


Figure 1. Cross-case analysis results on causes of population growth

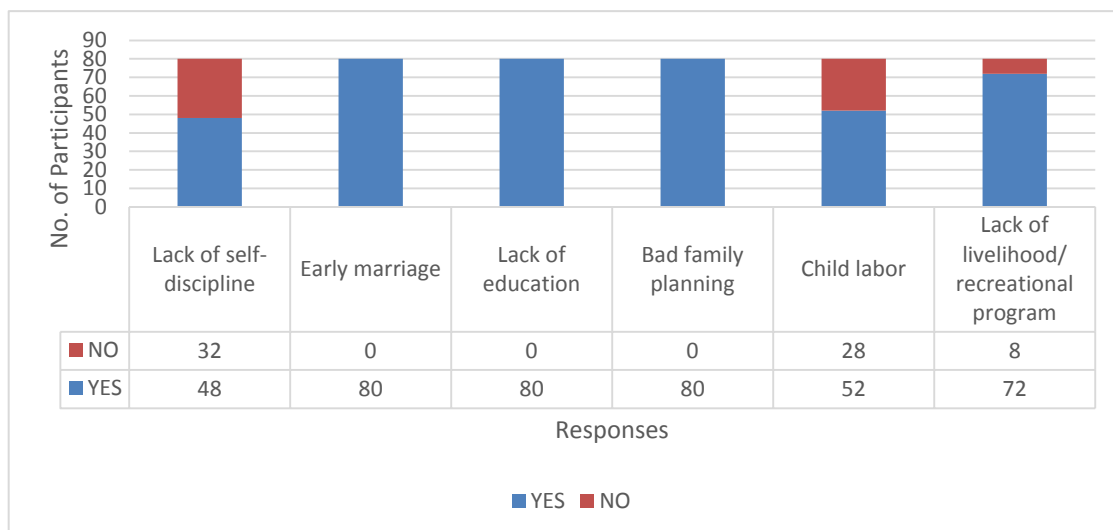


Figure 2. Perceived causes of population growth

aspects. Participants from the urban barangay considered lack of self-discipline as one of the determinants of population growth, while those from the rural barangay included child labor and lack of livelihood or recreational program.

Further, the number of participants who agreed on the aforementioned determinants of population growth is represented in Figure 2. It can be gleaned that all eighty (80) respondents from both urban and rural communities settled that early marriage, lack of education and bad family planning were determinants of population growth in the poorest communities in Samar. Early marriage was also a common determinant of population growth in some countries like India. However it differs regarding the terminology used. Instead of early marriage, this was called child marriage.

This remains pervasive and is linked to high and uncontrolled population growth (Raj, Saggurti, Balaiah & Silverman, 2009). Its rate is most common among poor families who have fewer resources and opportunities to invest in alternative options for girls (Parsons, Edmeades, Kes, Petroni, Sexton, & Wodon, 2015).

Another determinant was the lack of education. This was also evident in the research conducted by Wolfgang and Samir (2011), stating that those with higher levels of education had fewer children while better education meant lower fertility. The respondents also associated bad family planning with population growth. This similar result had been found in the work of Starbid, Norton, and Marcus (2016). It was quantified

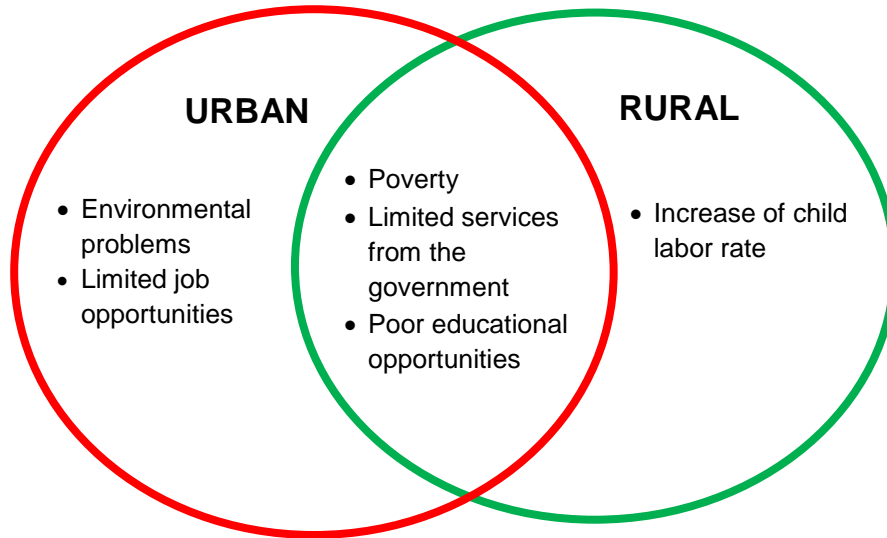


Figure 3. Cross-case analysis results on consequences of population growth

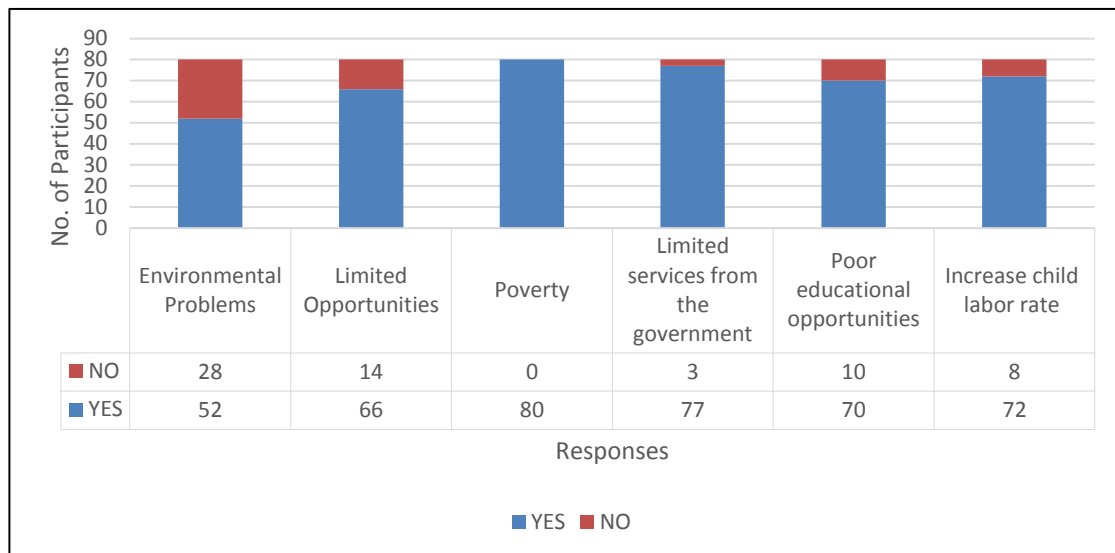


Figure 4. Perceived consequences of population growth

that rapid population growth was directly related to bad family planning.

Consequences of Population Growth

Figure 3 presents the cross-case analysis results of consequences of population growth identified by the participants from the rural and urban communities in Samar.

The participants of the study identified common consequences of population growth, which are positioned in the center of the Venn diagram (Figure 3). These were poverty, limited services from the government, and poor educational opportunities. However, participants from the urban barangays

considered environmental problems and limited job opportunities as results of high population growth, while the participants from the rural communities included an increase of child labor rate.

Figure 4 gives the numerical results of the consequences. It showed all eighty (80) participants agreed that poverty was one of the consequences of population growth. In terms of environmental problems, limited job opportunities, limited services from the government, poor educational opportunities, and increase of child labor, 52 (65 percent), 66 (82.5 percent), 72 (96.25 percent), 70 (87.5 percent) and 72 (90 percent) respectively

answered yes, considering those as consequences of population growth.

According to the work of Kanbur and Sumner (2012), fast growth of population resulted in poor communities. The relationship between population growth and poverty is in a vicious cycle. Poverty fuels overpopulation while overpopulation boost poverty or vice versa (Population Matters, 2011). Coupled with population growth, based on the results of the study, is also the limited services from the government. It had been stated by Simon's (1992) theory of population growth that in the long run population growth had negative effects to living standards while in the short run, it diminishes returns and the temporary burden of the society. This was proved by Kiarie (2016) that one of the impacts of population growth is the spur of limited government services and economic growth of a particular place. Corollary, poor educational opportunities was another concern generated by population growth.

IV. CONCLUSION

Causes of population growth in the poorest communities of Samar are early marriage, lack of education, and bad family planning. This disproves that technology is the greatest common determinant. With the identified causes, poverty, scarce services from the government and educational opportunities prevail in the locale. It is now the role of the local government of the involved municipalities to focus on strengthening family planning and address problems to the authorities with regard to limited services and provide equal livelihood opportunities to the residence as a means of alleviating poverty.

Moreover, the academe should conduct values reformation to lessen the incidence of teenage pregnancy and early marriage. As an educational institution, the school should look for sponsors or linkages which will support the schooling of out-of-school members of the communities. It is also suggested to come up with a model that will predict the increase in population growth with the variations of its causes.

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