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Code-switching in Teaching English Literature: The Case of Teachers in Candon City, Ilocos Sur

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Abstract- This study was designed to explore the case of English teachers in teaching literature. Specifically, this study focused on: a) finding the reasons why teachers codeswitch when teaching English literature; b) the effect of codeswitch in learning a new lesson and in the practice of the English language. It made use of qualitative research and applied the case study approach with Colaizzi as a method of analysis. Three (3) teachers were interviewed and observed, and eight (8) students were used for the focus group discussion (FGD). The study revealed that teachers codeswitch to facilitate understanding among learners. The study also uncovered that codeswitching affects learners by igniting their interest and hindering their fluency in the English language. Hence, code-switching should be used sparingly to help learners improve their English language communication skills. Since there are limitations of the study, it is therefore recommended that the next researchers should have an in-depth exploration of a certain case, consider the wider scope of the study, and conduct more readings related to the study.

Keywords: Codeswitching, English Literature, English Language, English Teachers, Colaizzi, Teaching

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How to cite this article: Mary.G.P.R. (2022). Code-switching in Teaching English Literature: The Case of Teachers in Candon City, Ilocos Sur. *Journal of Advances in Humanities Research*, 1 (3), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.56868/jadhur.v1i3.110>



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INTRODUCTION

English language instruction and literature instruction are embedded processes. As Heller and Martin-Jones (2001) affirmed, in the process, teachers need to be creative in order to facilitate learning among learners. In such instances, teachers employ various ways to deliver and execute lessons effectively. One of the ways that teachers employ is codeswitching. Nonetheless, it is a useful pedagogical tool.

In addition, Esen (2022) presented three (3) kinds of code-switching: inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and extra-sentential or tag-switching. Inter-sentential code-switching is prevalent in fluent bilingual speakers and the switch occurs at the beginning or end of a sentence, particularly in words and phrases. Intra-sentential code-switching is an unconscious shifting in the middle of a sentence with no hesitations, interruptions, and pauses to signal a shift within the clause or word level. Extra-sentential which is otherwise known as Tag Switching occurs of either a single word or a tag phrase or it can be wherein insertion of a tag from one language to another.

Furthermore, codeswitching is a prevalent phenomenon especially seen in multilingual and multicultural communities (Sert, 2005). For that reason, linguists around the world consider codeswitching as an inevitable phenomenon in multilingual and bilingual communities (Othman, 2015). One of the multilingual societies where codeswitching could be used is the Philippines.

In the Philippines, codeswitching has been frequent, especially, in the year 2012 when a republic act was signed supporting the contextualization of materials and the use of the native language in teaching. Republic Act 10533, an act enhancing the Philippine education system an act enhancing the Philippine basic education system by strengthening its curriculum and increasing the number of years for basic education, appropriating funds therefor and for other purposes, section 4, Enhanced Basic Education Program states: Basic education shall be delivered in languages understood by the learners as the language plays a strategic role in shaping the formative years of learners (OG, 2013). Thus, the instruction, teaching materials, and assessments of the kindergarten and grades level 1, 2, and 3 shall be in the regional or native language of the learners. And from grades level 4, and 6, Filipino and English are gradually introduced using a mother tongue language transition program until the two languages are the primary medium of instruction at the secondary level.

According to Gonzales, 1998 as cited by Esquivel, 2018 Philippines has been a realm of colonizers. Filipino is the national language and English is considered the second language. In addition, Filipinos use English in academic and business contexts and Filipino for local communication.

Meanwhile, the significance of codeswitching in the teaching and learning process has given birth to various studies. These studies focused on its nature, attitude, or perception towards it, and its

application to various contexts. Though conducted in various contexts, these studies highlighted various implications that cannot be undermined.

Gauci and Camilleri Grima (2013) conducted a study about codeswitching as a tool in Malta. The results of the study showed that the use of the L1 (Maltese) facilitated the pedagogical endeavors of both the teachers and the learners, especially the weaker and younger ones.

Bailey (2011) assessed students' perceptions of and attitudes toward codeswitching by both teachers and students in foreign language classes at a Midwestern American University since he had seen that the perception of teachers and students was not yet put under study. He used the recording and survey questionnaire. The result is that language anxiety and perceived language competence play a significant role in impacting students' perceptions of and attitudes toward code-switching in the foreign language classroom.

Ibrahim et al. (2013) looked into teachers' attitudes towards code-switching in teaching English as a foreign language to Malay students at one of the local universities in Malaysia. They followed the triangulation method—observation, questionnaires, and interviews. They observed each teacher and their language was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using the functions by Grumperz. The result is that teachers unconsciously do code-switch in the language classroom of a pedagogical purpose.

On the other hand, literature is an area in English courses where teachers use various literary texts as a springboard to teaching language. Since literature comes from a diverse culture, some works are translated to reach other cultures. English as the lingua franca of the world is used to translate these works. Carefully chosen, some works are included in the curriculum of English classes. However, usually, low proficient students of English consider these literary texts as fruitless because to them, learning a new language is complicated (Muhammad Malek, 2015).

Moreover, it was observed that there is in teaching literature to the students. Learners have difficulty in understanding the literary pieces which leads to the inevitable loss of students' interest and appreciation of literary pieces. This also yields unsatisfactory results of their comprehension assessments on literary pieces and it makes students non-participative in class. And the worse scenario to the part of the teacher is that learners find literature boring. And this boredom results in sleepiness inside the classroom and creates noise as well when the students talk to their seatmates about things that are not related to the lesson. These situations prompt the teacher to codeswitch as a classroom strategy. However, the practice of the English language was somehow affected. In Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions and In-Service Training (InSET) for teachers, English teachers often share the same observation. Teachers observed that students cannot fully comprehend literary texts in English. Students know how to read the piece but they do not understand it. Some words are not even familiar to them. There are students who would appeal to the teachers to translate what the teacher discusses. And if

called to answer comprehension questions they would ask if they are allowed to speak the dialect, Filipino, and Taglish¹.

With the deteriorating performance of students in English classes and disinterested students in literature lessons, the researcher was compelled to probe the case of code-switching of English teachers in their classes.

Moreover, previously conducted studies did not focus on literature and mother tongue in teaching in an English class. Thus, this study discovers why teachers and students in English classes codeswitch as they teach and learn literature and its effect on content acquisition and in the practice of the English language

METHODS

The study utilized a qualitative case study approach to identify and examine the reasons why English teachers codeswitch as they teach literature, the effects of codeswitching in learning new lessons and its effect on the practice of the English language.

Williams (2007), defines a case study as "an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., an activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection." Creswell recommends a case study as a methodology if the problem to be studied "relates to developing an in-depth understanding of a 'case' or bounded system" and if the purpose is to understand "an event, activity, process, or one or more individuals."

This study is particularly suitable for the case study as it uncovers the reasons why teachers codeswitch, its effect on content acquisition and in the practice of the English language. The result of the in-depth exploration gives an understanding and explanation of why teachers have to codeswitch as they teach literature, and what effects in content acquisition and practice of the English language were observed as they codeswitch.

Setting and Participants of the Study

This study was conducted at Candon National High School (CNHS), Candon City, Ilocos Sur. The participants of the study were chosen using the criterion sample with these criteria: a) they must be handling English classes for five years or more; b) they can speak Filipino, Iloco, and English; c) they are holders of a permanent position; d) they must be willing to be interviewed and observed.

The researcher sought for the approval of the Division of Candon City, Department of Education before each qualified participant was interviewed and observed. The Schools Division Superintendent granted

¹ Taglish or Englog is code-switching and/or code-mixing in the use of Tagalog and English, the most common languages of the Philippines.

the request of the researcher. Upon the approval of the request the Division Superintendent, the researcher wrote a letter addressed to the head teacher of the English Department of CNHS. With the above-mentioned criteria, three participants qualified for the conduct of the study. The three participants teach grade 7 English and literature. Each of them was willing to be interviewed and observed.

Each qualified participant was interviewed and observed in their respective literature classes. The participants were all observed in their 7th-grade class with the topic, “The Parable of the Rainbow Colors.” The only parable was discussed because it is the topic scheduled for the fourth quarter in the curriculum guide for Grade 7.

In verifying the answers of the participants, eight (8) willing learners coming from different sections and grade levels were used in the study.

Data Gathering Instrument and Procedure

Since the purpose of case study research is to provide an in-depth exploration of the person, program, or process under study, intensive data are needed. These intensive data can be acquired through interviews, class observation, and Focus Group Data (FGD).

The researcher used a semi-structured interview with the use of an aide-memoire which was used to summarize key the findings and important information about the participant. The interview was supported by classroom observations in literature classes. A focus group discussion was also held with the voluntary participation of eight (8) various students from different sections and year levels.

The research sought permission from the following authorities before the data gathering: the head teacher of the English Department, Assistant Principal II of the junior high school, and the school principal through a communication letter. After these authorities approved the researcher’s request, the interview started. The interview was conducted in the English faculty room after class hours. The interview for each participant ranges between 30-45 minutes depending upon the given data. The longest so far is 45 minutes. After the interview, the researcher transcribed the interview and was verified by the participants. The transcript which was in Ilokano was also translated.

The data from transcripts were treated using the Collaizi’s methodology which involves two phases—the cool and warm analysis. And from the analysis, themes were created.

The gathered data in the interview and created theme were verified through classroom observations in their literature class where the parable (The Parable of the Rainbow Colors) was discussed. A focus group discussion (FGD) was also conducted to further verify the result of the interview. Eight (8) students were willing to undergo the FGD. The FGD lasted for only 30 minutes.

Treatment of Data

The data gathered from the three teachers were analyzed using the Colaizzi's Methodology. Colaizzi's method of data analysis is an approach to interpreting qualitative research data to identify meaningful information and organize it into themes or categories (Colaizzi, 1978). The approach follows seven data analysis steps.

The first step was to transcribe all the interviews from each participant. In this section of the analysis process, the narratives are transcribed from the recorded interviews held with each individual. After transcribing, the statements which were in Filipino and Ilokano were translated to English. Second, significant statements were extracted. A third was the creation of formulated meanings. In this stage of analysis, the researcher formulated general meanings for each significant statement. The fourth was the combination of formulated meanings into clusters and themes. These clusters were created according to the problems under the case study. Fifth was the development of comprehensive description of the experiences of the participants. The sixth step is the interpretative analysis of the symbolic representations of the participants during the interview. This includes hand gestures, and facial expressions to affirm and negate statements. The last step is the summary of the essence of the experiential case as revealed through the interpretations and explanations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extracted data from the transcripts were subjected to cool and warm analyses as the primary mode of analysis of this study. The results of the analyses yielded three (3) themes: a) facilitate understanding, b) ignite learners' interest, and c) hinders fluency in the English language. The first theme summarizes the reasons of teachers in codeswitching while the second and third themes encapsulate how codeswitching affects the learners in learning new lessons and in practicing English language. themes were emerged as a result of the experiences of English language teachers in teaching literature through codeswitching as a teaching strategy. Nevertheless, they present the simultaneous phenomena which occur one after the other as a response to the diversity among learners.

Theme 1-Facilitate Understanding. One of the fulfillments of teachers is to see that the learners are really learning. Learning is communicated through the manifestations students show as a response to the stimuli given by the teacher. These manifestations come in various and diverse forms. It can be through mere facial expressions, recitation, and active participation in class discussions. In order to achieve learning in the classroom, different strategies are being used by teachers. One of which they claim as a teaching strategy is codeswitching.

English teachers, being the participants of the study, were asked about their reasons for codeswitching in teaching literature in their classes. All of them answered that their main reason is to facilitate the understanding of the literary pieces. As verbalized:

“If you are a sensitive teacher, you can already observe that when you speak continuously in English, you can see on your students’ faces if they can follow or not. If not, that’s the time that you codeswitch.” The teacher also supplemented enumerating observable attitude when they do not understand the lesson anymore namely: 1) they are not listening; 2) they talk to their seatmates; 3) they do things which are not related to the lesson; 4) they are non-participative; 5) they sleep in class. (Teacher 1: 38-year- old male)

“Students cannot understand, you see that the class is boring, and they are not participative.” (Teacher 2: 29-year-old, Male)

“First, for better understanding; second, though they can recognize the words but they do not understand it. It’s not only the words but also the sentences—the piece as a whole though they can read, they cannot comprehend. So, they easily comprehend when the dialect is used or Filipino.” She complemented her answer with manifestations that signal that students do not understand the lesson, “Upon seeing their facial expressions, you can see...second, they vocally ask questions, and they would say, “Ma’am can you translate in Iloko?” And if they answer, they ask “Can I answer in Iloko ma’am?” (Teacher 3: 32-year-old female)

Students verified that when teachers speak consistently in English as they teach literature, they find it difficult to understand, they even exclaimed, “Makapaturog ma’am!” (It makes us sleepy ma’am.) During classroom observation, as the teacher explained the lesson, some students were no longer paying attention. Some laid their head on their desks, a few students were doing their assignments in other subjects, and others were talking to their seatmates.

In the class of Teacher 2 (29-year-old, Male) nobody raises a hand to recite whenever the teacher asks questions to check their understanding of the parable discussed. Some do not sit properly in their sit. There are those who are doing other things like writing signatures in their notebooks or drawing anime. During the FGD, a student answered that they do not recite or even bother to raise their hand because they do not understand the lesson being discussed. “We are seated as if we are listening but other things are in our minds.” It has also been observed during the class observation that students can readily answer comprehension questions when the teacher explains the question using the mother tongue. Let’s say for instance in the class of Teacher 2 (29-year-old, Male) in Grade 7 Orchid:

Teacher: Aside from the literal scenario nga nu malpas kanu nga agtudo ket makakitaka ti rainbow. Anong ibig sabihin kapag there’s a rainbow after the rain.

(Aside from the literal scenario that after the rain, you'll see a rainbow, what does this mean: there's a rainbow after the rain?)

Student 1(13-year-old female): Babangon sir. (To get back up sir.)

Teacher: Very good! Ano ba and sinisymbolize ng rain? (What does rain symbolize?)

Student 2 (13-year-old female): Sadness sir.

Teacher 3 (32-year-old female) elucidated that she codeswitches in teaching literature for two reasons—for better understanding and easier comprehension of the literary text. Since the class that she handles is Grade 7, there is much need to codeswitch since the learners are the first batch of the K-12 Curriculum. In the class observation, the students are honest with their situation that they do not understand. Some students boldly ask the teacher to translate some words. The students said that they better understand the parable if it is explained using the mother tongue which they were used to be taught in grade school.

This theme corroborates to the pedagogic intent of codeswitching as identified in the study conducted by Fennema-Bloom (2010). There were four (4) categories which were coded namely: 1) instruction for content acquisition; 2) reformulation; 3) instruction for language acquisition; 4) facilitation. Category 4 which is facilitation supports the theme for the reasons why teachers codeswitch which is 'facilitate understanding.'

The theory of Gumperz, 2012, the Interactional Model, also supports this theme. It states that language is used by an addressee to interpret contextualizing cues—strategic activities such as choice of code, prosodic phenomena, dialect, speakers' behavior, and opening and closing in conversations. In connection with this theory, codeswitching was used as a strategic activity same with the dialect, Ilokano. Through codeswitching the speaker—the teacher—gave a signal to the listeners about its communicative intent which is to facilitate understanding.

Codeswitching is widely utilized as a strategy in teaching literature due to its efficiency in making the lesson easier, simplifying comprehension, and killing boredom and monotony inside the classroom. This theme implies that teachers should not hesitate to codeswitch when the need arises—that is, when it is observed that learners no longer interact with the teacher switch to the native language instead to aid students' understanding of the text.

For optimal ease in understanding literature, the learners may appeal to the teacher to at least translate the significant terms or points being discussed. In this way, gray areas in the lesson

will be cleared. To courageously admit that one needs help is a step higher than mere curiosity. Teachers would not address a need properly if no one asks for it.

An interactive teaching-learning process does not solely depend on one participant. It always involves the joint effort of both the learner and the teacher. This implies that for the learners to interact in class the teacher must reach out to their level through codeswitching during a class discussion on literature. Therefore, teachers need to be sensitive to noticing students' actions which either signal understanding or confusion.

Theme 2-Ignite Learners' Interest. With codeswitching, students' interest is heightened as they learn about life lessons in literature. According to the participants, their focus in teaching literature is on value formation. One of them remarked, "Literature is more on life—meaning is the target not form." In continuation, she added, "With interest also comes the participation of students because they are more eager to listen unlike teaching literature with pure English and with the realization comes appreciation." As verbalized:

"Students listen. They speak. They speak connected to the listen not speaking to their classmates anymore because they now understand." He supplemented, "They are more participative. The atmosphere is lighter because you can already see through their participation that they understand unlike when you use pure English...nothing good happens. They sleep, they talk to their seatmates, they do not listen." (Teacher 1: 38-year- old male)

"Learners easily grasp the new lesson by nodding and making hand gestures. They become more interested. They listen. They become participative." He further emphasized, "They are willing to answer; they raise their hand; you can see in their lips that they want to speak; you can see in their eyes that they already want to recite." (Teacher 2: 29-year-old, Male)

"When you teach the learner in the language that they are familiar with, they are more engaged. You can see their interest. They answer questions easily. They express themselves. They listen. Engaging now because they are now participating in class discussions. Everybody wants to recite."

When teachers codeswitch in teaching literature, students become more participative in class. They answer comprehension questions and the class' atmosphere becomes lighter brought about by the participation of the students. During the FGD, the students confirmed that it is true that they become more interested when the literature is discussed in the language that they understand. The classroom that contains passive students become interactive after the teacher had codeswitched to teach the lesson. Many students were interested to answer the questions and share experiences connected to the literary text.

There is a positive acquisition of the lesson when students are interested to participate. Learners manifest physical gestures like nodding and making hand gestures that signify that they understand the lesson. The learners confirmed that there is a more positive acquisition of the lesson which leads to interest when codeswitching is used to explain the literary text. Classroom observation also proves that codeswitching truly makes a class amazingly interactive as students create noise that comes from positive class discussions.

When the lesson is discussed using the language that students are familiar with they become more engaged. They untangled the fear that resides deep within them. They confidently answered the questions and shared their experiences. The students said that what makes them more engaged is their confidence that they can express their answers using the dialect though not always but in some instances they have to. During the observation, it has been seen and observed that the class is alive because everybody wants to recite.

This theme corroborates with Gordon Well's Interaction Theory. According to Wells, language is collaborative in nature. Thus, collaborative activity in the classroom provides multiple avenues of proximal development because language is concerned with the communication of meaning, it is essentially cooperative in nature. He maintains the peer-reinforced language development is one of the strongest motivators for language development. Moodley and Kamwangamalu (2004) cited that the fact that literary texts are open to multiple interpretation. This means that rarely two readers have identical interpretation of the texts. This gap between individual's interpretations can be bridged through genuine interaction. This study proves that genuine interaction can be achieved through natural and normal conversation and class interaction using the native language.

Teachers desire to achieve an interactive class where learners freely share their ideas. That kind of class does not always exist. It is only achieved in a class where students are allowed to speak and to share using codeswitching. This implies that in order to achieve a class with a brighter atmosphere where students are not afraid to speak, teachers do not have to be afraid to codeswitch when it is necessary for them to bring out full participation in class. This is anchored on Fennema-Bloom (2010) second category on pedagogic intent which is reformulation. It shows that the primary pedagogic function of reformulation is to sustain full participation in the comprehension of difficult concepts or textual information so that the teacher could proceed with instruction.

A healthy teaching-learning environment should not have fear as well. Codeswitching breaks the walls that separate the teacher and the learner. It breaks the old norm that the teacher is the sole provider of information, instead, the teacher becomes a guide by the side—facilitating

learning. Nothing beats a class where students are comfortable to speak. This is similar to one of the findings in the study of Sert (2005), he pointed out, “code switching is used by the teacher in order to build solidarity and intimate relations with the students. In this sense, one may speak of the contribution of code-switching for creating a supportive language environment in the classroom.”

In what way has codeswitching affected the learners in the practice of the English language?

Theme 3-Codeswitching hinders fluency in the English language. The three participants claimed that codeswitching affects students’ fluency in using the English language. However, they said that, “It’s a factor but not the sole factor.” They pointed out that the responsibility of learning the English language is not dependent in school. “It’s still on the part of the student,” the participants added. They reiterated that “codeswitching is just a strategy for them to understand. It’s still on the part of the student or the learner. So, the student/learner should take some effort in understanding, practicing, and in using the English language.” In addition, one participant claimed that “Codeswitching, in reality, is of big help to the students. It actually leads them to learn the L2 which is English.” As verbalized:

“Well, undeniably...they cannot speak the language anymore fluently. They can no longer express their ideas using the English language because they are more comfortable of using the dialect.

Codeswitching is just a strategy for them to understand. It’s still on the part of the student or the learner. So, the student/learner should take some effort in understanding, practicing, and in using the English language. Supposedly, codeswitching should be a tool for them to practice the language in a way it could be a help for them also. That’s why maybe MTB-MLE was implemented.” (T1)

“Their grammar skills did not improve. They’re always mixing languages. I cannot blame the school. I cannot blame the teachers why students cannot practice the English language because it’s not only the school where students can learn English. My point is, the school is doing its part. It’s still on the part of the student.” (Teacher 2: 29-year-old Male)

“It affects their proficiency and comprehension. They became complacent not to learn the language anymore because we tolerate. In our part as teachers, our goal in codeswitching is to help them understand the lesson. But for them, ‘it’s just okay to speak in the dialect or Filipino, there’s no need to learn the English language.’

When you are teaching language, that's the time maybe but when you are teaching literature, you are teaching mainly about life. It's more on life. It's more on life (with emphasis). And when it comes to life, there are no rules. You encourage your students to share about life without setting any limitations but if your focus is to focus on language the time is not to codeswitch but since it's literature we codeswitch.

We teach literature not to deviate from the purpose of teaching because literature is about life. But if we teach grammar, we should not codeswitch most of the time. When you teach a language, it should be taught in the language you are teaching for them to learn the language. Codeswitching may be a factor but not the sole factor. It's more on the exposure. It's more on the environment.” (*Teacher 3: 32-year-old, Female*)

Teacher 1 claims that codeswitching negatively affects the fluency of the learners in the English language. They had become more comfortable in speaking the dialect. On the other hand, two of the learners who participated in the FGD, elicited a different answer. One of them said, “Codeswitching made me practice the use of the English language easier. Since my teacher uses codeswitching with Filipino and English, it has helped me understand and pick up messages with straight English, expand my vocabulary, and speak or write fluently and confidently in English.” The other one answered, “Codeswitching has positively affected my practice of the English language because it served as a scaffolding to improve my English speaking skills.” In the classroom observations, it has been observed that few could express their ideas in English fluently, but some could not. Since there is a debatable point, the teacher added that codeswitching is just a strategy. He pointed out that codeswitching should be a tool for the learners to practice the L2. The second point of the teacher coincides with the two learners that codeswitching made their practice of the English language easier and made them more fluent.

Teacher 2 (29-year-old male) observed that the grammar skills of students did not improve; however, he claimed that school is not the only place where students can learn and practice the English language. In the FGD, some of them admittedly say that their grammar skills did not improve but school is not the reading. They said that they are just fond of reading stories and novels in “taglish” like those found in wattpad². Accordingly, it has been also a trend in social media that people post in “taglish”. The students take full responsibility for their inability to improve their grammar skills. They even said that, “more is expected from us as we advance to the next level each year.”

² Wattpad is an online literature platform intended for users to read and write original stories. <https://www.wattpad.com/>

Teacher 3 (32-year-old female) observed that codeswitching affected learners' fluency in English as well as their comprehension because learners had become complacent in the dialect or in Filipino. However, she supported her answer with a justification that in a literature class, language is not the focus but on meaning and lessons because it talks about life. Learners subjected to FGD said that their inability to be fluent in speaking English is not solely because of codeswitching. They admitted that they had not been exposed to the language at home and they do not give much effort to learn the language because they find it difficult.

This theme hinders fluency in the English language and corroborates four studies that were previously conducted but it negates the theories on bilingualism. The studies of Kim (2006), Gauci and Camilleri Grima (2013), Mokgwathi and Webb (2013), and Moodley and Kamwangamalu (2004) all point out to the negative effect of codeswitching. Kim (2006) in his study identified codeswitching as a sign of incompetence. Gauci and Camilleri Grima (2013) found out in their study that "a dependence on codeswitching would have counterproductive effects as both teachers and students would regard it as a shortcut, thus decreasing time which would be spent exchanging real communicative acts in the target language.

The theories of bilingualism by Cummins—Common Underlying Theory and Threshold Theory provide justification for why students are not fluent in the English language as codeswitching is used in teaching literature. The main idea behind Common Underlying Theory is that when students acquire a new language, they gain skills and metalinguistic knowledge which can help them in learning new languages.

In the codeswitching process, the students used all that they have acquired in the first language and second language. This is to note that the grade 7 learners who are taught by the participants are the first batch of k-12 Curriculum learners who had undergone the enhanced basic education wherein their kindergarten and first three (3) years of elementary education, instruction, teaching materials and assessment were in the regional or native language of the learners. Then DepEd had formulated a language transition program from Grade 4-6 wherein Filipino and English were gradually introduced until such time that Filipino and English languages became the primary languages of instruction at the secondary level. Therefore, their first year in secondary school is the transition phase where the learners are still acquiring base support for both languages. That is the reason behind their lack of fluency in the English language.

Threshold Theory still by Cummins, makes students in both languages and benefits them by bringing balanced bilinguals. It implies that the more developed the first language, the easier it will be to develop the second language. It has two thresholds. The first threshold provides the

minimum age before the learner accumulates the negative effects of bilingualism. The second threshold provides the age-appropriate level of competency with positive cognitive effects. This is another justification for why students are not still fluent in the English language. This gives a strong argument why codeswitching is not the reason for students' lack of fluency in the English language. It only means that the learners, especially the Grade 7 students who are taught by the respondents are still under the transition phase wherein they are still fewer bilinguals because they are in the transition phase.

“Codeswitching may have been a factor but not the sole factor.” This theme, corroboration, and justification imply that codeswitching as a strategy shall be used wisely as Gauci and Camilleri Grima (2013) concluded, “A dependence on codeswitching would have counterproductive effects as both teachers and students would regard it as a shortcut, thus decreasing time would be spent exchanging real communicative acts in the target language.” Furthermore, “Codeswitching is a double-edged sword which should be used wisely and not abused of.” In the teaching-learning process, codeswitching can be both an aid and a hindrance (Gauci & Camilleri Grima, 2013), so it shall be used only when needed or sparingly.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Using Collaizi's method, three themes emerged in this study namely: Codeswitching 1) facilitates understanding; 2) ignites learners' interest; and 3) hinders fluency in the English language. Codeswitching addresses the need for teachers to facilitate understanding in literature classes. This suggests that teachers may use this as a strategy to help students in the content acquisition. Literature classes become more meaningful and significant to the part of learners if they understand the lesson from the literary piece. Codeswitching ignites learners' interest. This would break the old norm that the teacher is the sole source of knowledge, with codeswitching as a strategy, literature content acquisition would be facilitated. With the facilitation comes the ignition of learners' interest which brings out the active interaction between the teacher and learner. In this phase of learning, teachers no longer stand as the sole source of knowledge but can already be the guide by the side or the class facilitator. With interest as they say comes, realization, and realization brings out appreciation. However, it was found in this research that codeswitching hinders fluency in the English language. But with the help of the theories on bilingualism by Cummins—Common Underlying Theory and Threshold Theory, it was justified that codeswitching is not the main reason why students are not fluent in the English language—it is more on the age-appropriation level of the competency. It means that the learners, the grade 7, are still less bilingual since they are still in the transition phase of the mother tongue and the acquisition of English and Filipino as the primary languages at the secondary level.

Data (and Software) Availability

All data underlying the results are available as part of the article and no additional sources of data are required.

Competing interests

No competing interests are declared by the author.

Ethical statement

The researcher sought the approval of the Division of Candon City, Department of Education before each qualified participant was interviewed and observed. The Schools Division Superintendent granted the request of the researcher. The researcher conducted a face-to-face interview with the participants. During the interview, the researcher asked the participants to record the interview.

Funding information

This study is not supported by any funding agency.

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Soft Skills for Employability from Academics Perspectives

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Abstract-Critical Thinking skills sum up the proficiencies needed for employment. Critical Thinking skills especially Soft skills are identified as a job barrier in Malaysia. Employers assert that our graduates lack Soft skills, thus in 2006, the Malaysian government introduces and encourages the use of Soft skills, which include communication skills, problem-solving and thinking skills, continuous learning skills and information management skills, work in group skills, leadership skills, entrepreneurship skills, and professional ethics. This study focuses on the Soft skills for graduates' employability through three objectives: to investigate the Soft skills needed by graduates, to determine whether graduates have the soft skills required for employment and whether these skills are being taught at university. The research methodology consists of a survey aimed at lecturers at the Language Centre, National Defence University of Malaysia, using a mixed-method approach. The online survey contains both closed and open-ended questions and is analyzed using SPSS v.25.0 and manual content analysis. Results indicate that the most desired Soft skills are Communication Skills, Problem Solving and Thinking Skills, and Teamwork Skills. Lecturers agree that graduates must be equipped with the Soft skills needed for employment and they perceive that these skills are taught at the university. The lecturers agree on the importance of Soft skills, and this is supported by the overall findings. This research suggests that higher educational institutions should teach Soft skills either through a course specifically for Soft skills or integrated into courses designed to meet employers' needs.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, Soft Skills, Affective Domain, Graduates' Employability, Higher Education Institution

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How to cite this article: Norshima.B.Z.S., Nur. S.B.A.A., and Belinda.M.B. (2022). Soft Skills for Employability from Academics Perspectives. Journal of Advances in Humanities Research, 1 (3), 16-36. <https://doi.org/10.56868/jadhur.v1i3.36>



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INTRODUCTION

One of the primary goals of education in Malaysia has always been the growth of Critical thinking (CT). Through the introduction of Soft skills, the Malaysian government has promoted the application of these skills in institutions of higher learning. The administration has recognized that increasing human capital is the most critical aspect in realizing Vision 2020. The holistic acquisition of information, skills, and attitude is referred to as "human capital development," and it is complimented by "Soft skills" talents. Personality qualities, social graces, linguistic proficiency, personal routines, and teamwork are collectively referred to as Soft skills or generic abilities.

Prior to the introduction of soft skills, the New Curriculum for Primary School (KBSR) and the New Curriculum for Secondary School (KBSM) have provided Malaysian students with problem-solving and, creative and critical thinking instruction, but it was not comprehensive. As a result, critical and creative thinking became the primary educational objective in Malaysia. Through an educational programme that includes curriculum and co-curricular activities which encompasses knowledge, skills, norms, values, cultural elements, and beliefs to help develop a student fully with respect to the physical, spiritual, mental and emotional aspects; as well as to inculcate and develop desirable moral values and to transmit knowledge; the Malaysian Education Act (1996) has also placed a focus on thinking skills.

CT was introduced into Malaysia's education system in the '90s. It began in primary schools where CT was integrated into Maths and Science. As mandated by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), the integration of CT in Malaysian higher education has been implemented since 2008. After more than 20 years of teaching CT, it is said to be one of the most quoted reasons for graduates' unemployment. Employers claimed that graduates lacked CT skills particularly Soft skills even though CT has been embedded into the school curriculum since the '90s and reached the tertiary level in 2008. This also raised the issue of the "skill gap" where what is being taught in higher education institutions does not correspond to what is required in the working world (Makasiranondh et al., 2011; Bhatnagar, 2021; Saunders & Bajjaly, 2022). Despite decades of emphasis on Soft skill development, Soft skill integration in Malaysia is still not at an optimal level (Tan et al., 2021). In addition, the Malaysian government has encouraged the use of CT skills in higher education institutions through the introduction of Soft skills, which include communication skills, problem-solving and thinking skills, continuous learning skills and information management skills, work in group skills, leadership skills, entrepreneurship skills, and professional ethics (Konting et al., 2008; Shakir, 2009). The seven (7) Soft skills are also said to be embedded in the syllabus and taught at Institutes of Higher Learning in Malaysia (Shakir, 2009).

This study focuses on the Soft skills for graduates' employability through three objectives: to investigate the Soft skills required by new employees in an educational organization, to determine

whether new employees have the Soft skills needed for employment from employers' perspectives and whether Soft skills are being taught at university. In general, it plans to assess whether lecturers understand what Soft skills are and whether they teach these important skills to students in their classrooms.

Research Objectives

This study examines whether lecturers are familiar with Soft skills at the university through three objectives:

RO1: To investigate the Soft skills needed by new employees or future graduates in an educational organization from lecturers' perspectives.

RO2: To examine whether new employees or future graduates have the Soft skills needed for employment from lecturers' perspectives, and

RO3: To determine whether Soft skills are being taught at the university.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the Soft skills needed by new employees or future graduates in an educational organization from the lecturers' perspectives?

RQ2: Do the new employees or future graduates have the Soft skills needed for employment from the lecturers' perspectives, and

RQ3: Are the Soft skills being taught at university?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking (CT) is one of the most discussed higher-order thinking skills (Butler, 2012; Halpern, 2013) and is seen to play a vital role in logical reasoning, decision-making, and problem-solving. It is also said to be one of higher education's most highly valued 21st-century skills (Leão & Ferreira, 2022; Nielsen et al., 2022; O'Reilly et al., 2022). Elder and Paul (1997) defined CT as the ability of thinkers to control their own thinking. Instead of being spoon-fed and relying entirely on textbooks and other people's opinions or internet resources, CT skills allow students to come up with solutions on their own, even if they are basic, and to use reasoning skills to explain their solutions. However, due to our current education system which is perceived to be excessively too exam-oriented and theory-based, potential employers frequently complained about graduates' ability to think critically,

and their lack of English proficiency restricts their ability to develop unique and creative ideas (Norshima, 2011).

CT is associated to commonly identified twenty-first-century abilities such as metacognition, motivation, and creativity (Lai, 2011). With the growth of technology, which has resulted in the globalization of the world, CT has become an essential and vital skill that one must possess both during their educational journey and at work. It is also a necessary talent for students since it allows them to connect with their cognitive abilities and spiritual questions, as well as in analyzing people, policies, and organizations, thereby preventing societal problems (Hatcher & Spencer, 2005; Duron et al., 2006). There have been numerous studies that link CT to the employability (Gao, 2022; Wafi et al., 2022; Waterworth et al., 2022).

The public is becoming more conscious of the importance of students developing higher-order thinking skills (CT skills) to cope with the demands of modern society (Underbakke et al., 1993). As a result, it is possible to conclude that even society's standards of CT had improved. The need of developing critical thinking abilities has been widely publicized, even to the most insignificant elements of society, to the point that it has become a crucial criterion that should be ingrained in everyone. The ability to think clearly and critically has become a must and a crucial trait even for future generations to be able to cope with current society.

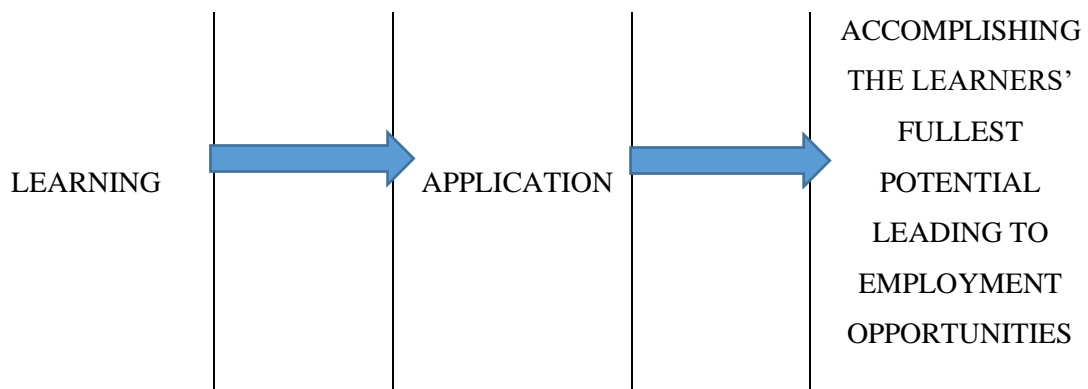


Figure 1. Theoretical framework: Pragmatic Learning
Adopted from Dewey (1916)

According to the Theory of Pragmatic Learning, students must first learn (the Soft skills) before being educated to apply what they have learned in order to become exceptional performers with a variety of employment prospects (see Fig. 1). In other words, students must receive the necessary instructions to put what they have learned into practice in order to become outstanding performers with a variety of job options. Ideally, based on this framework, Soft skills have to be taught to students and

they should be given the opportunities to apply these skills before they leave for the working world. This study seeks to investigate whether students are taught Soft skills and given the chance to apply these skills when they are at the university.

Soft skills are mostly related to the Affective domain of CT since these skills involve feelings, emotions, and attitudes. This domain encompasses how we interact with things emotionally, and it is further subdivided into five (5) subdomains: receiving, responding, valuing, organization, and characterization (Krathwohl et al., 1964). Although most people consider learning to be an intellectual or mental function (which means only the cognitive domain can be taught), attitudes and behaviors (affective) or Soft skills can also be taught. The Malaysian Government has identified seven (7) Soft skills that are vital to the employability of new graduates as shown in Figure 2. This study looks at CT as an umbrella which encompasses of all the learning domains in a human being. Ideally, if all three domains are given equal attention, then education in Malaysia will successfully produce balanced individuals which is the ultimate aim of the Malaysian National Education Philosophy (NEP).

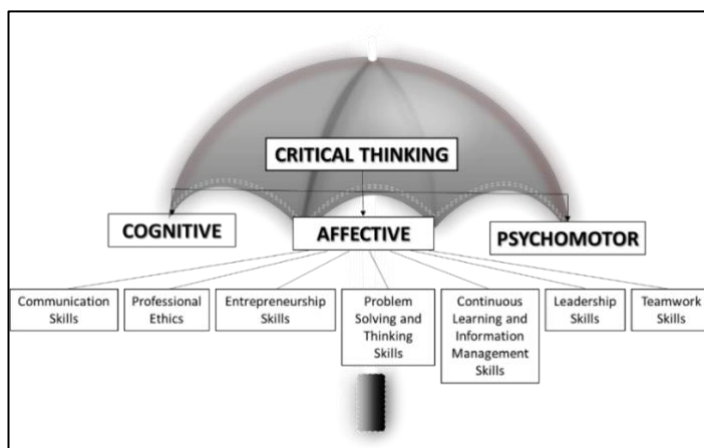


Figure 2. Theoretical Framework on Critical Thinking

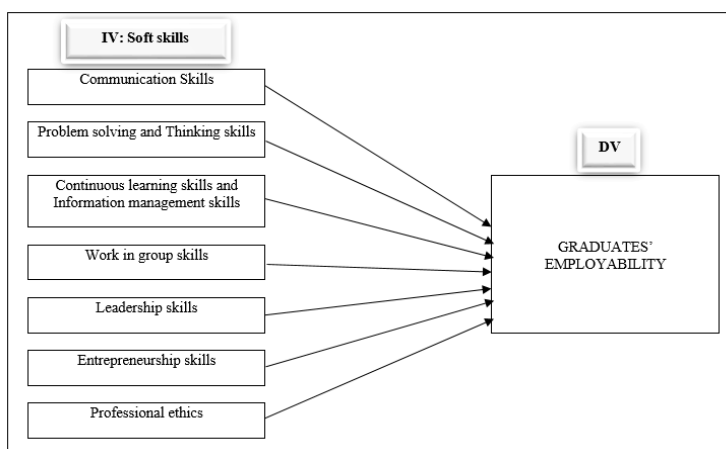


Figure 3. Conceptual framework: Graduates' employability is influenced by Soft skills

Affective Domain of Critical Thinking

By considering emotional elements, the affective domain influences an individual's capacity to make informed decisions. Our feelings play a significant part in determining the decisions we make. The affective domain is displayed using a comparable Bloom's Taxonomy, but it is discussed and explained in a different way. Bloom's Taxonomy uses five phases to represent the affective domain: receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterizing.

There is widespread concern that current undergraduate programmes are not generating graduates with the requisite life-long learning capabilities for their careers (De La Harpe et al., 2000; Karakolis et al., 2022; Mseleku, 2022) although higher education has the capability and obligation to catalyze and nurture both life-long-learning of workers at all career stages and a learning-centered workplace environment (Baker, 1995). Traditional evaluation approaches focus on knowledge acquisition rather than proficiency in employment qualities (Ferns & Zegwaard, 2014). The relevance of the affective domain is validated by Archer and Davison (2008), who suggested that most employers value Social skills and personality type over a degree (Archer & Davison, 2008; Pholphirul, 2017).

To a considerable extent, the economic pressure to prepare graduates with cognitive-oriented graduate traits has resulted in the marginalization of affective abilities. Employers value these social and emotional abilities the most, although they differ from the talents students typically possess upon graduation (Krahn et al., 2002). Graduates' ability to "self-regulate learning and process new knowledge" when employed is limited by higher-order thinking facilitated solely within the cognitive domain (Michalsky, 2012), which suggested that the affective domain of CT has been overlooked.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The mixed-method analysis was employed to acquire data for this study. The method used in this study was in the form of an online survey or Microsoft forms, distributed to the targeted respondents by using an approach of convenient sampling. The questionnaire has both closed and open-ended questions where the subjective questions were analyzed qualitatively through manual content analysis specifically to determine if respondents know the meaning of each Soft skill and can relate its application in their classrooms.

Population and Sampling

Based on the research objectives, the population of this research includes all lecturers from the Language Centre of the National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM). The sampling of this study is 17 lecturers at the Language Centre. Questionnaires were distributed through a convenient sampling

technique. The analysis utilized all the information from the respondents as an example estimate to get a progressively correct outcome.

Data Collection

Data and information of this research were gathered by means of questionnaire surveys that were distributed to respondents. The questionnaire has been modified after it was verified by three experts to accommodate the research objectives. The questionnaire of this study was mainly focused on closed-ended questions which allow the respondents to choose from concrete options available.

Data Analysis

The descriptive statistical analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.0 on the data obtained from this research. Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data from the open-ended questions.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is used in a lot of simple action research, and it provides useful information about the nature of a certain group of people. Descriptive data analysis restricts generalization to a certain group of people evaluated. There are no findings that extend beyond this group, and there is no way to know if they are similar individuals outside the group. The information pertains to only one group.

The variables used a five-point Likert scale as it is numerical and measurable. There are five levels of the mean score used to measure the mean obtained from the analysis. The levels of the mean score are depicted below (Moidunny, 2009):

Table 1: Mean Score and Level

MEAN SCORE	LEVEL (frequency/agreement)
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low (never/strongly disagree)
1.81 – 2.60	Low (rarely/disagree)
2.61 – 3.20	Medium (sometimes/neutral)
3.21 – 4.20	High (often/agree)
4.21 – 5.00	Very High (always/strongly agree)

Reliability Analysis

As a quantitative approach to determine the relationship between the variables, a five-point Likert scale was used in this study to evaluate the relationship between the variables. The association between the variables in this study is measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Cronbach's Alpha

coefficient is a method used to examine the instrument's dependability, which refers to the consistency or stability of a measure of behavior (Cozby & Bates, 2015). The following table shows the rule of thumb of the Alpha coefficient range of Cronbach:

Table 2: The range of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.90$	Excellent
$0.90 > \alpha \geq 0.80$	Good
$0.80 > \alpha \geq 0.70$	Acceptable
$0.70 > \alpha \geq 0.60$	Questionable
$0.60 > \alpha \geq 0.50$	Poor
$0.50 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

Inferential Analysis

The inferential analysis is a type of analysis that follows the data definition to get definitive results. The hypotheses were evaluated using inferential statistical methods, and the results were utilized to determine whether the hypotheses are accepted or rejected. Based on these findings, a study group's generalization can be applied to the entire population, and this process is known as making conclusions based on inferential analysis. In order to explain how well the independent variables and dependent variable of the sample interact with each other, Pearson Product Moment correlation, r , is used to evaluate the proposed hypotheses, and also to assess the intensity of the correlation between the two variables. The rule of thumb for Pearson correlation analysis (Hair et al., 2010) is shown in the table below:

Table 3: Description of Pearson Correlation coefficient

Coefficient Range	Strength of Correlation
± 0.00 to ± 0.20	Slight
± 0.21 to ± 0.40	Low
± 0.41 to ± 0.60	Moderate
± 0.61 to ± 0.80	High
± 0.81 to ± 1.00	Perfect

Content Analysis

The open-ended questions that were posed to the respondents from the questionnaire were analyzed using content analysis in this study. The content analysis focuses on identifying, evaluating, and recording patterns or themes within data, with the themes serving as analysis categories for the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The questions ask respondents to define the meaning of Soft

skills and relate them to their classroom application. A statement on each skill is followed or supported by two (2) examples of respondents' answers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



Demographic data

The demographic survey contains four (4) questions on the characteristics of the respondents which include gender, profession, qualification, and working experience. Question 1 asked for the respondents' gender which respectively consists of 58.8 percent (n=10) female and 41.2 percent (n=7) male. Question 2 described the profession of the respondents. The respondents who had answered the questionnaire are 100 percent (n=17) lecturers. Question 3 is related to their academic qualifications. The results showed that 64.7 percent (n = 11) of the respondents are Master's holders and 35.3 percent (n=6) are PhD holders. Question 4 is about the amount of time (years) of employment of the respondents since graduation. 17.6 percent (n=3) have less than five years of work experience, 35.3 percent (n=6) have six to 10 years of experience, 11.8 percent (n =2) have 11 years to 15 years of experience, another 11.8 percent (n =2) have 16 years to 20 years of experience, and 23.5 percent (n=4) have more than 21 years of working experience.

Descriptive analysis was also used to answer the research questions. The result for questions 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, and 21 (close-ended questions) where mean score is concerned; is presented in the table 4 below. The most important Soft skill to the least important Soft skill for employment according to the respondents: The highest mean score is CS3 and CS4, which is 4.53. CS3 says Communication skills are needed for employment. CS4 says Communication skills are important at your workplace. Second highest is PSTS3, PSTS4, PE3, and PE4, which is 4.47. PSTS3 says Problem solving and thinking skills are needed for employment and PSTS4 says Problem solving and thinking skills are important at your workplace. PE3 says Professional ethics are needed for employment. PE4 says Professional Ethics are important at your place. On the other hand, lowest mean score is TS1 and ES1 which is 3.18. TS1 says graduates or new employees have poor Teamwork skills. ES1 says graduates or new employees have poor Entrepreneurship skills.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
CS3 (1)	4.53	.514	17
CS4 (1)	4.53	.514	17
PSTS3 (2)	4.47	.514	17
PSTS4 (2)	4.47	.514	17
TS1 (1)	3.18	.636	17
ES1 (2)	3.18	.809	17
PE1 (3)	3.29	.920	17
PE3 (2)	4.47	.514	17
PE4 (2)	4.47	.514	17

Legend	
CS:	Communication Skills
PSTS:	Problem Solving and Thinking Skills
CLSIMS:	Continuous Learning and Information Management Skills
TS:	Teamwork Skills
LS:	Leadership Skills
ES:	Entrepreneurship Skills
PE:	Professional Ethics
	Highest
	Lowest

It is known that Communication skills are important as we need to interact to get things done. Previous studies have shown that employers preferred new employees who can communicate well. The capacity to listen, talk, follow directions, interact with people, and participate in meetings are all examples of oral communication abilities (Ulinski & O'callaghan, 2002). The majority of university education programmes place an emphasis on analytical and mathematical talents while ignoring the development of other crucial skills needed to perform in an organization. More attention should be paid to teaching Soft skills such as the capacity to interact with individuals within a company.

What are the Soft Skills needed by new employees?

Question (ii), (iii), and (iv)

Table 5. Mean Scores for Question (ii), (iii), and (iv)

Question	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ii	17	3.29	5.00	4.1849	.46775
iii	17	3.43	5.00	4.3277	.49426
iv	17	3.71	5.00	4.3277	.43672
Valid N (listwise)	17				

Based on Table 5, questions (ii), (iii), and (iv) from each section refer to the Soft skills required by new employees according to the respondents. The questions explained the need of skills in educational organisation; which explains whether employers seek these Soft skills, whether these skills are needed for employment, and whether they are important in their workplace. The lowest mean score obtained from the table is 4.1849 (the need of the skills in educational organisation). Referring to Table 1, all mean scores are above 3.21, this indicates High level of agreement from the respondents; that is,

the respondents agreed that all these Soft skills are needed by new employees in educational organisation or any other employment sector, employers seek these Soft skills, and they are important in the workplace. There is no doubt that these skills are important and that is why tertiary level educational institutions are instructed to integrate the seven (7) soft skills into all existing courses at the universities. It is however, unclear whether the directive is being followed.

Table 6. Mean Scores for Soft Skills

Soft skills	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Communication Skills (2)	17	3.33	4.67	4.0784	.38242
Problem Solving and Thinking Skills (1)	17	3.50	5.00	4.1176	.42803
Continuous Learning Skills and Information Management Skills (6)	17	3.33	5.00	3.9804	.42444
Teamwork Skills (3)	17	3.50	5.00	4.0686	.43724
Leadership Skills (4)	17	3.33	4.83	4.0294	.40498
Entrepreneurship Skills (7)	17	2.50	4.83	3.6765	.63866
Professional Ethics (5)	17	3.50	5.00	4.0294	.40925

The highest mean means perceived most important for employment by respondents and the lowest mean means perceived least important for employment by respondents.

Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics (mean scores) for all the Soft skills mentioned in this research. Problem Solving and Thinking Skills have the highest mean of 4.1176 which indicates the most important Soft skill for employment by respondents while Entrepreneurship Skills scored the lowest mean of 3.6765 which indicates as the least important Soft skills for employment by respondents. However, a mean score of 3.6765 is considered as High in the Mean Score table (Table 1) indicating that respondents **agree** that Entrepreneurship Skills are also important for employment but the least important among the seven (7) listed Soft skills by the Malaysian government.

In Malaysia, problem solving and thinking skills (critical thinking) have been introduced and integrated into the school curriculum in the early 1990s. According to the literature review, graduates must possess a variety of employability skills before they can begin working. These include teamwork, communication, and problem-solving and decision-making skills, which are the employability skills with the highest level of importance. Employees with problem solving and thinking skills are cognitively prepared to manage anything their professions throw at them. When issues unavoidably develop, problem solvers are able to observe, assess the situation, and take quick action.

On the other hand, although Entrepreneurship Skills is ranked as the least important, employers still want graduates with this skill. Singh and Kumar (2022) stated that employees with entrepreneurial

abilities are those that enable people to recognise and investigate new business prospects as well as provide novel goods and services to the market. An effective businessperson possesses enough skills to manage a variety of tasks.

Do new employees (future graduates) have poor soft skills that are needed for employment?

Question (i)

Question (i) from each section investigates whether the respondents think new employees have poor Soft skills. In this question, if the respondents disagree to the statement, it shows that the lecturers think that their students or future graduates have these Soft skills (which is the opposite of what employers think).

Table 7. Mean Scores for Question (i)

Question	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I	17	2.00	4.71	3.3277	.65614
Valid N (listwise)	17				

Table 7 shows the mean score for this question is 3.3277, which is High. This demonstrates that respondents agree that new employees have low or poor Soft skills. This agrees with what is being said about the graduates; that they lack of Soft skills that are needed for employment. This issue has been harped in Malaysian social media for a long time. Soft skills as listed by the Malaysian government are communication skills, problem solving and thinking skills, continuous learning skills and information management skills, work in group skills, leadership skills, entrepreneurship skills, and professional ethics; play a huge role in determining one's career.

Are Soft skills being taught at the university?

Question (v) and (vi)

Table 8. Mean Scores for Question (v) and (vi)

Question	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
V	17	2.86	5.00	3.9076	.64274
Vi	17	3.00	5.00	3.9076	.48954
Valid N (listwise)	17				

In each section, questions (v) and (vi) were asked to determine whether Soft skills are taught at the university. Question (v) is to check whether respondents think Soft skills are being taught at the university whilst Question (vi) is to see whether they agree that graduates will be exposed to these Soft skills through job training (internship). Table 8 shows that the mean scores for both questions is 3.9076, which is High. These indicates that respondents agree that these Soft skills are being taught at the university and they also agree that internship (training on the job) will expose the students to these soft

skills. As we know, employers are complaining that graduates do not have Soft skills. We are aware that tertiary level educational institutions are instructed to teach the seven (7) soft skills. If the students have been taught the skills, why then are the employers saying otherwise?

Soft Skills Rank

In Section I of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rank the Soft skills suggested by the Malaysian government according to their importance from their perspectives. At the same time, all the Soft skills were analysed using SPSS v.25.0 to determine the most important to least important Soft skills based on the mean scores. The results are as in Table 9.

Table 9. Soft Skills Rank

No.	Section I	SPSS v.25.0
1.	Communication Skills	Problem Solving and Thinking Skills
2.	Problem Solving and Thinking Skills	Communication Skills
3.	Teamwork Skills	Teamwork Skills
4.	Leadership Skills	Leadership Skills
5.	Professional Ethics	Professional Ethics
6.	Continuous Learning Skills and Information Management Skills	Continuous Learning Skills and Information Management Skills
7.	Entrepreneurship Skills	Entrepreneurship Skills

The table above shows that Problem Solving and Thinking Skills tops the list; next is Communication Skills, followed by Teamwork Skills; where both are highly rated as the most important Soft skills for employment by respondents. Leadership skills, and Professional Ethics are also ranked in the top five (5) important Soft skills for employment. Whereas, Entrepreneurship Skills is ranked as the least important skill for employment.

Reliability Analysis

All the variables used in the questionnaire are reliable because the coefficient alpha is greater than 0.70, which is the sound level of internal reliability. The α for “Soft skills for the questionnaire is 0.952. All the variables met the acceptable standard of reliability analysis and can be confirmed as reliable, standard, and relevant.

Inferential Analysis

Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used in this research to measure the strength of the correlation between the Soft skills that are listed in this research.

Table 10. Correlations

	Soft skills	CS	PSTS	CLSIMS	TS	LS	ES	PE
CS	Pearson Correlation	1	.757**	.641**	.612**	.672**	.644**	.617**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.006	.009	.003	.005	.008
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
PSTS	Pearson Correlation	.757**	1	.711**	.740**	.743**	.472	.792**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.001	.001	.001	.056	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
CLSIMS	Pearson Correlation	.641**	.711**	1	.842**	.878**	.782**	.963**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.001		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
TS	Pearson Correlation	.612**	.740**	.842**	1	.939**	.616**	.874**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.001	.000		.000	.008	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
LS	Pearson Correlation	.672**	.743**	.878**	.939**	1	.688**	.919**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.001	.000	.000		.002	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
ES	Pearson Correlation	.644**	.472	.782**	.616**	.688**	1	.729**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.056	.000	.008	.002		.001
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
PE	Pearson Correlation	.617**	.792**	.963**	.874**	.919**	.729**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 10 indicates all the skills have high positive r value indicating that all Soft skills are correlated to each other. This concludes that putting focus on any one of these skills will enhance the other Soft skills on the list.

Content Analysis

In Section 1 of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to state the Soft skills that are needed most in their profession and the three (3) highest rated skills are: Problem Solving and Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and Teamwork Skills. The respondents were then asked to define the meaning and relate the application of these Soft skills in their classrooms. Statement on each skills is substantiated by two (2) examples of respondents' answers.

Problem-Solving and Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and Teamwork Skills

Problem-Solving and Thinking Skills

In this section, respondents shared their views on the meaning of Problem Solving and Thinking Skills, which are regarded as the most significant Soft skills for employability in the ranking. Active

listening, analysis, research, inventiveness, dependability, and decision-making are all indicators of problem-solving and thinking skills. In addition, the respondents shared their definition of this skill as:

Respondent A: The ability to find solutions despite unforeseen circumstances and lack of resources. Knowing one's limit and achieving or utilising the best within that limit is also a part of the skills.

Respondent B: The ability to come up with ethical multiple solutions to a given problem when conventional solutions are unavailable.

To summarise, Problem Solving and Thinking Skills are the ability or ways of thinking that allow a person to deal with unexpected situations. The respondents gave positive insights on this Soft skill, and this proves that they too, support the importance of this skill for graduates' employability. The respondents know the meaning of this particular skill and can define it appropriately.

Communication skills

The question for this section is to define communication skills in respondents' own words. To apply communication skills, one must first have the knowledge of what communication skill is and how it contributes to the Soft skills for employability. When asked about communication skills, most would respond with "the ability to communicate". It is true in a sense where communication can only happen when two or more people communicate with each other. The respondents also shared that:

Respondent C: A communication skill is the ability to communicate with others regardless of language, racial, cultural, religion, and other barriers. It involves the ability to deliver and convey messages and engage in active conversations with people. It is crucial because the need to have interaction and communication with your colleagues and other departments cannot be disputed at all. It is important for you to acquire communication and interpersonal skills for your career advancement.

Respondent D: Communication Skills are the capabilities people employ to provide and receive various types of information. It is the idea of being able to share fresh ideas, sentiments, or even an update on the current project we are working on at work effectively. It also involves listening, speaking, observing, and empathising. It is understanding the variations in how to communicate through face-to-face contacts, phone conversations, and digital communications such as email and social media.

The Malaysian government recommends seven (7) soft talents, one of which is Communication Skills. It is important because we frequently communicate with others to establish plans, form relationships, and complete daily activities, these skills are essential to our daily lives as they can make all the difference in both business and personal life. The different views from each respondent had given

a positive outcome as they were able to explain Communication Skills in their own terms. As it was the most picked Soft skills, this confirms the importance of Communication Skills for graduates' employability.

Teamwork skills

Teamwork Skills are frequently used, especially when work must be done in groups. It promotes active listening, honesty, awareness, and responsibility. Upon the analysis of the answer from Section I, on the most important Soft Skills for employability, Teamwork Skills ranked third place. The following are the respondents' thoughts on this skill are:

Respondent E: Working well with a group of individuals to reach a common purpose or end. Attending to the needs of other team members. Considering everyone's thoughts, not just your own.

Respondent F: The ability to make things work and achieve goals despite working with people of different ages, backgrounds, abilities and needs.

The Malaysian government had listed Teamwork Skills as one of the Soft Skills needed for employment. The need for this skill is essential as most industries operate in groups. When employees collaborate to achieve a common goal, they use a combination of talents, attributes, methods, and processes. This is why Teamwork Skills or collaboration is so important. The responses from the respondents also support the means of this skill.

Situations where Soft skills (Problem Solving and Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and Teamwork Skills) are used at the workplace

Problem-solving and Thinking skills

Being a lecturer is not only about teaching students, but it includes handling situations related to the students. As online-based learning is being practiced during the Covid-19 pandemic, lecturers had to familiarize themselves with the use of online platforms and take prompt action when there is a problem to ensure their classes go on smoothly. Lecturers from the Language Centre claimed to use Problem-solving and Thinking skills in these situations: (active listening, analysis, research, creativity, dependability, and decision-making)

Respondent G: Sudden change of plans which requires quick decision-making and amendments. I always stress on listening properly to lecturer's explanation and to analyse any problem carefully before making any decisions.

Respondent H: Having two important tasks which need to be attended at the same time, you have to compare and evaluate which one needs to be solved first, and think of how to solve them.

Issues and problems are inevitable, and it is part of life. However, every problem has a solution. Problem Solving and Thinking Skills can be useful in situations that require critical thinking, such as when dealing with difficult situations. Problem solving skills are used regularly while conducting classroom activities.

Communication Skills

Communication happens on a daily basis whether in a form of verbal or non-verbal communication. Since the respondents for this research are all lecturers, the situation where they are required to use communication skills are often in class or meeting. This is corroborated by the responses provided by respondents:

Respondent I: When I am teaching online and need to deliver an effective lecture to help students understand the lessons as best as possible. Having good communication skills will help in students' engagement. Engagement in communication happens when there is meaningful communication.

Respondent J: To disagree towards certain issues or ideas and to add-up something to your colleague's idea in any meeting without offending the related parties. Communication skills are needed in negotiations that is in agreeing or coming to a decision agreed upon by everyone in a group.

Since the respondents are lecturers from the Language Centre, they emphasized the importance of Soft Skills, especially Communication Skills in classrooms, offices, or workplaces. Lecturers communicate with students daily and good communication skills are required by both parties; lecturers need good Communication Skills to be able to teach the students whilst students need good Communication Skills to communicate with the lecturers, and in doing their assignments, especially in group work to avoid miscommunication.

Teamwork Skills

Teamwork Skills are one of the Soft Skills that are frequently employed in the workplace. As teamwork involves two or more people working together to work on a task, communicating and sharing ideas, it is vital that this skill is set as one of the Soft Skills for employability. The following are examples of how these skills are used at the Language Centre:

Respondent K: We employ teamwork skills on a regular basis, particularly in our research and publications. We divide our tasks, discuss, and communicate well in order to reach our common goals, which contributes to our individual performance scores, PB productivity, and university's recognition nationwide.

Respondent L: Working on a novel project that involves the efforts from people with different exposure to the concept. We also give group assignments to students to enhance their teamwork skill because they definitely need this skill when to go out in the job market.

The responses reveal that respondents, who work as lecturers at the Language Centre, use Teamwork Skills on a daily basis, thus, confirming that Teamwork Skills are one of the most vital Soft skills among the seven (7) Soft skills recommended by the Malaysian government.

CONCLUSION

Critical thinking has been looked upon as an important criterion that every individual should have within themselves so that they can move around independently and make their own timely and sound decisions. Employers make it essential for their employees to have higher critical thinking skills so that they can critically analyze a problem and proceed further in evaluating the problem and coming up with solutions. Employers in the working world opined that graduates or new employees do not have the required Soft skills (the affective domain of CT) and this is supported by the respondents (the lecturers) even though they claimed that those Soft skills are taught at the university. Not only that but these Soft Skills are direly needed for employment. Communication Skills, Problem-Solving and Thinking Skills, and Teamwork Skills are the most needed Soft skills in an educational organization or any other organization; which makes it crucial for new employees or graduates to acquire these skills. This research suggests that higher educational institutions place a greater emphasis on developing these Soft skills for graduates' employability by making sure that the meaning of Soft skills is understood by lecturers and how these skills can be taught through teaching and learning processes at the university. This study also suggests considering creating a course specifically in teaching Soft skills to meet employers' needs, apart from teaching them integrated in existing courses. Universities' instruction must incorporate and stress non-cognitive skills in order to fully and comprehensively prepare future workers with the information and abilities they need to succeed in the demands of the workplace.

Author contributions

N.B.Z.S developed the idea and collected the data, N.S.B.A.A worked on literature and revisions and B.M.B revised the manuscript and worked on methods.

Data (and Software) Availability

All data underlying the results are available as part of the article and no additional sources of data are required.

Competing interests

No competing interests are declared by the author.

Ethical statement

The researcher sought the approval of the language center of the National Defense University of Malaysia before they were approached for the data collection from the research participants. All the participants were asked for informed consent to publish their responses without their names and personal information.

Funding information

This study is not supported by any funding agency.

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Crime Rates in the Philippines: A Comparative Analysis of Bulan and Irosin Municipalities from Sorsogon Province

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Abstract: The low crime rate has been identified as a predictor of a calm, orderly, and secure neighborhood. Furthermore, a safe and secure environment is essential in encouraging investment and economic progress in a country. Crime statistics can help criminal justice professionals predict increased crime risk. This study, therefore, aims to compare the crime rate of two municipalities in the province of Sorsogon: Bulan Sorsogon and Irosin Sorsogon from the calendar year 2018 to 2020. This study used document analysis to analyze and compare the crime data in the Municipality of Bulan and Irosin Sorsogon. Data reflected that in the comparison of the two municipalities in the province, the Municipality of Bulan has the highest crime rate (61%) compared to the Municipality of Irosin which has a (39%) total crime rate. Data also revealed that the crime under special law was the most numbered crime committed with (253) total in the five parameters of crime in both municipalities. Interestingly crime against property was (32) total crimes committed in both municipalities, showing a low number of crimes based on the record. Hence, the police may continue to collaborate closely with many community sectors to guarantee the seamless implementation of its programs and projects to protect public safety and security Information awareness campaigns in any form like in any platform of social media in all their programs and projects may be made available in the community to increase awareness and support of stakeholders, especially in the far-flung areas in the municipality.

Keywords: Crime Rate, Crime Against Person, Crime Against Property, Crime Prevention, Sorsogon Province

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How to cite this article: Manilyn. B.B. (2022). Crime Rates in the Philippines: A Comparative Analysis of Bulan and Irosin Municipalities from Sorsogon Province. *Journal of Advances in Humanities Research*, 1 (3), 37-57. <https://doi.org/10.56868/jadhur.v1i3.136>



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INTRODUCTION

A crime statistics report is a document that keeps track of crime occurrences, rates, and trends in the Philippines. Recent research shows that crime rates are decreasing and crime-resolution effectiveness is improving. Nonetheless, despite increases in crime-solving efficiency, crime prevention must be maintained due to the high occurrence of index offenses (Philippine Statistics Authority, December 3, 2022). Crime exists in numerous forms and is a major worry in metropolitan areas around the country (Overseas Security Advisory Council, 2022). Crime is divided into index and non-index offenses for statistical purposes and to provide a coherent understanding of criminal classification. Crimes against people and crimes against property, such as murder, homicide, physical injury and rape, kidnapping/carjacking, and cattle rustling, are examples of index crimes. Non-index offenses, on the other hand, are violations of specific legislation, such as unlawful logging or municipal by-laws or ordinances according to the Senate Economic Planning Office (2013).

Understanding the causes of crimes can help explain why they occur and shed insight into how they can be addressed and prevented. Various criminal theories attempt to explain the factors that lead someone to a life of crime. According to the rational choice hypothesis, thieves choose specific targets based on vulnerability, such as elderly persons, unsecured premises, or a lack of police presence (Jennings & Beaudry-Cyr, 2014). The occurrence of crime in rural regions is merely one component of the problem. For many people, whether they have been victims of crime or not, the sheer fear of crime may influence their quality of life just as much as the experience of crime. Long-term emotional stress and lack of confidence can have serious consequences, especially for children, families, and communities. Isolation in remote areas exacerbates this dread of criminality. The crime rate has been considered an indicator of a secure, tranquil, and orderly community (Adams & Serpe, 2000). A safe and secure environment is also a key factor in stimulating investment and economic progress in a country. Crime, violence, and terrorism are all rather common in the Philippines (O'Brien, 2012). In 2021, the country was listed in the region's bottom five for order and security index rankings (Statista, 2022).

Likewise, the Philippines has one of the highest imprisonment rates per 100,000 inhabitants (The Borgen Project, n.d). Crime rates were notably high in poorer neighborhoods and areas with a higher population and unemployment. Crime is a serious concern for all inhabitants of the Philippines, particularly those who live in the country's larger cities (Sanidad-Leones, 2006). Due to increased crime rates, the police confront the challenging burden of preserving security and order. Furthermore, a recent study found that the country has the highest rate of premeditated homicide in Asia (Sanidad-Leones, 2006). The National Capital Region, which is densely populated, has the highest crime rates in the country. In 2018, the region's average monthly crime rate was 90 per 100,000 people. Stealing and

physical injury were the most prevalent crimes in the Philippines (Caba-ong et al., 2015). Property crime accounted for more than 30% of all crimes committed in the country. In contrast, physical injury accounted for around 28% of the total. In comparison to 2017, the number of such offenses was reduced fourfold. Based on the Statista Research Department (2021). Crime statistics are used by criminal justice system officials and policymakers to make claims about crime levels and trends; legislators and criminal justice system officials use them to implement crime-fighting policies; and criminologists and other social scientists use crime statistics to research the causes of crime, inform theories of crime, and evaluate the effectiveness of crime control policies as stated by Mosher and Miethe (2015). The researcher intends to identify and compare the crime rates in both municipalities to acquire a better knowledge of crime in the area. The study's findings might be used by law enforcement to develop tactics for crime prevention and control initiatives.

Fleisher (1966) predicted that the crime rate increases when unemployment and low per capita income increase. Hence, a low income and low purchasing power directly reduce the good and services for the individuals which urge them to do unfair acts to meet their fair needs. Unemployment combined with inflation has a deep-rooted influence on the crime (Fajnzylber et al., 2002; Wu & Wu, 2012). Becker (1968) is of the view that an individual will commit a crime if the expected utility that will be derived from the criminal activity exceeds the expected cost of the crime. In general, crime and violence are ubiquitous in society. Throughout history, organized societies have tried to prevent crime following several approaches (Gordon et al., 2009). Studies have linked crime with several factors, including psychological traits (Kamaluddin et al., 2015; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 2022), environmental conditions (Gamble & Hess, 2012; Hsiang et al., 2013), spatial patterns (Short et al., 2008; Alves et al., 2015; D'Orsogna & Perc, 2015), and social and economic indicators (Becker, 1968; Glaeser et al., 1996). A significant fraction of the literature on statistical analysis in criminology tries to relate the number of a particular crime (e.g. robbery) with explicative variables such as the unemployment (Raphael & Winter-Ebmer, 2001) and income (Kelly, 2000).

Keeping this in perspective, crime can have a substantial impact on the health and well-being of victims and their families (Pastor-Satorras et al., 2015). Experience of violence may be associated with health risk behaviors such as smoking, harmful use of alcohol and illicit drugs, and physical inactivity (Wang et al., 2016). In addition, it can trigger emotional and psychological problems such as difficulty sleeping, lack of confidence, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (D'Orsogna & Perc, 2015). The purpose of this study, therefore, is to compare the crime rate and crime percentage in the Municipality of Bulan and Irosin in the Sorsogon province of Philippines from calendar year 2018 to 2020 in terms of Crime Against Person, Crime Against Property, Non- Index Crime, Traffic Incident, Special Law with the end goal of formulating intervention measures or programs that can help the authorities in to improve in their campaign in crime prevention. The

intervention measures were crafted based on the findings of this research. for the evaluation and development of intervention strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have highlighted the causes of crimes. For instance, Dutta and Husain (2009) examined the impact of economic growth, income inequality and urbanization on the crime rate. They collected the panel data for post-liberalized India from 1999 to 2005. They got their results by the use of a fixed effect model. Their inferences portray that economic growth is a very important factor for the curtailing of the crime rate because it has a negative and significant relationship with the crime rate. While increasing urbanization and income inequality are the accelerators of the crime rate. They suggested a policy that the government has to increase economic growth and have to reduce inequality to the curtail crime rate. The trickle-down effect and sustainable economic growth, are complementary for crime reduction. The trickle-down effect makes economic growth more effective because with this the poor segment can also get access to the benefits of economic growth. Without the trickledown effect, the rising of economic growth is meaningless. Dio et al. (2019) analyzed the profile of drug surrenderers and the crime statistics in the Province of Sorsogon during the implementation of Project Double Barrel in the Philippines. It was found that most of the drug surrenderers are from the marginalized sectors belonging to informal workers, construction workers and jobless. There was a notable decrease in crime volume incidents during the implementation of Project Double Barrel in the province. Due to constraints in the number of police personnel, however, there is no significant difference in the crime solution efficiency (CSE) as compared to the previous year. Physical injury and theft were the highest among the recorded index crime while most of the non-index crime incidents recorded were related to vehicular traffic incidents and other violations of street laws.

Gümüş (2004) argued that the most consequential determinants that may affect the crime rate as socioeconomic factors are increased population, police expenditure, primarily the black community. Mojica et al. (2019) investigated the relationship of both crime rates with some demographic variables while accounting for possible spatial autocorrelation using spatial lag models in Metro Manila, Philippines. Results show that both crime rates tend to cluster in the northern cities of Metro Manila. Furthermore, significant spatial lag coefficients were found only for physical injury rates, with values ranging from 0.49 to 0.62, signifying a positive city-level spatial dependence of physical injury rates in Metro Manila. Moreover, some demographic covariates, such as population density, percentage of young males, education, marriage, and immigration were found to be associated with both crime rates. The findings of Madni and Khan (2019) study revealed that economic complexity, institutions, and per capita income have a significant negative impact while economic misery and population growth have a significant positive relationship on violent crimes using the panel data of 34 countries covering the time

span from 2000 to 2014. Moreover, efficient institutions have prime importance to curb crimes in a society. The better provision of knowledge and a highly skilled labor force in an efficient institutional environment for the alleviation of crimes is suggested as a policy tool. Additionally, serious efforts to decrease economic misery and population growth are the need of the hour to overcome the crimes.

Ali and Bibi (2020) investigated the impact of public policies about taxes, defense expenditures, loans and grants on crimes in Pakistan over the period from 1980 to 2019 by employing the Autoregressive Distributed Lag and Vector Error-Correction model. The results of the study showed that defense expenditures, loans and grants more taxes and rising economic misery have a positive and significant impact on crime rates in the case of Pakistan. Based on the findings, the study suggested that for the reduction of the crime rate government of Pakistan must reduce taxes, defense expenditures, loans and grants and economic misery in the country. For reducing unemployment, the government of Pakistan must establish an economic environment that boost new jobs and stable inflation. Moreover, skill development programs must be initiated, so that youth can get self-employment rather than searching for government and private jobs. Inflation can be controlled by putting checks on rising production costs. Similarly, Gillani et al. (2009) reported that crime in Pakistan is mainly caused by poverty, price instability and unemployment. In the Philippines, Barrera et al. (2013) generated spatio-temporal heat maps of reported crimes in Dumaguete City using crime data from 2010 to 2012. Their results showed that crimes tend to be concentrated at or near the central business district. They provided policy recommendations for each spatio-temporal crime hot spot such as vehicle and foot patrols, improved lighting, public education campaign, and surveillance of entry/exit points.

Fajnzylber et al. (2002) estimate the relation and causality between crime and inequality. The study includes panel data of 30 economies. The empiric revealed that increasing inequality is a major cause of the increase in crime and this relationship is found strongly in inter and intra-country analysis. Salas and Hinlo (n.d) investigated the determinants of alcohol consumption and examine how alcohol consumption affects crime incidence in the Philippines. The study employed cross-sectional data and panel data in the estimation. Results in the estimation showed that among the determinants of alcohol consumption, food expenditure, wear expenditure, educational expenditure, income and age, significantly explain the changes in alcohol consumption in the Philippines. On the other hand, alcohol consumption significantly affects the changes in murder and physical injury. Mahase (2020) reported a 60% increase in emergency calls related to violence against women by their intimate partners in Europe. Similarly, Agüero (2021) found a 48% increase in helpline calls related to domestic violence in Peru. While analyzing tweets related to domestic violence, Xue et al. (2020) highlighted that tweets mentioning an increase in domestic violence due to COVID-19 were frequent. Haider and Ali (2015) mention that increase in unemployment and population density leads to an increase in crime in Punjab (Pakistan) considering all districts. The study recommends the need for government policies, including

police departments restructure, reducing poverty, and controlling population and corruption to decrease in crimes.

Caba-ong et al. (2015) examined the spatiotemporal patterns of index crimes in Ozamiz City, Philippines. Incidents of crime reported and docketed in the police blotter were retrieved from Ozamiz City Police Station. Case investigators were also interviewed to verify the data. Findings showed a decreased crime rate in 2010 relative to 2011, a most notable decline in 2012, and the sharpest increase in 2013. Among the index crimes, physical injuries had the highest crime volume, followed by theft and robbery. The volume of crimes against property was consistently higher compared to crimes against a person. In the same line, Tadjoeddin et al. (2021) investigated the nexus between inequality and violent conflict in selected provinces in Indonesia. This study finds empirical support for the violence-increasing effects of higher inequality across districts in provinces usually considered as 'high conflict' regions. The econometric results are robust after controlling for province and time effects, ethnic and religious fractionalizations and series of usual determinants of violence, as well as across different measures of violence. This new evidence implies that it is important to include tackling inequality as an explicit focus in the development agenda at the national as well as subnational levels. Mark and SARCENA (2021) utilized a quantitative descriptive research method to determine the extent of police operational activities and to test the association between the crime rate and the extent of police operation activities in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines. The results revealed that more respondents were 31- 35 years old and above. Most of them were male, bachelor's degree holders, attended training and seminars for 50 hours, and served the police force for 15 years and below. Patrolling and investigation were found to be much more observable while traffic management was observable. As for index crime, there were more crimes against the person committed than crimes against property. As for non-index crimes, there were more other non-index crimes compared to the violation of special laws. Patrolling has a positive influence on the commission and non-commission of both index and non-index crimes.

METHODOLOGY

The study aims to assess the crime rate of two municipalities to gain a deeper understanding of crime in the locality. The design of the research is quantitative, as well as document analysis were the data are ready and available, to calculate the crime rate in the Municipalities of Bulan and Irosin in the Province of Sorsogon of Philippines from CY 2018 to 2020.

Data Gathering and Procedure

The Population of the study is the number of crimes registered in the Bulan Municipal Police Station and Irosin Police Station. The Chief of police at both the stations was approach through a request letter. After obtaining the Chief of Police's consent in two municipalities, the request letter was

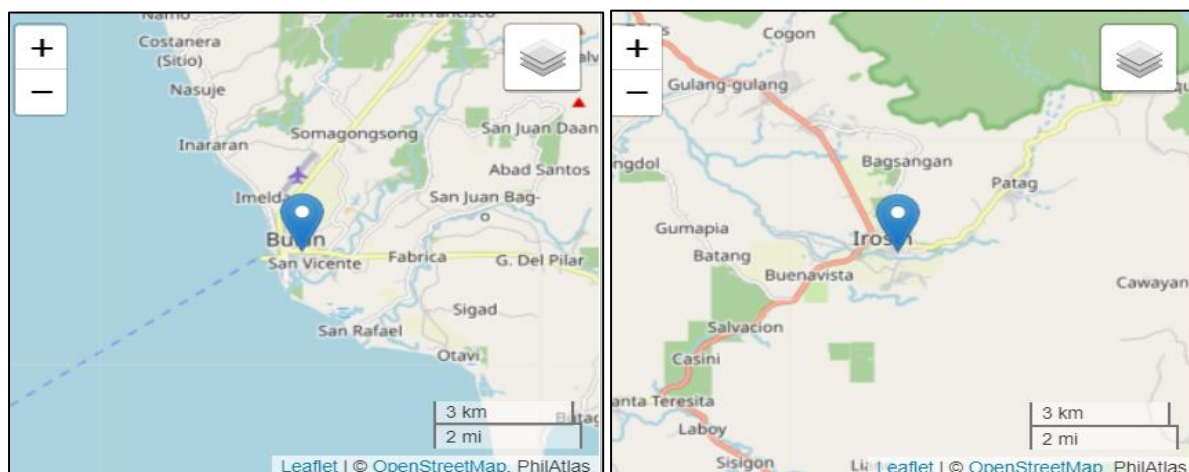
delivered to the administrative offices of the PNP Bulan and PNP Irosin for the extraction of statistics on the crime rate perpetrated in the municipalities. A total of 685 crimes data is obtained from both the stations where Municipal Police Station containing 415 crimes and Irosin Municipal Police Station containing 270 crimes for the fiscal year 2018 to the fiscal year 2020 and this obtained data had been taken as the population of the research study. The study used the quantitative method using SPSS software to process the collected data and Microsoft Excel was used for the data arrangement. Data has been descriptively analyzed to address the objectives of the study.

To safeguard the anonymity of the individuals, data were presented as aggregates in the form of percentages and averages. As part of a comparative study of crime data in two municipalities, this research employed document analysis to evaluate and compare crime statistics in the municipalities of Bulan and Irosin Sorsogon. Moreover, the Bulan Municipal Police Station and the Irosin Police Station were also approached for an ethical consideration evaluation and clearance. Throughout the data collection process, confidentiality and anonymity were preserved. The data will only be used for the research purposes.

Population and Locale of the Study

The geographical focus of the study is limited to Bulan and Irosin Municipalities of Sorsogon province, Philippines. The estimated population of the Sorsogon province by the 2020 Census was 828,655 (PhilAtlas, n.d1), representing 13.62% of the total population of the Bicol Region. It is Luzon's southernmost province, and comprises fourteen municipalities and one city. Bulan is a first-class municipality in the Philippines' province of Sorsogon (PhilAtlas, n.d2). According to the 2020 census, it has a population of 105,190 inhabitants, making it the province's most populous town. Bulan is situated on the southwestern most tip of the Bicol Peninsula on the island of Luzon (PhilAtlas, n.d2). It is the terminal and developing hub of trade and business for its adjacent towns, covering an area of exactly 20,094 hectares. It is made up of fifty-five (55) barangays and eight (8) zones and is home to people of many ethnicities (PhilAtlas, n.d2). While the Irosin is a landlocked municipality in Sorsogon's coastal province (PhilAtlas, n.d2). The municipality has a land area of 149.87 square kilometers (57.87 square miles), accounting for 7.07% of the total area of Sorsogon. The population was 59,267 according to the 2020 Census (PhilAtlas, n.d3). This accounted for 7.15% of the entire population of Sorsogon province, or 0.97% of the Bicol Region's total population. Based on these numbers, the population density is calculated to be 395 people per square kilometer or 1,024 people per square mile (PhilAtlas, n.d3).

Figure 1. Location Map of Bulan, and Irosin in the Province of Sorsogon



Source: PhilAtlas(n.d1, n.d2).

Bulan and Irosin Municipalities combine contain 20 percent population of Sorsogon province. However, due of its high crime rate, the Municipalities are considered as being unsafe to be reside there. Chances of being a victim of crime in Bulan as high as 1 in 14 in the northeast neighborhoods, or as low as 1 in 55 in the east part of the city. On average, a crime occurs every 13 days in Bulan (Crimegrade, n.d), while more likely a home to be robbed with no home security system. Also, Stealing and physical injury are the most prevalent crimes that usually happen in the Philippines (see, Caba-ong et al., 2015). Moreover, the Municipality of Irosin as one of the municipalities with the highest number of recorded crime incidences has 33 or 39.4% solved cases in FY 2015 which also went higher in FY 2016 with 54.8% or 19 solved cases of crime incidents (Dio et al., 2019). To conclude it, the municipalities of Irosin and Bulan are ranked higher in crime incidences, than other municipalities of Prieto Diaz, Sta. Magdalena, Barcelona, and Bulusan which records a less number of crime (see, Dio et al., 2019). Hence, gathering statistical data of crimes is relevant. Facts about the crime rate and patterns may help the law enforcers in the area improve the strategies for crime control. Also, the crime rate in both municipalities is not fully assessed. The purpose of this study to assess the crime rate of two municipalities to gain a deeper understanding of crime in the locality. The study also compares the crime rate and crime percentage in the Municipality of Bulan and Irosin in the Sorsogon province of Philippines from calendar year 2018 to 2020.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data set contains information on a total of 685 crimes and the data is obtained from the two police stations where Municipal Police Station contains 415 crimes and Irosin Municipal Police Station contains 270 crimes. Of the 685 individuals, 288 are female while 397 are male. The individuals are also categorized by age-wise. In which 130 age was less than 25 years, 219 individuals age were between 25 and 45, and 315 individuals age was in the range of 45 to 65. The individual in this range

was the highest in numbers in all and lastly, there were only 21 only individuals whose age was higher than 65 years. However, at the educational level, 274 individuals were illiterate, 192 were entrance passed, 116 were intermediate, 69 individuals were graduates and 34 individuals were postgraduates. The marital status of the individuals is a discrete. The total individuals are 685 in which majority (i.e., 459) of the individuals are married. 128 individuals are single and 92 are divorced. Only 5 individuals are widow.

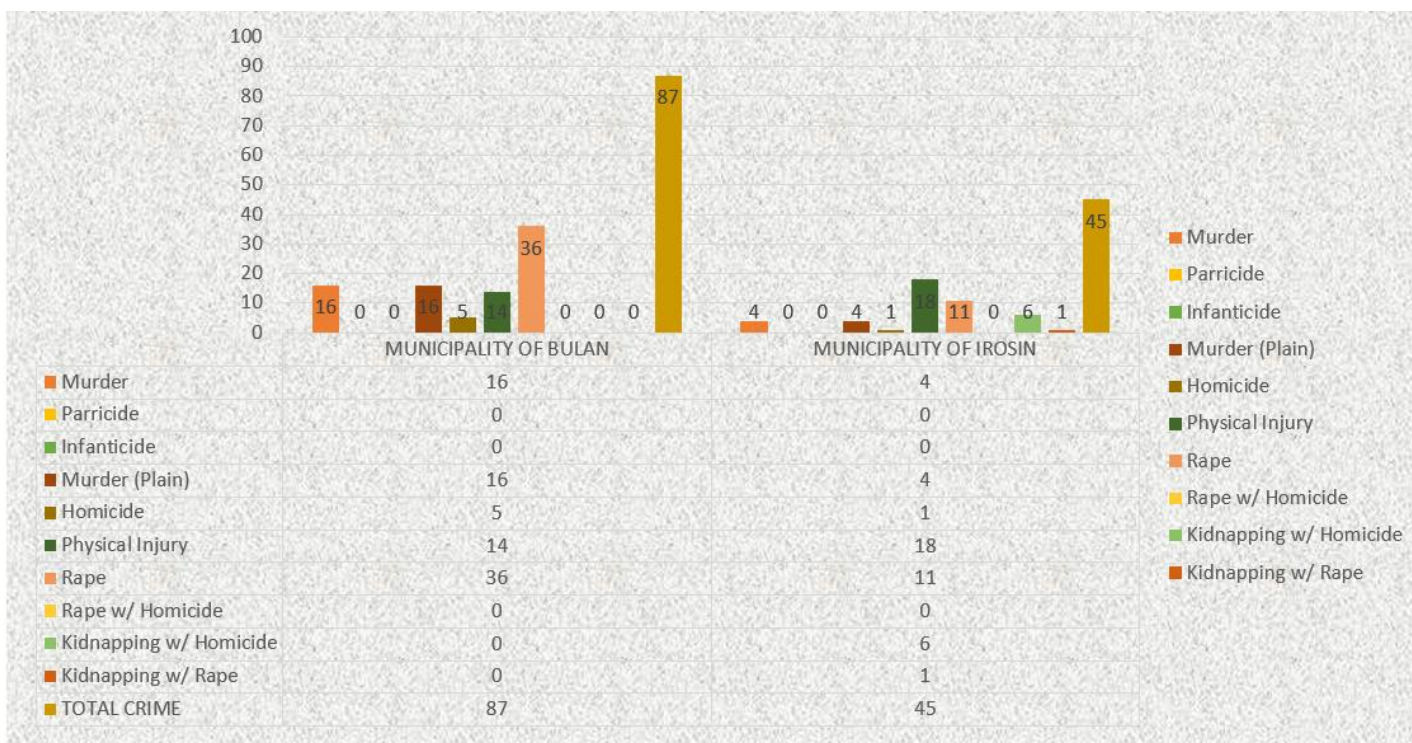
Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Data

Data Division	Categories	Number	Percentage
Gender	Female	288	42.1
	Male	397	57.9
	Total	685	100
Age (Years)	Less than 25	130	19
	25-45	219	32
	45-65	315	46
	More then 65	21	3
Education Level	Illiterate	274	40
	Matriculate	192	28
	Intermediate	116	17
	Graduate	69	10
	Postgraduate	34	5
Marital Status	Single	128	18.7
	Married	459	67
	Divorced	92	13.5
	Widow	5	0.8
Location	Municipal Police Station	415	61
	Irosin Municipal Police Station	270	39

2 contains information on individual crimes for both the cities the municipality of Bulan and Irosin. The data shows that a total of 132 crimes against the person have taken place during CY 2018 to 2020, of which 87 were in the municipality of Bulan and 45 municipalities of Irosin. The combined number of rape crimes in both municipalities was higher than the other crimes and was followed by physical injuries crimes. This implied that in places outside the cities like the municipality of Bulan and Irosin, the victim of rape has a high acknowledgment and acceptance that they are a victim because of the number of reported occurrences in the area. Eze (2013) stated that Sexual assault can be avoided, but some duties are required; some problems must be foreseen, and particular needs/circumstances must be accommodated. In the study of (Hassan et al., 2016). The majority of the victims of the sexual attack were small children. To prevent this horrific conduct, parents should be more careful in monitoring their children's whereabouts, and strict rules should be created and implemented. Offenders commit

crimes where crime opportunities coincide with their awareness space around and between routine activity nodes, such as their homes, schools, workplaces, shopping, and recreation locations. The fact that the victim and concepts of place are as influential as the convict indicates that the place where the crime is committed is, at the very least, as responsible as the person who commits the crime (Aksoy, 2017).

Figure 2. Crimes Against Person in the Municipality of Bulan and Municipality of Irosin, Sorsogon CY 2018-2020

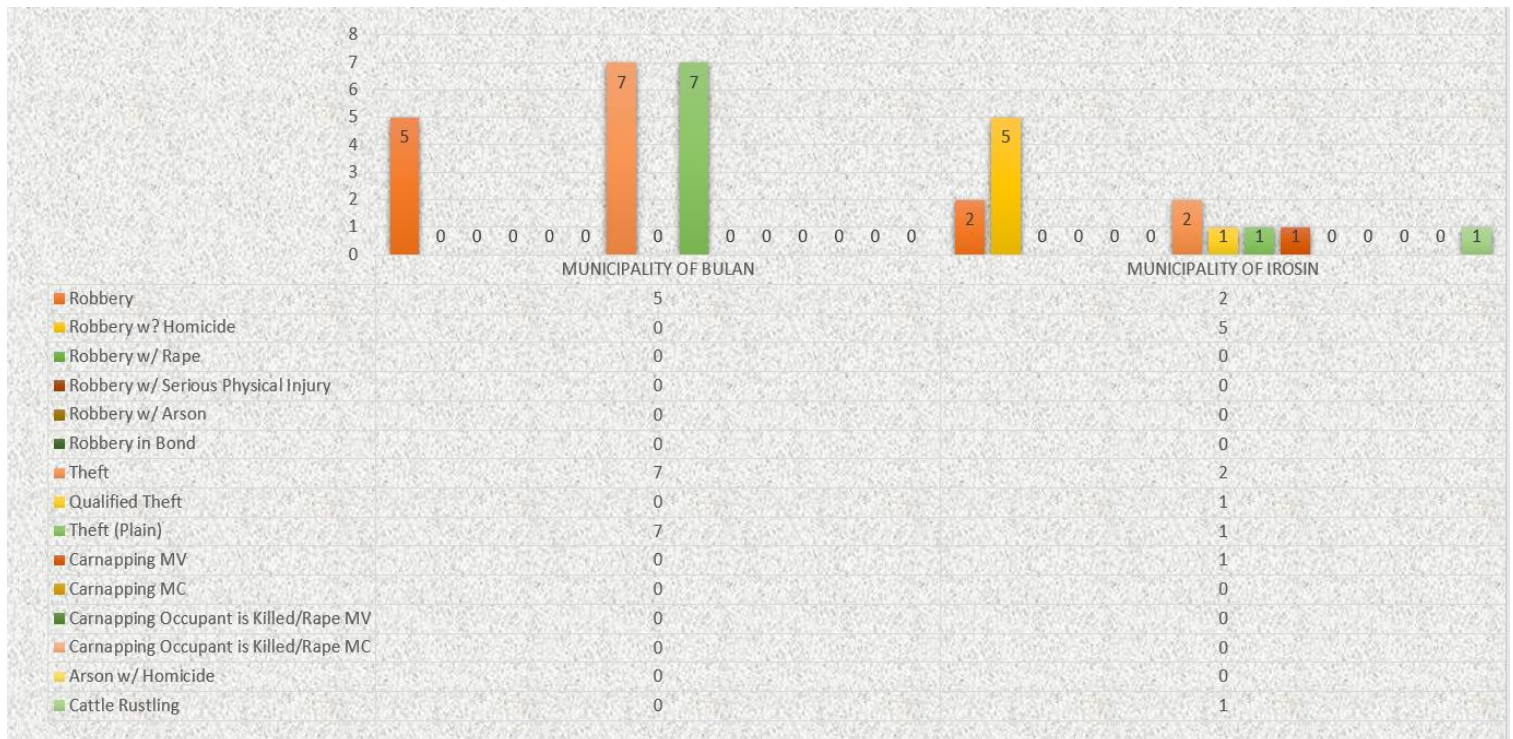


Source: Bulan Municipal Police Station, Irosin Municipal Police Station, Sorsogon Province

Figure3 presents the graphical presentation of crimes against property in the Municipality of Bulan and Irosin Sorsogon - CY 2018-2020. Data revealed that theft (plain) (82.63%) is the most common crime perpetrated in the municipality of Bulan. While in the municipality of Irosin, robbery homicide is the most numbered crime committed. Data also reflect that in both municipalities the crime of robbery with rape, robbery with serious physical injury, robbery with arson, robbery in the band, car napping MC, a car napping occupant is killed/raped MV, and the car napping occupant is killed/raped, shows no record of commission from the CY sited in the study. Moreover, according to Ghani (2017), the nature of crime differs from one geographical place to the next. Property crime is more widespread in some locations, whereas violent crime is more prominent in others. Crime is not caused by a single element; rather, several variables impact criminal activity. However, major elements that influence potential offenders'

criminal conduct include unemployment, poverty, poor governance, and shortcomings in law enforcement or crime-control organizations.

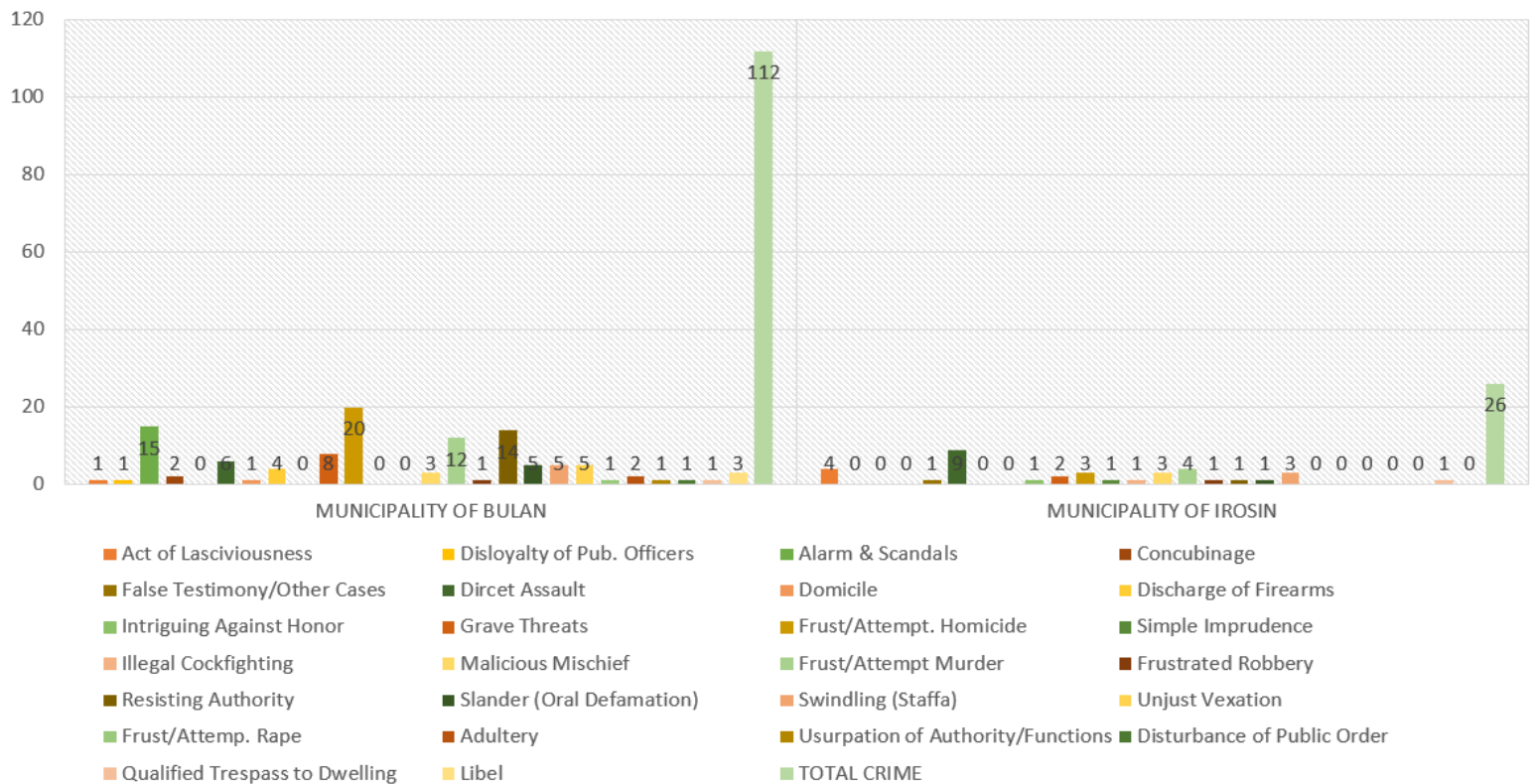
Figure 3. Crimes Against Property in the Municipality of Bulan and Municipality of Irosin Sorsogon - CY 2018-2020



Source: Bulan Municipal Police Station, Irosin Municipal Police Station, Sorsogon Province

Figure4 presents the graphical presentation of Non-Index Crime in the municipality of Bulan and Irosin, Sorsogon- CY 2018-2020. Data shows that out of 100 percent, (75.68%) of Non-index offenses were committed in the municipality of Bulan. While 24.32% committed in the municipality of Irosin. Data revealed that the most number of crimes committed in the municipality of Bulan are alarm & scandal, frustrated attempted homicide, frustrated attempted murder, and resisting authorities (88.82%). While in the municipality of Irosin Sorsogon, the highest number of crimes committed are acts of lasciviousness, direct assault, frustrated attempted homicide malicious mischief, attempted frustrated murder, and swindling (staff) (44.25%). Andzenge (1991) stated that the pace of the rise in crime appears to be incompatible with the rate of progress. Development may have led to a drop in crime in places such as Asia. The study's findings indicate that, while there appears to be a link between development and crime, the relationship appears to vary by location. This implies that some cultural and geographical variables may have a role in the connection. Because there is a negative association between the two in other locations, developers can assist reduce the frequency and rates of crime.

Figure 4. Non- Index Crime in Municipality of Bulan and Municipality of Irosin Sorsogon - CY 2018-2020

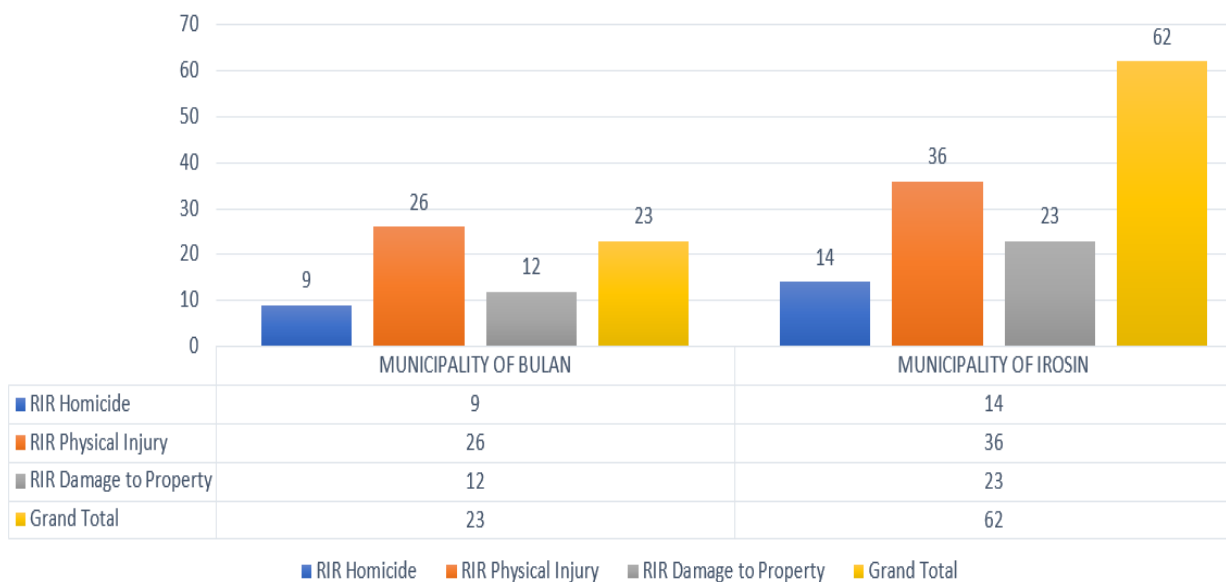


Source: Bulan Municipal Police Station, Irosin Municipal Police Station, Sorsogon Province

Figure 5 present the graphical presentation of Traffic Accidents in the Municipality of Bulan and Irosin Sorsogon - CY 2018-2020. Data shows that in the municipality of Bulan. Physical injury was the most number of traffic accidents with (41.94%) while in Irosin Sorsogon (65.71%) was RIR damage to property. However, as to the total number of traffic accidents majority of the said incident has occurred in the municipality of Irosin Sorsogon (60.83%). There are many differences in the municipality of Bulan. The implication is that the municipality of Bulan has a strict implementation of traffic regulations unlike Irosin which has a lenient implementation of traffic rules and regulations that is their data shows a higher number of traffic incidents committed. It implied that they perceive Robberies are regarded as a higher threat than crashes, however, the latter may be overstated. In nations with high accident and violent event data, such findings might be utilized to direct traffic safety legislation, education, and campaigns, with a focus on collision outcomes (da Silva & de Camargo Braga, 2018). Within the study period, young persons were overrepresented in injuries and deaths. Though many of the young individuals involved in collisions were driving at the time, it was also clear that they were frequently victims of a crash caused by someone else. To lessen the impact of traffic collisions on young people, there is a need to address road safety in general (Al Reesi et al., 2016). When young drivers were engaged in accidents, they were mostly men. These drivers' mishaps can be ascribed to a combination

of risk-taking and inexperience. The main risk factors for deaths were speeding and driving at night (Pawłowski et al., 2019). According to their findings, traffic-related injuries are the main cause of mortality for Polish males aged 18 to 44. The most prevalent cause of road accidents in Poland was a failure to follow traffic laws, such as excessive speeding. We also discovered that drivers misjudged driving conditions, experienced a lack of suitable road infrastructure, and kept numerous vehicles in bad condition.

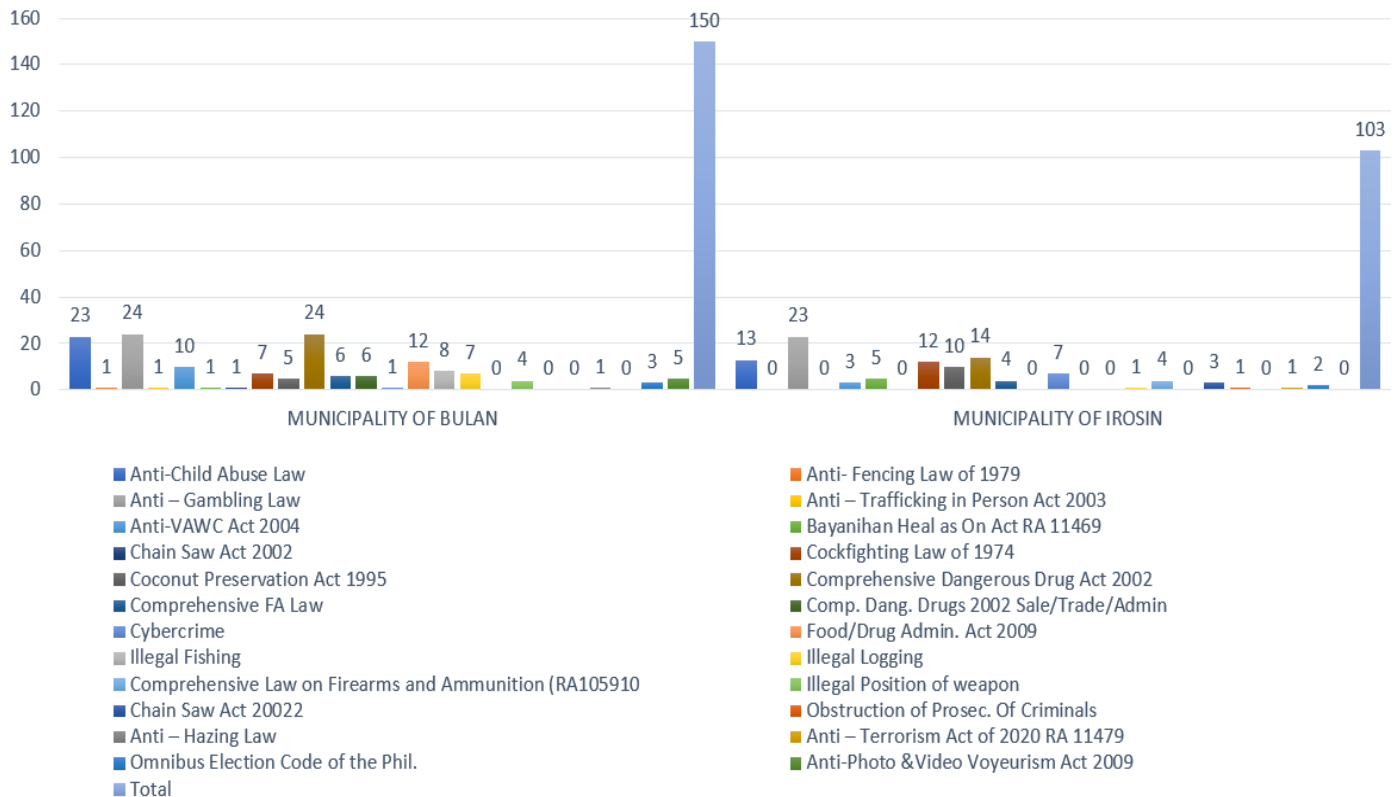
Figure 5. Traffic Accidents in the Municipality of Bulan and the Municipality of Irosin Sorsogon - CY 2018-2020



Source: Bulan Municipal Police Station, Irosin Municipal Police Station, Sorsogon Province

Figure6 presents the graphical presentation of special laws in the municipality of Bulan and the municipality of Irosin Sorsogon - CY 2018-2020. Data revealed that the total crime rate committed under the special laws with (253) total crime in both municipalities, the Municipality of Bulan has the highest crime percentage at (59.29%) compare to the municipality of Irosin with (40.71%). However, it also shows that the anti-gambling, anti-child abuse, anti-VAWC act 2004, Comprehensive Dangerous Drug Act 2002, and Food/Drug Admin. Act 2009 with (71.06%) has a high crime committed in the municipality of Bulan. While under the municipality of Irosin, the anti-gambling law has a high number of crimes committed (48.94%) with the combined total crime committed in both municipalities. This goes to show that among all crimes committed under special laws, there is the highest number of reported crime incidents compared to another category of crime committed.

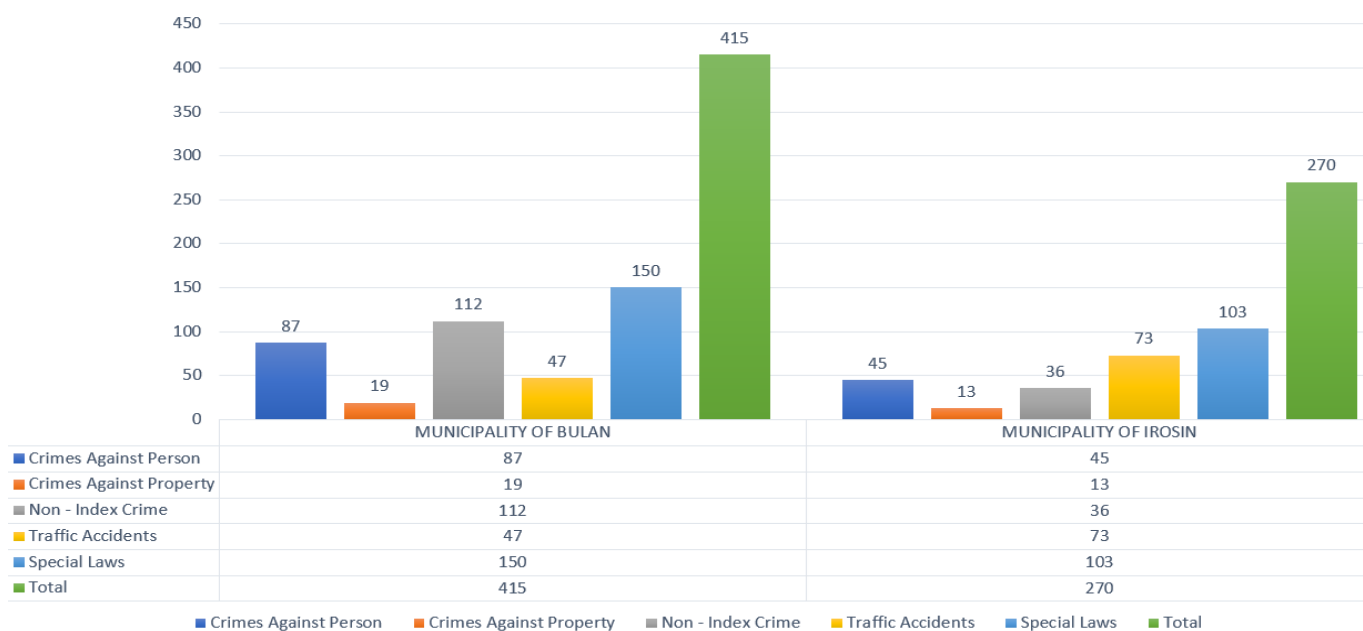
Figure 6. Special Laws in the Municipality of Bulan and the Municipality of Irosin Sorsogon - CY 2018-2020



Source: Bulan Municipal Police Station, Irosin Municipal Police Station, Sorsogon Province

This may be implied that both municipalities are strict in implementing and enforcing the laws their anti-crime prevention policy and strategy are observable. In words of Carcach (2000), crime levels in local areas are influenced by population size and geography. These elements are related to a region's ability to attract new economic activity, adapt to economic change, and promote local growth. Small communities located near big urban areas have crime rates comparable to distant places. However, geographical or service isolation may not always play a role in determining crime rates in rural areas (those with fewer than 1,000 persons). Economic change and the ability to adapt, population emigration, and the depth of community bonds are all important variables in influencing crime levels in these areas. Lastly, Figure 7 presents the graphical presentation of a summary of the total crime rate in the Municipality of Bulan and Municipality of Irosin Sorsogon. Data reflected that in the comparison of the two municipalities in the province, the Municipality of Bulan has a high crime rate of (61%) compared to the Municipality of Irosin which has (39%) of total crime rate.

Figure 7. Total Crime Rate in the Municipality of Bulan and the Municipality of Irosin Sorsogon - CY 2018-2020



Source: Bulan Municipal Police Station, Irosin Municipal Police Station, Sorsogon Province

Data also revealed that the crime under special law has a high number of crimes committed with (253) total in the five parameters of crime in both municipalities. Interestingly crime against property was (32) total crimes committed in both municipalities showing a low number of crimes based on the record. It shows that in both municipalities there is less opportunity for the commission of crime related to crimes against property, in a study by Brown (2018) is related to this study because the physical characteristics of places have an effect on crime when social characteristics of the population are also considered. A local crime watch organization feels that the administration's increased anti-illegal drug campaign contributed significantly to the decrease in the number of reported offenses (Kyodo News, 2017). Another is because of During the installation of the community quarantine, crime incidences in the country was reduced by 47 percent. This equates to an average of 92 cases per day, as opposed to 172 cases per day during the six-month pre-quarantine period (Caliwan, 2020).

CONCLUSION AND POLICY REMARKS

Today, the increasing rate of crimes is a vital concern, not only for the common individuals but for administrators, policymakers, criminal justice personnel and police forces. In efforts to reduce crime and violence, countries have adopted many preventative strategies for reducing actual crime and fear of crime such as hiring more police officers at police departments, installing more video cameras on roads and public places, and utilizing weapon-detection systems, etc. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to compare the crime rate and crime percentage in the Municipality of Bulan and Irosin in

the Sorsogon province of the Philippines from the calendar year 2018 to 2020 in terms of Crime Against Person, Crime Against Property, Non- Index Crime, Traffic Incident, Special Law with the end goal of formulating intervention measures or programs that can help the authorities in to improve in their campaign in crime prevention.

The findings of the study revealed that the combined number of crime committed by male individuals were highest than female in Municipal Police Station and Irosin Municipal Police Station. Of these, 42.1 percent were females while 57.9 percent are males. Age-wise crimes were highest between 45 to 65 years. Moreover, crimes against property in the Municipality of Bulan and Irosin Sorsogon for the calendar year from 2018 to 2020, the data revealed that theft (plain) (82.63%) is the most common crime perpetrated in the municipality of Bulan while in the municipality of Irosin, robbery homicide is the most numbered crime committed. However, the traffic accidents in the Municipality of Bulan and Irosin Sorsogon - CY 2018-2020. Data shows that in the municipality of Bulan. Physical injury was the most number of traffic accidents with (41.94%) while in Irosin Sorsogon (65.71%) was RIR damage to property. However, as to the total number of traffic accidents majority of the said incident has occurred in the municipality of Irosin Sorsogon (60.83%) while crimes committed under special laws, the number of reported crime incidents was highest compared to another category of crime committed. Hence, the total crime rate in the Municipality of Bulan and Municipality of Irosin Sorsogon province is concluded in such a way that in the comparison of the two municipalities in the province, the Municipality of Bulan has a high crime rate of (61%) compared to the Municipality of Irosin which has (39%) of total crime rate.

Thus, the researcher concludes that crime prevention strategies implemented by police forces in the municipalities of Bulan and Irosin Sorsogon Province were far more effective in reducing crime rates due to the low crime rates recorded under crimes against a person, crimes against property, traffic incidents, and special laws. Crime in the area would have been much higher if the PNP had not implemented crime-reduction tactics in both towns. It was discovered that between the municipalities of Bulan and Irosin in the province of Sorsogon, the municipality of Bulan has a higher crime rate because of its population and geographical location, which is larger and more developed than the municipality of Irosin, which is considered a landlocked area in the province of Sorsogon. Maintain and consistently enhance the municipality's crime prevention, public safety, and security. The following are suggested based on the study's findings, the police may strengthen the implementation of their plans and projects in ensuring public safety and security and intensify further their campaign against illegal drugs. The police may continue to collaborate closely with many community sectors to guarantee the seamless implementation of its programs and projects to protect public safety and security. Intensify the campaign against any forms of criminality and may be further reviewed and coordinated from the Provincial Level down to the barangay level. Information awareness campaigns in any form like in any

platform of social media in all their programs and projects may be made available in the community to increase awareness and support of stakeholders, especially in the far-flung areas in the municipality. Additional Police Personnel may be deployed in the municipality to strengthen police visibility.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

This study has limitations that can serve as an avenue for future researchers. First, this study was conducted in two municipalities in Bulan and Irosin of the Sorsogon province, Philippines. Hence, the findings of this study cannot be generalized due to their varying organizational structure. Further, this study cannot be generalized to other parts of the country due to different cultural contexts, therefore, caution should be taken when interpreting the results. Secondly, the study has only taken three calendars year such as from 2018 to 2020 which cannot be generalized for a longer period. Third, the study is in terms of crime against a person, crime against property, non-index crime, traffic incident, and special law. Henceforth, future studies should include other crimes rate such as violent crimes, youth violence, assaults by strangers, hate Crimes, drug crimes, and street crimes etc. Lastly, a wider scope for future researchers should study the topic with the increased sample within the Sorsogon province and broadly the country.

Data (and Software) Availability

This study was analyzed using (Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 22, Microsoft Excel 2013). All data underlying the result are available as part of the article through a request from the corresponding author.

Authors Contributions

All the authors contributed equally in conducting this research study.

Competing Interests

Upon the publication of this study, no conflict of interest was declared by the researchers.

Ethical Statement

The Bulan Municipal Police Station and the Irosin Police Station were also approached for an ethical consideration evaluation and clearance. Throughout the data collection process, confidentiality and anonymity were preserved. The data will only be used for this study.

Acknowledgment

The Author would like to express her deep and sincere gratitude to the Commission on Higher Education Region V (CHED – Sikap) for allowing me to conduct this research study and for the financial support. To my subject professor, Dr. Robino D. Cawi for allowing me to do this research study and providing invaluable guidance and suggestions to improve my study his knowledge, expertise, sincerity, and motivation have deeply inspired me. And to Bulan Municipal Police Station and Irosin Municipal Police Station for allowing me to conduct this comparative study.

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