INDIGENT STUDENTS IN THE ACADEME: THE ROLE OF MOTIVATIONS, RESILIENCY, CHALLENGES AND NEEDS IN THEIR ACADEMIC JOURNEY

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Abstract - Indigent students are not surprising in the Philippines but how they can survive in the academe of higher learning makestheir story interesting. The study sought to determine the motivations, resiliency, challenges and needs of these indigent students in thetertiary level. This is a quantitative descriptive-correlational method of research employing the use of interview and questionnairetechniques. The 240 indigent students of Tagbilaran City College were the respondents of this study. It was found out that they areextremely motivated in 6 out of 7 motivations. Furthermore, nearly 93% of them are commendably strongly to exceptionallyresilient.The challenges on system and time management and non-tuition fee expenses made them feel difficult to survive in College. There is nosignificant difference of the students' needs in the three academic programs. Studies and financial management topped among theseneeds. Their level of resiliency and perceived challenges have significant correlation. For them to be helped perform academically betterand survive in the academe, financial help, better communication of the lecturers and nutritious food should be addressed. It is stronglyrecommended thattheschoolcomeupwith institutionalfinancial aidpolicies.

Keywords – Indigent Students, Indigence, Motivations, Resiliency, Challenges

I. INTRODUCTION

Poverty and inequality in the Philippines remains a challenge[2].Infact,thefullyear2018povertyincidence amongpopulation, or the proportion of poor Filipinos whose per capitaincome is not sufficient to meet their basic food and non-foodneeds, was estimated at 16.6 percent, translated to 17.6 millionFilipinos who lived below the poverty threshold [12]. With thismillionsoulsexistingunderextremelymiserablelivingconditions,indigenceisinseparablefromthelivesofthemillion Filipino students. Based on the 2017 Annual PovertyIndicators Survey (APIS), there were 3.6 million out-of-schoolchildren and youth (OSCY).Of the 3.6 million OSCYs, 83. 1%were 16-24 years old youth who are not in school, not gainfullyemployedandhavenotfinishedcollegeorpost-secondarycourse [14]. With national development as the ultimate goal, thePhilippine government invested in the future of the youth. Infact, the Republic Act No. 10931, or the Universal Access toQuality Tertiary Education Act, which mandates the free tuitionandmiscellaneousfeesinlocalandstateuniversitiesandcolleges,isinfullswing[10].Withthegovernment's„Nooneisleftbehind" policy,thelawonfreetertiaryeducation,regardless of beliefs, gender,and socioeconomic status, assureseveryFilipinoequalaccesstoeducation.

Since August 2017, when the free tuition law took effect, morestudents from different high schools have taken an interest toattendcollege[11].Collegeenrolmentsurgedamonglow-income students [5]. Students from indigent families flocked incollege. Their presencechanged the face of Philippine TertiaryEducational landscape. At the same time, their perspective inlifeshifted. Their usual routine of how to feed their stomach in adaymayhavebeenexacerbatedtohowtosurviveintheacademe. Considering their status quo, they are prone to risks.The academic pressures, the environment full of diversity, theirnon-tuition fee expenses and many others pose them threats. Infact,acollegeinstitutionofferingeducationexclusivefforstudents from low income families had significant turned out initsenrolleesafterasemesterin2019duetofinancialproblems[1]andacademicpressures.

Hence,despitefreetertiaryeducation,indigentstudentsstillhave reasons to discontinue schooling.Thesereasons promptedthe researcher to explore on the cases of indigent students in thetertiary level. This investigation sought to shed light on theirmotivations, resiliency, challenges and needs and to find outhowtheycanbehelpedperformacademicallybetteranddsurviveineducationofhigherlearning.

II. OBJECTIVE

Thisstudywasconductedtodeterminethemotivations,resiliency,challengesandneedsofindigentstudentsinthetertiary level. With the significant findings, the study hopedthattheschooladministrationmaybeguidedtocomeupwithprogramsintended forthesubjectsofthestudy.

III. METHODOLOGY

Thisisaquantitativedescriptive-correlationalmethodofresearchemployingtheuseofinterviewandquestionnairetechniques.Throughpurposivesampling,the240indigentstudents, who are Alternative Learning System, Old and K-12curriculumgraduatesofTagbilaranCityCollegeweretherespondents of this study.The 240 respondents were composedof first year students from the three academic programs: OfficeAdministration,TourismManagementandEntrepreneurship.The respondents brought the questionnaires home and returnedthem through the class mayors 2 days after.The study tookplaceduringthefirstweekofDecember2019.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the motivations to study of the indigent students.It reveals that they are extremely motivated to study in collegeforfinancialstability,preparationforfuturefamily,gainknowledge and skills for job security, personal satisfactionanddevelopment,bettercareeropportunities andsocialskillsdevelopment.
Allthesareas,„correspondexactly"totheirreasons of getting college education. All these six are reasons tohavebetterandcomfortablelife.Itimpliesthattherespondentsare full of whims and schemes in life. It also connotes the ideaof no focus or clear goal in studying college. Since they havepervasive reasons to study in college, the tendency is they mightget lost. Too many reasons would lead to uncertainty. Living bythe social norms highly motivated them as well. This meanssociety's expectation over someone's decision to get educationis still atwork.

Amongthesemotivations,financialstabilitywiththemeanof4.75 tops the reason of their decision to be in college.
Makingmoremoneyiswhatdrivesthemtogotocollege.Theirpersonalexperienceandbackgroundofbeingdeprivedfinancially explains this tendency. In the minds of people whoexperience the worst of indigence dwells the idea that moneycan solve everything. Money can give a comfortable life.Apostsecondarydegreegivestheopportunitytopursuehighpayingcareers [9].
Theirpersonalbackgroundandexperiencegavethemtheinsight to prepare for their future family. This implies that theydon't want their future children to suffer the same fate. Tostruggle and live in scarcity is something they don't like theirchildren to experience. Item no.9 in the questionnaire, (Part I:Motivation),„tosetanexampleformychildren"gotanindividualscoreof4.56withaqualitativedescriptionof „Corresponds a lot" which means extremely motivated.Thisinsinuates the precept that they want their future children todreamandgeteducated.

Table1: IndigentStudents"MotivationtoStudy

Motivations	Mean	Rank	VerbalInterpretation
FinancialStability	4.75	1	ExtremelyMotivated
GainKnowledgeandSkills forJob Security	4.41	3	ExtremelyMotivated
Personal Satisfaction andDevelopment	4.38	4	ExtremelyMotivated
PreparationforFuture Family	4.57	2	ExtremelyMotivated
BetterCareerOpportunities	4.27	5.5	ExtremelyMotivated
SocialSkillsDevelopment	4.27	5.5	ExtremelyMotivated
Livingbythesocial norms	3.99	7	HighlyMotivated

Legend:

Mean	Qualitative Description	VerbalInterpretation
4.20-5.00	Corresponds exactly	Extremely Motivated
3.40-4.19	Corresponds a lot	Highly Motivated
2.60-3.39	Corresponds moderately	Moderately Motivated
1.80-2.59	Corresponds a little	Slightly Motivated
1.00-1.79	Does not correspond at all	Poorly Motivated

Table 2 presents the level of resiliency of the indigent students.The data shows that 46.25 % or 111 out of 240 respondents fallunderexceptionallevelofresiliency.Therespondentswithexceptional levelofresiliency arevery resilientmost ofthetimeandrarely failtobounceback whatever lifethrows atthem. They believe in making their own luck. Simply put, theyare very confident to stand unmoved by whatever circumstancesthey meet in life. Since they are used to living a life full ofchallenges, their faith, patience and life skills have already beenformed. Thus, nearly half of the respondents, no matter whattheyfaceincollege, theycanstandfirm.

Furthermore,awhopping47.08%or113ofthetotalrespondentswithameanof3.53withaqualitativedescriptionof „StronglyAgree"areclassifiedunderstronglevelofresiliency. These students are pretty good at rolling with thepunches and they have an impressive track record ofturningsetbacksintoopportunities.Financialdistressbecauseofthenon-tuitionfeeexpenses,troublesduetosystemlossandundefined time management (both with Qualitative Descriptionofbeing„Difficult"inTable3)academicdistressduetoanumber of subject requirements and social anxieties, which areslightly challenging (in Table 3) are just some of the setbacksthat the indigent students face. With strong level of resiliency,thesestudentscanturnthesesetbacksintoopportunitiesoflearning. They don't see them as threats but as chances to theiradvantage,tobuildanddevelopthemselves.
On the other hand, only 3.33 % or 8 out of 240 respondents areunder developing level. These

indigent students, although theymay notalwaysfeelatthemercy ofevents,wouldinfactbenefit significantly from developing aspects of their behavior.Meaning, they gain insights from their experiences. „Charge toexperience‟ maybecome theircommon line.

With a composite mean of 3.1, the indigent students have stronglevel of resiliency. Meaning, they are pretty good at rolling withthe punches and they have an impressive track record of turningsetbacks into opportunities. Generally speaking,this data speaksthat the students are prepared for challenges. The more resilientthey are, fewer the challenges they feel difficult (refer to Tables2 &3). Table7 supports this idea where challenges and level ofresiliencycorrelatewitheachother.Thus,facingwiththechallenges(in Table3),theycan'tjustsurrender.

Table2: IndigentStudents'LevelofResiliency,N=240

Student'sResponses			LevelofResiliency
Frequency	Percentage	Mean	
111	46.25%	4.51	ExceptionalLevel
113	47.08%	3.53	StrongLevel
8	3.33%	2.82	EstablishedLevel
8	3.33%	1.52	Developinglevel
	CompositeMean	3.1	StrongLevel

Legend:

Mean	**LevelofResiliency**
4.01-5.00	Exceptionallevel
3.01-4.00	StrongLevel
2.01-3.00	EstablishedLevel
1.00-2.00	Developinglevel

Shown in Table 3 are the challenges perceived by the indigentstudents. The table revealed that „non-tuition fee expenses witha mean of 2.71 is a difficult challenge faced by the indigentstudents. This challenge includes their food allowance, boardandlodging,farefortheirtransportation,expensesfor thesubject requirements, and others. This issue involvesfinances.Withparentsearningmeagerincomeand theydon'thaveanother source, they cannot sustain their needs. When they wereaskedwhatfactormaybeimprovedtohelpthemperform better,„FinancialHelp‟receivedascoreof64.17%or equivalent of 111 out of 240 respondents (Table 5). Money fortheir non-tuition fee expenses is of great concern that caused asignificantturned outof enrolleesin theCityCollege[1].

Furthermore, they found it „difficult‟ or challenging for them tomanage their time and to practice a system (Mean=2.66) ofdoing things. Their organization skills have not been mastered.Poor time management results to piling up their school-relatedprojects and assignments. Much time has been wasted for notfollowing a system in doing things. Based on the interviews,students said they did not know where to begin their school-relatedworks.Sleeplessnightswerespenttomeetdeadlines.

Onthecontrary,havinganestablishedlevelofresiliency(Mean=3.1, Table 2) helps them face emotional and physicalproblems, psychosocial anxieties and academic pressures. Forthem, they are just slightly challenging given the fact that thesestudentsareusedtothiskindofissuesintheirchildhood.Forsomereasons,theyhavealreadybuilttheirself-confidencewhen it comes to these problems; however, these challengesshouldnotbeignoredfortheymightcausementalhealthproblems in a later time if they remain unresolved. Little thingswhen accumulatedbecomeuncontrollable.

Table3: IndigentStudents'PerceivedChallenges

PerceivedChallenges	Rank	Mean	QualitativeDescription
Systemand Time Management	2	2.66	Difficult
Non-tuitionFee Expenses	1	2.71	Difficult
EmotionalandPhysical HealthProblems	3	2.33	SlightlyDifficult
PsychosocialAnxieties	5	2.04	SlightlyDifficult
AcademicPressures	4	2.15	SlightlyDifficult

Legend:

Mean	**QualitativeDescriptionInterpretation**
3.26-4.00	VeryDifficult Very Challenging
2.51-3.25	Difficult Challenging
1.76-2.50	SlightlyDifficult SlightlyChallenging
1.00-1.75	NotDifficult NotChallenging

Table 4 reveals the truth that the respondents believe thateveryneedisveryimportantforthem.Itconnotestheideaofgenerality,whichmayresulttoambiguity.Whenranked according to their means, the needs for their „Studies‟ (Mean=4.20, 4.28, 4.18) appears to be the top priority among all needsfortheindigentstudents.Theyaredescribedas„extremelyimportant‟ and „very important‟ respectively by the students inthe three academic programs. Their studies are their priority.Table 1 supports this data for they are extremely motivated tostudy because they believe that finishing college and earning adegreewouldsomedaygivethemfinancialstability(Mean=4.75), prepare for their future family (Mean=4.57)andgainknowledgeandskillsforjobsecurity(Mean=4.41).Educationistheirhopetoimprovetheir wayof living.

Experiencingtheworstoffinancialincapacity,theyhighlyneededhelptoaddress„FinancialManagement‟(Mean

=4.16,4.16, 4.15). Students in the three programs highly neededtips onhow to manage finances, obtain information about part-timejobs, and save money. Being financially incapacitated pushedthem to learn how to solve their own financial incapacity. Itimpliestheideathatnootherpeoplecansolvetheirownproblemsbuttheythemselves.

Across the three programs, the indigent students have the samepriority and level of importance of their needs. This is proven inTable6thatrevealsnosignificantdifferenceofneedsamongtheOfficeAdministration,TourismManagementandEntrepreneurship students. This might be due to the fact they allstand on the same ground. People of the same background havethe same needs as the saying goes, "Birds of the same featherflocktogether".

Table4: IndigentStudents'NeedsbyAcademicProgram

StudentsbyAcademicProgram	Rank	OfficeAdministration Students		Rank	TourismManagement Students		Rank	Entrepreneurship Students	
Student'sNeeds		Mean	QualitativeDescription		Mean	QualitativeDescription		Mean	QualitativeDescription
Self-Development	3	4.08	VI	3	4.12	VI	3	4.07	VI
FamilyRelationship	6	3.56	VI	6	3.74	VI	6	3.53	VI
SocialRelationship	5	3.59	VI	5	3.76	VI	5	3.60	VI
Studies	1	4.20	EI	1	4.28	EI	1	4.18	VI
FinancialManagement	2	4.16	VI	2	4.16	VI	2	4.15	VI
SpecificSocialIssues	4	3.85	VI	4	3.93	VI	4	3.77	VI

Legend:

Mean	QualitativeDescription	Interpretation
4.20-5.0	(EI)-ExtremelyImportant	ExtremelyNeeded
3.40-4.19	(VI)-VeryImportant	HighlyNeeded
2.60-3.39	(MI)-ModeratelyImportant	ModeratelyNeeded
1.80-2.59	(SI)-SomewhatImportant	SlightlyNeeded
1.00-1.79	(NI)-NotImportantat All	NotNeeded

Presented in Table 5 are the factors that the indigent studentsbelieve can help them perform academically better. Majority ofthe respondents (64.17%) believed that "Financial Help" (Rank1) can help them survive in College. Having established level ofresiliency (Table 2) plus the financial assistance that they shallreceive, they believe they can hurdle the challenges they founddifficult(Table3).Withthefinancialassistance,theirworriesand anxieties about their non-tuition fee expenses (Table 3) willdissipate with an assurance that "All is well". Their focus is nolongeronwhereandhowtofindmoneyfortheirfoodallowance, boardandlodging,farefortheirtransportation,subject requirement expenditures, and the like, will be divertedto their academic undertakings. They can focus on learning thelessonsintheclassroom. Theycanfocusonattendingtotheir projects and assignments. The academic pressures, emotionalandphysicalhealthproblems,psychosocialanxietieswhichare „Slightly Difficult" for them (Table 3) will become a naughtonce they are financially assisted. Challenges involving moneycanruinaday.

Better communication of the lecturers caught the attention ofhalf of the respondents. There are 122 out of 240 or 50.83% ofthe respondents spoke up that there is a need to improve thespeakingabilitiesoftheteachers.FluencyintheEnglishLanguageandtheabilityoftheteacherstoexpressthemselvesinclasscanmorelikelychallengeandinspiretheindigentstudents to better perform in class. Given their educational andsocietal background, the indigent student may not be able tospeakstraightEnglishbuttheycanunderstand.Thewayateacher articulates and delivers her message in class can makelearning happen even to the slowest learner in the room. Theseindigent students were deprived to experience the best teacherswhose speaking ability is superb. In the classroom with superbteachers, deprived students can change the perspective. Betterperspective in the classroom results to better mood. With bettermoodcomesthemotivationtolearndespitethepressures.Grittyteachersmaketheindigentstudents grittier.

Moreover, the factor „Nutritious Food" got noteworthy data. Itcaught the attention of the 48.33 % of the respondents. It hassomething to do with the food sold in the canteen. Based oninformal interviews, the canteen concessionaires sold the samevariety of food every day. Mostly, the foods sold did not followtheprescribedthreefoodgroupsthatanindividualshouldconsume. Monotonous food leads to loss of appetite. Loss ofappetite leads to student's empty stomach. Left with no optionconsidering the school campus is secluded, indigent

students,rentingaboardinghouseornot,wouldflockinth ecanteen.When asked what other issues they encounteredduringtheirstayinCollege,therespondentsr eplied“EatingConcerns”.Thisimpliesaproblemmighth aveonfoodaspect.

Lastly,thoughwithlesssignificantnumber,Teachersbeh avior in approaching students‟ should not be ignored. Table4showsthatthetopmostneedoftheindigentstudent sistheir,Studies‟(ExtremelyImportant).Theteachersde liverthelessons in class every day. They are the people these studentstalk to about difficulty in understanding lessons. Their presencein the classroom is primordial to students‟ understanding thelessons. If they, teachers, show unprofessionalism indealingwithstudents‟misdemeanorwouldsomehows hownegativeimpacttothestudents.Lessrespectwithunp rofessionalteachersdiminishesstudents‟ interestto stayin class.

Table 5: Factors to Help Indigent Students PerformAcademicallyBetter,N= 240

Factors	Frequency	Rank	Percentage
FinancialHelp	154	1	64.17%
BetterBoardingHouseneartotheCollege	49	9	20.42%
GoodClassroomEnvironment	97	4	40.41%
BetterCommunicationofthe Lecturers	122	2	50.83%
MoreIndustrialExposure	63	7	26.25%
FlexibleTime	48	10	20.00%
NutritiousFood	116	3	48.33%
Mentor-shipProgramstoImproveEnglish	92	5	38.33%
Help fromCounselors	59	8	24.58%
AttractiveCollegeEnvironment	78	6	32.5%
Others;Teacher‟sbehaviorinapproaching students	1	11	0.42 %

Table 6 shows the significant difference of the needs among thethreegroupsofstudents.UsingtheAnalysisofVarianc e(ANOVA), the result shows that the F observedvalue of 0.962is lower than the Critical factor of 3.04.This result accepts thenullhypothesis.Hence,significantdifferenceamongt heindigent students’ needs in the three academic programsdoes notexist.The Post Hoc Test, Scheffe test, supports this data. TheneedsoftheindigentstudentsfromthethreeAcademi cPrograms do not necessarily differ. This is proven in Table 4that shows across the three programs, the indigent students havethe same priority and level of importance of their needs. Thisfact can be attributed to the reality that they all stand on thesame ground. People of the same background have the sameneedsasthesayinggoes,“Birdsofthesamefeatherfl ocktogether”.Table4 supports thisclaim.

Table 6: Significant Difference of Needs among the OfficeAdministration,TourismManagementandEntrepreneur shipStudents

AcademicPrograms	F	CriticalFactor	Decision	Interpretation
OfficeAdministration TourismManagement Entrepreneurship	0.962	3.04	AcceptHo	Insignificant

Table 7 shows the relationship of indigent students‟ motivation,resiliency,challengesandneeds.Withtheco mputedtvalueof0.14thatislowerthanthecriticalvalueof 1.960,the nullhypothesis is accepted. Hence, the level of resiliency and needshave no correlation.This implies that the level of resiliencydoes not influence the needs of the indigent students nor theirneeds depend on their level of resiliency.Even if majority of therespondents are strongly (47.08 %) to exceptionally (46.25%)resilient,theneedsforself-development,familyandsocialrelationship, financial management, specific social issues andtheirstudiesarestillveryimportantforthem.Theyare notcomplacentbeingstronglyresilient.Notthattheyarev eryresilient, they do not need anymore the rapport with the peoplearound them. They value these aspects. They still are willing togrowandlearn.

Furthermore, needs and resiliency do not correlate with eachother. In fact, a person can be resilient even his needs for self-developmentarenotaddressed.Sayforinstance,many,e venwith unmet needs, have not finished their college education,have family and social issues, but they have survived in the testoflife.They aresuccessful.Besides,many whose needsthathad not been satisfiedsurvived college, and there are manywhoseneedshadbeenaddressedbutfailed.Needsar enotdeterminants of the level of resiliency nor the level of resiliencydeterminesone’sneeds.Onewhohasexceptio nallevelofresiliency cannot say he need not to establish good relationshipwith people. Thecomputedtvaluebetweentherespondents‟needsand motivations is 0.77 that is lower than the critical value of 1.960.This accepts the null hypothesis. The respondents‟ needs andmotivationsdonotcorrelatewitheachother.Theirrea sonstostudy in college are not because of the aforementioned needs.They just enrolled not knowingyet their true purpose ofgoingto college. Say for instance, Table 1 shows that six out of sevenmotivationstostudy,therespondentsare,,extremel ymotivated‟.Theyhave,,universal‟reasons.Universalit yleadstoambiguity. The data imply that the respondents have undefinedpurpose to study. Their mindset is vague.

They have lotsofwhimsandschemes.Thereisnocleargoal.Othersdidnotexpect to go to college so they might have no focus or mainpurposeofgoingto collegeyet.

Moreover,theCityCollegeoffersonlythreeacademicprogramswithminimaltuitionfee.AlternativeLearningSystem(ALS),oldandK-12curriculumgraduateswereadmitted.Since choices were limited, the respondentsmighthave been forced to enroll.The aforementioned needs did notinfluence their motivations to study. They just simply enrolledso they could study in college.In fact, Table 4 shows "Studies"cameout to be"extremelyimportant"forthem.

Lastly,therelationshipbetweenchallengesandlevelofresiliency is positive. The computed t value is 2.66, which ishigherthanthecriticalfvalueof1.960.Thispositivecorrelation implies that students who tended to have faced morechallenges tended to have strong level of resiliency. The morechallengestheywouldface,themoreresilienttheywouldbecome.Theirresiliency isshapedby theirchallenges.Themore and bigger challenges there are, the higher resiliency thereshould be. The higher level of resiliency is, the less difficult thechallenges are. Tables 2 and 3 supported this idea; accordingly,nearly93%oftherespondentshavestrongtoexceptionalresiliencewhilemorechallengesbecameslightlydifficult respectively.

Table7: SignificantRelationshipoftheIndigentStudents"Motivation, Resiliency,ChallengesandNeeds

Variables	*T value*	Critical Value	Decision	Interpretation
Level of ResiliencyVs Needs	0.14	1.960	AcceptHo	Negligible Relationship
Needsvs Motivations	0.77	1.960	AcceptHo	Negligible Relationship
Challengesvs LevelofResiliency	2.66	1.960	RejectHo	Significant Relationship

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings presented, the researcher concluded thatmotivations, challenges, and needs are not barriers to indigentstudents"academicjourney.Instead,theybuilttheindigentstudents"resiliencythatplaysavitalroleintheiracademicsuccess. Implementing a program on financial help can make alot of difference. With their extreme motivation towardsstudies,exceptional level of resiliency, well-addressed needs, and theschool's financial aid, indigent studentsin the academecansuccessfullytraverseintheirquest oflearning.

RECOMMENDATION

The researcher strongly recommends that the school come upwith institutional financial aid policies. They shall coordinatewithgovernmentandnon-governmentagencies,privateindividuals,institutions,andothernon-governmentorganizationsforscholarshipgrants,loans,orwork-studyprogramsforthese indigent students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Theresearcherwouldliketoconveyhisgratitudetothefollowing individuals, who in one way or another contributed tothe success of this study, namely, God the father for his Divineprovidence; the school's Governing Board led by Hon. JohnGeesnellL.YapIIfortheresearchgrantandsupport; Dr.ChrisJohnRenierG.Torralba and Mr. Leonides L. Borja, MPA, former and present OIC,fortheir trust;Miss Cathelyn O. Torremocha, MPA, the City Administrator, for herconstant motherly advice; Dr.TeotimaAmborgoforsharinghersteadfastconcerntowardsthecompletion of this difficult task afforded fruitful time for muchintellectual discussion and review of the practical benefits thestudy impacts on the stakeholders and the academe; Mr. RickyRas for shedding light in the statistical computation as well assparing his freetimetoexpeditethe datacomputation;Miss Karina M. Uy, Mr.Louel T. Rotilles and Jube Pulgarinas, for their words of encouragement and financial assistance; the ResearchCouncil of TCC, forthe approvaltoconduct the study; the Guidance Officer Ma' am Grace, forthe questionnaire used; Ma'am Dina, Ma'am Nesie,Ma'amClepsy,Ma'amMitzi,Ma'amMarites,Ma'amRodelyn,Ma'amCeline, Ma'am Christine, Sir James, Sir Jonas, Sir John S, SirGerod and Sir Willard for the inspiration; the support staff of TCC, for their helping hands; the participants andclassmayorsfortheircooperation;lastbutnotleast,theresearcher's family, faculty and staff for their prayer and moralsupport.

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