

The Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Crimes in The Province of Isabela

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on crimes, particularly on the prevailing crimes, crime trends, crime schemes or commissions, and the Police response to the crimes between non-pandemic and pandemic periods. The study used an explanatory sequential approach to reciprocally support groups of data. The quantitative data is taken from the PNP Crime Information Reporting and Analysis System (CIRAS) of cities and selected municipalities affected by COVID-19 in the Province of Isabela. The qualitative data were collected through a semi-structured interview with the Chief of Police and investigators of the station.

The study revealed that homicide, rape, violation of RA No. 11332, and vehicular incidents were the most committed. Intoxication is the key player in crimes and a shift to the subject was noted. The upward trajectory of crime during the pandemic was interconnected with the violation of the Republic Act (R.A.) No. 11332 through disobedience and arrogance to the person in authority. Income-related crimes are noted to have just emerged while work-and-business-related crimes have gone during the pandemic. The crime trend shows that if the pandemic persists, crimes dynamically trail an upward trend. The PNP in the Province of Isabela strictly adheres to its mandates and shows resiliency in pandemic crimes and COVID-19.

Keywords: COVID-19, prevailing crime, crime trend, crime commission.

INTRODUCTION

The swift outbreak of Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) raised the alarm about the clinical, psychological, emotional, and health system collapse, and the economic slowdown in around 200 countries (Madabhavi, Sarkar & Kadakol, 2020). In the USA Today analysis, arrests plummeted to 47 percent in March 2020 (Brown, 2020), a substantial drop of more than 30 percent observed in Baltimore, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Washington DC., and Chicago (Corley, 2020). For a closer look, there is an unparalleled drop in domestic-related crime in residential burglary but little change in non-residential burglary, thefts of motor vehicles also decreased while there were diverging patterns of thefts from motor vehicles in some large cities in the United States (Ashby, 2020; Piquero, 2020). In the Philippines, since the onset of General Community Quarantine (GCQ), crime has been down to almost 50 percent (Recuenco, 2020; Luna, 2020).

With hindsight on the overall crime trends for the last couple of years, in 2018 the crime rate dropped by 21.5% from July 2016 to June 2018 as compared to the same period from 2014 to 2016 (Overseas Security Advisory Council, 2019). The most common crimes are theft, physical assault, and robbery. Other crimes included are pickpocketing confidence schemes and credit card fraud. carjacking, robberies, and violent assaults also occurred throughout the country. A reduction in crime rate average of more than 50 percent per day during the lockdown period was also evident, according to the Commander of the Joint Task Force (JTF) (Pesco, 2020). The unprecedented drop in crime rate principally, is due to the government policy of stay-at-home (SAH) order (Stickle and Felson, 2020; Mervosh & Swales, 2020). The stay-at-home orders

restrict people from leaving their homes for anything other than essential activities (Schimelpfening, 2021) and limit people exposed to the virus.

Notwithstanding the downward movement of the crime rate from a bigger standpoint across the countries saturated with COVID-19 to a closer viewpoint, some crimes have climbed sharply. For example, cybercriminals focus on personal data theft, critical infrastructure, and the remote workforce. The observed significant fluctuation of crime rates affects the trends and patterns in crime commission. A crime trend is a significant change like selected crime types within a defined geographical area and period (uslegal.com, 2019). The crime trend may give important data to crime analysts and law enforcement agencies for crafting effective strategies (Park, Spicer, Tsang, Behiels & Song, 2019). Further, examining crime trends at a local micro level provides evidence and the importance of analyzing macro-level trends (Groff, Weisburd & Young, 2010).

A closer look at previous devastating pandemics like the Spanish Flu (1918-1920), Third Cholera Pandemic (1846-1860), Third Plague Pandemic 1855-1960, Flu Pandemic (1889-1890) or known as the Russian Flu, Influenza Pandemic 1957-1958, HIV/AIDS pandemic in 1981, no empirical studies that focus on the micro-level trends of the pandemic and crime. The study (Ashby, 2019) is considered the newest on the relationship between the pandemic and crime conducted in 16 large cities in the United States in the early part COVID-19 pandemic.

Thus, this paper aims to contribute to the existing studies focusing on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on crimes. Specifically, conducted to determine the pandemic crime trends, and the Philippine National Police (PNP) response to the crimes reported/committed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Theoretical Framework

The study considered the Rational Choice Theory, Containment Theory, and Social Bond Theory to exemplify crime causations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Rational Choice Theory postulates that people generally act in their self-interest and make decisions to commit crimes after weighing the potential risks against the rewards. The emphasis is on the processes whereby individuals initially decide to commit or not commit the crime. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there are legal limitations imposed by the government to demise the virus such as social distancing, wearing of facemasks, shelter-in-place or stay-at-home (SAH), virtual work and schooling, banned group gatherings, social distancing, constant public information dissemination and motivation for their self-protective behavior, were government platforms to demise the spread of the virus (Park, Ju, Ohs, & Hinsley, 2020). These are cautious devices for the people to conduct themselves in a specific way to support the government platforms however, the crime persists.

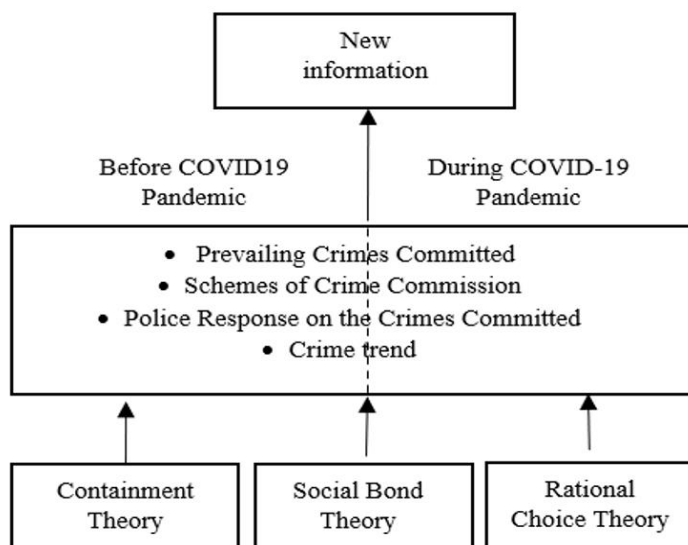


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

The Containment Theory according to Walter Reckless posits that moral breakdown and social forces are known as “contained” deviant behavior where juvenile delinquency develops. Further exemplified by the “push-pull” forces as contributing to the deviant behavior. The push forces may come from an individual reaction to the circumstances external to him. The pull factors can be from family and friends. Stress was considered an internal factor while environmental pull or attraction was an external factor (Nair, Yet Mee, & Nai Cheik, 2016). The theory also explains containment sources that prevent a person from diverting from normal and acceptable behavior. First, the inner containment stems from moral, and religious beliefs and the personal sense of right and wrong of an individual. Second, the outer containment (institutional reinforcement of norms) influences the individual to some degree (Schreck, Leiber, Miller & Welch, (2017) like the string of COVID-19 measures (Miller & Blumstein, 2020).

The Social Bond Theory. The Social Bond Theory advocated by Travis Hirschi posits that humans refrain from doing crime because they develop a social bond. In addition, there are elements of social bonds that tie an individual to society: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Attachments reflect the sensitivity or emotion of an individual to the bond. Commitment is the “rational” or stands of an individual to the bond when committing a crime. Involvement refers to the conventional activity of society, and belief signifies respect for society’s stands and laws (Akers, Sellers, & Jennings, 2021). Given the elements, it is a combination of social control and self-control to liberate deviant behavior.

The moment contagion measures have been imposed, the people’s support and obedience to the laws, orders, and health protocols to curb the widespread of COVID-19 signifies their attachment and belief. Participation in government programs signifies involvement. Violating crimes makes individuals commit themselves to the government and other people refrain from doing so. It means that the absence or non-observance of any of the elements of the theory is more likely for a person to get involved in deviant behavior (Taylor, 2015).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used the mixed method explanatory sequential design. In this research method, qualitative and quantitative data are collected, analyzed, and presented separately in numerical and narrative form (Subedi, 2016; Hong, Pluye, Bujold, & Wassef, 2017). The explanatory sequential design is apt for the study since the quantitative data was collected before the qualitative data.

1. Locale, population, and samples

The study was conducted in the Province of Isabela. The province is composed of six (6) Legislative Districts with 3 cities and Thirty-Four (34) municipalities. It was chosen as the locale of the study because from March 16, 2020, Luzon Islands and other places in the Philippines, were placed by the government under Enhance Community Quarantine (ECQ) (Official Gazette, 2020), with the exemption for a couple of months (May 16, 2020, to July 16, 2020) where it was placed in General Community Quarantine (GCQ).

The three (3) cities of Isabela Province (Santiago City, Cauayan City, Ilagan City), one (1) second-class municipality (Ramon), two (2) fifth-class municipalities (San Isidro, Luna), five(5) first-class municipalities (San Mateo, Roxas, Alicia, San Mariano, and Jones), four (4) 3rd class municipalities (Cabatuan, Aurora, Angadanan, San Agustin), and eight (8) 4th class municipalities (Gamau, Naguilian, Reina Mercedes, Burgos, Mallig, Quirino, San Manuel, Benito Soliven) with a total of 23 Police Stations (PS) served as the sources of numerical data and twelve (12) Chief of Police (COP) and fifteen (15) investigators of the Police Station (PS). The coastal towns of the Isabela Province covering Dinapigue, Divilican, Maconanon, and Palanan are excluded, for these towns are COVID-19-free based on the Department of Health (DOH) report (Baccay, 2020; Visaya Jr., 2020). Other municipalities are excluded since the majority of the municipalities

were already taken and well represented. On the other hand, a municipality that declined to be interviewed and or refused to give data was excluded.

The Chief of Police as the key officer of the Police Station oversees the operation and administration of his office. As the head of Office, they are knowledgeable of all the information coming in and out of their office. However, should the Chief of Police be newly assigned to the station, the station's investigator will be the participant with the COP.

On the other hand, the investigator is a PNP personnel directly responsible for the investigation of crimes committed within the area of responsibility of the station. All facts and information regarding the crimes committed within their area of responsibility (AOR) will come to their knowledge and possession.

2. Research Instrument

Two data-gathering approaches were used in the study: 1) a transcript of records based on the Philippine National Police Crime Information Reporting and Analysis System (PNP-CIRAS) and Police blotter book, and 2) a semi-structured interview.

The first data-gathering approach was through the transcript of records from the PNP documents (police blotter) and database records (from PNP-CIRAS) of the monthly reported crimes covering March to December of the year 2019 and 2020. A hard or soft copy of the police report was requested to prevent unintentional mistakes in figures thereby upholding the accuracy of the information.

Second, a semi-structured interview has been made after the informed consent was signed by the participants. The interview has been done through cellphone recording, to facilitate faster and avoid misleading answers.

3. Collection of Data

The numerical data is from the Crime Information Reporting and Analysis System (CIRAS) of Police Stations from March to December 2019 and 2020 validated from the PNP Police blotter book. The PNP-CIRAS is an enhanced e-blotter System for recording and uniform reporting of crime incidents (PNP Memorandum Circular 2018-050). Index and non-index crimes were recorded. Index crimes are those serious and occur with sufficient frequency and regularity such that they can serve as an index to the crime situation. Non-index crimes are a violation of special laws such as illegal logging or local ordinances including reckless imprudence resulting in homicide, damage to property, and physical injury (Letter of Instructions 02/09). This set of data was determined to answer the problem of the crimes before and during the pandemic.

The qualitative data was gathered in a semi-structured interview with the Chief of Police (COP) and investigators of the Police Stations (PS) based on the quantitative data (crime statistics) to unfold crime commissions and Law Enforcement Agencies (PNP) responses before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the data gathering, the researchers observed the following ethical standards. First, the confidentiality of the information. It is one of the utmost concerns that the researchers had observed throughout the conduct of the study. The researchers ensure that the participant's participation is voluntary to ensure that there is no threat, force, or intimidation used. Even if the participant had signed the consent form, he/she still has the right to withdraw anytime. Should the participant withdraw from the study before the data collection is completed, the data will be returned or destroyed. For assurance and practicability, the researcher will assign codes or numbers in place of the participant's real identity. A password highly personal to the researcher was provided in the folder where the electronic data are stored to avoid easy access to the data. All other

information including the interview transcript will be destroyed after the study has been done.

Should a hard copy of data be provided by the participant, the same must be stored in a secure place where the researcher kept confidential information.

Potential risk to the participant and the researcher is imminent as COVID-19 continuously spreads. Thus, the religious observance of the health protocol such as wearing of facemasks, and face shields, observance of social distancing, and application of disinfectant, among others, were considered during the distribution of letter, data gathering, and follow-up. For practicability, the contact number and email address of the researchers were provided in the letter for the alternate and viable means of communication.

4. Data Analysis

The PNP crime statistics from the PNP Crime Information Reporting and Analysis System (CIRAS) have been analyzed by the default statistical analysis tool of the software. Since there are only 23 participating Police Stations, for the study, the Total Crime Incidents (TCI) was computed as follows:

$$TCI = PSt1 + PSt2 + PSt3 + \dots + PSt23$$

Where:

TCI = Total Crime Incidents of the participating stations

PSt = the Police Station's total crime incidents

123... = refers to the number of participating police stations

The station that provides either an electronic copy or a hard copy of the crime statistics was included. The data given were validated in the police blotter logbook. All the data gathered are summated per year and category.

Second, the Excel trend function was used in the quest for the crime trend before and during the pandemic. According to Cheusheva, the head of the sales department in add-in express teams emphasized, that the Excel TREND function is used to calculate a linear trend line through a given set of dependent y-values and, optionally, a set of independent x-values and return values along the trend line (TREND function and other ways to do trend analysis in Excel, 2019). The range of x values has been calculated using the default formula of the EXCEL trend function:

$$y = bx + a$$

Where:

y – dependent variable (TCI)

x – the independent variable to calculate y (period included)

a – the intercept (indicates where the line intersects the y-axis and is equal to the value of y when x is 0)

b – the slope (indicates the steepness of the line).

Given the data, the month numbers (March to December 2019 and 2020) were the independent x-values and the Total Crime Incidents (TCI) were the dependent y-values to calculate the trend.

Third, the determination of the emerging methods of operations (MO) of the suspect/accused and the Police response to the pandemic crimes were thematically analyzed. The deductive Thematic Analysis approach has been made in the process of identifying and interpreting patterns and themes as the study had a preconceived theory or existing knowledge of the crime trends and crime commission.

In the interpretation of the interview transcript, the following steps as stated by Caulfield (2014) have been followed: 1) familiarization; 2) coding; 3) generating themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and 6) writing up.

RESULTS

Based on the significant data gathered, the succeeding figures present a comparative analysis of the prevailing crime in the Province of Isabela from March 1 to December 31, 2019, and from March 1 to December 31, 2020.

1. Comparative of the Prevailing Peace and Order Indicator (POI) Index Crimes

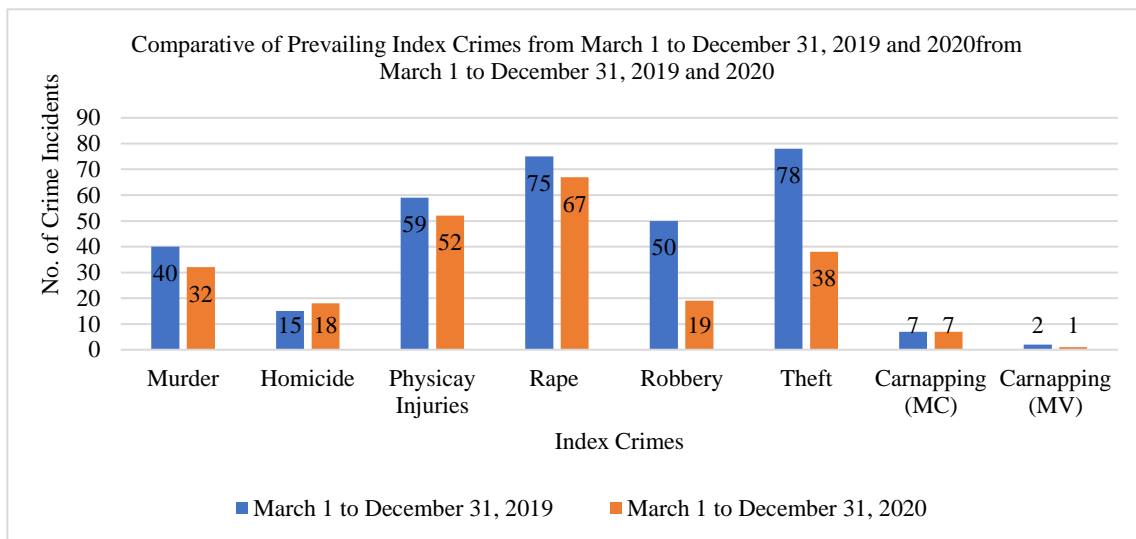


Figure 2. Comparative of Prevailing Index Crimes from March 1 to December 31, 2019 and 2020

2. Comparative of Prevailing POI non-index from March 1 to December 31, 2019 and 2020.

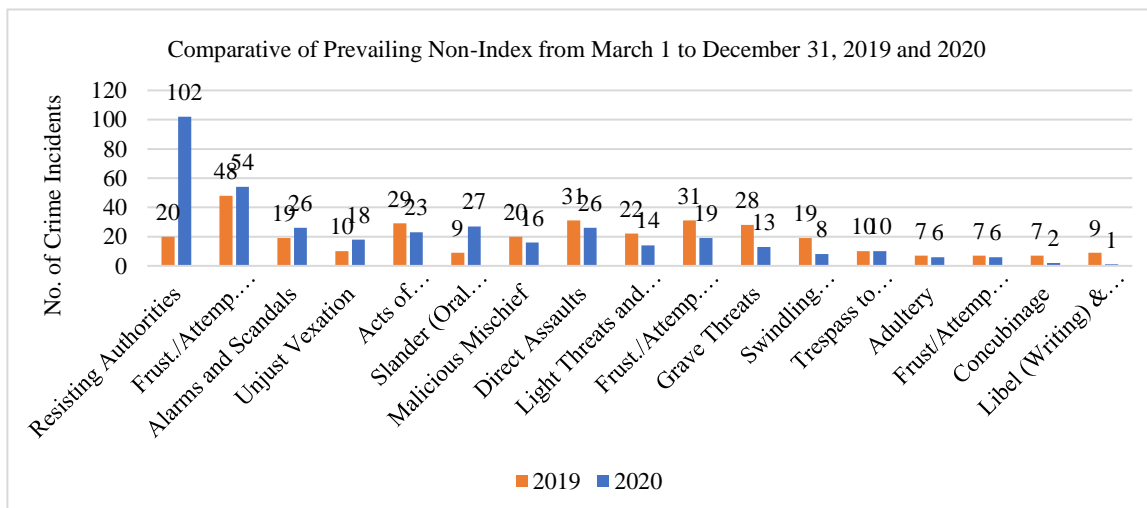


Figure 3. Comparative of Prevailing Non-index Crimes from March 1 to December 31, 2019 and 2020

3. Comparative of Prevailing Special Laws Violated from March 1 to December 31, 2019 and 2020.

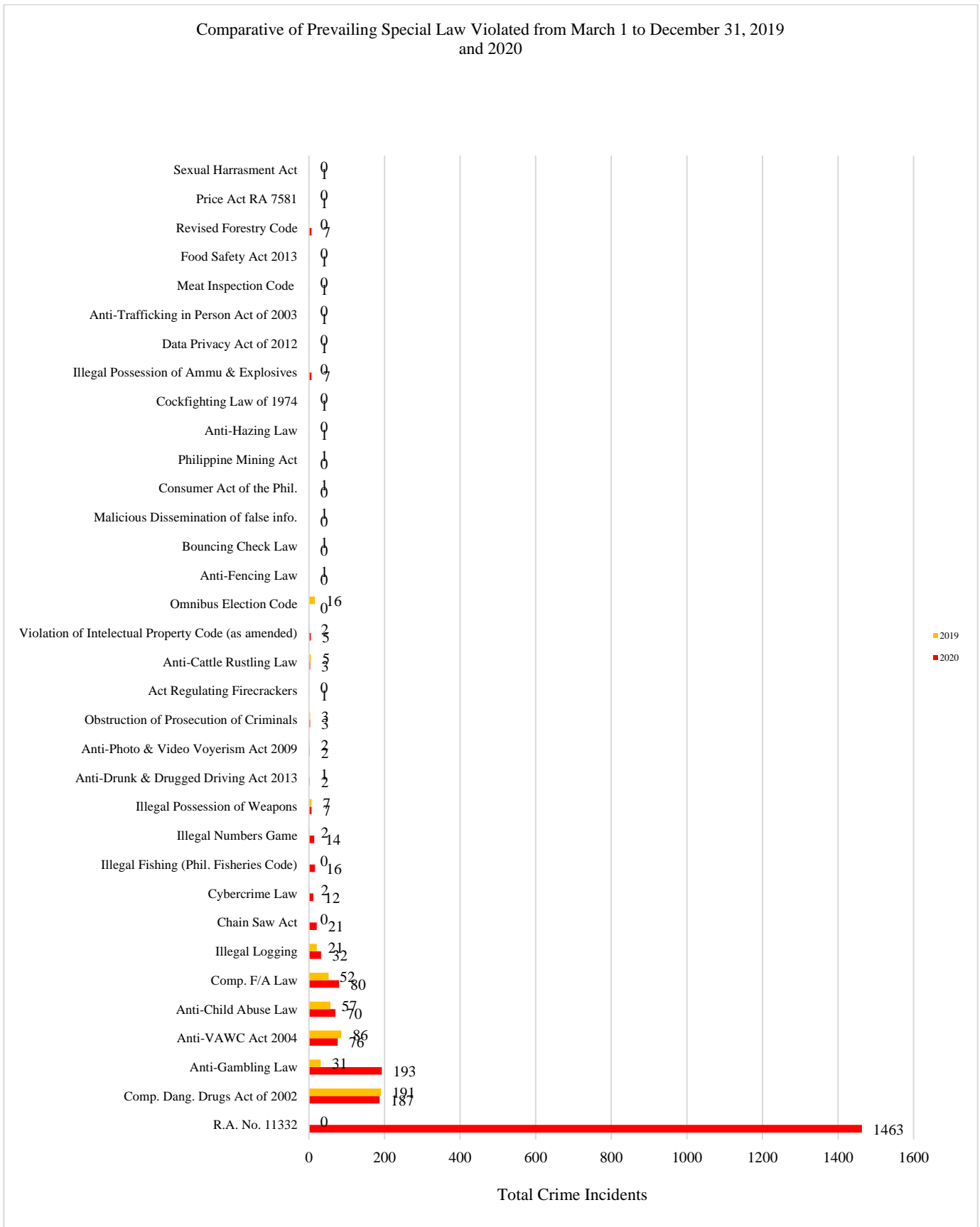


Figure 4. Comparative of Prevailing Special Laws Violated from March 1 to December 31, 2019 and 2020.

4. The Prevailing Public Safety Indicator from March 1 to December 31, 2019 and 2020

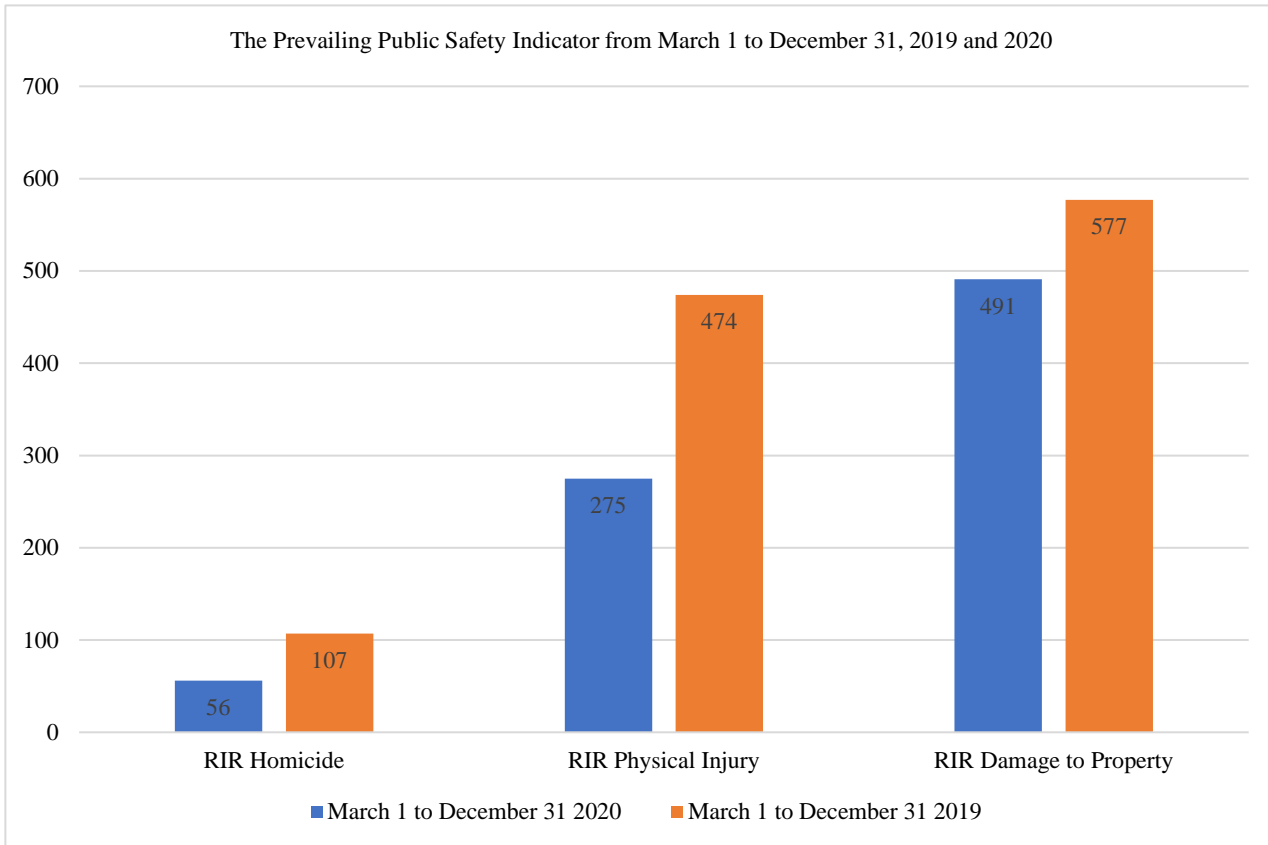


Figure 5. The Prevailing Public Safety Indicator from March 1 to December 31, 2019 and 2020

5. The Crime Trend from March 1 to December 31, 2019 and 2020

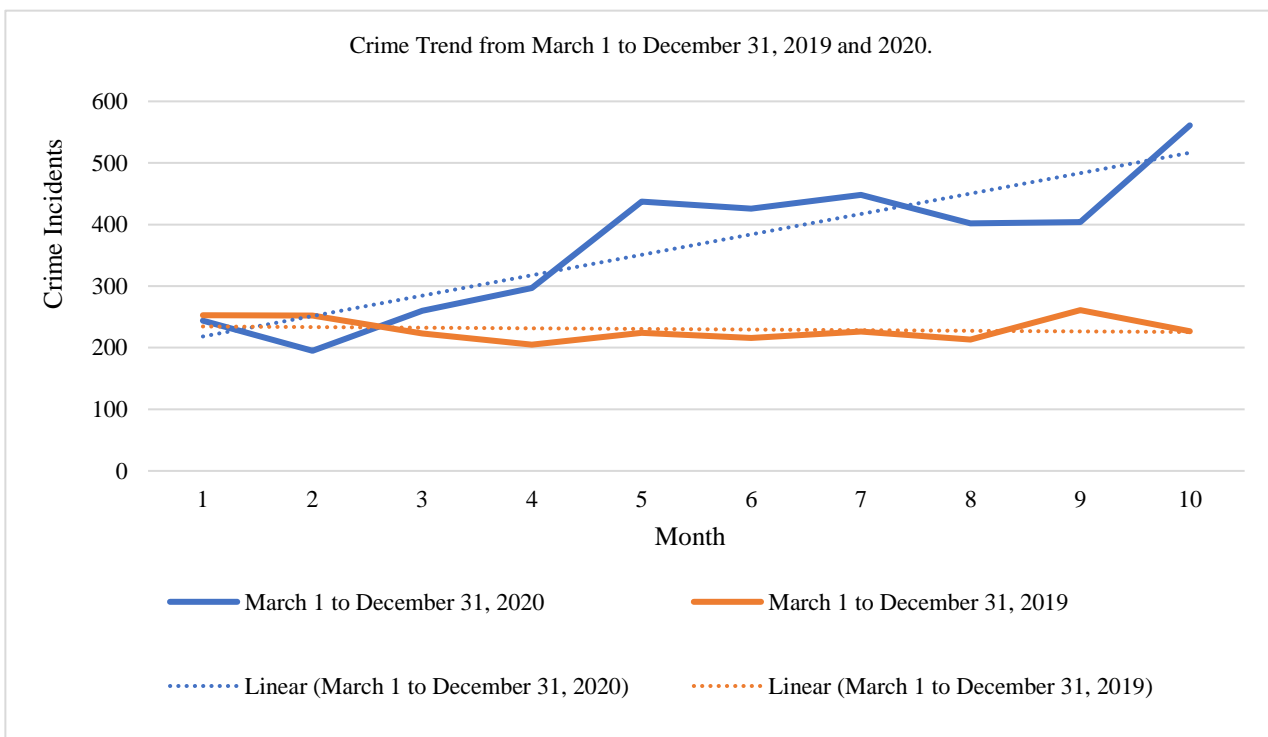


Figure 6. The Crime Trend from March 1 to December 31 2019 and 2020

DISCUSSION

The Prevailing Crimes

Index Crimes

Most index crimes or serious crimes decrease during the pandemic but homicide increases to 3 or 20 percent compared to the pre-pandemic period (March to December 2019). Also observed in US large cities where homicide rates increased to 36 percent between June to October 2020 (The Crime Report Staff, 2020). The increase is ascribed to intoxication, boredom, heated arguments, and short-range poverty because of economic loss. Intoxication serves as the initiatory act of the victim and offender in a crime. Drinking happens during curfew hours when the police are out in the vicinity and expecting that people are already in their houses. It means that people seek pleasure because of boredom by way of drinking alcohol. And, infers individuals' intolerance to the pandemic measures and anti-criminality campaign of the government.

Boredom accordingly is a temporary negative state of emotion, and drive. A study on the relationship between boredom and youth criminality mentioned that young people are more susceptible to boredom than older individuals (Newton, 2001). During the pandemic, the result of the study runs contrary as data shows that 2 out of 10 offenders are young people because most offenders are adults. This implies that the stay-at-home order eschewed young people from committing delinquency and crimes.

Further, the offenders are mostly halted from their jobs, for example, tricycle drivers, welders, and laborers. It means non-engagement in work is the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic as people are confined in their homes. It results in idleness or people are out of their usual daily routine/work/job (Burton, 2014). It implies that boredom and idleness contribute to people's vulnerability as crime victims and offenders and killing persists because of weariness.

In 2020, rape rates climbed to 67 but 11 percent down in comparison to 2019. According to the participants, rape victims during the pandemic is due to home quarantine, some are those deserted children, exposed to social media viewing pornographic videos, and intoxicated.

Further suggests that in the stay-at-home (SAH) policy, the crime victims are intact in their homes, increasing women's vulnerability to abuse (Chui, 2020) and the offenders have had ample opportunity to commit the crime (Lolarga, 2020). Most victims of rape are minors and closely related to the offender. It further implies that the lockdown exposed victims, especially minors' prone to exploitation and abuse.

In 2019, theft with a frequency of 78 prevailed but down to more than 50 percent in 2020, including robbery. The decrease in cases could be attributable to the pandemic as the criminal element "opportunity" has been eliminated, according to Guillermo as quoted by (Caliwan, 2020). Since people are prohibited from taking non-essential travels and are ordered to stay at home, they can take care of their valuable things and houses.

The reduction of robbery and theft may be correlated to the quarantine protocols. Data has shown that some modus of the criminals in the theft have been eliminated such as shoplifting, snatching, and prank engagement as a helper. These are more likely not applicable during the pandemic because of the strict implementation of various quarantine protocols and the presence of police in the area. In robbery, bag/purse snatching has been eliminated and reduction in a hold-up, and the carnapping of motorcycles and motor vehicles is also perceptible.

Additionally, these crimes are committed because of a lack of basic needs, hooked on bad vices, and those

associated with thieves' groups. It means that stealing is a compulsive reaction of a person to relieve economic burdens like hunger, and poverty, and to support the vices. Somehow, the 2015-2018 survey conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) Isabela was noted to be one of the provinces with the 3rd highest poverty incidence, supporting the findings of the study. Further, it implies that the pandemic situation does not stop people steal.

The Containment Theory exemplified the situation. Notwithstanding the containment measures imposed by the government, people are more likely to commit a crime because of the "contained" deviant behavior that they have. It means that humans persist in committing a crime for it has in their mind to commit it. This further implies and is exemplified by Rational Choice Theory that human action (commission of a crime) during a pandemic pampered with various pandemic measures to demise the virus is a "free will" or choice of the actor.

Non-Index Crimes/felonies less-serious in Nature

In 2020, resistance to a person in authority ballooned to 102 cases or four times higher compared to 2019. Resistance and disobedience to a person in authority (Art. 151, RPC as amended) shall be imposed upon any person who shall resist or seriously disobey any person in authority, or the agents of such person, while engaged in the performance of official duties. Those charged with this crime are arrogant violators of R.A. No. 11332. It means that the person act may be physically struggling against or attempting to elude a police officer to escape from restraint during the enforcement of laws and ordinances. This crime will be a charge against an individual on top of another crime committed.

It implies that many people during the pandemic show arrogance and disobedience to the enforcement action of the person in authority. According to Father John Hardon, as mentioned by (Sammons, 2020) obedience is "[t]he moral virtue that inclines the will to comply with the will of another who has the right to command." It means that obedience must succumb to the law enforcers executing the laws of the land. Further, signify a lack of "belief" in the police enforcing the laws and orders. Belief is an element of social bonds that connotes disrespect or contempt that convinces people to deviant behavior. Additionally, entails non-observance of other elements of social bond which is involved in the government programs and activities necessary to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The slander shows to have doubled in 2020. Slander is an act that causes dishonor or unjustly harms the reputation of another. In both periods, slander was observed to have been mostly done verbally. The imputation of one's honor during a pandemic was rampant. It implies that the offender directs the person listening to a thought that the victim engaged in something illegal, though the statement only appears false or harmful, it could cause dishonor to the reputation of the victim.

Unjust Vexation rises to 80 percent in comparison to the year 2019. Unjust vexation is committed if the noise is directed to a person or family that may cause annoyance, irritation, torment, or disturbance (Art 287, RPC as amended). During the pandemic, mostly done through resistance to authority and causing noise to irritate the Police. It signifies that this crime is connected to the enforcement of COVID-19 protocols. This implies a person's disobedience and intolerance to the quarantine protocols enforced.

Alarms and scandals have increased to 37 percent during the pandemic. Alarms and scandals are causing a disturbance or scandal in public places through the discharge of firearms, rockets, firecrackers, or other explosives that may cause alarm or danger, instigating or taking an active part in charivari or other similar means, wandering or engaging in other nocturnal amusement at night, and causing disturbance or scandals while under the influence of liquor (Art, 155, RPC as amended). It was noted that this crime was done most often in public to those who have been charged with resistance to authority or violation of quarantine

protocols. Discharge of firearms and instigating a crime with a bladed weapon under the influence of liquor are noted as other criminal schemes. It means that the person has annoyed the law enforcers by any of those acts above-mentioned. This implies that most of the violators are not following the quarantine protocols.

In 2019, frustrated/attempted homicide has taken place. Frustrated/attempted homicide are stages of committing the crime of homicide to a lesser degree. This means that physical violence is likely inflicted on the crime victims rather than moral or psychological violence. It implies that the offenders' criminal behavior is expressed in a physical assault which may result in a higher level or degree of crime, for example, from physical injuries to attempted or frustrated homicide.

Special Laws

Crime that Increases

The violation of Republic Act No. 11332 otherwise known as the Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act prevails in 2020. Mandatory reporting refers to the obligatory reporting of a condition to local or state health authorities, as required for notifiable diseases, epidemics, or public health events of public health concern (Sec. 3, par. I R.A. No. 11332). It means that most violators fail or are hesitant to follow COVID-19 minimum public health standards like not wearing face masks and face shields, non-observance of social distancing (sub. par. iii, par. f, sec. 1, Rule XI, Revised IRR of R.A. No. 11332). The strict implementation of the law is also observed in all other cities and municipalities.

Other crimes increases are a violation of Presidential Decree 1602 as amended or Illegal-Numbers Game, Timber Smuggling or Illegal Cutting of Logs from Public Forests and Forest Reserves as Qualified Theft, Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act, and Intellectual Property Code (IPC) of the Philippines. This implies that the observed sudden rise of crime incidents was not attributed to serious crimes in nature and PSI but a violation of special laws. Further, the increase is attributable to individuals' unawareness of the new law and the hardened implementation of the minimum health protocols (Visaya, 2020a). Emphasis supplied by the participant "Non-index crimes mostly is enforcement of laws that is why if there is a high difference between 2019 and 2020 it is because we became more aggressive in enforcing special laws because we have lots of health protocols to follow". The PNP's aggressive enforcement action, according to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana (Nepomuceno, 2020) is the setting up of various quarantine checkpoints, down to municipal and barangay levels under the supervision of the unit commander or COPs.

Crime Decreases

In 2019, violation of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 or R.A. No. 9165 which includes the sale, trading, possession, and administration of prohibited drugs with a frequency of 191 is the most violated special law. Violation of this law was noted to be second to a violation of R.A. 11332 in 2020, though decreased. The decrease is very minimal at 2.1 percent. This means that illicit drugs are viable to the public despite the heightened government's war on drugs (OPLAN TOKHANG) that was started in 2016. This implies that strict implementation of the intervention program (OPLAN TOKHANG) coupled with the pandemic measures like community or home quarantine are not factors to stop the illicit drugs business operation in the province.

Republic Act No. 9262 otherwise known as the Anti-Violation Against Women and their Children (VAWC) Act of 2004 decreased during the pandemic. This finding is congruent with the study of (Bullinger, Carr, & Packham, 2020) who studied the effects of stay-at-home orders on domestic violence and postulated that domestic and non-domestic crimes fell after SAH orders went into place in Chicago. It means a family that

stays together limits the causes of domestic violence. This implies that home quarantine brings family members significant time for closeness.

Crimes that Emerge

R.A. No. 11332 emerges as a new special law violated as this law has been in force and effect in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, also noted to have emerged is a violation of the Chain Saw Act of 2002, The Fisheries Code of the Philippines, The Anti-Hazing Act of 1995, the Cockfighting Law of 1974, Illegal Possession of Ammunitions & Explosives, Data Privacy Act of 2012, Anti-Trafficking in Person Act of 2003, Meat Inspection Code, Food Safety Act 2013, Revised Forestry Code, R.A. No. 7581 or Price Act, Sexual Harassment Act, and Act Regulating Firecrackers. However, these crimes have been noted to have the least number of incidents. Data revealed that most emerging crimes are income-related. It implies that a person was committing a crime trying to coup their economic loss due to loss of work or job despite the prohibition of the act relative to pandemic law.

Crimes provisionally disappeared

Crimes that have disappeared during the COVID-19 pandemic are a violation of Batas Pambansa (BP) Bilang 881 or Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines, Presidential Decree (PD) 1612 or Anti-Fencing Law of 1972, BP. Blg. 22 or Bouncing Check Law, PD. No. 1727 or Declaring as Unlawful the Malicious Dissemination of False Information, Consumer Act of the Philippines, and Philippine Mining Act of 1995. This means that stopping company operations from producing non-essential goods yields non-violation of the law relative to it. This also gives the impression of politics and business operations. This implies that the implementation of COVID-19 protocols contributes to the non-commission of some crimes.

Reckless imprudence resulting in damage to property mark first both from March 1 to December 31 of the year 2019 and 2020. In 2020, vehicular incidents have fallen to 236 or 22.31 percent. data shows that reckless imprudence resulting in homicide and physical injury marked an average of 44 percent down during the pandemic. This means most vehicle incidents are non-fatal. The significant drop in vehicle crashes may be associated with economic downturns (Lockwood, Lahiri & Babiceanu, 2020). Economic downturn refers to the collapse in real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or the drop or reduction in the success of a business or economy (Market Business News (MBN) (n.d.). During the pandemic, this was observed by the closing of non-essential businesses as a means to curb the spread of the virus or closure of businesses because of the decline of income, and fewer people travel because of loss of job. This means that road users were lessened. It implies a loose or spacious traffic way for motor vehicles and is safer for road users. It infers vehicular accidents incurred during the pandemic with less vehicle traveling are attributed to the human factor.

The crime trend before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

A crime trend uncovers the significant change like crimes committed (selected crime) within a defined geographical area and period or the measure of significant changes in an area's crime pattern over time. Knowing the trend of crime may help in the effective measures to repel it. Also, helps in the efficient but effective utilization of scarce resources.

In 2019, crimes show a horizontal or sideways movement. This means that the crimes are not moving in any direction. A slight upward and downward movement, however, does not show significant changes over the period. Even if the crime increases in November 2019, it does not affect the trend. This means that crime rates do not show a significant increase over the covered period. This implies a result of the intensified campaign of the Philippine National Police (PNP) against crime and lawlessness.

In 2020, there is an upward trend in crime. The upward trend implies that there is a positive movement of

the crimes which is unfavorable to Law Enforcement Agencies, especially the police. This means that people are active in committing crimes during the pandemic. It implies the need for suburb police interventions to cut down the increasing crime incidents. Further, the figure shows a surge over the holiday months (November and December) of the year 2020, amidst tightening quarantine policies. This means that during holidays many people go off to their houses and in so doing the opportunity to do their intended crime is present. This implies the need for stricter policing and law enforcement interventions.

The pre-pandemic and pandemic crime commission

In the context of the study, the prevailing crime schemes pertain to the prevalent mode of operation of the law violators in a particular crime. The following are themes significantly derived from the participants' responses.

Intoxication: The Key Player

The World Health Organization (WHO) (2020) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) (n.d.) defined intoxication as a condition that follows the administration of a psychoactive substance and results in disturbance in the level of consciousness, and cognition, perception, judgment, affect or behavior, and other psycho physiological functions and responses. The shared responses of the participants suggest that crimes like murder, homicide, physical injuries, rape, and vehicular incidents are almost committed under the influence of intoxicating drinks.

The data indicate that the presence of alcohol is closely related to the crimes committed before and during the pandemic, especially crimes against the person. In the crime of homicide, murder, and physical injuries, the sub-pressing factors are heated arguments, misunderstanding, and old grudges. This is committed by hacking, shooting, robbery with homicide, and stabbing. It means that drinking alcohol primarily is to socialize with others, however, when a change in mood occurs due to the effect of alcohol, a commotion arises that certainly results in a crime.

Further, the roadway situation during the pandemic is wide and quiet. Wide in the sense that travel decreases, thus drivers are assumed safer (Antoniou, Yannis, Papadimitriou & Lassarre, 2016). Boosted by PNP checkpoints at strategic locations mostly near municipal boundaries and the presence of roaming regional and provincial mobile traffic groups anywhere, However, a driver under the influence of alcohol has an impaired-senses thereby a change in mood behavior occurs or is experienced and slows down rationalization and psycho motor which results in the human factor. Driving under the influence of liquor is prohibited under R.A. No. 10586 otherwise known as "The Anti-Drunk and Drugged Driving Act". Another cause of vehicular accidents was over speeding and mechanical error, for example, wheel bursts. Somehow, this is supported by the records of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) where the common causes of vehicular incidents are barrier-related accidents, driving under the influence of alcohol, physical fatigue, over speeding, distracted driving, unauthorized use of accessories, and vehicle road worthiness issues (Santos, 2020).

House to Business-stall Shift

A house-to-business stall shift is a significant change noted by the law enforcers during the pandemic. During the pandemic, a "stay-at-home" order restricts people from getting out of their premises except for essential needs and frontline workers. The household members are in their houses, thereby they can oversee, protect, and secure their valuable household belongings. This removes the robber's opportunity to commit their crime to their target household. However, it is an opportunity for them in business establishments since most are closed and unsupervised.

Break-in

Thieves' ways of perpetrating their crime are baklas bubong, bolt cutter, akyat bahay, destroying locks, bukas kotse, and snatching. Somehow supported by a survey conducted by a senior vice president, crime regional leader for North America at AXA XL found that break-ins and burglaries of vacant properties also increased during the pandemic (Bangs, 2020). Robbery incidents are mostly noted in cities and first-class municipalities. It means that crimes against property are most likely to be committed in most developed areas. It infers that the more business stalls or establishments the more the thieves are subject to rob. Further suggests that during the pandemic unattended closed stores or business establishments are vulnerable to crime.

Nocturnal Activity

Additionally, robbery and theft are mostly committed during nighttime. It means that criminals are taking advantage of nighttime to commit the crime.

Filial Relation/Sweet-heart Relationship

Filial relation suggests the intimacy of the victim and accused in the crime of rape. This means that rape was between father and daughter, uncle and niece, grandfather and granddaughter, uncle and granddaughter or grandniece, and between boyfriend and girlfriend. This implies that the relationship was taken advantage of to commit the said crime.

It means that the pandemic has an advantage and disadvantages in the criminal world. Noteworthy to say that quarantine keeps the family intact, thus parents have more time for their children and make the family members closer to each other. Restrict unpleasant extra activities of individuals like dissemination of malicious information, gossiping, and other similar crimes. The disadvantage is, these filthy routines shifted to an incestuous lust vulnerable to a minor family member. Minors are easy to corrupt especially when promises or threats have been used. Also suggests trick and concealment of the

Transient/Temporary Resident

In rare cases, some victims and offenders are transients to the place of crime. This means that either the victim or the offender or both are temporary residents of the city or municipality. It implies that someplace of rape commission is somewhere in a municipality that has hotels, inns, and other business establishments catering or providing temporary shelter for travelers and lowers.

According to social bond theory, every individual has unfulfilled needs and desires for excitement, if the actor is given the opportunity, would pursue his or her desires (Reginald & Harley 1995). To Hirschi's idea, a person will be considered delinquent if anyone or any combination of those elements has a weakened bond with society, and "the stronger each element of the social bond, the less likely delinquent behavior will occur".

Further, despite the laws prohibiting a certain act, the man is a reasoning actor who weighs means and ends, cost and benefits, and makes a rational choice that includes the choice of the person to engage in criminal activity based on intent/premeditation and that the possible benefits received (Bond, 2015).

The Prevailing PNP Response

The prevailing Philippine National Police (PNP) response to the crime refers to the Police response to the crime the moment it was reported to the station. The following are the themes that suggest the Police

responses before and during the pandemic.

Preemptory-Incessant Police Response

The participant's responses imply similarity to all stations. The Police response is not at a commander's discretion but a keystone to all offices as this is a directive from the higher headquarters. The police strategies that the participants refer to are but are not limited to the following: police visibility, crime clock, and crime mapping, observance of response time, police-sa-barangay (Village-Police), and Police-sa-kalye (Street-Police).

Harmonized Police-Constituents Response Time

The ideal fifteen (15) minutes response time of the police was closely observed. To guarantee a quick response to crime reported, it is tied up to the barangay officials. They have close coordination with each other to maintain peace and order and to address immediately any situations that need the intervention of the police.

In responding to crimes, the PNP religiously observed the QUAD concept. This quad concept of operation involves Community Relations, Police Operation, Intelligence, and Investigation Units. However, the quad concept was observed differently during the pandemic, those are being lessened because fewer people attend fewer people to contract or contact with the said disease. The Joint Task Force Covid Shield Commander Lt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar once said the increased police visibility down to the barangay level is a big factor in reducing criminal incidents across the country (Caliwan, 2020).

The Doorstep Response

The "doorstep response" refers to an immediate police intervention done to the victim, offender, and their family on the cause and effect of the crime committed. This aims to educate the parties involved in crime at any stages or processes of the investigation and is usually given after the investigation. The meeting will be with the Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) and then with the Peace and Order Council (POC) one after the other to crop interventions on how to address the problem.

This was given by the police in the station, residents, or barangay of the parties involved purposely to explain the possible legal consequences of the crime. Further, the participant commended that "barangay advocacies or interventions are long-serving anti-criminality campaigns against lawless elements in the community.

Ultra COVID-19 awareness

Authority in the implementation and awareness of COVID-19 protocols is with utmost consideration. The Police had observed well the protocols and the need for the people to be educated on the same. The pandemic situation adds up to the usual PNP operational procedure based on the AITF and other government agencies' interim protocols to secure the front-liner's health against COVID-19. Subjecting the person arrested for a swab test, or medical examination before committing them to jail in adherence to the human rights or the Miranda warning act on the preservation of the arrested person's health, added to the Police Operations.

This means that during the pandemic the strict observance of health protocol was practical. It is mandatory for all police responders and all parties involved. It implies that COVID-19 protocols delay the investigation and commitment process most especially when the municipality cannot perform swabbing or flu tests for lack of testing kits. Further implies that failure to follow the health protocol risks the health of the police and

other individuals committed to a jail facility.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the crime trend. The trends are observable in the types of crime and place of commission. Serious crime has dropped except homicide. Burglaries have shifted from home breaks-in to closed businesses however, it has the same way of committing the crime before the pandemic. The rape victims are intimately related to the offenders. There are crimes hanged around, went off or disappeared, and have just emerged. Most crimes during the pandemic are related to profiting. And, the crimes that disappeared are associated with business closures like mining. These changes arose because people were confined in their homes, because of shortened work hours, business closure, and unnecessary travel restrictions.

Serious crimes like homicide, murder, and serious physical injuries most started from drinking intoxicating drinks, subsequently voicing out of the old grudge then resulted in violent crime. Robbers made advances to unattended business stalls through forced entry on the roof (baklas bubong), bolt cutter, and open car (bukas kotse) for carnapping. The pre-pandemic crimes were motionless, meaning not either increasing or decreasing or may increase but slightly with no showing of an upward diagonal trend. Crimes during the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically increased. The increase was attributable to the pandemic laws initiated by the government to curb the spread of the virus. The dramatic rise of cases for violating the law during the pandemic signifies law enforcers a more stringent policing system and enforcement of the law.

This pandemic has impacted the law enforcers in terms of personnel due to the skeletal workforce, psychological fear, and having direct contact with the people however, data showed an appealing crime rate which means that the law enforcers religiously, without fear of life perform their duties and responsibilities.

The person's criminal propensity suggests a breach of the social bond to the government, the element of attachment. The person's activities beyond the COVID-19 containment measures outrun his/her normal mental state and expression of contained deviant behavior.

Suggestions

In line with the conclusions, the following may be considered:

1. The Philippine National Police of the Province of Isabela may consider creating a special task force addressing emerging crimes to ensure preparation thus establishing a continuous action from prevention, investigation, and appropriate disposition once encountered.
2. The increase in domestic violence such as rape was noted thus local Philippine National Police may consider intensifying the "Pulis Sa Barangay" effort to ensure a ready response to prevent, detect and respond to these incidents.
3. The PNP Isabela may consider partnerships with socio-civic groups to promote the advocacies of crime prevention. Multi-sectoral cooperation may be undertaken to learn the needs and aspirations of the community as a way of developing future responses and developing reporting and monitoring mechanisms.
4. Future researchers may consider areas that were not covered in this research to follow up on the actions and programs of the PNP Isabela on crime prevention and control.

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