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Cultural Revolution in the Philippines amidst the New Normal

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ABSTRACT

Comparison between Cultural Revolution in China and the need to bring back Generation Z to the grassroots level, especially after the ill effects brought about by the pandemic. The transition to bringing everything back to normal will be a very difficult task even with the implementation of the limited face-to-face since April 4. Since this study is qualitative, the weight will be geared towards a comparison of the values and practices absorption pre-digital age and the digital age. Admittedly, there have been unfilled gaps in the abrupt turnout from carefree and laidback teenagers to being digital natives. The results of the study show that there are unexpected situations that can compromise not only the teachers but more of the students so with the other stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

When someone hears of Cultural Revolution, the first idea that enters one's mind is that of the Maoist control and governance in China (Mario & Lorenzo, 2020; Wang, 2018) wherein there was the burning and massive cleaning of any remnants of the old China through documents, ideas, practices, traditions, and brain-washing seems to be a colloquial term at this particular period. Students had the Maoist educational system which comprised the usefulness of Maoist culture and teachings. This is where Communism had reached its peak in terms of the socio-political environment.

But the Cultural Revolution here in the Philippines is entirely different from what had transpired in China, with the case of the Philippines, there is a definite need for an overhaul, of not cleaning up the old Philippines in terms of customs, traditions, practices, ideas, and documents but rather of reviving the old culture, just like a musical piece can have its revival after many years sung or play by a new artist but with the same old melody, old rhythm and old lyrics.

There is a need for a complete overhaul as seen during the two years of lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Shaikh et al., 2021; Teng et al., 2021) which had seen bringing back the old Filipino culture and not what one is witnessing at present. From the dependence on gadgets and technology

(Sorokoumova et al., 2021; Tyagi et al., 2021) particularly on social media platforms to the lack of courtesy, good manners, and respect towards the elders can be more evident, especially during the limited face to face classes. There is now an active interaction between teachers and their students. Most of the latter had failed to see the importance of courtesy and respect towards the elders as they use foul language excessively, were dependent on online games thus missing out on classes, and not even trying to memorize simple prayers like the Lord's Prayer. There has been cultural gaps in terms of traditions, customs and beliefs. Students are more geared towards uploading TikTok videos, playing online games, chatting and even scamming people using social media (Alkhateeb, 2020; Kausar & Ghafoor Awan, 2019).

Because of these circumstances, it is deemed necessary to teach students the basics; the seeds of progress which is what culture is all about. There is a need to help students appreciate and imbibe the old Filipino culture.

METHODS

The primary research design used is a descriptive narrative which focuses more on comparative analysis on bringing back education to the basics or the grassroots level. Amidst the digital surge, there should still be the continuous imbibing

of the moral values and practices which comprises what Filipino culture is all about, Despite the issuance of the Department of Education memorandum on the contextualization, localization, and indigenization of learning materials, it is not adequate enough to strengthen the moral fiber of the Philippine society especially after the outcome of the National Election last May 9, 2022. There have been unfilled gaps in roles and expectations, especially among the youth particularly the millennials and Generation Z which cannot be answered by the curriculum alone or the usage of learning materials, There should be a thread of continuity being implemented thus the revival of the values and traditional practices should be absorbed and be acted on.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since this study is qualitative in nature, the weight will be geared towards a comparison of the values and practices absorbed pre-digital age and the digital age, Admittedly, there have been unfilled gaps in the abrupt turnout from carefree and laidback teenagers to being digital natives.

Looking back at a former advertisement of a noodle product wherein the scene downplayed a family having meal time together which had started with a prayer and a conversation about how the day went on. This typical scene has been absent for quite some time and perhaps one of the factors why a lot of adolescents regardless of gender had started to become rebellious and sad to say an outcome could be teenage suicide. The time and attention from family members count for strong support which every individual needs especially during those two years of home confinement because of the Covid-19 pandemic (Al Dhaheri et al., 2021; Feng et al., 2020). Love and attachment go hand in hand, children need nurture from their parents but because of economic survival, time became a constraint to the bond and relationship. Adolescents seek out attention from others but then something is missing, the values formation and integration are lacking due to a lack of knowledge, understanding, and experience. One of the many reasons why adolescents seek the easiest way out is either being involved in drugs or other vices or just ending their life due to mental anguish and ailments unknown to many (Enriquez-Guerrero et al., 2021; Kamarulzaman & Jodi, 2018).

The two years of home confinement had brought many families together but more on the low-income families because of the lack of technological gadgets to keep them preoccupied, The bonding among these families centered on the love and appreciation of simple life pleasures such as gardening, playing tag games or simply taking a short walk or stroll around the vicinity. Another pleasure was the Bayanihan spirit that had emanated during the pandemic where kindness and compassion were in abundance (Siena, 2022). But for the higher income families, it was different since there were gadgets and luxuries to enjoy that even at meal times, the dining table was laden with cellphones and laptops because the parents indulged themselves with the work-from-home arrangement while their children were busy with social media and games. Communication is of the essence here, the expectation of a simple exchange of pleasantries counts a lot especially among the adolescents who are at the most confusing emotional and psychological stages in their lives and need their parents to be their anchors in these direst times.

Technology cannot replace human relationships (Jännes et al., 2015; Šeric, 2020). It is just a material thing, a man-made thing that can easily be disposed of and replaced. Human interaction, socialization, and human understanding make an individual be whole again, the feeling that he is not alone in this turbulent time. One of the many effects is the upsurge of emotional and mental distresses which can be troubling and burdensome. The presence of a parent was important but being ignored, just as the adolescent seeks the attention of other people to fill the gap but then because of the confinement, social interaction became limited and the adolescent can feel the world shattering around him as he seeks solace in vices or voices from temptation which he can't resist or ignore.

It became a shock to the parents who expected that because of technology around, the child will be occupied not knowing that he had ended his life because of too many unanswered questions. In this context, it is apparent that there is a weakening of the moral fiber, that it seems there is nothing good out of all the miseries felt, as what Sartre, the proverbial existentialist has been hankering for; the nothingness of the being.

A sad story to describe but the truth is out there, the emotional and mental sufferings had

become uncontrollable as the adolescents find comfort in the virtual reality forgetting what it was like to enjoy simple pleasures in the real world thus even the moral values suffered a lot in the process. Seldom do we see adolescents with a book at hand or talking and giggling with a friend. Strolling at the mall and window shopping with a friend became a rare occurrence. The mood swings especially if being reminded and reprimanded caused behavioral problems among the adolescents thus widening the relationship gap with the support group. The feelings of alienation, and isolation had produced drastic consequences. The inability to reach out to somebody for help in times of distress had been difficult so with the understanding of the situation.

Gone were the days that children will flock around Lola Basyang as she tells a fairy-tale story that makes one starry-eyed thus inspiring individuals that this can still be a beautiful world. Gone were the days that a group of boys or girls will go bathe in a nearby river enjoying each other's company and thus being serenaded by prospective suitors. Gone were the days of simple luxuries in life like a small bottle of cologne or a handkerchief being given by a special someone. Gone were the days when children will go with their grandparents to the market or church. Gone were the days when children after attending church services will kiss the hands of the elders upon reaching home. These were all customary and practiced through many generations, these had helped elicited simple lives, happiness, and contentment among the adolescents. Their models were also their support group and gadgets were out of the picture. They relied and depended on their families for anything.

Technology had deprived adolescents of simple lives and pleasures. It had taught them to be dependent and impulsive with their thoughts and actions. Compared to a whirlwind where everything can be attained by a single stroke. Every action became automatic and controlled. The simplicity of life became a complex one. This study aims to help with the realization of how Technology and the Digital era had affected the lives of adolescents in all aspects (Kurniasanti et al., 2019). It is the reason why there is a push on the part of the researcher to invoke the Cultural Revolution in the Philippines. There is the need to bring back or revive the dying culture in place of Technology.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of Life goes on, in each stage, some changes need to be realized, acted, and accepted but then in each stage, there is a culture that is an essential part of life. Because of the rapid changes in society, culture is affected because of dynamism and other factors but then the call for revival and revitalization becomes louder as the moral fiber of the society is being polluted and corrupt. It is indeed weakening and can affect every aspect of life,

Adolescents can be the most affected because they are also the most influenced by the rapid changes in society, there have been ignorance and apathy towards homegrown culture because of the presence of Technology which can be both boon and bane to society. Teaching adolescents to limit social interactions, having a weak support group, and being dependent on technology can affect personalities thus producing emotional and mental distresses. With this problem at hand, there should be a moral backup, the feeling of being there in these turbulent times is a must. The call for a cultural revolution has to happen to save these confused millennials and Gen Z's and much more to prevent the increase in suicide cases. We have to act on them now before it might be too late.

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