

POVERTY AND INDOLENCE: AN EMPIRICAL CORRELATION

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Abstract – Poverty is an economic condition traditionally characterized by the insufficiency of basic human needs, such as potable water, proper nutrition, health care, essential education, clothing and shelter, because of the incapacity to afford them.

However, not all precursors to such can be attributed to an innate economic deficiency. There are instances where in poverty can either be aggravated through indolence – laziness, per se. That is, if a person can become poor if his / her habits serve as detriments to personal economic growth and development.

David (2017) has previously studied poverty at the local level in his homeland – The Philippines. For this study, the proponent has decided to take it a step further by researching about the effect of indolence towards poverty in selected Asian countries. Through empirical analysis, it was concluded that evidences of indolence contribute to the respondents' dismal economic and life standing. These indolence's are prevalent through their rampant vices and other filthy habits.

Keywords: Poverty, Indolence, Median Poor

RESEARCH INQUIRY

Traditional Definition of Poverty

The economy plays a significant role in the increment of poverty, the gap between the rich and the poor is the economic foundations of such, with the middle class at the precarious middle. Some experts suggest that corruption, misuse of rich national resources.

The poor is generally underprivileged, the only differentiating factor is the level of income, privilege and luxury that these people receive. In worst cases, extreme poverty, or as defined, the condition of having a wage below the IMF set \$2 per day, is a consensus, and shall be the reference term for this research. This Unfortunate scenario holds true for majority of the countries in Asia, particularly the South Region, than in any other continent.

In the Philippines, poverty incidence is at 47%, with nearly half of the population living within the threshold set forth by the IMF.

Indolence as a Plausible Cause of Poverty

Poverty goes beyond the usual theoretical roots or even above its structural flaws. Poverty, in its intrinsic nature is more of a social disease. That is, the poor has the mind-set that will not anymore recover from their current status, and that in practicing such mind-set, they lose their drive and motivation, rely on vices such as alcohol, drugs and smoking and other short-term and also budget draining remedies. Worse, they pass this malpractice unto their children.

Psychological and anecdotal evidences prove that the aforementioned serve as their outlet in somehow temporarily forgetting their social situation. Ergo, poverty is a multi-faceted disease that involves the economic, social and even mental faculties of a person.

More importantly, the fundamental issue in poverty is not on the foregone issues, for these are only the effects. The most critical is the mind-set of the poor, or simply, the poor thinks that they will forever be poor, and that they are the moral and economic obligations of the taxpayers and the government. Their mind-set is already conditioned to this notion, with very little hope of self-dignity and room for growth. Worse, they become parasites and over dependents. They do not believe in the society, that the latter could never help them, along with the children, and their future per se, in uplifting their social disease.

Research Predicament and Objectives

This research validated whether or not the cases of indolence truly played a part towards the aggravation of poverty among selected Median Urban Poor Asians. Specifically, this answered the following Objectives:

1. Determine the causes as to why the respondents were poor
2. Discern the actions that they do in order to address their current state
3. Evaluate and recommend effective interventions that may help them solve their socio-economic quandary.

SYNTHESIS OF RELATED LITERATURE

Socially, the demography plays a significant role in determining poverty, with the most obvious signs of which is through population density. Density also conditions poverty since it is always a fact that the people who live in a certain area, the lesser provisions there would be in terms of the usage of the very limited natural resources (Yegorov, 2009).

Quite too many will utilize the resources of a certain area – which is limited and only has a certain capacity. A good example for such is the influx of informal settlers in Metro Manila, since they chose to settle in the urban zones despite their lack of financial capabilities, they resort to living under bridges, establishments and even along the streets. This happens for the reasons that the space – the capacity, as with the resources of the city – fixed, capital and human – become scarce – like a pie that is divided into so many who intend to eat. In the process, this also affects the economy since the Gross National and Domestic Products of the state are affected – that is, too many people living in a country, some without jobs, yet being accounted for as part of the overall national income.

Najman, *et al.* (2010) conducted a longitudinal study of over a thousand poor individuals to determine their mindset about their social status, and their outlook in life as they live within the skirts of poverty. Significant results suggested that poverty indeed affects the mindset of a certain person, especially if that person has been born poor and has never tasted a positive life change since. More so, the period of adolescence – the time where the so called “formation stage” occurs – was discovered to be the most vulnerable stage of a poor person’s life. Hence, poverty must be defined in a different context, must be addressed and conveyed with the tools to alleviate this disease at the time where the poor becomes vulnerable, in order to change their mindset.

The issues may be simple in books and in theory, but in actual practice the mechanisms are not implemented. What the books and policies say on poverty alleviation is not really put into action, at all. Given such, the programs used to address this social disease become mere palliative. Thus, consistency and commitment is the key success, the policies in writing must be put into action. Cooperation between the government, private sector and the belief of the poor to achieve a higher social and economic progress must be evident (Lobao and Kraybill, 2009).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was divided into two parts. The first part was predicated into identifying the causes and perception of selected Asians about poverty. Their respective answers determined whether or not indolence indeed plays a part as one of the reasons for their current dismal standard of living. The second tier involved the suggestion to exert more effort and check their filthy habits, so as to test whether noticeable improvements in their lives may

manifest. Altogether, the entire program took two (2) quarters of a year to be completed.

Sample size and sampling design

A total of 300 respondents from selected impoverished families from three Asian countries that are classified as developing were purposively used as the sample groups for this study. They were initially and intentionally chosen because they were referred to have the most vices, according to the community officials.

More so, to further add substance to the study, a modified cluster sampling method was used on the respondents. They were divided into groups in order to determine a more extensive and comparable progress of the program.

Data Collection Instrument and Gathering Protocol

Household interviews were conducted on selected communities within the nation's capital. The respondents were asked according to the contents of the questionnaire and they answered each as honest and sincere as possible. Afterwards, the respective responses were assessed and the actual interventions were introduced to the sample. This marked the second stage of the study. After the respondents have been made aware and the plan has been oriented and given to them, the implementation process began.

Research Framework

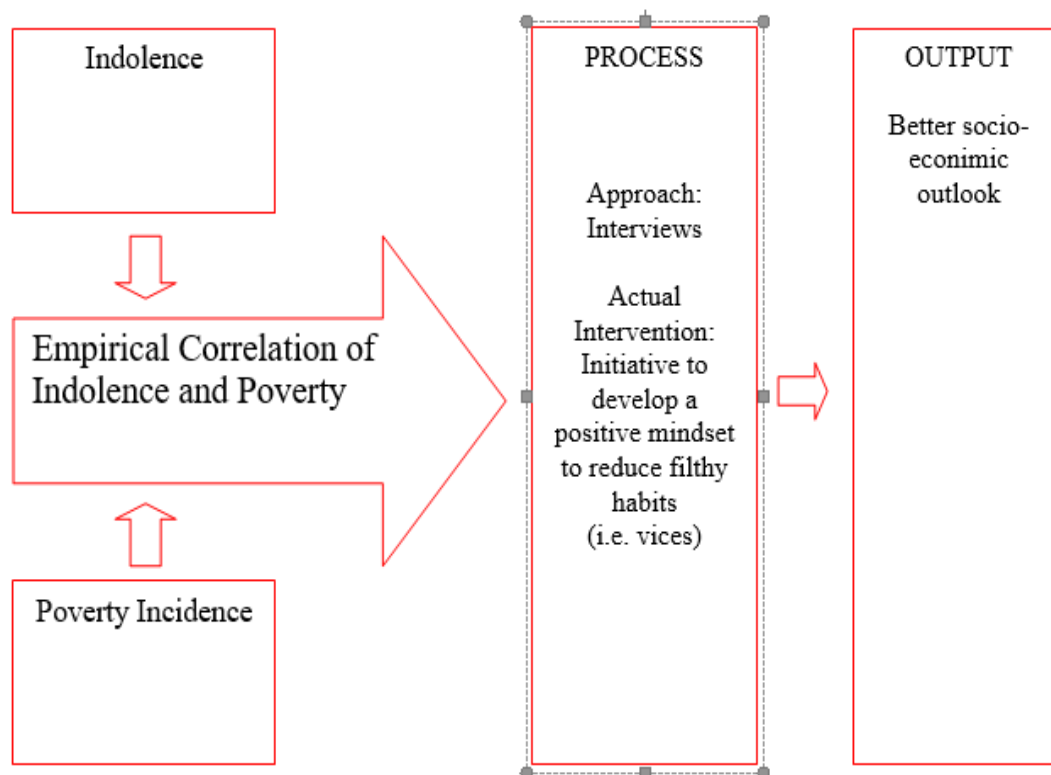


Fig. 1 Research Framework

The framework is simple: That is, the research attempted to validate whether – or not, poverty is also caused or worse, even aggravated by laziness. In order to achieve the goal, the respondents were interviewed about their filthy habits. In this case, it was deemed manifested by the rampant and prevalent vices that they do. After which, they were given certain interventions that may help them develop a more disciplined mindset and outlook. These intervention was simple – cut and limit their vices, regardless of how frequent or how much, as long as they cut it for half a year. After the time given, they were again interviewed for the results if there were really improvements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the significant findings of this research:

Poverty Insight

It is determined that poverty is indeed a multi-faceted predicament, with many anchors and predications that linger across the society and the economy.

La Vina (2011) on his lecture during the International Convention of Social Protection held at the University of Santo Tomas created a metaphor comparing poverty to a monster that has many hearts. And in order to defeat his so-called social tyrant, every heart must be stabbed simultaneously using all possible poverty alleviation means (e.g. microfinance, micro enterprising and social enterprising, among many more). Given such, it is now concluded that his metaphor is valid, for according to the respondents' mindset, they believe that it has many areas to consider.

Going further, based on multiple responses of the participants, they have utterly indicated that poverty is indeed a social disease, with majority (60%) attesting to this claim. This answer further reinforces the idea of Hoppe, *et al* (2010) that poverty is like an ailment that affects the mentality of an individual – that is, pushing him to think that the structure of the society is definitely unequal and unfair.

Base: Number of Respondents	Percentage
Dismal Social and Economic Status	87
Unavoidable life situation	55
Others Reasons (i.e. Government Corruption)	20
Note: Results exceed 100% due to multiple responses	

Relation to Indolence

The respondents who answered lack of financial discipline, upon further probing, revealed that vices do indeed play a part on their current status in life – which according to them is degrading and vicious (this will be further discussed on the following sub-topics).

Hence, this further proves two things:

1. Vices can be identified as a form or effect of the lack of financial discipline – which directly attributes to the reasons of poverty; and
2. The social disease aspect of negatively affecting the poor's mindset – which comprises multi-faceted characteristics and attributes - is truly valid, as what the respondents claim.

The vices are: Cigarette smoking and excessive gambling and liquor drinking.

Program Implementation and Results

After the respondents have given their honest answers, they were asked to limit their vices for half a year. The researcher did not interfere during this period – so as to achieve due diligence in the part of the respondents.

Significant results are as follows:

The results of the program revealed that majority (75%) of the respondents have indeed controlled their vices, and

statistically, changes are evident in terms of the following:

1. They were able to save a little more money to allocate for more important priorities such as food and medicine.
2. Parallel studies to health and wellness were manifested, as some respondents stated that they feel better physically. For instance, one chain smoker proclaimed that due to his control of his vices, he could now feel more energy to work, more so, he said that he became more optimistic in his mindset and outlook.

Table 2 Filthy Habit (Vice) Control	
Base: Number of Respondents with Vices	
Able to control 75%	Not able to control 25%

This shows promise and potential. Though, 25% is still a significant percentage, nevertheless, this can still be mitigated.

The reasons for the non-improvement are very simple yet devastating

1. Relapse
2. Too much negativity

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It can be easily concluded that indolence plays a part in aggravating poverty. Truly, this may sound like a cliché, but human development is at stake, and people find a simple gesture such as discipline easier said than done. Ergo, this empirical study was deemed to provide a good paradigm towards social upliftment.

Hence, it can be recommended that the program be sustained. Relapse is very possible, and it may affect those who have already been “reformed.” However, if the community can have interventions and initiatives to monitor every person and get everyone involved, then the possibilities for social change are boundless.

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