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**SOCIAL MEDIA USE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A STUDY  
ON CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LOS BANOS,  
LAGUNA, PHILIPPINES**

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### SOCIAL MEDIA USE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A STUDY ON CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LOS BANOS, LAGUNA, PHILIPPINES

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## **Dedication**

This thesis is for my Parents, Rose and Del

My Husband Ariel,

And my strength and wisdom, my daughter,

Athena Leone

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## ABSTRACT

COVID19 has brought huge effects on different fields including communication. The way people communicated at this time shifted to other communication platforms like social media. Issues, updates, and other information related to the pandemic were coursed through electronically. This study therefore explored how social media, specifically Facebook, was used as a crisis communication tool by the Municipality of Los Baños to govern during a crisis situation. It also determined how different the younger and older generation residents used social media during the pandemic. Guided by the Social Media Engagement Theory (Gangi and Wasko, 2016), a one-shot survey of 410 respondents was conducted. Results showed that the residents of Los Baños did not depend solely on the municipality's FB page as a primary tool during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the younger generation was deeply engaged in sharing announcements that served as their primary source of information during the crisis, as well as an informational tool during the pandemic. This implies that information that can instruct the residents was shared to increase awareness that would guide their actions. On the other hand, the older generation used social media as a tool for communication rather than a source of primary information. As a tool, social media was used to appease the residents of the locale where engagement albeit moderate saw its value in governance during a crisis. Lastly, variables including engagement, interaction, and involvement and participation can be considered as significant to measure SMET.

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Social Media Engagement Theory, Crisis Communication, Governan*

## **Chapter I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Rationale and Background of the Study**

Public health is one of the most important concerns in society. The government has a huge responsibility in taking care of the citizens' health as it is one of the best investments any locality can have. They should play a crucial role in the promotion and development of health awareness, programs, among others. It also secures and protects the public towards a better future and a good quality of life.

However, in 2019, scientists discovered an outbreak of Coronavirus Diseases 2019 (COVID-19) that caused respiratory illness in the City of Wuhan in Hubei Province, China. In a paper by Morens et al. (2020), entitled: "The origins of COVID-19 and Why it Matters," they discussed that initially, the disease originated from bats in which and was transferred to humans. It happened when the wet markets in Wuhan sold it to customers looking for meats of different kinds, including those of wild animals like snakes, beavers, porcupines, crocodiles, and course bats. Subsequently, according to WHO, people infected with the COVID-19 virus will suffer mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people with medical problems and comorbidities are more likely to develop serious illnesses.

With the continuous transmission, the virus spread like wildfire transmitted from one human to another, one province to the next, and one country to the world. Hence, on 11 March 2020, WHO declared a worldwide pandemic. A pandemic is a disease

outbreak that extends across countries and continents. It is different from an epidemic and an episode as it is more extensive and affects more people and lives (Robinson, 2020).

Edrada (2020) revealed that the Philippines recorded its first case of COVID-19 on 30 January 2020 with a 38-year-old woman from Wuhan. After two days, the country had its first death from COVID 19 outside China. On 17 March 2020, the Philippine Government announced the placement of the whole country in an "Enhanced Community Quarantine" or ECQ and a state of calamity. ECQ is a series of stay-at-home orders implemented by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID). The strict implementation of ECQ complies with Proclamation Nos. 929 and 922 of 2020.

In an article by the United Nations offices for Disaster Reduction, the pandemic caused by COVID-19 has been felt extremely at the local level. The response and recovery efforts are most crucial and precarious. Hence, proper communication in the middle of a crisis or pandemic must be done at the local level to address the needs of the community members. With the support from different departments at the national level, Local Government Units (LGUs) were able to fight the pandemic through volunteers and active interventions and coordination made by those at the local group when it comes to issues concerning the management of COVID-19.

In addition, Barse (2020), an associate professor at the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance, pertained to LGUs as the 'saving grace of the ongoing fight against COVID-19' because they belong to the level closest to the community and would directly hear and address the needs of the people. Through this,

communication was indeed essential. Effective communication was needed for LGUs to manage and adapt to the needs of the people during the pandemic. Their constituents equally required information from the LGU as it can guide them into informing, reporting, and outlining risks, reports, and feedback that might be crucial during the fight against COVID-19.

Coombs (1999) defined crisis communication as the transfer of essential and critical messages within a crisis management process, including prevention, preparation, performance, and learning. Further, it meant defining and managing the risks connected to activities and media relations of the company, the rehearsal of the crisis, and other activities that helped prevent the escalation of the situation and ensure effective action during a problem.

Different mediums through broadcasting like radio and television provided people with the information that they need. However, one of the most used media of communication is social media. Social media facilitates individuals to determine ideas and manage risks in different situations, including what happened during the pandemic. It can also help an individual and his community in different ways. Even if not correctly done, it can also cause harm to the community. USAID posited that LGUs may adopt different strategies for planning crisis communication, including identifying the communication needs and monitoring the information flow and public response or feedback.

Coombs (2014) further mentioned that crisis communication has evolved due to the massive relationship between crisis communication and social media. The role of social media in crisis communication has become huge concerning the three critical phases of crisis communication such as pre-crisis, crisis response, and post-crisis.

Preparation and prevention are key components of the pre-crisis period. Crisis response, on the other hand, sees that management must take action to address it; and the post-crisis phase fulfills obligations made during the crisis phase, includes follow-up information, and looks for methods to better prepare for the next problem. These phases serve as the organizational structure of crisis management (Marker, 2022)

Los Baños is a municipality located in the province of Laguna. On the website PhilAtlas.com, it is said that the town's population represents 3.41% of the total population of its region. It is known for the famous Mount Makiling and how it houses two prestigious universities in the country, the University of the Philippines Los Baños and the University of the Philippines Open University. Aside from this, it is also the home of international research centers like the International Rice Research Institute, SEAMEO-SEARCA, and others which made the town open its gates to both foreign and residents and visitors.

In March 2020, when the virus hit the country, the municipality responded rather quickly. In a personal interview with a former municipal employee, the late mayor Ceasar P. Perez tapped different offices in the Local Government and the barangay levels to immediately act upon the called lockdown. Students and guests might be affected since they might not go home directly. Communication between the Municipal office and other agencies became important as its constituents relied on how the LGU will react to the situation.

One of the methods used by the Local Government of Los Baños in communicating - during the pandemic was social media. Akram and Kumar (2017) defined social media as a platform for anyone to share their respective issues and

opinions and interact with different groups and individuals that happen in a virtual community. Through social media, the LGU of Los Baños communicated with its residents in the middle of the crisis. However, since Los Baños has a total population of 123,398 residents (DOH, 2020), different responses and reactions might come through this chosen communication medium.

Community response in social media made it important as the participation and communication between the municipality, and its citizens are established. Also, through community responses, specifically in social media, citizens have found their responsibility and participation in crisis communication or engagement.

The Social Media Engagement Theory (SMET) presented by Di Gangki and Wasko (2016) emphasizes how different organizations use social media to deliver their services to the people. The theory looks at how social media was used as a tool to deliver messages to the citizens. Hence, this paper aimed to investigate how SMET can explain the crisis communication done by the Local Government of Los Baños in Laguna, specifically the strategies employed and how the residents perceive it through the social media posts done during the pandemic. Assessing how the different variables of the theory, including the respondents' level of user engagement, level of interaction, and level of involvement and participation would help both the public and the organization to assess the information conveyed during a crisis vital to the effectiveness of the crisis-response strategies.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Communication plays a primary role in a success of a community. Hence, without investigating how the community will react to the messages given to those

through a particular platform during a crisis, the stakeholders might not recognize the proper strategy and approach needed for the community since a Local Government would like to protect and establish its reputation to the public. Therefore, in general, the study answered the question: How was social media used during the COVID 19 pandemic as a crisis communication platform in the Municipality of Los Baños, Laguna?

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the respondents' level of user engagement, interaction, involvement, and participation in using social media during the COVID -19 pandemic?
2. What is the difference in level of user, engagement, interaction, and involvement among generations of residents in Los Baños, Laguna? and
3. What is the relationship between the respondents' level of user engagement in social media, level of interaction with the municipality's social media platform, and their level of involvement and participation during the COVID-19 pandemic?

### **Objectives of the Study**

In general, the study aimed to find out how social media was used as a crisis communication platform during the COVID 19 pandemic in the Municipality of Los Baños, Laguna.

Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Identify the respondents' level of user engagement, interaction, involvement, and participation in using social media during the COVID-19 pandemic;

2. Assess the difference in level of user engagement, interaction, and involvement among generations of residents in Los Baños, Laguna; and
3. Determine the relationship between the respondents' level of user engagement in social media, level of interaction with the municipality's social media platform, and their level of involvement and participation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Significance of Study**

This study focused on how the municipality communicated with its constituents during a crisis using social media as a communication platform. In addition, it also explored and described the function of social media during the pandemic. Therefore, results can contribute to how organizations like LGUs, NGOs, and researchers package their messages and communication platforms during crises. Crises not only apply to the pandemic but could be to manufactured or natural calamities that could disrupt the day-to-day activities of the more significant population.

### **Scope and Limitations of the Study**

Social media use during a crisis greatly differs from day-to-day activities. The study only looked at the posts made during the COVID 19 pandemic and did not delve into other messages before then. The interactions in social media were investigated and described to establish what accomplishments resulted from its use during a crisis.

## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### COVID-19 and its effects

COVID-19 has affected many lives. It brought a huge impact on society. Haleem and Javaid (2020) stated that COVID-19 has rapidly impacted people's daily lives, enterprises, global trade, and travel. The virus spreads quickly from person to person, and early detection of the sickness is critical for controlling its spread. Most countries have also slowed the manufacturing of their goods. As people stay at home and economies shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many well-known brands in various industries are expected to go bankrupt (Tucker, 2020). Travelers traveling from one country to another also experienced the effects of the pandemic as different restrictions were put in place at each airport. The tourism industry hugely suffered, and most destinations became inaudible for a moment.

Aside from its effects on the economy and the tourism industry, the most affected of all are humans. People are affected psychologically by the COVID-19 pandemic. Death rates are increasing day by day; life grinds to a halt, and its control in time is unpredictable. COVID-19 had a detrimental psychological effect on everyone, much like traumatic experiences have caused many psychological issues in humans throughout history (Akat and Karatas, 2020).

Ozer (2020) also mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the educational process of students. School closures and other restrictions affect billions of pupils and millions of educators. Millions of students have been unable to complete their education at schools, universities, technical schools, and adult education

programs. Many governments have stepped up to meet the growing need for online and remote learning opportunities for schoolchildren.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, all local governments are free to implement their own version of quarantines, which includes travel restrictions (by air, sea, and land), the suspension of non-essential employment, the prevention of mass gatherings, and the closing of all businesses except those that provide or manufacture basic necessities. Curfews and lockdowns have been imposed by several local governments, and individuals who break them could be arrested (Buenaventura, Ho, & Lapid, 2020). Hence, for people to be informed, communication of information was key.

### **Communication and its importance in an organization**

Communication is the exchange of a message or information from a sender to a recipient. Communication allows for the formation of connections and the organization of tasks. Every message has a goal or target in mind. The sender intends to accomplish something via communication, whether consciously or unconsciously (Uttarakhand Open University, n.d). Effective communication all comes down to delivering messages to others in a clear and definite manner. It is also about getting information from others with the least amount of misinterpretation possible.

It is also the process of delivering messages (facts, ideas, attitudes, and views) from one person to another in such a way that they are understood (Cummings, 1989). Communication can be described as the exchange of information between two or more people. People gather to exchange ideas and gain a better understanding of one another. Communication is the comprehension of the invisible and hidden rather than the visible.

Communication is necessary not only for a person's development and self-expression but also for his organization. Patil and Kendre (2021) said that any organization's management relies heavily on communication. It is a process for sharing thoughts, ideas, opinions, and plans among employees in various company departments. Good communication is necessary not only for developing relationships but also for the success of a business. As a result, communication is essential in the workplace. At work, communication aids in increasing efficiency.

Communication is the foundation of any organization's success; business involves constant contact with various parties, including management, employees, and clients. Vaughan (2018) stated that effective communication ensures information flows freely between all parties involved, lowering the risk of misunderstanding, dissatisfaction, and a lack of trust.

Leaders benefit from communication to carry out their duties and obligations. Planning is built on the foundation of communication. All the necessary information must be provided to the management, who must then communicate the plans to implement them. Organizing also necessitates excellent communication with others regarding their job responsibilities. In the same way, leaders and managers must communicate well with their employees for the team to achieve its goals and objectives (Juneja, n.d.).

Therefore, supervisory proficiency in sending and receiving communications is required for an effective and efficient communication system. A leader must identify numerous communication barriers, assess the causes for their development, and take preventive measures to avoid them. As a result, a leader's principal task is to establish

and maintain an effective communication system in any organization, especially during crises like the pandemic.

### **Communication during the pandemic**

The way people communicate also changed during the pandemic. Many businesses and organizations started using several methods to communicate with their clients during the COVID-19 outbreak. Sexton (2021) discussed how people learned a lot about communication during a public health crisis over the last year. She mentioned that people had understood the necessity of leadership in managing and discussing the pandemic. It helped people learn the value of listening to and communicating clearly, succinctly, and honestly.

Taunton (2020) also discussed that the most noticeable differences are that most have less face-to-face engagement with others, and when they do, they wear masks. People also spent more time on Zoom, Skype, and other social media platforms and, overall, had less interaction with individuals outside of the people they lived with.

Many people are improving their communication skills, which could be advantageous in the future. Efficient communication involves content, method, people, and partners during an outbreak. During the many pandemic stages, communication precedes and monitors the operational and community response with phased and circumstance-relevant content (Reddy and Gupta, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, communication is critical from the government to the people, from the media to the people, from people to people, from doctor to patient, and so on. The value of content is emphasized in effective communication.

Communication has grown a lot more immediate in the last ten years. Sending emails back and forth from a computer and waiting for the receiver to arrive at their desk before responding is seldom used; most people have access to instant messaging software, which is increasingly being integrated into workplaces. Westgarth (2021), in the paper "Has the pandemic changed the way we communicate?", discussed that it is simple to assume that technology has replaced the necessity for face-to-face contact in these instances. With the shift to instant communication and in a post-pandemic world where being face-to-face with someone and being able to read the conversation, the flow, and body language is actively discouraged, it will be interesting to see how this affects the profession and society as a whole in the long run.

This is supported by Mheidly et al. (2020), who says that during the COVID-19 pandemic, interpersonal communication was severely hindered. Protective measures such as social separation and wearing face masks are necessary to combat the infection, but they complicate daily face-to-face interactions. This means people are more prone to using digital communication to substitute in-person relationships when physically separated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Persistent digital inequality means that not everyone will be able or willing to increase digital communication during a public health emergency. (Nguyen, Hargittai, & Marler, 2021).

### **Crisis Communication**

Cherry (2020) defined a crisis as a time of struggle wherein people may experience danger, trouble, or hardships. It can be an unpredicted event or situation that distresses either a community, organization, or business. These events can affect a person as they face impediments throughout the crisis. As a crisis affects most

members of society, and as a crisis is neither planned nor expected, any organization or group might experience different problems along the way. A planned and strategic approach is needed to lessen the damage a crisis or situation can cause to the public and the members of society. Hence, crisis communication is required. Crisis communication is how an organization delivers information to those immediately affected by a crisis, private or public. (Crisis Communication, n.d).

According to Coombs (2014), crisis communication, sometimes referred to as crisis management, is designed to guide and protect both the organization and its stakeholders from threats or effects that a crisis could have and inflict. Crisis communication primarily has three phases: the pre-crisis phase, the crisis response phase, and the post-crisis phase. These three phases include prevention and preparation, the management of the current crisis, the preparation for the following situation or problem, and the actual fulfillment of the commitments made during the crisis phase. These three phases are essential to ensure that the organization and its stakeholders are well managed.

Crisis communication is essential in any organization as it protects the members from debates that may arise in the middle of an unwanted situation. The public needs information for proper motivation and action during a crisis and the good spread of it. In addition, this is also done to avoid the feeling of being isolated and deprived of information inside an organization (Zoonen and der Meer, 2015). Organizations can preserve trust and good relationships with their members if done correctly by showing them their importance.

PAHO, or the Pan American Health Organization, published a tool in 2020 that guides the planning of a communication response for a municipality during a

pandemic. According to this tool, a communication breakdown during a pandemic can negatively affect the city and its residents. Hence, a city must create an efficient plan and strategic communication activity to help the whole locale.

Hinga (2020), in a blog entitled "Effective Crisis Communication: Why is it Important?" mentioned that organizations must make sure that there is ongoing, accurate, and transparent communication in both internal and external parts of an organization in times of crisis. Implementing good crisis communication in the inner division can aid the organization in handling problems properly. Crisis communication could be done by preparing the employees, finding and training a crisis communication team, making a crisis communication plan, and making sure the information put out to the public, mostly through social media, is accurate over how quickly it gets out.

In addition, according to Flores and Asuncion (2020) in the study "Toward an Improved/Crisis Communication in this Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Baseline Study for Philippine Local Government Units", crisis communication plays a vital role in the management of the damaging effects of a crisis, particularly during the escalation of the COVID-19 Pandemic. It aids in the direction of the whole organization, including its employees, partners, and customers, in a very unclear situation. Through crisis communication, if done correctly, trust can be established and gained from the public and can maintain a good relationship between an organization and its customers.

LGUs in the Philippines usually use social media to allow an instant and effective way of reaching and engaging with vast and diverse audiences. Usually, aside from regular announcements, updates, and reports, LGUs' content of crisis

communication ranges from having self-protective behavior promotions, calling for voluntariness, and addressing misinformation.

However, a study by Convento (2019) under the title, "Managing Crisis: Best Practices of Public Information Officers in Higher Education Institutions" found a lack of a standardized method for crisis communication. Most organizations are unprepared and not fully equipped with the protocols and procedures needed for crisis communication, which may lead to different problems in executing the crisis management process. Hence, she recommends developing a proper crisis communication management plan in different situations with active connections between the media and its stakeholders.

### **Crisis Communication in the Philippines**

The government's role as a civic enabler, or its ability to facilitate planned, systematic, and effective social action toward addressing future dangers and managing the current crisis, is critical in the fight against COVID-19. DiClemente and Jackson (2017) discussed how crisis communication is essential for promoting and fostering mutual trust and joint action. This entails effective and accurate transmission and exchange of information about existing and prospective risks and hazards and their repercussions.

Bautista Jr. (2020) narrated that when the government announced the introduction of community quarantine in the NCR from March 15 to April 14, the country experienced a problem in crisis communication. Classes, government offices, and mass meetings were all halted, but private-sector workers were encouraged to work in more flexible ways. Domestic air, land, and sea traffic to and from the NCR was also

halted. However, public transportation was not affected. This has left locals in the area concerned, uncertain of how the policy will be applied or what it implies.

A COVID-19 response necessitates more than just a good medical response. Effective communication is also essential to ensure that the public knows the pandemic's history and impacts the measures required to solve the crisis. The government must understand that communication entails more than simply presenting one's message in words. The message's delivery is more crucial.

In the Philippines, crisis communication needs to be reconsidered in light of climate change, and lessons might be learned from the Philippines' experience. (Genilo, 2018). In particular, crisis communication should accordingly place a greater emphasis on creating messages that are sensitive to the social construction of disasters, promoting dialogues rather than simply disseminating information, incorporating new media into the media mix, and using community-based information flow in addition to the traditional top-to-bottom approach.

Crisis communication was also used during Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Risk communication is critical in emergency management for public health message transmission. Because social media platforms like Facebook are popular in the Philippines, they were used to communicate risk during the Haiyan response. (Cool et al., 2015). The WHO Representative Office in the Philippines has established social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. A modest increase in followers was noticed thirty days after these social media channels were formed. The most significant gain in followers happened on Facebook, as uploaded content transitioned from general public health information to more proactive public health intervention and preparation messaging. This contained details on critical health interventions and

advice on adopting protective behaviors in the face of the public health hazards that usually arise following a disaster.

### **Role of the Community in Crisis Communication**

A community is described as a group of individuals living in a specific location or socially related due to shared interests, beliefs, or circumstances. Community approaches, which are based on this conception, refer to ways in which individuals and groups can be involved in emergency management, resulting in more effective emergency management. (FEMA, 2011). Communities are said to be the members of a specific locale meant to take part in improving their municipality. Accordingly, communities are intended to have a significant role in responding to different crises and problems. Authorities are designed to listen to communities and have community-based interventions to address issues accordingly.

Community engagement puts together a network of affected communities in a public health emergency. Engaged communities contribute to rehabilitation by bringing their particular abilities, resources, information, and perspectives to the table. The term "community" is frequently used in disaster response to indicate people who live in the geographic area affected by the response. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d).

In an emergency, your relationships with various communities should be based on their attitudes, views, and encounters with your organization prior to, during, and after the crisis. Policing Project (2020) said that community engagement is even more critical for organizations to share information in both directions in times of crisis. When things are serious, and a speedy answer is required, this may seem paradoxical, but individuals need to be heard to establish a foundation of trust.

Engaging communities entails more than simply disseminating information. It involves listening to and responding to community concerns and needs; enabling access to isolated or difficult-to-reach community segments; involving communities in crucial decisions; and allowing them to play active roles in the response. If the members of the community trust you, an engaged community may help you amplify your communications efforts during a crisis and even advocate for you. By definition, the individuals in your community will be the most interested in what you say. (Team Guild, 2022).

Linnell (2015), meanwhile, said that if authorities, individuals, and communities in hazard-prone areas are adequately prepared and ready to act and are equipped with the knowledge and capacities for effective disaster management, disaster impacts and losses can be significantly reduced. This highlights the role of community participation during crisis communication. It would be better if community members were open to working with the government or organizations to survive a crisis.

This is also supported by the Hyogo Framework (2005), which discussed that one significant activity should be the development of specialized mechanisms to engage the active participation and ownership of relevant stakeholders, including communities, in disaster risk reduction, with a focus on fostering a spirit of voluntarism. Meanwhile, these methods are also mentioned in the Yokohama Strategy and Plan for Action for a Safer World as policies, legislation, and institutional frameworks intended to bring all disaster and risk management sectors together to plan and respond in a more integrated and coordinated manner. (Yokohama Strategy, 2005).

## **Community Response and Crisis Communication**

Stansfield, Mapplethorpe, and South (2020), in the article, "The Community Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)," discussed how the community response contributed to how it built a joint trust within themselves. The article mentioned how the community members used social media and the Internet to be connected by looking out for one another and having volunteers who could act as community leaders in building a solid community with support from social media networks.

Social media is said to be a tool to help the community in emergency response. Measuring the community response to social media usage and implementation can also be done, which can help in recommending effective practices for government organizations in times of crisis or emergencies. (Innovative Uses of Social Media in Emergency Management, 2013).

Therefore, community response can be identified by looking into how the community members acted and responded to specific information given by an organization. Understanding this could assist in creating recommendations and improvements needed by government organizations since community members play an essential role in driving ideas in community enhancement, communication, and participation.

Marston, Renedo, and Miles (2020), in the article "Community Participation is Crucial in a Pandemic," mentioned that communities have diverse reactions to messages during a pandemic. However, their participation must be heard and recognized as they could contribute to the compliance of any crisis communication. Although community response and participation can be hard to establish, a good relationship between the community and the organization must ensure sustainable

involvement and communication by creating specific community engagement projects and taskforces to ensure that the community is heard and considered part of the response team.

Hence, Anoko et al. (2020) supported the discussion above in the article, "Community engagement for successful COVID-19 Pandemic response: 10 lessons from Ebola outbreak responses in Africa." They highlighted how communities are poorly involved in crisis communication during a pandemic, even if their commitment is essential in controlling the situation. Their experience in the Ebola outbreak showed that community engagement meant involving the community in problem analysis and solution generation made them more committed to fighting the epidemic. They mentioned that each community is unique in that respect, so proper engagement must be done for the specific needs of each community.

Lastly, South, Stansfield, and Weston (2020), in the article "Sustaining and Strengthening Community Resilience throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic and beyond," said that community action is a vital part of responding to a pandemic. They discussed that although crisis communication is done without community participation and support, any project cannot be successful. Although community participation and strengthening can take years, acknowledging organizations and community lead partners can be created to maintain trust and relationships between the government and the community.

### **Role of Local Government Units in Crisis Communication**

Local Government Units are the specific offices or individuals mandated by the national constitution or any higher government officer to provide a specific service to a small community or area. They are referred to as local government (Ferido, n.d.). In

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the Philippines, the president can create local government units (LGUs) as intended in the constitution.

They provide and create an essential role in developing a community as they address the problems and concerns within their small area of coverage through proper communication and management (Javier and Elazigue, 2011). In addition, they could also initiate planning efforts to shape the community in a developing and growing area. During a crisis, they are partnered with other government offices as they serve as the first responders. According to the Local Government Code of 1991, LGUs must deliver assistance and essential services to the people. During the pandemic last year, LGUs were tapped to ensure that the best resources and initiatives were given to their localities.

An LGU targets a seamless crisis communication plan to aid its constituents during crises and possible threats like the pandemic. Poor crisis communication from an LGU can lead to adverse effects, including distrust and uncertainty. Flores and Asuncion (2020) aimed to provide a guide for LGUs to communicate with their residents during the pandemic effectively in two stages; first is by looking into how LGUs, specifically the cities of Quezon City, Iloilo, and Davao City, used social media to gain trust from the citizens. The second stage then conducted an online survey that assessed the people's perceptions regarding the content of the social media accounts. As a result, they found that social media can be an effective tool for communicating with LGUs in the middle of a crisis. However, people must identify the source of information to trust what the LGU provides them. Hence, this study confirmed the importance of communication during disasters and pandemics.

Another study entitled "The Role of Social Media in Local Government Crisis Communication" by Graham, Avery, and Park (2015) surveyed 300 local government officials in the United States to examine the use of social media in crisis communication. The results showed the active use of social media in LGU and the positive impact on the crisis. These two studies can establish the importance of LGUs in crisis communication and social media usage in addressing concerns during an emergency.

### **Significance of social media in Crisis Communication**

Social media platforms are among the communication channels that have been shown to be excellent instruments for risk and crisis communication since they allow for quick and effective communication and engagement with broad and diverse audiences. (Addiction and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019)

During times of crisis, social media plays a crucial role in communication, as it did during this pandemic. Akram and Kumar (2017) published the study "A Study on the Positive and Negative Effects of Social Media on Society." Akram and Kumar (2017) defined social media as a platform for the public to debate and discuss their respective issues and opinions. It is also a term used to determine the interaction between different groups and individuals in a virtual community. Social media helps individuals, particularly the younger generation, discover ideas and manage risks in different situations. Although this might be a good point in using social media, if not correctly addressed, social media can help an individual and their community.

Researchers conducted various studies to assess the effects of social media on a person's health and psychological well-being. However, only a few studies showed the use of social media to deliver information in crisis communication. A

particular paper by Sarmiento (2019) entitled "Social Media for LGUs: Looking at the Impact of LGU Facebook Pages in the Social Impact Theory" discussed how social media had become an essential platform for LGUs to interact with their community members. However, her study also found the weak experience and knowledge of LGUs in implementing communication campaigns on social media.

Another study by Congjuico (2014) entitled "Social Media for Risk Management and Emergency Response for Philippine Local Government Units" proved that social media could support LGUs during disasters and risks. Hence, both LGU and its constituents can benefit from it. Misra and Jana (2017), in another study entitled, "Social Networks in the Context of Community Response to Disaster: Study of a Cyclone-affected Community in Coastal West Bengal, India." They explained how strong social networks' effects influence the community during different events, including disasters and other crisis events. In this study, local and outside groups formed a community and explained how each member could start raising awareness, making plans, and getting ready.

Social media has become not just an accessory to human life but a potent tool in everyday situations. Chan (n.d), in an article entitled, "The Role of Social Media in Crisis Preparedness, Response, and Recovery," identified four social media functions: information dissemination, disaster planning, and training, collaborative problem solving, decision-making, and information gathering. These functions can aid social media tools in improving crisis communication used by different organizations and government institutions. He recommended that social media used for crisis management must provide and encourage citizens and community members with their role in preparing and managing a crisis to enable them to respond appropriately for themselves and the community.

Therefore, an article published by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (2020) entitled, "Addressing Communication Challenges During an Infectious Disease Emergency Response: State Experiences from the H1N1 Pandemic" established the effective use of social media. It is an inexpensive communication tool that helps the local government overcome security and IT barriers. They did, however, recommend that a social media policy be implemented so that stakeholders are not further confused during the pandemic.

Further research on crisis communication has been conducted in the past years. It usually focuses on how crisis communication is used in different organizations and institutions. However, the emergence of social media has given a new opportunity for research in crisis communication as it has become one essential factor in its conduct.

According to Dearnell (2019) in the article, "Crisis Communication in the Age of Social Media," the immediate response to social media made it an essential factor in crisis communication. Tailoring responses on social media must be considered as a massive number of audiences are present on this kind of platform. Although building trust in social media is tricky, constant authoritative communication must respond to social media crises.

Social media has become a new communication instrument, especially in crisis communication. It has become a vital tool and influenced different mediums used by both the government and the citizens to connect (Bratu, 2016). Accordingly, the purpose of social media is to bring people together and develop relationships. From this most recent horrific occurrence, a pleasant feeling comes from knowing that the

public came together in a crisis and brought the terrorists to justice by working together rather than against each other or by themselves. (Agnes, 2013).

In an article by Maal and North (2019) entitled, "Social Media in Crisis Communication-the Do's and Don'ts," they highlighted that social media created more immediate information sharing among the organization's stakeholders. Accordingly, social media played a vital role in the response during crisis management as it can be considered a harvesting and rumor management tool.

Eriksson (2018), in the study, "Lessons for Crisis Communication on Social Media: A Systematic Review of What Research Tells Us Practice," discussed that effective social media crisis communication should be about developing social media's full potential to become a medium in crisis communication. It is also critical to monitor the contents and concentrate more on closing the gap between how social media was used and selecting the appropriate message, source, and timing of its letters.

Holmes (n.d), therefore, concluded in her paper entitled "Crisis Communications and Social Media: Advantages, Disadvantages, and Best Practices" that information in crisis communication must be delivered quickly, hence, the need for an appropriate tool to do this. With the help of technology, social media allows a wide variety of opportunities for crisis communication. However, she highlighted that social media is not the heart of crisis communication but just a tool to communicate and disseminate information, as it has pros and cons. Building and maintaining community relationships is still essential to keep a more substantial reputation for any crisis communication organization.

Cool et al. (2015) discussed how WHO employed social media for the first time in the Philippines as part of the ERC strategy in reaction to Typhoon Haiyan. It was

challenging to establish a social media presence and organically grow a following, especially during a large-scale humanitarian crisis.

### **Community Response in Social Media**

Social media has established its importance in different situations as it helps address those, including crises or other unwanted events. However, social media also influenced how the community members responded to various concerns and information as it brought the active participation of its members. Simon and Adini (2015), in the article entitled, "Socializing in Emergencies: A Review of the Use of Social Media in Emergency Situations," highlight how active public participation is present during emergencies. They discussed that social media provides chances for the community to express their responses in different situations they can access adequately.

Another paper by Wong et al. (2020) entitled "The Use of Social Media and Online Communications in time of Pandemic COVID-19" supported that social media brought a massive change in community members' communication. Despite having limitations, they use social media platforms to get the participation of community members, including how they responded to extra information, specifically those involving the healthcare system. Since COVID-19 resulted in a community-wide lockdown where physical distancing is needed, social media brought people together through communicating and responding to messages that needed interaction that could be helpful to each other.

A response is a statement made to answer a piece of information, a question, or a command given. The reaction can be elicited by simply asking a question or demanding additional information or clarification. Cooper (2020), in the article, "How

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to Use Social Media for Crisis Communications and Emergency Management," said that social media had become a perfect platform to deliver a response to crises and emergencies. The quick and direct means of communication made messages and information needed by the community available instantly. However, these answers and participation must be handled with extra care. Social media can get both negative and positive responses as it can have many users and participants. Also, active participation and response must be present as the community monitors different questions and feedback.

Therefore, as Barnes (2020) discussed in an article titled, "The Power of Social Media Community through Crisis," responses from the community helped connect despite the different controversies it might be facing, including fake news and bashing. Through social media and community response, citizens could share their thoughts and urge them to be responsible for the COVID-19 situation.

### **User-Engagement**

The terms "user engagement" or "customer engagement" refer to a person's reaction to a digital offering such as a service, a product, or a website. User engagement is crucial because highly involved people are more likely to try out a product or service, purchase it, or provide feedback on it. The number of downloads, clicks, shares, and other actions users take determines their engagement level. (What Is User Engagement?-Definition by Insider, 2021). Accordingly, it is one of the most important parts of the SME theory as it directly measures the engagement of a person with The material or message is posted. The amount of time individuals spends connecting with different social media accounts and content is known as "engagement" on social media. The phrase can describe various activities across all

social media platforms, including Likes and Favorites, Comments, Direct Messages, Replies, Shares, Retweets, Saves, Clicks, and Mentions. Engagement is a great way to see if the content an organization is providing is resonating with your target audience. (Social Media Engagement: Why It's Important and How to Do It Well-The Buffer Blog, 2021). It is said that social media is one of the top choices for connecting people. Therefore, support and teamwork can be provided if the user engages in them.

Ott and Theunissen (2015) also shared that the benefits of social media and social networking sites for organizations and public relations have been the topic of research. Potential hazards to a company's reputation have been largely overlooked, yet ineffective social media strategy can cause or worsen challenges. This means that participants must know how to engage properly on social media platforms to be able to communicate and see their involvement in the solution of the problem.

### **Interaction on social media**

Gomez (2021) defined social media interaction as two-way conversations and touchpoints between customers and service providers. The way they interact with your supporters has a significant impact on retention, whether you're liking a tagged post or responding to a negative review. Every positive connection has the ability to convert a one-time customer into a loyal customer. The exchange of information between two or more people is referred to as social interaction. Because these interactions represent the foundation of social organization, they are an important subject of basic social inquiry and analysis. The interaction between two (dyads), three (triads), or bigger social groups can be investigated. (Social Sciences, n.d).

Interactions on social media are helpful but sometimes misunderstood indicators of how well a piece of content has been received. As a result, when people

talk about interactions, it usually means likes and comments. Karnesi (2014) discussed that optimal involvement and dialogue with any networking group should be a two-sided activity while using social media platforms. Make the most of the resources available on these websites to get the most out of your internet presence.

Measuring social media interaction is crucial because it allows you to see how well your audience receives your material. This data can be used to improve the products and services or enhance future posts. It also provides a measurable stat to track your progress over time. Bukar et al., 2021 studied the impact of social media on crisis communication's ability to recover from a crisis through social response and interaction. They found out that the authorities in charge of crisis management and communication should place a high value on social media interaction. Meaningful involvement in crisis engagement and social interaction on social media might boost the public's ability to recover from a disaster through social media-based crisis communication.

### **Involvement and Participation**

Involvement, according to researchers, can be defined in behavioral terms. For example, Stone (1984) defined involvement as the amount of time and effort spent on a given activity. This is also supported by Rothchild (1984), who defined social media involvement as a person's level of interest, emotional attachment, or arousal with social media. The adaptation of these definitions aimed to explore the attachment and commitment of a person with regard to the posts seen on social media.

Amaro and Duarte (2015) defined social media involvement as a person's level of interest, emotional attachment, or agitation with social media. Therefore, involvement

in general would enable the community to be committed to understanding the needs and aspirations needed to improve the community to which they belong.

On the other hand, participation can be defined as social participation, which is described as a person's engagement in activities that allow them to interact with people in their society or area and express interpersonal interactions outside of the household. (Manijeh Dehi Aroogh & Mohammadi Shahboulaghi, 2020). Social participation is one of the most essential and effective aspects of determining how individuals react to various messages.

The difference between participation and involvement is that participation refers to people's actual business activities, whereas involvement refers to people's amount of input in decision-making about which activities they conduct.

### **Social Media and Crisis Communication**

Social media has proven its importance and impact on how people practice communication today. It has initiated a significant change in different organizations and communities and given different solutions to problems that people have experienced throughout the years. Due to the apparent introduction of modern technologies that allow information to reach a global scale in a split second, the sense of urgency connected with a crisis is heightened. (Fink, 2002).

In addition, with the rise of social media and its impact on people, the public created an urgent need for updated content, which is needed in crisis communication. The era of waiting for something has passed. People live in an era of immediate satisfaction, and professionals must understand this shift and modify their online strategy accordingly. (Mattee, 2011). Grunig (2009) mentioned organizations that

have formerly been able to control the narrative amid a crisis now constantly find themselves as participants, a key actor among many, in the flow of information. Hence, different organizations today are using social media to maintain the flow and regular updates needed by people who are already engaged in social media.

Another change brought about by the rise of social media in the crisis communication scene is the growing expectation of engagement and interaction. Most organizations today have already shifted to using technology, particularly social media, and have left their traditional ways of transmitting messages. According to Baron and Phillbin (2009), communication experts agree that engagement is critical in times of crisis. Organizations must recognize that social media should be used as a forum for discussion rather than just disseminating messages. This increased communication reach has significant consequences for crisis communications. In the event of a crisis, social media is likely to speed up the rate at which the issue is discussed and shared, exponentially increasing the crisis's spread and significance.

Another study found that through social media, people had the opportunity to post, comment, and share messages inside and outside of organizations. It improves the public's ability to keep an eye on the organization and communicate what they've seen, raising broad awareness of what's happening. (Gonzalez-Herrera & Smith, 2008).

Furthermore, the Internet allowed businesses to communicate directly with stakeholders, which impacted crisis communications. Corporations could now post press releases and statements on the internet to benefit the public and the media. (Witmer, 2000).

## Theoretical Framework

This paper is based mainly on social media's role in crisis communication. Communication plays a vital role during a crisis, especially during a pandemic. Social media enables the LGU to have direct contact with their constituents, improving their integrity and performance. However, despite the familiarity of many with social media, LGUs still face challenges in using them effectively for crisis communication.

Social media engagement is said to assist in refining relationships and analyzing how the community reacts to what an organization gives them. Also, community engagement could become a vital factor in looking into social media engagement (Dessart, 2017).

Hence, a theory introduced in a study by Di Gangi and Wasko (2016) entitled "Social Media Engagement Theory: Exploring the Influence of User Engagement on Social Media Usage" introduced the Social Media Engagement Theory (SMET). It focuses on how the community members interact with each other given the information from a particular organization. SMET emphasizes the interaction among users and how they engage in the messages given by the organization through social media.

Social media has been a very communal communication medium in the 21st century. It has made connections worldwide, and nobody can deny its strength and influence. Gilstrap and Holderby (2016), in the article "Actually Having Conversations and Talking to People: Defining Social Media Engagement," claimed that social media engagement influenced stakeholders and strengthened the organizational identity. They defined it as "the interactive, synchronous communication and collaboration among numerous participants via technology." SMET can measure how the public participates in and uses social media and how engaged the public is with its content.

Social media engagement happened during the pandemic in both the national and local communities. Authorities were pressured to find a way to relay information to the public immediately. A lack of awareness, knowledge, and preparedness could put people at risk. Hence, conveying accurate information is a must to address possible effects. Social media was then used during the pandemic, proving how powerful it could be (Sahni and Sharma, 2020).

Escoda, Narros, and Espinosa (2020) in the paper, "Social Networks' Engagement During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Spain: Health Media vs. Healthcare Professionals," supported the claim that they concluded how the pandemic created new challenges for the communication industry as well as media professionals. Social media then opened new opportunities and interactions for receiving information from not just the community but authorities as well.

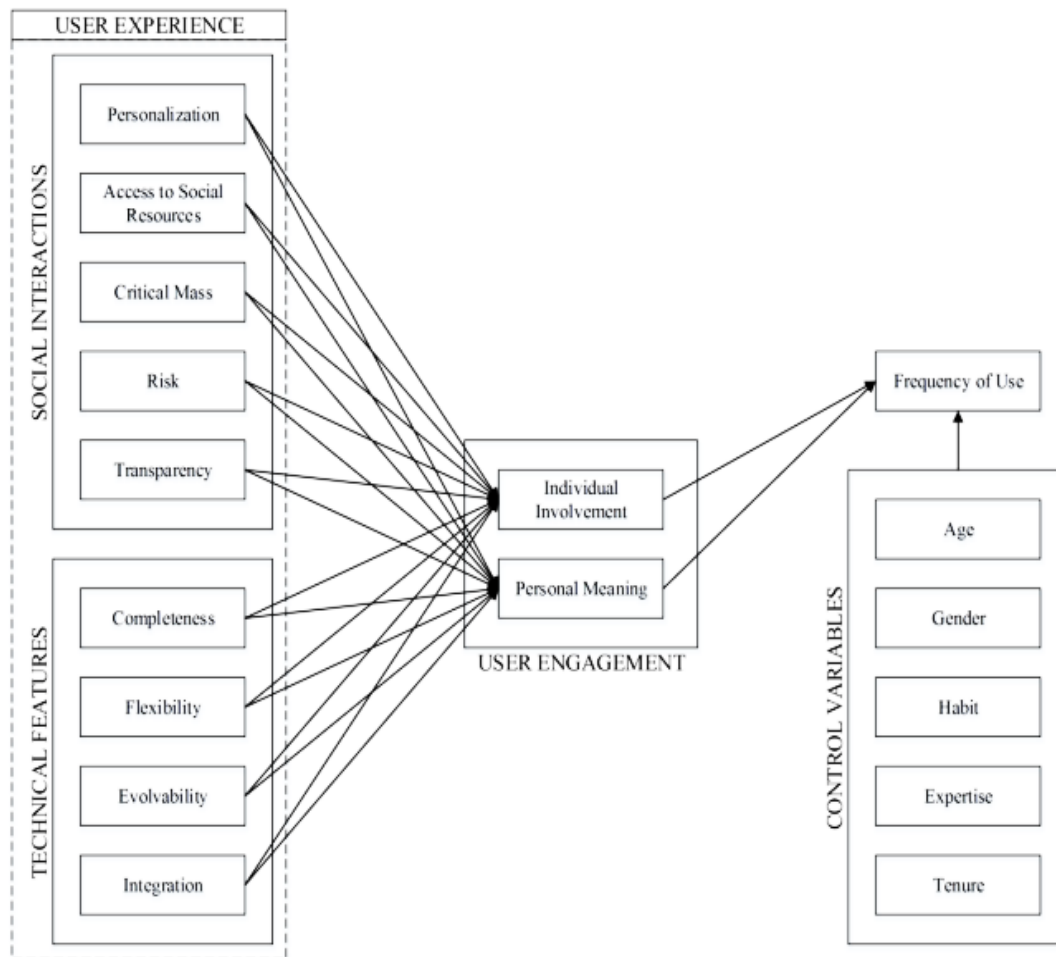
Social media engagement is also said to help improve relationships and build trust, commitment, and loyalty from the audience to an organization. Hence, community engagement has become an essential factor in social media engagement (Dessart, 2017). A paper entitled "A Model of Social Media Engagement: User Profiles, Gratifications, and Experiences" by Peet and Haase (2016) supported the idea of having activities, experiences, and engagements to better understand how people are engaged on social media. They highlighted how people are involved in social media because they found a connection between what social media gave them and how they play their role in society.

## **Social Media Engagement Theory**

Di Gangi and Wasko (2016) established how social media users modify, share, and reuse content without thinking of its original intention. Initially, SMET was made as a business model of interaction between a user and an organization until it was revised to focus on the social interaction among the users that use social media given by a particular organization. This theory, therefore, understands the user experience that impacts their engagement and usage.

SMET presented different elements, including presentation of self, action, and participation; uses and gratification; positive experiences; uses; and activity counts. Social context can explain how social media engagement can be dynamic and constantly changing. It is said to be iterative as the process continuously repeats. SMET was used to forecast how user experiences affect user engagement and other behaviors. While this is the theoretical underpinning of the study, the intent was not to validate or debunk the theory but simply as a lens and explanatory framework (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Social Media Engagement Theory (Di Gangi and Wasko, 2016)



### Conceptual Framework

Inspired by the Social Media Engagement Theory, the study assumed that the type of social media used as a crisis communication platform during a pandemic could lead to better managing the threats and risks facing the community of Los Baños. In this case, the study assumed that the Municipality of Los Baños used Facebook as a crisis communication tool to communicate with its constituents during the pandemic because face-to-face interaction was restricted. In a community with more than 123,000 people, Facebook would be a more plausible alternative considering the prevalence of social media users. Therefore, Los Baños residents were assumed to have accessed and read the FB posts. The exposure to these posts would depend on

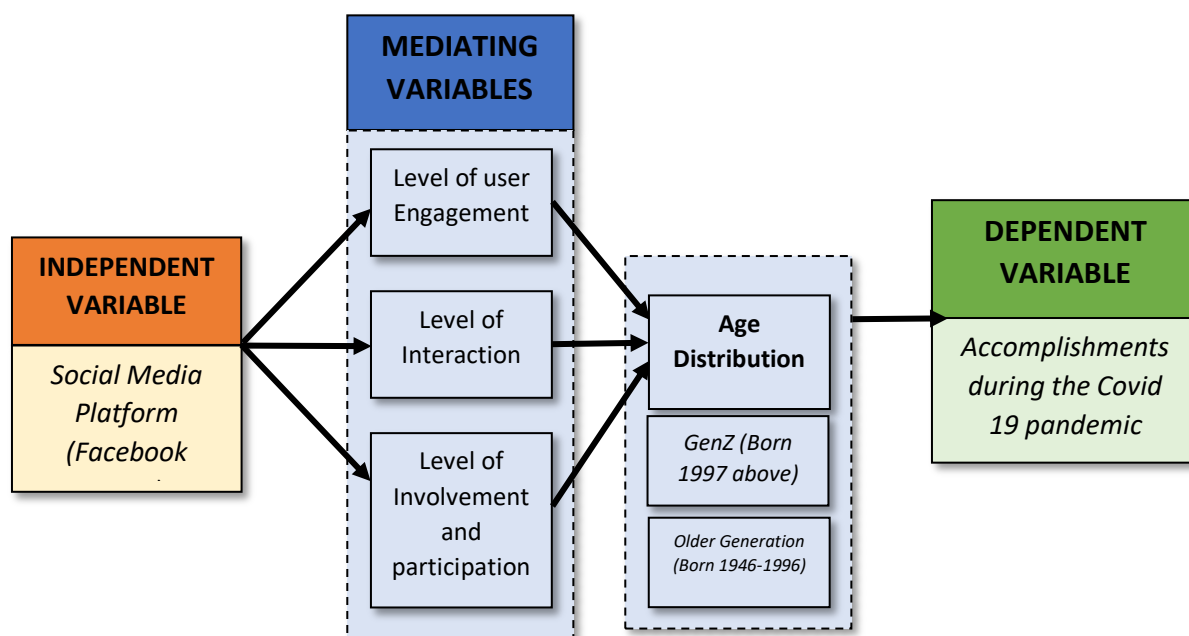
to what extent Los Baños constituents had engaged, involved, or interacted and participated with the posts, which would then lead to the nature of involvement and participation during the pandemic. It would also be interesting to find out which age group could have shown higher engagement, involvement, and interaction levels.

The level of engagement refers to the frequency of sharing, reacting, and commenting on the social media posts made by the LGU. This was measured by the amount of time spent on social media, the number of likes, shares, comments, and how the residents clicked and read the posts on social media. Such reactions could define the nature of the participation and accomplishments of the LGU.

Level of Interaction refer to the collaboration among users through social media. This was tested by looking how the residents' activity on social media like what they post they follow, what they clicked, read and monitored. These actions would define how they interacted with the social media page of the LGU.

The level of involvement and participation refers to the collaboration among users through social media. This was measured by the number of residents who followed, clicked, and monitored the social media posts by the LGU. While social media interaction refers to

This implies that engagement, interaction, involvement, and participation levels could be intergenerational. It could also imply that the accomplishments of the LGU in communicating with its constituents would highly depend on what age group would have been reached and adapted the protocols or messages posted for the call to action and compliance. Hence, age distribution would determine the nature of involvement and participation during the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Social media use during crisis situation and its accomplishments**

### Operational Definition of Terms

Social Media Platform	Social Media applications and websites where the interaction between the community and LGU happened
Social Media Posts	messages posted in the social media account LGU.
Social Media Interaction	Collaboration among users through social media. This was measured by the number of residents who followed, clicked, and monitored the social media posts by the LGU.
User Engagement	This is the frequency of sharing, reacting, and commenting on the social media posts by the LGU.

This was measured by the amount of time spent on social media, the number of likes, shares, and comments, and how the residents clicked and read the posts on social media.

Involvement

In the manner in which the residents react to the messages and how they become part of community activities.

Participation

The results and actions were taken by the users after receiving meaning from the message in the social media context.

## **Chapter III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

This study used a one-shot survey research design. Accordingly, this type of research design is where a single group is studied at a particular point in time after a presumed change-causing intervention (Research Connections, n.d). It is used to determine the state of knowledge, attitude, and practice of people after experiencing a particular event, treatment, or intervention. Therefore, the implications of this type of study are only based on the specific occurrence.

#### **Locale of the Study**

This study was conducted in the municipality of Los Baños, Laguna. It is a first-class municipality in the province with 14 barangays. According to a DOH census, as of 2020, the total population of the locals was 123,398. It is located between the Municipality of Bay and the City of Calamba. The distance from Manila to the Municipality of Los Baños is around 68.4km via the South Luzon Expressway, which takes about one and a half to two-hour drive. Additionally, the municipality is also known for products like Buko Pie and its famous brand of chocolate cake.

#### **Respondents**

The respondents of the study were residents of the Municipality of Los Baños. Table 1 presents the population of each barangay in the Municipality of Los Baños.

Table 1. Distribution of population by barangay in Los Baños, Laguna as of 2020.

<b>BARANGAY</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>
Anos	8,856
Bagong Silang	693
Bambang	7,963
Batong Malake	16,871
Baybayin (Pob.)	1,798
Bayog	11,524
Lalakay	5,544
Maahas	8,302
Malinta	8,117
Mayondon	18,807
Putho Tuntungin	9,990
San Antonio	14,914
Tadlak	3,656
Timugan (Pob)	6,362
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>123,398</b>

Source: Department of Health (2020)

### **Sampling Procedure**

Stratified random sampling was employed in the study to determine the sample size. This is a type of probability sampling where the population is grouped into homogeneous strata or groups. The members of each group must be distinct and unique to ensure that every member has an equal opportunity to be selected. The groups will be made according to their age and social media usage.

Stratified random sampling entails dividing the complete populace into homogeneous agencies known as strata (plural for stratum). Random samples are then decided upon from every stratum. The computation of sample size was done by (1) computing the overall sufficient sample size and (2) computing the sample size per barangay (proportionate stratified sampling).

Cochran (1963:75) developed the following equation to yield a sufficient sample size for proportions for populations that are considered large:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where  $n_0$  is the sample size,  $Z^2$  is the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts an area alpha ( $\alpha$ ) at the tails ( $1-\alpha$  equals the desired confidence level),  $e$  is the margin of error,  $p$  is the estimated proportion that is present in the population and  $q$  is just  $1 - p$ . Thus, the overall sample size is:

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 385$$

The next step was the proportionate stratified sampling. The formula was to get the population per barangay then multiplied it to the overall sample size (Table 2).

Table 2. Population size by barangay.

Barangay	Population	Percentage	Formula	Sample Size
Anos	8,856	0.072	0.072 x 385 =	28
Bagong Silang	693	0.006	0.006 x 385 =	2
Bambang	7,963	0.065	0.065 x 385 =	25
Batong Malake	16,871	0.137	0.137 x 385 =	53
Baybayin (Pob.)	1,798	0.015	0.015 x 385 =	6
Bayog	11,524	0.093	0.093 x 385 =	36
Lalakay	5,544	0.045	0.045 x 385 =	17
Maahas	8,302	0.067	0.067 x 385 =	26
Malinta	8,117	0.066	0.066 x 385 =	25
Mayondon	18,807	0.152	0.152 x 385 =	59
Putho Tuntungin	9,990	0.081	0.081 x 385 =	31
San Antonio	14,914	0.121	0.121 x 385 =	46
Tadlak	3,656	0.030	0.030 x 385 =	11
Timugan (Pob)	6,362	0.052	0.052 x 385 =	20
TOTAL	123,398	1.000	1.000 x 385 =	385

### Data Gathering Procedure

Permission from the Office of the Mayor of the Municipality of Los Baños was sought to get a list of residents. However, the list was not supplied due to the Data Privacy Act of 2012; hence, permission from the administrator of its Facebook page

was sought instead. Once the consent was received, a complete enumeration was employed. This means that all followers of the Facebook page of the municipality served as potential respondents. An online survey through Google forms as well as a pen and paper survey were used to gather the data.

### Data Analysis

The data obtained was encoded in SPSS version 25 for the data analysis. Descriptive statistics were employed in this study. The level of user engagement, interaction, and involvement and participation of community members on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic was measured using a 5-point Likert scale with the following descriptions: 1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Often, and 5-Always (Table 3).

Table 3. Verbal Interpretation used in the study.

<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Always	4.50-5.00
Often	3.50 – 4.49
Sometimes	2.50 – 3.49
Rarely	1.50 – 2.49
Never	1.00 – 1.49

Lastly, the relationship among variables was measured using a non-parametric correlational analysis to measure the degree of association. Specifically, Spearman's Rho was employed to interpret and highlight the strength of association between and among the variables' relationships.

## Instrument of the study

The respondents were given a questionnaire with a set of questions answerable on a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire statements were based on the variables used in the theory. The instrument contained five sections, which included questions regarding the profile of the respondents; the level of engagement in using social media during the COVID-19 pandemic; the respondents' level of interaction with the municipality's social media platform; the respondents' level of involvement and participation; and a free-answer question at the end of the survey. (Table 4).

The statements under the variables, level of user engagement, level of interaction, and level of involvement and participation, served as mediating variables to measure how Facebook was used as a crisis communication tool during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, these also served as a guide to the researcher to identify the actions, as well as accomplishments, taken by the community and the LGU during the pandemic.

Table 4. Variables used and its sources.

Variables	Statements	Sources
<b>Level of User Engagement</b>	I spent most of my time monitoring the municipality's Facebook page to be updated on the current news or happenings in the community	Di Gangi and Wasko (2016), "Social Media Engagement Theory: Exploring the Influence of User Engagement on Social Media Usage"
	I clicked "like" on every update posted in the municipality's Facebook page	
	I shared on my news feed, messenger, or other digital groups every update posted in the municipality's Facebook page	
	I commented on every posted material in the municipality's Facebook page to share my insights and opinions towards the shared information	
	I clicked and read all posted material in the municipality's Facebook page to be informed and updated	
<b>Level of Interaction</b>	I followed and added to my favorites the municipality's Facebook page to prioritize its post in my newsfeed	Di Gangi and Wasko (2016), "Social Media Engagement Theory: Exploring the Influence

	I clicked on videos, live videos, and reels on my notifications the municipality's Facebook page for me to be notified on all updates and posts	of User Engagement on Social Media Usage"
	I monitor, comment, and share every post the municipality's Facebook page	
	I monitor, comment, follow, and share every viral post the municipality's Facebook page	
	I see myself monitoring, commenting, following, and sharing every post of the municipality's Facebook page as source of information in the community	
<b>Level of Involvement and Participation</b>	When the municipality's Facebook page announces any activity that requires community participation I immediately follow and participate	Seifert (2016). "Involvement, Collaboration and Engagement: Social Networks through a Pedagogical Lens"
	When the municipality's Facebook posted information that requires sharing to the household, I immediately do so with the members of the family, and even with my friend and relatives	
	When the municipality's Facebook posted announcement of lockdown during the upsurge of the pandemic, I, and my family did necessary planning and preparation	
	The municipality's Facebook page served as our primary source of information during the pandemic from which our actions depend on	
	We communicated our issues, suggestions, opinions, needs and other concerns to be addressed by the local government thru the municipality's Facebook page	

## Chapter IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Socio-demographic profile of respondents

Of the 410 respondents, the majority (213 or 52%) were females, and an overwhelming majority (307 or 74.9%) were under 25 years old. This result implies that the population of Los Baños is relatively young. Being members of Generation Z, exposure to digital tools may be expected (Table 5).

Table 5. Distribution of respondents by socio-demographic profile

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>N=410</b>		
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	307	74.9
25-30	41	10
31-35	19	4.6
Over 55	12	2.9
36-40	10	2.4
41-45	9	2.2
46-50	8	2
51-55	4	1
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	197	48
Female	213	52

#### Level of user engagement, interaction, and involvement and participation in using social media during the COVID-19 pandemic

Respondents were asked to complete survey forms containing statements about their social media engagement. Questions, including their time spent on social media and the manner in which they reacted, shared, commented, clicked, and read posts were asked to identify the degree of their engagement.

In Table 6 below, Results showed that majority, which is 179 out of 410 of the residents of Los Baños, Laguna “sometimes” got engaged in social media, specifically Facebook, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first statement, “I spent most of my time monitoring the municipality’s Facebook page to be updated on the current news or happenings in the community,” got a median of 3 (43.4%, or 178) saying that they sometimes spent their time on Facebook monitoring the news during the pandemic.

Respondents showed that they tended to spend their attention and time using traditional news outlets as compared to using social media since it is readily available. Bekkers, Edwards, and de Kool (2013) were mentioned by O’Reilly (2007), where they said that social media penetrates information society, which highlights the importance of user participation, content-sharing, and network effects. However, it is said that residents who monitor social media pages are more likely to look for transparency. If the residents did not find transparency, they would shift to using TV and traditional news outlets for current news and happenings.

On the other hand, the second statement reads, “I clicked ‘like’ on every update posted on the municipality’s Facebook page” had a median of 3 (38.5% or 158). “Like,” according to Lee, Hansen, and Lee (2016), is said to be a form of acknowledgment or agreement between the user and organization. This function is, accordingly, used to experience and relate with others. The personality attribute of openness to experience was negatively impacted, whereas views of subjective norms and ease of use favorably influenced attitudes toward “like.” Therefore, it can be interpreted that the “like” function can be associated with how people see the message and how they actually acted upon the messages that they saw on their social media accounts. However, the results showed that the residents “sometimes” liked the updates on Facebook. Creativo.com said that people are not engaged with the Facebook page if

they do not "like" it. The content of the page might not inspire engagement if the page does not capture the attention of the users or provide the information that they needed.

The third statement, "I shared on my news feed, messenger, or other digital groups every update posted on the municipality's Facebook page," also got a median of 3 (158 or 38.5%) who shared posts from the municipal page in their own profiles. An article entitled "Sharing is Caring: 4 Reasons to Focus on Facebook Shares (Instead of Likes)" discussed that sharing is actually a form of showing that the person who shared the post cared about the content of the message. It stated that in an article from the New York Times, it reflected that 73% of people who shared posts processed the information more thoroughly and more intellectually, and 84% of the people who shared posts do so because it is their way of supporting different causes, issues, and problems around them. However, in the case of the residents of Los Baños, there was no engagement present since they sometimes shared the content posted on the Facebook page. Leonard (2018) discussed how people need to be engaged to share the content on their own newsfeed. The page might be lacking techniques to reach its target audience, which is why it was not shared among people in the community.

The fourth statement, "I commented on every posted material on the municipality's Facebook page to share my insights and opinions on the shared information" had a median of 1, indicating "Never" (125 or )30.5%. Lucey (2020), in his article, discussed that if a Facebook page wants and expects engagement, it should make the readers of the post feel that their feedback can be appreciated. On the Facebook page of the municipality, it can be observed that the posts were more focused on giving information and updates. Hence, the residents did not feel any responsibility to comment with their insights and opinions as they were more absorbed in the information, they needed to survive the pandemic. This could perhaps be the

reason is why there was no engagement present when it came to commenting on posts made by the LGU.

The last statement to measure the engagement, “I clicked and read all the posted material on the municipality’s Facebook page to be informed and updated,” got a median of 3 (131 or 32%). Lua (2014) discussed how Facebook uses algorithms to identify meaningful and informative stories so users can be updated on the pages they follow. Once the residents clicked and read posts from the municipal page, the algorithm will be doing its task by seeing the preferences of the user. Therefore, it can be interpreted that there was no engagement when it came to clicking and reading the posted material on the Facebook page. Since no prior engagement was made with similar posts by the residents, the algorithm, predictions, and suggestions connected to COVID-19 were also not viewed by the users.

These results show how that residents were not engaged in social media during the COVID-19 pandemic. SMET emphasizes social media engagement as it is applied consistently to actions users take when it comes to social media. However, in the case of Los Baños, it could perhaps be attributed to how the information was packaged and disseminated.

The second variable, Level of Interaction, on the other hand, measured how the residents did their activities with the Facebook page of the municipality, including how they followed, watched the video, and monitored the posts of the LGU. According to SMET, social interaction can be defined as how users communicate and relate with each other on social media. The first statement, “I followed and added to my favorites the municipality’s Facebook page to prioritize its posts in my newsfeed,” got a median of 3 (123 or 30%). Kirkbride (2021) in her article emphasized that following a page shows the interaction between the user and a page. Once the user follows a page, it

automatically shows the content and posts in his timeline. This makes the interaction more established as the user can now be updated on the posts made on the page. In the case of the Municipality of Los Baños, residents sometimes followed the page for them to see posts in their newsfeeds. As a result, there was no interaction because they were not following or adding the LGU's page to their favorites. Lozano (2016) said that people are not following a Facebook page since the page did not set a defined social media strategy to reach its audience, like creating effective visuals or generating branding that the residents can see. Users do not feel engagement; therefore, they cannot translate it to interaction. It could also be that the intent of the management was to simply inform residents and did not expect interactions from them.

The second statement, "I clicked on videos, live videos, and reels on my notifications on the municipality's Facebook page for me to be notified of all updates and posts," got a median score of 3 (154 or 37.6%). Basically, when a user likes a page, they can see all the updates, including videos, live videos, and reels. The municipality of Los Baños used this advantage to give updates to residents during the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Gomes (2019) said that Facebook Live could actually show real-time engagement and interaction between the user and the social media account. Reaching out to the audience and interacting with them can help to establish the content on the page's followers. It could also increase the awareness and exposure of the page to its followers. If the residents watched videos on the Facebook page of the municipality, then the residents of Los Baños interacted with the page as well as the content and updates from the LGU. SMET's technical features include evolvability, which can be defined as how social media meets a user's needs and desires. Accordingly, when users clicked on a specific post, they hold specific expectations for the manner in which they will be led through the first steps of

interacting with other users on the social media site. This shows that SMET expects people to interact with one another after seeing posts and messages on social media. However, results showed that residents were sometimes clicking on videos, live videos, and reels from the municipality's Facebook page. Bedrina (n.d) said that not promoting videos and misleading titles and descriptions might be the reasons users do not watch Facebook videos. It might be full of knowledge, but if the user does not feel engaged when they see the title, they will not proceed to watch the whole video. It could be that the videos from the municipality were not compelling to see compared to national televisions.

The third statement, "I monitor, comment, and share every post on the municipality's Facebook page," got a median score of 3 (135 or 32.9%). Lubag (2021) highlighted that monitoring, commenting, and sharing posts can show interaction and engage the audience in conversations with the page. This way, users can deliver their feedback, which can be a way of interacting with the followers of the page. In the case of the residents, it showed that there was a low level of interaction done by the residents since algorithms control what users see on social media. Therefore, if the algorithm did not see any activities or interactions related to the municipality's Facebook page, residents would have a hard time monitoring, commenting, and sharing posts from the LGU.

The fourth statement, "I monitor, comment, follow, and share every viral post on the municipality's Facebook page," also got a median of 3 (145 or 35.4%). Eckstein (n.d) discussed how monitoring viral posts is critical to measuring engagement and interaction. This could actually measure the impact of the page on residents. The higher the interaction, the greater the impact of the page. If the residents monitored, commented, and followed the viral posts on the page, it can be said that they

established impact as well as interaction. However, results showed a low level of interaction when it comes to monitoring, commenting, and following viral posts on social media. SMET mentioned that when a social media account posts news that can be seen as transparent, user engagement of the users becomes higher. Therefore, it can be said that the LGU is somehow lacking in showing the transparency of the information on its Facebook page. The posts on the page did not establish transparency, therefore resulting in a low level of interaction. It could also be that at that time there were competing sources of information and it could have been the first time that the government used FB as a communication medium. Information dissemination of going live might not have been communicated well.

The last statement, “I see myself monitoring, commenting, following, and sharing every post on the municipality’s Facebook page as a source of information in the community” also gained a median score of 3 (153 or 37.3%). This question determined whether the residents would still interact with the Facebook page and if the page would serve as a primary source of information for the municipality. The residents showed that they would “sometimes” monitor, comment, follow, and share the posts. Residents sometimes monitor, comment, follow, and share posts on the page provided. However, it cannot show interaction since they do not see transparency in the posts made by the LGU. Residents want to see first-hand the information that they need during a pandemic, and they can choose to use traditional media to get this kind of information.

The last variable, Level of Involvement and Participation, measured how the residents of Los Baños acted upon receiving the information from the Facebook page of the municipality. The first statement, “When the municipality’s Facebook page announces any activity that requires community participation, I immediately followed

and participated,” got a median score of 3 (127 or 31%). This shows that residents sometimes participated in community activities during the pandemic. In a paper by Brusilovskiy, Townley, Snethen, and Salzera (2016) entitled "Social media use, community participation, and psychological well-being among individuals with serious mental illnesses," they discussed how social media use was positively related to participation when it comes to community activities. They found that people who are more engaged in social media have a higher level of community involvement and participation and that people who spend the most time on social media actually have more time for participating in community work. However, residents of Los Baños sometimes participated in community work. A post by the website Community Tool Box discussed that the lack of motivation and encouragement is the reason people do not participate in community activities. Community communication is sometimes needed as the users might be unaware of opportunities, they can take to be involved in.

Meanwhile, the second statement, “When the municipality’s Facebook posts information that requires sharing with the household, I immediately do so with the members of the family, and even with friends and relatives,” got a median score of 3, (134 or 32.7%). A paper by Lee and Ma (2012) highlighted that since anybody may now take part in news generation and dissemination in communities, sharing news on social media has grown in importance on the social, economic, and political fronts. This supports SMET’s claim that social media creates a perception of participation in communities as they share acceptable information. Therefore, according to SMET, if people share information through social media, involvement and participation can influence the engagement of users on the municipality’s Facebook page. However, residents of Los Baños sometimes shared posts related to their family, friends, and

relatives. Mershon (2011) said that users do not trust the page if they do not share the post on their own accounts. This can reflect negative feedback to the LGU since they need to establish trust with their resident considering that they only sometimes share their posts to show involvement and participation in the community.

On the other hand, the third statement, "When the municipality's Facebook posted an announcement of lockdown during the upsurge of the pandemic, my family and I did necessary planning and preparation, got a median score of 5 (176 or 42.9%). One feature of SMET is completeness. Accordingly, social media users engage with messages if they are affected by the information they get from a specific message. User engagement will increase when users get the complete information they need on social media. Hence, in the particular statement, resident's engagement on social media was evident since they responded positively to the messages given by the page since the lockdown during the surge of the pandemic was done locally. Therefore, the residents depended on the page more as compared to the national TV since they needed to know when updates were coming directly from the municipality of Los Baños.

The fourth statement, "The municipality's Facebook page served as our primary source of information during the pandemic on which our actions depended," also got a median score of five (146 or 35.6%) of the total population. Coleman (2013) discussed how social media enables cross-institutional communication and collaboration among students, academics, and the general public. SMET highlights how users should have access to social resources for the purpose of getting involved in the community. It is said that users must have easy access to information provided by social media. Therefore, since the results showed that the residents agreed that the social media page of the municipality served as their primary source of information

during the surge of the pandemic since they needed information from a local perspective, it can be validated that social media engagement was present among the residents of Los Baños.

For the last statement, “We communicated our issues, suggestions, opinions, needs, and other concerns to be addressed by the local government through the municipality’s Facebook page,” got a median score of 3 (137 or 33.4%). Residents said they sometimes communicated their concerns to the LGU using the Facebook page. SMET highlighted one dimension, perceived risk, where users identify dangers, organizational speculation, and privacy issues about the risks of posting on social media. This causes users to rarely communicate their concerns on social media, as they tend to become more cautious and reflect on the negative consequences of participation.

Table 6 presents the level of user engagement, interaction, involvement, and participation in using social media as crisis communication tool during the pandemic.

Table 6. Resident’s level of user engagement, interaction, and involvement and participation in using social media as crisis communication tool.

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Frequency N=410</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretations</b>
1. I spent most of my time monitoring the municipality’s Facebook page to be updated on the current news or happenings in the community	3	178	Sometimes
2. I clicked “like” on every update posted in the municipality’s Facebook page	3	158	Sometimes
3. I shared on my news feed, messenger, or other digital groups every update posted in the municipality’s Facebook page	3	158	Sometimes
4. I commented on every posted material in the municipality’s Facebook page to	1	125	Never

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Frequency N=410</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretations</b>
share my insights and opinions towards the shared information			
5. I clicked and read all posted material in the municipality's Facebook page to be informed and updated	3	131	Sometimes
6. I followed and added to my favorites the municipality's Facebook page to prioritize its post in my newsfeed	3	123	Sometimes
7. I clicked on videos, live videos, and reels on my notifications the municipality's Facebook page for me to be notified on all updates and posts	3	154	Sometimes
8. I monitor, comment, and share every post the municipality's Facebook page	3	135	Sometimes
9. I monitor, comment, follow, and share every viral post the municipality's Facebook page	3	145	Sometimes
10. I see myself monitoring, commenting, following, and sharing every post of the municipality's Facebook page as source of information in the community	3	153	Sometimes
11. When the municipality's Facebook page announces any activity that requires community participation I immediately follow and participate	3	127	Sometimes
12. When the municipality's Facebook posted information that requires sharing to the household, I immediately do so with the members of the family, and even	3	134	Sometimes

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Frequency N=410</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretations</b>
with my friend and relatives			
13. When the municipality's Facebook posted announcement of lockdown during the upsurge of the pandemic, I, and my family did necessary planning and preparation	5	176	Always
14. The municipality's Facebook page served as our primary source of information during the pandemic from which our actions depend on	5	146	Always
15. We communicated our issues, suggestions, opinions, needs and other concerns to be addressed by the local government thru the municipality's Facebook page	3	137	Sometimes

Generally, Di Gangi and Wasko (2016) presented SMET and highlighted how organizations depended on user engagement in the content shown on social media. A study by O'Brien and Toms (2008) defined user engagement as how people would be involved with experiences in technology. They found that engagement pertains to the quality of how the user experiences technology with attributes concerning different areas, including its effect, appeal, attention, feedback, and control.

In addition, Eslami, Ghasemaghaei, and Hassanein (2021) mentioned that customer or user engagement in social media is shaped by the number and type of likes, comments, and shares of its users in social media posts. It is said that different literature agrees that there is a connection between how users react to a post and how

they engage on social media. Eckstein (n.d) said that engagement in social media shows how people are satisfied with the content of the page. It is said that Facebook uses “meaningful engagement” as an algorithm to show what posts should be prioritized. Therefore, if a social media post gets more engagement, it can have a better relationship with its followers as it can show how the community can relate to and help each other.

### **Difference in experiences among generations of residents in Los Baños, Laguna**

Social media is used by almost everyone, and it has become part of a person’s activities and lifestyle. It is a fact that different generations use social media to a different extent; it is also understood that they use social media in diverse ways. USC Libraries grouped generations accordingly. There are: Silent Generation (1928-1946), Baby boomers (born 1946–1964), Generation X (born 1965–1976), Generation Y or Millennials (born 1977–1995), and Generation Z or Centennials (1995-2010) were thought to use social media primarily for communication. They spend most of their time just scrolling on social media but do not usually pay attention to the content as they will not use the platform as a medium of connection to their peers. (Sproutsocial.com). These age groups primarily focus on one platform. They do not go from one platform to another. However, they tend to look for authenticity in the content that they are looking at.

On the other hand, Generation Z, also known as Gen Z or Zoomers, is considered extremely online. The majority of these digital natives have actually been active on social media for more than half their lives. As the only generation to prioritize passing the time on social media over communicating with loved ones and friends,

Gen Z users primarily utilize it to pass the time. An article by Melendi (2020) stated that this generation is very talented in managing information seen on social media as they spend more time looking into different social media accounts. Basically, they use social media to express their individuality and show people who they are and what they are.

Therefore, as concluded by Hayes, Stolk-Cooke, and Muench (2015), the aged user on Facebook sees different actions and perspectives differently. Aside from the time spent on the platform, the usage, engagement, and interaction were different across generations.

### ***Level of user engagement in using social media during CoVid-19 pandemic***

The first statement, "I spent most of my time monitoring the municipality's Facebook page to be updated on the current news or happenings in the community," got a median of 3. This result shows that the younger residents sometimes spent their time monitoring the municipality's Facebook page during the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic to be updated on the current news or happenings in the community. The second statement, "I clicked "like" on every update posted on the municipality's Facebook page," also got a median score of 3, which also showed that they sometimes liked every update posted on the municipality's Facebook page.

Meanwhile, the third statement, "I shared on my news feed, messenger, or other digital groups every update posted on the municipality's Facebook page," also got a median of 3. These results show that Gen Zs sometimes share on their news feed, messenger, or other digital groups every update posted on the municipality's Facebook page.

According to a survey conducted by Seiter (2016), people would most likely spend time on Facebook and share content for self-fulfillment. It was found that they would share and like posts on Facebook because it would allow them to be more involved in current issues on social media. It would also allow them to support causes and issues they can relate to and care about. On the other hand, the younger residents demonstrated that they occasionally spent time on Facebook, clicking like and sharing news on their feeds. This can show that there was no engagement in using social media shown by the younger generation.

On the other hand, the fourth statement, "I commented on every posted material on the municipality's Facebook page to share my insights and opinions towards the shared information," got a median of two. This shows that they "rarely" commented on every piece of the material posted on the municipality's Facebook page to share their insights and opinions on the information.

Lastly, on the last statement, "I clicked and read all the posted material on the municipality's Facebook page to be informed and updated," got a median of four. It revealed that the younger respondents "often" clicked and read all posted material on the municipality's Facebook page to be informed and updated.

The third statement showed that the younger generation didn't express their ideas on social media, while the last statement indicates that they have read material posted in it. Nguyen (n.d) explained that GenZ would prefer face-to-face communication rather than online. Although they spend most of their time on scrolling and reading posts on Facebook, they fear that if the older generation sees their issues being communicated online, they might see it as a childish act. But, the GenZ tries to be updated by often clicking the posted material on the Facebook page. The younger

generation still gets information from social media, although they are not engaged in communication with it.

Hence, it can be said that the younger generations in Los Baños are sometimes engaged on social media. They mostly spent their time monitoring the Facebook page, clicking on every update, and sharing updates on their newsfeed. However, they rarely commented on posted material on the page and often clicked and re-posted materials on the Facebook page. This highlighted the fact that Gen Zs spent their time on social media, but not specifically on Facebook. Kastenholz (2021) said that Gen Zs would be engaged in social media but could not focus on using one specific platform. Therefore, although Facebook is used, the younger generation still tended to explore other social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter (Table 7).

Table 7. GenZ’s level of user engagement in using social media as crisis communication tool

Statements	Median	Frequency N=307	Verbal Interpretation
1. I spent most of my time monitoring the municipality’s Facebook page to be updated on the current news or happenings in the community	3	142	Sometimes
2. I clicked “like” on every update posted in the municipality’s Facebook	3	128	Sometimes
3. I shared on my news feed, messenger, or other digital groups every update posted in the municipality’s Facebook page	3	129	Sometimes
4. I commented on every posted material in the municipality’s Facebook page to share my insights and opinions towards the	2	92	Rarely

5. I clicked and read all posted material in the municipality's Facebook page to be informed and updated	4	91	Often
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Meanwhile, different answers were gathered from the older residents of Los Baños. Unlike those who belong to the GenZs, this age group will again use social media not to get information but rather to communicate with their friends and families. As seen in the results in Table 8, the first, second, third, and fourth statements got a median of 2, which can be interpreted as rarely. Meanwhile, the fifth statement got a median of 3, which can be construed as sometimes. The results show that the older generation does not engage on social media, specifically Facebook, compared to how the younger generation sometimes engages on social media.

Table 8. Ages 25 above and their level of user engagement in using social media as crisis communication tool

Statements	Median	Frequency N=103	Verbal Interpretation
1. I spent most of my time monitoring the municipality's Facebook page to be updated on the current news or happenings in the community	2	48	Rarely
2. I clicked "like" on every update posted in the municipality's Facebook	2	62	Rarely
3. I shared on my news feed, messenger, or other digital groups every update posted in the municipality's Facebook page	2	64	Rarely
4. I commented on every posted material in the municipality's Facebook page to share my insights and opinions towards the	2	31	Rarely

5. I clicked and read all posted material in the municipality's Facebook page to be informed and updated.	3	33	Sometimes
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Therefore, engagement in social media can sometimes be present in the younger generation, but not in the older generation. In a blog by Salamander (n.d), he said that engagement is present in the younger generation because they have the “Fear of Missing Out”. They tend to spend most of their time being updated and being present in the situation that is happening. On the other hand, the older generation shows very little to no engagement in social media. In an article by Matsuura (2017), aside from the fact that the older generation mainly uses social media for communication, these generations are the ones who are exposed to the changes that happened during the pandemic. Mostly working adults, need to adjust from working onsite to working from home. They are also the ones who got to think beyond the pandemic. Therefore, giving them no time to face and engage with social media. Although they sometimes clicked and read the posted material, they cannot be engaged in social media since they are trying to overcome the challenges the pandemic has brought. Therefore, the older generations focused on other priorities rather than focusing on social media.

***Level of interaction with the municipality’s social media platform during COVID-19 Pandemic***

The level of interaction is said to be shown if the users are engaged in social media. The results show that the younger residents are sometimes engaged in using social media. Therefore, it can be translated that if they are sometimes engaged, then the level of interaction among them is limited. The first statement, “I followed and

added to my favorites the municipality's Facebook page to prioritize its posts in my newsfeed," got a median of 3. This statement shows that the younger respondents "sometimes" put the Facebook page on their priority list for them to be able to see the post immediately on their newsfeed. Putting the page on high priority would mean that the users would want to see posts from the page immediately. Seeing social media posts immediately would mean that the followers of that page would be more updated on important messages they need to know, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The second statement, "I clicked on videos, live videos, and reels on my notifications on the municipality's Facebook page for me to be notified of all updates and posts," also got a median of 3. This is interpreted that the younger residents of the Municipality of Los Baños, Laguna "sometimes" clicked on videos, live videos, and reels on their notifications to activate the municipality's Facebook page for them to be notified of all updates and posts. This would mean younger residents would sometimes want to be notified of the latest update during the pandemic.

Meanwhile, the third statement, "I monitored, commented, and shared every post on the municipality's Facebook page," had a median of 3 and showed that the GenZs "sometimes" monitored, commented, and shared posts on the Facebook page. This statement is relevant to the fourth statement that states, "I monitored, commented, followed, and shared every viral post on the municipality's Facebook page," which also got a median of 3. The final statement, "I see myself monitoring, commenting, following, and sharing every post on the municipality's Facebook page as a source of information in the community," got a median of 3. This suggests that the younger residents of Los Baños, Laguna "sometimes" followed and monitored their municipality's social media page to be updated on the current situation in the community, which implies a moderate level of interaction (Table 9).

Table 9. GenZ's level of Interaction with the municipality's social media platform during the COVID-19 pandemic

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Frequency N=307</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
1. I followed and added to my favorites the municipality's Facebook page to prioritize its post in my newsfeed	3	100	Sometimes
2. I clicked on videos, live videos, and reels on my notifications the municipality's Facebook page for me to be notified on all updates and posts	3	122	Sometimes
3. I monitored, commented, and shared every post the municipality's Facebook page	3	109	Sometimes
4. I monitored, commented, followed, and shared every viral post the municipality's Facebook	3	119	Sometimes
5. I see myself monitoring, commenting, following, and sharing every post of the municipality's Facebook page as source of information in the community	3	125	Sometimes

On the other hand, Table 10 shows the level of interaction of the older generation of residents in Los Baños, Laguna.

Table 10. Older generation’s level of interaction with the municipality’s social media platform during the COVID -19 pandemic

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Frequency N=103</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
1. I followed and added to my favorites the municipality’s Facebook page to prioritize its post in my newsfeed	2	49	Rarely
2. I clicked on videos, live videos, and reels on my notifications the municipality’s Facebook page for me to be notified on all updates and posts	3	33	Sometimes
3. I monitored, commented, and shared every post the municipality’s Facebook page	2	57	Rarely
4. I monitored, commented, followed, and shared every viral post the municipality’s Facebook	2	61	Rarely
5. I see myself monitoring, commenting, following, and sharing every post of the municipality’s Facebook page as source of information in the community	2	64	Rarely

Similar to the results for the level of engagement, the younger and older generations also got different scores on the level of interaction. The survey shows that the older generations rarely followed the Facebook page and monitored, commented, and shared posts. Like the GenZs, they also sometimes clicked on videos and live videos to be updated. These live videos can be said to influence residents during the pandemic as they have become one of the most reliable ways to be updated during the lockdown.

However, During the first Facebook live of the Municipality of Los Baños on March 23, 2020, the late Mayor Ceasar P. Perez first announced the current situation of Los Baños during the COVID-19-Pandemic. This is where he discussed that there are 28 people under investigation in the community. This particular video gained 703 comments, 381 shares, and a combined total of 1,018 reactions. Meanwhile, the second Facebook live that happened on 25 March 2020, where Mayor Perez announced the first causality of COVID-19, gained around 6,900 comments, 4,500 shares, and 5,900 combined reactions. The second video gained a huge number of viewers and interactions after the residents saw the relevance of the information conveyed through the first Facebook live done by the page.

Figure 3. Screenshot of Facebook live on March 23, 2020.



Figure 4. Screenshot of Facebook live on March 25, 2020.



This live video showed how the residents, in both generations, interacted with the social media page of the LGU of Los Baños. Although the results showed that GenZs sometimes showed interaction, and the older generation rarely do so, this particular event of the Municipality actually showed interaction from the residents. In a blog by Biteable.com, they discussed that Live videos gather more interactions as compared to posted materials as viewers and the account can create discussions and six time more interaction. This is because viewers can actually see transparency in a raw and live format presented by the user.

Overall, results show that the citizens of Los Baños, Laguna do not interact much with regard to the content of the social media page of the Municipality of Los Baños. According to one of the respondents, he mentioned that he is not always monitoring the Facebook page, saying, *“Di ko alam, di naman ako laging nakatutok sa*

*Page nayun e. Mas madalas kasi akong nakatutok sa T.V kesa sa FB. Kaya di ko alam.”* (I don't know, I am not always monitoring that page. I am monitoring the TV more rather than FB (Facebook) so, I don't know). Another respondent mentioned that, “Since the pandemic started, we've been relying on watching the news or waiting for further announcements online, and our municipality has been and still is one of the great sources of updates in terms of the situational status of our community.”

This can be said that the respondents would more likely be watching the TV for updates as compared to interacting with the social media post of the municipality. In the discussion above, it is said that most respondents agreed that they would more likely watch or refer to other sources of news as compared to only relying upon the posts on the municipal page. In a study by Austin, Liu, and Jin (2012) entitled, "How Audiences Seek Out Crisis Information: Exploring the Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Model", they found out that usage of social media is discouraged by humor and ideas about its purpose, whereas conventional media use is encouraged by legitimacy. However, if users saw transparency and the rawness of the information being delivered, then they could show interaction. The relevance of third-party influence in crisis communication, as well as the use of both traditional and social media in crisis response, were highlighted in the findings.

### ***Level of involvement and participation during COVID -19 pandemic***

As mentioned above, involvement and participation are how people in the community would collaborate. In the first statement, “When the municipality’s Facebook page announces any activity that requires community participation, I immediately follow and participate,” the median score is three. It can be said that the younger respondents “sometimes” participate immediately when the municipality’s

Facebook page announces any activity that requires community participation. This is related to the second statement, "When the municipality's Facebook posts information that requires sharing within the household, I immediately do so with the family members, friends, and relatives," which got a median of three. This can be interpreted to mean that they "occasionally" share information immediately with family members as well as friends and relatives. The results showed that the young respondents would sometimes be part of the participation and involvement of the government as they occasionally share posts and information from the municipality. Accordingly, the residents are looking for content that would make them feel more encouraged to attend community activities. Moreover, the third statement, "When the municipality's Facebook posted an announcement of lockdown during the upsurge of the pandemic, my family and I did necessary planning and preparation," got a median score of four. This can be interpreted that the younger residents of the Municipality of Los Baños, Laguna, and their families "often" did the necessary planning and preparation when the municipality's Facebook page posted an announcement of lockdown during the upsurge of the pandemic. These results would show that the younger residents are willing to do the planning and preparation needed to stop the pandemic.

According to Fletcher, Elder, and Mekos (2010), parents can encourage their children to participate in such activities by setting an example of personal involvement in the community and reinforcing their children's interests. However, parental encouragement is more important when parents are not involved in community activities. Since the respondents are aged under 25, aside from the fact that their parents do not allow them to go out of the house, there is also a municipal ordinance that says that no minors are allowed to go out of the house and that only one representative per household is needed outside. Therefore, although they want to be

involved and part of community efforts in fighting the virus, they are restricted inside their houses and can only participate in preparation and planning with their families.

The fourth statement, “The municipality’s Facebook page served as our primary source of information during the pandemic on which our actions depend,” also got a median of four. This means that the actions of the younger generation are relevant to the current pandemic, which “often” relies on the municipality’s Facebook page because it serves as their primary source of information. Accordingly, GenZs rely heavily on the latest updates from the Facebook page.

Lastly, the statement, “We communicated our issues, suggestions, opinions, needs, and other concerns to be addressed by the local government through the municipality’s Facebook page,” got a median of three. This means that the residents “sometimes” communicate their issues, suggestions, opinions, needs, and other concerns to be addressed by the local government through the municipality’s Facebook page. In the paper by Flores and Asuncion (2020), they said that social media, such as Facebook, is the primary medium for receiving and seeking information in the midst of the pandemic. They found out that the younger generation would most likely get information through social media but would not communicate their issues through it.

Hence, it can be said that the younger generation occasionally participated in community participation and involvement. A study by Suhaimi (2020) entitled “Social Media as a Channel to Promote Youth Participation in Governance” found out that the younger generation would consider the level of dependence on their experience on social media. Accordingly, the youth expressed limited confidence in their involvement and said they still lacked the social media channels necessary for meaningful participation. This means that young people would want to use other social media

platforms aside from Facebook to be able to show their involvement and participation in the community (Table 11).

Table 11. GenZ’s Level of involvement and participation during the COVID -19 pandemic

Statements	Median	Frequency N=410	Verbal Interpretation
1. When the municipality’s Facebook page announces any activity that requires community participation I immediately follow and participate	3	100	Sometimes
2. When the municipality’s Facebook posted information that requires sharing to the household, I immediately do so with the members of the family, and even with my friend and relatives	3	106	Sometimes
3. When the municipality’s Facebook posted announcement of lockdown during the upsurge of the pandemic, I, and my family did necessary planning and preparation	4	90	Often
4. The municipality’s Facebook page served as our primary source of information during the pandemic from which our actions depend on	4	102	Often
5. We communicated our issues, suggestions, opinions, needs and other concerns to be addressed by the local government thru the municipality’s Facebook page	3	111	Sometimes

However, the older residents of Los Baños had different views as compared to the younger generation (Table 12). The first statement got a median of 4. It states that older residents would often take part in participating in activities that required community participation. This is different from the younger generation since the results showed that the younger generation occasionally participated in community activities. As discussed earlier, a municipal ordinance was ongoing during the pandemic, restricting the younger generation from leaving their houses. During this time, the older

generation became active in going out and being involved in community activities. The second statement, "When the municipality's Facebook posts information that requires sharing with the household, I immediately do so with the family members, and even with my friends and relatives," also got a median of 4, which can be interpreted as often, which shows the participation of the older generation in relaying messages from social media. The third and fourth statements, "When the municipality's Facebook posted an announcement of lockdown during the upsurge of the pandemic, I and my family did necessary planning and preparation" and "The municipality's Facebook page served as our primary source of information during the pandemic from which our actions depended on," also got a median of four, which is also interpreted as often. Involvement and participation are present in the older generation since they took part in planning and preparation during the pandemic.

In the survey, one respondent said that, "*Sila ang nag aanunsiyo ng mga dapat gawin ng mamamayan ng kanilang bayan tungkol sa pandemyang mayroon tayo kaya malaki ang kanilang papel na ginagampanan*" (They are the ones who announce what the people of their town should do about the pandemic we have so they play a big role). Another respondent also said, "The municipality of Los Baños has always given legit information that can be easily understood by the people who read it." And when it comes to the action of the municipality of Los Baños, I totally respect and agree with that action. I saw the hard work and (the need) to be responsible for my community." They said that the Facebook page "plays a vital role to keep me and family updated with all the happenings during the pandemic" and that the page is a huge help saying, "*Malaking tulong ang bawat oras na pag update ng face book page ng munisipyo dahil ito ang naging pangunahing pagkukunan ng impormasyon ng aming pamilya*"

(Updating the municipal Facebook page every hour is a big help because it has become the main source of information for our family.)

However, the last statement, “We communicated our issues, suggestions, opinions, needs and other concerns to be addressed by the local government through the municipality’s Facebook page,” got a median of 2, which can be interpreted as rarely. It is said that the older generation would rarely communicate with the municipality of Los Baños to show their involvement. In an article by the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development in 2020, they said that LGUs often forget to address the needs of the older generation on social media. They suggested that the Local Government should take a closer look at the distinct demands of various societal groups and develop a clear course of action that will contribute to meeting those needs as well as intensify their efforts to better understand their constituents' needs, especially those of the most vulnerable, and relay these to other organizations and national government authorities. It can be said that there is a high level of involvement from the older generation on social media. However, they tend not to communicate their needs to the local government.

Eisenstein (2019) discussed that community members communicate with the LGU to get assurance that they are well-prepared and that the crisis is well-taken care of. Therefore, communicating issues, suggestions, opinions, needs, and other concerns is necessary for both the LGU and its community members.

Table 12. Older Generation’s level of involvement and participation during the CoVid-19 pandemic

Statements	Median	Frequency N=103	Verbal Interpretation
1. When the municipality’s Facebook page announces any activity that requires community participation I immediately follow and participate	4	49	Often

2. When the municipality's Facebook posted information that requires sharing to the household, I immediately do so with the members of the family, and even with my friend and relatives	4	43	Often
3. When the municipality's Facebook posted announcement of lockdown during the upsurge of the pandemic, I, and my family did necessary planning and preparation	4	36	Often
4. The municipality's Facebook page served as our primary source of information during the pandemic from which our actions depend on	4	29	Often
5. We communicated our issues, suggestions, opinions, needs and other concerns to be addressed by the local government thru the municipality's Facebook page	2	47	Rarely

Therefore, it can be said that the younger and older generations of Los Baños have different experiences in terms of social media engagement in crisis communication. When it comes to the level of engagement, GenZs occasionally become engaged. However, the older generation rarely becomes engaged on social media. Although they both use social media actively, their habits and practices become a factor in how they become engaged on social media. The younger generation tends to use different platforms. Therefore, their engagement on the Facebook page of the LGU became less as it limited their engagement to only one platform. On the other hand, it can be said that the older generation does not have engagement since they are more focused on doing more relevant things during the pandemic rather than being present on social media. Moreover, it can also be said that the younger generation will sometimes interact with social media. In a study by

they found that youngsters still favor in-person interactions over those on social media. This could be surprising, as most people think the younger generation wants to interact more on social media. (Toivonen et al., 2019). On the other hand, it is not a surprise that the older generation rarely interacts with social media. Liu and Jin (2012) emphasized that the older generation would still prefer the conventional types of media (TV, radio, and newspapers) as compared to using social media as their source of information. Although the older generation are also active users of social media, they tend to use it more as a medium to communicate and connect with other people than to use it as a source of information.

Lastly, it can also be said that the younger generation is occasionally involved in social media. In a paper by Galera, Hurtado, and Munoz (2014), they found that the participation and involvement of the younger generation are only limited to the social media platforms they use. This means that although they are active in sharing and posting messages that show their involvement, it stops with that. It showed that GenZs would be involved in producing content for engagement and encouragement, which is their way of participating in different issues. On the other hand, the older generation showed that they are very much involved in social media and would be willing to participate to show their engagement. It is said that the older generation would use social media for a positive outcome for society. (Vogels, 2019). Therefore, if utilized properly, social media may be useful for encouraging individuals to get involved in their communities. It can assist people in utilizing available community resources, getting outside more, finding things to do, connecting with others to do them with, and pursuing interests. Glogoza and Snethen (2018)

Table 13 shows the relationship between the respondents' level of user engagement in social media as a means of crisis communication, their level of

interaction with the municipality's social media platform, and their level of involvement and participation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the result of the non-parametric correlational analysis conducted, the level of users' engagement in social media as a means of crisis communication is highly correlated with their level of involvement and participation during the COVID-19 Pandemic (i.e.,  $r(410) \text{ ENGAGEMENT, PARTICIPATION} = .622, p < .01$ ). Similarly, the level of users' engagement in social media as a means of crisis communication is highly correlated with their level of interaction with the Municipality's Social Media platform (i.e.,  $r(410) \text{ ENGAGEMENT, INTERACTION} = .767, p < .01$ ). Lastly, the respondents' level of interaction with the Municipality's social media platform is highly correlated with their level of involvement and participation during the COVID-19 Pandemic (i.e.,  $r(410) \text{ INTERACTION, INVOLVEMENT} = .767, p < .01$ ).

The result of the correlational analysis confirmed the hypothesis of no significant relationship among the variables understudied. It means that the residents of Los Baños, Laguna's level of interaction, participation, and involvement depends on their engagement on the Municipality's Facebook page. Also, the residents' level of involvement and participation depends on their immersion in issues amidst the pandemic concerning them, their families, and their whereabouts. The updates and news that reach the residents allow them to enact appropriately what is relevant to their needs and those of the community.

In summary, the residents of Los Baños, Laguna, vary their levels of engagement, level of interaction, and levels of participation and involvement according to their age. Although they are both active users of social media, engagement still varies depending on the situations and messages the residents receive from the social media platform used.

Hence, although Social Media Engagement Theory focuses on the level of engagement, level of interaction, and level of participation, with the results of the survey from the two age groups, different variables and constructs can also be considered in looking at SMEs like the level of dependence on social media, the content and reliability of messages, and the use of platforms in social media.

Table 13. Relationship among level of users' engagement, interaction, involvement , and participation in social media as crisis communication tool, during the COVID -19 pandemic

<b>Variables</b>		<b>Level of Involvement and Participation During COVID -19 Pandemic</b>	<b>Level of Interaction with the Municipality's Social Media Platform</b>
Level of Users' Engagement in Social Media as Crisis Communication	Correlation Coefficient	.622**	.767**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	410	410
Level of Interaction with the Municipality's Social Media Platform	Correlation Coefficient	.673**	-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-
	N	410	-

*Legend: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

## **Chapter V**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Summary**

The Municipality of Los Baños, Laguna, was one of the first Local Government Units to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic when it started in March 2020. Since it houses different universities as well as research centers, many students and guests were trapped in the area when the lockdown was announced. This prompted the then Mayor Ceasar P. Perez, to call for the attention of different agencies as well as the barangay level to act upon the situation since citizens were relaying it to the LGU.

The Local Government then used social media, the most powerful tool to interact with different groups and individuals (Kumar, 2017). This opened the opportunity to shift the way they communicate with the residents. They have since opened the official Facebook page of the Municipality, the Municipal Government of Los Banos. This is what the LGU uses to update the current situation in the municipality and announce policies that was implemented.

Coombs (1999) defined crisis communication as giving important and meaningful messages during crisis management to control and manage the crisis. In a paper presented by Bratu (2016) entitled "The Critical Role of Social Media in Crisis Communication," she highlights the use of social media as a tool in crisis management, which highlights how the government calls upon its citizens to act and accept the message being delivered.

Di Gangi and Wasko (2016) presented a theory entitled "Social Media Engagement Theory" (SME) where it presented about how the community members

relate to and communicate with each other using the information and updates delivered by a particular organization through social media. It would also highlight the engagement, interaction, involvement, and participation of the people in the community.

The theory was used to explore how social media, specifically Facebook, was used as a crisis communication tool by the Municipality of Los Baños and how did the residents responded to the crisis communication done. A one-shot survey was done to a total of 410 respondents from the municipality. After interpreting the data gathered, data were compared from the two aged groups: GenZs (born from 1996 onwards) and the older generations (baby boomers (born from 1946-1964), Generation Jones (born 1955-1965), Generation X (born 1965-1980), Xennials (born 1977 to 1983), and millennials (born 1981–1996)).

The results showed that the residents didn't exclusively depend on social media as a primary tool to get updates and information during the pandemic. However, the younger generation used it as a tool to share posts and announcements as they spent most of their time in social media. The older generation on the other hand, only used social media for communicating with their relatives and friends and not as a way to transfer and get reliable information that they need during the pandemic.

When measured, the results showed that the residents are not engaged in using social media as a tool of crisis communication since the two age groups used social media with different intentions. First, the GenZs primarily used social media to pass their time and present themselves uniquely. On the other hand, the older generation didn't have time to use social media as they are busy surviving the pandemic after they sifted from a regular on-site work to a work from home set up.

The Level of interaction also didn't reflect as GenZs occasionally interacted on social media. But the older generation rarely interacted on social media. Therefore, it can be said that residents of Los Baños, Laguna, did not interact much about the content of the social media page posted by the LGU. The respondents agreed that social media was not a good source of information and would prefer to get their information from traditional media.

Lastly, the younger generation can sometimes be involved in and participated in social media engagement, but they are inclined to use diverse social media platforms and tend not to use the platform to communicate their issues. This means that while they are vigorous in sharing and posting messages that showed their involvement, it cannot be translated into in-person participation as compared to the older generation, which shows that they are often active in participation and involvement as they would use social media for a positive outcome for society.

Therefore, it is reflected that there the residents of Los Baños, Laguna didn't rely on the Municipality's Facebook page. The information gave the residents updates and educated them on proper actions and decisions; however, it can be found out that social media cannot be used as a primary tool for crisis communication as engagement and interaction is not done as reflected in the study.

## **Conclusion**

The Municipality of Los Baños used social media as an intermediary tool to govern its residents. The speed of the medium and the number of residents who have an FB account made possible the dissemination of relevant information in real time. During a crisis, the Local Government Unit (LGU) took advantage of the affordances

of the communication platform to reach a wider audience. It can be assumed that FB played a big role in information dissemination in the municipality. The immediacy or real time feature of the platform made it possible to inform the people what needs to be done and protocols to be adhered to locally. However, accessing information from the municipality's FB page cannot be solely depended on. This attribute of social media may be termed as incidental due to its popularity and pervasiveness. Thus, the LGU took advantage of it as a dominant platform for information dissemination. While residents did not consider FB as their primary communication medium as source of information, it was evident that FB has a great potential to be a governance tool during crisis situations where real time decision-making and instruction are crucial. The ability of the LGU to "gather" its constituents online shows that collective action can happen even if people are not gathered physically. The LGU was quite successful in creating awareness, an affordance that could have increased engagement but because it was rarely used, residents were not accustomed to visiting their web page. Lastly, the study proved that social media can be used as a crisis communication tool in the LGU of Los Baños given that the messages are created with proper consideration of the variances of perception among the residents in a locality.

### **Recommendations**

The results of the study help the researcher understand the relevance of crisis communication and social media usage during the pandemic. Accordingly, with the different variables present in the theory used, the LGU was able to have the community be involved and participate in actions relating to solving problems caused by the pandemic. Through these results, the researcher would like to recommend the following:

1. The LGU could hire a crisis communication manager and a social media manager to help manage the Facebook page. Through this, the messages could be adequately expressed and actions appropriately given to the community. He would also know how to address the community adequately and properly compose messages directed at them.
2. The messages and content delivered by the LGU can be formed in a way that all generations can relate to, engage with, and interact with.
3. The LGU could use other social media platforms like Youtube and Instagram to get more engagement from the younger generation.
4. The municipality could call for partnerships with media intuitions and companies to deliver important announcements and messages via a credible source aside from the official Facebook page.
5. Future researchers could validate other theories using supplementary variables in connection to social media and crisis communication.

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# APPENDIX A

## Research Instrument

Greetings!

I am Alliana Miranda, a student of Master in Development Communication from the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU). As part of my graduate thesis, I am currently conducting a study on how the residents of Los Banos, Laguna used social media during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In line with this, I would like to see your seek your consent to use your answers for the said study. Answering this survey will only take less than 30 minutes; and contains data that are intended for residents of Los Banos, Laguna especially those who follows the social media platform of the municipality.

By completing this survey, you are consenting to participate in the data gathering done; rest assured that your personal information is valued and protected by virtue and compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173). Please be assured that the data collected will only be used solely for the purpose of this study.

For inquiries, you may contact the researcher thru mobile number, 09367658264, or send an email to [alliana.miranda@upou.edu.ph](mailto:alliana.miranda@upou.edu.ph). Thank you and God bless.

1. I am voluntarily participating (free from any coercion) in this study entitled, "Social Media Use during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Study on Crisis Communication in the Municipality of Los Banos, Laguna, Philippines"  
 Yes  No
2. I have read and understood the nature of this study and have been informed about the purpose, methods, and intended possible uses of this research.  
 Yes  No
3. The confidentiality of the information supplied, and the anonymity of respondents is respected. Name Anonymity disclosure.  
 Allowed to be named  Anonymous
4. I understand that this research will not include any risk and/or harm on my part. This study will not ask questions about life threatening-situation and/or experiences. I also understand that I can withdraw my participation in the said study whenever I want to.  
 Yes  No  
Please click the YES button to proceed.  
 Yes  No

### Part I. Demographic profile of the respondents

**Instructions.** Please check the line that is applicable to you

1. Age  
 under 25  41-45  
 25-30  46-50  
 31-35  51-55  
 36-40  over 55
2. Sex  
 Male  Female
3. Barangay:  
 Anos  Maahas  
 Bagong Silang  Malinta  
 Bambang  Mayondon  
 Batong Malake  Putho Tuntungin  
 Baybayin (Pob.)  San Antonio  
 Bayog  Tادلak  
 Lalakay  Timugan (Pob)

### Part II. Respondents' Level of User Engagement in Using social media as Crisis Communication

**Instructions.** Put a check on the box that describes your level of engagement with the following statements.

Statements	Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (2)	Never (1)
1. I spent most of my time monitoring the municipality's Facebook page to be updated on the current news or happenings in the community  <i>Ginugol ko ang halos lahat ng oras ko sa pagsubaybay sa Facebook page ng munisipyo para maging updated sa mga kasalukuyang balita o nangyayari sa komunidad</i>					
2. I clicked "like" on every update posted in the municipality's Facebook page  <i>Nag-click ako ng "like" sa bawat update na naka-post sa Facebook page ng munisipyo</i>					
3. I shared on my news feed, messenger, or other digital groups every update posted in the municipality's Facebook page  <i>Ibinahagi ko sa aking news feed, messenger, o iba pang digital group ang bawat update na naka-post sa Facebook page ng munisipyo</i>					
4. I commented on every posted material in the municipality's Facebook page to share my insights and opinions towards the shared information  <i>Nagkomento ako sa bawat naka-post na materyal sa pahina ng Facebook ng munisipyo upang ibahagi ang aking mga pananaw at opinyon tungo sa ibinahaging impormasyon</i>					
5. I clicked and read all posted material in the municipality's Facebook page to be informed and updated  <i>Na-click at binasa ko ang lahat ng naka-post na materyal sa Facebook page ng munisipyo para ako ay may malaman at ma-update</i>					

**Part II. Respondents' Level of Interaction with the Municipality's Social Media Platform**

**Instructions.** Put a check on the box that describes your level of interaction with the following statements.

Statements	Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (2)	Never (1)
1. I followed and added to my favorites the municipality's Facebook page to prioritize its post in my newsfeed					

<i>Sinundan ko at idinagdag sa aking mga paborito ang Facebook page ng munisipyo para unahin ang post nito sa aking newsfeed</i>					
2. I clicked on videos, live videos, and reels on my notifications the municipality's Facebook page for me to be notified on all updates and posts  <i>Nag-click ako sa mga video, live na video, at reels sa aking mga notification sa Facebook page ng munisipyo para maabisuhan ako sa lahat ng mga update at post</i>					
3. I monitor, comment, and share every post the municipality's Facebook page  <i>Sinusubaybayan ko, nagkomento, at nagbabahagi ako ng bawat post sa Facebook page ng munisipyo</i>					
4. I monitor, comment, follow, and share every viral post the municipality's Facebook page  <i>Nagbantay ako, nagkokomento, nagsusubaybay, at nagbabahagi ng bawat viral post sa Facebook page ng munisipyo</i>					
5. I see myself monitoring, commenting, following, and sharing every post of the municipality's Facebook page as source of information in the community  <i>Nakikita ko ang aking sarili na nagbantay,, pagkokomento, pagsubaybay, at pagbabahagi ng bawat post ng Facebook page ng munisipyo bilang mapagkukunan ng impormasyon sa komunidad</i>					

### Part III. Respondents' Level of Involvement and Participation

**Instructions.** Put a check on the box that describes your level of involvement and participations on the following statements.

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Always (5)</b>	<b>Often (4)</b>	<b>Sometimes (3)</b>	<b>Rarely (2)</b>	<b>Never (1)</b>
1. When the municipality's Facebook page announces any activity that requires community participation I immediately follow and participate  <i>Kapag ang Facebook page ng munisipyo ay nag-anunyo ng anumang aktibidad na nangangailangan ng partisipasyon ng komunidad agad akong sumusunod at lumalahok</i>					

<p>2. When the municipality’s Facebook posted information that requires sharing to the household, I immediately do so with the members of the family, and even with my friend and relatives</p> <p><i>Kapag ang Facebook ng munisipyo ay nag-post ng impormasyon na nangangailangan ng pagbabahagi sa komunidad, agad kong ginagawa ito sa mga miyembro ng pamilya, at maging sa aking mga kaibigan at kamag-anak</i></p>					
<p>3. When the municipality’s Facebook posted announcement of lockdown during the upsurge of the pandemic, I, and my family did necessary planning and preparation</p> <p><i>Nang mag-post ang Facebook ng munisipyo ng anunsyo ng lockdown sa panahon ng pagtaas ng pandemya, ako at ang aking pamilya ay gumawa ng kinakailangang pagpapalano at paghahanda</i></p>					
<p>4. The municipality’s Facebook page served as our primary source of information during the pandemic from which our actions depend on</p> <p><i>Ang Facebook page ng munisipyo ay nagsilbing aming pangunahing mapagkukunan ng impormasyon sa panahon ng pandemya kung saan nakasalalay ang aming mga aksyon</i></p>					
<p>5. We communicated our issues, suggestions, opinions, needs and other concerns to be addressed by the local government thru the municipality’s Facebook page</p> <p><i>Ipinaabot namin ang aming mga isyu, mungkahi, opinyon, pangangailangan at iba pang alalahanin na tutugunan ng lokal na pamahalaan sa pamamagitan ng Facebook page ng munisipyo.</i></p>					

How would you describe the role that the municipality played during crisis situation in terms of relevance and helpfulness?

*(Paano mo ilalarawan ang naging papel na ginampanan ng munisipyo sa panahon ng krisis kung ang pag uusapan ay ang kaugnayan nito at ang mga naitulong sayo sa panahon ng sa COVID-19. )*

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