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The Plantitas and Their Plants Gardening in Time of the Pandemic: A Case of Sitio Lasang Planters in Koronadal City, Philippines

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ABSTRACTS

The purpose of the study is to find out the lived experiences of seven purposively chosen plants (planters) on plants gardening in time of the pandemic. The study was conducted in Sitio Lasang, Koronadal City. On the participants' involvement in plants gardening in times of pandemic, it was found out that because of the lockdown, they make themselves busy by involving in plant gardening. On how they develop their gardens, the participants revealed that they propagate plants from their collections, being purchased, and through barter. On why they chose plants' gardening in time of the pandemic, the participants revealed that they chose to plant because of leisure time and the safety and security of the family against the pandemic. In terms of benefits of plant gardening amidst pandemic to the plants, it is found out that plants' gardening aside from economic support, serves them as a stress reliever. Furthermore, on the effects of plants' gardening, it was found out that gardening serves as a workout and alternative means of doing something good while in the home.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The whole world is suffering from COVID 19 (Yau et al., 2020). The Philippines as well faces a lot of problems due to the pandemic. One of the major impacts that it has brought to the country is the financial crisis as an offshoot of the global economic problem (Banerjee et al., 2021; Chen & Yen, 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Many of the establishments and businesses are forced to close (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020). A lot of people are jobless. People stayed at home to stringently follow the quarantine protocols in containing the virus. Everything has changed.

To cope with the challenges of the new normal, Filipinos have turned to plants. They grow different kinds of plants: indoor and outdoor, small potted succulents and indoor trees, etc. This pandemic opened the doors for the inner Plantito or Plantita. It serves as a coping mechanism and a new hobby to those who wish to learn new things in their quarantine time.

Taking care of plants is also a positive activity especially in the pandemic. It helps people cope with the anxieties and other psychological effects this crisis has brought. Planting is also a good mental and physical exercise same way of cooking, jogging and the like.

Likewise, in the setting in Region XII, in the Philippines most numbered of constituents turn to become plantita and plantito during the pandemic. The natural beauty of ornamental plants is an excellent way to lower down stress and anxieties. People who keep plants at home feel happier, calmer, and freer from stress. The happiness they gain from the environment can decrease the chances of suffering stress and anxiety related to depression (Hall & Dickson, 2011).

Therefore, this study intends to determine the perceptions of Plantitas on plants gardening in times of pandemic particularly in Sitio Lasang, Koronadal City, Philippines.

2. METHODS

Qualitative research was used in this study. It was primarily concerned with the experiences of Plantitas on plants gardening in times of pandemic. The participants were purposively chosen particularly in Sitio Lasang, Koronadal City. After obtaining permission to conduct the study, the participants were identified using the inclusion criteria. A letter of invitation and consent form were sent to the chosen participants. The open-ended survey questionnaire was prepared and validated to be utilized in conducting the interview. To support the documentation, a voice recorder was also utilized in extract the data provided by the interviewees. After the collection of data, the researchers translated the data from its mother tongue to English. The researchers interpreted the data through Thematic Data Analysis by creating themes based on the responses of the participants.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Upon utilizing the intended data analysis approach, the study has the following findings:

1. The study found that plantitas involved in plants' gardening because of lockdown where everyone is forced to stay at home to be safe and plating help on their family ties;
2. People engage themselves in plant gardening to relieve their stress (Adevi & Lieberg, 2012) and other psychological effects of the pandemic. It can help them to a healthy lifestyle where they used their daily activities as their daily exercises where it gives also them the sense of comfort, relaxation, freedom, and enjoyment to them as planters (Eng et al., 2019);
3. Since plantitas (gardeners) sell their plants at reasonable costs, planting becomes their source of income especially those who have lost their jobs;

4. Planting plants become their hobbies (Campbell *et al.*, 2021) and their time in social media and other activities is diverted in gardening.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn: (i) Individuals turn in their interest to planting during the pandemic. Planting become their habit until it turned to be their source of income; (ii) Plantitas as planters developed their job more amidst the pandemic; (iii) Plantitas used to propagate plants and acquired more other varieties to expand their nursery and earn more income; (iv) For many, it becomes their daily exercise to sustain their healthy lifestyles; (v) The plantitas earned commendations of their unique activities in the new normal.

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6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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