

Psychology Programs in the Philippines: An Expository Narrative from a Change and Innovation Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This expository research delves on the history of Psychology programs in Psychology, from a change and innovation perspective. It begins with an overview of change and innovation, then proceeds to the historical timeline of Psychology offerings, beginning during the 18th century up to the contemporary times. It details the important personalities that laid the foundations for Psychology programs in the Philippines, and the notable institutions that contributed to its flourishing. It also discusses the relevant organizations, such as the Psychological Association of the Philippines, that served to formalize the Psychology profession. Notable research endeavors are also discussed, which further advanced the discipline of Psychology in the country. World-ranked universities which offer Psychology programs are also detailed, as well as contemporary publications in various fields of Psychology within the Phil. Context. Laws and other legal regulations are also discussed. It ends with the discussion of Psychology programs using a change and innovation lens and future trajectories of the discipline, highlighting the technological transformation of the discipline.

Keywords: change, innovation, Philippine education, Psychology programs, Psychological Research, Philippine Laws in Psychology

INTRODUCTION: AN OVERVIEW OF CHANGE AND INNOVATION

Change and innovation are two terms interchangeably used in various literatures. However, there are distinct differences in how they are defined and conceptualized. Change is defined as “differences in the state of affairs, related to different points in time” while innovation is referred to as “something new and original being offered to the world” (Wiest, 2022). On the bases of these definitions, one can see distinct nuances between these two terms: change naturally happens and it can refer to decisions being made, or transforming into a new person. Change usually leads to innovation, defined as “new ideas, new devices, or new processes introduced to the world”. Innovation happens when there are needs to be satisfied, and the present context is unable to address these needs. Thus, innovation makes things happen. It was first associated by Peter Drucker with wealth but later on applied to various contexts and factors (Reckmann, 2024).

There are said to be six differences between change and innovation. These differences lie in these different domains (Nagesser, 2014):

1. Incidental vs. Structural

- Change is incidental, which means improving current systems and mechanisms to attain better results and outcomes. In change, there is a prior precedent. On the other hand, innovation is structural, implying that a new foundation is necessary to be built, with new features and mechanisms, reliant on something new discovered.

2. Starting Points

- For change, the starting point is the world as it already exists; for innovation, it begins with “how the world should be”. The point of innovation is to bridge the two starting points. The focus is on the customers and end-users; what do they need, how it should be delivered, and how it makes lives easier. Thus, the starting point of change is the problems that already exist; for innovation, what are the “ideals” and “aspirations” and how should be go about in visualizing and implementing them. Innovation transcends the current systems and goes beyond individual and organizational stakes.

3. Identity and Vision

- Change is tackling the problems of the present while innovation takes on the vision of the future. Change is an outcome of a necessity while innovation entails having an organizational identity, anchored on the business vision and mission.

4. Inside-out and Outside In

- Initiating change is anchored on an “outside-in” approach, where people adapt to current systems. Change managers analyze current systems and mechanisms and determine how these should have positive impacts on people. The purpose of implementing change is to ensure that it has optimal impact on work behaviors. On the other hand, innovation has an “inside-out” approach and initiated from within the person, organization, and society with accompanying appropriate behavioral changes. It should begin with a paradigm shift and growth mindset before it can be successful.

5. Certainty vs. Uncertainty

- Change looks at existing systems and incorporates specific procedures to come up with calculated outcomes. For example, in analyzing a system that is observed to not be effective, change leaders break down the system into manageable units then troubleshoot these units to make them workable. For innovation, there are a lot of uncertainties because one is establishing a new system that has no precedent. One cannot absolutely predict the outcome of this innovation until it is used and implemented.

6. Administration vs. Transformation

- Change is a way of fixing administration; a problem is identified, recalibrated, used, and implemented. The focus is on repair, cost reduction and redesign. These are all part of the current systems and this is the focus of change. On the other hand, innovation is for purposes of transformation; this entails future-proofing, implying that innovations of today are likely to be beneficial for the future. If change is “fixing”, innovation is “reinventing” systems and human mindsets, fostering the qualities of creativity and resilience.

These distinctions in change and innovation are observed in education. The purpose of education is to adjust to societal needs that is always changing and growing (Supriani et.al., 2022). Thus, change and innovation are crucial in ensuring education goals are met that would be beneficial to all stakeholders, especially students.

Change and Innovation in Education

Amidst problems confronting educators such as “population mobility, unstable labor market, rapid pace of globalization”, there has been a need to strategize pedagogical methods (Talvio et. al., 2024). Further, with the digital revolution and advent of the covid-19 pandemic, the need to change and innovate is becoming more critical (Li et.al., 2021). Thus, innovations such as online learning (Raouna, 2024; Li & Lalani, 2020),

introduction of terms “synchronous” and “asynchronous” (Cuevas, 2021), and other digital tools, such as learning management systems (Haan & Watts, 2024) were put into place. The curriculum is considered as the “bedrock” of education (Pinugu, 2021); thus, it is important that curricular innovations should be implemented, as it is defined as “a set of tools to achieve a goal, ranging from planning, and implementation to evaluation” (Supriani et. al., 2022). Factors involved in curricular innovation include the institution’s vision and mission, population growth, science and technology, and educational demands. Curriculum is not only about courses and skills outcomes but also entails a set of norms, imbedded within a hidden curriculum (Hariharan, 2019), that underlies the academic system. Change and innovation are the answers to these issues at hand.

The goal of curricular innovation is to ensure teachers have access to a wide variety of educational tools at their disposal. The theoretical underpinnings of curricular innovation is clear to educators; however, at the practical level, implementation is hard to achieve because of vague and ambiguous objectives (Gonta & Tripon, 2021). The need for curriculum innovation is critical since it should be dynamic and progressive according to the needs of stakeholders in society (Supriani et.al., 2022). The ultimate aim of curriculum innovation is to “make learning more meaningful” for 21st century learners (Button, 2021). These changes to curriculum may be a response to economic, social, political, and cultural issues as well as technological innovation (Itauma, 2021; Button, 2021). Courses built on technology include discussion forums, online readings, and hybrid learning formats that are necessary for our digital native learners (Itauma, 2021). During the time of the pandemic, China adopted the “suspension of classes without suspending schooling” perspective, introducing innovative strategies to ensure learners sustain interest and foster learning amidst a challenging time (Li et.al., 2021). Thus, the importance of change and innovation is very important in education, especially for a mental health profession like Psychology.

In the introduction of Psychology programs here in the Philippines, there is a fusion of both change and innovation. Until now, the discipline is far from being a “set, definite” program in the country; it still needs fixing, realignment, redesigning, and transforming the discipline not only as an academic discipline, but also in terms of ethical and competent practice, not only in the Philippines but in other countries, across global platforms as well. Mental healthcare and literacy, being at the forefront of psychological issues nowadays, should guide the future directions of the Psychology discipline. Considering post-pandemic issues and concerns, there is still a lot of innovations and transformations that warrant attention. Given these future trajectories, we need to study the historical timeline of Psychology programs in the Philippines, how should it be sustained, and future directions it should follow.

The Beginnings of Psychology Programs in the Philippines

Psychology as a course subject was initially taught during the 17th century, notably in two institutions: University of San Carlos in Cebu and University of Santo Tomas in Manila (Paredes-Canilao & Babaran-Diaz, 2013). The nature of Psychology being taught was philosophical and academic in nature, given that this discipline was brought to the country by Spanish friars (Licuanan, 1985). With the coming of the Americans, our educational system gained advancement through scholarships awarded to deserving Filipino students, who were sent to the United States for academic training, with the intention of starting academic programs in universities established in the country. The establishment of the University of the Philippines by the Americans in 1908 saw Psychology imbedded within the Department of Philosophy. In 1926, Psychology was taught as a separate subject in the University of the Philippines (UP) but was housed in the College of Education. On the other hand, in the early 1930s, the University of Santo Tomas (UST) opened the Department of Psychology and in 1948, the B. S. Psychology program opened, earning the distinction of being the first educational institution to offer a Psychology degree program. Masters and Doctoral Programs shortly followed (Gines, 2006).

The first Psychologist was Agustin Alonzo, who would later on become the first head of the Department of Psychology in the University of the Philippines. Alonzo was an Education graduate in his Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree, before he earned his Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology at the University of Chicago, under

an American scholarship. The first Filipino Psychologist who pursued Psychology from a Bachelor's Degree to Ph.D. is Sinforoso Padilla, whose dissertation was mentored by B.F. Skinner (Pe-Pua, 2021; Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). In an obvious influence of his mentor and the predominant wave in the study of Psychology, Padilla reorganized the Experimental Psychology at the University of the Philippines (UP) and also established the Psychological Clinic in 1932. These trends of sending students to the United States for advanced academic training in Psychology and establishing offices and departments related to Psychology can be observed in institutions such as the University of Santo Tomas (UST), National University (NU), Far Eastern University (FEU), Ateneo de Manila University (AdMU), and Philippine Women's University (PWU), where the first Clinical Psychologist Aldaba-Lim set up the Human Relations Clinic (Gastardo-Conaco, 2005; Licuanan, 1985). There were also pioneers who established Psychology-related offices in companies, acknowledging that Psychology is not only meant for academic purposes but also has value in company functions and programs. Psychological clinics and other similar offices were also established, emphasizing that Psychology is not only an academic program and discipline but is most valued in professional practice. Thus, we can see here that Psychology's learning outcomes lie in its mastery of content, establishment of practice, and research outputs. Further, there was a collaboration in that teams were not only made up of Psychologists but also included counselors, social workers, educators, and psychiatrists, which highlights the role of a collaborative, dynamic team in addressing human issues and concerns (PAP, 2024).

In terms of research, there was not much documented among the works of the Pioneering Psychologists. There were fifteen (15) research theses listed before WW2, but these were classified under Education since they were written to obtain Education degrees. Among these researches include "Psychology of Feelings" by Alonzo in 1922 and "Girl's Juvenile Delinquency" by Aldaba-Lim in 1935. On the other hand, there is a strong Philosophical Orientation in research coming from the University of Santo Tomas. Among them were "The Nature of Dreams", "Pleasure and Happiness", and "Psychology from the standpoint of Scholasticism". These were written in 1935-1936. The acknowledged first Psychology research was written after WW2 in the University of the Philippines. Entitled "Inkblot study of imagination", this was written in 1947, followed by "A Study of Extra Sensory Perception" (1953), "The Present Status of Rorschach in V. Luna Hospital" (1954), "A study of Drugless Healing" (1955), and "Group Rorschach Method: Preliminary Studies on Filipinos" (1955). These initial Psychology research show to be inclined to Clinical Psychology (Licuanan, 1985). Thus, it can be surmised that the interest of Psychology was focused on treatments and interventions using standardized instruments. This is evident in testing course subjects and practices such as counseling and hypnotherapy that were carried out in classes (Salazar, 2018).

The opening of the Department of Psychology by the University of the Philippines (UP) in 1926 saw the shift from having a Philosophical identity to one that finds a comfortable collaboration with Education. Thus, a number of courses within the Psychology degree saw a mix of education and psychology courses, since a large number of faculty teaching these courses are Education graduates. However, there was a need to establish Psychology as a distinct discipline, separate from Philosophy and Education. This would be evident in the succeeding years of establishing the discipline in various educational institutions (Pe-Pua, 2021).

Psychology in the later years: 1960s – 1980s

During the 1960s, initial courses in Psychology programs focused on General Psychology, Genetic Psychology, Educational Psychology, and Tests and Measurements, an obvious influence of the collaboration with the Education discipline. In order to fortify the discipline as a unique program, courses such as Personality Theories, Abnormal Psychology, Experimental Psychology, Comparative Psychology, and Social Psychology (Licuanan, 1985). Given that majority of the pioneering Psychologists were trained in Experimental and Clinical Psychology, these were the instructional content and strategies utilized in their classes (Pe-Pua, 2021).

In 1962, two major organizations were established: the Philippine Psychological Corporation (PPC) and the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP). These two organizations were founded by the

predominant psychologists of the time. The Psychological Corporation was established to act as the exclusive distributor of standardized tests in the Philippines. This was a milestone since it would mean that standardized tests could be made available to Psychology practitioners (Gines, 2006; Licuanan, 1985). However, this is also a sign of our dependence on Western-made scales and adherence to their constructs. On the other hand, the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) was established to “promote excellence in Psychology’s teaching, research, and practice and its recognition as a scientifically oriented discipline for human and social development.” (PAP, 2024). The founders of the PAP were Agustin Alonzo (UP), Jaime Bulatao (Ateneo), Sinforoso Padilla (UP), Jesus Perpinan (FEU), Mariano Obias (UP/ Caltex Philippines), and Alfredo Lagmay (UP). Its first conference happened in 1964, where Personality research papers were presented from various universities and published as a book (Salazar, 2018).

In the late 1960s, among forty-four schools all over the Philippines, around twenty-five (25) of them were offering Psychology programs and allied disciplines such as Behavioral Sciences and Counseling (Licuanan, 1985). From a handful of courses, there were now more offered to students, including but not limited to: General Psychology, Statistics, Social Psychology, Experimental Psychology, Personality Theories, and Practicum. Specialized courses included Projective Techniques and Rorschach. While Projective techniques were offered to undergraduate students, this course was later on removed during the 1990s, given the delicate nature and advanced training needed for these kinds of instruments. There were four schools offering MA Psychology, MA Counseling, and MA Behavioral Sciences. On the other hand, there were only 4 schools offering Ph.D., namely: Ateneo de Manila University, University of the Philippines, University of Santo Tomas, and Manuel L. Quezon University. Psychology was a popular course, especially in the undergraduate level. A reason for this was the abolishment of Pre-medicine in the Bachelor’s programs; Psychology was seen as a good pre-medicine alternative (Licuanan, 1985). The presence of local PhD programs was also timely as there were less scholarships for academic training in the US. Thus, there were more opportunities for advanced specializations in the Philippines, as compared to the costly opportunity of going to a foreign country for Ph.D. Those who pursued Ph.D. locally are more experienced; they have on-ground experiences in the Philippines, have been in the practice longer, and are typically older than the first generation of Psychology practitioners (Pe-Pua & Protaco-Marcelino, 2000).

In a survey conducted by the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) during the 1980s, it was revealed that while students are able to find jobs upon graduating with a Psychology degree, they were confronted with low salary offers and expressed the desire for further training for improved professional status. A significant number of these graduates pursued Medicine, while others found jobs in the industry, schools, and government agencies. The primary skills expected of these graduates are testing, training, and research. On the other hand, there were those who accepted job offers that were not aligned to Psychology (PAP, 2024).

Upon commencement of the survey, PAP has convened an accreditation committee that serves to regulate, upgrade, and standardize Psychology curricula and departments across all levels- from the Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Ph.D. levels. This is the first concerted effort of any organization in standardizing the offering of Psychology programs in the country, which shows the progress of the discipline and educational institutions which offer Psychology programs. Among the initiatives of this accreditation committee was to offer the Bachelor’s degree as a general liberal arts course, and advanced specializations and skills to be offered in the MA and PhD levels (PAP, 2024).

In terms of research, the 1960s to the 1970s has seen an increase in the numbers of studies and publications, and with a more diverse background. During the 1950s and early 1960s, produced research focused on experimental studies and behaviorism (Pe-Pua & Protaco-Marcelino, 2000; Licuanan, 1985). In the latter part of the 1960s, there was a diversion toward local and indigenous studies, and other areas of Psychology, including Social Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Personality, Cognitive Psychology, and other similar specializations. Ateneo being the first to offer an MA IO Psychology produced the most IO Psychology research during the 1960s and 1970s. Research in Social Psychology, Test and Measurement,

Personality, and Child Development dominated the 1970s. With an inclination toward research of local and indigenous communities, there is an obvious shift away from Western-driven constructs. Research that touches on the economic and political climates of the country were also undertaken through a psychological lens. In furthering indigenous psychology, some theses and dissertations were written in the Filipino language. Novel research were pursued by Psychologists; among them was Jaime Bulatao, who explored indigenous forms of mental illness and cure, as well as the field of parapsychology (Bautista & Aguilar, 2023). The sources of these research were universities, PAP research presentations, and the Phil. Journal of Psychology, the official publication of PAP (Licuanan, 1985).

Aside from the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP), the “*Pambansang Samahan sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino*” (National Society of Filipino Psychology), was also established in 1975, to pave the way for the foundations of Filipino Psychology, led by Virgilio Enriquez, considered as the “Father of Phil. Psychology” (Gines, 2006). The organization has forwarded local constructs in explaining the Filipino Psyche. The establishment of these organizations contribute further to the flourishing of research, practices, and theoretical grounding of Psychology in the Philippines. Attendance to conferences of these organizations also provide opportunities to synergize narratives and conversations about Psychology among practitioners, academicians, faculty, and students.

The flourishing of the Psychology profession continued with various organizations and offices established, which provided services to the public. Some were established within educational institutions, which also served as training providers for OJTs of students. These offices within colleges and universities offered their services to the public, and included counseling, testing, research, and training and development. Among these included Ateneo’s Central Guidance Bureau established by Bulatao and PWU’s Institute of Human Relations by Aldaba-Lim, who also founded the Psychological Corporation (PAP, 2024; Licuanan, 1985).

The number of clinical psychologists has also prospered, offering counseling and psychotherapy services to the public. The National Mental Hospital (NMH) has been providing services of assessment, diagnosis, and treatment and intervention. Given the delicate and sensitive nature of these services, psychologists and doctors have been pushing for strict standardization of the qualifications of Psychologists and appropriate certification of these Psychologists (NCMH, 2024). The challenge of having this measure is that there are few who would qualify to become certified psychologists, against the numbers by demand. It is for this reason that the Psychology Bill is being pushed for legislation, to provide resources and credentialing measures for psychometricians and psychologists. The Psychology Bill has been pushed as early as 1960s but has not yet been read in Congress during the 1980s (Enriquez, 2004).

The required presence of psychologists is also felt in government agencies and the private sectors in terms of research, industrial testing, and community development, in collaboration with allied disciplines such as sociology, social work, and training specialists. This shows that the effective implementation of psychological programs entails collaboration with other professionals, producing synergy of efforts for attainment of outcomes.

The advent of the 1980s has seen an immense growth in literature and practice in Psychology. While there have been significant advances, there seems to be few takers. There are more professionals who have MA and PhD degrees, but they do not seem to indulge in research and other forms of advancement in the discipline. There is now a conscious movement towards a genuine Filipino Psychology, with the leadership of Virgilio Enriquez (Pe-Pua & Protaco-Marcelino, 2000). Filipino psychologists are taking part in national development and raising the Filipino consciousness. The greatest breakthrough of Psychology is the proposal of the Psychology Bill which seeks to professionalize the practice by setting standards of practice, and regulating criteria and certifications of practitioners.

Consistent and continuous support of initiatives to uphold the Psychology profession will truly be an era of significant change, leading to transformations and innovations in the future. From the 17th to the 20th century, we have seen a lot of changes in the implementation of Psychology in educational institutions and beyond.

From being offered as a specific course, to offering it as a Bachelor's degree program, to advancing toward graduate schools (MA and PhD), we have seen a lot of redesign, recalibration, and readjustment of Psychology programs. Changes that have been implemented is an obvious sign of the times, and the demands imposed upon the profession is because of the current contexts. These changes will continue on and hopefully, will lead to the quality implementation of Psychology as a profession, beginning in school programs until it leads to practice, and successful approval of the Psychology Bill into law (PAP, 2024).

Psychology in the contemporary times: 1990s – 2000s

In 1994, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) was established as a consequence of Republic Act 7722, otherwise known as the "Higher Education Act of 1994", for the purpose of supervising tertiary degree programs and graduate studies (Paredes-Canilao & Babaran-Diaz, 2013) which includes Psychology programs. RA 7722 was introduced in order for the Phil. Education System to be abreast of global competitiveness and world-class standards for Humanities, Social Sciences, and Communication programs. CHED issued CMO No. 59, series of 1996, entitled New General Education Curriculum (GEC), which details a mandatory general education curriculum across 4 domains, totaling 64 units, as follows:

1. Language and Literature (24 units)
2. Mathematics and Natural Sciences (15 units)
3. Humanities and Social Sciences (18 units)
4. Mandated Subjects (6 units)

Psychology is included under the Humanities and Social sciences and is a required course subject across all bachelor's degree programs. As regards the aim of Social Sciences, it is *"to make students aware of the general social problems and issues, especially those with relevance to the Phil. Society. These courses shall likewise enhance the students' awareness of the importance of scientific approaches to the discussion and analysis of social issues"* (CHED, 2024). This goal carries over the psychological orientation in the 1980s decade of focusing on social issues and aligning the study of Psychology to indigenous matters. Further, it acknowledges that Psychology is a scientific discipline that helps to enhance discourse of social issues and calls to actions.

The following year, CHED issued CMO no. 44, series of 1997, with the subject heading "Policies and Standards for Humanities, Social Sciences, and Communication", which details the curriculum, course codes and descriptions, minimum faculty qualifications, laboratory facilities, and required psychological tests for Psychology programs. In terms of its mission statements, the Social Sciences programs, which includes Psychology, aims to facilitate holistic development of the youth in order to *"effect changes in himself and in his environment to realize fullness of human life"* (CHED, 1997). The curriculum aims to prepare learners in providing the foundations for a particular specialization. At the end of the program, the student is expected to manifest competence in his chosen specialization which is a necessity for employment and for graduate school training beyond the bachelor's degree. This memorandum order is now focusing on Psychology as a distinct discipline, on which a degree program is based, compared to the prior CMO which explains the offering of Psychology as a course subject and part of the General Education Curriculum (GEC) offered to all college students.

In 2010, the Phil. Psychology Act of 2009 was signed into law by Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, making the professionalization of Psychology official. The law recognizes the value of Psychologists in nation building and seeks to regulate the practice by forming the Professional Regulatory Board who sets the minimum criteria of who are qualified to practice. The law also sets the foundation for the licensure exams of both psychometricians (for the bachelor's degree holders) and psychologists (for master's degree holders). The qualifications of the PRB are also explicitly stated and the processes for the licensure exams discussed. It also cites the code of ethics for the members of the PRB and those who will be granted a license, including those who will qualify under the grandfather's clause (PAP, 2022).

The approval of the Psychology Act of 2009 led to a major upgrade of Psychology programs in 2010, with the release of CMO 38 for undergraduate programs and CMO 39 for graduate programs. In these latest CMOs, Psychology is defined and how it contributes to national development. Distinctions are also set for AB and BS Psychology, with BS Psychology having additional science courses. Competency standards are also stated, with graduates expected to have competencies in knowledge, research, application of psychological models and theories, ethics, and graduate school training. Specific skill sets include teaching, psychometrics, research, human resource development, and training and development (Supreme Court, 2010).

For CMO 39, it encompasses students enrolled in MA non-thesis programs, thesis programs, and Ph.D. The same competency standards are expected of graduate students, except for additional items of post-graduate training and provisions for lifelong learning.

In both CMOs, the curriculum is presented but HEIs are encouraged to go beyond the minimum, in order to ensure that graduates of the program are qualified to take the licensure exams and become qualified practitioners. Aside from competency standards, both CMOs include program descriptions, research policies, program administration, faculty requirements, library, laboratory, and admission/ retention policies. The specific details incorporated in these CMOs show the uniqueness of the psychology programs and the stringent standards which will be utilized to ensure that graduates of the program are steeped in knowledge, research, and practice (CHED, 2017).

In 2012, the Commission on Higher Education adopted the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) Framework and endorsed it to all Higher Education Institutions (HEI). The Outcomes- Based Education framework is an optimistic philosophy that assumes 3 premises: students learn, but not at the same time and in the same way; successful learning begets more learning, and; school and its teachers control and set up the conditions for success of students. In implementing OBE, it subscribes to four operating principles: clarify of focus, high expectations, expanded opportunities, and design down (Macayan, 2017). Mapua Institute of Technology was the first university to adopt the OBE framework and cascade to its respective schools and departments (Macayan, 2023). The utilization of the OBE framework highlights the need for quality assurance in educational systems, that emphasize demonstration of skills (outcomes) of students after a significant learning experience. Initially, it was adopted because of ABET engineering accreditation but has since been adopted by all programs, including that of Psychology.

In 2013, in attempts to sustain excellence in Psychology programs, CMO no.7 was issued. The memorandum highlighted the requirements of awarding institutions as Centers of Excellence (CEO) in the offering of Psychology programs. These institutions have the responsibility of continuous quality improvement in terms of faculty qualifications, research, and providing expertise to government institutions, among others (Education, Guidelines for Grants and Proposals for Center of Excellence and Center of Development in Psychology, 2013). Psychology has also been categorized as a priority course in 2014, under the Social Sciences area (CHED, 2014).

In 2017, a new CMO no. 34 was issued by CHED, entitled “Policies and Standards for Undergraduate Programs in Psychology”. It is explicitly stated in this new memo about the shift to Outcome-based Education (OBE) and this is manifested in the reporting of 7 new outcomes specific to Psychology graduates. Each program outcome has performance indicators that have not been stated in previous CMOs. Further, other changes included some courses to be required in the curriculum, instead of being just electives. The same revisions can be found in CMO 15, series of 2019 for graduate programs in Psychology, with a different and more advanced set of outcomes expected of graduate studies level. Educational institutions offering Psychology are adhering to these CHED CMOs.

In 2020, the COVID-19 Pandemic became the biggest global disruption in education. Classes immediately shifted to online modality, and the Commission on Higher Education released a memo on the implementation of flexible learning (CHED, 2020). Both educators and students became entrenched in

distance/online learning, with new terminologies such as synchronous and asynchronous, learning management systems, digital tools, independent learning, video conferencing, digital platforms, and other innovative tools were put in place to ensure learning still continued (Broom, 2022; Dorn et.al., 2021; De Guzman, 2021; Montemayor, 2020). All of these were integrated in this memorandum that were enforced, until the return to face-to-face modality.

Aside from local accreditations, selected Psychology programs have also pursued international accreditation. Mapua University is currently pursuing AUN- QA accreditation for its AB Psychology program. This symbolizes that the Psychology program is at par with international standards (Mapua, 2022).

From the initial offering of Psychology as a subject, to its offering as a bachelor's degree program and later on, graduate studies, it is evident that change and innovation played a crucial role in its transformation over the last decade, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there are still more opportunities for growth and development for Psychology programs in the Philippines, in terms of theoretical grounding and practice. Let us look at the current status of Psychology.

Current Status of Psychology Programs and Practical Implications in the Philippines

From forty-four institutions offering Psychology programs during the 1980s, it has now expanded to 170 colleges and universities as of 2007, with more educational institutions offering the program in succeeding years (Gines, 2007). Top universities in the country are offering Psychology, with a vision of contributing to nation- building. Program outcomes and competencies are also provided to ensure future practitioners undergo sufficient and quality training. Aside from professionalization measures for psychologists and psychometricians, the Phil. Mental Health Law has also been introduced as well as other legal policies. To expand the discipline and promote growth of its theory and practice, current research is actively undertaken, resulting in more localized theoretical grounding and practice of Psychology in the Philippines.

Program outcomes and competencies

The memorandum order no. 34 of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) defines Psychology as “the scientific study of behavior and mental processes, with the goal of contributing to national development through research and interventions by optimizing the development of people and groups” (CHED, 2017). With this national goal, it is important that Psychology programs offered in the Philippines should train students toward becoming effective and productive practitioners. Thus, the following program outcomes have been detailed by the Commission on Higher Education for Psychology programs to implement for students, as follows:

1. Knowledge in Psychology

- Demonstrate the capability to discuss and analyze the major theories and concepts in Psychology;

2. Psychological Research

- Demonstrate and apply the methods of psychological inquiry in building knowledge on local culture and context;

3. Application of Psychology

- Demonstrate and apply psychological theories and methods in personal and professional setting.

4. Independent Learning

- Demonstrate capability for self-reflection and independent learning in graduate education or in a professional context.

5. Ethics

- Demonstrate professional and ethical behaviors in research and practice.

6. Interpersonal Skills

- Demonstrate harmonious interpersonal relationship with colleagues, clients, and others in diverse cultural setting.

7. Psychological Assessment

- Demonstrate the ability to conduct psychological assessments and evaluation.

The above outcomes are a mix of technical and soft skills which future Psychology professionals should possess. They are expected to have not only knowledge but are able to apply these to their future practice. A core outcome here is ethics; skills will be useless if character and principles are lacking, especially if it is expected that future Psychologists and professionals will address client mental health for optimal development.

The importance of ethics is also observed by the American Psychological Association (APA) as it is the first quality principle stated for undergraduate education in Psychology (APA, 2023). The purpose of these quality principles is to promote the best practices that educators, programs, and administration can utilize in Psychology education. The quality principles delineated by the American Psychological Association are as follows:

1. Faculty members strive to be ethical, culturally- responsive scientist- educators who use their educational background, ongoing professional development, pedagogical expertise, and lived experiences to teach, mentor, and support students with diverse and intersecting identities.

Within this first quality principle, six specific recommendations are presented, aligned to educator expertise, evidence- based learning principles, inclusive and accessible curriculum, consistent and continuous assessment, promotion of inclusion, equity, and diversity within the classroom, and provision of support and guidance to students.

2. Psychology department and programs design their curriculum, offer co-curricular activities, and create learning environments that will adequately prepare students to achieve the knowledge and skills expected of undergraduates engaged in the study of psychology.

There are nine specific recommendations underlying this second quality principle, focusing on the need for a globally responsive curriculum, effective sequencing of courses, sufficient number of qualified faculty members, policy development for quality learning, provision of experiential learning and student involvement in co-curricular activities, promotion of equity, diversity, and inclusion to reduce inequalities, provision of advisorship and mentorship, need for periodic program review, and fostering positive relationships with other institutions and other stakeholders for student development. These quality principles are necessary prerequisites to establishing a psychology program, to ensure that training will produce highly qualified practitioners.

Just recently, the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) released a position paper on the roles of psychologists, psychiatrists, and guidance counselors. The role of a psychologist is to “focus on helping people through counseling, psychotherapy, coaching, psychological debriefing, psychosocial support, and other non-medical interventions to improve the psychological functioning of individuals, families, groups, and organizations”. (PAP, 2024). Given this description, it is clear that Psychologists have numerous functions they have to serve for their individual and organizational clients, for the goal of optimal functioning, growth, and development. While there are a multitude of roles that Psychologists deliver in their

respective positions, collaboration with other mental health professionals is encouraged to deliver sufficient and quality client care to those with mental health issues. Thus, given this important synergizing role psychologists play, it is important that the Psychology curriculum is steeped on knowledge, models, and experiential learning for future Psychology practitioners in several work contexts.

It is for this reason that top universities in the Philippines are ensuring that design and implementation of quality program outcomes, curriculum, and learning pedagogies in Psychology are clearly articulated and demonstrated. These universities ensure that the curriculum is constantly updated to remain relevant to the needs of the times. Learning opportunities covering knowledge and practice are provided, as well as forging partnerships with relevant institutions to promote authentic learning and assessment. Service learning are integrated within the curriculum, which is considered to be a high- impact pedagogy that includes community- based service activities (Bringle et. al., 2022; Salam et. al., 2019). Teaching and learning pedagogies are developed to become adaptive to technology amidst the demand for learning innovations.

Psychology program offerings in the Philippines

Around one hundred seventy institutions are offering Psychology (Gines, 2007). According to the Times Higher Education (THE), six Philippine universities entered the world rankings for 2025 (Guiao, 2024). These are Ateneo de Manila University (AdMU), which is ranked first, followed by the University of the Philippines (UP), and occupying the third position are De La Salle University (DLSU), Mapua University (MU), Mindanao State University (MSU), and the University of Santo Tomas (UST). Ateneo, University of the Philippines, and the University of Santo Tomas have been part of the history in the establishment of Psychology offerings in the Philippines (Gines, 2007; Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000; Licuanan, 1985). Thus, it is notable that they are considered to be among the top universities in the country. Further, all the six institutions are offering Psychology programs in both the undergraduate and graduate school levels. While the course offerings and minimum standards of the Psychology programs are aligned to the memorandum order of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), each university has its notable curriculum and pedagogy in implementing the Psychology program.

Ateneo de Manila University opened its Department of Psychology in 1960, spearheaded by Fr. Jaime Bulatao (Ateneo, 2022), who was among the pioneer founders of the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP). The university offers both Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Psychology, as well as Master's and Ph.D. The expected learning outcomes of the Psychology programs are anchored on knowledge and skills, ethical behavior, and personal mastery of the discipline. The bachelor's degree programs are expected to be completed in four years. Among the teaching and learning activities implemented include lectures, multimedia support materials, student discussions, cooperative learning, enrichment activities, formative and summative projects, case studies, independent research, and feedback. Assessment tools include quizzes and exams, research, worksheets and exercises, integration projects, reports and presentations, service learning and reflection papers. The Psychology programs are also certified by local and international accreditors, ensuring that quality standards are in place (Ateneo, 2021).

The University of the Philippines started offering Psychology courses in 1918, under the College of Education (University of the Philippines, n.d.). In 1959, it eventually opened the Department of Psychology under the College of Social Science and Philosophy (CSSP). The Psychology department is anchored on the scientist-practitioner-advocate model, where educators and learners are trained to be scientific thinkers, grounded in practice, and advocating for reforms. The university is well known for its advocacy of Filipino Psychology, as advocated by the Virgilio Enriquez, considered to be its founder and also become the head of the Psychology Department (Pe-Pua, 2021; Gines, 2007; Licuanan, 1985). Its mission and vision highlight its competent and productive faculty roster, high level of teaching and mentoring, applying Psychology to government, civil society, and private sector, cultivating a culture of ethics, and fostering an optimal learning environment on the basis of respect and diversity. The university offers both bachelor of arts and science in Psychology as well as a Master's degree and Ph.D. The University is also cited as the top ranked Phil. Educational institution according to the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) for 2025 (Uson, 2024).

De La Salle University (DLSU) started offering Psychology programs in 1971, integrating it with other related disciplines such as Sociology and Anthropology, to form the Behavioral Sciences Department (DLSU, 2017). The Psychology department is described as a “diverse community” that responds to pressing social concerns as well as fosters optimal human development, focusing on intellectual capacity, moral principles, and social service. The Psychology program is anchored on the attainment of five goals: providing quality education with a scientist-practitioner perspective, engaging in research and discourse, faculty development with diverse expertise, forging relevant local and international collaborations and linkages, and endorsing Lasallian and Filipino values. The university offers both bachelor of arts and science degrees in Psychology, as well as master’s and Ph.D. degree programs. The university envisions Psychology graduates to be committed to mental health initiatives, ethical research practitioners, and globally competent in the field. The university boasts of local and international accreditation recognitions such as PAASCU, ABET, and AUN-QA, including that for Psychology programs, highlighting the quality standards utilized by the university in producing quality Psychology professionals and advocates. De La Salle University also boasts of exemplary licensure performance for both psychometricians and psychologists (DLSU, 2022).

Mapua University (MU) was first established in 1925 as Mapua Institute of Technology by the first Filipino registered architect, Don Tomas Mapua. In 2005, it started offering the bachelor of arts and science in Psychology, gearing towards attaining University status. In 2013, it offered the Master’s degree and double degree Psychology programs, serving to bridge the bachelor’s to master’s degree. There are seven (7) program outcomes of the Psychology programs, namely (Mapua, 2024):

1. To explain human behavior among various psychological theories and principles;
2. Conduct research of publishable quality;
3. Communicate effectively in multidisciplinary and multi-cultural contexts;
4. Perform psychological assessment and evaluation using standardized instruments and procedures;
5. Develop instruments that will appropriately measure and assess psychological constructs;
6. Implement essential behavioral interventions using basic psychological techniques; and
7. Formulate and execute psychological programs that will address lifelong problems.

Mapua was a pioneering advocate of outcomes-based education, which is the learning framework endorsed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) across all tertiary institutions in the Philippines (Macayan, 2023; Pinugu, 2022), paving the way for the first outcome-based licensure exams for Psychometricians and Psychologists in the Philippines. The Psychology programs possess both local and international accreditations and was judged to be among the top 20 schools offering Psychology in the country in 2018 (Mapua, 2024). Recently, Mapua partnered with Arizona State University (ASU), the number one innovation university in the United States (Pedrosa, 2022), to collaborate on educational goals, resources, pedagogies, and global learning sessions, which includes the Psychology programs, solidifying Mapua’s strength in digital and technological education.

Lastly, the University of Santo Tomas (UST) holds the distinction of being the first to offer a bachelor’s degree in Psychology in 1926, under the College of Education (UST, 2024). The university offers both bachelor’s degree programs in Psychology, as well as a Master’s degree and Ph.D. The Psychology program utilizes a biopsychosocial model in studying human behavior, evident in the curriculum they have crafted. The Psychology department provides opportunities to students to excel in the field of Psychology across clinical, industrial, and educational settings. The program boasts of ten program outcomes, focusing on knowledge mastery, psychological application, developing professional working relationships with stakeholders, communication competence, demonstrating professional and cultural humility, ethics, psychological assessment and evaluation, engagement in lifelong learning, and demonstrate potential for graduate study. The program boasts of promoting an elearning environment, especially crucial during the pandemic. The ELearning environment includes a cloud-based learning management system, web conferencing tools, and asynchronous videos.

The five aforementioned universities have transformed and innovated their respective Psychology offerings through clear articulation of outcomes and academic goals, introduction of technological and digital tools, which was crucial during the time of the pandemic, and emphasized the need to address societal concerns and problems that Psychology encompasses. The change and innovations that these universities have undertaken were anchored on prevalent needs of its stakeholders, both in and out of their respective school jurisdictions. The presence of these institutions is a major factor to the expansion and growth of the Psychology discipline. The other major factor is the quantity and quality of research outputs produced in the country.

Current Research Publications and Directions

Research is defined as “a process used to collect and analyze information to increase one’s understanding of a topic or issue” (Cresswell, 2022). There are 2 general research design: quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research is an inquiry into a social or human problem, the goal of which is to test a hypothesis through the use of numbers and analysis of variables. On the other hand, qualitative research is based on a distinct methodology where the researcher presents a holistic picture of a phenomenon and problem using words, detailed narratives of participants, and conducted in a natural setting, with the goal of exploring a social or human problem. A combination of the two results in a mixed methods study. Psychological research in the Philippines has a plethora in educational, clinical, and organizational contexts (Rimban, 2024; Uskul, 2024)

The goal of research is to answer questions, solve problems, and further advance knowledge in a specific field (Hassan, 2024). Within the ASEAN region, research productivity is one of the key indicators of tertiary institutions as evidence of innovation capability (Sukoco et.al., 2023). The Philippines as a member of the ASEAN was able to produce more than 5,000 scholarly outputs in 2019, as compared to its counterparts like Malaysia and Indonesia, which averaged thirty-six thousand and forty-five thousand outputs, respectively. Aside from advancement of knowledge and innovation, research productivity also has impact on economic growth (Sukoco et.al., 2023; Pinto & Teixeira, 2020).

Within the realm of psychology, the goal of research is to “successfully navigate a complex world” (Spielman et.al., 2023). It is aimed to produce scientific knowledge that is a result of empirical research. It enables critical thinking, helps us to arrive at logical decisions, and provides basis for evaluation for crucial issues. It provides the basis for the development and implementation of interventions and endorses evidence-based best practices in the Psychology profession (Gaskell et.al., 2022). Psychological research is a necessary requisite of Psychology majors, where students are expected to conceptualize a research concept, reviewing literature, postulating a conceptual framework, planning the methodology, analyzing data, and forming conclusions about psychological phenomenon (CHED, 2017). Thus, a substantial number of research publications are culled from student research, where these are submitted for consideration to various local and international journals for publication.

Documented psychological research conducted inside the Philippines are submitted to the Psychological Journal of the Philippines, which is published by the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP). It is an “international, open access, and refereed journal that promotes psychological studies in the Philippines among Filipinos” (PAP, 2020). The journal publishes four to five research articles annually.

From 2019-2021, the journal has produced a total of twenty research, spanning the areas of Industrial/Organizational Psychology (1), Social Psychology (4), Educational Psychology (1), Psychological Assessment (2), and Clinical Psychology (12). These studies were conducted by both students and professionals in the local contexts, using quantitative and qualitative approaches.

A qualitative study conducted among 106 Filipino employees from multiple industries during the Covid-19 pandemic revealed both favorable and unfavorable attitudes during the ongoing crises. Using the Affective-behavioral-cognitive model, results revealed more positive attitudes, such as ensuring safety, openness to

WFH arrangement, improved prioritization and efficiency, attainment of work-life balance, preparing for contingencies, increased appreciation for the company, gratitude for the job, work motivation, improved disposition toward work, importance of interpersonal connectedness, prioritizing family and health, and importance toward technology. On the other hand, there were also a few negative attitudes, such as presence of uncertainty and anxiety, personal work from home difficulties, complacency and decreased work productivity, disappointment toward employers, and thoughts of quitting (Caringal-Go et.al., 2021). Studies conducted within the pandemic not only focused on employment variables but also on mental health related variables (Hechanova et.al., 2022) and educational constructs (Joaquin et. al., 2020), highlighting the tremendous impact of the pandemic on all aspects of life.

A mixed methods study conducted among 305 university students revealed the importance of mental health, influenced by their personal interactions, nature of relationships with their peers and mentors, and the university environment. Students are calling for changes within the school environment, focusing on mental health needs as well and not only highlighting academic performance, disregarding valuation and personal meaning in the academic process. Teachers and non-academic staff should be trained to observe the mental health needs of students that can facilitate meaningful learning outcomes and better performance (Tan et.al., 2021). This study emphasizes the critical role of mental health in education, which is a primary focus of psychology.

Psychological assessment is also deemed to be one of the primary functions of Psychologists and allied professionals. Within the realm of professional practice, Psychologists-in-training are expected to be adept in the administration and scoring of psychological tests, answering the referral questions, and making data-driven recommendations. Further, to advance Psychology within the local context, it is important to develop scales for Filipino populations. Such is the case of the paper detailing the scale development of the “Tagasalo” Personality (Tuazon et.al., 2021), revealing two domains that are unique to the Filipino attributes: taking care of others and taking care of family, yielding a Cronbach’s alpha of .87. The term “tagasalo”, which translates to “taking responsibility for others”, is a notable attribute of the Filipinos that makes them distinct from other cultures. Another paper focused on the review of practices in psychological assessment. This mixed methods study, composed of 150 psychometricians, psychologists, and guidance counselors, revealed that the dominant activities of these professionals are focused on psychological report writing, test administration, scoring, and interpretation, administrative work, interviews, and research (Tarroja et.al., 2020). However, some participants highlighted the need for supervision and mentorship, continuous training, standardization of the assessment process, and development of local tools, which can be imbibed within existing Psychology curricula, to better prepare students for what is expected of them in professional practice.

A dominant theme of psychological research in the Philippines is social psychology, evidenced by 3 research papers, roughly comprising 20% of the publications in the Phil. Journal of Psychology, through a qualitative lens. The trend among these qualitative studies highlights specific Filipino contexts and practices. In a phenomenological study conducted among 11 Black Nazarene Devotees and their “panata”, defined as a religious vow where Filipinos make certain sacrifices in the hopes of getting eternal rewards, results reveal that their experiences is anchored on three categories: entry into panata due to feelings of loss, helplessness, and vulnerability; self-transformation as a result of imbibing panata into their daily lives; and the transition from a personal vow to social responsibility (Domingo et.al., 2020). Another social psychology research focused on notions of family planning in a province. This mixed methods study included 400 fathers and mothers, where they were asked about their thoughts on family planning. Results revealed that parents see family planning as favorable and beneficial, since the cost of raising a child goes beyond financial. Further, implementing family planning secures the family’s future. These conceptions are rooted in their own experiences and poverty contexts, which pave the way for research grounded in the social realities of participants (Robles & Baquiano, 2021). A similar study was conducted among human rights workers in areas with armed conflicts explored their experiences and primary motivations. Results revealed that their primary motivation includes altruism, belief in their advocacy and cause, a sense of fulfillment, and strong

identification with their work. They are also motivated by the courage of their communities and the bond they share with its members (Hernandez et. al., 2020). These studies are important in furthering the cause of Filipino psychology, which emphasizes the uniqueness of Filipino experiences, cultural beliefs, and collective behavior (Pe-Pua, 2021), which should be integrated in Psychology curricula.

The bulk of psychological research in the Philippines are found in the area of clinical psychology. This is not surprising considering that a primary focus of Psychology is on mental health (Khatri, 2023; Bohlmeijer & Westerhof, 2021; Levine et. al., 2021). Thus, 80% of the research produced from 2019-2021 are found in this specialization. Nine out of twelve studies focused on substance abuse experiences, interventions and rehabilitation programs while the other three focused on gratitude journaling, psychological well-being of middle-aged Filipinos, and transgender men. In research about substance abuse, perspectives were obtained from barangay officials, family members, and recovering substance abusers, while others focused on evaluating the effectiveness of specific strategies and programs of community interventions in local levels. This is not surprising considering the high rate of substance abuse in the country Based on the Dangerous Drug Boards, the total number of admissions to drug facilities numbered 3,865. Of this number, 3,343 are new admissions while 79 are relapse cases and 443 are outpatient cases (Dangerous Drug Board, 2022). With these substantial numbers, as well as the controversial war against drug by then Pres. Duterte (De Guzman, 2023), it is not surprising that psychological programs were designed and implemented for this critical population.

For barangay officials involved in community- based drug rehabilitation, they see themselves as protectors, facilitators of growth, and partners in recovery while experiencing feelings of frustration. On the other hand, they also find fulfillment, commitment, and personal growth in their role within the local community (Allado, et. all., 2019).

In another study that evaluates the impact of a community-based family intervention, results show that the program was effective since it increased family support and quality of family life. Further, there was a decrease in the reporting of substance use disorder symptoms. Recovering abusers reported feelings of remorse, developing a sense of responsibility, and better communication without the family. Thus, the program had positive impact on the family of recovering substance abusers, which was the purpose of the program (Bunagan et. al., 2019). Another intervention that was seen to have a positive impact on recovering abusers was the utilization of dispositional mindfulness techniques, mediated by their self- efficacy. The use of dispositional mindfulness resulted to development of functional self- beliefs and mastery over accomplishment of tasks (Galacgac & Tarroja, 2019). Another program, called Katatagan Kontra Drogas sa Komunidad, translated to Strength Against Drugs in the Community, was seen to be effective among mild-risk drug users, resulting to moderate effects on dependence symptoms and life skills while posing large effects on drug recovery skills and psychological well-being. However, it was observed that challenges within the community may hamper the positive effects of the program (Bautista & Teng- Calleja, 2021; Hechanova et. al., 2019). Similar programs also resulted to positive effects on overcoming stigma and finding hope and purpose (Cunanan & Yabut, 2019), transition from an addict identity to non- addict identity in the process of identity reconstruction (Santos et. al., 2019), improved life skills and refusal of alcohol (Ochoa et. al., 2019, stress management, rebuilding relationships, and return to daily functioning, facilitated by recovery connections, social support, and recovery-supportive activities (Castillo & Resurreccion, 2019). These research studies on programs and interventions highlight the need for program development instruction in Psychology curricula, notably to address community problems focusing on substance abuse.

Other research in clinical psychology is focused on relevant issues facing Phil. Society. In the narrative analysis of transgender men's video blogs, the following themes emerged: realization of identity, gender dysphoria, coming out, decision to transition, hormone therapy, community engagements, facing challenges, balancing stealth and coming out, and finding advocacy and resolution (Castaneda, 2020). Given issues facing the LGBT community in the Philippines, such studies highlight the unique experiences of this population, with the goal of addressing their needs and advocacy. In dealing with individuals facing

retirement, psychological well-being anchored on positive psychology was found to buffer the negative effects of retirement anxiety (Reyes, 2021). Lastly, a positive psychology intervention, gratitude journaling, was found to have a positive association with positive conflict resolution styles (Dizon, 2020). The amount of research utilizing positive psychology constructs and its effectiveness have led to calls to incorporate it within psychology curricula (Bernardo et. al., 2023).

The role of research in curricular innovations cannot be undermined. New knowledge generated by research can be used to improve curriculum content and modes of learning. Further, research courses as well as experiential learning strategies may enhance better critical thinking skills, problem-solving, and other higher order thinking.

The impact of curricular transformations can also be observed in the crafting and implementation of laws and other legal policies, which have direct contribution to nation-building, which is the ultimate goal of education, completing the process of learning in full-circle.

Phil. Mental Health Law and other relevant legal policies

Several measures have been introduced to professionalize various helping professions, to answer the call for quality interventions by qualified professionals. Among them are Republic Act No. 9258, also known as the Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004 (Dela Cruz & Atienza, 2024), Republic Act No. 10029, also known as the Phil. Psychology Act of 2009 (Reyes, 2023), and just recently, Republic Act 11036, known as the Phil. Mental Health Act of 2014 (Lally et. al., 2019). These laws serve to regulate the practice of the professions by defining the discipline, enumerating the qualifications of practitioners, the functions and services to be rendered by these professionals, and other logistic matters on its delivery and implementation.

The Phil. Mental Health Act of 2014 is the most recent law that highlights the importance of the citizens' well-being and optimal functioning. The author of the law, Sen. Risa Hontiveros, cited this as a victory for this advocacy, citing data from the World Health Organization (WHO), stating that seven Filipinos commit suicide daily, including adolescents (Patag, 2018). The law recognizes and promotes the importance of mental health to citizens, with the following goals (Chua & Nunez, 2021):

1. Endorsing and executing policies, strategies, programs, and regulations;
2. Developing systems addressing psychiatric, neurologic, and psychosocial needs;
3. Protection of rights of those affected;
4. Enhance information campaign on wellness and mental health;
5. Integrating mental health services as a basic care right;
6. And endorsing strategies to promote mental health in various social institutions.

The approval of the mental health law ushers in a new era of prioritizing mental health, alongside physical health. It serves as an important first step in reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness and at the same time, promoting the advocacy for mental health literacy (Shahwan et. al., 2022; Martinez et. al., 2020; Furnham & Swami, 2020). Calls for training for mental health have been introduced, evidenced by the partnership between the Department of Health (DOH) and World Health Organization (WHO) in introducing the 5-year Phil. Council for Mental Health's Health Strategic Framework. The goal of the framework is to promote the basic right of Filipinos to mental health by "implementing policies, enhancing patient navigation and referral pathways, creating a review board, and training media for ethical and responsible reporting of suicide" (Ramirez, 2023). Mental health hotlines were also set up by the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH) to provide 24/7 counseling access, and encouraging various organizations to set up a mental health desk for its employees and health workers in clinical institutions. As of 2022, there are only about three mental health workers for every 100,000 Filipinos, which is not enough to address their needs, especially for those with diagnosis for pathology (De Villa, 2022). Thus, it is crucial that there should be more mental health workers and they are qualified to take on their role of providing services for the benefit of those suffering from a number of disorders, notably depression and anxiety, which are the prevalent conditions

among Filipinos according to the World Health Organization (Alibudbud, 2022; De Villa, 2022; Puyat et. al., 2021; Martinez et. al 2020).

There are a number of mental health professionals in the Philippines, notably psychometricians, counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists. According to the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP), they all have distinctive roles in the delivery of mental health services, as follows (Agbulos, 2024):

Psychometricians are licensed practitioners who have a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. They work in multiple settings and are involved in testing, assessment, and data collection. In the delivery of their services, they are under the supervision of a licensed Psychologist;

Psychologists are licensed professionals who hold a Master's degree in Psychology. They are eligible to conduct counseling, psychotherapy, coaching, debriefing, providing psychosocial support, and other non-medical interventions for optimal psychological functioning of individuals across multiple contexts;

Psychiatrists are medical doctors who are responsible for the client's diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental health conditions. Their roles include management of emotional, mental, and behavioral disorders through psychiatric evaluation, prescribing medication, and related medical treatment;

Guidance counselors hold a master's degree in counseling and help to foster appropriate behavioral change and enhance mental health through counseling interventions. They often address emotional distress, but not within the confines of pathology; and lastly, Life coaches are expected deliver general guidance and support that are not classified to be impaired and severe (PAP, 2022).

These qualifications should be the primary goal of Psychology curricula to ensure that they are producing qualified and productive professionals in taking care of the population's mental health needs. There should be theoretical and conceptual grounding, experiential learning for hands-on practice, and imbibing professionalism and ethics in performing these responsibilities. Educational institutions should ensure that these outcomes are provided for in the Psychology curricula, to guarantee quality services and qualified practitioners for the relevant population and society at large towards nation- building (San Antonio, 2022; Riedel, et. al., 2020; Coulombe, et. al., 2020; CHED, 2017).

Lastly, aligned to the goal to establish a unique Filipino Psychology, there has been a move to design and implement an intervention model for resilience made by Filipinos for Filipinos, named as the Katatagan (Hechanova et.al., 2015). The intervention model is composed of six modules, customized for Filipinos who are survivors of natural calamities. The modules seek to enhance the self- efficacy, functional coping skills, and well-being of Filipino calamity survivors. The model has since been applied to a variety of interventions, notably in substance abuse (Bautista & Teng- Calleja, 2021; Hechanova, 2019). The intervention is anchored on the following principles of Luthar and Cichetti (Hechanova et.al., 2015): promoting a sense of safety, promoting calm, promoting self and community efficacy, connectedness, and instilling hope. In its pilot run, the Katatagan Model was found to be effective in developing positive coping skills and decreasing anxiety and depressive symptoms among college symptoms. It is recommended that the intervention should for collaborations and partnerships with communities to be able to reach out to the intended populations for which the intervention model was developed for.

The Katatagan Model, being a Filipino resilience-driven intervention, should be endorsed and set the precedent for more culturally nuanced interventions for Filipinos. Thus, it is crucial that Psychology majors, in both undergraduate and graduate school levels should be trained in crafting intervention programs that would enable them to conceptualize these kinds of program. This endeavor can lead to more positive societal outcomes. Ultimately, bridging the gap between schools and the public sector should be the ideal educational model, and setting a transformative curriculum may just be the initial step toward attainment of positive mental health outcomes for the country.

CONCLUSION

From a change and innovation perspective, the Psychology programs in the Philippines has undergone significant transformations since the 18th century when it was first offered at the University of Santo Tomas (UST) and the University of the Philippines. The exodus of notable scholars to the United States is one such transformational innovation, especially coming from an historical context where knowledge was subject to gatekeeping by the Spaniards for more than 300 years. The American legacy of establishing free public schools, the landing of the Thomasites, and sharing of American knowledge, including those of Psychology, was something unheard of. If not for this historical transformation, we would not have made such advancements in the field of Psychology in the Philippines. It is important to take note of the historical timeline in order to assess what opportunities lie beyond the present and how to pave the way for more advancements for this specialization that accounts for taking care of mental health of society. Knowing what has transpired, within the context of “history repeating itself” can provide us with insights as to how to further enhance the discipline, better articular outcomes that define the curriculum, and to bridge the gap between schools and industry which is crucial.

From a change- incidental perspective, it began as a single course offering and has flourished to become a degree program in the bachelor’s and graduate school levels. Competencies and outcomes have been defined that informs the teaching pedagogies and other learning activities. From an innovation- structured perspective, the advent of the Covid-19 paved the way for online learning that enforced distance learning; students can learn anytime and anywhere through the use of gadgets and other digital materials. The shift to online learning was a marked transformation from the traditional, classroom set-up where the teacher was the one in charge of learning and students’ academic activities were rooted in inflexible time schedule and a fixed geographical space.

The coming of the Covid- 19 pandemic has also resulted in the transformation of teaching strategies and pedagogies via an online learning set-up. Terminologies such as asynchronous and synchronous became a household name when a decade ago, most did not know these terms existed. The use of technologies such as learning management systems, zoom, google meet, google classrooms, clicker, and open access resources have made learning universal and borderless, affecting the study of Psychology as well.

Psychology programs in the Philippines adapted to the current needs of the time, as defined by a change-existing perspective. Curricular policies and pedagogies were adopted according to what was pervasive in practice. Traditional modes of learning such as lectures were set in place because memorization of facts was prioritized. However, the shift to a learner-centered, outcomes-based approach was an innovative- ideal practice because it focused on the needs of students and what they should be prepared for in the future. The shift from a teacher-centric to a learner-centric modality was surely an ideal perspective because it bridges the gap between education and industry; schools harness the skills of students to be able to meet the demands of industry. Within the same context, industry can collaborate with colleges and universities to synergize skills with industry demands, which was the crux of outcomes-based education. It does not settle with what exists but transcends to “what should exist”. Thus, in the context of identity and vision, the psychology offerings of colleges and universities are aligned to their institutional identity while emergent laws and regulatory policies are forged to contribute to the future of the country within a nation-building context. The impact of educational reforms is not only for the sake of learners and educators but to society-at-large.

Within the context of initiating change, psychology programs in the Philippines adapt to the mandatory regulations of government agencies in charge of education. In research, initial focus on philosophy, education, experimental psychology, and behaviorism have shifted to issues of developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, social psychology, and most especially to indigenous psychology, focusing on current social problems, politics, and governance. In instructional content, we have seen a flourishing of psychological electives and learning strategies that is underlined by the OBE framework; authentic assessments, problem-based learning, project learning, service learning, and inclusion of research, paving the

way for a diverse range of topics that touch on both global and local phenomenon. From an outside-in approach, universities such as Mapua have advocated for outcomes-based education, which was a result of being the first ABET-accredited institution in East Asia. This paved the way for other universities to pursue international accreditation and adoption of outcomes-based education. Further, the introduction of digital education was also spearheaded by Mapua, even before the covid-19 pandemic, which also influenced other schools to follow the same route. This proves that transformations geared toward alternative, futuristic trajectories are likely to be adopted by organizations to ensure growth in a challenging environment. These changes and risks are also underlined by the dichotomy of certainty and uncertainty in change and innovation management. Changes can be predicted on the basis of precedents and earlier mechanisms but one cannot predict the outcome of an innovation.

In response to the growing demand for more mental health practitioners, it is crucial that psychology programs should constantly be monitored and updated. Problem solving is a constant mechanism that educational institutions should utilize. On the other hand, there is a need to reinvent academic and educational processes to make it viable for the future. Administrators fix the current Psychology curricula but future thinkers always find ways of reinventing institutions toward the ideal educational goals. Collaboration with international partners, continuous online education, and utilization of more authentic assessments are only some of the ways by which education, in particular, Psychology curricula, can be reinvented.

The historical timeline of Psychology programs has shown the changes and innovations that were implemented across centuries and decades. From being a philosophical offering, it has been allied with education, social sciences, and as a unique stand-alone disciplinal program in the Philippines. Notable advancements and contributions to literature, research and development, innovation, and practice has been highlighted over decades.

However, the change and innovations in Psychology will not end soon. With online set-ups seemingly becoming a permanent fixture in the Phil. Educational system, there will be more add-ins to this arrangement. Technologies that control integrity in assessment, online trainings like coursera and moocs, and open access will be more accessible to more learners, including those aligned to Psychology.

Robotics can also share the landscape of Psychology, with the presence of AI in certain academic tasks, robots that can approximate human touch in therapy, and the use of robots in certain human functioning. Psychological assessments that are computerized rather than subject to human evaluation, real time psychological evaluation via zoom and other similar technologies, keeping of psychological data and information in cloud storage, for access of mental health professionals even without the benefit of physical distance... these are some of the ways by which Psychology can evolve to Psych Technology.

The future is far-reaching and whatever the mind can conceive, the body can achieve. Such is also the promise of Psychology programs for the future. We create the future that we want to see.

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