

# PERCEPTION OF PARENTS TOWARDS EASING OF COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

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**ABSTRACT:** This qualitative study aimed to investigate parents' perspectives on the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, delving into their experiences, challenges faced, and coping strategies. Utilizing a phenomenological approach, sixteen parents (eight males and eight females) from Barangay Sambag 2, Sitio Palsy, Cebu City, were purposively sampled for in-depth interviews guided by a semi-structured interview guide. The collected data underwent transcription, recording, coding, clustering, and categorization using thematic analysis. The informants' responses revealed twenty-one cluster themes, grouped into seventeen sub-themes, forming eleven emergent themes, and ultimately categorized into three overarching themes. These themes addressed the sub-problems and included Experiences of parents towards easing of COVID-19 restrictions (Opportune Time for Earning, Sense of Freedom, Resume Face to Face), Challenges during the easing of COVID-19 restrictions (Financial Crisis, Heavy Traffic, Unemployment, Inadequate Management), and Coping Mechanisms (Finding ways and means, Trust in God, making ends meet, Observance of Health Protocol). In conclusion, the study highlighted parents' multifaceted perceptions and experiences regarding the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, offering insights that informed recommendations to address the challenges faced by the informants in navigating this period.

**Keywords:** Parent's Perceptions, COVID-19, Easing Restrictions, Qualitative Study, Thematic Analysis

## 1. Introduction

The Coronavirus Disease of 2019, commonly known as COVID-19, has brought a catastrophic global crisis. However, the severity of its effects has varied significantly among nations, with some being quite successful in stopping the disease's spread and averting fatalities (Edouard Mathieu *et al.*, 2020). A consequential number of families have suffered greatly in battling the unseen enemy, making them feel helpless. The COVID-19 outbreak led to the downfall of local and global economies due to the border lockdown and restrictions implemented to contain the virus's spread. People's daily routines were suddenly disturbed, and this big change seemed to have happened almost instantaneously. People were barred from freely riding public utility vehicles, going to the public market to buy fresh goods, spending quality time with their family outside, taking their pets on morning walks, hanging out with friends, and much more. The feeling of not being able to breathe fresh air freely has become a trigger for a lot of negative effects on individuals. The mandatory requirement for everyone to wear face masks and face shields was implemented for safety reasons.

In Japan, even after the state of emergency was lifted, the government urged people of all ages to follow certain precautions: staying away from the "3Cs" (closed spaces, crowded places, and close-contact settings); adopting a "new lifestyle" to stop the infection from spreading; and staying away from the "3Cs" indoors, particularly in daily life, at work, and other public places (Takashima *et al.*). Even in difficult situations, many have persisted by participating in social activities by selecting those that took risks into account or by altering how they were carried out. Yet, communal activities were frequently deemed unimportant and were discontinued, and individual hobbies took center stage.

In the Philippines, parents are the front-liners who have to make sure that the safety of their children is their utmost priority. Most parents felt anxious about what will happen in the future if this pandemic does not subside. Most have strictly enforced their children not to interact with other people as usual due to fears of virus transmission and infection. However, for the household to survive, parents need to make ends meet for food, water, electricity, and other bills that need to be paid. In addition to their already heavy burdens, the pandemic has abruptly transitioned the educational set-up to online learning, prompting them to purchase smartphones and subscribe to internet service providers, or at the very least, mobile data packages to support their children's continuing education.

With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, parents and the general public seem torn between these developments. Some people think that this helps them lessen the task at home because students are now back to what was normal before. They can allow their kids to go and have fun outside to distract themselves from what they were feeling at the moment. They can also freely and safely travel back and forth from work and earn a living for the family. On the other hand, others have fully adjusted to their lives in the pandemic, and the easing of restrictions may

actually cause another wave of new COVID cases. Or, they have fully embraced the adjustments they have made to their lives in the pandemic, and the thought of transitioning once more to the post-pandemic can be quite anxiety-provoking. Although there were studies that talked about perceptions about COVID-19, these were mainly focused on the effects, causes, advantages, and disadvantages during the pandemic. It can be observed that there are only a few studies or articles to be found concerning the slow and steady transition to the easing of restrictions towards the post-pandemic. Thus, this study will address such gaps and will specifically focus on parents' perceptions of easing COVID-19 restrictions.

## 2. Theoretical Background

This study is grounded in the Family Systems Theory proposed by Kerr and Bowen (1988), supported by Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Bio-ecological Theory of Development, and Ryan and Deci's (1985) Self-Determination Theory.

The Family Systems Theory by Kerr and Bowen is a conceptual framework for understanding human behavior within the family unit. It defines the family as a complex social system where members interact, influencing each other's behavior. This theory provides a comprehensive approach to understanding human behavior, focusing on interactions between family members as well as the family's context. In this theory, a family is viewed as a complete system, where each member's actions can impact the other members and can lead to changes in the overall family dynamics. The parents have a crucial role in leading their children towards their desired objectives, and are responsible for their children's actions, which can influence the entire family. Family interactions are vital in understanding individual behavior and emotions, according to the Family Systems Theory. This theory also emphasizes the importance of assessing the nature of a relationship. In addition, the theory influences day-to-day lives by emphasizing that when a member faces a crisis, other family members should help each other to overcome their dilemmas. (Benjamin & Wendel, 2016).

An individual's functioning, according to a family systems perspective, is influenced less by intrapsychic factors and more by the system(s) they are a part of. These system pushes and pulls include competing emotional demands, role definitions and expectations, boundary and hierarchy issues, coalitions and collusions, loyalty conflicts, family and institutional culture and belief systems, double binds, project management issues, and more. Furthermore, a system's self-correcting and self-enforcing feedback loops can either help or hurt pathology or health, breakdown, or resilience. Clarifying the fundamental contributions of systems theory itself is necessary for a complete comprehension of family systems theory. Family system theory will allow parents to act according to what they perceive in their environment's behavior.

Concerning this study, the COVID-19 crisis may affect the family's daily functioning and disrupt the established balance in the household, which could later lead to poorer parenting practices and, eventually, poorer child functioning in the long run. With the gradual relaxation of the

COVID-19 restrictions, parents again monitor the environment for its potential effects that could again change the entirety of the family dynamics which were re-established amid the pandemic.

One of the supporting theories upon which this study is anchored is Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory which proposes a transactional system that influences personal factors such as parents' self-efficacy cognition, parenting practices, and family networks. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is an aspect that changes in response to changing demands such as personal development and parenting skill acquisition. High levels of self-efficacy are thought to be associated with high levels of motivation to do well, the probability of commencing challenging tasks, effort investment, and determination to face adversity.

In accordance with Social Cognitive Theory, there exists a reciprocal deterministic relationship among an individual's environment, behavior, and potential interventions aimed at behavior change. All three of these factors interact and interact with one another in a dynamic manner (Bandura, 1977a, 1986, 2001). Due to its emphasis on the interaction between internal factors such as thinking and symbolic processing (e.g., attention, memory, and motivation) and external determinants (e.g., rewards and punishments) in shaping behavior, the Social Cognitive Theory is often characterized as a bridge between behavioral and cognitive learning theories. Self-efficacy, or people's confidence in their capacity to do an activity, is a key idea in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977b). The relationship between outcome expectations (the degree to which people feel their conduct will result in certain outcomes) and efficacy expectations (the degree to which they believe they can bring about the specific consequence) determines behaviors (Bandura, 1977b, 1997).

These characteristics are associated with competent task fulfillment and reaching the intended goal. In the case of childrearing and family matters, parenting self-efficacy influences children setting in ways to contribute to their beneficial development through their abilities to retain good parenting techniques when facing difficulty through time plays a vital impact in the methods of doing so.

Another theory that supports this study is Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological System Theory (1994). He proposed the 'Ecological Systems Theory' based on the dynamic interactions that the environment has on the developing child. This theory suggests that a child's growth occurs within an ecological system composed of various settings or systems that interact to shape the child's development into adulthood. The central idea of this theory is that a child's development is significantly influenced by various factors throughout their life. Bronfenbrenner suggested that a child's surroundings consist of concentric circles with them at the center, highlighting this aspect of his concept. The closer the layers are to the child, the more a system influences a child's experiences. This indicates that a child's development is affected by various contexts, settings, or ecologies, such as family, peers, school, communities, and socio-cultural belief systems.

This theory explains the multiple face-to-face environments or settings within a person's microsystem. Individuals can create connections that can influence the interaction within the family, and this theory analyzes people's lives. Parents must explain to their children what is happening in the environment, especially during a pandemic when there is a need for social distancing and a shift in how people interact, which may impact the family's ability to function. Although restrictions are gradually being lifted, parents are still responsible for determining if their children's surroundings are safe.

Additionally, the Self Determination Theory by Ryan & Deci is another theory that supports the current study. This theory proposes that three basic innate psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) must be fulfilled for optimal human functioning. When individuals have support for these needs, they are intrinsically motivated to pursue their goals because it is engaging, rewarding, and fascinating. Conversely, if these psychological needs are not met or are blocked, it can lead to decreased well-being and growth.

In terms of student learning, autonomy and competence relate to freedom of choice, feeling effective while learning, and relatedness to the teacher and the class. The fulfillment of these needs is crucial for learning. Furthermore, this theory highlights how social and cultural factors can either facilitate or undermine people's sense of volition and initiative.

The theory also distinguishes between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, with the former being driven by external sources and rewards (such as grades, rewards, and external admiration), and the latter coming from within and based on personal values, interests, and sense of morality. Overall, the Self Determination Theory provides a meta-theory for framing motivational studies and highlights the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in promoting optimal human functioning.

The Self Determination Theory also emphasizes the importance of autonomy in motivation. The autonomy-supportive parenting style is linked to higher levels of intrinsic motivation and better academic performance in children (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). During the pandemic, parents who adopted this parenting style may have provided their children with choices and opportunities for self-direction, such as allowing them to choose their own activities or giving them the responsibility of completing certain household tasks. This may have helped children to feel a sense of control and ownership over their lives during a time of uncertainty and change.

Furthermore, the Self-Determination Theory posits that social and cultural factors contribute to shaping an individual's sense of volition and initiative. Thus, the cultural beliefs and values of a family may influence their response to the pandemic and the easing of restrictions. For instance, families who prioritize individualism may have a different approach to coping with the pandemic compared to those who prioritize collectivism. Understanding the cultural context of families can

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help in providing appropriate support and interventions to help them cope during these challenging times.

At the individual differences level, several factors including uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, long-term orientation, masculinity, empathic concern, personal distress, reactance, and general conspiracy theory beliefs have been found to significantly influence attitudes towards easing COVID-19 restrictions (Gerace *et al.*, 2022). Understanding these factors can help inform the development of effective health messaging and initiatives, particularly as countries and states consider opening borders. One potential resilience factor that can mitigate the negative psychological effects of government restrictions is perceived efficacy, including coping response efficacy based on protection motivation theory. Perceptions of governmental actions as effective can promote life satisfaction and support protective behavior, while a positive appraisal of public health policies can foster a positive social climate. Trust, beliefs in efficacy, and feelings of personal risk, including fear of contagion and death, have all been found to contribute to compliance with recommended preventive health behaviors, including COVID-19 restrictions (Mækela *et al.*, 2020).

Empathy is a useful factor for understanding responses to restrictions. Empathy encompasses the ability to comprehend the perspectives of others, especially regarding their negative experiences or challenges, and involves feeling concerned and caring towards them (Gerace *et al.*, 2020). One of the measures taken to combat the recent COVID-19 epidemic has been the closure of schools. The ensuing home isolation and restricted activity of the entire family have increased stress among parents. While children struggle with their routines and family expectations, parents, who are already worried due to job insecurity and difficulties in making ends meet, have an additional task of constant child supervision. Even though it is commonly believed that children are completely safe at home, they are sometimes at a greater risk of violence from parents and family members due to the dynamic of power and control interplay.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents experience burnout due to high levels of parenting-related stress and limited resources available, which may increase the risk of parental malpractices and child abuse and neglect (Griffith, 2020). Stressors such as economic stress, marital conflicts, intimate partner violence, physical and mental health concerns, intensified relationships between child and parents, and homeschooling challenges are associated with an increase in child maltreatment (Wu & Xu, 2020). One or both parents losing a job is found to be a significant risk factor for the maltreatment of children (Lawson *et al.*, 2020). The increased stress of parents can affect parent-child relationships, which may increase the likelihood of using harsh parenting methods and the risk of potential child abuse (Chung *et al.*, 2020). Negative strategies used by parents are associated with negative outcomes related to a child's sleep, behavior, games, and mental health (Oliveira *et al.*, 2021). It has been found that the potential for increased child abuse is associated with parental anxiety and depressive symptoms and decreases with parental support and perceived control during the pandemic (Brown *et al.*, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown was put into place to stop its spread, which abruptly altered peoples' daily routines. Despite the modifications, not every individual goes through the same alterations as the others. However, things including their jobs, families, health, and personality attributes affected how they were able to handle the initial crises. This experience caused them to do things differently to adjust and keep their families safe. They may not like the mandated protocols, but they have no choice but to accept the truth. A lockdown may be inconvenient for some, but it is the only way to help slow the spread of the virus and keep everyone safe.

The sudden onset of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown measures resulted in tense circumstances, as indicated in studies by Flesia *et al.* (2020) and Petzold *et al.* (2020). This study aims to investigate how different personality traits affect individuals' perception of stressful situations, drawing on stress theory. According to Vollrath (2001), people may perceive a stressful situation differently depending on their personality. The transaction theory of stress and coping (Lazarus and Folkman, 1987) guides this study, emphasizing the importance of how individuals view the situation rather than the stressor itself. Individuals initially assess whether a situation is relevant to their well-being before focusing on potential solutions, and this process of primary assessment and coping relies on individual resources and dispositions, including personality and situational circumstances.

People changed their behavior during the lockdown, engaging in activities such as using social media, watching TV and movies, playing games, and reading books, as well as doing domestic chores, to pass the time and cope with the stay-at-home order (Statista, 2020; Watson, 2020). However, not everyone was equally affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as different individuals had different reactions to the situation and various governments implemented different policies. Some people took precautions to reduce their risk of contracting COVID-19 (Wang *et al.*, 2020), while others experienced heightened anxiety, stress, or increased alcohol consumption (Ahmed, Ahmed, Alim, *et al.*, 2020). These diverse reactions suggest that personality may be a critical factor in how people deal with the pandemic.

Furthermore, as COVID-19 restrictions ease, parents will face another challenge. Given the uncertainty of the pandemic, their parenting self-efficacy will play a crucial role in their ability to successfully fulfill their parenting roles during the slow but steady transition towards the post-pandemic period.

Personality is defined by an individual's distinct behavioral and thought patterns in response to their environment and surroundings (Crider *et al.*, 1983). One of the most established models for personality traits is the five-factor model, which includes extraversion, agreeableness, the three Cs (cognitivism, neuroticism, and openness; McCrae & Costa Jr., 2003). Studies have shown that individuals with higher levels of extraversion, agreeableness, and openness tend to avoid contagious diseases more than those who exhibit these traits less frequently (Mortensen *et al.*, 2010).

Real-world interactions occur within a dynamic system of characteristics that form a person's mind (Donnellan & Robins, 2010). In 2020, governments worldwide implemented measures to lessen the impact and spread of COVID-19, resulting in significant regulation of people's lives. However, opinions on these measures have been conflicting, resulting in varying rates of adoption and adherence to such limits. Understanding why some individuals were more disposed to follow regulations such as wearing masks and staying home alone could be influenced by personality traits that affect how people perceive things. The easiest way to understand personality traits is through the lens of accounting. The Big Five personality traits, which include sociability, neuroticism, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and agreeableness, are thought to account for individual differences in compliance with regulations. These traits capture individual variances in a wide range of personality traits. Some of these traits can serve as significant indicators of adherence to COVID-19 government regulations. Firstly, neuroticism is a personality trait that may accurately reflect people's propensity to avoid risk (Jonason & Sherman, 2020), which could influence neurotic individuals to follow laws that boost their sense of security. Secondly, agreeable individuals are typically considerate of others and are prosocial in character (Wilkowski, Robinson, & Meier, 2006). Therefore, those who are agreeable may comply because doing so protects other people. Thirdly, conscientious individuals strive to avoid germs and lead a disciplined life (McRae & Costa, 2008). The COVID-19 situation could prompt individuals with this personality type to be more compliant in order to prevent infection. Moreover, studies have shown that conscientious individuals tend to visit a relatively small number of places regularly, according to their personality and spatial behavior (Ai, Liu, & Zhao, 2019). Therefore, some restrictions, such as isolation, may not be as disruptive for them. In contrast, extroverted individuals tend to visit more places in a day, and isolation could be particularly challenging for them.

Individual variances in people's perceptions of compliance that we take into account include situations. Although personality qualities are linked to how people see circumstances (Jonason and Sherman, 2020; Serfass & Sherman, 2013), in this article we analyze the direct role of perceptions in accounting for personality traits and different compliance levels between people. Instead of being a component of a broader system, compliance, it may be how one assesses the personality perceptible predicted pattern of behavior, and current circumstances that indicate whether they will or won't cooperate. Several situational factors include. To understand why some people comply or do not, perspectives may be important. Individuals may follow the rules because (1) they believe they have an obligation or duty to do so considering how difficult it is to follow them and (2) they believe the situation to be unfavorable or adversarial, which calls for action to prevent the virus's risks. In contrast, if (3) people believe that there are possibilities for having sex, and (4) they believe that the government's rules and the virus's existence are lies, then they could be less likely to comply.



The ongoing pandemic requires supporting children and adolescents who are dealing with bereavement and issues related to parental unemployment or loss of household income. It is also crucial to monitor the mental health status of young people in the long term and examine how prolonged school closures, strict social distancing measures, and the pandemic itself impact the well-being of children and adolescents (Herbert et al., 2020). In a study by Han et al. (2020), five prerequisites for easing COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions were identified: knowledge of infection status, community engagement, adequate public health capacity, adequate health-system capacity, and border controls. While replicating the same measures may not be feasible or beneficial in different countries due to varying socioeconomic contexts, countries can consider policy alternatives and novel solutions developed by other countries and adjust them based on their domestic circumstances and resources. It is essential to note that developing empathetic concern for a person in need, by understanding their perspective, leads to a motivation to assist them. Therefore, those who are more likely to consider others' situations, even if different from their own, and experience empathetic concern, are more likely to want to help vulnerable individuals by adhering to restrictions (Gerace et al., 2020)

### 3. Objective of the Study

This study focused on investigating parents' perspectives on the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions in Cebu City, delving into their experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms during this phase.

### 4. Methodology

This section presents the research design, the research environment, research participants, research instruments, and research procedures.

#### 4.1. Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design, specifically a phenomenological research approach. This method was chosen because the goal of phenomenology is to describe the meaning of a particular phenomenon both in terms of what was experienced and how it was experienced (Teherani et al., 2015). By using the phenomenological approach, the researcher focused on exploring the perceptions of parents towards the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

#### 4.2. Research Environment

This study was conducted in Sitio Palsy, Barangay Sambag 2, Cebu City. This Sitio Palsy is an urban area; its population, as determined by the 2020 Census, was 12,173. This represented 1.26% of the total population of Cebu City. Sambag II is situated at approximately 10.3059, 123.8910. It can easily be accessed by taking a cab and even public transportation because Sitio Palsy is located in Cebu City. There are also a lot of apartments, malls, and schools nearby. The usual occupation of the people living there are construction workers and also there are a lot of vendors selling food and beverage and also there is a lot of neighborhood sundry stores.

### 4.3. Research Informants

The informants required for this study are parents of students who have experienced the COVID-19 pandemic and are now transitioning into the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. Participation of these informants will be voluntary, and they must agree to the provided consent before proceeding with the actual interview. The informants will consist of 8 males and 8 females and will be selected to answer open-ended questions prepared by the researchers. The informants' educational attainment, occupation, and age range will not be specified.

### 4.4. Research Instruments

To collect the necessary data for this study, the researchers prepared and constructed a semi-structured interview questionnaire with open-ended questions and with the possibility of follow-up questions. The constructed questionnaire was composed of 16-item open-ended questions. In line with this, researchers were able to adhere to and collect data that integrates the experiences of the parents.

### 4.5. Research Procedures

This section discussed the presentation of the data collection and analysis, ethical considerations, the trustworthiness of the study, credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability of the study as initiated.

#### 4.5.1. Data Collection

To conduct this study, the researchers first sought permission and approval by sending a transmittal letter to the barangay officials of Sitio Palsy, Barangay Sambag 2, Cebu City, through their Barangay Captain. The letter contained the nature, purpose, and necessary details and procedures for the study. Once the barangay captain approved the request, the researchers approached prospective informants and explained the nature and objectives of the study. They also discussed the confidentiality clause of the study and distributed the informed consent form for the participants to sign.

The informants were encouraged to provide honest answers and additional inputs if possible. Due to the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, the researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with the informants and took notes of their responses. If necessary, the researchers may also utilize online platforms such as Google Meet and Zoom, depending on the circumstances. After collecting and analyzing all the data, the researchers thanked and provided a small token of appreciation to the informants.

#### 4.5.2. Data Analysis

The researchers utilized thematic analysis to analyze the data collected from the informant interviews. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that involves identifying and reporting recurring patterns in a data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The researchers familiarized themselves with the interview recordings, took notes on relevant information, and summarized

the data for coding, theme creation, and translation from vernacular to English. The transcript was then reviewed by the researchers to ensure data accuracy and comprehensive findings.

## 5. Results and Discussion

This chapter summarizes the findings gathered from participant interviews and data analysis using thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to analyze the collected data and determine the results of the study.

This qualitative study relied on a comprehensive understanding of the transcribed responses. For every main informant's transcribed response by comprehensively reading transcripts to identify the overall sense of its content coverage. The significant statements were properly encoded with their designed number of responses and informant number for efficient tracing. There was a total of 138 significant statements that represented the Perceptions of Parents towards Easing of Covid-19 Restrictions.

The researcher developed formulated meanings for each of the 138 significant statements extracted from the transcripts. 138 coded formulated meanings provided a clear explanation of the informant's experiences. The formulated that shared the same patterns of ideas and structure were grouped. These common groups of formulated meanings were categorized as cluster themes. There were 21 cluster themes developed. The cluster was then improved and regrouped into sub-themes, which resulted in the merging of two or more cluster themes. The merging of clusters of themes resulted in 17 sub-themes. Then, the 17 sub-themes were clustered to form the major themes known as emergent themes. 10 emergent themes represented the major themes that provide the meaning to the study's three (3) sub-problems.

After a generation of thorough and time-consuming formation of the core meaning using thematic analysis by Clark and Braun (2006), twenty (20) cluster themes were generated and reorganized into sixteen (16) sub-themes which were further separated into eleven (11) major themes known as emergent themes. The emergent themes were categorized into four (3) main points that provide meaning to the study's sub-problems. The following are the overall themes with emergent themes:

### I. Experiences towards easing of the COVID-19 Restrictions

- a) Opportune Time for Earning
- b) Sense of Freedom
- c) Resume Face to Face

### II. Challenges Parents

- a) Financial Crisis
- b) Heavy Traffic
- c) Unemployment
- d) Inadequate Management

### III. Coping Mechanisms of the participant's Challenges During the Easing of Covid-19 Restrictions

- a) Finding ways and means
- b) Trust in God
- c) Making ends meet
- d) Observance of Health Protocol

The themes were created to describe the study's answers to the questions. Each of the three (3) main themes with different emergent themes are discussed here.

#### I. Experiences towards easing of the COVID-19 Restrictions

The themes constructed with main themes provided descriptions of the experiences of informants towards easing of the Covid-19 restrictions.

The following are the four (4) themes developed to describe the responses of the study's key informants to sub-problem number 1:

##### a) Opportune Time for Earning

This theme entails that since the restrictions of COVID-19 have lessened meaning, new opportunities to earn money are now starting to open up to those people whose is in urgent need of more income to better sustain their family.

The informant 2 is being asked about what is different about his life right now that that the restrictions have loosened, he answered:

*Ang kalainan during covid, limited mn ang atoang pangwarta, limited atong sideline, limited atong source of income, especially sa among field of work, moengage mig different type of people so kato nga time covid, minus-minus jd sya ug income, di jd sya income generating tan.awn katong covid. So diperensya nya karn kay niluag na sya, nibalik na sya sa normal, ninindot na ang pampangwarta tapos ningkumpyansa na pd ang mga taw. (The Difference during Covid-19 is that we have limited sources of income, and limited sidelines, especially in our field of work where we need to engage to different types of people. So, at that time during COVID, the income was a lot less and wasn't really a very income-generating time. So the difference is now that it has loosened, it's now back to normal, earning money is much easier and the people can now rest easy.)*

Informant 5 was asked about the difference in life right now that the restrictions have already loosened. He answered:

*Lahi karun kay maka kita nata kwarta og trabaho unya nana tai income. (There is a difference now because we can already earn money and look for a job, we already have income)*

According to the responses from the informants, upon easing the restriction, there is a greater chance of being hired, particularly for those who are seeking employment since there will now be more opportunities and new job openings.

This theme is related to the Self Determination Theory by Ryan & Deci, which focuses on how social and cultural factors can affect people's sense of volition and initiative. Wu & Xu (2020) found that stressors such as economic stress, marital conflicts, intimate personal violence, and physical and mental health concerns can lead to an increase in child maltreatment, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, being a competent parent and providing a safe environment for children is crucial for their well-being and future opportunities, including job opportunities. As the restrictions are gradually being lifted, parents still have a responsibility to ensure that their children's surroundings are safe.

#### b) Sense of Freedom

This theme describes that people have now felt a sense of freedom that they didn't feel before due to the strict policies that requires them to only stay at home and they can only go out if they are granted with permission.

The informant 2 is being asked about what is different about his life right now that that the restrictions have loosened, he answered:

*Ang kalahian? Ah nindot na e inom-inom aris gawas, wanay mobadlong ba. Wanay sap mag roaming. Di naman sad ni apil og curfew kay hapit naman sad ni senyor. (The difference? It's okay now to drink outside, no one could scold me, no more SAP roaming around. There are no more curfews here since we're almost in senior age.)*

Informant 1 also added that:

*Maka gawas gawas na tanan, maka laag na intawon. (Everyone can go out and wander outside)*

According to these responses, the informant's experience with the easing of Covid-19 restrictions has given them lots of freedom in different aspects but most especially with regard to going out and also with other opportunities such as paving the way to earn more income. Parents have felt and experienced that it is now slowly but surely going back to the normal standards in which people can freely go out and go to any places without being restricted.

This theme is in agreement with the Family System Theory by Kerr and Bowen, which explains human behavior by focusing on interactions among family members and the family's contexts. The theory emphasizes the importance of understanding how families function as a unit and how individual family members' actions and behaviors affect the family system.

### c) **Resume Face to Face**

This theme describes that now that the restrictions have lessened the freedom to go out, it also coming back then the fare means that since the restriction has lessened then the face-to-face classes will now resume. Student can now go back to the way it was, where they are not confined to their own houses.

Informant 15 is being asked about what is different about his life right now that the restrictions have lessened, he answered:

*Kuan, nalipay, na naa nay, balik nang face to face, balik nas trabaho, maka sulod natas establishment. (I was happy! Face to face is back. We're back to our work. And we can now enter any establishments again.)*

Then informant 8 added:

*Daghan ug biktima sa covid. Lipay lang ko kay niluag ng covid ni balik ng face to face sa mga bata. (There are many victims of covid. I'm just happy because the covid is easing up and children are back to face to face.)*

According to the responses, the informants are glad that face-to-face classes have resumed. The reason for this is that students who were unable to enroll in online classes due to financial difficulties can now continue their education. Parents are also pleased that their children can now attend classes physically. This theme is consistent with the Self Determination Theory by Ryan & Deci, which focuses on how social and cultural factors can facilitate or undermine a person's sense of volition and initiative. Motivation is one of the contexts that enable a person to act, and it focuses on an individual's positive tendencies that can trigger a person to move towards growth. The three core needs that facilitate growth are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. With the resumption of face-to-face classes, physical interactions and cultural factors can start to stimulate the students and parents' growth as individuals.

## II. **Challenges Met by the Parents**

The themes constructed with main themes provided descriptions of the challenges met by the informants.

The following are the four (4) themes developed to describe the responses of the study's key informants to sub-problem number 2:

### a) **Financial Crisis**

The theme states that despite the fact that Covid-19 restriction has lessened, the informants continue to face difficulties, one of which is the ongoing financial crisis, which is also a major issue in the area. The ongoing problem has made it difficult for the informants to meet their daily needs.

The informant 14 was being asked the about the challenges they have met during the easing of covid-19 restrictions. He answered:

*Finacial gyud, kay ni balik na ang face to face, diba ang face to face kay dagko mam jud tog gasto kaysa sa modular gyud.* (Financial, because face to face classes are back and it's more expensive that the modular.)

Informant 16 added:

*Kwarta ragyud akong problema wamay problema akong balay, wabay, wapa nasira... oh nasunog man diria, mao nay problema kayo.* (Money is really my main problem. I don't have problems with my house; it's just that my house is still wide open. Yes, there was a fire burn here, and that's the only thing that worries me.)

Informant 2 also answered:

*In general, challenges jd nat ang kawad.on jd, dapat unta tagaan unta ug importansya sa atong gobyerno ang paghatag ug panginabuhian sa mga pobre, specially kita naam n jd kita sa kapobre altho nagskwela ta , atong ginikana naglisud pd silage earn para pambayad sa atong tuition so unta makit.an unta nas gobyerno .tagaan unta nlag nindot ug mga resources ang mga pobre na makaeearn ug sapat, sapat paras ppamilya, sapat para pamskwela sa mga anak ug sapat pd paras mga needs sa mga nanarbaho.* (In general, the real challenge is deprivation. the government should prioritize providing job opportunities to those less fortunate people. Especially, even if we can afford to go to school but our parents are still struggling to earn the money to pay for the tuition. So, I hope the government will notice that problem and I hope the government will provide resources for the less fortunate to earn more that can sustain their family, education and the needs of those who are working.)

Informant 3 added:

*Ang challenge nko kay pangwarta rajud kay lisud, oo financial, mangitag pangwarta kay nay mga requirements, unsaon panang palitonon dha.* (The challenge for me is really how to earn more because it's hard nowadays to make ends meet. To earn money, there are so many requirements and other things to buy)

According to these responses, the informants' main problem is financial crisis, despite the fact that the covid-19 has lessened most of the informants' struggle to provide for their family's needs. To lessen the burden, informants will try to conserve and save money, especially now that face-to-face classes are back.

This theme corresponds to Kerr and Bowen's Family System Theory that explains about the understanding of human behavior that focuses on interactions between family members as well as the family's context(s). The theory also influences day-to-day lives it emphasizes that when a member is faced with a crisis, other members would help each other's dilemma (Kerr & Bowen, 1988)". Family system theory will allow parents to act according to what they perceive in their environment's behavior. This states that even though the restrictions have lessened, the rise of the cost for the day-to-day needs is one of the challenges the informants have experienced. In relation to the theory the financial crisis is that there are interactions that would need to have a sufficient amount of money, for example is some gatherings, occasions and events.

#### b.) Heavy Traffic

During the covid-19, the roads were spacious because there were only a few vehicles and people who would travel and wander outside, which was an advantage for most drivers because it allowed them to travel quickly. However, as the restrictions was slowly lifted, the number of vehicles on the road also started to plummet, which became the new struggle for today since roads became more congested and also the jeepney fare increased dramatically.

The informant 2 was being asked about the challenges they have met during the easing of the covid restrictions. He answered:

*Traffic jud as in. kanang kuan mag lisod natag sakay noon kay daghan nang taw nang gawas nya gamay rang sakyanan, waka balik ang uban tanan sakyanan na mga jeep nga karaaan. (The traffic is very heavy, we are having difficulties in using the transportation vehicles the reason of which is that there's already too much people going out but there's only a small number of transport vehicles available, since some of the old jeepneys are now not available)*

Informant 13 added:

*Mogawas ko kadlawn man gud nya mouli ko gabie nagud. Wala koy comment ana. Aw traffic ana nuon nay daghan. (I'm going out early in the morning and will be home at night, so I have no comment. In terms of traffic, yes, there is a lot.)*

Informant 14 added:

*Sa asa man sa katung naluag na? Ah kanang kuan gyud, daghan oy, usa na sa kanang trapik ang dan, nagnagdrive baya kog kanang nagduty baya kog armoded car nya trapik na kaayo nya dugay ta maabot satong destinasyon mao na siya, mao na akong nasinati pud sa diri sa cebu city pud nga niluag na ang ... oh. (To what? To the lossening? Well, a lot. It resulted to heavy traffic. I actually drove an armoured car and since it was traffic, getting to my destination takes a lot of time)*



Informant 16 also said:

*Wala ra... mas nindto tong lockdown kay hawan kayng dan, karun kay okay rasad, bahalag trapik. (Nothing really, but it was nicer when we were in lockdown because all the roads are clear. But now it's still fine even if it's traffic.)*

According to these responses, now that the restrictions have loosened, there has been an increase in the number of vehicles on the road. This has resulted in heavy traffic since there are no longer restrictions that inhibit people from going outside.

This coincides with the increased stress of parents, which can affect parent-child relationships and may increase the likelihood of the use of harsh parenting methods and the risk of potential child abuse (Chung et al., 2020). This explains that due to the increase in the number of vehicles allowed on the road and the expensive fare, it can result in stress for both students and parents. Heavy traffic can result in being delayed in going to school or work, and since the fare is already expensive, parents may choose to walk from home to school and vice versa.

### c.) Unemployment

This theme suggests that one of the challenges they encountered is being unemployed and also the lack of opportunities for the less fortunate to land a good job and also obtain resources that will allow them to meet their basic needs.

The informant 2 was being asked about the challenges you have experienced that made you feel a lot of emotions that were very hard for you to handle. He answered:

*In general, challenges jd nat ang kawad.on jd, dapat unta tagaan unta ug importansya sa atong gobyerno ang paghatag ug panginabuhian sa mga pobre, specially kita naam n jd kita sa kapobre altho nagskwela ta , atong ginikana naglisud pd silage earn para pambayad sa atong tuition so unta makit.an unta nas gobyerno. Tagaan unta nlag nindot ug mga resources ang mga pobre na makaeearn ug sapat, sapat paras ppamilya, sapat para pamskwela sa mga anak ug sapat pd paras mga needs sa mga nanarbaho. (In general, the real challenge is deprivation. the government should prioritize providing job opportunities to those less fortunate people. Especially, even if we can afford to go to school but our parents are still struggling to earn the money to pay for the tuition. So I hope the government will notice that problem and I hope the government will provide resources for the less fortunate to earn more that can sustain their family, education and the needs of those who are working.)*

Informant 2 added:

*Actually wala mn jd anto nafeell sa city kanang nihatag sila ug like what I said hatagan ug pangwarta or source of income sa mga pobre, akong Nakita mn pd nanningkamot mn sd ang*

*mga Cebuano kung unsaon pagsurvive daily, iyaiya na lang jd.* (Actually I haven't felt anything with regard to our city like offering job opportunities or sources of income to those less fortunate. But what ive seen is that the Cebuano's are trying hard just to survive our day-to-day life. To each his own)

According to the responses of the informants, even though the Covid-19 restrictions have been eased, some people in the area are still having difficulties earning money, possibly due to not having completed their education or, worse, not having had the privilege of going to school.

This theme goes along with Self Determination Theory by Ryan & Deci, this theory focuses on how social and cultural factors facilitate or undermine people's sense of volition and initiative.,

This theme explains that according to the informants, despite the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, there is still a lack of opportunities to earn money, especially for the out-of-school youth and underprivileged individuals in the area. This corresponds to Self Determination Theory by Ryan & Deci, which highlights the importance of social and cultural factors in facilitating or hindering people's sense of volition and initiative. In this case, the lack of job opportunities can hinder individuals' motivation to take initiative in improving their financial situation. However, the theory also emphasizes the positive tendencies that can trigger a person to move towards growth, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Thus, even though the lack of job opportunities is a challenge, the people in the area still strive to overcome it and find ways to thrive.

#### **d.) Inadequate Management**

Cooperating and managing the people is important in a barangay as they are the ones who keep the peace and harmony in the community. Updating and checking the people would make them feel that they were being validated. But for some, the people are not their priority as they choose the people; they want help, which may cause chaos.

The informant 2 was being asked about the challenges you have experienced that made you feel a lot of emotions that were very hard for you to handle. He answered:

*Sa akoo lang jud sa barangay mo coordinate lang ghapon sila ba kong bisag luag na.* (For me with regards to the barangay they should still coordinate with us and help is even if the Covid-19 Restrictions has already loosened up)

Informant 1 added:

*Kuan sa ako nga pamaagi bisag laug na mag sge lang ta silag update ba ang uban dre ang sentro mo tabang mn jud ang mga sentro kay mo adto mn jud ta. Sa barangay ang uban mn ang taw sa barangay lisod kay doulon. Bisag naa gae koy igsoun dha di gani kaayu ko halus mo doul kay kong mo ingon silag dili, Dili jud. Mo ingon silag huwat lang mo mo ana jud silag huwat*

*lang mo. Naa mn say maabot pero kasagaran dugay lang jud. Lisod sad kaayu og kita kamiy mangusog nya sila dili, kay sila jud bayay naa sa katungdanan.* (For me my way is that even though the restrictions has already loosened the barangay should still give updates, same thing in the medical center they are willing to help. But in our barangay some of the people there are very hard to approach, even me I have a sibling working in the barangay but still I can't directly approach him/her because if they said that "it's a no then it's a no". and if they say that "just wait" then just wait there will be some relief goods coming but its way past overdue before the relief goods arrive. And it's not like we can insist about that since they are the ones in charge)

In addition Informant 3 added:

*Extra bitaw kos brngy nga tigkuhag basura, wa mn, wa mn nilage atiman sa nko nadigrasya akong kamot, nasangit akong kamot sa sin, naa mn gani tambal halos nmn gani dimo hatag ang barangay nga amahan man untas tanan.* (I was working there in the barangay as an extra garbage collector, but they didn't take care of me when my hand was wounded by a metal object from the roof. Yeah, there's some medicine but I have to wait for too long to receive it.)

Informant 6 added:

*Lalis mga silingan og barangay, barangay mai ga dag patay feel nako bahala syag mo ingun basta tinoud na ako, mao rana, mga silingan wala mn, barangay dae akong kalagotan.* (The neighbours and barangay are having a quarrel, I have a gut feeling that the barangay is the focal of this all, I don't care what they say, as long as I'm true, that's it, I have no qualms with my neighbors but the barangay is really what im mad about.)

Informant 7 added:

*Lack of cooperation sa mga taw lack of ayuda murag naa sila ge pili pero wa man tai mahimo kay ilaha mana mga doul sa luwag, ilaha mana.* (Lack of cooperation of the people lack of aid it seems like they choose, we cannot do anything about it because only those who have relations with them can get the benefits.)

According to the informants' responses, they were dissatisfied with the services provided by the barangay officials, as they showed favoritism towards particular groups of people. There was a lack of coordination and management in the area, and people felt like their complaints were not being validated. This theme aligns with Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological System theory (1994), which states that a child's development is influenced by many different contexts, settings, or ecologies, such as family, peers, school, communities, and socio-cultural belief systems.

This theme explains that depending on the environment of a family, it directly influences the different aspects of the lives in each family members. In relation to that, since the local

government or the barangay hall in that place didn't function as expected, it can lead to negative effects on the lives of the residents in that area.

### III. Coping Mechanisms of the participant's challenges during the easing of Covid-19 Restrictions

The themes constructed with main themes provided descriptions of the challenges met by the informants.

The following are the four (4) themes developed to describe the responses of the study's key informants to sub-problem number 3:

#### a.) Finding Ways and Means

The topic suggests that in order to cope with those challenges, the informants had to find their own ways and means just to provide for their family and for themselves. Because even if the restrictions have lessened, that doesn't mean that those people who are already less fortunate would be able to immediately grab job opportunities or anything that can help them financially.

The informant 3 was being asked about how they cope with the challenges that they have experienced during the easing of restrictions. He answered:

*Mangita jd tag pangwarta maayu, di jid ta patanga2 dhas kalibutan kay kung patangatanga ta na matay jd ka way hinungdan, buhi mn gani nang oud nga way kamot way tiil kita pa nga tau nga kompleto. (We will look for more ways to earn, don't be a fool and just wait for what will happen. Because if you'll just stay there and be passive then you'll die for nothing. Even the worm can live without a hand and feet how much more us when we have the complete set of hands and feet)*

Informant 4 added:

*Kuan ramn kanang iya iya mi og paningkamot. Samot na karon nga ni luag na wanay ayuda. (Just work hard and to each his own, especially now that the restrictions has loosened meaning there's no relief goods anymore.)*

In addition, Informant 8 added:

*Ningkamot para makakaon wala ko nagpasagad sa mga bata. Karon wala koy tarbaho. (Will do everything just to have food even if I don't have work now I did not neglect my children.)*

Also, Informant 10 added:

*Ang sa katung una wala man ko nagsalig nila kay naningkamot man jud ko kay mag salig ta nila dili man ta kakaon kay kasaban pata sa karun naningkamot jud ko mabuhi akong pamilya.* (The first is I wasn't depending on them I strive on my own if we depend on them we will not able to eat because they will sculled us now I am working hard I order for my family to survive)

According to the informants' responses, since the restrictions are loosening, working for a living is their only way to survive, especially since the government no longer assists them. Finding sources of income is difficult for the informants, but they manage to survive daily. Their families would starve if they relied solely on the government. This theme is consistent with Self-Determination Theory by Ryan and Deci, which explains that motivation is one of the contexts that enable a person to act. The theory focuses on an individual's positive tendencies that can trigger growth, and the three core needs that facilitate growth are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Although individual variances in people's perceptions of compliance are taken into account, situations play a significant role. While personality qualities are linked to how people see circumstances (Jonason and Sherman, 2020; Serfass & Sherman, 2013), this context analyzes the direct role of perceptions in accounting for personality trait differences in compliance levels between people. Compliance, rather than being a component of a broader system, is the focus.

During trying times, it is important to maintain motivation to provide for one's family. Based on the theory, these challenging situations can serve as motivation to move forward and grow as a person.

#### **b.) Trust in God**

The theme states one of the ways to cope with the challenges that the informants experienced is that to have faith in God.

The informant 15 was being asked about how they cope with the challenges that they have experienced during the easing of restrictions. She answered:

*Awh, kuan, ang una gyud, pag ampo sa ginood, ang pagsalig niya nga malayo sa anang sakit nga naabot diri aning kalibutana... pagpaningkamot lang jud, paningkamot, pag ampo, pagsalig sa ginoo* (First of all, just pray to God and have faith that God will protect us from the sickness that came into this world. Just strive and pray to God all the time.)

Informant 13 added that:

*Same ra gihapon akong tubag ganina. Eampo, wala kay laing ampoan ang Ginoo ragyud.* (My answer is still the same as before. Pray, there is no one else to pray but to God)

According to the informant's responses, despite feeling hopeless at times, they still have faith that there is a higher power looking out for them. This belief has helped them cope with the pandemic and the easing of restrictions.

This theme coincides with the Self Determination Theory of Ryan & Deci (2000), which focuses on how social and cultural factors facilitate or undermine people's sense of volition and initiative. Motivation is one of the contexts that enable a person to act. This focuses on the individual's positive tendencies that can trigger a person to move towards growth, and the three core needs that facilitate growth are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Some people changed their behavior as a result of the lockout, increasing the frequency of using social media, watching TV and movies, playing games, and reading books occupying oneself with domestic chores and other things to pass the time when under a stay-at-home order is a way to cope with the lockdown (Hall, 2020; Statista, 2020; Watson, 2020). Those who have experienced the pandemic period and the easing of the restrictions were able to survive due to their faith which served as the motivation to push through against those trying times and also to how they have responded to the environment that they were in at that time (Cheng et al., 2021; Han et al., 2020).

### c.) Making Ends Meet

The theme states that since the restriction has lessened, it doesn't mean that their financial problems have decreased. Since there was still that problem, the only solution to that is to somehow make ways just to survive the day-to-day struggle.

Informant 2 was being asked about how they coped with the challenges that were experienced during the easing of restrictions. He answered:

*Actually wala mn jd anto nafeell sa city kanang nihatag sila ug like what I said hatagan ug pangwarta or source of income sa mga pobre, akong Nakita mn pd nanningkamot mn sd ang mga Cebuano kung unsaon pagsurvive daily, iyaiya na lang jd. (Actually I haven't felt anything with regard to our city when it comes to offering job opportunities or provide sources of income to those less fortunate. But what ive seen is that the Cebuano's are trying hard just to survive our day-to-day life. To each his own)*

Informant 3 answered that:

*Mangita lang kog pamaagi sama anang mamasura, no choice mn, sidelines, bitay mn di ta katrabaho pila ka semana antos lng ta ang imprtante limpyo. (I will find a way like collecting garbage, because there's no other choice, doing some sidelines. Even if we can't work for a week but still endure the important things is its clean)*

According to the informant's response, to cope with the financial problems that came along with the easing of restrictions, they solved their problems by taking it one step at a time. This means

that they focused on the most immediate problem and solved it one by one. They believed that surviving for just one day means that they have to live for another day. As time passes and the circumstances become better, they will eventually overcome the challenges that they faced. This approach aligns with the concept of Problem-Solving Theory, which suggests that individuals can cope with stress and challenges by breaking down the problem into smaller, more manageable parts and addressing each part separately (D'Zurilla & Goldfried, 1971).

This theme aligns with the principles of Family Systems Theory by Kerr and Bowen, which emphasizes the interdependence of family members and how they influence each other's behavior and reactions to stressors (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The theory suggests that when one member of the family is facing a crisis or challenge, other members can provide support and help to cope with the situation. In the context of the easing of restrictions, families may need to work together and support each other to adapt to the changes and challenges brought about by the pandemic. Even small contributions from each family member can lead to more significant changes and positive outcomes.

#### d.) Observance of Health Protocol

This theme states that to cope with the challenges, one must still adhere to the protocols that were issued by the government. Even if the restrictions have been lifted. There are still some protocols that need to be followed appropriately.

Informant 5 was being asked in how to cope with the challenges that was experienced during the easing of covid-19 restrictions. He answered:

*Mao to ang first mag amping sa lawas atiman sa mga bata, inom og vitamins para dili dali ma takdan kaduha dili pagawson mga bata striktohon para sa safety sa pamilya og ma disciplina sla.* (That's it. First is to take extra care of your body, look after the children, take vitamins so that they will not get infected easily, do not allow the children to go outside, be strict for the family's safety and also to discipline them.)

Then informant 9 added that:

*Wala, basta akua kay tuman raman jud ko sa atung syudad wala raman sad dawad ra follow tanan.* (Nothing, ill just follow the rules that were mandated by the city.)

According to the responses that were stated by the informants, in order to cope with the challenges that were experienced during the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. Is to follow the protocols strictly and also to discipline their kids now, that there are no more restrictions that inhibit a kid from playing outside and there are no more curfews.

"The sudden onset of the pandemic, as well as the subsequent lockdown measures, resulted in a tense circumstance (e.g., Flesia *et al.*, 2020; Petzold *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, this study draws on stress theory to investigate differences in perception caused by various personality traits. Depending on their personality, people may perceive a stressful situation differently (Vollrath 2001). This resulted in a stricter approach by parents in dealing with family matters, particularly within the household."

This theme conforms to Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, which explains that transactional system that influences personal factors such as parents' self-efficacy cognition, parenting practices, and family networks. In the case of childrearing and family matters, parenting self-efficacy influences children setting in ways to contribute to their beneficial development through their abilities to retain good parenting techniques when facing difficulty through time plays a vital impact in the methods of doing so. Since disciplining a children can only be done if the parent is efficient and really has the determination and motivation in dealing with family matters.

## 6. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine parents' perceptions regarding the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in Cebu City, specifically exploring their experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms during this period.

The study identified a total of eleven (11) emergent themes derived from informant responses, which were then categorized into three (3) overarching themes addressing sub-problems. These emergent themes were discerned from the key informants' significant statements, specifically focusing on their experiences related to the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. In exploring the informants' experiences regarding the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, the overarching theme, "Experiences of the Informants on Easing COVID-19 Restrictions," encapsulates three (3) primary themes: "Opportune Time for Earning," "Sense of Freedom," and "Resume Face to Face." Examining the challenges faced by the informants during the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, the theme "Challenges Met by Informants" unfolds into four (4) overarching themes: "Financial Crisis," "Heavy Traffic," "Unemployment," and "Inadequate Management." When delving into the coping mechanisms employed by the informants during the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, the overarching theme, "Coping Mechanisms of the Informants During the Easing of COVID-19 Restrictions," encompasses four (4) identified themes: "Finding Ways and Means," "Trust in God," "Making Ends Meet," and "Observance of Health Protocol."

These findings are limited to the perspectives of parents in Metro Cebu regarding the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. It's important to note that the study focuses on highly urbanized areas, and the results may differ for parents in provinces or barangays that are less densely populated.



Based on the study's findings, recommendations are proposed to address financial struggles in the community. Despite eased restrictions, the impact persists, especially in terms of financial difficulties. To alleviate this, the barangay should revive a program training residents in small-scale product creation for income generation. Simultaneously, recognizing ongoing job challenges, a Job Fair can connect residents with diverse employment opportunities, while government-sponsored entrepreneurship programs can empower those without higher education. Addressing the rising number of out-of-school youth requires an educational awareness program, counteracting parental disinterest in education. Financial assistance programs, based on fair criteria, can ensure deserving students have access to education, broadening their opportunities for better employment. This comprehensive approach aims to uplift the community and foster sustainable development.

The researcher suggests several prospective research topics for future exploration, including the examination of factors influencing youth motivation in completing their education, an investigation into the impacts of being an out-of-school youth, and an exploration of strategies to overcome financial difficulties.

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