Chapter 1: The Problem and its Background

Introduction

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization identified COVID-19 as a pandemic (WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020, 2020). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple quarantines around the world had occurred and had changed people’s accustomed lives. Many schools have adopted online methods of teaching while most employees were asked to work from home and participate in more virtual meetings.

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting poor people the hardest, uncovering imbalances in getting access to health care. In the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte announced on March 16, 2020 that the entire Luzon archipelago will be on enhanced community quarantine (Memorandum from the Executive Secretary On Community Quarantine Over the Entire Luzon and Further Guidelines for the Management of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation, 2020). During the early phase of the pandemic in the Philippines, one-fourth of respondents reported moderate-to-severe anxiety and one-sixth reported moderate-to-severe depression and psychological impact (Tee, et al., 2020). Numerous individuals are arrested for violations related to lockdown and curfew orders, in reaction to the pandemic. Many people have also lost their jobs due to lockdowns shuttering thousands of businesses.

The purpose of this study is to raise awareness regarding the circumstances the pandemic has fostered. By simulating the COVID-19 pandemic as visual novel game, users will be able to apply their knowledge about the situation and turn it into real time actions. Simulations facilitate fast learning by providing immediate feedback on the outcomes of their decisions. The visual novel game will assist in equipping users with realistic knowledge so that they can better respond to real-life situations during the COVID-19 pandemic.