

**THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SANITATION CODES IN DAVAO CITY:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES****COLITA, JUDITH N.**University of Southeastern Philippines College of Development Management Graduate Program
Mintal Campus, Davao City**ABSTRACT**

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in Davao City, Philippines, has brought attention to the significance of sanitary regulations. This study tries to pinpoint the difficulties and opportunities the epidemic has presented for Davao City's sanitation infrastructure. Data was collected from participants from various sectors using qualitative methodologies. The findings demonstrated that the pandemic had a significant impact on waste management, the upkeep of public restrooms, and the application of sanitary laws. The issue was made worse by a lack of adequate resources, including money and labor. The epidemic did, however, present chances for advancement, including as the deployment of alternative waste management strategies, the implementation of tougher monitoring systems, and the promotion of hygienic standards.

Keywords:

Sanitation codes, COVID-19, waste management, hygiene, public health

INTRODUCTION

The current environmental crisis in Davao City, Philippines, serves as a reminder of how crucial sanitation rules are to preserving the health and safety of the general populace. The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has made it more difficult for Davao City to manage garbage, maintain public restrooms, and put sanitation laws into practice (Reyes et al., 2019, Philippine Statistics Authority, 2018). The population's health and wellbeing are seriously threatened by these issues, particularly during pandemics.

This paper tries to outline the potential and difficulties the pandemic presented for Davao City's sanitation infrastructure. The goal of the study is to determine the scope of the issue, the key influences on it, and any viable solutions. In order to address the city's sanitation issues both during and after the epidemic, this study aims to offer policymakers, sanitation practitioners, and the general public information and recommendations.

Guide Questions:

1. What specific challenges have the respondents identified in the sanitation system in Davao City during the pandemic, and how have these challenges impacted public health and safety?
2. In what ways has the pandemic exposed the weaknesses and limitations of the current sanitation codes and practices in Davao City, and what opportunities have emerged to address these issues?
3. How have the respondents identified the effects of the reduced budget for sanitation in Davao City during the pandemic, and what measures can be taken to mitigate its impact on sanitation and waste management?
4. What are the recommended changes or interventions that should be made by the government or sanitation practitioners to address the challenges identified by the study respondents regarding waste management and public hygiene practices during and after the pandemic?
5. How can the implementation and enforcement of the sanitation codes in Davao City be strengthened to improve compliance and ensure public health and safety?

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METHOD

In order to collect information from participants from various sectors, including local government officials, community leaders, health specialists, and waste management personnel, this study used qualitative approaches, specifically semi-structured interviews. The investigation was carried out in Davao City, Philippines' Mindanao region. The pandemic's effects on the sanitation system, including the difficulties, chances, and prospective remedies, were the main topics of the interview questions. Creswell (2014) asserts that qualitative research techniques, such as semi-structured interviews, are useful for exploring and comprehending complicated phenomena, particularly those that occur in social contexts. Researchers can provide consistent and relevant interpretations of the data by using content analysis during the data analysis process.

Some data collection was done thru actual interview and thru online, the interviews were written down, and subjected to content analysis. The themes of the study questions were used to code, group, and analyze the data. Torrentira, M. (2020)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study identified several findings regarding the impact of COVID-19 on sanitation codes in Davao City. These findings are summarized below:

1. Inadequate waste management: The pandemic has amplified the existing challenges in waste management, such as the limited capacity to collect and dispose of waste, inadequate waste segregation, and low compliance with established guidelines. These challenges have significant implications for public health and the environment, as infectious waste can increase the risk of disease transmission and the degradation of natural resources.
2. Reduced budget for sanitation: The pandemic has disrupted the regular operations of the sanitation system in Davao City, resulting in reduced funding for sanitation and hygiene. The reduced budget has led to inadequate toilet facilities, waste management equipment, and cleaning supplies for public areas. As a result, the sanitation services' quality and efficiency have decreased, negatively affecting the public's health and well-being.
3. Maintenance of public comfort rooms: The pandemic has limited the public's access to sanitation facilities, particularly public comfort rooms. Most public comfort rooms have been closed due to the risk of transmission, while other facilities have limited operating hours and minimal maintenance, leading to unhygienic conditions and an increased risk of disease transmission.
4. Implementation of sanitation codes: The implementation of sanitation codes during the pandemic has been challenging due to reduced manpower, limited resources, and a lack of public cooperation. This has resulted in inadequate monitoring and enforcement of the codes, leading to poor compliance and public health risks.

The study identified several potential solutions to address the above-mentioned findings, including deploying alternative waste management solutions, promoting personal hygiene practices, strengthening monitoring systems, and collaborating between the government and the public.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that the pandemic has highlighted the need for an effective and updated sanitation code in Davao City to ensure public health and safety during and after the pandemic. The study recommends incorporating the potential solutions identified in this study, such as deploying alternative waste management solutions, promoting personal hygiene practices, and strengthening the implementation and enforcement of sanitation codes. The study also recommends continued collaboration between the government and the public in addressing the sanitation challenges faced by the city.

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