

## **ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE DECISION- MAKING OF LOCAL CHIEF EXECUTIVES IN BILIRAN PROVINCE, PHILIPPINES**

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### **Abstract**

Social media is one of the tools that most people rely for information and has become an effective venue for ordinary citizens to express their concerns and persuade government officials to take immediate actions to vital concerns. Further, this study is concerned with the role and influence of social media in influencing the decision-making of local chief executives on the following standpoints: local economy, emergency and disaster response, and civic engagements. The seven-step Colaizzi method was used to analyze the data from the eight Local Chief Executives (LCEs) in the Province of Biliran. Results of the study show that majority of the LCEs consider social media as partner of local governments' development and as well as the aversion in some aspects of local governance.

Keywords – influence of social media, local chief executives, decision-making

### **Introduction**

Social Media is one of the influential tools that most of us rely for information. It becomes a dichotomy that persuades users to be actively involved in societal issues through posting of opinion, dispositions and even frustrations online. In recent years, social media becomes an effective platform which impacts political leaders to compel with the demands of their constituents. Communications theorist Marshall McLuhan recognized the idea that social media is a precursor for a wider "global village" where decisions can be made based on mere prejudice of online users. The prominence of social media has been particularly highlighted in politics, economics, communications, etc., given the fact that the use of social networking sites (Facebook) and microblogging services (twitter) are believed to have the potential of positively influencing political and societal participation (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan, 2012).

Chilton and Schaffner (2002) and Cap and Okulska (2013) argued that social media has demonstrated a very powerful impact on politics and its scope as it continues to broaden as the actors on the political stage discover new manners in which this valuable tool can sway opinions, trends, options, and most importantly, votes. June

(2011) of the University of Pittsburgh in the United States disclosed the resonant impact of social media in the deliberate changes and subsequent revamping of the political environment: first, is an increase in public participation; second, communication between the government and citizens has changed from indirect communication to direct contact; and lastly, the citizenry as a whole become the main force of public opinion, unlike in the past, when the government and a few opinion leaders could dominate public discourse. Most of the political leaders in the Philippines are deeply inclined and conscious with public opinion particularly with online comments which subsequently becomes the trend of policy formulation. Lately, governments' in both first world and developing nations espoused an "open-sourced" or "crowd-sourced" approach where in most cases, the government gradually embrace citizens' ideas via social media in the policy proposal-making and decision stages. Hence, engages the wider public for policy and decision-making processes where political figures and policy-makers will likely consider.

However, the University of Copenhagen and Lund University (2017) worries that social media may affect democratic countries in both positive and negative ways. Positively, social media may increase the level of political information, awareness, and participation of citizens and grant smaller parties a better chance at reaching votes. It may also increase the degree of cohesion among social and marginalized groups. Negatively, for many of the same reasons, social media may be a fertile ground for the radicalization of public opinion, for the unbridled circulation of false information, radical propaganda and extremist mobilization. The local governments on this case are the frontrunners of imbibing a culture of responsiveness to the demands of the public through responsible utilization of social media platforms.

Bannister and Connolly (2012) and Bertot, Jaeger and Grimes (2012) believed that social media in the government has been associated with openness, transparency and even anti-corruption. However, irresponsiveness of the government is prevalent in most cases, expectations of receptiveness have mostly proven unrealistic despite of the government's utilization of social media as a tool to engage (Mergel,2012). Current literature tends to emphasize that high level of social media maturity in government are concomitant with the ability to enhance information dissemination, timely responsiveness to the public and at later stages, to engage with them (Lee and Kwak, 2012).

This study is concerned with the impact and role of social media in influencing the decision-making of local chief executives on the following standpoints: local economy, emergency and disaster response, and civic engagements.

### **Research Problem**

The study aims to determine the role and influence of social media in the decision-making of the local chief executives in their respective political jurisdiction.

Specifically, this research undertaking will endeavor to answer the following specific questions to wit:

1. What is the role of social media in yielding decisions with the following:
  - 1.1. Economic;
  - 1.2. Civic engagements/ social services programs
  - 1.3. Safety and Security; and
  - 1.4. Disaster risk mitigation and response.
2. What is the impact of social media in local governance?

### **Literature Review**

This section provides various studies and literature which serve as strong foundations on the present study. Further, this also serves as a guide of the proponent in the research process.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) highly emphasized the role of the media in promoting good governance which are facilitated by a strong and independent media scape within the society and in this case the social media which presently becomes a major catalyst in shaping the country's public opinion and likely influenced public governance of sovereign nations at a wider scale. Moreover, social media emanates good governance in multilateral manner which implies the ways through citizens and groups in a society voice their interests, mediate their differences, and exercise their legal rights and obligations. Further, good governance includes notions of greater participation by civil society in decision making, instituting the rule of law, anti-corruption, transparency, accountability, poverty reduction and human rights. In addition, the United Nations Resolution Number 2542 (XXIV) or the Declaration on Social Progress and Development in 1969 foresaw media to be more global and integrated in every fabric of the society, such declaration later becomes the fundamental cornerstone of sovereign nations' constitutions recognizing the supposed larger than life role of mass media in decades to come. Thus suggests the role of disseminating information for the purpose of making individuals aware of changes in society as a whole; and mobilization of public opinion, at both national and international levels, in support of the principles and objectives of social progress and development.

Moreover, the 1987 Philippine constitution recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation building (Article II. Section 24: 1987 Philippine Constitution). Along with this development, social media has introduced new opportunities for the government to, interact with and engage the public in matters of public interests, including its policy making processes; create awareness of its programs and policies; and receive feedback (DICT,n.d.). Yang and Holzer (2006) expanded on the argument that governments should seek to improve citizen participation as a means for increasing public trust, focusing on the role of performance measurement processes in affecting this potential. The Guardian, a news outfit based in England in their article entitled, *Does social media empower*

*local communities?* suggests that citizens would use social media to force more interesting and responsive channels of decision-making rather than waiting for local authorities to change on their own accord, it further revives local democracy and concentrate more humble ways to help communities. Warren, Sulaiman and Jaafar (2014) indicated that citizen engagement in social media had a positive impact on the propensity to trust, and specifically on trust in the institutions using social media for engagement purposes, in effect to citizens' commitment and receptiveness.

Holzer & Kim (2008); Schorr & Stevens (2011); Arnstein (1969) claimed that through social media platforms and citizen engagement in government operations can precisely stimulate government workers to engage more directly in their work and can contribute to a "*performance oriented dialogue*" between public administrators and their communities that can improve services through practice-informed feedback and put the power back into the hands of the citizens. Moreover, social media allows citizens to consume, produce, distribute and comment on news and political information (Gil de Zuniga, Molyneux & Zheng, 2014; Pew,2014; & Weeks & Holbert,2013)

In the past, politicians and governing bodies had no alternative but to use mass media to communicate with the public. And due to the concentration of the news media into a limited number of organizations with access controlled by professional journalists, citizens had few opportunities to contribute to the triangulated sphere of communications between politicians, journalists and citizens. But in recent years, an actively engaged citizenry has increasingly come to be considered to the move from top-down command government to devolved, co-productive governance (Firmstone & Coleman, 2015). It is argued that social media represent citizens in real time, unfiltered and direct way (Dekker & Melenhorst, 2014). The democratization of government policies which includes the enhance participation of the citizenry and direct involvement to state matter paved way for civilians to engage more on social media as a platform to communicate directly to the government. Polunsky (2014) argued that government is considered transparent when the public can see how decisions are being made. Beyond simple transparency, government can become interactive when the public has ways of participating in decision-making as it occurs. Such precedence have raised awareness to public influencers to collectively consider the possibility of more engagement coming from the public through valuable use of social media, this development if taken positively can be a vantage point to further mobilize their political machinery through digital convergence. Turcotte et.l (2015) added that social media are inherently social and bring people together digitally, which provides new opportunities for opinion leaders to influence in their networks.

The influence and power of social media cannot be categorically questioned considering the number of Filipinos using their social networking accounts and the amount of time spent online. The Philippine Daily Inquirer in their 20 March 2018 article, reported that 47 million Filipinos spend more time on social media sites than

anyone else in the world with roughly four hours and 17 minutes a day on Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter. The increasing pace of users made social media a platform for governance and connectivity in diverse geopolitical and economic landscape. Rutgers University in their online article entitled, *How social media is changing public administrations* stressed out that irresponsiveness on the networks only worsens the situation for government entities that are plagued by negative stigma. In addition, implementing a more proactive social media strategy creates a great opportunity to change perception. Replying or acknowledging messages on Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms shows effort. In addition, the Rutgers University College of Public Administration outlined *several avenues that local government can use social media to the LGU's advantage: posting alerts and updates to severe weather or other emergencies; public service announcements aimed at raising awareness of key issues that affects residents; major assemblies using an official social media page where some municipalities not only in the United States but also in selected locations in the Philippines offer live-streaming or videos of council meetings where it can be accessed on YouTube or shared as links on social sites.*

Kang & Gearhart (2010); Krueathep (2006) and Schorr & Stevens (2011) claimed that social media hold great promise for advancing local governments' transactions with citizens through ease of access, greater transparency, streamlining of communication and improvement of government service delivery. This can be manifested in the subsequent implementation of local governments' initiative in reaching the people thorough online platform, the responsiveness, however on this case remains an improbable matter that need to be reconciled.

Nabatchi & Mergel (2010) cognizant with Kang & Gearhan (2010) et.,al. emphasized that governments engagement with citizens online in real-time formats and through other interactive social media efforts have been shown to have citizens who are deeply engrossed in their communities. In the countryside where economic developments are protracted and civic engagements are rare, provides an impeccable opportunity to convey nuisances through social media platforms and online corroboration of policies and methods to sway both the public and the government to pool resources for greater engagement.

The above studies outlined, shows unison on the question of the influence of social media in the decision-making of local chief executives in Biliran province to their respective local economies, civic engagements and social programs, safety and security and disaster preparedness and mitigation strategies.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This section presents the theory that have been reviewed and considered to provide enlightenment to the research question posed and to be addressed in the study.

Cognitive engagement theory proposes that an individual's political participation is as a result of his education, access to information, political interest, political knowledge

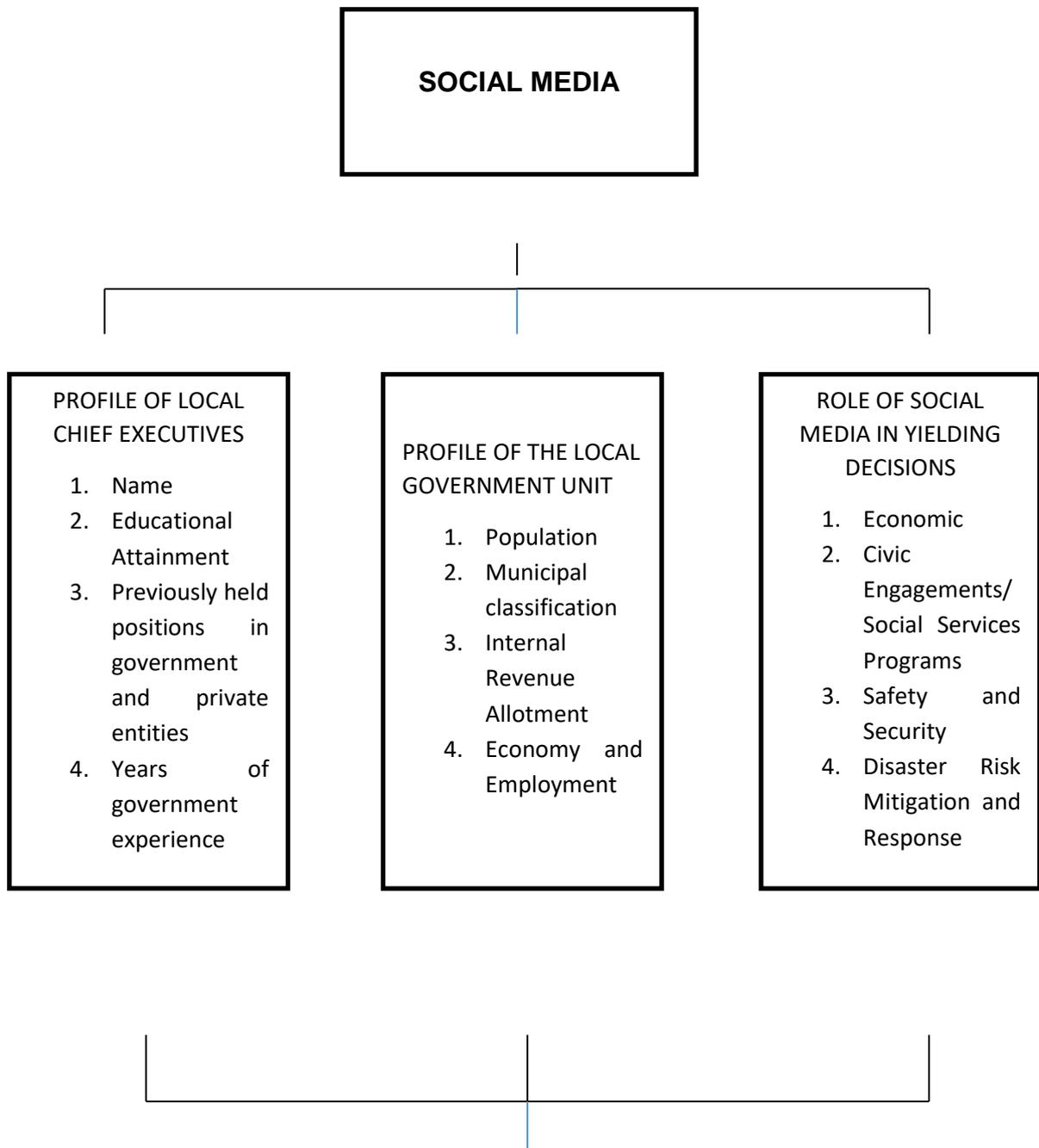
and policy satisfaction (Inglehart,1977) and (Pattie & Seyd,2004). Hence, the theory is based on the assumption that the more educated citizens a society have, the better informed they will be and in the long run the more they will participate in politics to show their satisfaction with government policies. The lesser the cost of

information access, the more citizens consume information from the media and the higher of political knowledge and interest among citizens which further leads to increase in political information and participation (M.C.W., 2010). This theory manifests the activities of stakeholders into deliberate and direct engagement to their political leaders through employing social media as a tool to express immediate concerns.

On the other hand, Altercasting theory is a tactic for persuading people by forcing them in a social role, so they will be inclined to behave according to that role. Core assumption of this theory is when a person accepts a certain social role ; a number of social pressures are brought to bear to insure that the role is enacted. The social environment expects the person behave in a manner that is consistent with the role. It is likewise downplayed with one of the basic forms of altercasting called Manded Casting which means that we (stakeholders) tell people who they are and what they are supposed to do, by making an existing role salient, by placing other in a particular role, by asking a people to play a role (Pratkanis,2000). In this case, the local chief executives are modulated and bounded by their respective obligations as public servants. The social media, on this regard, is the stimulus that compels them to dispose their authority in accord with their mandates.

Lastly, Social Exchange theory which mainly uses cost-benefit framework and comparison of alternatives to explain how human beings communicate with each other, how they form relationships and bonds, and how communities are formed through communication exchanges (Homans,1958). In addition, the theory states that individuals engage in behaviors they find rewarding and avoid behaviors that have too high a cost. In other words, all social behavior is based on each actor's subjective assessment of the cost-benefit of contributing to a social exchange. In cognizant to peoples participation in social media as a platform for immediate reforms. Homans (1958) posited some of the reasons that will likely associate our engagement: an expected gain in reputation and influence on others; an anticipated reciprocity on the part of others; altruism; and direct reward. This theory might enlighten some of the paradoxical grounds of social media users' immense involvement in societal phenomena.

## Conceptual Framework



**IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN LOCAL  
GOVERNANCE**

**Figure 1. Framework**

Figure 1 presents the framework of the study. It is based on the presentation of the research questions in the problem statement. It gives definite understanding of the readers' and researches' about the concept of the study.

### **Methodology**

This study utilizes qualitative phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is a research method that study on the lived experience of the people to understand and discover a certain phenomenon or things in our society. According to Van Manen (1990), phenomenological study provides perceptions on the reality and should not develop a theory.

Further, the phenomenological data analysis using Collaizi's strategy will be utilized. The following steps represent Collaizi process for phenomenological data analysis (cited in Sanders,2003; Speziale & Carpenter,2007).

Each transcript should be read and re-read in order to obtain a general sense about the whole content; for each transcript, significant statements that pertain to the phenomenon under the study should be extracted. These statements must be recorded on a separate sheet noting their pages and lines numbers; meanings should be formulated from these significant statements; the formulated meaning should be sorted into categories, clusters of themes, and themes; the findings of the study should be integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study; the fundamental structure of the phenomenon should be described; and finally, validation of the findings should be sought from the research participants to compare the researcher's descriptive results with their experiences.

### **Results and Discussion**

In reference to the research question posed by the researcher, five (5) variables were included: economic; civic engagements/social services programs; safety and security; disaster risk, mitigation and response; and impact of social media in local governance.

The economic variable presents six (6) emergent themes out from seven (7) cluster themes; civic engagement/ social services variable exhibits three (3) emergent themes out from eight (8) cluster themes; safety and security variable shows three (3) emergent themes out from four (4) cluster themes; disaster risk, mitigation and response provides two (2) emergent themes out from four (4) cluster themes; and

the impact of social media in local governance exhibits four (4) emergent themes out from seven (7) cluster themes.

In summary, in five (5) research variables, it produced eighteen (18) emergent themes, thirty (30) cluster themes out from one hundred forty two (142) formulated meanings and one hundred sixty four (164) significant statements verbally manifested by the eight (8) local chief executives during the entire research inquiry.

## **1. Role and Influence of Social Media in Local Government's Thriving Economy**

In the economic perspective, most of the Local Chief Executives' (LCEs') collectively agreed with the immense influence of social media in their respective territorial unit, in a thriving economy like Biliran province, information gate-way becomes evident in the daily lives of both ordinary residents' of the province, public and elected government officials. Hence, social media becomes an indicator for socio-economic development and basis for decision-making. Respondent LCE 2 noted:

*"Facebook here is just used for information dissemination... economically it is one of the sources of information that affects the decision-making of both the public and the local officials..." (Respondent LCE 2; Page Number 2; Line Number 20-21)*

### **1.1. First Emergent Theme (Economy): "Social Media Promotes Socio-economic Development to Biliran's Local Government Units"**

The first emergent theme considers social media which promotes socio-economic development among local government units' in the province. Biliran province famously known as an island paradise adjacent to neighboring provinces of mainland Leyte, famous to its white-sand beaches, waterfalls and exceptional geographical features which becomes an outstanding feature for promotion by the local government in persuading local and foreign tourists to visit , the advent of social media further boost the tourism industry of the province. Respondent LCE 8 from his/her own verbal manifestations:

*"... sa development sa Maripipi promotion, labi na sa amoang Island of Sambawan, na discover ang Sambawan pina-agi sa social media kay kung wala na (social media) hinay..." (Respondent LCE 8; Page 2; Line 54-55)*

*(Translation: Maripipi's development and promotion can be attributed to the social media's help and promotion which led to the discovery of the island of Sambawan)*

In addition LCE 8 further manifests that social media becomes a viable partner of the local government to further enforce its tourism campaign. He/she added:

*"... yes through social media, ang information kasi madali... mas kusog ang information drive sa tourism dako kaayong tabang sa amoang tourism..." (Respondent LCE 8; Page 2; Line 54-55)*

*(Translation: In social media, information is much faster, social media strengthens the LGU's tourism information campaign, such a big help)*

Moreover, LCE 1 also attributed to the social media's help in establishing now a famous landmark for his/her town, thus, generating jobs and opportunities to locals. He/she uttered that:

*" Social media helped me, like you know what, one thing. Tingnan mo yung sea park (restaurant located near the port area which offers varieties of sea food dishes) ko dyan, ang social media ang nag promote yan... kung economic lang ang pinag-uusapan natin so far, medyo gumaganda" (Respondent LCE 1; Page 2; Line 42-44 & 49-50)*

*(Translation: Social media helped me promote our sea park restaurant, economically, everything is doing well)*

Lastly, LCE 8 further contributed to the numerous arrivals of tourists in his/her town, he/she attributed it to the ever-increasing social media presence despite of his/her conventional leadership approach, he/she added:

*" I am not fond of like what I did in my town like posting in social media or what... sila (tourists) talaga nagpunta dito na ginawang tourist destination yung munisipyo ko... yung restaurant na seapark, talagang yan an nag boom ngayon, nakilala talaga yung town namin..." (Respondent LCE 1; Page 2; Line 54-55;57-59)*

*(Translation: I am not fond of posting in social media, I let the tourists come to our place and let them discover it at first-hand, our seapark made our town far more recognized.)*

This emergent theme finds support to the ideals of the social exchange theory which support, how human beings further communicate, bond, form relationship and how communities are shaped through various means (Homans,1958). In this case, social media helped local government units' develop a sense of identity and how a network of individuals' through virtual space, exchange information to further advocate LGUs' cause for sustainable development.

The said emergent theme can be partially attributed to Turcotte, et.al (2015) which manifests that social media are inherently social and bring people together digitally. Local Chief Executives' (LCEs') responses did not reiterate with their first-hand involvement to social media in their respective local government units', however, with the growing number of social media users' in the Philippines, hence; it further diversifies the portfolio of the local government to promote tourisms through digital interconnectedness.

## **1.2. Second Emergent Theme (Economy): Social Media Promotes Socio-Economic Development and Inclusiveness**

The second theme can be attributed to social media that promotes socio-economic development and inclusiveness. In this manner, seven (7) out of eight (8)

municipalities belonged to fourth class or developing municipalities which poverty is evident and economic insecurity among citizens flourished. In the advent of new media, people of different societal backgrounds went online to express their concerns to their elected officials and in return the local government becomes aware and responsive with their constituents' needs, hence; promotes inclusiveness and sense of belongingness in a contemporary form. Respondent LCE 2 stated in his/her own words:

*"...social media is a proactive tool because you cannot always grasp what are the complaints coming from the grassroots if it is not published in the social media..." (Respondent LCE 2; Page 3; Line 77-78)*

Further, LCE 2 affirmed that social media now becomes a tool that empowers every citizen to further examine their leaders. In his/her statement he disclosed:

*"... I always let the people validate the same so and then...and give myself and what the people deserved..." (Respondent LCE 2; Page 3; Line 79-80)*

The democratization of the social media becomes evident that programs within the local government affect LCEs' decision-making to their forthcoming programs. Hence, it facilitates ideas from the grassroots level to the local government hierarchy. Respondent LCE 3 noted that:

*"What's good in facebook especially... I used to post my projects, programs in Kawayan as long as I've been honest in posting my...there a lots of comments also that gives me ideas to in a way...change or revise, maximize the whatever programs and projects that we are initiating" (Respondent LCE 3; Page 1; Line 23-25)*

This emergent theme can be contributed to the notion of cognitive engagement theory which manifests the fervor of LCEs' constituents' to engage themselves to the decision-making process within the local government threshold that can have a direct impact to their lives. This behavior can be credited as a result of maturity through education, access to viable information, political interests, political knowledge and political satisfaction (Inglehart, 1977) and (Pattie and Seyd, 2004).

In addition, the said emergent theme on inclusiveness further advocates that citizens using social media develops evident awareness and deep social engagements (Nabatchi and Mergel,2010) and Kang & Gearhan (2010).

### **1.3. Third Emergent Theme (Economy): Social Media Promotes Good Governance**

The third emergent theme suggests after inquiry depicts that social media promotes good governance. In this manner, social media becomes a deterrent and as well as an advantage mechanism to both citizens' and public officials. Social media based on the results, suggests that LCEs' are becoming more directly vulnerable to public

criticism and public opinion, hence; creates a feeling of urgency for change to mitigate complaints within their political jurisdiction. Respondent LCE 6 noted:

*“...you have to change kung naay comment (social media) sa imu nga dili maayo, dautan ohh...why not change?...” (Respondent 6; Page 3; Line 82-83)*

*(Translation: If public criticism is highly evident, why not change?)*

It is affirmed by Respondent LCE 3 that open-mindedness in good governance addresses immediate concerns of his/her constituents'. He/she added that better communication and relationship to the community will convey positive results in long-term basis, he/she suggested:

*“...social media, communication is the best policy for me to know what's going on because I cannot serve by myself, I need ideas coming from the people.” (Respondent LCE 3; Page 2; Line 40-41)*

In addition, Respondent LCE 6 acknowledges that elected officials must not rely on their own intuition but on the people they are representing. He stressed that vulnerable constituents' are the one who knows the problem and have the ideas to solve it. Respondent LCE 6 noted:

*“...it's good (social media) kay dili ka depend sa imung kaugalingon as if you're the best for ten terms kana, you have to depend also...kaning mga tawo dinha sila makahibalo unsay ilang ahh...nakita didto nga wala sa ako so ako dili ko makatan-aw so kinahanglan ig-inform pud ko para so that I can adjust kung unsa naa diha sa ground...” (Respondent LCE 6; Page 3; Line 68-71)*

*(Translation: Social media is good, notwithstanding with your extensive experience in public service, you need also to rely on your people because they understood the situation well, with that, you can adjust)*

Respondent LCE 2 in his statement affirms that social media becomes a “must” consideration in any decisions particularly economic programs. He/she noted:

*“... I keep their (constituents') opinion coming from them or directly from them, not only on social media because I am very sensible and sensitive although some of my decisions are based on social media about 20 percent...” (Respondent LCE 2; Page 2; Line 44-46)*

This emergent theme clearly manifests and cognizant with the notion of the *Altercasting Theory* which focuses on the assumption that when certain individuals accepts responsibilities, in this case, the LCEs' mandate for public service directly to their constituents', social media becomes an agent that articulates immense social pressure that forces them (LCEs') to address their mandate in a deliberate fashion. Henceforth, social media then becomes a tool that directs citizens' as an external juries in their own turf and rules.

In addition, Kang & Gearhart (2010); Krueathep (2006) and Schorr & Stevens (2011) suggests that social media promotes greater transparency in the bureaucracy and checks leaders for transparency.

**1.4. Fourth Emergent Theme (Economy): Social Media Serves as Facilitator of the Local Governments' Economic Modeling and Decision- Making**

The fourth theme suggests that Social Media serves as facilitator of the local governments' economic modeling and decision-making. Local Chief Executives' (LCEs') accepted the fact that the advent of social media in the countryside made an incredible amount of pressure to government officials and as it had produced well-informed citizens and responsive local government units'. Respondent LCE uttered:

*" I think subliminally... they are aware more than the... even the non-internet savvy or not ahh... local government officials, so...the population are more updated really in economic conditions..." (Respondent LCE 2; Page 1; Line 11-13)*

In addition, Respondent LCE 2, in his note, suggested that social media becomes definitely his/her confidant in making decisions.

*"...Facebook here is just for information dissemination... economically it is one of the sources of information that affects the decision-making of both the public and the local officials" (Respondent LCE 2; Page 2; Line 20-21)*

Respondent LCE 3 on the other hand, recognized that social media becomes a part of information that helped the local government monitor the economic development of the province in a daily basis; LCE 3 accepted the fact that such movement in prices in the larger market affect the LGUs' economy in a larger scale. He/she noted:

*"...talking about economic condition, social media is a big help for us to know, more or less what is going on in the daily basis ahh... for example, the ahh... the rise of prices: commodities, gasoline, ahh... for us to verify because we are getting fuel in Naval (capital town of Biliran province), we can compare based on social media" (Respondent LCE 3; Page 1; Line 9-12)*

Respondent LCE 5 noted that, social media becomes the source of indispensable information where information and relevant data were considered to conceptualize viable programs for the local government. He uttered:

*"...local news, social media sites you can use that as our... source, we have to collaborate with the facts..." (Respondent LCE 5; Page 1; Line 1; Line 38-39)*

In the greater manifestation, social media now becomes part of the local government discussions within their respective *Sangguniang Bayan* (Municipal Council) caucus. It is noted that the new media established a reasonable and viable foothold in influencing the local government for policy-formulation and decisions. Respondent LCE 8 noted:

*“ Economically, yes naay mga recommendations (social media), oo naa...naa... actually kanang ilahang mga recommendations akoa nang gi-acknowledge i- forward na nako sa akoang council nga mao ni ang mga proposals then ok man” (Respondent 8; Page 3; Line 77-79)*

This emergent theme is cognizant with one of the basic forms of altercasting called *manded casting* which suggests that by reminding people with their role and asking them to act on their respective obligations (Pratkanis,2000), local chief executives were compelled through social media to take immediate actions to the existing nuisances of their constituents’. In addition, this emergent theme can be supported with existing literature of the study, Nabatchi and Mergel (2010) cognizant with Kang and Gearhan (2010) et.al. noted that interactive social media becomes a driving factor of citizens’ engagement to the daily affairs of their government. Hence, creates immediate response on the part of the local chief executives and further promotes democratization of the local government affairs.

#### 1.5. **Fifth Emergent Theme (Economy): *Complex Bureaucracy***

The fifth emergent theme suggests the existing complexity of the larger-scale of the Philippine bureaucracy where its laws and rules hereby creates delay of economic and development projects in the local government units. In Biliran province, seven (7) out of eight (8) municipalities belonged to the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) class municipality levels or in simple definition, still a developing unit since the establishment of the province in 1992, twenty-five (25) years thereafter, significant economic development were felt but in a very protracted pace. Most of the LCEs’ upon inquiry, blamed the limited to nothing fund to the other needs of the local government and to the complex regulations by the national government and other constitutional and regulating bodies like the Commission on Audit (COA), Department of Budget and Management, etc.

Respondent LCE 2 in his/her personal statement, uttered:

*“... there are several factors that affect... remedy or approach on how to solve the problem there are several factors: the financial aspect, the manpower, the capability, the capacity and then the laws that governs” (Respondent LCE 2; Page 2; Line 65-66)*

In addition, LCE 4 expressed his/her frustration with the comments made online regarding on the long-winded infrastructure projects of the local government. He/she disclosed that availability of the funds should be considered regardless of the viability of program to the community. Respondent LCE 4, in his/her own words:

*“... gusto mong ma-i-comment sa administration, it is easy for you to take pictures and mag comment doon sa marami ang bashers diba?...so which is hindi nila naiintindihan kung what’s the real situation ng itong project o naka-program bay an, priority ba iyan ng government, ng local government unit, so may budget ba?...”*

*(Respondent 4; Page 1; Line 28-31)*

*(Translation: It is easy for social media users to make comment online, it is easy to take pictures apparently these bashers do not know the real situation, were the projects they are proposing, a priority by the local government? Are these programs have sufficient fund to sustain?)*

In addition, Respondent LCE 8 cognizant with the statement of Respondent LCE 4 affirmed that funds for the local government becomes more limited while the processes in ensuring transparency in the bureaucracy becomes more stringent and the consistent demands of their constituents’ severed. Respondent LCE 4 in his/her own note:

*“... yes kinahanglan man gud nga aksyonan (suggestions) only kay sa karon sa administration ni president Duterte kuan man ta... ingun pa nga naay transparency so dili dayon lahi ra sa una, sige... naay pondo maniguro dayon ta, implement dayon dili man naa may masunod man gyud ta sa proseso murag ma-delay ang kuan sa implementation kay dapat i-comply ang kuan... ang mga requirements una ta maka-implement” (Respondent LCE 8; Page 3; Line 81-85)*

*(Translation: President Duterte’s administration compelled the government including the local government units’ to observe stringent procedures in the procurement and implementation of projects to promote transparency.)*

#### **1.6. Sixth Emergent Theme: Social Media Becomes an Avenue for Baseless Conjectures**

Lastly, respondent LCE 6 in his own statement said that local government units need to compel with whatever regulations of the government and all its instrumentalities, he/she acknowledged the rules that governs the bureaucracy:

*“ if you’re talking economically, it is not from this place alone direct from sa taas from the office of the president down to public servants...” (Respondent 6; Page 2; Line 39-40)*

*(Translation: Economically, it is not from this place (LGU) were decisions alone were made but everything comes from the office of the president down to the workers of the government.)*

This emergent theme is cognizant with the ideas of Altercasting theory, it suggests that like any workers of the government including the local chief executives’ these LCEs’ are deeply compelled with their obligations in accord with their mandates as elected officials. In addition, this can be supported with the study of Polunsky (2014) which argued that government is considered transparent when the public can see

how decisions are being made. This idea can be manifested with the advent of the new media which facilitates the government to open its transactions regardless of the complexities of the bureaucracy.

The sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) emergent theme as the result of inquiry, it cannot be denied that social media helped the local government units' particularly the LCEs' with their policy-formulation and decision-making to elevate and inspire their constituents' through their programs, however, LCEs' made it clear that social media in the most unlikely circumstances becomes a platform for indictments. Respondent LCE 2 noted:

*"yes...yes... they (social media users') are more knowledgeable because perception, they always backed perception rather than on facts, so that is why they cannot suggests what the people think is they are convenient not considering the facts..." (Respondent 2; Page 2; Line 61-64)*

Further, respondent LCE 2 added that government and elected officials alike need to be engrossed at some point with the needs of their constituents', he/she added that suggestions are needed on whatever means to properly addressed issues in LGUs', apparently it is done otherwise. Respondent LCE 2 uttered:

*"...that is an instinct with anyone that they (social media users/constituents') are good only in complaint rather than to give suggestions, so they (social media users'/constituents') they are not..." (Respondent 2; Page 2; Line 57-58)*

It is even noted by respondent LCE 4 that social media now becomes the threat to the local governments' function, new media platform like facebook which is common in the countryside made it as a tool that leads LGUs' operations at bay. Respondent LCE 4 noted:

*" ang mai-susuggest ko kasi minsan may nakapost sa social media which is against your conviction, its easy naman kung mayroon kang concerns, just visit my office and not directly to the social media in which marami ang nagba-bash, marami ang nagco-comment..." (Respondent 4; Page 3; Line 86-88)*

*(Translation: Comments made online which is against your conviction, it is prudent and reasonable enough to approach me directly instead of rallying concerns in the social where "bashers" are deliberate and many would comment.)*

However, respondent LCE 4 fought back with the comments online, if he/she finds it imprudent and unfounded as a matter of retaliation to his/her bashers. In his verbatim statement, he/she said:

*"...the discussions, with the comments... medyo hindi gumaganda kung baga ahh...para bang they are hitting below the belt yung comments so... I replied at the same process,kung ano ang approach mo? If you give reactions below the belt ehh... the more I will give you the... the worst also reply na hindi mo pa naririnig..." (Respondent LCE 4; Page ; Line 99-102)*

*(Translation: If comments made online becomes worst and becomes deeply personal, I replied in the same manner, if unfounded comments were made, I will reply the worst possible reply, anyone could have imagined.)*

This emergent theme is in cognizant with the three (3) theories of the under study: cognitive engagement theory where it suggests that increase in information access through education and other means of information helped citizens' participate in politics to show their satisfaction with government policies (Inglehart,1977) and (Pattie and Seyd,2004); secondly, the altercasting theory which manifests that social pressures, in this case, the social media, compelled government workers to exploit their functions and utmost capabilities to perform their mandate as elected officials (Pratkanis,2000); lastly, social exchange theory, where it manifests that subjective assessment contributes to social-exchange where information regardless of its tone help addressed immediate reforms needed by the people themselves.

In addition, this can be also supported with the existing literature under study, where it is argued by Dekker and Melenhorst (2014) that social media represents citizens' in real-time , unfiltered and direct way. Holzer & Kim (2008); Schorr & Stevens (2011); Arnstein (1969) claimed that through social media platforms and citizen engagement in government operations can precisely stimulate government workers to engage more directly in their work.

## **2. Role and Influence of Social Media in the Local Government Units' Civic Engagements and Social Services**

As the result of the inquiry, most of the Local Chief Executives' have agreed that social media most likely becomes the basis of their governance, most of these LCEs' concurred that despite of social media's intrusive feature, inevitably it becomes the new norm at present local governments where advises from their constituents are now initiated virtually. Respondent LCE 5 noted:

*"...the good with social media is you can do also crowdsourcing, if you want something to happen, if you don't have an idea, you can just post something on social media, I need your advise nung ganyan..." (Respondent 5; Page 3; Line 97-99)*

### **2.1. First Emergent Theme (Civic Engagements and Social Services): Public Service is a Moral Obligation**

Respondent LCE 2 during the inquiry, manifested that helping your constituents' does not perceive that a local chief executive can do anything they want. Since the culture of Waray in Leyte where most of the people are still deeply engrossed with their honor and pride, LCEs' need also to be sensitive with their statements' delivered in public and total awareness of communities embedded culture. Hence, the culture of respect and sensitivity must also transpire in the local government units' most especially to people classified themselves as Waray. In his verbatim statement, he/she noted:

*“...waray practiced the datu system and other places practiced Rajanite system, so in Datu system so if you’re a ruler of the village, you are the provider, you are the protector and everything and then that is the part of the tradition and culture already that the current politicians...” (Respondent LCE 2; Page 3; Line 104-107)*

Moreover, most of the LCEs’ made to a point that public service is a selfless position in any functional government. Most of their constituents’ in this case, in Biliran province, where majority of the people are living in poverty, most of these helpless individuals cannot immediately approach their relatives or neighbors considering most of them experienced the same insecurities in life. Hence, these helpless individuals’ approach their immediate government, in this scenario, the local government units. Respondent LCE 6, in his own words, uttered:

*“...every politician you will experience that nga personal bisag asa ka daupon, mangayo pa gani pangbayad sa kuryente, pangbayad pamasaha, transportation...dili man na pwede isulod sa munisipyo kay bawal man na naa man guidelines ang municipal kung unsa lay ihatag sa mga financial support didto sa mga constituents” (Respondent LCE 6; Page 4-5; Line 136-140)*

*(Translation: Every politician experience that, in whenever place you go, people seeking assistance would come to you even paying their electricity bills, for conveyance, everything. There are guidelines in the municipal government where financial support is only limited.)*

In addition, respondent LCE 8 that even most his retirement and salary were given to his constituents’ in constant basis. He noted:

*“...kay naay time nga immediate ang needs... with my own personal nga sweldo, sa akoang retirement na nako gikuha...” (Respondent 8; Page 4; Line 129, 134-135)*

However, despite of the disadvantage that most LCEs’ had experienced, they noted that the only means of securing their constituents’ respect is simply to practice the idea of altruism. Respondent LCE 2, in his own words:

*“...it depends on the person that will run a government, if you are a generous, the righteous one because people will be happy and live in peace in prosperity and you can gain their respect and cooperation...” (Respondent 2; Page 3; Line 110-112)*

This emergent theme is cognizant with the Manded Casting Theory where public and elected officials are bounded with their obligations as public servants, irrespective with the invasive nature of their work, they even claimed that public service spoil their personal serenity, this has proved that public service, indeed is a moral obligation to fulfill. In connection to this statement, it can be supported with the existing literature based on the study of Rutgers University, New Jersey, USA, where it suggests that total awareness in public governance regardless of its complex and bureaucratic nature forms innovative collaboration and solution between the government and its citizens’.

**2.2. Second Emergent Theme (Civic Engagements and Social Services):  
Social Media as an Affiliate and Medium for Socio-Development**

Most of the local chief executives have agreed on the notion that social media at present helps the local government unit to better inform their constituents' with regards to the programs and services of their local government. Considering that Biliran is considered an agricultural province where fisher folks and farmers alike highly need the assistance of their respective local governments to augment their immediate concerns and destitutions. Respondent LCE 3 uttered that social media help his/her constituents' with their programs. In his own words, he/she stated:

*"...there are sometimes asking me na in that barangay they have a relative na humihingi ng makina because they saw on facebook so I messaged them sabihin ko what's his name, anong pangalan niya ganito tell him to go to my office right away, in a way social media helps..." (Respondent 3; Page 3; Line 88-90)*

*(Translation: There are instances that some people from the barangays used to ask for a machine used for motor banka because they saw it on facebook, I directly messaged them with who was asking and I immediately tell them to come to my office, in a way social media helps.)*

Respondent LCE 3 added that social media becomes a medium that promotes not only vital information to the local government's programs but also sends a clear message to their constituents' that they are definitely working. He/she noted:

*..." because social media ahh...ahh... spreads your programs and what you're doing in your town as a chief executive... I want to tell my constituents' that this is what we are doing in Kawayan right now that's why I usually post what's going on baka sabihin nila wala akong ginagawa..." (Respondent LCE 3; Page 3; Line 79-82)*

In addition, in cognizant with the response of respondent LCE 3, respondent LCE 4 affirmed that social media not only informs the public with their work but also the local governments' immediate interests. In his/her note, he/she uttered:

*"...(social media's advantage to LCE) Oo ...kasi at least nalalaman nila na hindi pala natutulog ang local chief executive ahh...at least nalalaman din nila na medyo gumaganda na rin...so at least for the information..." (Respondent LCE 4; Page 6; Line 179-180)*

*(Translation: Constituents would be aware that their local chief executive is working and not complacent, in this note everything is doing well in the LGU.)*

At some point, social media users' becomes an immediate advocate for the local governments' programs through voluntarily posting all of their (LCEs') accomplishments online, thus, creates a passive vantage point and a positive leverage on the LCEs' publicity. Respondent LCE 8 noted:

*“...mga gi-release nga mga pond para kanang mga programa so mo-come in man ang mga picture-picture, I upload nila (social media users)” so na known nata nga kining mga pondo nga gihatag sa gobyerno gi-upload (social media) na sa mga recipients’ o kinsa man dinha nga audience so makit-an nan a nga naa silay na-receive nga award, mga cash award, cash assistance, ana...so diha maingon pud nako nga dako pud og tabang pati na ang to-a sa gawas makahibaw sila...’ (Respondent LCE 8; Page 4; Line 113-117)*

*(Translation: Funds allocated and released by the government were uploaded to social media by the recipients of the programs themselves , in a way social media becomes a huge factor in informing its constituents’ most especially working overseas.)*

On a final note, respondent LCE 7 suggested that social media becomes a vehicle in deliberately informing his/her constituents’ with the local government’s programs. He/she noted:

*“siyempre king naay mga programs, ipa-agi namo sa social media, usahay i-personal namo ang mga barangay captains amoang ipatawag kung kinsa man gani nga department ang concern adto mi nya sila ang mu-disseminate.” (Respondent LCE 7; Page 3; Line 63-65)*

*(Translation: If there are programs initiated by the local government, we channel it through social media, in some cases we contact the village leaders and other officials concerned.)*

### **2.3. Third Emergent Theme (Civic Engagements and Social Services): Obscure Bureaucracy**

While local chief executives’ acknowledged the importance of good governance and inclusiveness in promoting sustainable development to their respective local government units’, most of these LCEs’ considers the dearth of discipline among their constituents’ as one of the rudimentary factor to the ills of the society, where they considered that too much dependence to the government becomes an inevitable scenario in the countryside. Respondent LCE 3 noted:

*“...kasi ang tao ehh...para bang lahat na lang akala nila ang pera nandito sa munisipyo, Oo...so they are just dependent kung ano ang mahihingi so ako kasi kung ano ang mahihingi makakabigay tayo pero limited lang so nabigyan mo na ng sampu isang beses mo lang hindi mabigyan ika na ang masama, so actually yun ang attitude na hindi ko alam kung papano siya maso-solve until now...” (Respondent LCE 4;Page 6; Line 185-188)*

*(Translation: People would simply go to the municipal office to ask for monetary assistance, they are just dependent. Assistance is always available but it is limited. A single event when you failed to provide then you are ridiculed that is the present attitude of people, I don’t know how to solve the problem.)*

In addition, respondent LCE 8 noted that Filipinos common attitude is our failure to thrive for sustainable development when livelihood programs at no single cost provided by the local government. He/she expressed:

*“...everytime nga mag meeting ko ingon ko sa ila nga dili ta mag dependi nala sa gobyerno kung naa nay gipanghatag sa inyo nga kabuhayan so... seryosohon na nga mulambo ang inyong pakabuhi dili gusto si presidente nga naay pobrehanon nga mahabilin...” (Respondent LCE 8; Page 5; Line 143-145)*

*(Translation: I always remind my constituents that livelihood programs provided by the local government, they need to develop and sustain it in long-term basis.)*

In cognizant with the statement by respondent LCE 8, respondent LCE 4, in addition, uttered that accountability of people constantly requesting for assistance need also to be examined. He/she said:

*“... Pilipino ka talaga kasi matigas ang ulo mo...iba...iba ang thinking, so pag may mga programs, may mga let’s say may binigay ang gobyerno ana para pang tawid, pang puhonan, agad-agad yun pupunta manghilingi pero what about your accountability, your obligations na-a-address mo ba?” (Respondent LCE 4; Page 6; Line 192-195)*

*(Translation: Filipinos think and do whatever they pleased, for instance, the local government would provide livelihood assistance, people would immediately rush to the local government to demand. The premise would be, how about your accountability, your obligations, have you addressed it?)*

Apparently some of the LCEs’ admitted that stringent policies means further delay to any assistance intended for their proposed programs, the bureaucracy itself was designed as a buffer for corruption. This buffer creates stringent policy that forces LCEs’ to plead for assistance to the national government and non-profit organizations. Respondent LCE 4 noted:

*“...more non-government organizations should come-in here and the more assistance siguro kung ano ang pe-pwede so kasi its hard na although marami akong minsan ginagawa na mga feeding programs at least maka...maramdaman man lamang ng tao even that is your personal money...Oo...kay pagdito lang sa LGU wala...limited naman ehh...” (Respondent LCE 4; Page 4; Line 139-142)*

*(Translation: More non-government organizations should come for more assistance, more feeding programs the local government initiated, most of these comes from my personal money. In the local government, everything is limited.)*

On the final note, respondent LCEs’ 2 and 5 agreed that the obscure and complex bureaucracy is one of the foremost hurdle to their programs. They noted:

*“...they (community) asked for something ano agriculture equipment worth 15 thousand instead of processing pa, checking the neaty and greedy stuff here ano...so give I them the money...” (Respondent LCE 5; Page 4; Line 112-113)*

“...if your will not engage your own personal income for public services and then you will not succeed, that is what I have observed in the current system...” (*Respondent LCE 2; Page 4; Line 128-129*)

“...there are limitations because our current system cannot solve the problem immediately but will only yield several problems because of the limitations...” (*Respondent LCE 2; Page 4; Line 125-126*)

This emergent theme is correlated with one of the forms of *Altercasting* called *Manded Casting theory* where it suggests that public service becomes the stimulus of the local chief executives' to compel with their obligations as elected officials of the government and acting to such role that the local government has accorded them to comply (Pratkanis,2000). It can be also find basis on existing literature of the study where Holzer & Kim (2008); Schorr & Stevens (2011); Arnstein (1969) which they argued that citizen engagement in government operations can precisely stimulate government's workers to engage more directly to their work.

### **3. Role and Influence of Social Media in the Local Government Units' Safety and Security**

During the research inquiry, most of the local chief executives interviewed agreed that safety and security of their respective local government units' should be one of the topmost priorities of any thriving economy like Biliran province. Respondent LCE 5 noted that full support of the local government to the law enforcement agencies assigned is a must to address the pressing concerns in his/her town. His/her constant involvement against illegal drug trade gave him/her numerous death threats. He noted:

“...if there is any buy bust I give rewards to the police, I give them 15 thousand when in fact ahm... when I did kasagsagan nung sa... crusade ni presidente sa drugs one source informed me that there was already bounty on my head (smiles)...” (*Respondent LCE 5; Page 3; Line 86-88*)

(*Translation: If there is any buy bust I give rewards to the police, I give them 15 thousand pesos. In fact, I did it during the heated campaign of the president against illegal drugs. One source informed me that there was already bounty on my head.*)

#### **3.1. First Emergent Theme (Safety and Security): Social Media Promotes Intelligence Gathering Mechanism**

The constant pressure of President Duterte against illegal drugs and criminality took its toll in the last couple of years and undoubtedly mandates all local government officials' to comply or face legal charges before the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Ombudsman. Respondent LCE 7 considers the significance of social media in gathering intelligence information to any fraudulent activities to their respective communities. He/she noted:

*“(social media) dako sad na nga tabang in terms of safety, kay ngano? Maka-contact man gyud dayon nya awareness la permi kung naay mga laing tawo ingun-ana...adik, mga drugs, naa mi hotline ug social media...” (Respondent LCE 7; Page 6; Line 179-181)*

*(Translation: Social media helped a lot in terms of security. We can contact immediately, awareness if there are suspicious personalities in the community, drug addicts, and illegal drugs. We have hotline and social media.)*

Respondent LCE 6 added that social media becomes a virtual agent that feeds information to the local government and law enforcement agencies during the heated and contested campaign against illegal drugs. He/she uttered:

*“(help of social media in communities) naay mga reports sa mga barangay nga naa mao na amoa ipa-follow-up dayon diretso sa PDEA (Philippine Drug Enforcement Agencies) kung kinsay kuan didto suspected namo ipa-submit para ipa-monitor ...mao na of course with the help of the constituents nga mi-suporta pud ani...” (Respondent LCE6; Page 6; Line 196-198)*

*(Translation: If there are reports present directly delivered from our village leaders, we inform PDEA to monitor and identify the suspected illegal drugs users or pushers, of course with the help of our constituents.)*

In addition, cognizant with respondent LCE 6 statement, respondent LCE 8 affirmed that social media becomes a toll for intelligence gathering. He/she noted:

*“(help of social media as surveillance tool) yes...dako gyud nga tabang oy...kay murag text (sms) or message (message applications) na sila nga mayor mao ni ang information involved ni sa kuan, so atoang ma-monitor...” (Respondent LCE 8; Page 4; Line 102-103)*

*(Translation: Social media helped a lot, messages through sms or message applications informed us LCEs’ to identify and monitor suspected individuals.)*

This emergent theme is cognizant with the cognitive engagement theory in which consistent engagement of political and information and participation through social media by citizens’ the more they are aware, participant and deliberate with their social responsibility (M.C.W.,2010). In addition this emergent theme correlates with the study of Wareen, Sulaiman and Jaafar (2014) which indicates that citizen engagement leads to their commitment and receptiveness for institutional participation and awareness.

### **3.2. Second Emergent Theme (Safety and Security): Community Partnership**

Most of the local chief executives have agreed that drugs and criminality have been part of the system as anyone could have imagined. Most of these LCEs’ also agreed that in preventing drugs and criminality, the local government need to respond with the needs of their constituents’ particularly on providing livelihood assistance to

vulnerable communities as a counter-measure and initiative by the local government units'. Respondent LCE 3 noted:

*"...we continue our programs regarding that to sustain the program like giving, just like there will be upcoming program again which I post (social media) regarding the commitment of DOLE (Department of Labor and Employment) for the various livelihood like engines, sewing machines and fishnets and five of those beneficiaries are ahh...drug surrenderees that undergone ahh...seminar for livelihood program they've been accommodated..." (Respondent LCE 3; Page 2; Line 51-54)*

Respondent LCE 7 affirmed with the statement of respondent LCE 3, that a stringent counter-measure against criminality is through immediate provisions of sustainable livelihood to communities: Respondent LCE 7 noted from his/her own words:

*"...ang uban amoang gitaga-an og livelihood, among gi-tap sa tourism, TESDA, ang uban sa agriculture amoang gipa-apil sa tupad at least malingaw-lingaw..." (Respondent 7; Page 7; Line 201-202)*

*(Translation: The local government provided livelihood programs to our constituents. Some we employed in the tourism sector, others we supported for skills acquisition through TESDA, others in agriculture and others are on temporary employment made available by the LGU.)*

This emergent theme is cognizant with the theory of Pratkanis (2010) called *Altercasting theory* with a core assumption that social pressure which most LCEs' experienced compel them to act according to what is accorded to them, in this social environment, LCEs' behave in the manner consistent with their oath as elected public official. In addition, this can be also manifested in the study of Yang and Holzer (2006) that by increasing citizens' participation, it creates a certain degree of public trust and viability in any thriving economy.

### **3.3. Third Emergent Theme (Safety and Security): Supporting National Government Initiatives**

Most of the LCEs' upon observing their non-verbal gestures and tone of their response, they indeed felt the pressure imposed by the national government to draft final resolution against illegal drugs and criminality in their respective local government units'. Respondent LCE 7 with a shuddering tone, noted:

*"...dili man gyud na nato kalikayan nga naay mu-abot nga panahon nga ingun-ana so at least kanang more on defensive mi, even gani pag opening sa klase musoroy mi with PNP, district supervisors nga aware ang mga eskwela, ang mga katawhan nga mao ni atoan programa..." (Respondent LCE 7; Page 6; Line 189-191)*

*(Translation: The local government always ready for any untoward incidents, we are always on preventive approach. During opening of classes we visit our schools along with the PNP and district supervisors just to send a clear message with our programs.)*

Respondent LCE 7 added when asked about his/her campaign cognizant with the mandate of the president, he/she quickly uttered in an insisting tone:

*"...pareho mi og programs ni Duterte dong: kanang corruption, illegal drugs and criminality..." (Respondent LCE 7; Page 6; Line 186)*

*(Translation: Our local government is cognizant with the programs of the president: corruption, illegal drugs and criminality.)*

On the final note, respondent LCE 4 responded with his/her own measures despite of his/her town's proximity to Samar Island he/she claimed:

*"...I don't see any drugs anymore actually ang munisipyo ko ehh...this is the first ahh...LGU, I supposed in Region 8 ahh...drug cleared municipality, so wala kami ditong crimes, wala...walang crimes maybe because siguro tinatakot ko in a way that is my form of management na pe-pwede although psywar so kasi mga tao medyo natakot so far kung baga in totality okay kami..." (Respondent LCE 4; Page 6; Line 210-214)*

This emergent theme is correlated with *Alcasting theory* which suggests that the social environment (local government) expects the person (LCEs') behave in a manner that is consistent with their role (elected public official). This is also in cognizant with the study of Holzer & Kim (2008); Schorr & Stevens (2011); Arnstein (1969) that engagement in government operations can stimulate government workers (local chief executives') to engage more directly in their work.

#### **4. Role and Influence of Social Media in the Local Government Units' Disaster Mitigation and Response**

Eastern Visayas region has been consistently affected when natural disasters occur. In recent years, region 8 is one of the heavily stricken regions in the country during course of super typhoon Yolanda and Urduja which claimed the lives of thousands and damaged billions of pesos of properties. With this experience, local government units strengthened its disaster mitigation and response mechanism to mitigate any untoward circumstances. Respondents LCEs' 2 and 3 noted:

*"...because of the lesson of Yolanda so ahead of time we are always convened so we are prepared all of the time..." (Respondent 2; Page 6; Line 214-216)*

*"...may mga dump trucks na, mayroon mga makina, speedboats, and there is evacuation center ready, it is newly constructed..." (Respondent 3; Page 4; Line 102-103)*

*(Translation: We have dump trucks, speedboats and newly constructed evacuation center.)*

Most of the local chief executive inquired, unanimously agreed that every natural disasters experienced by the local government, social media becomes a close

confidant of their constituents' in expressing handful of concerns that needs immediate resolution by the LGUs'. Respondent LCE 7 noted:

*"...(messages received in social media) daghan, kanang wala aksyoni so mao lagi to akoang gi-ingon dili man ta maka-accommodate dayon tanan so...kutob sa amoang mahimo we try our best nga ma-answer ang ilang needs..." (Respondent LCE 7; Page 4; Line 117-119)*

#### **4.1. First Emergent Theme (Disaster Mitigation and Response): Community and Local Government Mobilization**

Respondent LCE 1 noted that prior to any natural disaster in their local government units; they considered social media and other communication lines a vital part in properly positioning their agenda to mitigate any untoward circumstances. He/she noted:

*"...before Urduja came you know we already informed the people through our office, social media, etc. I think four (4) days before Urduja, three (3) days we always repeat, repeat..." (Respondent 1; Page 6; Line 230-232)*

Respondent LCE 4 on the other hand, noted that communication lines, community mobilization and coordination with the local government are imperative to attain zero casualties: From his/her own words:

*"...pag mayroon kaming disaster na nababalitaan na parating so ang aking municipal disaster risk reduction officer lumilibot nayan sa lahat nga barangay so naka-organize na kami ng mga ahh...mga disaster ano na mga officials sa mga barangay so they are informed (i.e. social media, news weather updates, etc.) so marami nang bagyong dumating dito sa Biliran kung mapapansin mo marami nang namatay sa mga bayan-bayan, bukod tangi ang aking bayan wala..." (Respondent LCE 4; Page 7; Line 230-235)*

*(Translation: If any information regarding disaster reached the local government, we immediately went to our communities; we inform our village leaders and their officials in person or through social media and other means of communication. If you happen to observe our area, we have zero recorded casualties.)*

Respondent LCE 7 cognizant with the statement of respondent LCE 4 affirmed that an effective buffer against natural calamities is complete and total coordination of the local government unit, government agencies and the communities to mitigate any untoward event. Respondent LCE 7 noted:

*"Ang among Disaster Risk Management Council kuan...aware lang permi once gani naay announcement diha sa social media o sa news, disseminate dayon ang information. Ang disaster council do their jobs...DILG, I inform ang mga kapitan, ang fire, ang police, department heads, convene dayon ang disaster team kung unsay buhaton unya after sa kuan..." (Respondent LCE 7; Page 3; Line 88-91)*

*(Translation: The local government along with the disaster risk management council is always vigilant. If there are approaching typhoons announced in social media or news, we immediately disseminate the information. We informed the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), our village leaders, fire bureau, law enforcement agencies, department heads, we convene to plan.)*

If there are reported incidents, respondent LCE 7 had his/her experience on how social media helped the provincial rescuers after Typhoon Urduja afflicted his/her municipality: He/she noted:

*“...oo, dako sad kay ang kadtong nahitabo sa kuan nahitabo sa amoang landslilde sa Barobohan (mountainous barangay) nga dili naman mata-ak ang kuan karsada so nanawag na through cellphones, social media nya aware pud ang naay magpa-rescue naa man mi in-charge sa kuan sa kaning mga calls ba, incoming calls naay usa ka team ana, naay landslide didto, naay problema, naay magpa-rescue...”(Respondent LCE 7; Page 4; Line 95-98)*

*(Translation: What happened in Barangay Barobohan where landslide had occurred, all roads going to the village were halted by the debris. Emergency calls through cellphone and social media started to call the attention of the local government for speedy rescue operations.)*

In cognizant with the statement of respondent LCE 7, respondent LCE 5 affirmed that indeed social media helped them in monitoring recent situation to their communities along with establishing contact outlets to their respective village leaders. Respondent LCE 5 noted:

*“...so during the time of Urduja I was here nasira yung bridge nandito ako so I sleep here for three days yata yun without any clothes huh...without any clothes. I stay on ground walang ligo talaga...we used the radio, the social media, I keep receiving text messages and calls asking for help ganyan... and then constant monitoring with the barangay captains so that’s what we did.” (Respondent LCE 5; Page 4; Line 136-140)*

*(Translation: During Urduja, I was in my office when the bridge was destroyed. I slept here (office) for three days without any extra clothes. We used the radio, the social media, I keep on receiving text messages and calls asking for help. We also monitor our village leaders, that’s what we did.)*

This emergent theme is cognizant with the social exchange theory which suggests that communities are formed through communication exchanges (Homans,1958). This theme highly manifests the interconnectedness of the community and local government through any possible means of communication to properly coordinate and attain their respective functions. Social media in this case, represents a valuable channel which connects the communities and their immediate government. In addition, Dekker and Melenhorst (2014) argued that social media represent citizens in real time, unfiltered and direct way. Further, Nabatchi & Mergel (2010) cognizant

with Kang & Gearhan (2010) et.,al. manifests that constant engagement of government to their citizens online can produce constituents' deep participation to government and political affairs.

#### 4.2. **Second Emergent Theme (Disaster Mitigation and Response): Responsive Mitigating Practices**

Local chief executives have agreed that mitigating disaster cannot be confined in disaster prevention materials, lectures and seminars but on the immediacy of response and commitment of the local government. Hence, it is a fundamental core of mitigation. Respondent LCE 1 noted:

*"...during typhoon Urduja and Yolanda I always here, I sleep here in my office. I am always on the ground I do also visit kung saan lugar nag ano. In fact during Urduja we have a rescue, I was there..." (Respondent LCE 1; Page 5; Line 213-215)*

*(Translator: During typhoon Urduja and Yolanda I am always here. I sleep here in my office. I am always on the ground, I do also visit affected areas. In fact during Urduja we have a rescue, I was there.)*

Respondent LCE 1 added that establishing and strengthening pool of equally-trained disaster prevention personnel can help mitigate any untoward event. He/she responded:

*"...we have the MDRRMO (Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office). Diba? Ano naman talaga yan given yan pagdating dito sa mga LGU and we always have preparation in times even though ganito wala we are prepared, every now and then..."(Respondent LCE 1; Page 5; Line 208-211)*

*(Translation: In our local government, we have the MDRRMO (Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office). In the local government, we are always prepared.)*

Respondent LCE 3, on the other hand, responded that despite of the stringent preparations of the local government and its counterpart agencies, still the effective mitigating factor is providing tangible rescue equipment and facilities. In his own words, he/she noted:

*"...may mga dump trucks na, mayroon mga makina, speedboats and there is evacuation center ready, it is newly constructed..." (Respondent LCE 3; Page 4; Line 102-103)*

*(Translation: We have dump trucks, speedboats and evacuation center, it is newly constructed.)*

On the lighter note, respondent LCE 2 considers that mitigation should not be always on conveying stressful scenario to the people, instead dispense subtler approach for a worthwhile experience. In a humorous note, respondent LCE 2 noted:

*“...I usually prepare delicious food, mag-haw ko og baboy, pakan-on ko og lami mao na labi na ang mga bata pakan-unon nako og maayo mao na para ang bata ma-inclucate na sila nga lami man diay sa evacuation center dili kana maghago og sunod...” (Respondent 2; Page 6; Line 205-208)*

*(Translation: I usually prepare delicious food, I used to prepare swine for the villagers most especially the children. I do it just to send a message that staying in the evacuation center help them to be secure. At least the next time you convince your constituents' to evacuate, they will follow.)*

I (researcher) went to the village mayor respondent 2 had pointed to probe the his/her statement. I found out that upon talking to some of the villagers, they affirmed the above statement of the mayor. My reaction, stunned.

This emergent theme is cognizant with Altercasting theory where on this case the local chief executives acted on what they are supposed to do as public and elected officials. In these circumstances, social pressures added to a wider perspective that local chief executives are compelled to their obligations to the public. In addition, this theme can be supported with the idea of Warren, Sulaiman and Jaafar (2014) that citizen engagement through social media had a huge propensity of wider people engagement to their governments. Lastly Polunsky (2014) argued that simply observing a transparent government, both citizens and government engage.

## **5. Impact of Social Media in Local Governance**

Most of the local chief executives' expressed both progressive approach and undesirable affirmation. Respondents' however, made a clear manifestation that social media represents their agenda to the public and can influence their decision-making.

### **5.1. First Emergent Theme (Impact of Social Media in Local Governance): Social Media Creates Mutual Relations**

Respondent LCE 1 noted that the impact of social media made the local government vigilant to the needs and concerns of their constituents'. He/she noted:

*“...social media is really a good ahh...information coming from the people and the social media I appreciate the social media because you know doon mo malalaman lahat kung ano ang galaw ng tao, anong mga comments and reactions, yes...” (Respondent LCE 1; Page 6; Line 250-253)*

*(Translation: Social media is really good most importantly the information coming from the people. I appreciate it because through social media we can recognize the comments and reactions of people.)*

Further, respondent LCE 5 considers social media as a catalyst for social development in communities. He/she manifested:

*“(social media) if you want to...stir something, if you want to create something especially for the people...” (Respondent LCE 5; Page 1; Line 31-32)*

On the final note, respondent LCE3 noted that one of the most significant impacts of social media, it gave them (LCEs’) the opportunity to express themselves to their constituents’, at least virtually. Respondent LCE 3 noted:

*“...it’s great impact, a big impact because through social media I can express myself, I can express what I am doing here in Kawayan, for the betterment of our people...” (Respondent LCE 3; Page 4; Line 132-133)*

This emergent theme is cognizant with social exchange theory where on the case of LCEs’ and their constituents; social media becomes a significant channel that forms viable relationships between communities and their local government units. Further, this emergent theme can be correlated with the study of Turcotte et.al.,(2015) which suggests that social media brought the people together, in this case local chief executives’ as opinion leaders and constituents’ as opinion followers come together digitally for effective communication exchanges, thus, provides and creates equal opportunity for public expression and grievance mechanism for both the public and local government units’.

## **5.2. Second Emergent Theme (Impact of Social Media in Local Governance): Social Media Creates Speculations and Public Indictments**

Most of the local chief executives’ agreed that social media becomes a tool that creates baseless conjectures and speculations. Most of these LCEs’ verbal manifestations show apparent distress on social media’s role in what they called “*virtualdestabilization*”. Respondent LCE 6 in his/her own words:

*“...sa social media patyon ka na, waray ka pa gani makabaton (awkward smirk) sa kuan...sa information diba? Murag i-close ka dayon bisag gamay ra ang imung kuan tua dayon ka sa 8888...” (Respondent LCE 6; Page 7; Line 208-210)*

*(Translation: Regardless of your response, in social media, you are unjustly persecuted. In unlikely circumstances, you will be endorsed to 8888.)*

Further, respondent LCE 6 noted in a furious voice, expressed his/her concerns that social media becomes an instrument that stages speculations. In his/her manifestation:

*“...kanang uban nga mga tawo: mga dautan mu-report na dayon ngadto (i.e. social media) mao ni...mao ni... bisag wa pa ohh...ginagmay la gani nimu nga kuan improve-improve i-report dayon kay naa kay kontra didto ahh...ipa kuan na ano pa kining ahh...ipa investigate dayon kay iyang wealth kuan dinha...na-unsu naba diri ni bisag ginagmay ra nga mga (laughs) empleyado...makita lang nga naa kay sakyanan i-report dayon...nangawat na (laughs)...” (Respondent LCE 6; Page 7; Line 211-216)*

*(Translation: There are people immediately reports false information in social media. When there are slight improvements, people reports and request concerned agencies to investigate my earnings.)*

Respondent LCE 3 noted that social media is undeniably used to circulate skeptical messages which becomes disadvantageous to most public and elected local officials. Respondent LCE 3 noted:

*“...people always believe what is being circulated but the truth if you are in the side of the truth...you are bad because of the influence of social media... ingun pa kung ano ang end yan ang maganda kung ano ang hindi end mali yan...so that is the bad effect of social media...” (Respondent LCE 3; Page 4; Line 132-133)*

*(Translation: People always believe what is being circulated in the social media; you are bad because of the influence of social media.)*

On the final note, respondent LCE 6 expressed his/her concerns that social media served as an instrument for defamatory conjectures most especially among social media users'. He/she noted:

*“...political magamit nila mao naman ang kuan karon bisag sa ilang campaign through social media...sila but gamiton mo sa isigkatawo nimu, pangdaot-daot...which is not good that's not good para sa akoa lugi lang ko sa social media kay dili man ko mupatul...dili nala pud ko mubasa, mao ray kuan ana...” (Respondent 6; Page 7; Line 223-225)*

*(Translation: Social media is used against political opponents but if you used social media in undermining others, that is not good. I would not stoop to their undesirable intentions.)*

This emergent theme is cognizant with social exchange theory which suggests that individual's political participation is as a result of his education, access to information, political interest, political knowledge and policy satisfaction (Inglehart,1977) and (Pattie & Seyd,2004). In this case, both citizens and local chief executives engage to their respective role that checks and balances their respective responsibilities. Further, this can be correlated with the study of Gil de Zuniga, Molyneux & Zheng, (2014); Pew (2014); & Weeks & Holber (2013) which manifests that social media allows citizens to consume, produce, distribute and comment on news and political information. In this scenario, constituents' and local chief executives exchanges information regardless of its content and nature of message delivery.

### **5.3. Third Emergent Theme (Impact of Social Media in Local Governance): *Social Media as “Fiscalizer”***

Majority of the local chief executives' out from their verbal manifestations suggested that social media and local governance presently correlates with their daily lives as elected officials. Respondent LCE 4 noted:

*“...at first talaga masisira ang serenity mo sa totoo lang especially if you have issues kasi na lalo sa probinsya karamihan dito (social media) ginagamit...” (Respondent 4; Page 4; Line 120-121)*

*(Translation: To be honest, it affects your personal life, your serenity most especially if you have issues. In our province social media is widely used.)*

Apparently, on the lighter side respondent LCE 3 noted that social media despite of its intrusive nature, social media becomes an outlet that eases personal tension and burden. He/she uttered:

*“...sometimes actually facebook, for me social media relieves tension ehh...stress, kasi even though I don't know personally my friends are most of them but through social media it helps me ahh...in a way... validate my service, myself, and also it creates new friends...” (Respondent 3; Page 4-5; Line 136-139)*

Respondent LCE 2 responded that social media's impact indeed influence their decision-making and in a way form a new wave of contemporary expression. He/she noted from his his/ her own words:

*“...currently, we are already in the period of millenials you should be internet savvy and you know how to use social media because people will always uhh... hang on it so you should... it is a must, the impact of social media in local governance it is now...it influences in every aspect in your decision-making ingun pa subliminally it governs the thinking of the people...” (Respondent LCE 2; Page 7; Line 232-235)*

On a final note, respondent LCE 6 suggested that social media validates his leadership and the local government he/she oversees. Respondent LCE 6 noted:

*“ (in social media) mas makahibaw ta dayon nga mao diay ni nahitabo, kung mao problema ngadto so atoang tagaan og pagtagad kung tinuod ba...” (Respondent LCE 6; Page 5; Line 150-151)*

*(Translation: In social media, we can immediately address and validate concerns.)*

*“...(social media) naa puy uban makatabang, naa say uban nga pang-demolish lang pero mas kusog ang information dissemination through social media...” (Respondent LCE 6; Page 5; Line 146-147)*

*(Translation: At some point social media can help, sometimes it is used to distract but through social media, information dissemination is efficient.)*

This emergent theme is cognizant with *Altercasting theory* which suggests that people behave according to their respective roles. In this case, local chief executives affirmed that public service compel these LCEs' to perform on what is accorded to them by the public as elected officials. In addition, Holzer & Kim (2008); Schorr & Stevens (2011); Arnstein (1969) claimed that through social media platforms and citizen engagement in government operations can precisely stimulate government workers to engage more directly in their work. Hence, creates mutual engagement

between local government units and their respective constituents', at least in virtual platform.

**5.4. Fourth Emergent Theme (Impact of Social Media in Local Governance): Social Media Creates Productive Dynamics to Local Governance**

Majority of the local chief executives' interviewed overwhelmingly agreed that social media creates an exclusive dimension in public service. It creates a new way of expression that preludes the conventional public management to a new level. Apparently, despite of this contemporary approach in local governance, still LCEs' admit that public service is a learning process and even inherited interests. Respondent LCE 3 noted:

*"...hindi sa pagmamalaki huh...ang pulitika nasa dugo rin yan ang hirap ka magtu-tuon maging public servant so talagang mahihirapan ka..." (Respondent LCE 3; Page 4; Line 111-112)*

*(Translation: Interests in politics is truly inherent, the only setback is if you did not learn the system, you will find it very odd.)*

In addition, respondent LCE 2 noted that social media is presently associated with public service, it forcibly compel any public and elected officials bound for public opinion. Through this new media it creates a unique dynamics between local government and their constituents'. Respondent LCE 2 uttered:

*"...(through social media) you are always bound for the public opinion, you are already judged even before trial... so that is the bar of public opinion. That's the negative impact..." (Respondent 2; Page 7; Line 244-245)*

Respondent LCE 2 however uttered that despite of social media's intrusive features; he/she never denied the fact that social media indeed is imperative in resolving predicaments within the local government level. Respondent LCE 2 noted from his/her own words:

*"...it will help the information what you gathered from the social media can help your decision-making in solving the problem..." (Respondent 2; Page 7; Line 243-244)*

Respondent LCE 5 suggested that social media is a significant tool that allows him/her to communicate with his/her constituents', at least virtually. Respondent LCE 5 from his/her own manifestations:

*"...social media in local governance, number one is for awareness: programs, projects; second is you can...you can use social media as a way for you to communicate with your constituents'. In my case, what I do is if there are any complaints, I directly reply to them, if there are ano...people who would like to complain or there are any problems, I think social media can slightly give us an advantage..." (Respondent 5; Page 5; Line 23-27)*

Respondent LCE 3 noted that through social media's post, people can determine the personality of their LCEs' and their level of personal diplomacy to the public. He/she noted:

*"...people can judge a person the way you talks, sends his message, his comments and reactions (social media) diba? Malalaman kung mayabang ba to, kung matapobre ba to, kung cowboy ba to..." (Respondent 3; Page 4; Ine 134-136)*

*(Translation: People can judge a person the way he talks, sends his message, his comments and reactions (social media). People can determine his attitude through social media.)*

On the final note, respondent LCE 4 manifested that social media gives opportunity for the public officials to rally their prospective projects, proposals, and accomplishments to the public. He/she noted:

*"...the constituents especially those who lived...nakatira sa abroad ahh...alam nila kung ano ang nangyayari, ano ang development, ano ang development, ano ang prospective na projects, proposals, ano yung pwedeng mangyari, what are the ano yung ini-expect nila na pe-pweden mangyari sa LGU ahh isa yun and what are the services na ginagawa ng LGU and siguro yun ang mga sa tingin ko positive..." (Respondent 4; Page 8; Line 270-274)*

*(Translation: Constituents living overseas, through social media, appreciates developments of the LGUs' prospective projects, proposal and the expectations of the people; the services of the local government and what is deemed necessary for our development.)*

This emergent theme is cognizant with *Manded Casting theory* which suggests that local chief executives' though social media are compelled to perform their mandate as locally elected public officials. Under immense pressure, social media shapes the dimension of public opinion which induces both local chief executives and their governance, address necessary measures to contain their constituents' array of virtual opinion. In addition, this can be associated in the article of the London-based newspaper, the Guardian which in their column manifests that citizens used social media to force interesting and responsive channels of decision-making. Hence, revives democracy and mutual relations between their immediate governments and constituents'.

## **Conclusion**

After a thorough analysis of the findings the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Local chief executives' considers social media as an inevitable tool that help the local government units' convey their plans and programs to their constituents.

2. The social media becomes a huge influence among local chief executives and the local government in the decision-making process with regards to their plans and programs.
3. The social media becomes a contemporary form of expression among constituents. However, these recent practice of social media revolution becomes the basis for baseless conjectures and defamatory contents which undeniably admitted by LCEs' as deliberate attack against the institution.
4. Social media prior, during and after natural disasters helped the local government units in mobilizing disaster response and mitigation units'. Majority of the local chief executives' considers social media as a major deterrent to any natural disasters. Further, social media provides safety mechanism to local government units to mitigate and respond disasters.
5. Social media provides symbiotic relationship among local government units and its constituents. Majority of the local chief executives' believed that social media promotes socio-economic development to their communities through online advertisements of their respective localities. Further, social media encourages mutual inclusiveness among communities which inconveniences of the public are expressed and deliberately taken into stringent consideration by the local government.
6. Social media however, were made into subversive and imprudent platform among users. Local chief executives' in the local government always remind their constituents to be responsible with social media usage. Conjectures and defamatory pronouncements made online becomes a tool that disturbs and misrepresent both the local government units programs and its people.
7. Social media becomes a deterrent against criminality and illegal drugs. Local chief executives' believed that social media established and provides vital information to the intelligence community and in the grassroots level particularly to the local government units.
8. Local chief executives' considers the idea that regardless of the complaints of their constituents online. Most of these LCEs' expressed that existing status quo hinders programs of the local government units. In this regard, the present system of bureaucracy which consists of a handful of regulating and constitutional bodies becomes a substantial "*buffer zone*" against "*red tape*" and other fraudulent activities in the government.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of the study, the eight (8) local government units must establish a centralized communications center to their respective political units to consolidate vital information into a central and unified communications server and unit in order to properly address pressing demands and needs of their constituents.

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