

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

The development of globalization provides opportunities through trade, capital, information, and people flows (Altman and Bastian, 2019). However, despite the economic, political, and technological advancements, the 21st century is characterized by a ‘combination of record-breaking inequality with record-breaking climate change’ where people struggle from both injustices and environmental crisis (Angus, 2016). The recent environmental problems coupled with economic and social turmoil mark the challenges of the contemporary world.

Environmental degradations occur on both global and national scale. Devastations caused by random climate occurrence and extreme weather events are staple in world news. Countless environmental disasters trigger actions from international organizations and governments. In the case of the Philippines, a country of more than 7,000 islands, its environment is at stake due to continuous various activities like deforestation, massive soil erosion, pollution of major river systems, destruction of coral reefs, and production of massive waste in urban areas (Soriano, 1995, 2-3). These threats which caused havoc to the common *tao* (person) are a sum product of capitalist and developmental agenda.

Despite these environmental risks, the Philippine efforts to uplift the environmental situation are reflected on numerous legal documents and policies. These actions are also revealed in the country’s school system. In 1998, through *Republic Act No. 8491*, a National Motto was codified which enshrined in its Great Seal the four national core values which are *Maka-Diyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, Makabayan* (God-fearing, humane, environmental, nationalist). These values serve as the guiding principles of the state in achieving its national and state goals. The Philippine state made it official that one of its national values should be anchored in being environmental (*makakalikasan*).



Figure 1.1 “Maka-Diyos, Maka-tao, Makakalikasan at Makabansa” incorporated into the Great Seal of the Philippines (Wikipedia)

National agencies in the Philippines also implemented these core values, particularly the Department of Education which is responsible in promoting the national values through education. In 2013, the Department of Education, through Order No. 36, stated that its vision, mission and core values are now anchored on the National Motto. The state, through its instrumentalities, revealed its manifest aims to mold the youth through the country’s educational system and ‘develop learners who are true citizens and patriots, who have a strong desire to serve the country and work for its betterment’.

After adopting the national core values as its own values, two years after, in 2015, the Department of Education issued Order No. 8 (Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Program) integrated these core values in the report card of the students. It has also translated the core values in to behavioral statements with indicators and behavioral indicators. The guide will be used by class advisers and teachers to give an accurate non-numerical rating on the core values of the learners in the report card. Together with these educational developments was the shift of the Philippine education system into the K-12 program for its basic education in recent years. The K to 12 Program covers Kindergarten and 12 years of basic education (six years of primary

education, four years of Junior High School, and two years of Senior High School [SHS]). It incorporates curriculum enhancement, childhood education, and specialized upper-secondary education (RA 10157 and RA 10533).

Adjustments in both the structural and education practices became pressing which are coupled with conceptual and economic issues of students. Being environmental has been manifested in numerous laws to address the environmental threats. Teaching about the environment has become an imperative. The passage of Republic Act No. 9512 known as the *National Environmental Awareness and Education Act of 2008* provided the legal scope and definition of environmental education:

Environmental education shall encompass environmental concepts and principles, environmental laws, the state of international and local environment, local environmental best practices, the threats of environmental degradation and its impact on human well-being, the responsibility of the citizenry to the environment and the value of conservation, protection and rehabilitation of natural resources and the environment in the context of sustainable development. It shall cover both theoretical and practicum modules comprising activities, projects, programs including, but not limited to, tree planting; waste minimization, segregation, recycling and composting; freshwater and marine conservation; forest management and conservation; relevant livelihood opportunities and economic benefits and other such programs and undertakings to aid the implementation of the different environmental protection law (RP, 2008).

Likewise, this law has designated the month of November of every year as the "Environmental Awareness Month" throughout the Philippines. Implementation of public education and awareness programs on environmental protection and conservation shall be done through collaborative interagency and multi-sectoral

effort at all levels as well capacity-building programs nationwide such as trainings, seminars, workshops on environmental education, development and production of environmental education materials, and teacher-education courses and related livelihood programs by various agencies (i.e. Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Other laws pertaining to the environment were also passed by the State. These laws are intended to utilize, protect, and preserve Philippine natural resources. These include the following: Republic Act No. 8749 – Philippine Clean Air Act (RP, 1999); Republic Act No. 9003- Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (RP, 2001); Republic Act No. 9275 – Clean Water Act (RP 2004); and Republic Act No. 9512 – National Environmental Awareness Act (RP 2008).

In a recent issuance of School Calendar for School Year 2019-2020 by the Department of Education (April 22, 2019), two celebrations were mentioned pertaining to environmental activities: The Zero Waste Month every January and World Environmental Day in June. It was President Benigno Aquino who signed Proclamation No. 760, S. 2014 declaring every month of January as “Zero Waste Month” wherein all heads of departments, agencies, and instrumentalities of the national government and other sectors are encouraged to extend their support and participate in the programs and activities to be held for this purpose. “Zero waste” is seen as a “goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use.” Likewise, the World Environmental Day (Presidential Proclamation 237, s. 1988) was signed by former President Corazon Aquino because there is “a necessity to heighten the environmental consciousness of our people and to generate greater participation and integration of efforts through the extended celebration of environmental protection concern and awareness in the country.”

All of these efforts could be well associated with concepts that have been promoted world-wide – the concepts of sustainability, sustainable development, and sustainable lifestyles. Generally accepted meaning of sustainability refers to the development that satisfies the needs of the present without compromising the capacity of future generations, guaranteeing the balance between economic growth, care for the environment and social well-being. It is integral to the concept of sustainable development which includes environmental, economic, and social aspects. These pillars of sustainability ensures the protection and rational use of nature, respect for people, communities, and culture, as well as, equal distribution of economic resources.

Since the Brundtland Report in 1987, various developments have been achieved in this field. Eventually, in 2002, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that called for a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD 2005–2014). A review of the following materials may assist in understanding the developments during this era: The Decade at a Glance (UNESCO, 2005a); The International Implementation Scheme for the Decade in Brief (UNESCO, 2005b); The Bonn Declaration (UNESCO, 2009); and the comprehensive report on DESD Shaping the Education of Tomorrow (Wals, 2012). In 2015, the adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) became the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations (UN) Member States, including the Philippines. The SDGs are aimed to transform the habits into a sustainable way. These goals are interconnected and address the global challenges including poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice.

Unfortunately, recent studies somehow reflect the difficulty to implement environmental ideas and policies. In a recent survey on sustainability, the Philippines' capital city, Manila, ranks among lowest in 2018 Sustainable Cities Index. Various news article headlines mention: 'Manila among least sustainable cities globally- report' (Rappler, 2018); 'Why Manila didn't fare well on list ranking world's most sustainable cities' (ABS-CBN, 2018); 'Manila ranks among

lowest in 2018 Sustainable Cities Index’ (GMA Network, 2018); ‘Manila among world’s least sustainable cities – report’ (Inquirer.net, 2018) and ‘Manila one of world’s least sustainable cities’ (Philstar Global, 2018). This environmental predicament, which is not only the situation of Manila but of any locality within the National Capital Region, showcases also the habit of consumption of individuals which is said to be anchored in a capitalist world.

Scholars argue that capitalism lead to the creation of a culture industry based on *false needs* due to an unavoidable mass-production whose end result is a monopoly over a homogenized and passive consumer audience (Durham-Peters cited by Ago, 2015). Marcuse believes that the drastic effect came in the beginning of the 20th century when free capitalism changed into an organized one where monopolies undermined the power and values of the individual which were now standardized by the culture industry (Ago, 2015) . Other scholars would argue this ‘catastrophic processes that Western reason has set in motion is identified with a contemporary mechanistic epistemology – *FIDUROD* (formal, intractable, decontextualized, universalistic, reductionistic, and one dimensional), an acronym created by critical pedagogue, Joe Kincheloe (2008). This critical complex epistemology emphasize the concept of process to knowledge production and curriculum development come to value obscured dynamics that situate the physical, socio-political, psychological, and educational domains in a ever-changing terrain (Kincheloe, 2008, 243).

To combat consumerism and materialistic mindset, concepts are utilized to do so which also relates to sustainability. A concept related to sustainability and sustainable development is *sustainable lifestyle*, a way of life which ‘refers to patterns of action and consumption, used by people to affiliate and differentiate themselves from others, which: meet basic needs, provide a better quality of life, minimize the use of natural resources and emissions of waste and pollutants over the lifecycle, and do not jeopardize the needs of future generations. Sustainable lifestyles reflect specific cultural, natural, economic and social heritage of each society’ (Mont 2007).

In light with all these movements, the Philippines should ride the wave of change and take advantage of the educational reforms and developments in the Philippines which could provide opportunities to advance sustainability and link local conceptions with pedagogical movements. With the emergence of environmental pedagogies, a path towards a usable approach to the teaching and learning of connections between environmental and social problems may be taken as an alternative environmental pedagogical model. Environmental pedagogies emerged to address the challenges posed by nature. These movements or practices include the environment as an essential part of human education which include environment-based pedagogies include environmental education, education for sustainable development, and ecopedagogy. In this situation, our schools may be our last hope and teachers as hope bearers. Likewise, it should be noted that teachers are key to the necessary change but the gaps between policy reformulation, teacher education and the classroom remain large (Sahlberg and Oldroyd 2010, 296). A deep understanding of education within sustainable development framework was best describe within the connections of aims and goals:

Education for sustainable development (ESD) aims to educate and enable students and citizens to contribute towards sustainable development by empowering people, through education, to shoulder their responsibility of creating a sustainable future. It seeks to engage people from all walks of life, in bringing about changes for a better world. The aim and objective of education should not be focused on mere grades but should strive beyond to instill fundamental values and awareness to mold responsible citizens who are not self-centered or self-biased. Providing quality education is not the sole responsibility of the Agency dealing with education. Stakeholders across sectors have a role to play in changing the way education is delivered and ensuring we make decisions are made for a better future (NEAAP, 2017).

1.2 Problem Formulation

Oftentimes, macro-structures define models and patterns of habits where structural patterns affect individual actions. However, given society's complex situation it would be interesting to provide links and connect environmental problems, teachers, pedagogy, and sustainable lifestyle. In the reality of great climate occurrences, a new lifestyle has been espoused which is known as 'sustainable lifestyle,' a standard of living that aims to moderate an individual's or society's use of natural and personal resources. Much has been written to explain and elaborate the concept of sustainability. However, various facets relating to this lifestyle emerged and needs to be discussed.

This study would like to contribute to the building blocks of information necessary to understand the perspective, habits, behavior of teachers espousing sustainable lifestyle at the grass roots. A grounded perspective on the dynamics of choice at a personal level by people, particularly school teachers, who are into sustainable lifestyle adds on the insights to further sustainable pedagogies.

This paper is about the lived experiences of sustainable lifestyle education practitioners/enthusiasts and how to utilize their experiences to create a pedagogical framework in teaching sustainable lifestyle. These pedagogical imperatives are characterized as an approach that emphasizes the use of data for improvement and views the classroom as laboratory where faculty see themselves as responsible for student learning. The research aims to address the following key research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of teachers who are into sustainable lifestyle?
2. What are the life stories/narratives/experiences of teachers who were converted into sustainable lifestyle?
3. What pedagogical elements can be inferred from their experiences that can be utilized in the classroom as pedagogical imperatives in sustainable lifestyle?

Critical questions were also formulated to solicit data from the respondents' experiences as well as gather their insights and conceptions about sustainable lifestyle. These essential questions are intended to showcase the individual's personal experiences to be able to further understand the dealings of the individual vis-a-vis the role of being a professional teacher in a school setting as practitioner of sustainable lifestyle.

As an Individual (Personal)

1. What experiences made you a Sustainable Lifestyle practitioner? Kindly tell your story in your journey to sustainable lifestyle? How long have you been practicing a sustainable lifestyle?
2. What were your initial challenges in shifting to a sustainable lifestyle? How did you overcome these challenges?
3. How have your family and friends reacted to your decision to adopt a sustainable lifestyle and how have you responded back? What support systems do you have now to maintain such lifestyle?

As a Teacher

1. As you practice a sustainable lifestyle, what are the common challenges in implementing sustainability/sustainable lifestyle projects inside the school?
2. Based on your experience, what do you think are the imperatives (or necessary conditions) in teaching sustainability in schools?
3. What conditions are needed to teach sustainable lifestyle effectively to students?
4. How should we teach sustainability to effect change in behavior of students?

4. How has shifting to sustainable lifestyle changed you (e.g., physical condition, perspectives, dealing with others)
5. Do you promote sustainable lifestyle to your family, relatives, and friends? How? What specific approaches and strategies do you apply? Could you describe them?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of the study is to extract pedagogical principles on sustainability from the lived experience of school teachers in the National Capital Region/ Metropolitan Manila, Philippines practicing 'sustainable lifestyle'. It aims to solicit narratives from actual experiences and identify patterns of transformation of educators who are into living this particular way of lifestyle. Thus, the essential insights (real-life reflections) from these experiences could be utilize to form a set of principles in promoting sustainable lifestyle in an urban setting.

The object of the study focuses on cases and experiences of educators who considered themselves as sustainable lifestyle enthusiasts.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

This study could provide addition insights in the development of pedagogical guides in the field of sustainability and environmental education. However, like any other research endeavor, this study has limitations which serve as opportunities for further research and study.

When this study was initially conceptualized, the bigger picture was to create a pedagogical model for sustainability that would be applicable on a national scale. But it was acknowledged to be a gargantuan task to be able to do a national survey of educators, develop a model, and test its validity and usability in a limited time. The advice given to the researcher was to limit and focus the study to a particular locality taking into consideration that proper contextualization and localization are both essential to be able to suggest possible frameworks relating to sustainability in schools.

The researcher, who lives in Manila, considered several factors that would be essential elements in the conduct of the research. First, the locality of the study would be within the bounds of Metropolitan Manila. This decision was due to the proximity of the area to the researcher. But aside from this practicality, familiarity and knowledge of the local conditions would be an advantage to better analyze the results of the study. The researcher also recognizes the need to utilize purposely an urban-rural classification. The assumption of the rural-urban differences in attitudes and behavior is largely influenced with the belief to differentiate the socio-economic conditions and habits between a rural and urban setting. The study aims to understand the dynamics of habits of educators in an urban locality (i.e. Metropolitan Manila) with its own peculiarity and uniqueness. The National Capital Region, with its highly populated territory, covers residential, commercial, and other urban land uses is a fitting locale to conduct the research. Urbanization is taken into account as part of the socio-structural factors that affect human behaviors. Consumerism is recognized to be a moving force in an urban area which directly affects environmental concerns and behaviors.

Methodological limitations are also present in the study. This qualitative research, because of its nature, poses a scarcity of respondents. Though the intended targets are teachers from all schools in Metro Manila, it is evident that the study yielded only a limited number of respondents. Likewise, aside from the availability of respondents, who are mostly from private institutions in Metro Manila, a gender

component also became apparent. Economic considerations incidentally also became a factor in the pursuit of respondents. Teachers, who are sustainable lifestyle practitioners, claim that the habit is challenging to many due to the perceived cost or the expensive value of performing this type of lifestyle. The highly selective criteria of respondents only highlighted the shortage of teacher practitioners which became part of the study. These limitations are the realities confronted by the researcher with the scarcity of ‘actual practitioners’ of sustainable lifestyle as a major challenge. Thus, all of these, resulted to a sample size which was limited to a highly select ‘qualified respondents’.

Lastly, given the novelty of the study, the gap (or a lack of prior research studies) on the topic on pedagogical imperatives relating to sustainable lifestyle in Metropolitan Manila is understandable. Recent studies on urbanization and development of the locality focus more on historical, socio-political, cultural, economic and environmental aspects. Also, pedagogical researches often include cognitive areas and learning processes intended for academic learning and a pedagogical perspective on environmental behavior and beliefs is not often explored. This research hopes to contribute to the literature of pedagogical studies on sustainable lifestyle and environmental education.

1.5 Usefulness of Research

The study’s importance is to present narratives of practitioners to better understand the dynamics of living and teaching sustainability. The study explores perspectives and habits of a sustainable lifestyle from a schoolteacher’s lens by identifying real life situations, individual transformations, and opportunities and challenges. The significance of the study is to provide a working knowledge and understanding of the mental and behavioral dealings of teaching and learning about sustainable lifestyle within the contextual experience of the educator-enthusiast.

By doing so, pedagogical principles for teaching sustainable lifestyle may be formulated to further the promotion of this movement for the environment which could be embedded in our school systems. Teaching and practice comprise two ends of the spectrum. One may teach but may lack the ability to practice. Thus, this study may provide a framework of praxis – from teaching to practice, bringing into a usable model that can be adapted by teachers and students. The study also provides local context and locates sustainable lifestyle among Filipino teachers. From the respondents' vast repertoire of praxis, the *Pedagogical Imperatives on Sustainable Lifestyle* (PISL), a set of pedagogical essentials, was derived to serve as a reference guide for schools' implementation of sustainable lifestyle.

While the Philippines subscribes to the mainstream environmental education and education for sustainable development, what seem to be lacking is a pedagogical approach anchored on local experience and analysis. To better explain beliefs and practices, it is necessary to dwell where knowledge, beliefs, and practices occur. Thus, it is also crucial to understand the predicaments and challenges of educating via perspectives and experiences of the pedagogue. The students might be the centerpiece of any educational program but it is the teacher's distinct position which harmonizes essential elements of learning. The qualities and the pedagogies that prepare young people to make a creative and collaborative contribution to national competitiveness and address global ecological challenges for a sustainable future are similar (Sahlberg and Oldroyd 2010, 287). Thus, any insight or reflection which emanates from actual teaching should be considered in the formulation of pedagogical practices. The teacher's location in a community provides a perspective of wisdom of the institutional and individual contexts and addressing the challenges head-on seem to be a worthy task.

“We seem to be so ashamed of ourselves that we attempt to conceal ourselves from our institutions. The effort to construct human institutions that could take on the pedagogical imperative of liberating our pedagogical imperatives in many dimensions of human life is an option we are fortunate to have as our choice” (Gordon, 2010, 34).