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Public Administration and Policy – An Asia-Pacific Journal (PAP) was first launched and jointly published by HKPAA and City University of Hong Kong in 1992. It was suspended in 2005 and re-launched in 2012 with the new co-publisher, the School of Professional Education and Executive Development (SPEED) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Since 2018, it has been published online in open access on the Emerald Insight Platform. This year marks the 30th anniversary of its first launch and the 10th anniversary of the re-launch and the 4th anniversary of online publication with Emerald.

PAP now publishes three issues with over twenty articles per year. It is indexed and abstracted by Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), CrossRef, EBSCO Discovery Service, Google Scholar, Health Research Premium Collection (ProQuest), Healthcare Administration Database (ProQuest), ProQuest Central, ProQuest Central Basic (Korea), ProQuest Central Essentials, ProQuest Central Student, Publicly Available Content Database (ProQuest), Summons (ProQuest) and WorldCat. Academics and practitioners in public administration, management, public policy, and related fields are welcomed to contribute papers to PAP.

The COVID-19 was declared as pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020 and it has infected more than 243 million people and caused the death of close to 5 million people worldwide as of October 2021 (Worldometer, 2021). Currently, a wide range of countries are still under the threat of the deadly coronavirus especially with the spread of the variants, whereas only very few countries have it under control through stringent quarantine measures and vaccinations. Wearing mask is an effective way of preventing the infection of COVID-19 which is well documented in the literature. An article in this issue will illustrate the value of wearing mask by example from the findings in the U.S. that implemented the mandatory mask wearing before 30 September 2020. Moreover, the coronavirus pandemic has caused significant turbulences and downturn in the world economy. Another article in this issue analyses the global economic cost of the pandemic and sheds lights on four key aspects which have been significantly affected and proposes how organizations can survive based on contingency theory.

Hong Kong has experienced a very serious social and political unrest in 2019. On 30 June 2020, China's National People's Congress passed the National Security Law in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) with the aim of stopping violence and the riots in Hong Kong. The National Security Law prohibits and punishes the crimes of secession, subversion, terrorist activities, and collusion with foreign countries or external forces to endanger national security (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2020). The Law is considered as an important tool to restore the stability of Hong Kong politically. An article in this issue discusses the political and social effects on the governance of HKSAR. In the past year and half, Hong Kong's social and political unrests have largely been stopped. However, the economic and business sectors are still severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and it might take another year before a full economic recovery can be seen.



Summary of articles

This third issue of 2021 consists of eight articles with two related to the above mentioned coronavirus pandemic, three on the Hong Kong and China political, legal and social contexts, one comparative analysis of China and Singapore's political leaders, one on India's economic revitalization programme, and one on Ghana's healthcare service respectively. A brief introduction of these articles is given below.

The first article on "The National Security Law: political and social effects on the governance of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" by Siu-kai Lau identifies the major political and social effects of the Law after its enactment on 1 July 2020 in Hong Kong. It is argued that such enactment has allowed Hong Kong not only to end its protracted political turmoil since its return to China in 1997, but will also generate the favorable conditions for long-term stability and effective governance in the territory. Specifically, it summarized that the Law has brought about significant changes in the political psychology of Hongkongers, the balance of power among different political forces, the ability of external forces to interfere in Hong Kong politics, the way Hong Kong is governed, the relationship between the government and the legislature, the activities in the educational and cultural sectors, and the behavior of the judiciary. This article would be of interest to scholars and people who are interested in the implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" in the HKSAR as well as Beijing's new policy towards Hong Kong in the aftermath of Hong Kong's unprecedented riots and violence.

The second article is "Upholding parental responsibility by family mediation - revisiting the role of the law for children in divorce in Hong Kong" by Sau-wai Law. Based on policies and documents reviews, and literal analysis of court guidance, this paper analyses the different contents and requirements of Practice Direction 15.10 (the process of family mediation) and Practice Direction 31 (the process of general mediation), evaluates their impact, and highlights the need to incorporate the spirit of family mediation into legislation to better protect children's interest in a family dispute. In an effort to promote parental responsibility-based negotiation in divorce proceeding, a missed opportunity in enacting the Children Proceedings (Parental Responsibility) Bill in 2015 might be a blessing in disguise as it offers another chance for policy makers to consider how to direct parties to negotiate and communicate, to seek and benefit from professional guidance on a continuous basis, and to seek alternative channels to resolve disputes other than the court room. The paper advocates a switch from a "rights-based" to "responsibility-based" approach in handling children's matters should be revisited by incorporating the spirit of family mediation into legislation.

The third article on "The Guangdong-Hong Kong nexus in grassroots collective actions amid Sino-Anglo interface, 1841 to 1927" by Kent Wan provides an analysis of the historical linkages between Chinese on both sides of the Sino-Hong Kong border during this period by examining important incidents of collective actions in the colony and Canton. Based on annual reports of the colonial administration in Hong Kong, especially those witnessed major incidents of anti-colonial agitations, this paper analyzes how British policymakers were confronted by collective actions mounted by Chinese in Canton and Hong Kong. This paper examines if a Cantonese regional solidarity served as the foundation for popular movements, which in turn consolidated a rising Chinese nationalism when Canton and Hong Kong were the focal points of mass actions against imperialism. It reveals that Hong Kong Chinese workers were vanguards of the modern Chinese revolutions that transformed not just their homeland, but their lives, allegiances, and aspirations as Chinese in a domain under foreign jurisdiction on Chinese soil, as their actions were emulated by their compatriots outside of South China, thus starting a chain reaction that culminated in the establishment of the Nanjing regime.

The fourth article on "How to select good leaders in Asian countries: the case of China and Singapore" by Franky K.H. Choi gives an analytical account of the ways adopted by the two

Asian political leaders, Deng Xiaoping of China and Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, in selecting their successors. Based on comparative historical analysis, as to the duo's succession results, Deng Xiaoping's selection of leaders was somewhat successful, while Lee Kuan Yew's was phenomenal. This indicates that good leaders could still be selected beyond universal suffrage, mainly because of the elites-driven context in both cases. It concludes that the means of selecting elites with the abilities and qualities defined by these political strongmen are lessons for countries practising Western-style democracy. Learning from the duo's leadership successions, the West may treat elite politics as the supplement under Western Electoral Democracies in order to avoid their countries falling into the trap of populism. The West could consider the exceptional criteria prized by the duo for leadership successions. Considering such interactions among elites in the real-life context, it could serve as an alternative model to Western-style democracy.

The fifth article is "A study of the effect of wearing face masks in preventing COVID-19 transmission in the United States of America" by Kazuyuki Suzuki, Tomonori Hasegawa, Noriaki Kano and Yoshihisa Okamoto. The article demonstrates the effectiveness of face mask wearing as a means to prevent COVID-19 transmission in U.S. The findings revealed that for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C. that implemented the mask mandates before 30 September 2020, the higher the mask wearing rate, the lower the number of COVID-19 cases. For the 23 states with mobility reduction of less than 15 percent, the higher the proportion of population required to wear masks, the lower the number of cases. The positive effect of wearing masks is shown based on simple descriptive statistics for intuitive and intelligible understanding, which may lead people to comprehend the importance of wearing masks, and break through their custom, culture, and norms, and wear masks. Through understanding the benefits of wearing masks, it is hoped to facilitate the change of societal behavior and more people are willing to wear face mask.

The sixth article is "The global economic cost of coronavirus pandemic: current and future implications" by Mian M. Ajmal, Mehmood Khan and Muhammad Kashif Shad. The prolonged movement control orders, social distancing, and lockdowns under the coronavirus pandemic have triggered global economic downturn, disrupted the demand and supply chains, and caused many jobs loss. This article summarizes that the world has witnessed far-ranging economic consequences in four aspects: (i) decline in personal consumption; (ii) decline in the investments and stock prices in capital market; (iii) decline in government spending in developmental projects and increase in new borrowing; and (iv) decline of exports of goods to international markets. Based on contingency theory, the article suggests the need for urgent actions by the world leaders to oversee, anticipate, and manage the risks and cushion the economic consequences. It concludes that the flexibility and adaptability of leaders, effectiveness, workforce protection, efficient use of modern technology, including automation and artificial intelligence, would enhance the resilience of supply chains which will support organizations to sustain in this critical time.

The seventh article is "Impact of an economic revitalization programme on export and employment generation: a case study of One District One Product Programme in Uttar Pradesh, India" by Aditya P. Tripathi and Noopur Agrawal. This paper discusses the role of the economic revitalization programme, One District One Product (ODOP) implemented in the state of Uttar Pradesh of India in 2018, examine its strategy, and analyze its impact on employment generation, export promotion and economic growth of the state. Based on case study approach, this article illustrates the positive impact of the systematically crafted ODOP programme. Nevertheless, for desired success, it signifies the inevitability of active participation and engagement of public that has always been a precarious subject in the literature of public administration and governance. The motive-approach matrix offers a guiding live example for other states/countries to successfully implement ODOP programme which is a transformational step for realizing the true potential of each district. Strategies like

ODOP may serve as an agent of change and be of immense help to governments in solving the problems of economic inequalities and regional imbalances.

The last article “Quality healthcare services under National Health Insurance Scheme in Ghana: perspectives of health policy implementers and beneficiaries” by Daniel Dramani Kipo-Sunyehzi examines the factors that affect the quality of healthcare services in the implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) at the local level in Ghana from the perspectives of health policy implementers and beneficiaries in public-private organisations. By adopting a mixed research method with both over 100 participants took part in the interviews and the questionnaire survey, the study found that from the implementers’ perspectives, these factors greatly affect the quality of healthcare services — referrals, effectiveness in monitoring, timeliness, efficiency, reimbursement, compliance with standard guidelines of Ghana Health Service (GHS) and accreditation process. For the beneficiaries, three factors are important, including medical consultations, diagnostic services and the supply of drugs and medicines. The study found that implementers and beneficiaries exhibited a mixed reaction on accessing some healthcare services as where the implementers perceived that beneficiaries have more access to such services, the beneficiaries think otherwise.

I wish to thank all the authors for contributing their papers to this issue and the reviewers for their critical but constructive comments in helping the authors to improve their papers. Finally, I thank Emerald and our editorial team as well as the members of both Asia Pacific Editorial Board and International Editorial Advisory Board for their contributions in making the successful publication of this issue possible. We hope these papers will enhance the understanding of various issues on public administration and policy across the regions.

Peter K.W. Fong

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About the Editor-in-Chief

Professor Peter K.W. Fong, PhD (New York University), is President of Hong Kong Public Administration Association and Editor-in-Chief of PAP Journal. He teaches strategic management and supervises DBA students’ dissertations of University of Wales TSD and lectures Public Policy Values and Ethics at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He held Advisory/Visiting Professorships in Tongji, Tsinghua, Renmin, Tianjin Universities and HK Poly U. He has been members of HK Institute of Planners & Planning Institute Australia. He was a Teaching Fellow of Judge Business School, University of Cambridge; Director of EMBA programme, HKU Business School; Associate Professor, Department of Urban Planning, HKU; Executive Vice President of City University of Macao; Honorary Professor, China Training Centre for Senior Civil Servants in Beijing; Studies Director, Civil Service Training & Development Institute, HKSAR Government; Visiting Scholar, MIT; Director, Delta Asia Bank; Consultant, the World Bank. Peter K.W. Fong can be contacted at: fongpeter@netnavigator.com

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The National Security Law: political and social effects on the governance of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to identify the major political and social effects of the Hong Kong National Security Law on Hong Kong. It is argued that the enactment of this Law allows Hong Kong not only to end its protracted political turmoil since its return to China in 1997, but also will generate the favorable conditions for long-term stability and effective governance in the territory.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper is based on the author's close observation of what had happened in Hong Kong in the year since the Hong Kong National Security Law came into effect on 1 July 2020.

Findings – The Hong Kong National Security Law has brought about significant changes in the political psychology of Hongkongers, the balance of power among different political forces, the ability of external forces to interfere in Hong Kong politics, the way Hong Kong is governed, the relationship between the government and the legislature, the activities in the educational and cultural sectors, and the behavior of the judiciary.

Originality/value – This paper would be of interest to scholars and people who are interested in the implementation of “One Country, Two Systems” in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) as well as Beijing's new policy towards Hong Kong in the aftermath of Hong Kong's unprecedented riots and violence.

Keywords National Security Law, Hong Kong, “One Country, Two Systems”, Governance

Paper type Viewpoint

Introduction

On 30 June 2020, the National People's Congress passed the “Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region” (referred to as the “Hong Kong National Security Law”) and officially implemented it in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2020). The legislative purpose is to implement the decision made at the end of 2019 by the Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on “establishing and improving the legal system and implementation mechanism of the special administrative region to maintain national security”, thereby filling in the serious vulnerability left behind by the failure of Hong Kong SAR in completing the enactment of Article 23 of the Basic Law. The vulnerability that has been in existence after the reunification has not only made Hong Kong a long-term hidden danger and threat to national security, but also the chief culprit of Hong Kong's political instability and ineffective governance. The internal and external hostile forces have incessantly and relentlessly exploited the vulnerability to stir up troubles in Hong Kong, thus unscrupulously undermining the implementation of “One Country, Two Systems”



in the territory; inciting Hongkongers to confront the central and local authorities; disrupting the governance of the SAR; stifling the prosperity, stability and development of Hong Kong; and causing the various longstanding deep-seated contradictions to become increasingly serious. In the past decade, the internal and external hostile forces had become stronger and aggressive (Lau, 2017). They not only tried to use violence to seize Hong Kong's jurisdiction and paralyze the governance of the SAR, but also acted as chess pieces of the United States and other Western powers to curb the rise of China and hinder the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (Vittachi, 2020).

The Hong Kong National Security Law

The Hong Kong National Security Law is a law aimed precisely at cracking down on the riots in Hong Kong. Its purpose is to prohibit and punish the crimes of secession, subversion, terrorist activities, and collusion with foreign countries or external forces to endanger national security. These four serious crimes have frequently occurred in Hong Kong since its return to China, especially in the past three years, and have made it impossible for the SAR government to achieve effective governance in a context of endless political turmoil.

After the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law, instant and encouraging effects on the political situation and governance of the SAR have been produced. To this day, the riots in Hong Kong have largely subsided, and what remain are some sporadic resistance, violence and terrorist activities. A lot of people involved in the riots have been arrested, prosecuted, remanded, put on trial, imprisoned, or have escaped, emigrated or disappeared. Many anti-China and anti-Hong Kong organizations have disbanded, suspended activities, died down, or operated in a low-key manner. The vast majority of opposition members in the Legislative Council have already left and can no longer interfere with the administration of the SAR government by paralyzing the operation of the legislature. The new oath taking system has forced most of the radical district council members to lose their seats and can no longer turn the district councils into a platform for political struggles (Lau, 2021). The civil service team has completed the oath taking procedures and its discipline has improved. The dissidents inside the civil service have been effectively curbed. The *Apple Daily*, which played a key role in the riots, has ceased publication and the persons in-charge have also been held criminally liable. In the past year, the political situation and governance of the SAR had witnessed significant improvements.

Political and social effects on governance

As a legal measure, the power and deterrence of the Hong Kong's National Security Law are obvious. However, when analyzing and evaluating the effectiveness of the Hong Kong National Security Law, we must not only pay attention to its legal effects, but also its political and social effects. It can be said that the Hong Kong National Security Law has created a political and social environment conducive to the effective governance and long-term stability in the SAR in several aspects.

First of all, the Hong Kong National Security Law has completely changed the political culture and psychological expectations of most Hongkongers, thus making them no longer willing or daring to participate in political actions that challenge the central authorities and the SAR government. As a result, the governance of the SAR can proceed in a more stable and rational context. For a long time, under the bewitchment and indoctrination of the hostile forces at home and abroad, a lot of Hongkongers, especially the young people, lacked the awe for the central authorities and the SAR government whom they even considered to be weak and easy to bully. These people believed that as long as Hongkongers could launch large-scale protests to undermine Hong Kong's prosperity and stability, and with the support of external forces as well as their threats to China, the central authorities would, because of the unbearable pressures, inevitably succumb and let the internal and external hostile forces to

seize more political powers. They believed that Hong Kong was extremely important to the country, and the central authorities were very afraid of the eruption of any riot that might endanger the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and damage to its economic value to the country. Moreover, they felt that China was also worried about Western sanctions on Hong Kong and China. In order to avoid Western sanctions and the disruption of Sino-Western relations, the central authorities would definitely take a low-key and compromising response to the challenges of the internal and external hostile forces, and reluctantly satisfy their political ambitions in whole or in part (Lau, 2020, pp.170-180).

The central authorities' decisive action in formulating the Hong Kong National Security Law and the rigorous enforcement of the Law by the Hong Kong SAR government have completely shattered their original psychological expectations of the response of the central authorities and the SAR government and made them deeply aware of the central authorities' great determination, courage and ability in safeguarding national security, the "One Country, Two Systems", and the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong. At the same time, it instills into them a clear understanding of the hefty price that Hong Kong and themselves will have to pay when engaging in and supporting illegal and violent acts. At present, Hong Kong society's aspiration for and emphasis on stability, law and order, an end to violence, and robust rule of law are rising. Even though some Hongkongers are still unable to adapt to the swift appearance of the Hong Kong National Security Law and thus remain resentful, or even continue to resort to confrontational words and deeds, in the end, I believe that most of them will accommodate themselves to the new political reality. They will dare not or avoid doing things that endanger the stability and order of Hong Kong.

Second, the Hong Kong National Security Law has dealt a devastating blow to Hong Kong's opposition, thus greatly diminishing their space for survival and development. All along, the opposition has incessantly and unscrupulously exploited the deficiencies and loopholes in Hong Kong's national security laws and enforcement mechanisms to carry out "anti-China, anti-communist and anti-government" propaganda and mobilization. These actions will be difficult to organize and carry out after the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law. The opposition has therefore lost their most important "trump card". More and more Hongkongers will no longer be so easily incited and mobilized by the opposition because of the existence of the Hong Kong National Security Law. This has greatly weakened the opposition's ability to launch large-scale political struggles in Hong Kong. Today, the opposition has been utterly routed as their ability at organization, leadership, and resources are severely lacking, and they have no place in the governance structure of the SAR. Their protest actions are also subject to severe legal constraints. The opposition has not only lost the boldness and temerity of the past, but also has a rather bleak future. The more deadly blow to the opposition is that the tricks that they used to incite Hongkongers in the past have become ineffective. More and more people in Hong Kong no longer believe in the various "sure win" myths that the opposition repeatedly put forward in the past. They no longer believe that supporting and participating in their protest actions will achieve their stated goals and will bring themselves and Hong Kong a better tomorrow. On the contrary, this unprecedented and extremely destructive riot has prompted many Hongkongers to deeply reflect and introspect on the past actions of the opposition, and feel remorse and resentment for being deceived by the opposition for such a long time. This explains why, whilst the people in "patriotic" camp are shaking hands and celebrating, the Hong Kong people react so coldly and indifferently towards the arrest and imprisonment of a large number of opposition leaders, the fact that anti-China and anti-Hong Kong elements cannot enter the governance structure, the shutting down of many opposition organizations and media, and the prohibition of many demonstrations and protest activities by the Hong Kong police. It can be said that the long-standing ability of the opposition to obstruct the administration of the SAR government would come to an end.

Third, the Hong Kong National Security Law has greatly boosted the morale, courage and sense of responsibility of the “patriotic” camp. Under the leadership of the central authorities and with the strong backing of the Hong Kong National Security Law, the “patriots” have actively participated in combating the violence and chaos in Hong Kong, thus giving the anti-China and anti-Hong Kong elements and external forces a hard hit and severely suppressing their hubris and arrogance. They actively support and respond to the central authorities’ policies and arrangements to rectify the situation. Through the training derived from taking part in political struggles, the “patriotic” camp now is more united and more combative than before as well as more capable of supporting the administration of the SAR government.

Fourth, the Hong Kong National Security Law has severely cracked down on the external forces and exposed their hypocrisy and unreliability. Under the Hong Kong National Security Law, it will be difficult for the opposition to collude with external forces and obtain their support and funding. Likewise, the external forces will find it hard to make use of their agents in Hong Kong to foment political unrest. Whether they are the Western forces or Taiwan independence elements, after the Hong Kong National Security Law came into effect, they have maintained a low-key posture. Some foreign organizations have in fact withdrawn from Hong Kong. Of course, the external forces will never give up. They will certainly continue to encourage and support the opposition in Hong Kong from abroad by verbally criticizing the central authorities and the SAR government, providing “escape doors” to the rioters, imposing various sanctions on Hong Kong, discrediting and disparaging Hong Kong internationally, damaging Hong Kong’s investment environment, and finding ways to get Hong Kong’s talents and money to leave Hong Kong, etc. However, Hongkongers are quite aware of the fact that the external forces are absolutely incapable of changing the determination and policies of the central authorities in safeguarding national sovereignty and security in Hong Kong. On the contrary, the actions of external forces have caused more Hongkongers to see more clearly the treacherous intention of external forces in making use of Hong Kong to contain China’s rise. The opposition and its supporters have always placed high hopes on the support and “protection” of the external forces, and especially hope that they will issue severe warnings and threats to China and Hong Kong. However, the support and care that they have actually received are far below their expectations, thus making many of them feeling chilly and uncomfortable as if they had become the “abandoned children” of the external forces. As more and more opposition figures and Hongkongers realize that the external forces are malicious, hypocritical and unreliable, the political influence of the external forces in Hong Kong is expected to decline continuously.

Fifth, the Hong Kong National Security Law has given the SAR government powerful legal means. This has greatly enhanced the SAR government’s ability, determination and responsibility to protect national security and Hong Kong’s stability, and significantly strengthened the SAR government’s law enforcement capabilities. With the Hong Kong National Security Law, some of the Hong Kong’s original laws relating to safeguarding national security and Hong Kong stability, such as the Public Security Ordinance and the Criminal Offences Ordinance, have been “activated” and decisively applied. In the past year, the SAR government had significantly increased its will and boldness to curb the chaos, and to crack down on the radical anti-China riots in Hong Kong. Up to now the achievements in this regard are quite obvious. The National Security Service under the Police Force of the Special Administrative Region government has decisively enforced the Hong Kong National Security Law. So far, more than 100 people have been arrested and prosecuted for violating the Law. Even more people have been punished for violating other Hong Kong laws relating to the protection of public order and public safety. The National Security Office established by the central authorities in Hong Kong not only is the “rampart” safeguarding national security, but also provides strong support and the necessary assistance to the SAR government.

Sixth, the Hong Kong National Security Law has brought about gratifying changes in the relationship between the executive and the legislature. The opposition forces in Hong Kong, for a long time, have been using their presence in the Legislative Council to interfere with the operation of the Council by various “filibuster”, “head-counting” and other disgraceful means, thereby obstructing the work of the SAR government. At the same time, they rejected the “legitimacy” of the SAR’s political system on grounds of the failure of governance in the SAR. With the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law and the successive promulgation of other major measures by the central authorities, the so-called “Council Front” of the anti-China forces in Hong Kong has completely collapsed. The vast majority of opposition members have been forced to leave the Legislative Council, and thenceforth, incapable of doing any harm to the Council. Today, the executive-legislative relationship is harmonious and smooth, and has fully fulfilled the intentions of the Basic Law to install an “executive-led” political system and setting up the principle of “the executive and the legislature cooperating as well as checking and balancing each other but with cooperation coming first”. Today, the efficiency of the Legislative Council is unprecedentedly high. The SAR government has, on one hand, fulfilled its constitutional responsibility to the Legislative Council and, with the support of the Council, has greatly accelerated the speed of legislation and allocation of funds, and, on the other hand, significantly improved the effectiveness of its governance. The most prominent example is undoubtedly that the Legislative Council was able to pass within a very short period of time the local laws to implement the decisions of the National People’s Congress and the prescriptions of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on the reform of Hong Kong’s electoral system, thus enabling the three upcoming important elections to be held in succession in Hong Kong.

Seventh, the Hong Kong National Security Law has provided a good and rare opportunity to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government to practise active governance. After the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law, the SAR government has made significant progress in many fronts under a politically stable situation. This is mainly manifested in the acceleration of the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Guangdong-Hong Kong cooperation, Shenzhen-Hong Kong cooperation, development of the innovation and high technology industries; prevention and control of the COVID-19 epidemic; enhancement of labor rights, poverty alleviation, and people’s livelihood improvement. All these works will help to gradually resolve the deep-seated contradictions in Hong Kong society in the long run.

Eighth, the role of the Hong Kong National Security Law in the ideological fields of society, education, media, social media, culture, law, movies, art, and religion is becoming more and more obvious. The cessation of publication of the anti-China and anti-communist *Apple Daily* is a landmark and signal achievement. For a long time, the opposition and external forces in Hong Kong have held a dominant position in these areas, and therefore have gained the “right to speak” on many problems and issues, thus producing very bad influence in society, particularly on the young people. After the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law, many influential people in those fields are still trying every means, such as “spin the side ball” or hidden methods to conduct “soft confrontation” without evidently “violating” the Law. By doing so, they aspire to continue the dissemination of information and ideas that would foster admiration of and worship for Western institutions and values, and therefore would be unfavorable to the CCP, the central authorities, China, and the SAR government. However, the deterrent power of the Hong Kong National Security Law is gradually showing up even in those fields. Today and in the future, the SAR government will continue to work hard to crack down on the anti-China and anti-communist media and organizations. It will strengthen its management of the internet to eliminate false information, bullying, “doxing” and incitement. It will also tighten its supervision over artistic and cultural works and activities, suppress all kinds of “soft confrontation” behaviour, rectify the

intransigent Radio and Television Hong Kong, punish the teachers who commit dereliction of duty and sanction the radical students. We have clearly seen that some of the leading figures and organizations in those ideological fields have become vigilant, apprehensive and restrained, thus freeing up spaces for the central authorities, the SAR government and the “patriots” to undertake various cultural, ideological, and educational works and hopefully to regain the “right to speak”. At the same time, the SAR government is strengthening the curriculum of Chinese History for the schools, replacing the broadly criticized Liberal Studies with Citizenship and Social Development with the purpose of enhancing patriotic education, and organizing and promoting various extracurricular activities to help improving students’ patriotic identification with the nation (Education Bureau, 2021).

Ninth, the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law and the determination of the central authorities and the SAR government to set things right, coupled with Hong Kong people’s desires for stability and order, have formed a social and political atmosphere that is bound to impact on the judiciary. More and more judges are inclined to be strict with those who have participated in the riots, and accordingly have imposed appropriate and deterrent sentences on those who have been convicted. The situation in the past where too many light sentences were delivered by some of the judges has changed palpably. At the same time, the judiciary also knows that after the principle of “patriots’ administering Hong Kong” is fully implemented, the SAR government and the Legislative Council dominated by the “patriots” will work together to amend the laws and raise the minimum penalties if the courts are found to be too lenient to the offenders who have harmed national security and social stability. When necessary, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress will also explain the relevant provisions of the Basic Law to make sure that they are correctly understood and applied by the judges. In order to maintain the trust of all parties towards the judiciary, the courts in Hong Kong are expected to actively support and cooperate with the central authorities and the SAR government in safeguarding national security and public order, and thus contributing to the long-term stability of Hong Kong.

Finally, the Hong Kong National Security Law has provided a solid foundation for the comprehensive realization of “patriots’ administering Hong Kong” and the long-term stability of Hong Kong. The Hong Kong National Security Law and other central authorities’ measures to bring order out of chaos have not only made it hard for the opposition to gain a foothold in society, but also made it difficult for them to enter into Hong Kong’s governance structure. In the past, patriotic forces were bullied and persecuted by the internal and external anti-China and anti-Hong Kong elements in society and within the governance structure. This has hampered the development of “patriotic forces” to a certain extent. The situation will inevitably be changed in the future and will be beneficial to the growth and unity of the “patriotic forces”. After the elimination of the interference and sabotage of anti-China and anti-Hong Kong elements, all walks of life in Hong Kong, under the leadership and urging of the central authorities and the SAR government and the “patriotic camp”, will concentrate on solving the deep-seated economic, social, and livelihood issues in Hong Kong. More social elites will actively join the “patriotic camp” to help resolving those practical problems. Without any doubt, “patriots’ administering Hong Kong” is the prerequisite for the realization of good governance, and the Hong Kong National Security Law is an indispensable condition for achieving this prerequisite.

All in all, the Hong Kong National Security Law has established a solid political and social foundation for the long-term stability of Hong Kong.

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Upholding parental responsibility by family mediation: revisiting the role of the law for children in divorce in Hong Kong

Upholding
parental
responsibility

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to analyse the different requirements of Practice Direction 15.10 (which governs the process of family mediation in Hong Kong) and Practice Direction 31 (which governs the process of general mediation in Hong Kong), and to highlight the need to incorporate the spirit of family mediation into legislation to better protect children’s interest in a family dispute.

Design/Methodology/approach – The paper reviews and compares the content on Practice Direction 15.10 and Practice Direction 31 issued by Chief Justice of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal, and adopts interpretative and analytical approaches to evaluate their impact.

Findings – In an effort to promote parental responsibility-based negotiation in divorce proceeding, a missed opportunity in enacting the Children Proceedings (Parental Responsibility) Bill in 2015 might be a blessing in disguise as it offers another chance for policy makers to consider how to direct parties to negotiate and communicate, to seek and benefit from professional guidance on a continuous basis, and to seek alternative channels to resolve disputes other than the court room. The policy and the law advocating a switch from a “rights-based” to “responsibility-based” approach in handling children’s matters should be revisited by incorporating the spirit of family mediation into legislation.

Originality/value – Analyses are conducted through direct contextual review and documentary research. This paper conducts literal analysis of court guidance and unveils policy implications for the general public. It would be of interest to judicial officers, scholars and government officials concerning children’s rights and parental responsibility in divorce proceedings.

Keywords Family mediation, Civil Justice Reform, Hong Kong public policy, Children’s rights, Rights-based negotiation, Responsibility-based negotiation

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The notion that parents are best positioned to resolve family matters involving children is deeply rooted in our society but what if the parents have decided to separate and are hostile towards each other? Resorting to litigation may be one way out but just as the Chinese proverb puts it, “*Even the upright judge finds it hard to settle family matters.*” A Working Group appointed by the Chief Justice in 1997 recognized that a non-adversarial approach in resolving disputes arising from marital breakdown would minimize the attendant trauma and acrimony which may adversely affect the welfare of children, and that the parties are more likely to comply with the agreement (Hong Kong Legislative Council, 1999), the Judiciary accepted the recommendation of the Working Group and launched a 3-year Pilot

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Scheme on Family Mediation in 2000 (“Pilot Scheme”). The result of the Pilot Scheme was promising. Over 70 percent of family cases submitted to court were suitable for family mediation of which 70 percent had successfully reached full settlement using an average of 10 hours per case. It has saved over 204 court days (Judiciary of HKSAR, 2021). The process was highly regarded as an efficient process and has been made permanent since then. The Chief Justice issued the Practice Direction 15.10 – Family Mediation (“PD15.10”) (Chief Justice, 2012a) which first came into effect in April 2000, laying down the procedure to conduct family mediation in matrimonial proceedings. A coordination office which is now called the “Integrated Mediation Office” has been established to assist parties who are seeking family mediation services. A booklet “Family mediation: guide to court services” (“The booklet”) (Hong Kong Judiciary, 2019) has also been published to provide further guidance to the public.

This paper explores what it takes to better protect children’s interest in matrimonial disputes through the promotion of family mediation. Two documents issued by the Judiciary were examined: the PD15.10 (Chief Justice, 2012a) and Practice Direction 31 – Mediation (“PD31”) (Chief Justice, 2014). They provide supplemental protocols to assist in the conduct of mediation in court proceedings. Through critical analysis and comparative studies of the two documents, this paper seeks to re-draw stakeholders’ attention to the function of family mediation and advocates that negotiation on children’s post separation arrangement should be child-centric and be based on parental responsibility rather than parental rights over the children. To this effect, the unsuccessful attempt to enact the Proposed Bill of Children Proceedings (Parental Responsibility) Bill in 2015 (“the Proposed Bill”) (Hong Kong Labour and Welfare Bureau, 2015) might well be a “blessing in disguise” in a sense that the stakeholders now have more time to reflect on whether the paradigm shift can be achieved through a consensual approach such as family mediation (e.g., Lynch, 2019). It also allows the Administration to adopt a wholesale approach in perfecting the law, policy, and professional assistance required to create a more meaningful impact.

The comparison of the two documents appears to suggest that the court could have provided more information in aiding lawyers and parents to adopt family mediation in resolving children-related matters, yet relying on the Practice Direction alone might not achieve this purpose. For example, the role of the integrated office which monitors and ensures the quality of family mediators, and the smooth administration of the process could be made more explicit to the public through the booklet. Also, family mediation could be made a necessary or even mandatory process should the Children Proceedings (Parental Responsibility) Bill be proposed again.

Mediation and family mediation

What is mediation and family mediation

There is no unified definition for “mediation”. The word can trace its root back to the word “*mediatus*”, with Latin meaning “placed in the middle”. It is now commonly referred to a process in which an acceptable, impartial, and neutral third party who has no adjudicative power, intervenes in a dispute or a negotiation and assists the parties thereto in reaching a mutually acceptable settlement or agreement voluntarily (Moore, 2003). It is often held in private (Yarn, 1999), and the third party applies dispute settlement techniques in relation to negotiation process so that the disputants’ minds could be influenced in a way towards settlement (Davis and Dugan, 1982). The core elements of mediation are voluntary, non-binding, and the process itself is also flexible. The decision-making authority rests with the participants themselves. Participants are encouraged to make an informed decision which not only recognizes the legal merit, but also their needs, cultural differences, variations in

style, and future relationship between the disputants. The mediator facilitates the communication among the disputants (Leung, 2014).

Mediation (or general mediation) differs from litigation mainly in four aspects. First, the timing and procedure of mediation is determined by disputants whilst litigation is controlled by tactics and procedural law. Second, mediation is consensual in nature where parties agree upon an outcome, whereas litigation is adjudicative in nature where the judge or tribunal decides the outcome in accordance with the facts and the law. Third, disputants could choose their own mediators in mediation but not the judge in litigation. Fourth, litigation is mostly conducted in public whilst mediation mostly in private. The benefits of mediation have been widely recognized. It saves the parties' and court's time and costs. It promotes early settlement of dispute and the outcome is usually customized. There is a high compliance rate as the parties voluntarily entered into the agreement or settlement. In some cases, it also helps to preserve the parties' relationship. That said, not all cases are suitable for mediation. Where parties fail to settle, it will add to the costs of litigation. Unlike a court order which can be directly enforced, a mediated settlement agreement is a contract and can only be enforced through litigation.

Family mediation has a similar definition. It is a problem-solving process designed to help separating or divorcing couples to reach their own mutually acceptable agreements regarding the on-going arrangements of their children and related matters. It is a non-adversarial, co-operative decision-making process for issues relating to certain family matters. The family mediation booklet further narrows the scope to only issues arising out of separation and divorce (Hong Kong Judiciary, 2019). Family mediation often has special features of (i) allowing parties to vent their emotions and have them acknowledged and mutualized during the process (Leung, 2014); (ii) engaging parties in the discussion of the parental role relating to child custody, care, control, and support, as well as access to the child (Leung, 2014); (iii) assessing the family resources upon marriage break down (Leung, 2014); and (iv) catering for the power imbalance between husband and wife, if any (Shapiro, 2017). The differences between family mediation and court proceedings are similar to those cited above, except cases in the Family Court in Hong Kong are heard in private.

Mediation model

There is no one-size fit all practice or model for mediation. The metamodel which provides a systematic framework for mediation could be largely described under six mediation practices, namely, the settlement mediation, facilitative mediation, transformative mediation, expert advisory mediation, wise-counsel mediation, and tradition-based mediation (Alexander, 2008). It could be facilitated towards two dimensions depending on the nature of the dispute: an intervention dimension and interaction dimension. The former deals mainly with the process and problem, such as when to have joint or separate meetings, defining the issues in dispute and when the mediator should intervene in an exchange between the parties. The latter varies among (i) positional bargaining – the back and forth of offers and counteroffers; (ii) interest-based negotiation – the exploration of needs and concerns; and (iii) dialogue – the immediate focus of which is the patterns of interaction between the parties (Alexander, 2010). The intervention of a mediator can also be broadly divided into the facilitative model and the evaluative model. In a facilitative mediation, the mediator intervenes only with the process and will not express an opinion on the merits of the parties' respective cases albeit he or she may cast doubt upon the parties' positions on legal merits, or other matters. On the contrary, an evaluative mediator may assess the merits of the parties' case, predict how a judge or jury would react to the argument or proposition, and inform the parties of his/her assessments.

Family mediation is usually a mix of different approaches. Yet in general, family mediation practitioners usually make it clear that they will facilitate the mediation where children's best

interests will put before the parents (HKMAAL, 2021). Some mediation will be child-inclusive mediation where special techniques will be applied to interview the children involved so as to understand their needs and emotions, and the person interviewing the children is usually different from the family mediator. In any child-focused practice, ventilation of emotion and maintenance of relationship between the separating couple are critical. In a family mediation, the process might involve psychology, counselling, and social work, which also address feelings and relationships, encourage participation towards a mutually agreeable solution, a solution that meets different needs and protects the interest of parties (Irving, 2002). Nowadays, separating couples can also appoint Private Family Adjudicators to resolve their disputes. This was firstly initiated on 19th January 2015 for a 3-year pilot scheme under Practice Direction on the Pilot Scheme on the Private Adjudication of Financial Disputes in Matrimonial and Family Proceedings – SL9 (Chief Justice, 2020). There are several organizations providing mediation services such as the Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council (2021) and the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society (2021).

Advocating family mediation: brief overview of the global and Hong Kong perspectives

Research has shown that family mediation could be an effective mechanism for a win-win situation. Also, there is an increasing need to reduce the potential negative effects of divorce (e.g., Cohen and Weitzman, 2016; Rudd *et al.*, 2015). Hence adopting family mediation has been a global trend (Hong Kong Legislative Council, 1999).

In Hong Kong, a recent study has shown family mediation benefits the children. Parents reported that mediation did improve the efficacy of their parentings and also alleviate their children's stress; mediation also helped restore parental responsibilities by setting a good example for their children in terms of adopting an effective means of conflict resolution as well as the basis for co-parenting. Children would feel that the parents' relationship has improved, and they felt more support from their family. Nevertheless, the children might feel powerless during the process as they might not receive as much support as they could have expected (Wong *et al.*, 2019).

Contrary to the positive experiences and outcomes, the use of family mediation has not been active. Between 2013 and 2020, the total number of cases referred to independent mediators through Family Mediation Co-Ordinator's office has stayed at around 230 cases per year except 202 cases in 2020 likely affected by COVID (Hong Kong Judiciary – Mediation, 2021), the utilization is very low when compared with the caseload submitted to the Family Jurisdiction of the District Court with 23,392 cases in 2013 and 17,585 cases in 2020 (Hong Kong Judiciary, 2021). Although the cause of low usage in family mediation needs further investigation, it appears that lack of policy support and lack of formal legal requirement to family mediation might have contributed to it. Currently, there seems to be heavy reliance on the court procedure to encourage family mediation, and it leads to a critical question of whether court procedure could effectively encourage separating parents to use family mediation to protect children's best interests during this painful process, of which insights could be found in Practice Directions issued by Chief Justice of Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal.

PD15.10 and PD31

PD15.10: Family Mediation

Part 1 deals with the purposes of the Practice Direction ("PD") as well as the consequences when parties fail to engage in mediation. Whether a party has engaged in a minimum level of participation and their reasonable explanation for not engaging in a mediation could be an admissible material to the court in considering whether to make an adverse costs order against a party under 1.5(i) and 1.5 (ii) of PD15.10. The PD has provided examples, in the form

of a footnote, of what a minimum level of participation means, such as agreement to identify a mediator, agreement to the rules and one substantive mediation with the mediator. There is case law on reasonableness in general but in large it will depend on the specific circumstances of each case.

Part 2 offers the procedural guidelines relating to the referral of cases to family mediation. There are 5 sections subject to whether the parties are legally represented. If a party is legally represented, the solicitor *shall advise* the party the availability of family mediation service and how it may assist in the proceedings; solicitor shall provide the party with a copy of the leaflet prepared for promoting family mediation, complete the *Certificate as to Family Mediation* and declare that the above has been duly performed. If a party acts in person, the Registry would give out the leaflet and *inform* the party to complete the relevant certificate to declare that he has received the same. The Form requires the parties to indicate whether they would like to engage in mediation. Parts 3 and 4 offer guidelines with regard to interlocutory proceedings. Part 3 generally explains how to apply for family mediation and states that litigation proceedings will not be stayed automatically by reason of any application to mediation. Part 4 is addressed to legally represented parties only and it stipulates the general procedure of an interim stay of the underlying proceedings where mediation has been contemplated. The court may give directions appropriate to resolve relevant points arising during mediation or stay the proceedings under the court's own accord.

PD31: Mediation

PD31 is divided into 3 parts. Part A focuses on how the court will exercise its discretion on costs for a party's unreasonable refusal to participate in mediation. Part B stipulates how mediation should be initiated for parties who are legally represented. Part C provides that the court may direct the parties who are not legally represented to initiate mediation following procedures set out in Part B and thus should be considered in tandem with Part B.

Part A begins by stating the purposes and scope of the PD to include all civil proceedings in the Court of First Instance and the District Court begun by writ with a few exceptions (Appendix 1 of PD31). It also states that the court may impose an adverse costs order against a party who has unreasonably failed to engage in mediation (paragraph 4 of PD31). It indicates such order would not be imposed if the parties have shown a minimum level of participation or have a reasonable explanation for not engaging in mediation. Paragraph 5 of PD31 provides that an adverse costs order will *not* be made if:

- (1) The party has engaged in mediation to the *minimum level* of participation agreed to by the parties or as directed by the Court prior to the mediation . . .
- (2) A party has a *reasonable explanation for not engaging* in mediation . . . active without prejudice settlement negotiations . . . is likely to provide such a reasonable explanation . . . parties are *actively engaged* in some other form of ADR (alternative dispute resolution procedure) to settle the dispute may also provide a reasonable explanation. . .

When considering the reasonableness of refusing to participate in mediation, the court will look at a wide range of factors and a non-exhaustive list has been provided in *Halsey v Milton Keynes NHS Trust* [2004] 1 WLR 2002 (Martin, 2009):

- (a) the nature of the dispute;
- (b) the merit of the case, specifically “the fact that a party reasonably believes that he has a strong case is relevant to the question whether he has acted reasonably in refusing ADR”;
- (c) the extent to which other settlement methods have been attempted;

- (d) whether the costs of ADR would be disproportionately high;
- (e) whether any delay in setting up and attending the ADR would have been prejudicial; and
- (f) whether ADR has a reasonable prospect of success.

However, it should be noted that an adverse costs order is only an exception to the *costs should follow the event principle* and could not be justified unless it is shown that the successful party acted unreasonably in refusing to agree to ADR. The burden of proof is on the unsuccessful party.

Parts B and C set out the mechanism of the filing of a Mediation Certificate as per the time tabling questionnaire under O25 r 1 RHC. It indicates whether or not a party is willing to attempt mediation after solicitors have explained to their client the availability of mediation and the cost implication (Appendix B of PD31); then it stipulates that the party who wishes to attempt mediation should serve a Mediation Notice (Appendix C of PD31) on the other party, who should, within 14 days upon receipt of the Mediation Notice, serve a Mediation Response (Appendix D of PD31). The parties should resolve between themselves any differences as to the proposals made in the Mediation Notice and Response, and record them in the Mediation Minute, failing which either or both parties may make an application to the Court for direction. The court may stay the proceedings upon application by either party or on its own motion (paragraph 16 of PD31).

Is family mediation a must?

At first sight, the court appears to be more determined and proactive in ensuring that the benefits of family mediation are brought to the attention of the litigants. PD15.10 requires that the parties be given a leaflet when they commence court proceedings. The leaflet briefly sets out what family mediation is and highlights its benefits which includes a “User’s Review and Recommendation session”. Whereas under PD31, the court only needs to see evidence of an exploration of mediation which includes: A Mediation Notice (Appendix C of PD31), Response (Appendix D of PD31) and Minutes without requiring delivery of information that promotes mediation.

A closer evaluation between the content of PD15.10 and PD31 appears to unveil that the effort of guiding family mediation under PD15.10 might not be as much as that of general mediation under PD31. It could be reflected in different handlings of the procedural requirements.

Part 2 of PD15.10 details the documentary requirements between legally represented and unrepresented parties. It sets out the step for what would fulfill the court’s requirements. Taking 2.5.1 of PD15.10, which relates to the other respondent or intervening party, as an example, it specifies the role of each officer, where: the solicitor shall complete the certificate in Appendix 4; the Registry staff shall check referral to the coordinator for parties attempting family mediation; the Coordinator will contact the other parties. Similar instruction is found in PD31: the parties would appoint the mediator through Mediation Notice and Responses but without the role of the coordinator - indicating that the judicial officers (usually the legal representative of the parties) shall ensure that the parties have participated in mediation. Whilst a clear division of labour describing the operational flow ensures engagement of the judicial officers, their roles appear to be restricted to passing the information to the parties in this process. It may be unclear how such a message is delivered and whether parties are sufficiently informed of the function of mediation. For example, there would be a significant difference if the judicial officers only hand over the leaflet to the parties versus the officers have a 30-minute one-on-one session explaining the details of the leaflet.

Another example is the role of the court. As seen, the court did control the quality of the integrated office, but this is not mentioned in relevant documents and hence should the judicial officers only hand over the leaflet to the parties, they might not be aware of the involvement and supervision from the court even if whether the parties have engaged in family mediation appeared to be outside the court. In an extreme case where parties are not represented legally, the court would not know whether the leaflet is duly read and noted because the requirement in writing appears to be stated as “I have *given* the leaflet on Family Mediation . . .” under Appendix 4 of PD15.10, it does not require the parties to *read* it. Also, it is optional for parties to explain why they do not participate family mediation as per PD15.10, whilst it is mandatory to explain under Appendix B of PD31.

It is further observed that the handling of the stay of proceedings may indicate a different emphasis. Even though there are provisions in both PD15.10 and PD31 for the parties to have the rights to apply for stay or the court might take its own motion to stay the proceedings under paragraphs 14, 16, 17 of PD31 and paragraphs 4.1 of PD15.10 respectively, it is stated “*Any application for Family Mediation . . . shall not lead to an automatic stay in the litigation proceedings.*” under paragraph 3.2 of PD15.10; such provision is not stated in PD31. It may give an impression (although possibly not true) that the court has reserved its rights *not* to stay the proceedings for family mediation unless the parties apply for it. Also, parties acting in person are not obliged to follow paragraph 3.2 of PD15.10 and are referred back to Part C of PD31 which direct the party to the court’s direction to consider whether mediation is desirable. It may not be easy for litigants in person (often lay persons) to understand these procedures, especially in terms of the role of the court and the consequences of not engaging in mediation and family mediation. On the other hand, whilst it is a procedural matter because family mediation has not started yet, and the court shall continue to rule on non-mediated matters governed by related Ordinances under Part D of Practice Direction 15.12 (Chief Justice, 2011), this is unlikely a reason to explain the different treatment because otherwise separate proceedings should be in place and there will not exist the issue of an interim stay of the proceedings. While in practice, a stay of proceedings is identical between general and family mediation where the parties will apply to reschedule hearing dates pending mediation, it is unclear why relevant provisions in PD31 is written differently in this regard.

The enthusiasm shown in promoting family mediation may not bear fruit if one only relies on the guidance from the Practice Directions. However, there are other initiatives that were not mentioned in PD15.10 such as the role of the Integration Office. PD15.10 serves as a document to facilitate settlement of disputes through family mediation with underlying objectives and costs consequences (1.1 of PD15.10), then requests the solicitor to advise the availability of family mediation services and gives the leaflet prepared by the Integrated Office (2.1.1. of PD15.10). It appears to miss important instructions such as “explain”, “promote”, “facilitate” the use of family mediation. Neither does it request any evidence of how solicitors offer their advice, or at least document the reasons for refusal to mediate. It may be less than sufficient from a policy perspective because the efforts appear to stop at information dissemination and go no further.

This observation could be examined through illustrating the findings from one detailed analysis between the content of the appendices of PD31 and PD15.10. In Appendix B of PD31, Part I asks two questions: if (i) the Plaintiff / Defendant are willing to attempt mediation and (ii) if not, “*please state the reasons in this Certificate . . . such reasons or additional reasons should be set out*”. In Part II, the solicitor must “*explain*” to the client the availability, cost position and PD31. In Part III, the party must acknowledge that they “*understand*” PD31. In Appendix 2 of PD15.10, it requires solicitor to “*explain*”, the respondent only need to “*certify*” that they are “*advised*” of the Underlying Objective and have “*received*” the leaflet. It is optional for the parties to give reasons. For a respondent acting in person, they just need to confirm they “*receive*” the leaflet, and parties are not required to provide reasons for non-

participation but instead simply an indication of their intention to participate or not under Appendix B of PD31 and Appendix 2 of PD15.10. It is also noted that PD15.10 also does not require parties to “understand” PD15.10 or the leaflet, unlike PD31 (under Part III and Appendix B of PD31) which requests parties to understand the Practice Direction on Mediation. It may give the impression that general mediation is more important or less complex than family mediation and hence the use of these languages.

The court’s duty to protect children and its challenges

The court is highly concerned about children’s matters. In *SKP v Y, ITT* (Legal Terminology to be used in Child/ren’s Arrangements) FCMC 17772 / 2011 (District Court Hong Kong SAR, 2012), the court laid down in detail the arrangements concerning the child’s life after her parents are divorced. It covered many aspects, with a detailed timetable for weekdays and weekends including the arrangements for shower time and story time. It also defines the terminology such as joint care, control, and custody. This case clearly illustrates that the court is readily prepared to step in if the parents are not able to put children’s best interests before theirs, or that the parties are in such high conflict situation that it is unlikely for them to arrange in the best interest of their children.

A more refined approach is found in the Proposed Bill. It follows the child’s best interests principles as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which was adopted in Hong Kong on 7 September 1994, and advocates greater involvement of both parents in the lives of the children. The concept of Parental Responsibility could have achieved the aim to eliminate the distinction between a “winner” and a “loser” when negotiating children’s matters. These are reflected in the Proposed Bill through introducing for example the Child Arrangements Orders, availability for grandparents to apply for parental responsibility, repealing terms under Section 30 of the Proposed Bill which represent outdated perceptions of parental proprietary rights such as “Custody”, “Control”, and “Access”. Through the emphasis of dual parental responsibilities, the Proposed Bill departs from the old approach which has resulted in the dwindling contact between the children and the non-custodial parent. Such dual parental responsibilities are reckoned through a wide variety of well-defined court orders under Part 2 (5) of the Proposed Bill. The Proposed Bill also promotes the active involvement of separating couples in the lives of their children by expanding the old “rights” and “authority” over the children to the concept of shared responsibility. Although the scope of this paper is confined to the analysis of the wording in PD15.10 and PD31, along with the general purpose of the Proposed Bill, without drilling into the legal implications thereof, the question on how the provisions of the Proposed Bill might affect the way such purposes are achieved warrants further research. It is a clear attempt to nurture a new culture by shifting the litigants’ mindset from “winning or losing” rights over their children to dual parental responsibilities despite their separation.

Practice Direction 15.13 has made it clear that “the best interest of children remains the court’s paramount concern” (Chief Justice, 2016, paragraph 2), and the court readily plays a role in achieving the child’s welfare albeit its limitations. *SKP* is a prominent Hong Kong example. The order in *SKP* stipulates that those arrangements made by the court “*will need to change over time*” (paragraph 24, *SKP*), which is obvious because the interest of a 3.5-year-old girl (as in *SKP*) would not be the same when she turns 6. Having said that, whether the parents would require further court proceedings to resolve their differences has yet to be seen. Even if the parties have to resort to the court for direction, it is impossible for the law to lay down standardized arrangements for children attaining different ages. It is ineffective and somewhat impractical in light of the ever-changing dynamics and circumstances. The law is not the answer in this aspect and would be dangerous if the law ventures into directing individuals’ lives and behavior at such level of detail.

Policy implications

Whilst studies have shown that the law could have already helped facilitate the use of family mediation (e.g., Batagol, 2011), the proposed change to the Children Proceedings (Parental Responsibility) Bill is still necessary. The Proposed Bill was not enacted primarily because of the additional resources and support measures needed before the legislation. Since 2018/19, more resources have been proposed as a priority to support continuing parental responsibility for children even after divorce or separation. Although the recommendations from the Law Reform Commission have also been adopted in practice, the efforts should be stronger by promoting family mediation through legislation. Relying on Practice Directions and lawyers is far from sufficient. The court should only serve as the last line of defence in children's matters. The role of court serving as a safe haven should be re-considered as the literature has long-discussed (e.g., Lynch, 2019).

Family is the foundation of a society; family stability and children's interest no doubt are matters of public interest. Yet, it is also equally critical to acknowledge that each family has its own unique situation, and the court may not be in a position to prescribe all possible steps to fit the needs of the children. According to the Proposed Bill, the move from rights-based to responsibility-based parenthood should be further supplemented by the engagement of family mediation despite some known difficulties such as lack of mechanism for children to express their disagreement regarding custody and visitation arrangements (Hong Kong Legislative Council, 2018). It might be time to revisit these rationales again for sake of children's best interests, which is always a top priority for the society and in which the need for a solution is imminent.

What has not been mentioned so far is the Practice Direction 15.13 – Children Dispute Resolution (Chief Justice, 2016). There had been a Pilot Scheme on Children's Dispute Resolution carried out by the Family Court from 3 October 2012 to 31 March 2016 to support mothers and fathers with the judge acting as a conciliator to discuss the children-related arrangement post-separation on the basis of the children's best interests. It is done alongside with Practice Direction 15.11 – Financial Dispute Resolution Pilot Scheme (Chief Justice, 2012b) which deals with financial matters. It further demonstrates the keen concern of the court to resolve children's matters. However, these Practice Directions, like other Practice Directions, serves only as procedural guidance in aiding court proceedings. The parents would also need practical advice such as how to handle their emotions and set their priorities, such that they would focus better on their responsibilities as parents, not only their rights. To date the Pilot Scheme is still incorporated into court proceedings but it could have been made more explicit and known to be a permanent process by the general public.

Conclusion

In a difficult situation where a couple seeks separation, but both continued to be bound due to their parental responsibilities, family mediation may help. It is recognized that there are initiatives in Hong Kong to bring the children's voice to the negotiation table. For example, the current External Mediator Master Scheme (Ho, 2020) could be applied to family cases, and the discussion of the legal rights of unmarried fathers (*hongkongdivorce.com*, 2020). However, these initiatives do not seem to be operating at policy level, as they should be. These initiatives promoted by the Judiciary should be supplemented and promoted by policy, law and supporting services so as to facilitate the transition from rights-based negotiation to a responsibility-based negotiation, as well as to drive the society to provide more support for parents' post-negotiation (e.g., exercise of their visitation rights). Whether a good judge could be equipped to issue a suitable judgment for the children for the rest of their childhood is always a debate that would reach no conclusion, parents with proper aid are always the most qualified to make such a call.

Whilst policy and resources support are vital to the implementation of a piece of legislation, the reverse can also be true. Even if the law might seem to be coercing the parents to adopt a different mindset, and even if it may be more authoritative to receive a court order which is issued after considering expert opinions on children's matter, family mediation could still play its role to facilitate long-term parental decision-making responding to children's needs at different stages. Child protection, as argued in this paper, is the most important social topic that still requires legal enforcement.

When considering a divorce or separation, the first question the parties usually ask is "what will court say about the children?". The correct question to ask should be "what is best for the children and what could parents do?". Family mediation should be further promoted through enacting at least its spirit in the Proposed Bill, so as to establish a legal foundation to direct parties to negotiate and communicate, to seek and benefit from professional guidance on a continuous basis, and to seek alternative channels to resolve disputes other than the court room such as collaborative lawyering (e.g., Tesler, 2004; Herman, 2013; Gamache, 2005). Relying on Practice Directions might not be sufficient, and the court should only act as the last line of defense.

Still, mediation is conducted in the shadow of the law. Parties would inevitably negotiate in contemplation of the outcome of litigation. Their mindsets are likely to be framed by how their legal cases are put which focus on their rights and the wrongs they have suffered. Although Family Mediator has the "overriding duty to protect the best interest of the children" (Part A(h)(ii), HKMAAL, 2021), a legal foundation would still better prepare them to adopt a child-focus approach and intervene the process to give priority to children's interests or parental responsibilities. Albeit the Proposed Bill has not been enacted, there is nothing to prevent the promulgation of its spirit. In fact, in anticipation of the legislative change, Family Judges have been having recourse to the Welfare Checklist as set out by the Law Reform Commission, which was also stated in Part 2(3) of the Proposed Bill. The same spirit could have been extended to family mediation. If parents are well educated on what the court would look at, they might be motivated to negotiate in that direction. It would be encouraging to see if more could be done by the Administration or the Judiciary to equip the mediators and parents in this regard, notwithstanding they are the guardian of children's interest in matrimonial proceedings.

Currently, it appears to have no known research to see how family mediation might be used to achieve the spirit of the Proposed Bill as an alternative to litigation. As stated at the beginning of this paper, it is now an appropriate time to reflect on whether the Proposed Bill can be incorporated into a consensual approach to bring the best possible arrangement for children in family proceedings.

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The Guangdong-Hong Kong nexus in grassroots collective actions amid Sino-Anglo interface, 1841 to 1927

Guangdong-
Hong Kong
nexus

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper provides an analytical account detailing the historical linkages between Chinese on both sides of the Sino-Hong Kong border from 1841 onwards and examining important incidents of collective actions in the colony and Canton.

Design/methodology/approach – Using annual reports published by the colonial administration in Hong Kong, especially those focusing on years that witnessed major incidents of anti-colonial agitations, this paper analyzes how British policymakers were confronted by collective actions mounted by Chinese in Canton and Hong Kong. Building on the works of prominent historians and utilizing the theoretical frameworks of analysts such as Charles Tilly (1978), the author examines if a Cantonese regional solidarity served as the foundation for popular movements, which in turn consolidated a rising Chinese nationalism when Canton and Hong Kong were the focal points of mass actions against imperialism.

Findings – Hong Kong Chinese workers were vanguards of the modern Chinese revolutions that transformed not just their homeland, but their lives, allegiances, and aspirations as Chinese in a domain under foreign jurisdiction on Chinese soil, as their actions were emulated by their compatriots outside of South China, thus starting a chain reaction that culminated in the establishment of the Nanjing regime.

Originality/value – This paper reveals that popular movements of Hong Kong Chinese possessed national and international importance, especially when they were supported by their Cantonese compatriots and the two leading Chinese political parties, the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Keywords Chinese nationalism, Collective actions, Cantonese solidarity, Chinese history, Hong Kong history, British colonialism

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

While they were often underappreciated and largely ignored in academic scholarship, ordinary men and women on the frontline of Hong Kong's economic and political transformations were of immense strategic significance to both their colonizers and mainland regimes that attempted to combat perceived imperialist encroachments on Chinese sovereignty. This paper will examine anti-colonial collective actions against the British mounted by the Hong Kong Chinese grassroots from the mid-19th century to the 1920s, and how social, cultural, economic, and political ties that united Guangdong and Hong Kong provided those who were resisting



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colonialism in Hong Kong with allies in Canton in their efforts to undermine British imperialism in South China.

In terms of its strategic locale, colonial Hong Kong coming under British rule had much to do with its beachhead, gateway, and platform hub functions in repeated western attempts to penetrate and even dominate the China trade and the mainland Chinese market (Tsang, 2004, p. 17). As such, linkages between British Hong Kong and the mainland definitely had been of paramount importance in Hong Kong's growth, developments, and historical transformations from a collection of fishing villages on a barren rock to one of the most significant shipping and trade centers of the Far East (Tsang, 2004, p. 57). This paper chronicles and analyzes a series of large-scale popular actions that were much more than labour strikes and the impact of which reverberated beyond the border of Hong Kong. While incidents of perceived injustice that occurred in the colony no doubt constituted a motivating factor for collective actions, the workers of Hong Kong were highly attuned to political events occurring outside of the colony, meaning that they were often enraged by actions of foreign powers that were interpreted as damaging to the social, economic, and political interests of their compatriots in other parts of the mainland. Given that Guangdong was not only the native province of the majority of the colony's Chinese workers, but was also a site of confrontations between foreign powers and political organizations with aspirations to becoming the ruling regime of China, it was only natural for the KMT, when its political base was in Canton, to offer political and financial support to Hong Kong Chinese workers when they were mobilizing against the British. Collective actions in Hong Kong assumed national and international importance when their participants were supported by a political organ determined to become the ruling party of China, one that offered them shelter in the city of Canton, the capital of a province containing men and women who spoke the same dialect as that of the colony's workers. Using primary sources such as reports published by the British Colonial Office and synthesizing the works of leading historians and social scientists, this paper asserts that popular movements participated by the Chinese workers of Hong Kong severely undermined British authority and prestige, thereby creating examples for their compatriots in other parts of China to emulate and cementing a Chinese nationalism that culminated in the establishment of the Nanjing regime in 1927.

Analytical framework

Given the richness of southern Chinese culture that was treasured by Chinese who saw Guangdong as their ancestral province, analysts could use Anthony D. Smith's argument (1998, p. 193), that unity within a community was established upon shared symbols, values, myths and traditions of its members who were then able to pass on their cherished cultural heritage to successive generations, to better understand how a sense of regional solidarity emerged in Guangdong. Indeed, according to Helen Siu, men and women residing in Guangdong spoke "a distinctive dialect (*yue*)" and had since the Song dynasty, cultivated "myths and regional historiographies, compiled genealogies, and built ornate ancestral halls with literati pretension", all in an effort to claim a status of equality with their northern compatriots (Siu, 2016, p. 31, p. 37). There existed a "collective cultural identity" among Chinese in Guangdong that was centuries in the making, so much so that adherents of this cultural identity were willing to mobilize to defend their ancestral home when it was under threat (Smith, 1993, p. 49).

Since Guangdong's capital, Canton, was an economic interface between China and the world, thereby making its inhabitants much more exposed to foreign incursions into Chinese territories than their compatriots in other regions of China, it is not surprising that during the period of Qing Empire's decline, Chinese of the city often found themselves at the frontline of anti-foreign agitations (Siu, 2016, pp. 34-35). According to Frederic Wakeman, the appearance

of powerful external enemies such as the British motivated the Cantonese to unite against outside threats, efforts that were participated by their compatriots in British Hong Kong. Of course, cultural unity could not overcome conflicting class and economic interests, and more often than not, local and class rivalries would quickly reemerge, thereby dooming the prospect of a regional solidarity becoming a sustained political force during the late-Qing period. The existence of a shared cultural identity notwithstanding, divergent economic interests between different classes limited anti-foreign resistance to sporadic outbursts that dissipated almost as suddenly as they emerged (Wakeman, 1966, p. 115, p. 167).

During the 1920s, however, revolutionary organizations with aspirations to govern all of China would come to see as powerful political instruments the Chinese workers of Hong Kong, as they were highly adept at inflicting substantial damages to British interests in Hong Kong and China (Chan, 1975, p. 313; Jacobs, 1981, p. 140). The KMT's "Canton Decade" that started with its installation in Canton in 1917 and concluded with the establishment of the Nanjing regime was full of trials and tribulations, as it had to fight other militarists in the province and even stave off coup attempts by prominent merchants distrustful of the party, meaning that it was only able to successfully consolidate control over all of Guangdong through successive military campaigns in 1926. Nevertheless, using the provincial capital as a political base, the party did emerge as the political protector of Chinese workers in Hong Kong (Chan, 1996, p. 227; Chan, 1994, p. 37, p. 44). Reliance on Chinese workers as partisans of mass actions would only intensify after the formation of the KMT-CCP United Front, an alliance that lasted from 1924 to 1927 (Jacobs, 1981, p. 182). Regional solidarity of workers in Canton and Hong Kong therefore had to be harassed by political organizations able to offer workers in the Pearl River Delta political protection from not only retaliations by the imperial powers, but also their compatriots in higher socioeconomic positions who saw prolonged popular movements as detrimental to their class interests. To operationalize the analytical framework of Charles Tilly, the Canton government acted as a vital facilitator of collective actions in Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta by nullifying the campaigns of repression organized by the colonial administration and its allies (Tilly, 1978, p. 100). "Collective actions" that came close to eradicating British presence in South China were made possible by the alignment of "interests" between the Chinese grassroots of Hong Kong and the Canton regime that realized they needed one another in the "in pursuit of common ends", as the former had to secure political protection to confront the British, while the KMT, and later the United Front, wanted to use workers as shock troops of its political and military campaigns to exterminate domestic and foreign opponents (Tilly, 1978, p. 52, pp. 54-55).

"[R]esourceful southerners," be they statesmen leading Canton or workers in the Pearl River Delta, were so proud of their Southern Chinese heritage that what worried the opponents of the KMT and the United Front was not that they would mount some kind of separatist efforts, but that its leaders and supporters, many of whom of Cantonese origin, would compete for national power by leading popular and military movements that drew support from Chinese in and around Guangdong (Chan, 1996, p. 230; Siu, 1996, p. 180; Siu, 2016, p. 36). The support given by the KMT and the United Front to Hong Kong Chinese workers that was so vital in their capacity to seriously challenge British imperialism was thereby not to establish a regional strong base in Guangdong, but to use the province, especially its capital city, Canton, as the point of commencement of anti-imperial efforts that would grant the party the popular legitimacy necessary to launch a political and military campaign to unify China under its rule.

Historical context: the original sin of colonialism in South China

Hong Kong's strategic value derived from its status as *the* major economic hub of the British Empire in the Far East, one that allowed its merchants to dominate the China trade and

ensured transpacific shipping would pass through the colony's ports (Des Voeux, 1889, p. 21). Yet, the reliance on the China market and global shipping networks rendered Hong Kong vulnerable to political instability emanating from China, on the one hand, and the global economy, on the other, a situation common to many port cities on the China coast. Anglo-China geopolitical tensions even created conflicts between Chinese in Hong Kong and their colonial rulers, as the local population was predominately Chinese and non-locally born. Indeed, the majority of Hong Kong's Chinese were émigrées from mainland China, especially Guangdong. In a sense, Anglo-Sino dynamics as articulated in the relations between Hong Kong and Canton and interactions between the Chinese grassroots and British colonial rulers shaped the chronicle of Hong Kong before the First World War.

Major cases of East-West confrontations erupted in Hong Kong during the first century of British rule. Chinese workers in Hong Kong were at the frontline both to keep Hong Kong functioning and at times of political, social, economic conflicts, the defenders of their own collective class interests as well as Chinese interests – local, regional, national, and international. Local strikes, boycotts, and other forms of collective actions staged by the Chinese grassroots of Hong Kong, by logic, and as a matter of necessity, could hardly escape the characterizations of conflicts between labour and capital, of ethnic-sociocultural tensions between oriental and occidental, and of British capitalism and imperialism against Cantonese solidarity and Chinese nationalism. Thus, grassroots collective actions must be regarded as fissures in state-society disequilibrium of Hong Kong and as peculiar historical constructs of British interests colliding with Chinese aspirations and survival instincts, with cross-border implications.

The British takeover of Hong Kong Island in 1841 during the final phase of the First Opium War that was sanctioned by the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing was often labelled the start of China's century of humiliation under the unequal treaties, or the age of western imperialism in China (Morris, 1988, pp. 25-26). Colonial occupation of Hong Kong also witnessed the concurrent British attempt to enforce another Nanjing Treaty provision: the right of entry into the walled city of Canton (Wong, 1998, p. 139). This provoked fierce resistance against the British by the Canton officialdom and local residents for several years, who viewed Hong Kong's colonization under the British Crown as the original sin of British oppression in China (Nield, 2015, pp. 59-60; Munn, 2009, p. 46). As evident by the locals' enthusiastic enlistment in the militias of Canton to defend their city and the readiness of men and women in Canton to form "screaming mob" that terrified "foreign merchants and native officials alike", such was Cantonese contempt towards the British that Peking actually sided with the local population in refusing British entry into the city, and the Emperor even stated that "if [the British] enter the city, there will be harm but no profit", thereby handing the Cantonese society a stunning victory in 1849 (Wakeman, 1966, p. 77, p. 96, p. 103).

Hong Kong, Canton, and cross-border collective actions

For most of the 19th century, Canton-Hong Kong relationship at the formal regime to regime level was often stressful and antagonistic, while at the popular level, the Chinese on both sides of the border enjoyed brotherhood solidarity (Tsai, 1993, p. 52). Most of the Chinese residing in Hong Kong were natives of Guangdong who never became British subjects (Tsang, 2004, p. 46). Based on, stemmed from, and rooted in blood ties, clan-lineages, linguistic commonality, shared social-cultural heritage, and parallel or overlapped economic interests, Hong Kong and Canton were much more than cousins – they were brothers, and even twins (Chan, 1975, pp. 101-103). To quote Anthony D. Smith, the Chinese grassroots of Hong Kong and Canton were bonded by "a myth of common ancestry, shared memories and cultural elements, a link with an historic territory or homeland and a measure of solidarity", thus cementing a sense of commonality that would endure long after Hong Kong's colonization by the British (Smith, 1993, p. 49).

The Second Opium War (1856-1860) resulted in the Convention of Peking that ceded the Kowloon Peninsula to the British colonial domain of Hong Kong (Tsang, 1995, pp. 31-32). During this period of Sino-British military hostilities, Chinese workers in Hong Kong rallied to the patriotic calls of anti-British resistance issued by the officialdom and elites of Canton. Indeed, after Canton fell to the British and the French in December 1857, “foreigners. . . found it difficult to buy food or hire help” in the provincial capital and Hong Kong (Wakeman, 1966, p. 168). In 1858, some 30,000 plus Chinese workers in the colony simply walked off from their jobs and returned to their homes in the mainland (Tsai, 1993, p. 58, p. 171). Another particularly noteworthy scandal was the bread poisoning incident of 1857, in which a Chinese-owned bakery was suspected of poisoning the bread supplies for Caucasian households, including members of the British officialdom, that resulted in widespread food poisoning among leading British families (Carroll, 2007, p. 26). It was widely assumed by both local Chinese and European residing in the colony that this poisoned bread scandal was a Chinese revenge against the Anglo-French joint occupation of their beloved city of Canton (Wakeman, 1966, pp. 159-164). During the Sino-French War (1883-1885) over French imperialism in Indochina, Hong Kong Chinese shipyard workers’ refusal to repair a damaged French warship in 1884 triggered a widespread wave of sympathy strikes and anti-Caucasian boycotts among Chinese workers, including restaurant workers, hotels and domestic servants, who refused to serve foreign soldiers and sailors (Tsai, 1993, pp. 126-129). The local Chinese workers’ patriotic resistance in defiance of British colonial repression forced the damaged French warship to seek repair elsewhere, and this case of “offshore Chinese patriotism” left a deep impression in the mind of a young Cantonese student in a Hong Kong high school (Hong Kong Government Central School), whose later career personified Chinese nationalism and Cantonese solidarity. His name was Sun Yat-sen (Tsai, 1993, p. 142).

The above cases were “*reactive* collective action[s]” that were reactions to incidents of injustices and consisted of relative spontaneous outbursts that lacked sustained and organized leadership, meaning that even if there were occasional victories, due to the fact that the officialdom in Canton and Chinese elites in both the provincial capital and the colony often suspended their support when they became fearful that large-scale mass actions would escape their control, thereby causing disturbances that would threaten not only the British, but also the existing social order, the actions of the Hong Kong and Cantonese grassroots during this sunset period of Qing rule did not pose an existential threat to British imperialism in South China. (Tilly, 1978, pp. 145-146; Tsai, 1993, pp. 134-135). One fact is nevertheless clear: Chinese workers in colonial Hong Kong resorted to collective economic actions to defend Chinese national interests, especially if their ancestral province and beloved city of Canton was threatened by foreign aggressions. Hong Kong was, and would always remain, their workplace and domicile, but never their home. In the early decades of the 20th century, many Hong Kong workers, especially mechanics and seamen, actively responded to the calls for revolutionary undertakings of a fellow Cantonese, Sun Yat-sen, and his political organs, the leadership of which was by and large Cantonese as well (Lau, 1990, pp. 126-127). The solidarity, partnership, and even feudalistic, traditional, sociocultural ties that emerged in Guangdong but were carried to the British colony by Chinese workers were ready-made, convenient, and extremely powerful channel for revolutionary mass actions the purposes of which were the preservation of their collective interests, the defense of their ancestral province, and if harassed by a political organization that saw itself as the prime representative of an anti-imperialist Chinese nationalism, the creation of a new China. As we shall see, many Chinese in Hong Kong and Canton did not have to choose between regional solidarity and Chinese nationalism, as they were convinced that their home province ought to be the cradle of the revolution to create a China that would be freed from imperialism.

In the early days of the new Republic, a noteworthy instance of Chinese grassroots boycott against British colonial regime-British business collusion broke out in the form of the

1912-1913 Tramway Boycott (Colonial Office, 1913, pp. 30-31; Munn, 2009, p. 377). This incident originated from a supposedly simple, if not innocent, economic cause. To prevent revenue losses due to the use of depreciated mainland-Cantonese copper coins, the British-owned tramway on Hong Kong Island refused the payment of tram fare with Cantonese coins, which by then bore the Chinese Republic insignia and were minted in Canton since 1912 (Lau, 1990, pp. 107-114). This non-acceptance of Cantonese coins provoked widespread boycott of the tramway by local Chinese residents, which in turn led to the colonial authorities' imposition of a local neighborhood collective penalty for the boycott that was deemed illegal and counterproductive by Whitehall (Chan, 1994, pp. 29-31). The Legislative Council gave Governor Francis Henry May the authority to declare entire districts to be boycotting areas the residents of which had to pay fines that would be used to reimburse businesses targeted by the Boycott (Chan, 1994, p. 30). The draconian measures of the colonial government gradually weakened the will of the general public to continue to support the Boycott. By February 1913, the Boycott Prevention Ordinance was suspended as passenger traffic had by then returned to normal (Chan, 1994, p. 30). While the Boycott represented a series of relatively disorganized and leaderless protests that were eventually suppressed, the fact that there was such an immense backlash against a minor policy concerning the utilization of coins issued in Canton and bore the Republican insignia reveals that Chinese in Hong Kong were always ready to defend their native province and China, and the distinction between the two was not always clear given Canton's immense political and economic importance in the early days of the Republic (Chan, 1994, pp. 30-31).

Landmark cases of collective actions in South China during the 1920s

The outbreak of First World War saw Hong Kong on the side of the allies, while China remained neutral until 1916. The war triggered several economic processes. First, the War led to the destruction of East-West trade, a new reality that was severely damaging to Hong Kong, especially since the colony's prosperity was dependent upon its external trades (Colonial Office, 1919, p. 21; Colonial Office, 1920, p. 2). Second, global conflicts created challenges and risks in long distance shipping, affecting the lives of Cantonese seamen disembarking from Hong Kong. Third, on the global scale, the interruption of supply lines, which resulted in scarcity, disputation of production patterns, and a boom in new industrial investments by Japanese and Chinese interests in treaty ports, created demands for materials and skilled workers that propelled an inflationary spiral well into the interwar period (Chan, 1975, pp. 211-212, pp. 268-271; Chan, 1994, pp. 32-33, pp. 36-37). These objective economic preconditions represented the foundations for and root causes of major economic strikes that engulfed Hong Kong in 1920 and 1922; in both of these cases, workers were engaging in "*proactive* collective actions" to have their demands met by joining unions able to organize their members, meaning the capacity to impose discipline in preparation for the pursuit of collective objectives, and mobilize their assets, as there existed an imperative to marshal resources that would be used in the coming struggles (Tilly, 1978, p. 54, p. 147; Chan, 1994, p. 38, p. 40).

The 1920 Mechanics' Strike, the climax of which saw some 30,000 Hong Kong mechanics walked off from their jobs and sought a safe refuge in Canton, represented the opening salvo of Hong Kong-Canton popular movements during the interwar years (Chan, 1994, pp. 37-38; Carroll, 2007, p. 97). The Canton sanctuary effect enhanced the strikers' bargaining power against the owner-management, while at the same time, removed the strikers from the repressive arms of the colonial regime and shielded them from retaliations by their employers (Chan, 1994, pp. 37-40). In the end, the strikers emerged victorious, and the colonial government tersely summed up the defeat of the management side during the 1920 Strike by stating that the participating "mechanics and skilled labour" obtained the "advances of

wages by some 30 percent” (Colonial Office, 1922, p. 3). The same pattern was repeated two years later in the Seamen’s Strike that, due to the ineptitude of the colonial administration, was turned into a political confrontation between British Hong Kong and the KMT-controlled Canton authorities. Governor Reginald Edward Stubbs, by resorting to high-handed measures and ill-justified legal means to ban the Seamen’s Union and two coolies unions that participated in sympathy strikes, pushed itself into a legal jam (Chan, 1994, pp. 40-41).

Indeed, after banning the Seaman Union, the government then demanded it to change its name when it became clear that simple coercion was not going to end the Strike, as it was too embarrassing for the colonial regime to participate in negotiation with the very same entity that it had previously outlawed (Chan, 1975, p. 280). Worse still, unwarranted police conducts in removing the sign board of the Seamen’s Union that bore the calligraphy of Sun Yat-sen “escalated and transformed this economic strike into a political confrontation between British colonial might and Chinese patriotic pride and working-class solidarity” (Chan, 1994, p. 41). Of course, the striking seamen and other strikers returned to Canton, where they were fed and housed by Canton labour organs, with the blessing of a sympathetic provincial and municipal leadership. The Canton sanctuary effect meant the prolongation of the Strike that paralyzed Hong Kong’s global shipping and rendered everyday lives and overall economic activities to a total standstill (Chan, 1975, pp. 280-281). In the end, Stubbs had to rescind the ban on the unions, and the British policemen had to eat humble pie and restore the sign board of the Seamen’s Union to its original place (Chan, 1994, p. 41). The shipping companies had to raise the seamen’s salaries by 15 percent to 30 percent, a term stipulated by the strikers that finally ended the work stoppage (Chan, 1975, p. 281). Besides their Union’s organization and mobilization skills, the seamen’s victory was made possible by the full support of Canton state-society, which even helped enlisted financial aids from overseas Chinese communities around the globe (Chan, 1975, p. 277).

The victory of the Seamen’s Union signaled beyond any doubt British imperial decline in Asia after the First World War and the emergence of the KMT as a force to be reckoned with in China, especially given its increased willingness to weaponize Chinese workers in and outside of Hong Kong. According to Tilly, before joining any opposition movements, participants of popular actions had to be convinced that the chance of having their interests advanced through victory had to outweigh the fear that they would be crushed by the regime in power (Tilly, 1978, p. 133). That the KMT leadership was willing to offer sanctuary to Chinese workers from Hong Kong in Guangdong’s capital not only ensured the defeat of the colonial government in successive confrontations against the city’s Chinese workers, but also signaled that the party would be a protector of Chinese who would stand up against the British, thereby encouraging further acts of defiance in the future.

The 16 months Canton-Hong Kong General Strike-Boycott from 1925 to 1926 had the unique distinction of being the best-known labour incident in Hong Kong and Guangdong history. Simply put, it was a series of collections actions for patriotic purpose, and a local response to the British massacre of Chinese workers and student protestors in Shanghai during the May 30th Incident. The Strike-Boycott was a priority project of the KMT-CCP United Front that was “formed in January 1924 and committed to an anti-imperialist national revolution” (Chan, 1994, pp. 45-46). At its height, over a quarter million Hong Kong workers and their families left the colony and went to Canton, where the strike headquarter was located (Chan, 1994, p. 45). The Strike-Boycott was a retaliation against violent acts committed by the British *and* a series of proactive collective actions, as strikers from Hong Kong presented several demands, including the rights to freedom of speech, assembly and organization, democratic elections to the Legislative Council, housing reforms, reforms of labour legislations, and elimination of racial discrimination so that Chinese could reside anywhere in Hong Kong (Chan, 1994, p. 48). The Chinese workers of Hong Kong could not have imposed these demands on the British had they not been supported by their Cantonese

compatriots and welcomed into Canton, which was controlled by a regime willing to offer sanctuary to opponents of British imperialism. Local and regional aspirations, and a desire to humble the British, could only be fulfilled by a regime based in Canton hellbent on exacting retributions from the imperialists. Anti-imperialism, Regional solidarity, and Chinese nationalism all compelled a large number of Chinese workers to support the Strike-Boycott.

In terms of organization, it was the CCP that was responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Strike-Boycott and the maintenance of internal order among its partisans, as the party took charge of functions such as reception, propaganda, recreation, general administration, and discipline (Chan, 1975, p. 315). Concerning mobilization, it was up to prominent members of the KMT left, such as Liao Zhongkai, and men who would play instrumental roles in the future of China but during the Strike-Boycott were officials stationed at the famous Whampoa Academy, like Zhou Enlai and Chiang Kai-shek, to help secure financial support, weapons, and military training that transformed Hong Kong Chinese workers who found sanctuary in Canton into members of a paramilitary force that ruthlessly enforced the boycott of Hong Kong (Chan, 1975, pp. 318-319; Chan, 1994, pp. 46-47). Even more so than the labour actions of 1920 and 1922, the Canton regime during the Strike-Boycott was responsible for the hardening of resolve among members of the Hong Kong grassroots in their popular campaign to cripple British Hong Kong.

In the words of British Hong Kong authorities, during the height of the Strike-Boycott, “the great majority of household servants, sailors, engineers, and workers of all kinds had deserted their post” (Colonial Office, 1927a, p. 2). The Strike-Boycott imposed a boycott of British goods and placed an embargo on British shipping, actions that led to the economic hollowing out of Hong Kong, paralyzed the colony, and created widespread bankruptcies among its businesses. Rent rates declined by around 60 percent and the values of shares in the stock market plummeted by 40 percent (Chan, 1975, p. 329). Even the giant Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), “the pillar of the colony’s finance and the major instrument of British economic activities in China,” saw the price of its shares dropped by 11.5 percent (Chan, 1975, p. 329). Governor Stubbs had to request an emergency £3 million loan from London “to relieve the colony’s distress” (Chan, 1994, p. 45).

The Strike-Boycott entailed several layers of struggles. First, the Strike-Boycott was a revolt against British colonialism in Hong Kong and against British imperialism at large. Second, by enhancing the power and influence of the KMT left and the CCP, the Strike-Boycott triggered a KMT left-wing versus right-wing power struggle within Canton. Third, tensions between left-right and right-wing unions created by conflicting opinions on whether the CCP could be trusted, the duration of the Strike-boycott, and the degree to which a hostile stance against the British should be maintained that, at their worst, provoked intra-union strife among activists possessing contrasting political orientations within the same organization (Lau, 1990, pp. 210-211). A manifestation of this left-right division within the labour movement was the refusal of the Mechanics’ Union to participate in the Strike-Boycott, as its conservative leadership was highly suspicious of the CCP (Chan, 1975, p. 313). A sense of unity that was created by Cantonese solidarity and Chinese nationalism and sustained by the United Front eventually succumbed to divergent political ideologies among participants of the Strike-Boycott and members of the grassroots in the colony and Canton.

Due to the need to concentrate all political, military and diplomatic resources to advance the KMT Northern Expedition into central and eastern China, the Strike-Boycott was terminated on the 15th anniversary of the 1911 Revolution on 10 October 1926 (Colonial Office, 1927b, p. 1; Tsang, 2004, p. 100). While it didn’t achieve the liquidation of British colonialism in Hong Kong, the Strike-Boycott did establish enough momentum for the KMT to move forward and launch the Northern Expedition, thereby creating the foundation for the Nanjing regime (Chan, 1975, p. 47, p. 71, pp. 350-351). As part of the settlement, the British didn’t object to the imposition of the 2.5 percent to 5 percent maritime customs surcharge levied by the

Canton regime that paved the way for China regaining tariff independence in 1929 (Chan, 1975, p. 353). It also created a high tide of mass actions that spread to central and eastern China. Shanghai fell under the control of the KMT in March 1927, and the retrocession of Hankou and Jiujiang occurred in July 1927 (Chan, 1994, p. 52; Pantsov, 2000, p. 128; Jackson, 2017, p. 239). It is not an exaggeration to state that the actions of strikers in South China was of vital importance to the liberation of regions such as Hankou and the eventual success of the North Expedition, which was a rare occasion in Chinese history in which a political and military campaign to win national power was originated in Guangdong, or more precisely, the KMT's home base in Canton. Cantonese solidarity, of which Hong Kong Chinese were vital adherents, therefore contributed mightily to the KMT's successful completion of the Northern Expedition, the conclusion of which witnessed the party assuming control over significant portions of China (Chan, 2010, p. 5).

It should be noted that their immense contributions notwithstanding, none of the demands presented by the strikers regarding reforms in Hong Kong were met; indeed, indictive of the colonial regime's vindictiveness, the Seamen Union, which had bested the colonial administration in 1922 and was an important contributor to the Strike-Boycott, was outlawed in 1927 (Chan, 1994, p. 53). The Strike-Boycott nevertheless forced the colonial regime to become more sensitive to the local Chinese population by appointing the first Chinese to the Executive Council (Sir Shouson Chow) and to establish a school of Chinese studies at the University of Hong Kong (Carroll, 2005, p. 141, p. 155). An unexpected outcome of the Strike-Boycott, according to John Carroll, was the consolidation of a Hong Kong identity, at least among the colony's Chinese elites who had played "an active role in combating" the Strike-Boycott through actions such as counterpropaganda and the establishment of a "Labour Protection Bureau" to undermine the intimidation tactics of the strikers and whose families had, in stark contrast with members of the Chinese grassroots who simply saw the colony as their place of work, been in Hong Kong for generations. The colony's near extinction during the Strike-Boycott made "leading Chinese" such as Shouson Chow realize that their wealth and social status were dependent upon the preservation of Hong Kong's British status and the city's separation from the rest of China (Carroll, 2005, p. 34, p. 104, p. 132, pp. 134-135, p. 139, pp. 143-146, pp. 156-158).

An important legacy of the Strike-Boycott was that its conclusion triggered the final split between the KMT and the CCP that ended the United Front. It was in the aftermath of the April 1927 purge carried out by the KMT against its former CCP allies that the CCP staged the Canton Commune Uprising, essentially a full-scale urban putsch, in December 1927 (Lau, 1990, pp. 232-233, p. 245). As stated by Tsang (2004, p. 100), while the colony served as a safe haven and planning center for the leaders of the uprising, the workers of Hong Kong were not enthusiastic supporters of the CCP. Although there remained a substantial number of Hong Kong strikers lingering in Canton at this juncture, including some 300 Seamen's Union members, they played a very small role in this doomed insurrection (Zhou, 2009, p. 84). The major labour contingent that joined the insurrection was made up of 300 rickshaw pullers, most of them natives of Guangdong. CCP pioneer Peng Bai was an enthusiastic participant of the Uprising (Lau, 1999, p. 87, p. 90). The Uprising was "a major tragedy of the fledgling Chinese Communist Movement", one that left Canton "visibly shaken" as "trade was seriously disrupted. . . and grave apprehension filled the air" (Lau, 1999, p. 95). The refusal of Hong Kong Chinese workers to participate in the Canton Uprising demonstrates to historians their rational sense of patriotism. They were simply not willing to engage in a brutal vendetta for an extreme partisan campaign with a flawed strategy and uncertain objective. Patriotism has its limits, and patriotism is to the land, to the people, to the social-culture heritage, and to the glorious historical legacy that were higher and far beyond partisan claims and extremist pretensions.

Conclusion

Hong Kong Chinese workers were vital contributors to some of China's most important collective actions. The political energy unleashed by the Canton-Hong Kong Strike-Boycott motivated Chinese in Shanghai, Hankou and Jiujiang to similarly revolt against foreign rule in 1927. A sense of Cantonese solidarity that was fundamental to mass actions in Canton and Hong Kong was therefore an overwhelmingly important component of Chinese national efforts against foreign occupations in the 1920s. If a sense of admiration for one's homeland was a necessary ingredient for successful popular movements, then it was Hong Kong Chinese's abiding allegiance to Canton that made them such dangerous opponents of their colonial masters. After all, for the majority of Hong Kong Chinese, Guangdong was their ancestral homeland, and Canton was their political Jerusalem that granted them a sanctuary during their hours of need. Through the examination of the triangular relations between Hong Kong, Canton, and China, a conclusion could be made that in 20th century China, regional solidarity reinforced Chinese nationalism, as Cantonese participants of campaigns against colonialism were convinced that their rebellions against colonial rule would be joined by Chinese in other regions who were similarly oppressed by the imperial powers.

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How to select good leaders in Asian countries: the case of China and Singapore

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to bring out the possibility of selecting good leaders in Asian countries, i.e., China and Singapore.

Design/methodology/approach – Since comparative historical analysis enhances the objectivity for academic discussion, Deng Xiaoping's and Lee Kuan Yew's leadership successions have been chosen as the cases for studies by virtue of "method of agreement". Incorporating "argument based on the contrary" into the context for macro-historical analysis, this paper characterises the duo's successful (at least quite successful) leadership successions, thus offering an alternative paradigm beyond Western-style democracy.

Findings – Both cases of post-Mao China and the independent Singapore indicate that in quite a number of Asian countries, good leaders could still be selected beyond universal suffrage as practised among Western Electoral Democracies, mainly because of the elites-driven context. As to the duo's succession results, Deng Xiaoping's selection of leaders was somewhat successful, while Lee Kuan Yew's was phenomenal.

Originality – This paper offers readers a glance over the possibility of selecting good leaders in Asian countries not fully based on Western-style democracy. Learning from the duo's leadership successions, the West may treat elite politics as the supplement under Western Electoral Democracies in order to avoid their countries falling into the trap of populism. The West could meanwhile consider the exceptional criteria prized by the duo for leadership successions. Considering such interactions among elites in the real-life context, it could serve as an alternative model to Western-style democracy.

Keywords China, Chinese Communist Party, Elite politics, Leadership successions, People's Action Party, Singapore

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

In the twentieth century, one cannot ignore the importance of such alternative paradigms to Western-style democracy in shaping politics in Asia. In an article entitled *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Linz (1975, p. 264) defined authoritarianism in terms of three critical aspects, namely limited political pluralism tendencies, specific mentality, as well as limited political participation. In this, states without such practice were not likely to undergo enormous political changes unless contingencies, such as serious threats on their leaders' life and/ or position, occurred. After the Second World War, the weakened political impact of the Western world on most Asian regions has led to emergence of nation-states. Compared with Western Electoral Democracies, Asian countries not fully practising Western-style democracy had become increasingly popular in Asia. In the lead of political strongmen in such newly-established nation-states, those states persisted in political systems of one-party hegemony or even one-party rule. They attempted to establish or change economy and/ or social institutions in the purpose of obtaining legitimacy through good governance. In view of many scholars and



populace in the East, the most renowned and influential political strongmen not fully practising Western-style democracy in contemporary Asia were Deng Xiaoping, the second generation's "core" of China, and Lee Kuan Yew, the founding father of Singapore.

Authoritarian regimes are sometimes considered as an alternative to a significant number of countries practising Western-style democracy, including but not limited to the process and result of leadership successions. To certain scholars, authoritarianism does cast a shadow, i.e., with quite a negative connotation followed by their academic beliefs. In this, leadership successions without entirely sticking with the Western experience would be correlated with chaos and instability. For instance, in a book entitled *How Communist States Change their Rulers*, such a view criticised that when there was power transfer from the old guard to the next generation in communist states, the leadership succession crisis was inevitable (Rush, 1974). More crucially, the author discovered that this political tragedy came from a lack of long-term legitimacy in its authority of decision-making bodies, together with the absence of an institutionalised power transfer mechanism; that could be characterised as a common failure in most, if not all, of the communist states. Yet, starting from 2002, i.e., since the Sixteenth Party Congress in China, its success in leadership successions until the case of Xi Jinping has provided a convincing but counter example of "authoritarian resilience" against the former mainstream perspective. Shambaugh (2008, p. 176) thus praised, "despite its atrophy, I see the Chinese Communist Party as a reasonably strong and resilient institution (I agree with Andrew Nathan's characterisation of the Chinese Communist Party's 'authoritarian resilience'). To be sure, it has its problems and challenges, but none present the real possibility of systematic collapse". In other words, although Western-style democracy is featured by unshakeable merits, it would not be wise to entirely ignore the bright side of certain Asian perspectives on governance, including but not limited to leadership successions.

A core argument of this paper, particularly with reference to post-Mao China and the independent Singapore, pertains to how we can make every attempt to pick up good leaders beyond Western Electoral Democracies. Thus, leadership successions with less, if not the least, relying on the practice of universal suffrage in the East were picked up as a key issue or as an entry point to discuss how and why some countries not fully practising Western-style democracy could still maintain internal stability during power transfer, including their leaders' capability to obtain legitimacy during the tenures. Since to adopt universal suffrage is a positive means but not a panacea for all socio-economic problems, to achieve the ultimate goal of good governance by alternative ways is indeed an urgent question not simply for Asian countries, but is also noted as the supplement beyond universal suffrage for Western Electoral Democracies.

Leadership successions in China and Singapore

Different from many Western Electoral Democracies, the governance of most, if not all, Asian countries in the twentieth century was elites-driven. This could be initially explained by their profound impact due to superiority of the party and the state, which was in line with Lijphart's classification of political culture into a political culture of mass and a political culture of elites. Another explanation was that elites could manipulate public opinions via political framing and propaganda. Through monopolistic guidance over the mass media, the framing party could manoeuvre the discussion and perception of a critical issue, such as legitimacy (Guo, 2010, p. 19). Therefore, in certain Asian countries, without taking the factor of universal suffrage into an entire account, elites were further required to take an active role in leadership successions, i.e., changing the top leaders from the old guard to the next generation, such as post-Mao China led by Deng Xiaoping behind the scene and the independent Singapore headed by Lee Kuan Yew.

Criteria for selecting next generation leaders

With regard to elites' active role in leadership successions, Choi (2017, p. 215) illustrated the next generation leaders preferred by both statesmen mainly according to these criteria: (i) the significance of "expert" as emphasised by Lee Kuan Yew, who considered this criterion as "helicopter qualities" in addition to "support of the new Cabinet's colleagues"; and (ii) the importance of "red" and "expert" as valued by Deng Xiaoping, who broke down both criteria into "Four Modernisations cadres" as well as "adhering to the line of Economic Reform and Open-door Policy and who had some achievements in that respect to their credit". For better understanding, we should note that the aforementioned criteria set by the two paramount leaders in China and Singapore did not have strong correlations with the electoral results from universal suffrage as consistently practised in the West.

As the paramount leader in post-Mao China, Deng Xiaoping valued "Four Modernisations cadres" in addition to "adhering to the line of Economic Reform and Open-door Policy and who had some achievements in that respect to their credit" while appointing his preferred next generation leaders. To consider the connotation of "Four Modernisations cadres", Kou (2010, p. 146) addressed this important requirement with the thorough explanation. For the utmost importance of "red", which Deng Xiaoping coined as "revolutionary standard", it ensured the leadership team would be in the hands of reliable cadres in order to avoid the Cultural Revolution's supporters coming back to power in post-Mao China; concerning "younger standard", it set up the age configuration of each leading group. The lower the level of cadres, the younger the age. In light of this, the leading groups on all levels showed trapezoidal distribution. As for "better educated and professional standards", the ruling party strived to improve both the knowledge and the wisdom of the potential leaders. Of all standards, Deng (1994, p. 361) prized "revolutionary standard", and explained its utmost importance in detail, "while making sure that we select cadres who will keep to the socialist road, we must reduce their average age, and raise the level of their education and professional competence. The cadre system should be gradually improved to ensure this. Of course, cadres must be revolutionary. This requirement takes precedence over considerations of age, education and professional competence". Not only was the significance of "revolutionary standard" exalted, but the subordination of the other three standards was also asserted. Moreover, this political strongman still indicated a close relationship between "revolutionary standard" and one's political character: this standard could be objectively evaluated through obedience towards the Central Committee, insistence of Four Cardinal Principles, and the practical action of "adhering to the line of Economic Reform and Open-door Policy and who had some achievements in that respect to their credit". A cadre following the above criteria was regarded as fulfilling "revolutionary standard", whereas any hesitation in the real-life context would be perceived as the failure at complying with this criterion.

Deng Xiaoping proposed "younger standard" for the sake of vitality and morale among cadres occupying critical positions. Yet, promoting younger Party members to prominent positions would contradict the convention (in accordance with qualifications and seniority) through which the Party used to assign jobs. What is more, oppositions to promotion of younger Party members were foreseeable since such an act would change the original power structure and violate vested interests. Regarding such a bottleneck, Deng (1994, pp. 225, 265) reviled, "we say that the capitalist society is bad, but it doesn't hesitate to discover and utilise talents. One of its traits is that it makes use of anyone who is qualified, regardless of seniority, and this is considered normal. In this respect, our system of cadres selection is outmoded. The seniority system represents a force of habit, and is backward". Afterwards, he went on with a pacified tone, "we veteran comrades should not look down on young people or think they are invariably less competent than we are. In fact, at what age did we ourselves begin our careers? Didn't we start doing significant work in our early

twenties? Are young people nowadays less intelligent than we were then? I think we ought to be more open-minded and consider the overall interests and the future of our cause. We should make a real effort to discover capable persons, and having found them, give them earnest help". In the meantime, it was impossible to "let some people get rich first", or build a well-off society if a successive leader only possessed proper ideologies and vitality. Deng Xiaoping had recognised such a predicament. As a result, he pragmatically highlighted the importance of "better educated and professional standards", and argued, "Four Modernisations cannot be achieved merely by keeping to the socialist road; we must also master professional knowledge and skills. No matter what job a person has, he must acquire the specialised knowledge it entails and become professional competent [. . .] Being 'expert' does not necessarily mean one is 'red,' but being 'red' means one must strive to be 'expert'. No matter what one's line of work, if he does not possess expertise, if he does not know his own job but issues arbitrary orders, harming the interests of the people and holding up production and construction, he cannot be considered 'red'" (Deng, 1994, p. 262). Apart from being "red", the working capability possessed by a young successor was still significant, simply because "a person may have ardour for socialist construction, but if he doesn't master professional skills and study conscientiously, he will not be able to make the contribution he should do that construction or play his proper part in it; on the contrary, he may play a negative role" (Deng, 1994, p. 264).

Besides, Lee Kuan Yew, the paramount leader in the independent Singapore, had identified leadership successions as a crucial long-term issue: that he needed to recruit candidates both inside and outside the People's Action Party since 1967. He did not believe all humans were on equal standing in terms of their physicality and intelligence. In this regard, he rejected this kind of common presumption, i.e., everyone could make valuable contributions together with their equal abilities (Josey, 1980, p. 36). Of all candidates, those elitist talents were highly educated and professional; they were thirty something years old and outperformed in their field. Goh Chok Tong and Tan Keng Yam were typical examples. As an old guard leader, the criteria of next generation leaders Lee Kuan Yew valued were "helicopter qualities", including "power of analysis", "logical grasp of the facts" and "concentration on the basic points, extracting the principles" (Han *et al.*, 1998, p. 103). In view of such requirements, Lee Kuan Yew preferred to recruit "problem-solvers" rather than "word-spinners" so as to improve the governance quality (Milne and Mauzy, 1990, p. 116). To be obvious, Lee Kuan Yew strongly believed a capable leader should be a better and skilful debater; and this leader should have academic and professional background, working ability along with positive attitude, and ability to deal with contingencies. Followed by his observation and judgment, this founding father of Singapore needed to decide whether he would let such a candidate continue with his candidacy based on his performance in politics later. Since not all young elitist talents in Singapore could overcome challenges, quite a substantial number of selected candidates were gradually eliminated during the process. Lee Kuan Yew hence explained, "in order to recruit thirty capable elitist talents, we have to select fifty candidates for final screening with twenty eliminated" (Ed. Singapore Joint Morning Paper, 1994, p. 493). At this point, Goh Chok Tong was one of the very few who survived, and became the Prime Minister. Accordingly, "helicopter qualities" would be beneficial to the People's Action Party, who pursued highly efficient administration.

Not only wholly relying on "helicopter qualities" for consideration, but also should Lee Kuan Yew value his successor's relations with other Cabinet's Ministers in the name of "support of the new Cabinet's colleagues". To put it simply, as long as this old guard leader could get along well with his colleagues, he could strike a good balance between stakeholders and his homeland during policy-making. He further pointed out, "the posts of political leaders and civil servants should be taken up by the most suitable candidates. In other words,

they should have a high level of integrity, devotion, and abilities to lead the country” (Ed. Singapore Joint Morning Paper, 1994, p. 240). In this, Lee Kuan Yew sincerely popularised the wisdom of politics, in particular the human transcendence against the external environment. Therefore, he prized selection and training of elitist talents, and harmonious interpersonal relationships. Obviously, Singapore’s leadership succession smoothly proceeded under his long-term planning. After this political strongman handed over his political power in the 1980s, he allowed potential leaders of the second generation to compete freely in this political game; as a result, Goh Chok Tong survived in this unexpected political journey over decades. Goh recently summarised his dramatic succession experience in the memoir, “I was chosen by the second-generation Ministers (‘support of the new Cabinet’s colleagues’) to lead in December 1984. Lee Kuan Yew then appointed me Deputy Prime Minister. But four years later, he publicly declared that I was not his first choice (Tan Keng Yam) as Prime Minister. Whatever his doubts and reasons, my colleagues stood by me. Lee Kuan Yew handed me the premiership in November 1990” (Peh, 2019, p. ix).

Evaluations of passing the batons to next generation leaders

A method for evaluating the result of leadership successions is to judge from Deng Xiaoping’s and Lee Kuan Yew’s successors. Prior to evaluating whether their successors succeeded, we should initially understand both the meanings of success in and failure at successions. To go further, the duo’s leadership successions included the succession of position, power, and authority. Given that a next generation leader was capable of acquiring the position, power and authority from the political strongman, and coping with the challenges from other candidates or factions without being stepped down, he would then succeed. However, since others could hardly gain the authority itself, one could still succeed accordingly, if he was able to take hold of both the position and the power from an old guard. On the contrary, if the successors merely took one of the three: including position, power and authority from his political strongman, and were forced to leave the office earlier than original settings: including but not limited to house detention, such a succession would be regarded as a failure.

Based on the above-mentioned benchmark for an evaluation, Deng Xiaoping had appointed four candidates as General Secretary, i.e., Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao. For instance, Jiang Zemin received both the highest leadership positions, i.e., both the General Secretary and the Chairman of the Central Military Commission. More significantly, he could complete his entire terms of office. After Jiang Zemin won those top leadership’s positions of the Party and the state, his power grew. During the Southern Tour in 1992, Deng Xiaoping had marginalised many potential competitors inside the Chinese Communist Party through his personal authority, so that Jiang Zemin could become the “core” of the third generation leadership with both the positions and the power. Of four successors, the first two were forced to step down despite their unexpired terms of office, while the last two were more successful. Compared with Deng Xiaoping’s power transfer arrangement, Lee Kuan Yew’s plan to this was mainly the power given and the power of transfer, i.e., letting his successor receive a position and hold the power. No doubt, Deng Xiaoping never possessed a leading position, and, more critically, his personal authority was restricted by life cycle as other humans did. Thus, Deng Xiaoping shaped such a difficult milieu for his successors to compete regardless of his intension. Clearly, Deng Xiaoping’s leadership successions encountered a lot more constraints than Lee Kuan Yew’s. As a result, the two political strongmen’s distinctive arrangements on leadership successions led to different results, i.e., Lee Kuan Yew was considered as an excellent politician to complete this task, while Deng Xiaoping only received the better results from his third and fourth attempts.

Lessons of good governance in Asian countries for Western Electoral Democracies

Good leaders in
Asian
countries

Influenced by the Westminster system, relationship of nation-states between the East and the West has long been a combination of sweet and sour. Yet, during the twenty-first century, at least in the understanding of the path about political development, such a relationship is increasingly souring. It is believed that this secular trend will continue over the next decade and beyond. As Yip (2012, pp. 171-172) said, “today, there are no confronting ideologies as in the Cold War period. During the Cold War, when two worlds (the East and the West) were hostile to each other [. . .] Now that the Soviet Union has disintegrated [. . .] The world should opt for integration instead of confrontation. It is not necessary to overemphasise the merits of a democratic political system (in the West) or promote the merits of the China model (one of the Asian models in the East). The two systems can be discussed with an open mind”. In other words, once looking into the future, mutual respect, sharing and co-existence among distinctive civilisations are essential, including but not limited to learning some of the good governance lessons in the East in order to contribute to human progression even for Western Electoral Democracies.

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To select good leaders beyond Western Electoral Democracies

Democracy is good in nature, but the understanding of this political term can be diverse regarding its connotation and practice among countries. As Wang (2016, p. 233) explained, our general recognition of democracy could be divided into: representative democracy to highlight democratic featured matters, such as regularly-held universal suffrage (as in the West), and representational democracy to focus on people’s essential needs (as in the East). The former, however, is likely to put excessive emphasis on the means, since Bell (2015, p. 16) suggested, “yet political power is an exception: it’s fine to pick a leader with no prior political experience, so long as he or she has been chosen on the basis of one person, one vote”. In other words, catastrophic results may arise due to excessive procedural justification; and that a democratic society is likely to be haunted by the unwanted consequence. For example, some area specialists suggested that “where democratisation has recently taken place, it is unstable and vulnerable to new rounds of executive actions, military coups, and mass uprisings” (Case, 1996, p. 437). Obviously, the aforementioned consequences, such as riots, could be the unexpected by-products of representative democracy. Jones (2020, p. 9), moreover, added, “the push for ‘one person, one vote,’ come what may, has had both benefits and costs, and in the twenty-first century we have enough data to make it clear that the costs are pretty high. The costs of giving equal weight to the informed and uninformed alike are high enough that it’s worthwhile to look for creative ways to tilt the scales just a little bit toward the informed”. That is to say, there is an important presumption for “one person, one vote”; the populace themselves should be informed enough for making sensible and independent voting, one that is not manipulated by certain social media with political leaning. To Jones, however, the costs of fulfilling such a prerequisite are relatively high, in which case the merits of “one person, one vote” are likely to be eaten up by the costs *per se*. Also, “representation need not mean representative government” (Pitkin, 1967, pp. 2-3) in all spatial-temporal conditions. While we could have distinctive interpretations of democracy, the above-mentioned view implied that such a political term, including but not limited to leadership successions that may have various definitions and developmental paths, should not be entirely related to making good use of universal suffrage for picking up next generation leaders, especially with reference to the scenarios after the leadership of their political strongmen. For passing of the old guard, such as revolutionary leaders of the Chinese Communist Party, the leadership succession issue was increasingly pressing. As the new generation naturally lacked the personal power that their old counterparts shared based

on their revolutionary experience, they had to build up a new power base by discovering a series of new rules and methods. Take China as an example again, the post-Deng leadership, i.e., Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and currently Xi Jinping, have made enormous efforts to institutionalise such elite politics. Undoubtedly, many formal institutions have been established, but informal rules continued to play a significant role in leadership successions (Zhang, 2009, pp. 72-73).

Regardless of the process of leadership successions in post-Mao China or the independent Singapore, such an approach of both countries was not fully institutionalised. Take Singapore as an example, this Southeast Asian “red-dot” had been through the lead of two Prime Ministers, i.e., Goh Chok Tong, and now Lee Hsien Loong after Lee Kuan Yew’s step-down in 1990. Although the founding father of Singapore was no longer the Prime Minister nor the President after 1990, and he further resigned from the post of Secretary General of the People’s Action Party in 1992, he was still reelected as a Member of Parliament of Tanjong Pagar constituency, and served as the Senior Minister from 1991 to 2004 and later the Minister Mentor from 2004 to 2011; definitely his off-stage political influence was remarkably obvious behind the scene. Goh Chok Tong explained that he arranged the regularly-held Cabinet meetings to discuss issues with Ministers beyond the Parliament, in which a meeting was divided into two parts, i.e., formal and informal discussions. Although Lee Kuan Yew was not invited to join the first part of the meeting, he could still exercise his residual power by sharing his previous governing experience in the second part (Vasil, 1992, pp. 232-233). Clearly, such a sharing implied that the most critical public policies and personnel appointments required Lee Kuan Yew’s final endorsement, whether under the frontline leadership of Goh Chok Tong or Lee Hsien Loong. Then, why did governments in China and Singapore not prefer to opt for such fully institutionalised leadership successions? Among all factors, the current effectiveness of leadership successions and, more importantly, the potential risk of changing the current approach could mainly account for the situation. As Helms (2020, p. 5) suggested, “autocratic successions tend to be of even greater importance in their own right than successions in democratic regimes. While successions in democracies usually represent a more limited form of power change, compared to full-scale democratic transitions (in terms of alternation in government and changing patterns of political control), successions in autocratic contexts often mark the one visible element of change in an otherwise more or less change-averse and closed environment”. In other words, some regimes, such as Deng Xiaoping’s and Lee Kuan Yew’s nations, were likely to perpetuate the current political mechanism, because the nature of such regimes not fully practising Western-style democracy went against changes, especially significant ones; and such a feature could be exemplified by specific mentality.

First, after more than half a century, the developmental path of leadership successions of both countries has retained the characteristics of the traditional political system; at the same time, it has also been adjusted due to political modernisation. At present, the leadership successions are no longer full of violence or noted as a zero-sum game. Changing the mode of leadership successions to terminate the current governors to recruit or even appoint successors is not a rational option for the ruling parties; instead, most rational top leaders are inclined to preserve the existing mechanism in order to maintain their legitimacy, including the process of leadership successions. As for the governed of some countries not fully practising Western-style democracy, they do not have the strong motives to completely subvert the existing system, mainly because the leadership succession issue has always been manipulated by the elites but not the populace within the boundaries.

Second, the democratic transition including but not limited to leadership successions in many non-democratic countries, such as the Soviet Union and a series of post-communist states in Eastern Europe, did not serve as a good example for the top leaders of China and Singapore. In other words, as there is already some less, if not the least, successful change in

leadership successions of some countries not fully practising Western-style democracy, to maintain the stability of the existing system is, no doubt, the most considerate option for the utmost interests of China and Singapore.

With regard to an absence of the fully institutionalised leadership succession of some Asian countries, just as the scenarios occurred in China and Singapore, what are the lessons for Western Electoral Democracies? In addition to the practice of regularly-held universal suffrage for selecting new generation leaders, it is, meanwhile, critical to highlight the importance of elite politics as the supplement under Western Electoral Democracies in order to avoid their countries falling into the trap of populism, especially with the emergence of a series of low-quality democratic representatives leading the general public. Clearly, to continuously allow for the “self-renewal” (from the old guard to the next generation) inside the Chinese Communist Party and Singapore’s People’s Action Party, elite politics has mostly been placed as the top priority starting from the leadership of Deng Xiaoping and Lee Kuan Yew.

First, in terms of the requirements for recruiting or appointing the next generation leaders, such a criterion of “expert” was prized by the old guards in post-Mao China and the independent Singapore, which was also considered the supplement beyond the regularly-held universal suffrage for Western Electoral Democracies. On the one hand, elites absorbed to the government can be nurtured as technocrats who had earlier received systematic education, together with professional training. Due to quality education, such technocrats, while governing their homelands, can tackle problems rationally and professionally. On the other hand, these individuals are more interested in their professional fields than power struggle in politics. Being experts in their professional fields, they tend to analyse problems not through official ideologies during both the formulation and the implementation of public policies. In other words, practical problems are better not to be solved by the political means.

Second, the ruling parties in China and Singapore were well-established in an elite cooperation mechanism in order to balance the interests of distinctive stakeholders of their countries. Such a practice focused on cooperating different elites both inside and outside the party, especially for attracting economic elites and industrial elites as political elites, i.e., some next generation leaders. Theoretically, the frequent interaction among various elites, in particular representing the interests of their professional fields, may undermine social equity or challenge the implementation of certain public policies. But in the real-life context, being a lesson for Western Electoral Democracies, such an interaction among elites can be characterised as the benign competition under the countries not fully practising Western-style democracy. In many situations, elites are required to obey the premise of “consistent basic interests” and have to cooperate in all critical decision-making scenarios, rather than be blunt or confront unreasonably, just as certain legislatures under Western Electoral Democracies for making use of the “filibuster” form of deliberation in order to upset the administrative efficiency. That is to say, whether or not under Western Electoral Democracies, the interaction and the cooperation among different elites both inside and outside the party for formulating and later implementing public policies as expected would guarantee the better legitimate status of the ruling party of that country. More significantly, even under the practice of regularly-held universal suffrage among Western Electoral Democracies, such a mode still deserves mentioning here as it can greatly lower the top leaders’ potential risk of encountering “motion of non-confidence”, such as being raised by opposition parties in the Parliament. Its successful key in fact can be simply attributed to “never putting all the eggs in one basket”, i.e., elites of the ruling party and, meanwhile, different stakeholders of society actively participating in the process of policy-making would share the political risks and responsibilities, if the implementation result of a public policy initiated by the ruling party and its top leaders is unsatisfactory. Thus, in the case of the sudden absent legitimacy of the government, this political tactic is certainly a wise move to supplement the declining

procedural legitimacy at once, and this is what Western Electoral Democracies can learn from accordingly.

Conclusion

This paper argues the cases of post-Mao China and the independent Singapore prove that in some Asian countries, good leaders could still be selected beyond Western-style democracy, mainly because of the elites-driven context. From this, the statesmen's criteria for leadership successions are in tandem with (i) the significance of "expert" as emphasised by Lee Kuan Yew, who considered this criterion as "helicopter qualities" in addition to "support of the new Cabinet's colleagues"; and (ii) the importance of "red" and "expert" as valued by Deng Xiaoping, who broke down both criteria into "Four Modernisations cadres" as well as "adhering to the line of Economic Reform and Open-door Policy and who had some achievements in that respect to their credit". Moreover, Deng Xiaoping proposed "younger standard" for the sake of vitality and morale among cadres occupying critical positions. Apart from being "red", the working capability possessed by a young successor was still significant. As to Lee Kuan Yew, he valued a lot more his successor's relations with other Cabinet's Ministers in the name of "support of the new Cabinet's colleagues".

Evaluating the duo's leadership successions, we could gauge the results based on their successors' fulfilment of the proposed criteria and their terms of office. Deng Xiaoping's leadership successions were somewhat successful (with two successful cases as Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao) due to the political situation he was facing at the time. In contrast, Lee Kuan Yew's was phenomenal (with his successor taking hold of both the position and the power).

From the duo's selection of leaders, one could discover that their successions were partly institutionalised, because most rational top leaders are inclined to preserve the existing mechanism in order to retain their legitimacy. Additionally, the democratic transition including but not limited to the leadership succession in many non-democratic countries, such as the Soviet Union and a series of post-communist states in Eastern Europe, did not serve as an exemplary case for the top leaders of China and Singapore.

Learning from Deng Xiaoping's and Lee Kuan Yew's leadership successions, the West may treat elite politics as the supplement under Western Electoral Democracies in order to avoid their countries falling into the trap of populism. As Lutovac (2020, p. 51) warned, "populism does not only appear as an 'alternative' to the established parties – it is at the same time infiltrating them as well as society on the whole. The narrative of populism widens the gap between the political class and society, but it does not provide rational answers to the crisis of representative democracy. Populism grows in the atmosphere of political and social divisions and favours the destruction of 'the people's enemy' over compromise". The West could meanwhile consider a series of exceptional criteria prized by the duo for leadership successions. As for the interaction among elites in the real-life context, it could serve as the benign competition under the countries not fully practising Western-style democracy, which the West can learn from.

One might note that during leadership successions, the two political strongmen's personal authorities originated from their charismatic leadership. Since such personal authorities were obtained through historical achievements and also personal charisma, they could constantly receive their followers' loyalty. That kind of personal authority could barely be forwarded to the future leaders. As time passes, during power transfer, i.e., obtaining positions from the duo, successive leaders just had a pinch of power. Their policy-making then took an opulent cavalcade towards the political strongmen's wave of stick.

To fill the knowledge gap of our existing literature, the significance of this paper lies in offering readers a glance over the possibility of selecting good leaders in Asian countries not fully based on Eurocentric perspective, e.g., overemphasising both the good and the usefulness of having universal suffrage as widely accepted in Western Electoral Democracies.

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A study of the effect of wearing face masks in preventing COVID-19 transmission in the United States of America

Preventing
COVID-19
transmission

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to intelligibly demonstrate the effectiveness of face mask wearing as a means to prevent COVID-19 transmission. Through understanding the benefits of wearing masks, it is hoped to facilitate the change of societal behavior and more people are willing to wear face mask.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper investigates the 50 states in the United States of America (U.S.) and Washington, D.C. that implemented the mask mandates before September 30, 2020, which are divided into four groups: (1) those implemented the statewide mask mandates before June 5, 2020 when World Health Organization (WHO) recommended mask wearing; (2) those implemented statewide mask mandates after June 5, 2020; (3) those implemented partial mandates affecting 30 percent or more of the state's population; and (4) those implemented partial mandates affecting less than 30 percent. Simple descriptive statistics are analyzed.

Findings – For the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C., the higher the mask wearing rate, the lower the number of COVID-19 cases (correlation coefficient: -0.69 ($p < 0.001$)). For the 23 states with mobility reduction of less than 15 percent, the higher the proportion of population required to wear masks, the lower the number of cases. This can be seen from the difference in the number of cases among the four groups by ANOVA ($p = 0.013$).

Originality – The positive effect of wearing masks is shown based on simple descriptive statistics for intuitive and intelligible understanding, which may lead people to comprehend the importance of wearing masks, and break through their custom, culture, and norms, and wear masks.

Keywords COVID-19, Mask mandate, Mask effect, Behavior change, United States

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to reduce the infection risks in daily life as much as possible. COVID-19 vaccination has started in many countries, and the effect of the

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vaccines has gradually taken effect. However, even if the infection can be suppressed in some countries, eradication of COVID-19 is difficult because of increasing globalization and the appearance of coronavirus variants. It will be tough to return to a coronavirus-free society. Therefore, activities that enable society to coexist with COVID-19 are needed for the foreseeable future.

This paper will investigate the effect of face mask mandates in the U.S. on COVID-19 infection rates as a means to effect a change in societal behavior and promote the wearing of masks, which is necessary if society is to coexist with coronaviruses.

Changing societal behavior

A key concern when contemplating which measures to take against COVID-19 infection is how potential societal restrictions will affect the economy. The balance between restrictions and the economy depends on the country and the political position of its leader. For example, the former president of the U.S., Donald Trump, emphasized the economy more. In addition, it is widely known through television news and other forms of mass media that there were many Americans who did not wear masks at numerous Republican rallies before and after the presidential election. Furthermore, the implementation of such measures as mask mandates and stay-at-home orders as well as the timing of the strengthening these measures differed greatly among states depending on whether the state was under Republican or Democratic control.

Purpose

Unlike hand disinfection, social distancing and ventilation, there will be resistance to wearing face masks due to long-standing custom, social and cultural backgrounds, and subjective norms across countries or regions. In this paper, the effect of wearing masks is shown by a descriptive statistical approach so that people can easily understand and probably be convinced on the positive effect of mask wearing. Hopefully more people will break through their custom, culture, and norms and take actions of wearing masks.

Research methodology

Data collection

The effect of mask mandates on the number of COVID-19 cases was analyzed using data for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C. through September 30, 2020. The data included the start date of mask mandates, the proportion of people required to wear masks, other measures taken before and after the mask mandates were implemented, the mask wearing rate and the mobility rate estimated by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME, 2021), and the number of cases compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2020). The authors used the IHME mask wearing rate rather than that of Carnegie Mellon University (Delphi Group, 2021) since the study focused on the period until September 30, 2020. Number of cases was standardized per million of state population (person per million / PPM). The U.S. was chosen for this study since each state makes their own health policy decisions independently, thus enabling comparison among various policies. In that sense, the U.S. can be regarded as a field for social experiments. In particular, the U.S. does not have a mask-wearing culture, and the specifics of the mask mandates are different among states.

Design and statistical analysis

First, the states and the D.C. (collectively referred to as a “state”) were divided into two groups, those that implemented it throughout the state and those that implemented it in only

certain areas (Ballotpedia, 2021; Kim *et al.*, 2020; Markowitz, 2021; *The New York Times*, 2020). The former group was further divided into two groups: the states in which the mandate was implemented before June 5, 2020 when the WHO recommended mask wearing, and those in which it was implemented after June 5, 2020. Similarly, the latter group was further divided into two groups, the states with 30 percent or more of the population required to wear masks and those with less than 30 percent. In those states where the implementation date differed depending on areas, the implementation date of the county or city with the largest population was set as the start date. The population targeted for mask mandates was the total population of the areas where a mask mandate was implemented within two weeks before and after the set start date (four weeks in total). The four groups investigated are defined as follows.

Group A: Statewide mask mandate before June 5, 2021

Group B: Statewide mask mandate after June 5, 2021

Group C: 30 percent or more of the state's population required to wear a mask

Group D: Less than 30 percent of the state's population required to wear a mask

Measures such as stay-at-home orders, school closures, large-gathering prohibitions, and restaurant, bar, and recreational facility closures greatly affect mobility. Therefore, the effect of a mask mandate was examined only for the states where the mobility for four weeks (two weeks before and after the start date) was reduced by less than 15 percent compared with normal mobility. Table 1 shows the data for the 23 states with a mobility reduction rate of less than 15 percent. The number of cases two weeks after the start date was set to 100, and the increase or decrease in the number of cases was investigated for the following six weeks (from the 3rd to the 8th week). Besides, a scatter plot between the mask wearing rate for all the states and D.C. on September 30, 2020, and the number of cases for one month (September) was created, and the correlation was examined.

Mask mandates start date and relevant population

When a mask mandate was implemented in a part of the state and the implementation date of each area was different, the implementation date of the most populous area was set as the implementation date of the mask mandate in the state. When the implementation date of the mask mandate in multiple areas was consecutive, the authors compared the total population of those areas with that of the area implemented on another day before setting the state implementation date of the mask mandate. For example, in Georgia, five cities implemented a mask mandate on July 9 and two other cities did it on July 10. July 9 and 10 are consecutive and so the total population of seven cities was compared with that of the area implemented on another day. As a result, the total population of seven cities was more than the others. Next, the authors compare the population of the areas where the mask mandate was conducted on July 9 with that of the areas implemented on July 10. Since the total population of the areas implemented on July 9 is more, July 9 was set as the implementation date of the mask mandate in Georgia. The population covered by a mandate implemented within two weeks before (including the start day) and after the start date (four weeks in total), was about 2.12 million. The total population of the state was about 10.62 million, so 20.0 percent of the population was required to wear a mask.

Appearance of mask mandates effect

Figure 1 is a time series graph showing the daily number of newly infected people per million in Ohio (Group B), South Carolina (Group C), and Nebraska (Group D). The curved line shows the seven-day moving average. In general, the effect of the mask mandate appeared about

Table 1.
Portion of dataset used
for analyzing effect of
mask wearing (Less
than 15% mobility
reduction)

Group	State	Abbr	Implement- ation date of mask mandate	Propor- tion of popu- lation required to wear a mask	Stay at home start date	Reopen business date	Normali- zed number ^a of cases on mandate start date	Normali- zed number ^a of cases at second week	Normali- zed number ^a of cases from 3rd to 8th weeks	Number of cases in Sep. 2020 (PPM)	Mask wearing rate 9/30 (%)	Mobility compared with before pandemic
B	Alabama	AL	2020/7/16	100%	2020/ 4/4	2020/4/ 30	116	100	72	5993	61	-9%
	Arkansas	AR	2020/7/20	100%	No issue until 2020/9/30		100	100	84	7707	62	-13%
	Indiana	IN	2020/7/27	100%	2020/ 3/24	2020/5/1	86	100	94	3983	61	-14%
	Kentucky	KY	2020/7/10	100%	2020/ 3/26	2020/6/ 29	58	100	99	4711	65	-14%
	Mississippi	MS	2020/8/5	100%	2020/ 4/3	2020/4/ 27	111	100	64	5157	59	-11%
	Montana	MT	2020/7/15	100%	2020/ 3/28	2020/4/ 26	91	100	93	5963	54	3%
	Ohio	OH	2020/7/23	100%	2020/ 3/23	2020/5/ 19	116	100	94	2672	62	-14%
	West Virginia	WV	2020/7/7	100%	2020/ 3/24	2020/5/4	108	100	112	3021	61	-8%
	Wisconsin	WI	2020/8/1	100%	2020/ 3/25	2020/5/ 13	114	100	158	8538	62	-14%

(continued)

Group	State	Abbr	Implementa- tion date of mask mandate	Propor- tion of popu- lation required to wear a mask	Stay at home start date	Reopen business	Normali- zed number ^a of cases on mandate start date	Normali- zed number ^a of cases at second week	Normali- zed number ^a of cases from 3rd to 8th weeks	Number of cases in Sep. 2020 (PPM)	Mask wearing rate 9/30 (%)	Mobility compared with before pandemic
C	Alaska	AK	2020/6/29	40%	2020/ 3/28	2020/4/ 24	54	100	146	3606	52	-10%
	Kansas	KS	2020/7/3	67%	2020/ 3/30	2020/5/3	73	100	95	6006	47	-9%
	Idaho	ID	2020/7/14	41%	2020/ 3/25	2020/4/ 30	112	100	72	6354	59	-8%
	Missouri	MO	2020/7/3	32%	2020/ 4/6	2020/5/3	61	100	179	6915	54	-14%
	Oklahoma	OK	2020/7/17	30%	2020/ 3/17	2020/5/1	53	100	60	7820	53	-7%
	South Carolina	SC	2020/7/6	40%	2020/ 4/17	2020/5/4	83	100	60	6259	60	-13%
	Tennessee	TN	2020/7/3	36%	2020/ 3/31	2020/4/ 30	69	100	90	6493	56	-11%
	Georgia	GA	2020/7/9	20%	2020/ 4/3	2020/4/ 27	82	100	80	4909	59	-11%
	Iowa	IA	2020/8/26	7%	2020/ 3/17	2020/4/ 30	149	100	128	7881	51	-6%
	Nebraska	NE	2020/8/11	25%	2020/ 3/16	2020/5/1	124	100	180	6175	53	-8%
D	New Hampshire	NH	2020/8/31	5%	2020/ 3/27	2020/6/ 15	64	100	188	753	67	-14%
	North Dakota	ND	2020/7/27	16%	2020/ 3/20	2020/4/ 30	90	100	186	15192	42	-4%
	South Dakota	SD	2020/9/9	3%	2020/ 3/23	2020/4/ 30	66	100	215	10907	40	3%
	Wyoming	WY	2020/8/6	5%	2020/ 3/20	2020/5/1	69	100	125	3737	34	6%

Note a: Normalized by 2nd week number of cases, which was set to 100

Table 1.

two weeks after the mandate start date as shown in the graph of South Carolina. That is, there was a peak in the number of cases in the second week from the start date (July 6). The same situation also occurred in Indiana, Kentucky, Montana, Kansas, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Tennessee (Table 1). However, as shown in the table, there were several exceptions. For Alabama, Arkansas, and Idaho, the larger number of COVID-19 cases appeared on the mandate start date, which is attributed to the effect of the Independence Day holiday on July 4, just about 2 weeks before the mandate start date. For Ohio, the larger number on the mandate start date, July 23, is probably because seven major counties implemented mandates on July 7, about two weeks prior to statewide implementation on July 23. The total population of the seven counties was 4.87 million of the 11.69 million state population (41.7 percent). Therefore, there was a peak in the number of cases two weeks after July 7 (Figure 1).

Results

Relationship between number of COVID-19 cases and mask mandate start date

The number of COVID-19 cases per million population in September 2020 is plotted against the mask mandate start date in Figure 2 for the four groups investigated. It is noted that each plot point in the figure represents a state or D.C. Differences in the total number of COVID-19 cases among these four groups can be clearly seen. In particular, the states that mandated mask wearing statewide before June 5 had a lower number of cases.

Relationship between number of COVID-19 cases and mask wearing rate

The number of COVID-19 cases per million people in September 2020 is plotted against the estimated mask wearing rate (IHME, 2021) on September 30, 2020 in Figure 3 for the four

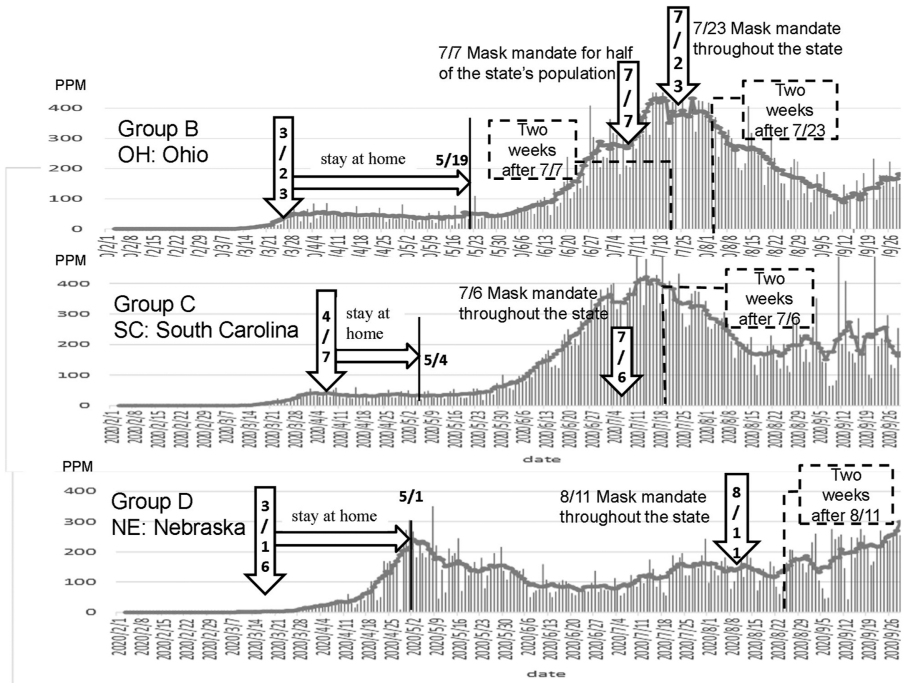
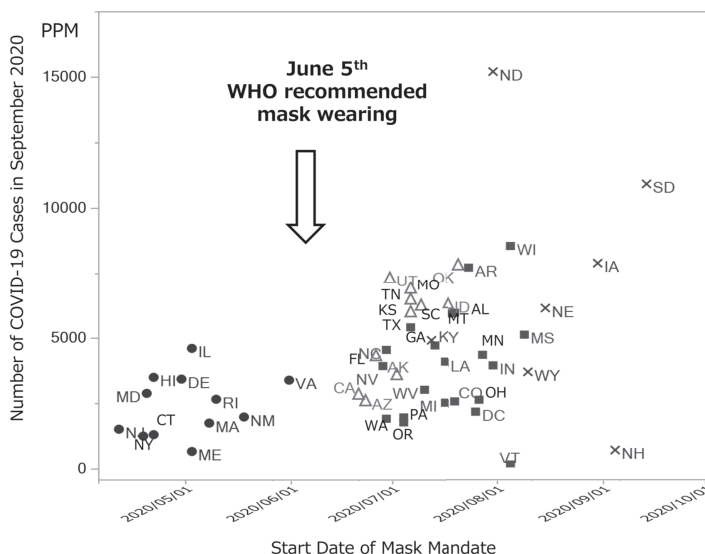


Figure 1. Time series graph of number of newly infected people in Ohio (Group B), South Carolina (Group C), and Nebraska (Group D)



- Group A: ● Statewide, before June 5, 2020
- Group B: ■ Statewide, after June 5, 2020
- Group C: △ Partially, 30% or more of population
- Group D: × Partially, less than 30% of population

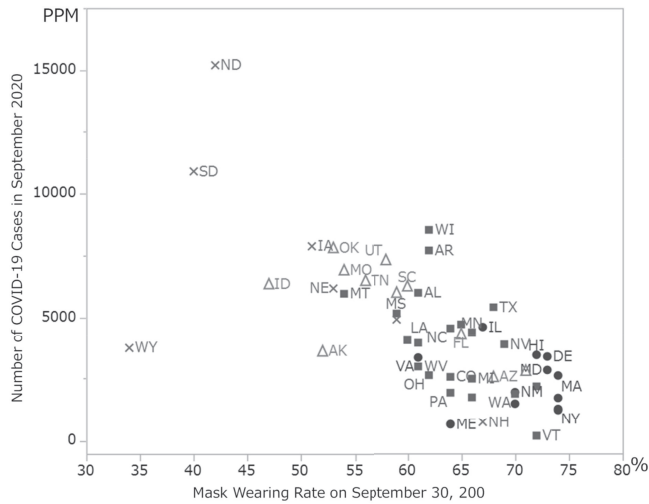
Figure 2.
Number of COVID-19
cases in September
2020 versus start date
of mask mandate

groups. There is a clear correlation between the rate of mask wearing and the number of cases. The correlation coefficient for September was -0.69 ($p < 0.001$) including Wyoming and -0.79 ($p < .001$) excluding Wyoming. That is, the higher the rate, the fewer the cases.

Effect of mask mandate considering mobility

In Figure 4, the average number of COVID-19 cases from the 3rd to the 8th weeks normalized by the 2nd week number of cases is plotted against the average mobility for four weeks (two weeks before and after the start date of mask mandates) for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C. stratified by the four groups investigated. The number of cases for the 2nd week was set to 100. The vertical dotted line corresponds to a 15 percent reduction in the mobility rate. Figure 5 shows the average mobility for four weeks (two weeks before and after the start date of mask mandates) for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C. classified into the four groups. With the threshold of “-15 percent”, the number of states for Groups A, B, C and D is 0, 9, 7 and 7, respectively, and they are renamed as A', B', C', and D', respectively.

Graphs for these 23 states with mobility reduction of less than 15 percent are shown in Figure 6 for the three groups described above (Groups B', C', and D', there was no state in Group A'). There was no significant difference in mobility between groups ($p = 0.109$ by ANOVA). The ANOVA result for the difference in covered population means of the groups in terms of the number of COVID-19 cases was significant ($p = 0.013$), indicating that mask mandates were effective in decreasing the number of COVID-19 cases. Sensitivity analysis showed that with the threshold of the population percentage required to wear a mask changed from 30 percent to 20 percent, the ANOVA result would be still significant ($p = 0.010$). Also, if the threshold changed from 30 percent to 40 percent, the result would be still significant ($p = 0.045$).



Note(s): $r = -0.69$ ($p < 0.001$) Including Wyoming (WY) and $r = -0.79$ ($p < 0.001$) Excluding Wyoming

Group A: ● Statewide, before June 5, 2020

Group B: ■ Statewide, after June 5, 2020

Group C: △ Partially, 30% or more of population

Group D: × Partially, less than 30% of population

Figure 3.
Number of COVID-19 cases in September 2020 versus mask wearing rate

Discussion

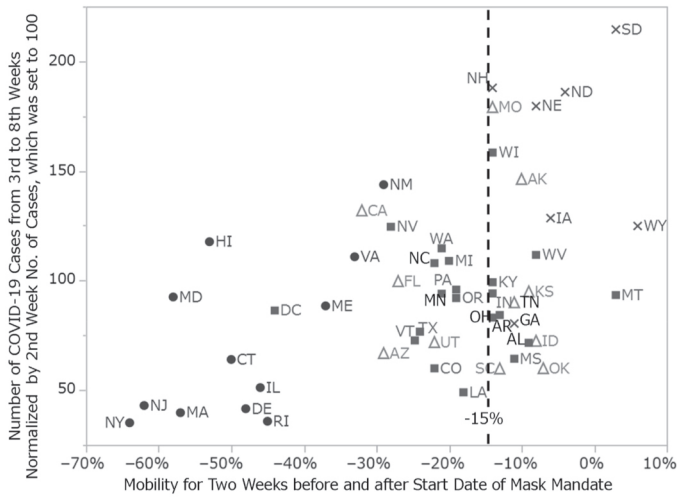
This study has three key implications as discussed below.

Perceiving the benefits of mask wearing

For changing societal behavior, Hung (2018) indicated the importance of perceived benefits of mask wearing and lack of perception of being at risk, and barriers to social interaction of mask wearing during the flu pandemic. Moreover, based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB), it was shown that risk perceptions of the pandemic and perceived benefits of face masks are the major influencing factors that positively affect public willingness to wear face masks besides attitude and social norms (Irfan *et al.*, 2021). For perceiving the benefits of mask wearing, it is important to provide data and scientific evidence in a way that people can easily understand so that hopefully they can be convinced of the genuine need to wear a mask.

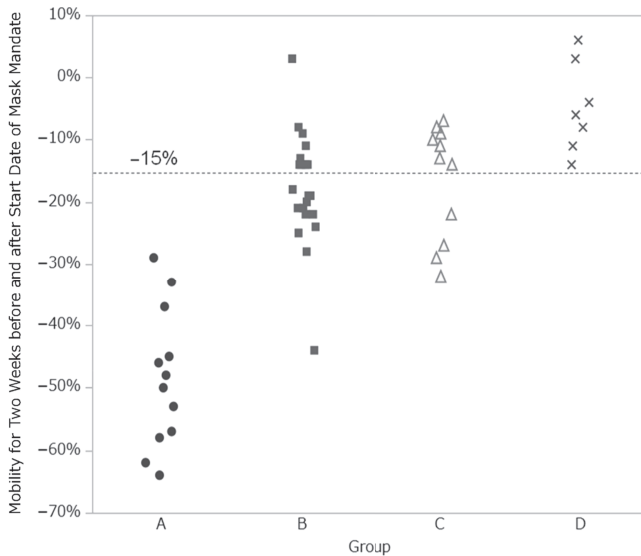
Face coverings can have both social and cultural meanings. In the U.S, mask mandates have become a political issue because being required to wear a mask in public is thought by many people to be a violation of freedom (Rojas, 2020). Wearing one has been described as dehumanizing as well (MacFarquhar, 2020). Several U.S. government officials including the former president, Donald Trump, initially refused to wear a mask, describing it as a sign of weakness. They asserted their authority by not wearing a mask (Ball, 2020).

Social and community thinking may affect mask wearing. For example, the mask wearing rate varied among states depending on whether the state supported the Republican or Democratic party in the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Figure 7 shows the same data as



- Group A: ● Statewide, before June 5, 2020
- Group B: ■ Statewide, after June 5, 2020
- Group C: △ Partially, 30% or more of population
- Group D: × Partially, less than 30% of population

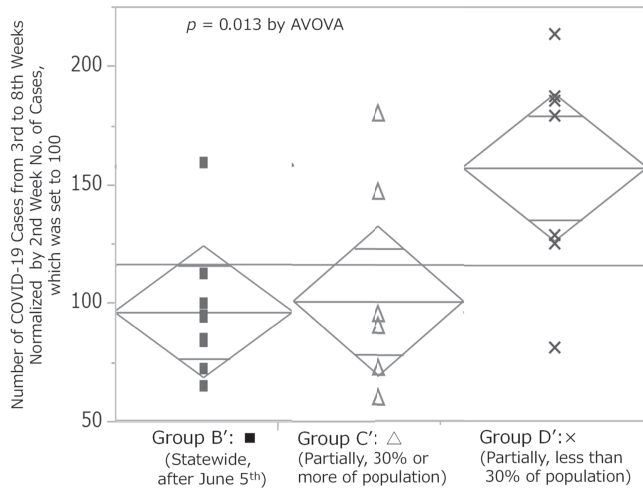
Figure 4. Number of COVID-19 cases from 3rd to 8th weeks versus mobility



- Group A: ● Statewide, before June 5, 2020
- Group B: ■ Statewide, after June 5, 2020
- Group C: △ Partially, 30% or more of population
- Group D: × Partially, less than 30% of population

Figure 5. Average mobility for four weeks (two weeks before and after the start date of mask mandates) for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C. stratified by the four groups

Figure 6. Comparison of normalized number of COVID-19 cases by different population groups required to wear a mask



Note(s): Mobility was limited to less than 15%; Graphs show point estimates and 95% confidence intervals of population means

Figure 7. Number of COVID-19 cases in September 2020 versus mask wearing rate stratified by political party supported in 2020 U.S. presidential election

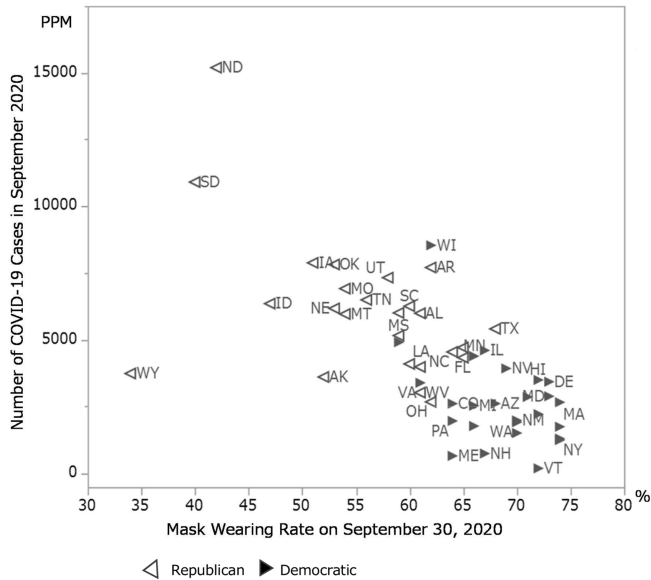


Figure 3, with the states labeled with the party they supported in the 2020 presidential election. The states in which self-responsibility is highly valued were likely to have supported the Republican Party and that valuation may have influenced the way the residents think about wearing a mask. Schoeni *et al.* (2021) showed that both the rate of not wearing a mask in the past week and the adjusted percentage of at-risk adults never wearing a mask were higher for Republicans than Democrats. Also, Green *et al.* (2020) showed that Democratic members of

congress were more likely to frame the pandemic as a public health threat than Republican members.

As shown in this study, protecting public health requires compromising individual freedom although individual freedom should not be taken lightly. This is because people who do not wear a mask present a higher risk of infection to others. This is analogous to smokers presenting a risk to non-smokers through passive smoking. The similarities between mask wearing and smoking are discussed in the literature (Vuolo *et al.*, 2020). Bavel *et al.* (2020) also focused on protecting others, besides several social scientific insights such as emphasizing benefits to the recipient, aligning with the recipient's moral values and appealing to social consensus or scientific norms. To bring some advantages to other people, using evolutionary game theory, Kabir *et al.* (2021) quantified how people use mask-wearing and related protecting behaviors. To promote mask wearing for protecting others, it is important to provide data and scientific evidence in an easy-to-understand way. Behavior change is a multi-step, multi-factor process, and how to incorporate scientific findings into public health policy is an issue for future study.

Differences from previous research

Previous studies on the effects of mask wearing were summarized by Brooks and Butler (2021) from an epidemic point of view. Lyu and Wehby (2020) focused on requirements to wear a mask in public as well as restrictions on movement such as banning gatherings and closing schools. Using a model based on an exponential growth curve, they found that the increase in the rate of COVID-19 infections was possibly reduced by up to 2.0 percent by implementing mask mandates. X. Wang *et al.* (2020) and Y. Wang *et al.* (2020) used a weighted nonlinear regression model, and a multivariable logistic regression model respectively, to show the effect of mask wearing. Model-based analysis and a descriptive statistical approach used in this paper have a complementary relationship. In formulating health policy, it is important to make decisions based on the knowledge obtained by various methods in view of the magnitude of the impact.

To investigate the effects of mask wearing, Lyu and Wehby (2020) focused on the number of days since the declaration of a mask mandate while Gallaway *et al.* (2020) focused on the number of days since the start date of a mandate. This study used the latter approach in order to reveal the effects of mask mandates more clearly. While the study of Gallaway *et al.* (2020) was limited to one U.S. state, this study expanded the scope to all U.S. states plus D.C.

Effectiveness of early mask mandates

As can be seen from Figure 2, the earlier the mask mandates were issued by the states, the smaller the number of infected people. Also, from Figure 3, it is found that the higher the mask wearing rate, the smaller the number of infected people. The above result may be attributed to whether the state supported the Republican or Democratic Party in the 2020 U.S. presidential election from Figure 7. On the other hand, the graphs of mask wearing rates on the IHME web site (IHME, 2021) revealed that once statewide mask mandates were implemented, the mask wearing rate either increased or stayed the same for the most part. The mask wearing rates varied depending on the state, however, it rarely decreased before the end of September. This further demonstrates how important mask mandate was in changing people's behavior within a certain period.

Mechanism of infection prevention by masks

The transmission of COVID-19 can be roughly divided into three main routes: droplet infection by release of droplets $5\ \mu$ or more in diameter from the oral cavity, aerosol infection

caused by droplet nuclei (less than $5\ \mu$ in diameter) formed due to evaporation of the moisture in droplets due to low humidity (particularly in winter), and contact infection due to touching the face and eyes. For droplet infection, masks and social distancing are effective. For aerosol infection, ventilation and safety glasses in addition to masks are effective. For contact infection, hand hygiene is definitely important. Also, masks are effective since wearing a mask helps to reduce the frequency of touching the face (Chen *et al.*, 2020). In short, masks are indispensable items for all three infection routes.

In addition, from the micro perspective, the effectiveness of mask wearing should be considered on the basis of various factors such as the mask design and material, the manufacturing process, humidity, ventilation, and population density. These factors are addressed in the research literature (Riken, 2020; Ueki *et al.*, 2020). Various experiments as well as a descriptive statistical approach are indispensable to facilitate people's understanding on the effects of mask wearing.

Strengths and limitations

There are two strengths of this study. First, the analysis method is based on descriptive statistical approach to demonstrate the effect of mask wearing using comprehensively summarized data in each U.S. state and D.C. This study makes it easier for people to understand the importance of mask wearing. Hopefully, this could contribute to probable changes in mask wearing behavior.

Second, regarding the advantage of wearing masks, an important point is that masks do not substantially interfere with economic activities if appropriate measures are taken related to eating, drinking, singing, speaking, yelling, etc. Since infection spreads through human movement and face-to-face communication, infection can be prevented by using virtual communication like web conferencing under stay-at-home orders that restrict the movement of people (Kano *et al.*, 2020). However, real face-to-face communication is difficult. In addition, under various restrictions, the economic activities of travel-related businesses including railways, airlines, and hotels are limited. Masks are an effective way to reduce these difficulties.

This study is an ecological study and thus does not directly explain causal relationships. Moreover, factors other than mask wearing may have affected the results. The two main limitations are as follows. First, there are effects other than masks. In addition to promoting mask wearing and limiting mobility, it is important to enforce social distancing to prevent droplet infection, improve ventilation to prevent aerosol infection, and disinfect surfaces to prevent contact infection. This study set a four-week mobility condition (two weeks before and after the start date of mask mandates), i.e., a reduction in mobility of less than 15 percent, and made no assumptions about other major changes in behavior such as disinfecting surfaces, improving ventilation, and social distancing. In addition, the effect of being vaccinated on mask wearing was not considered.

Second limitation is related to mask wearing rate, how to wear, and the types of mask. According to the data on mask wearing from IHME (2021), on September 30, 2020, the maximum rate of mask wearing was 77 percent in the U.S., much less than 100 percent. Although infection rates are affected by the types of mask worn and the way in which masks are worn (Tamamoto *et al.*, 2020), measures aimed at improving the mask wearing rate, using effective masks, and wearing masks properly were not taken into account.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of mask wearing was investigated using data for the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C. through September 30, 2020. The effect of mask mandate was clarified

under a similar mobility condition, thereby excluding the effects of restrictions on movement such as stay-at-home orders and gathering limitations. This study revealed that the higher the mask wearing rate, the lower the number of COVID-19 cases, and the higher the proportion of population required to wear masks, the lower the number of cases. Mask wearing could last for a relatively long period of time once a mask mandate is declared. Presenting the effects in an easy-to-understand manner may lead to better understanding by the general public of the effectiveness of mask wearing and to changes in their mask-wearing behavior. This approach may prove useful in promoting measures aimed at controlling other types of infections as well.

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The global economic cost of coronavirus pandemic: current and future implications

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Abstract

Purpose – The global economy is plagued by an unprecedented shock that has devastated economic growth under the coronavirus pandemic. The prolonged movement control orders, social distancing, and lockdowns have triggered the global economic downturn, disrupted the demand and supply chains, reduced the pool of workforce, and caused many jobs loss. This paper aims to analyze the global economic cost of the coronavirus pandemic, and its current and future implications.

Design/methodology/approach – Based on contingency theory, this paper provides an in-depth analysis of the current situation on the global economic cost of the COVID-19 outbreak and gives insights from an organizational perspective.

Findings – This paper found that the world has witnessed far-ranging economic consequences due to the coronavirus pandemic in four aspects: (i) decline in personal consumption; (ii) decline in the investments and stock prices in capital market; (iii) decline in government spending in developmental projects and increase in new borrowing; and (iv) decline of exports of goods to international markets.

Originality/value – The novelty lies in investigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on micro and macroeconomic levels — the components of GDP, consumer behavior, business investments, government spending, and global exports. The paper suggests the need for urgent actions by the world leaders to oversee, anticipate, and manage the risks and cushion the economic consequences. It concludes that the flexibility and adaptability of leaders, effectiveness, workforce protection, efficient use of modern technology, including automation and artificial intelligence, would enhance the resilience of supply chains which will support organizations to sustain in this critical time.

Keywords COVID-19, Pandemic, Contingency theory, Economic cost, Global economy

Paper type Viewpoint

Introduction

The global economy has been thrown into a state of uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. COVID-19 was declared a pandemic in March 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO), which shocked societies, health systems, economies, and governments worldwide (Ali *et al.*, 2021; Yu *et al.*, 2021). Amid extraordinary challenges and uncertainty, and countless personal tragedies, world leaders are under pressure to make decisions on managing the immediate impact of the pandemic and its consequences and decisions that will shape the state of the world for years to come. There is no doubt that the coronavirus outbreak has significantly disrupted the momentum, initially in China and more broadly



(Kraus *et al.*, 2020). The pandemic is having a noticeable impact on global economic growth. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) stated that many countries face a multi-layered crisis that includes a health crisis, a domestic economic crisis, falling external demand, capital outflows, and a collapse in commodity prices (Congressional Research Service, 2021). It is predicted that the global economy would experience its “worst recession since the Great Depression, surpassing that seen during the global financial crisis a decade ago.” The IMF estimated that the global economy could decline by 2.4 to 2.8 percent; global trade is projected to fall by 13 percent to 32 percent, and oil prices are projected to fall by 42 percent in 2020 (Sharfuddin, 2020).

In comparison, the World Bank recently forecasted a 5.2 percent contraction in global economic growth in 2020, with a 4.2 percent rebound in 2021. The World Economic Outlook report in April and June 2020 projected a decline in global GDP growth to -3.0 percent in April from 3.3 percent in January 2020. The projection was further recorded downward by 1.9 percent to -4.9 percent in June 2020 as shown in Figure 1 (Gopinath, 2020). These projections imply a cumulative loss to the global economy over two years (2020–21) of over \$12 trillion from this pandemic.

Nearly all advanced and emerging economies have their growth estimates downward or some into negative in 2020 (Maliszewska *et al.*, 2020). This pandemic has impacted the global economy significantly due to workplace absenteeism, low production, sharp drop in travel, a decline in demand and supply, and closures of factories. In addition to the impact on macroeconomic activities, consumers typically changed their spending behavior, mainly due to decreased income and household finances and a collapse of consumer demand as millions of people stay home and postpone their non-essential expenditures. Service industries such as tourism, hospitality, air travel, cruises, and road transportation have suffered significant losses due to fewer travelers. According to Škare *et al.* (2021), the national economies are badly affected by travel restrictions such as international travel, domestic tourism, day visits, and segments as diverse as air transport, cruises, public transport, accommodation, cafes and restaurants, conventions, festivals, meetings, or sports events. These micro and macroeconomic factors severely damage almost every sector and ultimately lead to the global economic recession. Several countries such as New Zealand, Vietnam, Germany, Costa Rica, Thailand have done relatively well in flattening the COVID-19 curve and put their economies on a firmer footing through direct fiscal injection. Nonetheless, these direct assistance packages are causing fiscal deficit and debt-to-GDP ratio to rise. Ultimately, this will further deteriorate by bringing unemployment, income losses, inflation, and tax base shift, necessitating more drastic policy options.

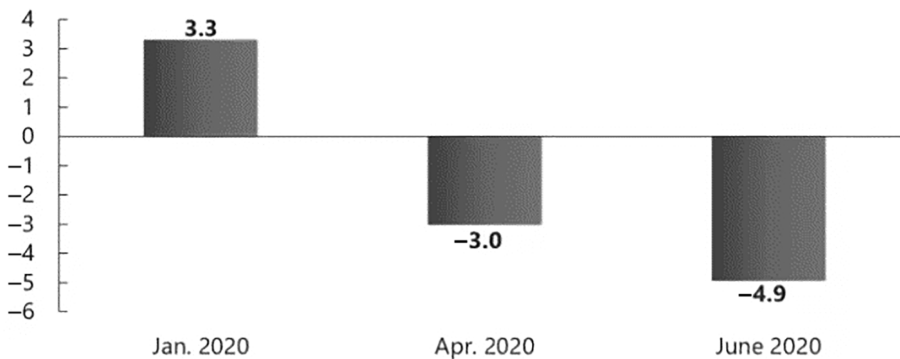


Figure 1.
Global GDP output for
Q1 and Q2 2020

Source(s): Gopinath (2020)

In this paper, the authors provide a review of the economic consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak over various sectors of the global economy. It is significant to study and understand the economic situations of developing countries with low GDP output, high debt, and dependence on oil and other essential technologies, as it is hard for them to maintain independent foreign policies in these critical times (Sharfuddin, 2020). This paper reviews the effect of prolonged movement control orders, social distancing, and lockdown practices on the world economy. It also attempts to put forward the notion of contingency theory by knowing the consequences and formulation of productive tactics and pre-planned strategies that could help organizations reduce at least the impact of the possible crisis. In a nutshell, this paper summarizes four aspects through which the economies are affected due to the COVID-19 outbreak, which are: (i) decline in the consumption behavior of people including goods and services; (ii) decline in the investments and stock prices in capital market; (iii) decline in government spending in developmental projects and increased in new borrowing; and (iv) decline in domestically produced goods to export to international markets.

The COVID-19 crisis

Coronavirus disease, now named as COVID-19 was first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan, China (Abiad *et al.*, 2020). Since then, it has spread across the globe, and the World Health Organization has declared it a global pandemic (Kraus *et al.*, 2020). This virus belongs to the same family of coronaviruses that caused the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003 and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreak in 2012. The estimated mortality rate of COVID-19 is around 2.1 percent, pretty lesser than 9.6 percent for SARS, 43.9 percent for Ebola, and 34.4 percent for MERS (Table 1), but substantially higher than the mortality rate of seasonal flu (0.07 percent), and AH1N1 Influenza (0.02 percent). The infection rate of COVID-19 is much higher than that of MERS, SARS, and Ebola, which spread to around 205 countries and confirmed cases exceeded over 212.5 million. More than 4.6 million deaths were reported to WHO (2021) on 10 September 2021 (Table 1).

Global economy under the COVID-19 crisis

COVID-19 initially a health crisis translated into an economic crisis that severely damaged the global economy and brought it to its knees. As a result, World's GDP is expected to decline by 2.1 percent, developing countries by 2.5 percent, and high-income countries by 1.9 percent in 2020 (Maliszewska *et al.*, 2020). Exporting countries such as the U.S., Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, and South Korea's growth is highly driven by domestic resources. They are projected to be the most negatively affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Also, service-oriented economies are badly affected; nearly half of the global workforce lost livelihoods.

Moreover, social distancing, travel restrictions, and quarantines caused heavy losses to all significant economies reliant on the tourism industry, including the U.S., Greece, Portugal,

Diseases	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Fatality Rate %
COVID-19 or Corona Virus	228,734,606	4,697,994	2.1
U.S. Seasonal Flu	13,000,000	10,000	0.07
SARS	8,437	813	9.6
MERS	2,494	858	34.4
Ebola	34,453	15,158	43.9
AH1N1	762,630,000	284,500	0.02

Table 1.
Fatality and infection rates of COVID-19 and other diseases

Source: WHO (2021).

Spain, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Saudi Arabia. COVID-19 had affected a broad range of countries, including the G7 countries, which jointly contribute 60 percent of world supply and demand, 65 percent of world manufacturing, and 41 percent of world exports. This pandemic has jeopardized overall economies, including large, small, developed, and developing economies. Romano (2020) found that the pandemic has badly affected Australia’s economy, contributing around a 15 percent reduction in their GDP.

IMF’s World Economic Outlook report stated that the COVID-19 is escalating economic costs day by day. The projected cumulative loss to the global economy over two years (2020–21) would be over \$12 trillion. Congressional Research Service Report has identified three aspects through which the global economy is being affected — decline in the supply chains, reduced demand for goods in general, including imports, and reduced trade with exporters (Congressional Research Service, 2021). Nicola *et al.* (2020) also summarized three main channels of the pandemic’s likely effects on the global economy — primary sectors, including industries involved in the extraction of raw materials, secondary sectors involved in producing finished products, and tertiary sectors including all service provision industries. On the other hand, Arezki and Nguyen (2020) discussed four channels that hurt the economies of North Africa and the Middle East. These include disruptions in oil price, value chain, tourism, and travel. Meninno and Wolff (2020) looked at the economic consequences of closing borders of the European Union (EU). They suggested that stopping cross-border travel would lead to a significant disruption of economic activity in the EU. Other researchers, such as Abiad *et al.* (2020), argued that economic activities in developing Asia, including China, are being affected in several aspects. These include a temporary decline in domestic consumption and investments in business activities, declines in tourism and business travel, a decrease in production and trade activities, disruptions in the supply side, and effects on health such as increased disease and mortality and shifts in health care spending. Inevitably, the most important channels through which the global economic effects of the pandemic were spread through a sharp decline in consumption, investments, government spending, and decline in the exports (Figure 2).

In an attempt to understand the negative effect of COVID-19 on the global economy in terms of GDP, four aspects are summarized: (i) focusing on the decline in the consumption expenditures, which include goods and services; (ii) capital investments and stock prices in markets; (iii) government spending including central government expenditure in national defense and non-defense, as well as State and local government’s expenditure estimates; and (iv) exports including goods and services made domestically and purchased by foreigners.

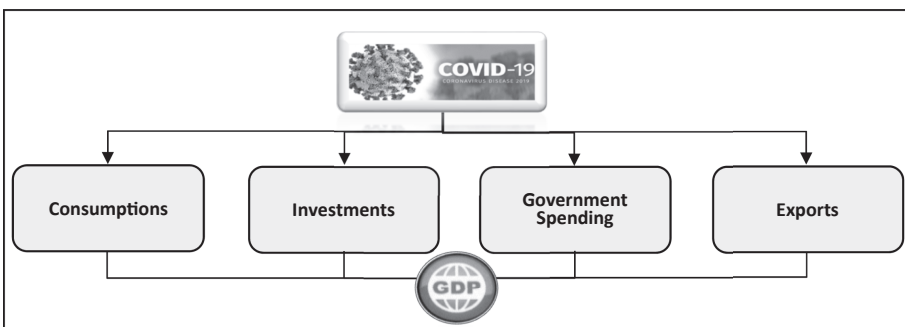


Figure 2. The impacts of COVID-19 on GDP components

Source(s): By authors

A. Impact on personal consumption

The leading component for the decline in GDP due to COVID-19 is the downward curve of people’s consumption behavior. The pandemic badly damaged economic growth due to higher production costs, low labor supply, and reduced consumption. Most people have reduced their spending as they are worried about their household finances due to the economic recession. According to Nicola *et al.* (2020), China’s quarantine and social distancing practices reduced industrial manufacturing, people’s consumption, demand, and utilization of goods and services. The immediate and direct impact of the COVID-19 outbreak was felt on the shutdown of factories and businesses, resulting in a sharp and immediate decline of production in the economy. The crisis then amplified simultaneous supply chains disruptions of necessary production inputs and an immediate drop in demand. The demand for goods and services dropped as consumers saved for emergencies. As COVID-19 spreads worldwide, the international demand for countries’ goods and services slumped significantly, reducing production.

According to Baker *et al.* (2020), personal consumption contributes almost 70 percent to the U.S. economy annually, and hence it is considered a significant economic indicator and workhorse that drives economic growth. The demand for good consumption, both durable and non-durable goods, declined continuously all over the world. Durable goods such as automobiles, household equipment, furnishings, and other durables saw a significant decline over the last quarter due to the closure of economic activities and uncertainty in the global economic environment and household income. At the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, household consumption of non-durable goods, including food and beverages, clothing and footwear, fuel, and other nondurable goods, increased dramatically. This increase is led by panic buying in an attempt to store needed household stuff because of fear of shortage and closure of the retailers. Hence, household expenditures increased by approximately 50 percent between February 26 and March 11, 2019 (Baker *et al.*, 2020). According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (2020), personal expenditure fell around 7.6 percent during the first quarter of 2020, which is the most significant decline in the history of the U.S. (Figure 3).

Baker *et al.* (2020) stated that as the pandemic spread increased, the household began to alter their typical spending across several significant categories drastically. Initially, spending increased sharply, particularly in retail, credit card spending, and food items.

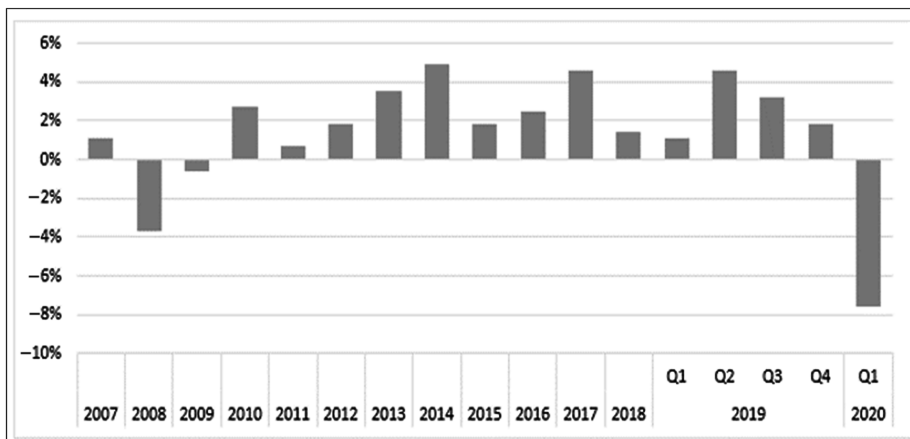


Figure 3.
U.S. personal
consumption
expenditures

Source(s): U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (2020)

A sharp decrease followed this in overall spending — retail spending, restaurant spending, air travel spending, food delivery spending, public transit spending, and credit card spending.

B. Impact on investment and stock prices in capital market

Another important aspect through which the global economic system is affected is likely to reduce investments and stock prices in capital markets. Globally stock markets have crashed dramatically and lost 15 trillion of the value of high-risk assets, and economists are anticipating a worse economic crisis than the great recession of 2008–2009 (Kraus *et al.*, 2020). On the other hand, the investors in emerging markets pulled out US\$5.3 billion of stocks which is the highest level in 30 weeks (Alnasrawi *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, the global demand and supply of durable goods stocks declined severely due to a decline in global economic activities.

In the same context, New York Wall Street has incurred heavy losses. U.S. stock market index, namely Standard and Poor (S&P) that measures the stock performance of 500 large companies on the U.S. stock exchange, the Dow Jones Industrial Average, and the Nikkei 225 (Stock market index for Tokyo stock exchange), fell dramatically. S&P index lost 34.56 percent over March, its worst month since 2008. The Dow Jones Industrial index lost nearly 35 percent of its value in March 2020, and the Nikkei 225 lost 28 percent of its value (Bloomberg, 2020) (Figure 4). All these stock markets lost billions of dollars in value until the U.S. government secured the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, with the indexes raised to –19.3 percent for S&P, –13.3 percent for Dow Jones, and –5.2 percent for Nikkei index in July 2020 (Nicola *et al.*, 2020).

Furthermore, the financial markets indices of other countries also fell drastically, and investors in these markets cannot predict where to invest in this vulnerable period. According to Ozili (2020), significant stocks such as Safaricom declined by 5.4 percent, and Kenya Commercial Bank Group (KCB) stock’s value declined by 7 percent in Nairobi Stock Exchange on the first day the first COVID case was found. Similarly, in Casablanca Stock Exchange Morocco, the share prices dropped immediately after confirmed cases, leading to a recession in the equity investment market. In China, the Shanghai stock market fell by 2 percent, and Hong Kong stock market was down by more than 3.6 percent, Sydney Stock Exchange fell by more than 7 percent (Alnasrawi *et al.*, 2020). In Gulf stock exchanges, the most considerable losses are suffered by oil and gas companies. Aramco lost a tenth of the



Source(s): Bloomberg (2020)

Figure 4.
Stock markets
performance during
COVID crisis

value of its shares in its trading. Dubai's financial market general index fell by 5 percent, trading at its lowest since 2013. National Bank of Dubai (NBD) was among the biggest fallers, dropping 10 percent. According to the World Cities Report (2020), the largest companies in the Gulf region lost around US\$420 billion in market capital during the first quarter of 2020. Moreover, the losses recorded by the wealth of these companies are equivalent to 8 percent of the region's total wealth (Alnasrawi *et al.*, 2020).

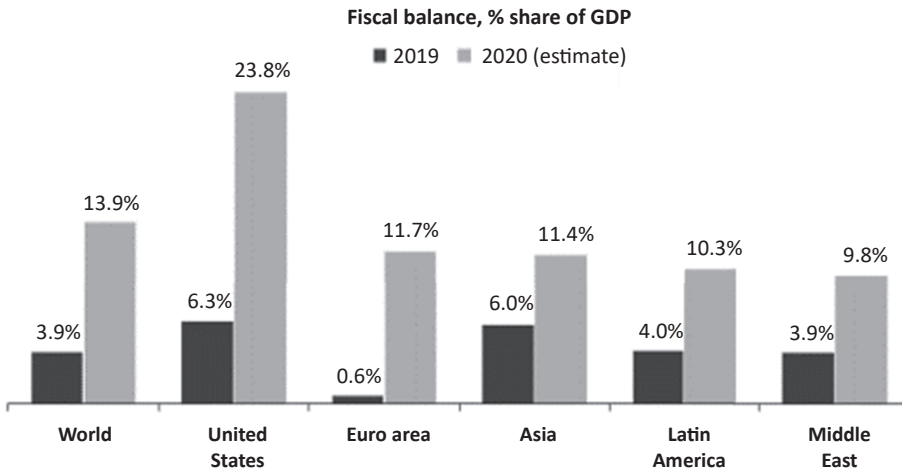
C. Impact on government spending

Government spending includes government consumption, investment, and transfer payments to acquire goods and services to create future benefits. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, more than three times the local government's budget is spent on community hygienic and health and care services. Moreover, most of the countries abandoned traditional borrowing to increase fiscal spending to sustain economic growth. In some emerging economies, governments adopted special programs to support unemployed workers and social safety nets (Kraus *et al.*, 2020). Eventually, the local government's revenue collection through taxation, transport, fines and penalties, rents, and taxes from council properties suffered badly (Sharfuddin, 2020). Sales tax is one of the most important sources of revenue for local governments. It is most likely to be affected by the economic pause and social distancing measures implemented to control COVID-19 (Haji, 2021). The closure of retail and entertainment venues, restaurants, and shopping malls and the decline in gasoline prices have begun to impact sales tax revenues and increase the fiscal deficit significantly. Other than that, the increase in the fiscal deficit was instigated as the central governments around the world have adopted measures to support economic growth. These measures broadly include tax cuts and tax deferrals, wage and income supplements to individuals, including expanding unemployment insurance, and other payments to businesses (Congressional Research Service, 2021). To reduce the fiscal deficit and fill the gap between revenue and spending, the government subsequently borrows money, increasing national debt (Ehigiamusoe and Lean, 2020). According to the recent Congressional Research Service Report published in September 2020, IMF has estimated the increase in borrowing by governments globally to rise from 3.9 percent of global GDP in 2019 to 13.9 percent in 2020, as shown in Figure 5.

The U.S. fiscal deficit to GDP is projected to rise from 6.3 percent to 23.8 percent, the highest ratio for any country or region. BBC reported on 9 July 2020 that according to the office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) UK's government estimated deficit was around £55 billion in 2019. However, it is projected to increase to around £300bn in 2020, more than 10 percent of their annual GDP. Similarly, the Canadian government estimated their budget deficit to C\$314.0 billion in 2020-21, 12.7 percent of Canada's GDP and would be the most significant federal deficit on record. For developing economies, the fiscal deficit to GDP ratio is projected to rise from 4.9 percent to 10.6 percent, significantly increasing their debt burden and raising prospects of defaults (Congressional Research Service, 2021). Among the Asian economies, the fiscal deficit to GDP ratio is projected to rise from 6.0 percent in 2019 to 11.4 percent in 2020. The ratio for Middle Eastern economies is projected to rise from 3.9 percent to 9.8 percent in 2020. In summary, IMF assumed that higher debt levels could become unmanageable, particularly for developing economies, and activate prolonged recession. Ehigiamusoe and Lean (2020) provided empirical evidence that fiscal deficit negatively impacts economic growth by decreasing productivity and capital growth.

D. Impact on net exports

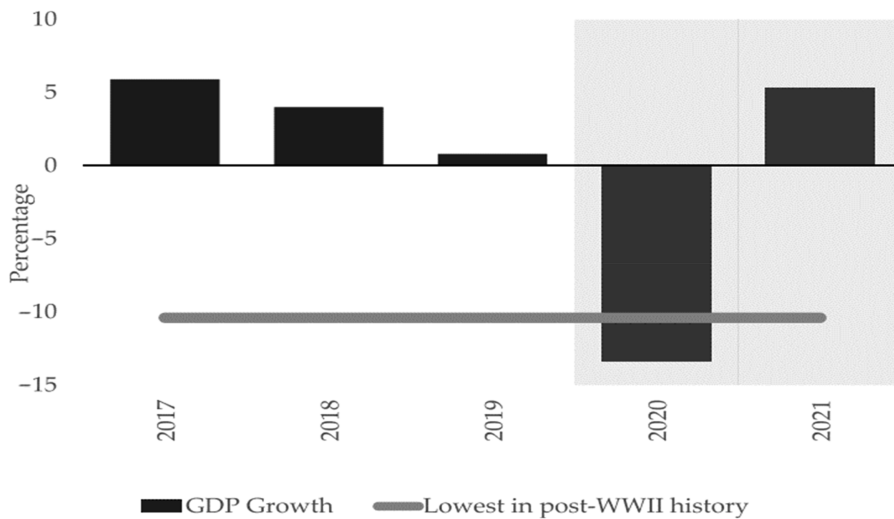
The global economy has received a massive hit from COVID-19, and the volume of goods in global trade fell drastically, affecting all sectors of the economy (Haji, 2021; Cepal, 2020).



Source(s): Congressional Research Service (2020)

Figure 5. Global economy projected fiscal deficit

Global Economic Prospects by World Bank stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had affected international travel and global value chains, which caused global trade to decline by 13 percent in 2020, which is more than that it did during the global financial crisis and World War II (World Bank Group, 2020) (Figure 6). This fall in trade negatively impacts not only export-oriented but also importing countries. As the country could not export its finished goods, the imports of material declined. More broadly, the decline in exports occurred as a result of a slowdown in three channels of trade: (i) disruptions in the global supply chain network; (ii) reduction in demand for goods in general including imports; and (iii) reduction in



Source(s): World Bank Group (2020)

Figure 6. Global trade growth

trade with commodity exporters, which, in turn, reduced their imports and negatively affected trade and economic activities of exporters (Congressional Research Service, 2021). Amongst the most developed and significant economies such as Canada, the U.S., UK, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Russia, Netherlands, and Singapore are highly dependent on trade. Exporters are now projected to be the most negatively affected as a result of a slowdown in trade. The World Bank has also predicted that these economies will likely experience slow growth in the first half of 2020. Vidya and Prabheesh (2020) empirically validated the trade volume of the above-mentioned major trade economies. They found that the COVID crisis has badly damaged the trading density of these areas, which has been reduced from 0.833 to 0.429. Congressional Research Service Report (2021) indicated that in July 2020, U.S. exports of goods and services had fallen by 17.5 percent compared with the comparable with July 2019, and the imports of goods and services had fallen by 13.8 percent, reflecting the overall decline in global trade. Cepal (2020) indicated that the global trade has collapsed, and the volume of goods trade in the global economy fell by 17.7 percent in May 2020 compared with the same month in 2019.

Contingency theory

Contingency theory is well established in leadership and management literature that describes different situations by interacting with effective leadership styles (Arifah *et al.*, 2018). This theory presents the dynamics of interaction between influential leaders and workers in facing any situation. The occurrence of any crisis or uncertainty affects the demand and supply chains of products and services that can damage the entire economy at both micro and macro level and pose a threat to global economic growth (Ghosal and Ye, 2019). Past studies on harsh conditions, such as Bradley *et al.* (2011), indicated that the organization needs to develop a contingency plan that can help them sustain their vital resources during a crisis. Ineffective business continuity planning along with poor risk management accounts for business failure and leads to bankruptcy. According to Obrenovic *et al.* (2020), organizations without adequate contingency and business continuity plans will suffer significant post-crisis financial losses. Therefore, successful organizations have to put contingency and risk management plans in place onset.

Kim and Kreps (2020) stated that at the beginning of the COVID pandemic, the U.S. government violated the notion of contingency theory by failing to adopt creative and responsive strategies to address the threat. Rather, the U.S. federal government repeatedly downplayed the risk from the coronavirus, telling the public that the viral risk would probably go away on its own. Even though contingency and risk management plans exist at every stage of the organization, the sudden shock and failure in performance caused by the crisis or pandemic show the inappropriate or ineffective implementation of the current strategic programs. Instead, the organizations may have contingency plans or risk management departments but do not have practical value (Obrenovic *et al.*, 2020). The coronavirus outbreak is unprecedented and caused economic crisis for which the global organizations were not prepared. Therefore, global leaders need to focus on learning the immense magnitude of such a crisis in the future and carefully evaluate the economic actors and business processes. A more comprehensive understanding of the calamities and consequences of the potential crisis may help organizations formulate various strategies to cope with such events. Knowing the consequences and formulation of productive tactics and pre-planned strategies could help organizations reduce at least the impact of the possible crisis.

The contingency theory embraces several concepts relevant to the understanding and suggests the organizations' strategies to cope with the crisis. Lartey (2020) identified four critical constructs of contingency theory — adaptation, effectiveness, equifinality, and

congruency. Tosi and Slocum (1984) conceptualized that organizations need to sharpen three dimensions — effectiveness, environment, and congruency. A recent study by Moretto and Caniato (2021) provided research directions based on contingency theory in the supply chain finance domain to mitigate financial disruption amid COVID-19. According to the authors, COVID-19 has introduced new contingent variables (new solutions), new response variables (new objectives), and new performance variables (new benefits). Obrenovic *et al.* (2020) argued that organizations with a financial contingency plan, diversified supply chain network, distributed leadership and workforce, and advanced digitalization would sustain themselves during the emergency and disastrous situations. Therefore, we build on these premises and theorize that the flexibility and adaptive culture, effectiveness, workforce protection, intelligent use of technology and cloud computing, and use of automation and artificial intelligence to enhance the resilience of supply chains will support organizations to survive during the coronavirus pandemic (Table 2).

A) Adaptability

Adaptability and flexibility of leaders to the potential changes in the environment is the fundamental principle of contingency theory. Contingency theory supports identifying the related aspects of any circumstance and enabling the system to adapt in case of any eventuality (Lartey, 2020). Effective leadership must adapt to a modified level of operations and maximize output without fostering burnout during prolonged crises such as the COVID pandemic. The leadership that preserves an open-door policy for team members, a resilient and flexible mindset, is more adaptable and can deal effectively with unsafe conditions (Obrenovic *et al.*, 2020). In responding to the current pandemic, countries need to put adaptive governance mechanisms into practice and swiftly take action (Janssen and Van Der Voort, 2020).

To reduce the financial impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, the top management in the organizations needs to focus on consumer preferences and restructure their businesses for the next normal. COVID-19 has forced many businesses from their comfort zone, testing the limits of remote working and redesigning operations to encourage health and safety practices. The adaptability of the management to new normal and managing new risks emerged due to the recent pandemic in an organization, its processes, and its policies should result in resilience and growth, not fragility and pain.

B) Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness requires a business strategy designed to improve efficiency without compromising the quality of goods or services. Lartey (2020) indicated that effectiveness is a central pillar of the contingency theory as it is essential in the adaptation and survival of the organization to meet its goals. There are many ways to achieve effectiveness — stable and secure work experience and job security, trust relationships and employees satisfaction, individual purpose and contribution, quality services, use of technology, performance measurement through correct metrics, and social cohesion and inclusion. As ways of work shifted dramatically with the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization's top management needs to obtain new ideas to help reduce costs, sustain trust and acknowledge employee efforts, and improve product and quality customer services.

C) Workforce protection

Workforce protection is a notion embedded in contingency theory that represents the leadership style to get the best from their workers, creating flexible and suitable working structures that benefit everyone (Obrenovic *et al.*, 2020). The organizations witnessed

Adaptability	Leader's flexibility and adaptability to the potential changes in the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Building a resilient mindset ■ Rapidly develop responses ■ Dedicate/create new channels to share updates with your people and communicate priorities ■ Maintain an open-door policy for team members to share honest feelings ■ Accommodate agile/adaptive operating structures ■ Institute lessons learned sessions for teams to share learnings around new ways of work ■ Encourage employees to create new relationships and working groups
Effectiveness	Achieve effectiveness through employee's satisfaction, work-life balance, job security, quality services, and social responsibility outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve employee's engagement and performance ■ Uphold employees to their tasks and responsibilities ■ Work on quality services or products ■ Make use of digitization and advance technology ■ Measure and analyze your project, process, or other systems by correct metrics
Workforce Protection	Actively contribute to protecting workforce value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understand the impact on people and priorities ■ Prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace ■ Unlock the potential for teaming and collaboration ■ Safeguard confidentiality ■ Prioritize employee well being ■ Avoid workforce bias ■ Empower team
Use of Technology	Demonstrate the importance of digital readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Take a human-centered and inclusive approach to technology governance ■ Improve decision making through better data analytics ■ Improve remote work ■ Improve collaboration and communication ■ Build necessary infrastructure to support a digitized world and stay current in the latest technology ■ Reconfigure supply chain network to real-time ■ Make use of technology to strengthen resilience within your supply chains

Table 2.
Critical constructs of
contingency theory

Source: By authors.

restrictions due to the pandemic, including remote work policies and flexible workforce arrangements which required the global organization to improve their IT systems for effective communication between management, employees, suppliers, and customers (Kilpatrick and Barter, 2020). Most of the organizations worldwide have started resuming work. Therefore, leaders need to consider restart business operations, improve their

workforce's well-being, and confidentiality amid the ongoing pandemic. The top management requires additional attention to workforce planning and the quality of goods or services they provide to the market (Kilpatrick and Barter, 2020).

D) Use of technology

Contingency theory believes that there is no “one right way” because it all depends on the situation (Arifah *et al.*, 2018). The leadership in the organization needs to think afresh in any situation and decide the best next step to take. The recent restriction due to the pandemic forced workers to work from home, making workers and organizations more dependent on technology. The technological advancement of the fourth industrial revolution with emerging and enabling technologies including 5G, Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, big data, internet of things (IoT), blockchain, virtual reality, and cloud computing are bringing drastic impact on improving the businesses by enhancing the accuracy of data and encouraging data sharing (Khan, 2020). The use of digital technology-enabled workforce to work from their homes and handle their professional tasks from their smartphone, tablets, laptops, and computer to keep businesses afloat during the current crisis. Moreover, the businesses that have designed their solutions to use the full potential of cloud computing, such as accessing digital payment methods, will strengthen their supply chain nexus.

Discussion and managerial implications

The world is witnessing far-ranging economic consequences due to the coronavirus pandemic, and the end is not yet in sight. Disruptions in the supply chain network, including imports and exports, inflation, lack of investment opportunities, fluctuation in the oil prices and stock market affected the US\$90 trillion global economy beyond anything experienced in nearly a century (Congressional Research Service, 2021). Global trade has collapsed, and the volume of goods trade fell sharply due to the global recession, which added to the extent of global economic disturbance. The value of equity markets, investors, earnings, and households employment have been affected within the countries. The destruction in the global economy as a result of the current pandemic is apparent, representing the most considerable economic shock the world has been experiencing in decades. COVID-19 crisis highlights the need for urgent actions by the world leaders to oversee, anticipate, and manage the risks and cushion the economic consequences. Critical decisions need to be taken, but time is limited. During disordered situations, the organization needs to diagnose the business environment. They need to identify the level of disorder in their business activities constantly. This is important as the various levels of turmoil require organizations to adopt different coping strategies. By identifying the level of disorder and diagnosing the needs and tastes, the organizations may turn crises into new business opportunities.

Based on contingency theory, leaders and managers can quickly take innovative moves, respond to unforeseen situations, and willingly accept certain risks. Avoid facing risks may push them out of the market. Innovation is the key; when businesses are disrupted, the leaders should think of other business models to face various pandemic stages, including shock, adaptation, recovery, and the new normal. Leaders and managers should continue developing financial and managerial responses and other safety plans to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and return to normal business operations. The organizations with governance structures that are better adapted to predictable environments observe significant changes in management and leadership practices (Moretto and Caniato, 2021). Maher *et al.* (2020) proposed a RISE (Resilience, Intentions, Sustain and Endurance) framework that aims to help public and non-profit entities to navigate the economic effects of

COVID-19. The organizational actions can be classified into four stages such as resilience or flexibility to react to the uncertainty, intentions to take immediate actions to mitigate the negative financial impacts, sustain the actions to be taken for organizations survival and stability, and endurance of their operation against future fiscal emergencies and seize new opportunities.

Most of the organizations have now enforced their online activities or explored alternative markets. The essential part for the organization in a chaotic situation is to learn from their worst experiences. They should be flexible and constantly update their strategies to deal with the chaotic environment. In addition, organizations need to generate self-renewal and agility by upgrading their strengths and developing resources by coping with new demands of the environment. Agility, scalability, and automation will be the watchwords for this new era of business, and now those with these capabilities will be the winners. In the light of the contingency theory, businesses that focus on the principle of adaptability and flexibility and have designed their solutions to use the full potential of the technology such as cloud computing, automation, and artificial intelligence, will not be buckled under the pressure. For instance, the cloud gives businesses easy access to digital payment methods. This will enable companies to continue working by rapidly and securely providing access to business applications to their employees working at home, providing financial flexibility, and enhancing the resilience of their supply chains.

Conclusively, the COVID-19 crisis provides prominent lessons to world leaders, businesses, economists, policymakers, and academic researchers about the effects of global change. Hence, this paper would be highly relevant for academia and management alike. Academically, it is essential for two reasons. First, there is limited research investigating the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the components of GDP, including consumer behavior, business investments, government spending, and exports of countries. Second, the coronavirus pandemic is still ongoing; as a result, the economy changes significantly. Understanding how countries change after pandemic and face the second wave allows for an improved understanding of global changing economies. In line with that, this paper focuses on contingency theory and theorize that to create a genuinely sustainable economy, it is crucial for world leaders to have a culture of adaptability, effectiveness, workforce protection, and use of automation and artificial intelligence to enhance resilience of supply chains to support and sustain organizations during pandemic. The paper is of managerial relevance because the world is severely affected by the pandemic. An understanding of what happened during and as a consequence of this pandemic makes it possible to know how world leaders can react to a pandemic that is going on and has not fully recovered yet. There is still a great deal of uncertainty about COVID-19, which makes it very concerning.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has spread profoundly, infected millions of people and halt economic activities globally. The unprecedented collapse in the global economic system is caused due to widespread disruption in demand and supply chains, evacuation of millions of workers, slowing global trade, shipment, and travel-related restrictions imposed by local governments. The challenge is now to collectively learn from this global crisis and accelerate the global economic transformation. In this paper, the authors delve into the existing literature to generate new knowledge regarding the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the global GDP. The novelty lies in the investigation of the disproportionate effect of the current pandemic on the global economy through (i) decline in the consumption behavior of people; (ii) decline in the investments and stock prices in capital market; (iii) decline in government spending in developmental projects and increase in new borrowing; and (iv) decline in export

of goods to international markets. Based on contingency theory, this paper suggests the need for urgent actions by world leaders to overcome the economic consequences of the pandemic. As longer the COVID-19 persists, the more difficult it would be for global firms to survive. This, in turn, spillover the aggregate growth rate of the global economy. This paper concludes that the flexibility and adaptability of leaders, effectiveness, workforce protection, and the efficient use of modern technologies to enhance the resilience of supply chains will support organizations to sustain their businesses. Future researchers can test the proposed conceptual framework by taking real-time data and validate the impact of COVID-19 on the components of global GDP, especially on the emerging economies.

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Impact of an economic revitalization programme on export and employment generation: a case study of One District One Product Programme in Uttar Pradesh, India

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Abstract

Purpose – The aim of this paper is to discuss the role of the economic revitalization programme, One District One Product (ODOP) implemented in the state of Uttar Pradesh of India in 2018, examine its strategy, and analyze its impact on employment generation, export promotion and economic growth of the state from 2018 to 2020.

Design/methodology/approach – Along with extensive literature, this paper uses case study approach for discussion. Arguments and facts are based on secondary data comprising of research by scholars, international agencies, government publications, websites, news reports, etc.

Findings – This paper presents positive impact of the systematically crafted ODOP programme. Nevertheless, for desired success, it signifies the inevitability of active participation and engagement of public that has always been a precarious subject in the literature of public administration and governance.

Originality – This paper offers a guiding live example for other states/countries to successfully implement ODOP programme which is a transformational step for realizing the true potential of each district. Strategies like ODOP may serve as an agent of change and be of immense help to governments in solving the problems of economic inequalities and regional imbalances.

Keywords One District One Product (ODOP), One Village One Product (OVOP), Employment, Export, Skill development, Uttar Pradesh

Paper type Case study

Introduction

India, a union of states, is a sovereign, secular, democratic republic comprising of 28 states and 8 union territories. It has emerged as the fastest growing major economy in the world and appeared as fifth largest economy of the world in terms of nominal GDP (IMF, 2020). Majority of Indian population dwells in rural areas. According to the Census 2011, 72.4 percent of the workforce and 68.8 percent of Indian population reside in rural areas. A comparative look at censuses of 2001 and 2011 indicates a 31.80 percent increase in urban population as compared

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to 12.18 percent increase in rural population during this period. Research indicates that more than 50 percent of surge in urban population is attributed either to the migration from rural areas to urban or re-classification of rural areas into the urban (Pradhan, 2013). The increasing trend of rural-urban migration with the hope of better employment opportunities results in unhygienic and depriving living conditions for migrants owing to tremendous pressure on urban infrastructure. It also creates a vacuum in the process of economic development of rural areas. Hence, to curb with unplanned migration from rural to urban areas and to ensure improved socio-economic conditions, revitalization of the rural economy is a pre-requisite.

Despite being a fast-growing economy, India is also listed among one of the most unequal countries of the world. The magnitude of economic inequality can be gauged from the fact that 77 percent of the total national wealth of the country is held by the top 10 percent of the Indian population. A close look at the plight of workers reveals that it would take 941 years for a minimum wage worker in rural India to earn what the top paid executive at a leading Indian garment company earns in a year (Oxfam, 2018). This trend with vicious cycle of rising economic inequality has triggered a huge rural-urban divide, thus urgently demanding for a planned scheme of economic revitalization not only to ensure inclusive growth but also to transform the dream of making India a USD5 trillion economy by 2025 a reality.

Under this backdrop, India has launched several economic revitalization programmes at both central and state level. In this series, One District One Product (ODOP) scheme launched by the government of Uttar Pradesh, an Indian state in 2018 is regarded as one of the most important schemes for regional economic revitalization. The concept of ODOP is similar as the Japanese model of One Village One Product (OVOP). In 1979, this model was introduced by Morihiko Hiramatsu, the then governor of Oita prefecture in Japan. The basic idea was to focus on one area per village, which had the bright prospects of a specific type of product for ensuring the transformation of wealth-making skills into profit-making ventures (Hiramatsu, 2008, cited in Claymone and Jaiborisudhi, 2011). Understanding the intent and goal of OVOP is important to compare ODOP with it. With a view to contribute to the existing body of knowledge, this paper examines the role, impact and magnitude of the economic revitalization programme ODOP implemented in Uttar Pradesh in 2018.

Theoretical underpinnings of One Village One Product

One Village One Product (OVOP) is a concept which was originated in the 1980s in Oita, Japan. The story began from a group of women who used to produce home-made biscuits for selling them in a nearby local market. Swiftly the biscuits caught demand in the market and the women who were producing, started acquiring new set of skills such as book-keeping, marketing, etc. Eventually, the quality and packaging of the product were also improved with increasing awareness of the product. They also paid frequent visits to the local markets and tuned their products to match the expectations of customers (UNDP, 2017). This practice by a group of women of a small village empowered them to emerge as a successful entrepreneur of which Japan popularly named it as OVOP. It promoted competitive and staple product of an identified village to increase sales and thus improved the standard of living of the villagers. The revitalization programme of OVOP helped local population not only in generating funds and credit from local banks but also contributed to the creation of employment and modern facilities in their respective villages (UNDP, 2017).

For more than three decades, following its successful introduction and implementation in Japan, the OVOP concept has widely been adopted by different countries especially in developing regions because of its enormous potential to revitalize the economic development and reverse regional failures (Ndione and Suzuki, 2018). However, the evidence suggests that OVOP is not a panacea. A study of Claymone and Jaiborisudhi (2011) concluded that there

were three basic reasons behind the failure of equivalent schemes in Indonesia (OTOP – One Tambon One Product) and Thailand (Local Community Development Project with the name of “Back to Village Project):

1. The problem of not understanding the true philosophy and approach of the OVOP project;
2. The problem of the top-down policy, that is assuming it to be a purely government initiative; and
3. The quality and skill sets of human resources in the area.

The study suggested that given the success of Japan’s OVOP project followed by the failure of Thailand and Indonesia’s projects are valid instances of success and failure which offer key lessons to be learnt by the local community.

A comparison of OVOP and OTOP indicates that while OVOP was grounded on a long-term strategy which was gradual in nature, objective of OTOP was to ensure establishment of community entrepreneurship at a faster pace (Shakya, 2011). The time horizon of implementing the strategy determines the form of OVOP in each country. As the first country to implement OVOP strategy, Japan took roughly thirty years to be rated as successful. Thailand as a country after implementing it for approximately twenty years has now framed a system called “Star Certification System” which is regarded as a distinctive method (Meirina, 2013 cited in Ndione and Suzuki, 2019).

As regards the implementation of OVOP in Indonesia, a top-down approach was adopted and it required tremendous and sincere efforts for communicating the same to people at large with the help of a central personality from their respective community. Research indicates that presence of such central figure(s) will not only make the socialization process of OVOP effective but also position it as a self-development programme rather than limiting it to merely a government scheme (Meirina, 2013 cited in Ndione and Suzuki, 2019). The essence of OVOP is to encourage the utilization of unique features of every village for economic revitalization and community development. It requires customization as per the country, time and circumstances while guaranteeing the presence of three basic principles of OVOP — self-reliance and creativity, local yet global, and human resource development.

Literature review

Public administration today is no more confined to the geographical boundaries of a country. It has progressively become international and comparative with an aim to find the best of strategies, administrative tools and processes from across the world to manage the challenges faced by any country. It has been substantiated by researchers that if governments aspire to establish, manage and improve their administrative acumen and capacity, a clear understanding of comparative public administration is vital (Jreisat, 2005). Comparative approach towards public administration helps researchers recognize the way different culture, institutions and administrative processes etc. offer opportunities and challenges in adopting best global practices for solving local problems. Albeit it is validated by research that in place of adopting exogenous innovations as it is, context specific adaptation and sustaining such innovations are regarded as smart practices (Bardach and Patashnik, 2019).

Adaptations of exogenous innovations are based on supposition that after learning and comparing different ideas and concepts, one must consider only those variables which are specific to the context in which such ideas are implemented (Jabbara and Dwivedi, 2004; Robinson, 2007; Rogers, 2003). One among different innovative practices widely replicated, adapted and implemented for economic revitalization around the world is the OVOP

programme. Active participation by the local community is a key factor for the success of such schemes in any region. The rationale behind the OVOP programme is to boost rural development via community-oriented activities by deploying local talents, resources and knowledge. This community-led economic revitalization programme could be regarded as a programme having endogenous rather than exogenous components as its vital physiognomies (Natsuda, 2011).

OVOP, in its true sense and philosophy, an endogenous model of development, is basically a strategic programme for and by the local people to identify local products of which they are proud of. It further proposes to transform such identified products into competitive products which shall, in turn, be accepted not only in the domestic market but also in the global market and shall eventually contribute to reinvigorate the economy at local level (Issa, 2014). The theorizers of endogenous development are of opinion that local/regional economic development cannot be determined merely by the capacity of any region to attract foreign firms. According to them, the capability of a region to create the conditions of transformation of its own productive structure is the sole determinant of its economic development (Dinis, 2006).

In order to ensure sustained economic development at local level, community development has to be carried out by community members themselves instead of only depending on supports from outsiders (Denpaiboon and Amatasawatdee, 2012). The role of government assistance to the success of small business enterprises are reported in numerous studies from different perspectives. Sarder (1997) conducted a primary research on 161 small enterprises in Bangladesh and drew the inference that firms getting support services, such as common facilities, marketing and technical services, etc. from the public or private agencies witnessed a significant increase in the quantum of sales, generation of employment and increase in the productivity. On the contrary, other researchers found that government assistance is not very important to the success of small business enterprises. A case study of three small manufacturing firms in Nigeria observed that the firms receiving credit and other forms of assistance and support did not perform better than their less privileged counterparts in terms of government support (Mambula, 2004).

As for policy implication, a research found that in order to achieve success in their business, small rural entrepreneurs irrespective of their coverage under the schemes named as OVOP, OTOP or any other, require strong and serious government support in the marketing and distribution activities of their products. This reflects the fact that the local workforce finds itself helpless (Radiah, 2009). The significance of local community in the success of OVOP programmes had also been proven by numerous research studies. Yoshimura's study (cited in Ndione and Suzuki, 2018) concludes that in addition to the substantial support by the government, the successful OTOP and OVOP entrepreneurs in Thailand and Japan respectively were reciprocally sustained by their local community capital.

It is important to mention that OVOP in Japan did not use government funding because it was basically a social movement based on the principle of self-reliance and creativity. It was the local community which took the initiative and tried the scheme independently for their own betterment. Use of their own collected funds made the community more responsible, vigilant and self-reliant (Meirina, 2013 cited in Ndione and Suzuki, 2019). Moreover, OVOP has obtained several key achievements by implementing another principle of local yet global. It has fashioned awareness among people and has discovered the latent potential of every village by incessant trials and relentless efforts while pursuing higher degree of value addition in products. OVOP has also developed markets and distribution channels for various products making local products globally competitive. Talents and skills of people have been well fostered and developed (Issa, 2014). The third principle of OVOP is human resource development which involves the partaking of local workforce in the process of holistic

community development. It consists of providing educational openings to the people who may either be the prospective leaders of OVOP or inheritors to family run businesses, groups of women involved in the OVOP scheme along with all those who may significantly contribute to human resource development in any capacity (Radiah, 2009). The next session will discuss the implementation of ODOP in Uttar Pradesh of India.

310 **Implementation of ODOP in Uttar Pradesh**

Uttar Pradesh, having 75 districts, under the present leadership of Yogi Adityanath envisioned and implemented the coveted programme of One District One Product (ODOP) in 2018, which followed the validated and experienced global idea of Japanese's OVOP. Uttar Pradesh has implemented ODOP programme with the objective of transforming every district of the state into an export hub by identifying products having export prospects, eliminating the tailbacks in exporting the products, scaling up their manufacturing at local levels, and eventually finding its potential buyers across the boundaries of the nation. The aim of ODOP programme is to offer a new identity to each district by having improvement in the quality of the traditionally famous product/craft of respective districts, and ensure the generation of employment at district level for contributing towards the economic development of respective districts, state and eventually the nation.

Across an area of 240,928 square kilometers, Uttar Pradesh is the 4th largest state of India (in terms of area) encompassing 7.3 percent of total area of India. As per 2011 census, Uttar Pradesh is the largest state of India in population hosting 16.5 percent of its total population. In terms of its economy, the state ranks second after Maharashtra, having a share of 8.79 percent of India's GDP at current prices in the year 2018-19, and is recording upward trend in the recent years (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2020). Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector plays a very significant role in the economy of Uttar Pradesh with nearly 9 million (90 Lakhs) MSME units, enriching the state to secure first position in the country. MSME is the largest contributor to employment after agriculture not only for the state but also the entire India (Table 1).

The MSMEs proudly contributed to 80 percent of exports of Uttar Pradesh valued at Rs 1.14 trillion in 2018-19. The share of Uttar Pradesh in total exports from India is 4.73 percent which may further be increased via ODOP. Role and contribution of MSMEs and the challenges faced by this sector offer great opportunity and scope for ODOP to revitalize the economy.

Considering these facts and prevalent problem of unemployment at the level of districts, the ODOP has been implemented with the following key objectives (Department of MSME and Export Promotion, 2020b):

- Preserving and developing local crafts and skills along with promotion of the art.
- Increasing the income of workforce and generating employment at local level (for ensuring decline in migration of workforce for employment).

Description	Major Success
No of MSMEs established	90 Lakh units
Creation of self-employment	For almost 5 lakhs individuals every year
Export of around	Rs. 89,000 crore and above
Position occupied in terms of handicrafts, food processing, carpets, and ready-made garments	First position
Note(s): One lakh equals to one hundred thousand; one crore equals to ten million	
Source: Department of MSME and Export Promotion (2021).	

Table 1.
Achievements of MSME in Uttar Pradesh

- Improving the quality of products and development of requisite set of skills.
- Transforming the products in an artistic way (by branding and packaging).
- To link the production/products with tourism.
- To eliminate the problem of economic differences and regional imbalances owing to income disparity.
- After successful implementation of ODOP at state level, extending this concept to national and international level.

The ODOP Schemes

ODOP programme of Uttar Pradesh comprises of four schemes — Common Facility Centre Scheme (CFC), Marketing Development Assistance Scheme (MDA), Financial Assistance Scheme (Margin Money Scheme) and Skill Development Scheme. The purpose and modus operandi of these schemes are as follows:

- 1. Common Facility Centre Scheme (CFC):** In order to revitalize and transform regional skills and provide a new identity to the illustrious products of every district, availability of basic infrastructural support is a pre-requisite. To ensure adequate infrastructural support, the scheme encompasses the following activities as key links for creating the value-chain:
 - Testing Lab Facility
 - Centre for Design Development and Training
 - Technical Research and Development Centre
 - Product exhibition cum Selling Centre
 - Raw Material Bank or Centre of Common Resource
 - Centre for Common Production or Processing
 - Centre for Common Logistics
 - Centre for Information, Communication and Broadcasting.
 - Facility of Packaging, Labeling and Barcoding.
 - Other such facilities associated to any of the missing link of value chain

Under this scheme, for the establishment of CFC, entities like NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Volunteer Organizations, Private Limited Companies, Producer Companies, Cooperatives and Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) may come forth with their active participation and contribution.

Incentives provided by the state government to CFCs include:

- In case of CFCs having project cost up to INR 15 crores, the state government will provide financial assistance of up to 90 percent of the project cost, whereas a minimum of 10 percent of the cost would be borne by the Special Purpose Vehicle - SPV.
- Conditional financial assistance would be provided, that is, share of the state would be calculated on INR 15 crores only for the CFCs having project cost of more than INR 15 crores.
- The state government may also sanction capital for identical projects which were previously approved by the Central and the state governments but are incomplete due

to the scarcity of funds. Albeit, for supporting such incomplete projects, proper justification shall be a pre-requisite.

2. **Marketing Development Assistance Scheme (MDA):** The objective of the Scheme is to ensure fair pricing for the entrepreneurs, weavers, artisans and exporters of the ODOP products through improved and planned marketing. This scheme offers financial assistance to the participants of national and international fairs/exhibitions for demonstration, promotion and sale of the products selected under the ODOP project.
3. **Finance Assistance Scheme (Margin Money Scheme):** Department of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) along with Department of Export Promotion will release the ODOP margin money subsidy against the applications submitted, and all nationalized banks, Regional Rural Banks and other scheduled banks shall finance the scheme. The margin money shall be merged with the subsidy after the enterprise successfully completes two years of its operation.

The margin money subsidy is being offered at following rates as shown in Table 2.

4. **Skill Development Scheme:** In order to match the present and future requirements of skilled workforce in the entire value chain of ODOP products across the state, another significant scheme named ODOP Skill Development and Tool Kit Distribution Scheme has been crafted. This scheme intends to equip artisans / workers through distribution of advanced tool kits.

Incentives under the scheme include:

- Artisans who are already skilled shall be imparted required training through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and shall be certified through relevant Sector Skill Councils.
- For the artisans who are unskilled, there shall be a training programme of 10 days, post completion of which they will also be certified under RPL.
- In order to motivate in financial terms, all the trainees shall receive an honorarium of INR 200 per day during the training period.
- All the trained artisans shall be provided with an advanced toolkit, free of cost, by the department.

Enterprise with project cost	Margin Money Subsidy
a) Enterprises with project cost up to INR 25 lakhs	25% of the entire project cost subject to a maximum of INR 6.25 lakhs, whichever is less, shall be payable under the margin money scheme.
b) Enterprises with project cost between INR 25 lakhs to 50 lakhs	20% of the project cost or INR 6.25 lakhs whichever is more, shall be payable under the margin money scheme.
c) Enterprises with project cost between INR 50 lakhs to 150 lakhs	INR 10 lakhs or 10% of the project cost, whichever is more, shall be payable under the margin money scheme.
d) Enterprises with project costs exceeding INR 150 lakhs	10% of the entire amount subject to maximum of INR 20 lakhs, whichever is less, shall be payable under the margin money scheme.

Source: Department of MSME and Export Promotion (2020a).

Table 2.
Rates of Margin Money Subsidy for enterprises with different project cost

For the implementation of ODOP programme, provision of INR 250 crores was made by Government of Uttar Pradesh under Budget 2018-19.

Indian ODOP in the Motive and Approach Matrix of OVOP implementation in ASEAN

The project of Dipta (2014) found that countries in ASEAN inclined to adopt different approaches and motives while implementing OVOP programme in their respective countries. Diverse strategies were formulated by different countries to match their local realities. Based on different motives and approaches, countries can be categorized into four matrix arrangements numbered as 1, 2, 3 and 4 representing varying combinations of both components in initiating OVOP programme (Figure 1).

‘BEST’ at the center of matrix represents middle path of India with Bottom-up initiative to achieve Economic- Social motive- with the support of Top-down Approach (Acronym – ‘BEST’ coined by the authors for Indian Strategy based on the philosophy of ODOP in Uttar Pradesh, India).

Quadrant 1: Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos: Adopted a strategic mix of bottom-up approach and economic motives.

Quadrant 2: Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines: Top-down and economic motive where government played a significant role in OVOP adaptation and focus was on economic motives.

Quadrant 3: Brunei Darussalam: It combined top-down approach with social motives.

Quadrant 4: Japan: Started by local people (bottom-up approach) with the motive of social value. It is the only country in the fourth quadrant which combines the bottom-up approach with social motives in its OVOP movement.

Center of the matrix: positioning of ODOP– Uttar Pradesh at the mid-path making ODOP a unique experiment

Authors are of opinion that different schemes with which the flagship programme of ODOP is implemented in Uttar Pradesh of India, a reflection of synthesis of not only economic and social

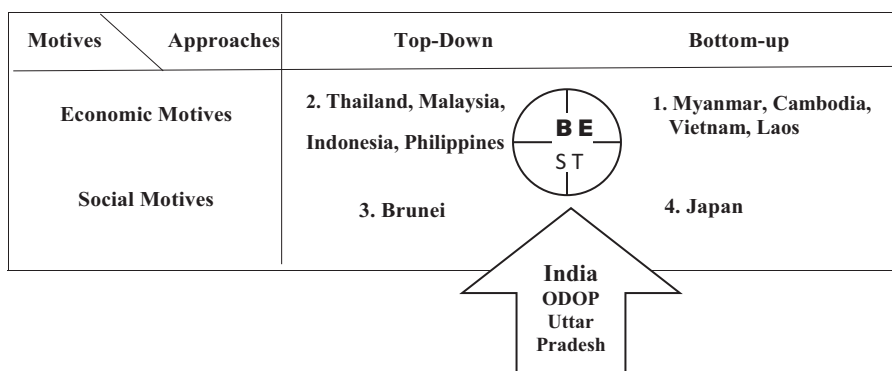


Figure 1. Matrix of Development Strategy for OVOP in ASEAN Vis-à-vis ODOP in Uttar Pradesh, India

Source: Basic Matrix adapted from Dipta (2014, pp.27-28)

motives but also the top-down and bottom-up approaches is observed. In the matrix, the authors had placed ODOP of Uttar Pradesh at the centre of Matrix and assigned it an acronym of BEST (Bottom-up approach –for realizing Economic-Social motives-under Top-Down support of the government) representing a unique combination of the paired motive and approaches.

The observation and analysis of implementation of ODOP in Uttar Pradesh reveals that while the government is attempting to develop requisite infrastructure, its approach is top-down. On the contrary, the scheme of financial assistance seeking application from local entrepreneurs, offering only margin money by the government ensures that the local community must take the lead and should actively be involved. It is nothing else but implementation of bottom-up approach which was the essence of Japanese OVOP.

All four schemes of ODOP not only intends to realize the economic motives, but also the social ones. ODOP, in its simplest form aims to attain economic development, increased investment, export promotion and employment generation of the area along with the social motive of skilling, re-skilling of workforce, eliminating the regional imbalances and offering improved standard of living to all. All this make ODOP the rarest and the ‘BEST’ combination of paired approaches and motives.

Success story of ODOP in Uttar Pradesh: impact on exports, employment, self-employment and investment

In order to examine the impact of ODOP programme on export, employment and investment, data published by the State Export Promotion Council, Economics and Statistics Division of Uttar Pradesh’s State Planning Institute and database of Reserve Bank of India (2020) have been compiled and analyzed. The size of economy and per-capita income of the state are shown in Table 3.

The **Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)** of the state for 2020-21 (at current prices) is estimated to be INR 17,91,263 crore. This is based on the estimate that the state’s economy will grow at a rate of 6 percent from the year 2019-20. GSDP data of the state for different years have recorded a consistent upward trend even amidst the global pandemic of Covid-19.

The data of per-capita income of the state have also recorded the increasing trend with INR 42,270 in 2015-16, followed by INR 47,120 in 2016-17, INR 55,339 in 2017-18, INR 58,820 in 2018-19, INR 66,510 in 2019-20 and INR 70,419 in the Year 2020-21 which show remarkable success.

ODOP and export of the state: The relevant data indicates a substantial increase in the export of the state after implementing ODOP programme (Table 4).

In the last five years, Uttar Pradesh witnessed gradual increase in its exports from INR 81,218 crore in 2015-16 to INR 1,20,356 crore in 2019-20 – a substantial jump of 48 percent – with the highest increase in 2018-19. Officials of MSME and Export Promotion attributed this significant increase in the exports to the most celebrated ODOP scheme of the state which was launched in 2018.

Product-wise export data indicated that approximately 80 percent of products which have been exported from the state belonged to the ODOP category. The exports of identified

Parameters	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at current prices	11,37,807.94 INR Crore	12,90,289.33 INR Crore	14,60,442.73 INR Crore	16,68,229.24 INR Crore	15,79,807 INR Crore	17,91,263 INR Crore (Estimated Value)
Per-capita income	Rs.42,270	Rs.47,120	Rs.55,339	Rs.58,820	Rs.66,510	Rs.70,419

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Uttar Pradesh (2020).

Table 3.
Size of economy and per-capita income of Uttar Pradesh

products at district levels have significantly increased in the last three years due to effective execution of new policies, and incentives for it. Success of the ODOP scheme may be validated from the fact that central government of India has notified implementation of ODOP across the nation. It is worth mentioning that Nepal, Bangladesh, and South Asian countries received a large number of ODOP products from Uttar Pradesh. During the global pandemic of Covid-19, goods worth INR 72,508 crore were exported from Uttar Pradesh between April and November 2020. In the fiscal year 2020-21 amidst pandemic induced lockdown, the exports in the ODOP category fell to INR 65,982 crore (estimated). However, during the same period, food products recorded a 36 percent rise as compared to last year and were pegged at INR 4909 crore as compared to INR 3620 crore in 2018-19 (Rehman, 2020).

Getting aligned to the central government's aim of increasing exports, the government of Uttar Pradesh has set for itself a highly ambitious target of exporting goods worth INR 3 lakh crore in the next four years from the present INR 1.2 lakh crore, which is an increase of nearly 250 percent and the only base for doing so is through ODOP.

Financial assistance under ODOP: ground realities

The government of Uttar Pradesh has provided financial assistance of INR 8,200 Crore benefiting 2,600 entrepreneurs in the last three years as an impetus to the traditional industry under ODOP. The scheme has already marked its footprints in the international markets as the specific products of all 75 districts of the state have found takers not only in domestic market but also abroad.

According to the statistics, more than 11,000 ODOP products are available on online shopping major Amazon and over 50,000 products worth INR 24 crore have already been sold so far. The MSME, umbrella department of ODOP, had given financial assistance of INR 3,134 Crore to 916 entrepreneurs in the financial year 2018-19 and provided employment opportunities to 10,733 people in this period. Similarly, during 2019-20, as many as 1,442 entrepreneurs were offered financial assistance of over INR 4,353 Crore and 15,253 people also got employment. In the financial year 2020-21 until August, 236 entrepreneurs have been given financial assistance of about INR 8 Crore, and 2,114 people were given employment (ANI, 2020) (Table 5).

Furthermore, zone-wise success stories of ODOP programmes have validated the positive impact and acceptance of ODOP (Department of MSME and Export Promotion, 2020b).

Year	Size of Export (in INR)	Jump (Percentage)
2015-16	81,218 Crore	-
2016-17	83,999 Crore	(+3.4%)
2017-18	88,967 Crore	(+5.9%)
2018-19	1,14,042 Crore	(+28%)
2019-20	1,20,356 Crore	(+5.5%)

Source: Rehman (2020).

Table 4.
Year-wise size of
export of Uttar Pradesh

Year	Amount of financial assistance	Entrepreneurs benefited	Employment opportunities created
2018-19	Rs 3,134 Crore	916 entrepreneurs	10,733 people
2019-20	Rs 4,353 Crore	1,442 entrepreneurs	15,253 people
2020-21	Rs 8 Crore (till August 2020)	236 entrepreneurs	2,114 people

Source: ANI (2020).

Table 5.
Year-wise financial
assistance
under ODOP

A close look at the government data of investments indicates that Uttar Pradesh has received over INR 1,88,000 crore (till January 2021) investment in the last three and a half years which is quite a significant achievement.

Findings and observations

Given the success stories of ODOP from all 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh and the data released by the state on the success and contribution of ODOP, following observations are made:

1. The unique ODOP initiative of Uttar Pradesh has emerged as a transformational step forward towards realization of the true potential of each and every district of the state. It has fostered economic growth, generated employment at local level, and increased the standard of living of artisans/entrepreneurs.
2. The Unique Selling Proposition of ODOP model is its implementation as a Sensitization Programme for the local community. It is crafted in such a way that local people may actively get involved in quality enhancement and promotion of the identified product of their respective district, and a battery of financial as well as non-financial support of government is offered to them at each crucial step.
3. The product of local fame has significantly gained national as well global identity. Presence of illustrious products of different districts of the state on online shopping portals like Amazon is a testimony to it.
4. Success of ODOP has helped Uttar Pradesh in achieving the goal of *Atma-Nirbhar Bharat* (Self-Reliant India, another scheme of Government of India). By accepting it as a successful model, the government of India has now decided and notified to implement it in other parts of the country.
5. Magnitude of success can be gauged by the fact that in 2020, Department of Commerce through Director General-Foreign Trade has started its engagement with the state and central government agencies to promote ODOP (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2020).
6. Initially for the ODOP programme at central level, 106 products have been identified from 103 districts across 27 states. District Export Promotion Committee meetings have been convened in 510 districts of India, and Draft Export Action Plans were prepared for 451 districts till February 2021 (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2021).

Discussion and conclusion

Review of literature on OVOP reflects that the most appropriate method of it can only be identified through its implementation and it is country specific. Majority of Indian population lives in rural areas and they depend on agriculture, allied activities and various crafts for their livelihood. Most of artisans and craft persons are struggling to somehow preserve the legacy of their family, village and state and living with small earnings just to keep their skills alive. Nevertheless, due to poor standard of living and low income being insufficient to fulfill their basic requirements, the new generation of such artisans have started moving towards the urban areas for employment opportunities and better living standard. And yet this increasing trend of rural-urban migration has not only created significant demographic challenges for the urban areas but also for the rural heartland. The plight of artisans and craftsmen specializing in different skills and enterprises along with increasing rate of unemployment led the government of Uttar Pradesh to come up with a well-planned strategy which may alleviate poor people, control the roaring rate of

urbanization, restore the lost identity of local artisans and crafts, thereby ensuring balanced and inclusive economic development.

In this background, government of Uttar Pradesh implemented the innovative concept of ODOP which is based on the distinct identity of handicrafts, agro, processed and many other specialized products of all 75 districts of the state. The initial results of ODOP in the state are quite encouraging. Notwithstanding the sincere efforts of the government of Uttar Pradesh in positioning ODOP strategy as a well-thought idea committed to ensure inclusive economic growth, it is actually the faith, involvement and active participation of local community (artisans and craftsmen) from each district that will determine the fate of ODOP scheme in the long run.

Conclusively, the authors are of opinion that the outstanding success of regional economic revitalization programme of ODOP implemented in Uttar Pradesh has set an example for the other 27 states and 8 Union Territories of the country. ODOP, a customized global solution for the problems faced by India offers the unique pairing of motives and approaches which the authors referred as 'BEST' in this paper. ODOP has shown encouraging results after its implementation in Uttar Pradesh since last three years, however, the best of it is yet to be realized.

Given the positive results and impact of the concept of OVOP, it will be of immense benefit for economic revitalization and inclusive development of those countries which are facing the problem of income inequality, increasing pressure of rural-urban migration, fading local skills and crafts and lack of employment opportunities. This study of ODOP programme in Uttar Pradesh presents a live example of experimenting with motive-approach matrix. This case is a contribution to the body of knowledge on OVOP which can further be replicated by other countries.

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Quality healthcare services under National Health Insurance Scheme in Ghana: perspectives from health policy implementers and beneficiaries

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to examine the factors that affect the quality of healthcare services in the implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) at the local level in Ghana from the perspectives of health policy implementers and beneficiaries in public-private organisations.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper has adopted a mixed research method with both qualitative and quantitative data, with in-depth interviews, document analysis and focus groups discussions. A total of 107 participants took part in the interviews and the questionnaire survey.

Findings – The study found that these factors greatly affect the quality of healthcare services from the implementers' perspectives — referrals, effectiveness in monitoring, timeliness, efficiency, reimbursement, compliance with standard guidelines of Ghana Health Service (GHS) and accreditation process. For the beneficiaries, three healthcare services factors are important, including medical consultations, diagnostic services and the supply of drugs and medicines. Some other factors are found to be the least prioritized healthcare services, namely the issuance of prescription forms, verification of identification (ID) cards and staff attitude. However, the study found that implementers and beneficiaries exhibited a mixed reaction (perspectives) on accessing some healthcare services. In some healthcare services where the implementers perceived that beneficiaries have more access to such services, the beneficiaries think otherwise, an irony in the perspectives of the two actors.

Originality/value – This paper adds to the extant literature on the perspectives of policy implementers and beneficiaries on factors that affect the quality of healthcare services in general and specifically on the implementation of NHIS in Ghana with the public-private dimension.

Keywords Health facilities, Implementers, Beneficiaries, Quality healthcare services, Ghana

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

This paper examines the factors that affect the quality of healthcare services in the context of the implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in Ghana. The NHIS is initiated by the Government of Ghana in 2003 and implemented in 2004. It is backed by the National Health Insurance Laws and a Legislative Instrument (LI) L1809 (Government of Ghana, 2003, 2004, 2012). The purpose of the NHIS is to “secure the provision of basic healthcare services to persons resident in the country through mutual and private health insurance schemes; to put in place a body to register, license and regulate health insurance



schemes and to accredit and monitor healthcare providers operating under health insurance schemes. . .” (Government of Ghana, 2003, p. 4). This provision of the law expects the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) to monitor healthcare providers (hospitals, clinics, and others) in the implementation of NHIS in order not to compromise the quality of healthcare services they render to health insurance beneficiaries throughout Ghana.

Also, section 68 of the National Health Insurance (NHI) Act stipulates that healthcare services that are rendered to beneficiaries should be “reasonably good quality and high standard”. The healthcare service providers should use “medical technology and equipment” that is consistent with actual needs and conforms to standards of medical practice in Ghana. Moreover, the accredited healthcare service providers should follow medical procedures, administer appropriate drugs to beneficiaries and comply with the “accepted medical practice and ethics”. Finally, healthcare service providers must ensure that drugs and medication used in the provision of healthcare services to beneficiaries are approved in the National Health Insurance Drug List of the Ministry of Health (Government of Ghana, 2003, pp. 16-17). These are some key provisions in the health insurance law to safeguard the provision of quality healthcare services to beneficiaries in the implementation of NHIS. To what extent are these key provisions on quality healthcare services adhered to in the implementation of NHIS is investigated in this paper. Moreover, as not many studies have examined the perspectives of implementers and beneficiaries from public-private healthcare provision, this paper attempts to fill in such gap in the implementation of NHIS.

Literature review

Implementation of the NHIS and implementers and beneficiaries’ perspectives on quality

The implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) started in 2004 in Ghana intending to cover all citizens and persons with legal residence in the country, which is Ghana’s NHIS journey towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Several studies show the NHIS covered about 40 percent of the population while 60 percent are yet to be enrolled into the scheme (Nketiah-Amponsah *et al.*, 2019; Kipo-Sunyehzi *et al.*, 2019; Umar *et al.*, 2020; Kipo-Sunyehzi, 2020). There are reasons for such a rate of population coverage of the NHIS, one of which is the access to quality healthcare services. The literature points out that the better the quality of healthcare services, the more the enrolment into NHIS as improving quality healthcare services will enhance the full benefits of the NHIS (Kipo-Sunyehzi, 2020; Ekholuenetale and Barrow, 2021).

Several studies have been conducted on the implementation of NHIS in Ghana on the quality of services offered to the insured (NHIS beneficiaries) and uninsured (those who pay cash-out of pockets) patients. These studies found some unequal treatment between the insured and uninsured patients in terms of the quality of healthcare services offered to them. These studies suggest that implementers of NHIS (health service providers) tend to exhibit more negative attitudes towards the insured than the uninsured at health facilities. Thus, the insured experienced more shouts, verbal abuses, spent longer waiting time (hours at facilities), and tend to suffer from different forms of discrimination during healthcare service delivery. The beneficiaries attributed these negative attitudes towards them to their lack of cash payments for the healthcare services (Kipo-Sunyehzi, 2020; Umar *et al.*, 2020).

Moreover, there is a significant difference between the insured and the uninsured patients in Ghana in terms of financial access to healthcare services. The literature shows the insured still pay cash at the point of service delivery (out of pocket payments) though the uninsured bear more financial cost compared with the insured. Thus, there are several inequalities in terms of out-of-pocket payments or expenditure for healthcare services utilisation under NHIS. Some implementation challenges include the inability of the insured to determine which healthcare services are covered under NHIS and those that are not covered. Women of

reproductive ages are also at risk of out-of-pocket payments or expenditure. Yet many beneficiaries look happy for NHIS in terms of the less financial burden on payments of medical bills. Also, under NHIS, pregnant women are exempted from premium payments and they have free access to antenatal, skilled delivery and postnatal healthcare services. Studies show that pregnant women have more access to healthcare services under NHIS. The empirical evidence shows that about 78.2 percent of pregnant women indicated that NHIS is helping them in accessing maternal healthcare services in Ghana. Thus, the free maternal health policy has a positive effect on NHIS enrolment (Agbanyo, 2020; Okoroh *et al.*, 2020; Umar *et al.*, 2020; Ekholuenetale and Barrow, 2021). Despite this positive aspect of NHIS, other studies identified some challenges including distance travel to accredited health facilities, travel cost and perceived poor quality of healthcare services rendered to NHIS beneficiaries (Kodom *et al.*, 2019; Ameyaw *et al.*, 2021).

Several studies examine the perspectives of the health policy (NHIS) beneficiaries on the quality of healthcare services at credentialed health facilities in the implementation of NHIS in Ghana. These studies report beneficiaries' dissatisfaction with the quality of healthcare services. Some of the beneficiaries report cheap drugs and medicines, extra payments for expensive drugs/medicines, shortages of drugs, less attention from service providers at facilities, among others. (Atinga, 2012; Nketiah-Amponsah *et al.*, 2019; Ampaw, *et al.*, 2020).

The implementation of NHIS is also examined from the perspectives of implementers or the health service providers on factors that affect the quality of healthcare services. Some factors identified include delays in the submission of claims, the processing of claims and the reimbursement of claims, inadequately qualified staff, and the incidence of reused disposable medical supplies. Other factors identified to affect quality healthcare services include a shortage in supply of drugs/medicines, low morals of service providers, which in turn affect the quantity and the quality of services provided to NHIS beneficiaries. On the other hand, health insurance managers/officials expect service providers' strict compliance with tariffs and the use of appropriate referrals to help deal with delays in the processing of claims and reimbursement. Other challenges on NHIS identified by some service providers include how to effectively deal with corruption and intense political influence (Andoh-Adjei *et al.*, 2018; Kipo-Sunyehzi, 2018; Christmals and Aidam, 2020; Akweongo *et al.*, 2021).

Despite these studies on the implementation of Ghana's NHIS, not many have been conducted on the perspectives of both implementers and beneficiaries from the lens of public-private provision of healthcare services. In this regard, this paper attempts to bridge the literature gap with a specific focus on the perspectives of NHIS implementers and beneficiaries on the factors that affect quality healthcare services in Ghana with a public-private dimension.

Quality healthcare service dimensions and perspectives on Ghana's health insurance scheme

There is no universally accepted definition of quality healthcare as there are diverse perspectives. Donabedian (1990) gives an elaboration of quality healthcare service on six relevant areas for physicians: (1) *Efficacy* - the ability of the healthcare system to improve health; (2) *Effectiveness* - the degree of attaining healthcare objectives or goals; (3) *Efficiency* - attaining or obtaining the greatest health improvement at the lowest cost, thus balancing health costs and benefits; (4) *Acceptability* - meeting patients or customers preferences in most/all aspects of health delivery; (5) *Legitimacy* - conformity to societal tastes or preferences; and (6) *Equality* - fair access and fair distribution of health care resources.

Quality healthcare services can be defined in terms of 'conformance quality' which means meeting requirements such as accreditation of health service providers or certification/licensing (Penneys, 1997, p. 503). Shengelia *et al.* (2005) emphasised the delivery of 'high-quality healthcare services to achieve 'health gains'. Thus, they stressed that 'quality' must capture the following issues or aspects: making the right diagnosis when individual/patient

presents symptoms, choosing the most 'appropriate intervention strategy' and executing the intervention in line with 'appropriate clinical standards' (Shengelia *et al.*, 2005, p. 99). From these conceptions, quality healthcare services can be viewed from two actors, namely clients and health service providers (workers) perspectives.

Quality healthcare services are examined in the context of the quality of emergency care (Okoroh *et al.*, 2020) as well as the quality of maternal and childcare delivery (Atinga *et al.*, 2018). Others focus on the quality of clinical care for the elderly (Lilleheie *et al.*, 2020). The World Health Organisation (2018) looks at quality healthcare from six dimensions: when the service is effective, efficient, patient-centred, integrated, equitable and safe for the people.

Quality healthcare services can also be measured from the level of provider compliance with clinical guidelines (Heiby, 2014). This conception of compliance can be linked to Ghana's treatment guidelines. Ghana's standard treatment guidelines have been prepared as a tool to assist and guide prescribers (medical doctors, medical assistants/midwives), dispensers, pharmacists and other healthcare staff at primary health facilities to provide quality healthcare services to their patients. Prescribers are to follow those guidelines in the delivery of healthcare services in Ghana. The treatment guidelines serve as a reference book, which guides on treatment choices, management of patients and referrals. Patients are referred from one health facility to another when a prescriber is not able to handle or manage the patient either for lack of personal experience or availability of appropriate facilities to handle the patient case properly (Ministry of Health, 2017). The welfare of patients should be an important goal of referrals including emergency cases. Moreover, health service providers to comply with Section 68 on quality assurance in the delivery of good quality and high standard services, to use proper medical equipment, to follow medical procedures on the administration of drugs and the use of drugs based on National Health Insurance Drug List of Ministry of Health of Ghana are crucial in the implementation of NHIS (Ministry of Health, 2017).

The aim of this paper is to examine the factors that affect quality healthcare services from the perspectives of implementers and beneficiaries in public-private healthcare provision. Thus, the research question is: What factors affect the quality of healthcare services in the implementation of NHIS from the perspectives of implementers and beneficiaries?

Research methodology

Research design

The research design is based on mixed method approach that incorporated multiple actors' perspectives. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been adopted based on various sources of data, including in-depth interviews, focus groups discussions, documents, census figures, and etc. so that the data can be compared for their convergence and/or divergence. The rationale of using mixed method is to take advantage of their strengths and minimise their weaknesses. The quantitative and qualitative methods are towards complementarity of the two for a better understanding of social phenomena like quality healthcare services from health service providers and users' perspectives (Baran, 2020).

Several studies have been conducted on healthcare or health services research with mixed methods in a single study or series of studies, despite some challenges in the combination which may be in data collection, analysis or interpretation. Mixed methods studies remain crucial and relevant for health researchers and clinicians in studies within or across hospitals, some looking at multi-service or multiple health service delivery areas (Fetters and Molina-Azorin, 2020).

Study setting, participants and sample

This research was carried out in the Tamale Metropolis of Ghana as it is the biggest city and the only metropolis in Northern Ghana, with an estimated population of 281,619 in 2020

(Ghana Statistical Service, 2020). It was selected as it has the large number of accredited or credentialed health facilities in the implementation of NHIS, with 17 accredited or credentialed public health facilities and 38 private health facilities (National Health Insurance Authority, 2014).

The data collection took 12 months and in three phases with 2 months in 2012, 6 months in 2013 and 4 months in 2014, which ended in October 2014. The study involved four health facilities including two hospitals and two clinics along with the public-private basis and district and regional NHIA offices. The recruitment of participants was done purposively based on convenience, proximity and as insured and persons directly involved in the implementation of NHIS at health facilities and health insurance offices. The purposive sampling technique was used for two actors — NHIS beneficiaries and implementers at the selected health facilities, offices, and communities while the snowball sampling method helped more in tracing other beneficiaries. The selection or recruitment of the implementers was based on their positions at the health facilities and offices and their knowledge on NHIS, whereas the beneficiaries were recruited based on their categories: exempt group members, premium payees and contributors based on NHIS laws/regulations and other studies (Government of Ghana, 2003; 2004; 2012; Creswell, 2014; Kipo-Sunyehzi, 2020). It is important to note uninsured persons and workers who were not involved in NHIS were excluded. The number of implementers and beneficiaries who took part in the study were 107 as shown in Table 1.

Instruments

The first phase of the research involved some pilot tests and familiarisation of study sites and seeking institutional permission. Some questionnaires (close-ended questions) were administered alongside an interview guide for qualitative data. The interview guide (open-ended questions) was used during in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions (FGDs). All FGDs involved only beneficiaries. Four FGDs took place at hospitals and clinics (n = 24) and three FGDs took place at some selected communities: Kalpohin Estate, Moshie-Zongo, Lamashegu (n = 18). The selection of the communities or locations was based on census figures along with the geographic location (suburbs of Tamale) and socio-economic characteristics or conditions (low, middle, high income) and population of the communities (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012; 2014).

Data analysis

The interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of the participants. The audio recorded information was transcribed, field notes were typed out and meaning was made from the information. Verification of the transcripts was done by listening to the recorded information for accuracy. The open-ended questions were analysed along with themes/

Groups	Units and Number of Participant						Total
	SDA H.	W. H	HA C.	BH C.	NHIA Offices	Others	
Implementers	I (7)	I (6)	I (6)	I (7)	I (4)	I (7)	37
Beneficiaries	I (5)	I (5)	I (6)	I (7)	I (5)	F (18)	70
	F (6)	F (6)	F (5)	F (7)			
Total	18	17	17	21	9	25	107

Table 1.
Participants of
the study

Notes: I - In-depth interviews participants; F - Focus groups discussions participants; **SDA H.** -Seventh Day Adventist Hospital; **W. H.** - West Hospital; **HA C.** - Haj Adams Clinic; **BH C.** - Bilpeila Health Centre; **NHIA** - National Health Insurance Authority.

perspectives based on the participants' experiences/statements (Creswell, 2014). Thematic analysis was conducted in the study. The five steps of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding were followed, including transcribing, grouping, or coding (similarities/differences in data), forming thematic hierarchies and matrices, making meaning out of data and drawing conclusions from the data, respectively (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). Two major themes emerged from data such as access to healthcare services and quality healthcare services, and the presentation of findings were largely on them, and preferences which were ranked. Coding was done using qualitative data analysis NVivo software (version 10).

Ethical approvals

Approvals have been obtained from the Metropolitan Health Directorate of the Ghana Health Service and the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) offices (regional and district). Also, the informed consent of participants was sought for through writing or verbal communication before interviews commenced. Participation was voluntary, and other issues of privacy, confidentiality, anonymity among others were strictly adhered to (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018; Baran, 2020).

Results

Perspectives of implementers on factors that affect quality healthcare services

The views or perspectives of health policy implementers on the quality of healthcare services to health insurance beneficiaries are presented. Some factors they perceived which affect the quality of healthcare services are shown in Table 2 which include referrals, effectiveness in monitoring, timeliness, efficiency, reimbursement, compliance with standard guidelines of Ghana Health Service (GHS), and accreditation process.

Other factors mentioned by the implementers include administration of the tariff system, the state of medical equipment in health facilities including laboratories, the caseload of health workers, doing the right thing, the right time, waiting times (time beneficiaries spent at facilities), the work environment, efficacious services and meeting the health needs and the satisfaction of subscribers.

Implementers' perceptions on access to quality healthcare services at health facilities

As shown in Table 1, 26 health workers of the four selected health facilities (two hospitals and two clinics) were interviewed on NHIS beneficiaries' access to quality healthcare services at health facilities. The implementers' responses are presented in Table 3.

The healthcare service that most implementers perceived that the beneficiaries have more access to is on medical consultations (88.5 percent) while the least perceived healthcare service is on medical emergencies (46.1 percent).

Beneficiaries' perceptions on access to quality healthcare services at health facilities

Data based on beneficiaries' perceptions and opinions on access to healthcare services at health facilities, both in-depth interviews and FGDs indicated that beneficiaries have access to healthcare services such as medical consultations, the supply of drugs and medicines, diagnostic services (laboratory/ultra-scan tests, x-rays) among others. However, it was found that beneficiaries lacked knowledge on which services were of good quality, which drug or medicine, an injection was more effective or not, and they could not determine effective treatment methods. Thus, the beneficiaries relied more on what medical officials (practitioners) at health facilities prescribe, dispense, and instruct them to do.

Factors	Health policy implementers perspectives
Referrals	<p><i>The referral system of GHS aims to increase subscribers' and other clients' access to drugs and services and part of the process towards health facilities access and quality assurance measures (I: MHO1).</i></p> <p><i>Referrals are often from a lower health facility to a higher one example from a primary facility to a secondary and a tertiary facility like TTH or Komfo Anokye or Korle Bu teaching hospitals (I: SO3).</i></p>
Effectiveness in monitoring	<p><i>We are not able to get full cooperation from facilities in areas of right prescriptions, early submission of claims and collection of cheques, continuous monitoring of facilities to ensure good, quality health services for subscribers are also a problem (I: SO3).</i></p> <p><i>You know this clinic is not for GHS, so they do not control us, we did not obtain our license from GHS but PHMHB. What matters most is that we have a license to provide health care and we are always ready to provide quality services to our clients. We got our accreditation license from the health insurance authority, but they do not control us on what services to provide and whatnot (I: PRC2).</i></p>
Timeliness	<p><i>There is the need to reduce the time subscribers spend at our offices through our decentralised registration system, we also make efforts to pay facilities claims on time towards quality service delivery (I: SO3).</i></p> <p><i>We treat patients equally whether health insurance subscribers or those who pay cash, we provide prompt services in terms of medical consultation or drug prescription, and where we cannot meet the healthcare needs of patients, we refer them to higher facilities (I: PUC2)</i></p> <p><i>The health care needs of subscribers are important to us and we always try our possible best not to delay their time at the facility. Above all, we provide them with good quality services (I: PRC2)</i></p>
Efficiency	<p><i>...we do not vacate facility early as most clinics do. Moreover, the provision of quality service to subscribers is our topmost priority here (I: PRC1-5#2)</i></p>
Reimbursement	<p><i>There are too many delays in payments of claims, where you provide services to insurance members for eight months without reimbursement, how.... (I: PRC1-3#3)</i></p> <p><i>Health insurance is good, but reimbursement is the problem. Too many delays, no payments for the whole year (from January to July). (I: PUC1-3#1)</i></p>
Compliance with standard guidelines of GHS	<p><i>Health facilities work within GHS treatment guidelines be it public or private facilities to ensure that the quality of health services is not compromised (I: MHO1).</i></p> <p><i>Health insurance officials are involved in periodic monitoring of facilities service delivery across the country (I: NIO1).</i></p>
Accreditation process	<p><i>We receive credentials of facilities forward them to the authority for approval. NHIA accreditation body or delegated persons can make unannounced visits to inspect facilities to ensure standards are not compromised (I: SO3).</i></p> <p><i>We have a strict procedure that facilities must meet for accreditation and there is no favouritism, politics, or cronyism. Some service providers when they are denied accreditation, turn to blame us on these issues instead of doing the right thing. All that is expected is for the facility to meet the basic requirements of providing at least five core areas and meet the 50% pass mark (I: RIO1).</i></p> <p><i>This is a big hospital and has been able to meet all the conditions required for accreditation. Meeting conditions spelt out by NHIA is not a problem in this facility but maintaining standards and upgrading to secondary care hospital is our priority (I: PUH1, 3#1).</i></p> <p><i>We met those conditions set for facilities and have since been accredited and have renewed many times. The goal of the hospital is to become the best hospital in the metropolis (I: PRH1, 3#3).</i></p>

Table 2.
Perspectives of
implementers/health
service providers

Source: Fieldwork data

Notes: I: MHO - Interviewed Metropolitan Health Management Team Officer; SO - Scheme Officer; PRC - Private Clinic Officer; PUC - Public Clinic Officer; NIO - National Insurance Officer; RIO - Regional Insurance Officer; PUH - Public Hospital Officer; PRH - Private Hospital Office

The next issue is on the beneficiaries' views on access to healthcare services at health facilities. The essence of this issue is for the beneficiaries to share their views and experiences on the kind of healthcare services they received at health facilities (hospitals and clinics) in the implementation of NHIS at the local level. The beneficiaries' perceptions are summarized in Table 4.

Beneficiaries' ranking of healthcare services at health facilities

Private Clinic (HAC). During in-depth interviews and FGDs at the private clinic, the beneficiaries were asked to rank various key areas of services in their order of importance. Under the eight-point scale with '8' as the *most important* healthcare service (factor), while '1' as the *least important* healthcare service. The findings showed that medical consultations were ranked first as the most important healthcare service. The second most important healthcare service was the supply of drugs and medicines in the implementation of NHIS. The third and fourth most important healthcare services were diagnostic services and admissions, respectively. The fifth most important service was emergency services (referrals/ambulance), followed by the sixth of prescription forms, while the least important healthcare service delivery area was the processing of ID cards and staff attitude which were jointly ranked as the seventh. This means that beneficiaries at the private clinic did not see health insurance ID card processing and staff attitudes as crucial factors in the implementation of NHIS.

Public Clinic (BC). In-depth interviews and the FGDs conducted at the public clinic have interesting findings. The result showed that the most important healthcare service area (factor) was at consultations (services received at consulting unit) as ranked the first, followed by the supply of medicine, prescription forms, processing of ID card, staff attitude, emergency services, while the least important healthcare services were admissions and diagnostic

Services	No. Quality Services	Percentage
Consultations	23	88.5
Supply of Drugs	17	65.4
Diagnostic Services	16	61.5
Admissions	14	53.8
Maternity	22	84.6
Emergencies	12	46.1
Total No. of Street-level bureaucrats	26	

Source: Fieldwork data

Table 3.
Responses on access to
quality healthcare
services at health
facilities

Services	'Yes' on access to healthcare services	Percentage
Consultations	61	87
Drugs and Medicines	55	79
Diagnostic services	43	61
Admissions (in-patient)	39	56
Emergencies	37	53
Maternity	36	51
Total No. of beneficiaries	70	

Source: Fieldwork data

Table 4.
Beneficiaries'
perceptions on access
to healthcare services
at health facilities

services. Diagnostic services were least prioritised because the health facility laboratory was not functioning or not in full operation.

Public Hospital (WH). The interviews and the six beneficiaries who took part in the FGDs also ranked the healthcare services in the order of importance based on their views or experience at health facilities (hospitals). The beneficiaries ranked medical consultations and diagnostic services jointly as the two most important factors (healthcare services). Supply of medicine and admissions were also jointly ranked as the third, emergency services as the fifth and sixth for prescription forms. Processing of ID cards and staff attitudes were ranked as the least important factors respectively.

Private Hospital (SDAH). The interview ranking of healthcare services provided at the private hospital, diagnostic services were ranked as the most important one, followed by the supply of medicines, consultations, emergency services, admissions, and staff attitude. While the least important factors were the processing of ID cards and issuance of prescription forms. These findings show that beneficiaries were mindful of what service providers delivered in each unit in hospitals and clinics. A summary of the ranking of healthcare services at facilities in order of importance by the health policy beneficiaries (health insurance subscribers) is shown in Table 5.

Discussion

The study found that the factors that affect the quality of healthcare services in the implementation of NHIS in Ghana from the perspectives of implementers are multifaceted. The implementers hold the view that an effective referral system is an essential, rigorous accreditation process coupled with good as well as periodic monitoring of health facilities healthcare services. Most of the key factors identified in the study (Table 2) seem to agree with the findings of earlier studies (Kipo-Sunyehzi, 2020; Ratcliffe *et al.*, 2020; Akweongo *et al.*, 2021). The implementers also indicated in the responses of their compliance with the Ministry of Health and GHS quality assurance manuals and documents in the provision of quality healthcare services (Ghana Health Service, 2007, 2012; Ministry of Health, 2017).

The health policy beneficiaries also identified factors that affect their access to healthcare services in the implementation of NHIS at the local level. The beneficiaries mentioned factors as well as conditions that they were not happy with health service providers (implementers). These include long hours spent at health facilities to follow health insurance ID card verification process, referrals to other facilities for drugs and medicines, referrals for diagnostic services like ultrasound scan, laboratory tests, and more access to a large volume

Table 5.
Summary of beneficiaries' ranking of healthcare services in the four health facilities

Rankings of Health Services	Private Clinic (HAC)	Public Clinic (BC)	Public Hospital (WH)	Private Hospital (SDAH)
1 st	Consultations	Consultations	Consult/ Diagnostic	Diagnostic
2 nd	Medicine	Medicine	Jointly Ranked*	Medicine
3 rd	Diagnostic	Prescriptions	Medicine/Admis.	Consultations
4 th	Admissions	Processing of ID	Jointly Ranked*	Emergency
5 th	Emergency	Staff Attitude	Emergency	Admissions
6 th	Prescriptions	Emergency	Prescriptions	Staff Attitude
7 th	ID Card/Staff.	Admissions	Processing of ID	Processing of ID
8 th	Jointly ranked*	Diagnostic	Staff Attitude	Prescriptions

Source: Fieldwork data (FGDs at the four health facilities)

Note: 1st represents the most important service/factor, 8th represents the least important service/factor; *Jointly ranked services - include (1st/2nd and 3rd/4th in a public hospital; 7th and 8th private clinic)

of perceived cheap drugs like ‘paracetamol’, the issuance of prescription forms, in some cases poor attitude of health workers towards NHIS beneficiaries. The factors and conditions in the findings seem to agree with other studies (Andoh-Adjei *et al.*, 2018; Nketiah-Amponsah, *et al.*, 2019; Ampaw *et al.*, 2020; Umar *et al.*, 2020). The conceptualisation of quality healthcare services among NHIS beneficiaries was problematic. The beneficiaries focus was not on the concept of quality healthcare services, but they were mindful of how their health problems or conditions are addressed, thus their healthcare needs and satisfaction. However, most implementers at health facilities (hospitals and clinics) complained of delays in the reimbursement of their health insurance claims and that affected the quality of healthcare services.

Interestingly, perceptions of NHIS beneficiaries on their access to healthcare services at health facilities (hospitals and clinics) at the local level happened to be mixed perspectives (Table 3 and 4) and irony. For instance, the implementers’ view is that beneficiaries have more access to maternity services with 84.6 percent but the beneficiaries think otherwise with a 53 percent rate of access to maternity services. The overall findings showed positive results where the beneficiaries had over 50 percent access to key healthcare services at health facilities at the local level in Ghana. This finding concurs with some recent studies on pregnant women’ increased access to maternal healthcare services under NHIS in Ghana (Ameyaw *et al.*, 2021; Ekholuenetale and Barrow, 2021).

Table 5 shows that most beneficiaries prioritised three types of healthcare service delivery areas, namely medical consultations, the supply of drugs/medicines and diagnostic services. Admissions and emergency services were perceived as the next most important factors or healthcare services while the issuance of prescription forms, verification of health insurance ID cards before accessing healthcare services and staff attitude as the least important factors or least prioritised healthcare services provided at the four health facilities (hospitals, clinics) at the local level in Ghana.

Explanation for the ranking of services is that some beneficiaries felt disappointed when they were asked to go outside of a hospital or clinic to access drugs through the issuance of prescription forms, or to undergo laboratory tests or ultrasound-scan or x-ray tests. Moreover, some beneficiaries saw the verification of ID cards process as a waste of time, thus reflected in its low ranking. Most beneficiaries did not connect staff attitude to healthcare service delivery area, hence the ranking for staff attitude is low. Between the public and private health service providers (health facilities), most of the health policy beneficiaries prefer private health facilities to their public counterparts. One key factor for this preference is their perceived good quality healthcare services in terms of meeting their health needs and satisfaction at the facility and the less use of shouts and insults at the private health facilities.

Conclusion

The study established that both implementers and beneficiaries of NHIS conceptualised quality healthcare services differently, while implementers look at it from three perspectives: patient care, facility environment and professionalism, the beneficiaries mainly look at it from patient care. It was concluded that the implementers’ perspectives on the factors that affect quality healthcare services were multifaceted, and beneficiaries ranking of healthcare services as multi-dimensional. Moreover, the beneficiaries ranking of healthcare services was based on what they perceived as good in solving their healthcare needs and satisfaction at health facilities. Thus, three healthcare services were more important (highly prioritized) to the beneficiaries as medical consultations, diagnostic services, and supply of drugs/medicines, which agree largely to the perspectives of implementers.

A possible limitation of this study is the generalisation of findings based on the sample size of 107 and the use of the purposive sampling method to include categories of NHIS

beneficiaries. Nonetheless, the findings may have the power of transferability to locations with similar settings in other countries. Moreover, the mixed-method approach has helped minimise the bias effect of using a ranking matrix in understanding the access to quality healthcare services.

The finding of this paper will have some implications for policymakers, implementers, and beneficiaries. The results suggest that policymakers have to consider the means of achieving policy goals (resources) and make adequate resources available to policy implementers. The implementers need to consider the interest of policy beneficiaries and work towards them and for the welfare of the larger society.

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