

COVID-19 THROUGH THE LENS OF THE FILIPINOS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ON THE MEDICAL, ECONOMICAL, AND SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT: Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was declared as a pandemic on March 11, 2020; since then, it has infected millions of people worldwide. With the continuous rise of cases, it is necessary to examine current knowledge to improve future medical responses and possibly slow down the progression of the pandemic. The keywords "COVID AND Philippines," "COVID AND Filipino," and "COVID Health Impact Philippines" in combination with corresponding Boolean operators were utilized as a search strategy in three primary databases. The article selection process is reported using the Preferred Reporting Items for the Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA). Following a full-text analysis, 34 articles proceeded in the systematic review. This systematic review aims to determine how the pandemic affected the Philippines medically, sociologically, and economically; while simultaneously evaluating the effectiveness of government policies to soften the various impacts in these different sectors. Key findings indicate that some policies such as community quarantines and the suspension of face-to-face classes have a short-term effectivity, while curfews were deemed ineffective. In conclusion, some policies, despite their effectiveness in mitigating the virus, cast sociological and economic concerns on the Filipinos. The findings from this review may be substantial for future pandemic planning purposes.

Keywords: coronavirus; epidemiology; government response; pandemic; public health

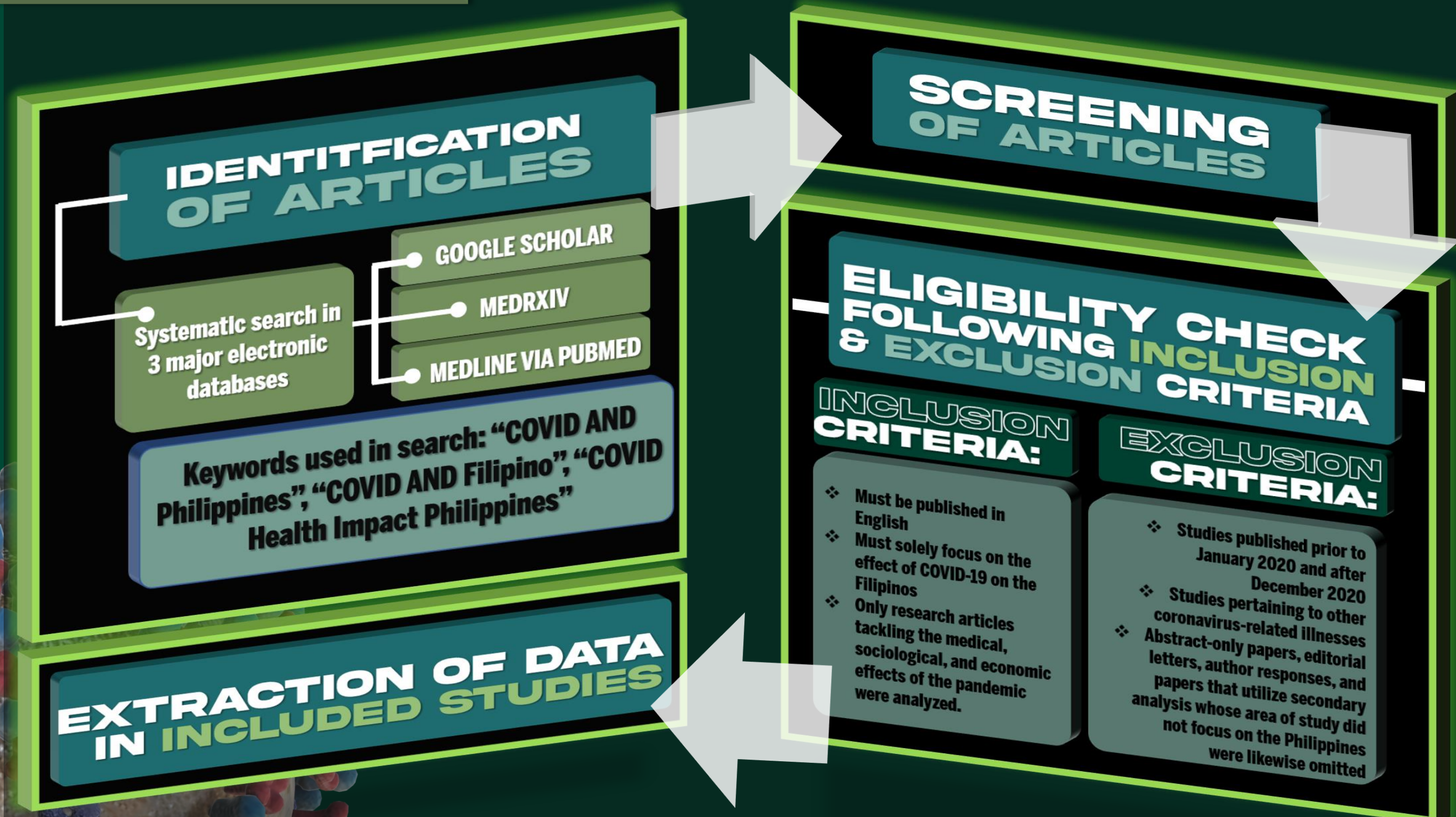
INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has globally infected millions of people. The first COVID-19 death outside of China was recorded in the Philippines on February 2, 2020. On March 8, 2020, President Rodrigo Duterte issued Proclamation No. 922, imposing a state of national emergency (Ricalde, 2020). To decrease the transmission of COVID-19, the Philippine government has implemented different policies and preventive measures such as community quarantines, isolation, social distancing, and closure of academic institutions.

The pandemic manifested a multiplicative impact in different sectors and industries in the Philippines. On April 11, 2021, the Philippine government placed Metro Manila and its surrounding provinces under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) (Aguilar, 2021). Thirteen months into the pandemic, a surge in cases remains high in the Philippines despite the numerous government interventions. Given the explosion of literature and the fact that time is always scarce, review papers play an important role in evidence-based decision-making. With prolonged lockdown, this study aims to utilize a systematic review to determine whether the government's policies are effective in combating the pandemic while simultaneously assessing the impact of the pandemic medically, sociologically, and economically.

Recognizing that most individuals do not have the time to locate essential primary research, objectively evaluate them, and acquire the evidence they need for their questions, systematic reviews may be their most credible source for evidence. Systematic reviews aim to identify, evaluate, and summarize the findings of all relevant individual studies over issues (*in this case, health-related and policy-related*), thereby making available evidence more accessible to decision-makers. This review assesses the validity of studies through a systematic search and will only encompass studies concerning the effects of COVID-19 in the Philippines' medical, sociological, and economical landscape. Additionally, the journal articles included in this systematic review were limited from January 2020 to December 2020. This study identifies pandemic policies that require utmost adjustments in order to further strengthen public health.

METHODOLOGY



RESULTS

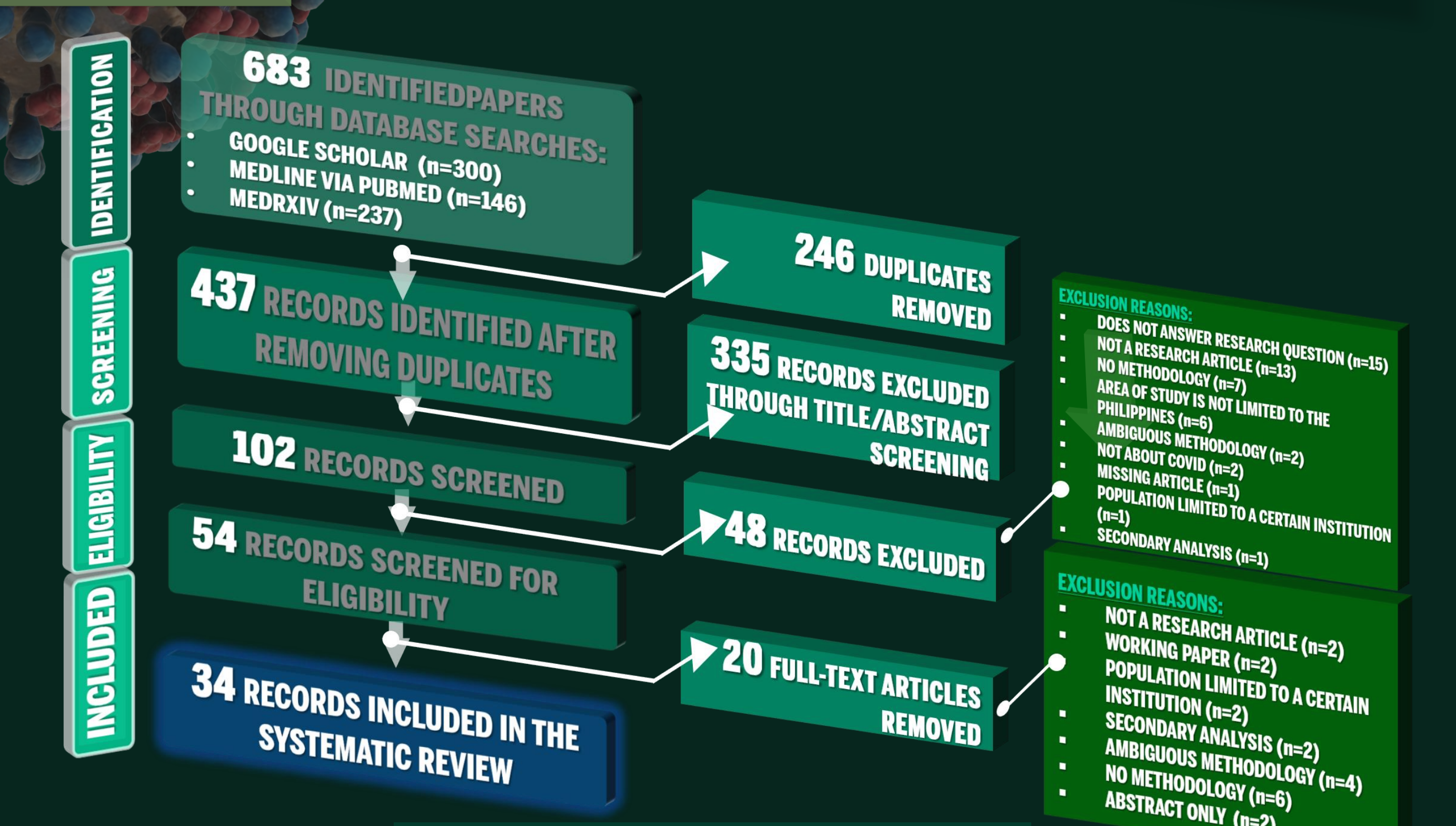


FIGURE 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

RESULTS

TABLE 1. Medical, Economical, and Sociological Impact of the Pandemic

HOW DID THE PANDEMIC AFFECT THE PHILIPPINES?		
ASPECT	HIGHLIGHTED EFFECTS	AUTHOR
MEDICALLY	Frontline healthcare workers are exposed to high risks of infection due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of prior experience with COVID-19 cases, Lack of preventive guidelines on COVID-19 transmission Shortage of personal protective equipment Fatigue 	Abrigo et al. (2020)
	Registered nurses from public hospitals experienced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased level of fear of COVID-19 Decreased job satisfaction Increased psychological distress 	Labrague and De los Santos (2020)
	During the pandemic, the risk of death in COVID-19 patients with tuberculosis was 2.17% times higher than in those without.	Sy et al. (2020)
	In a survey composed of 1879 respondents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16.3% declared a moderate to severe psychological impact of the outbreak. 28.8% of the respondents encountered moderate-to-severe anxiety rates. 16.9% of the respondents reported moderate-to-severe depressive indications. 13.4% of the respondents had moderate-to-severe stress intensity. 	Tee et al. (2020)
ECONOMICALLY	Regions within the Philippines that had prevalent poverty rates, minimum resources, and expenditure were likely to have high amounts of COVID-19 cases.	Alipio (2020)
	A 2.0% decrease in the economic performance of the Philippines was projected by the Asia Development Bank.	Estadilla (2020)
	Increase of unemployment rates from 5.1% unemployment rate in April 2019 to an estimated peak of 23% (7.25 million workers) for April 2020	Lim (2020)
SOCIOLOGICALLY	Full-time workers plummeted from 28.4 million to 9.9 million -- ultimately affecting more than 18 million workers, which accounted for 39% to 40% of the labor force.	Lim (2020)
	Anxiety manifested throughout the majority of the students of the lockdown 62.64% of the respondents were concerned about food and finances.	Baloran (2020)
	Only 1,505 (41%) of 3670 medical students are considered physically and mentally capable in participating in online learning.	Baticulon et al. (2020)
	80% of the citizens paid more attention to their hygiene, utilized disinfectants, face masks, and practiced social distancing.	Bautista et al. (2020)
	The movement of citizens and physical contact were decreased.	Bawingan et al. (2020)

RESULTS

TABLE 2. Effectivity of Policies Implemented by the Government to Counter the Pandemic

WERE THE POLICIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVE?			
POLICY	EFFECTIVITY (Short Term Effectivity, Long Term Effectivity, Not Effective*)	REASON	AUTHOR
Community Quarantine (ECQ, MECQ, MGCQ, GCQ)	SHORT-TERM EFFECTIVITY	Despite the negative effects to the Philippine economy, observing ECQ guidelines was necessary in an epidemiological perspective	Vallejo and Ong (2020)
		In addition to the low employment rate, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) decline of 0.7% was seen in the first quarter of 2020 as quarantine protocols were implemented.	Lim, (2020)
Curfews	NOT EFFECTIVE	A protocol with low prominence and low relation in mitigating the virus. The protocol continues to be an indirect factor in reducing the risk of transmission.	Ocampo and Yamagishi (2020)
Suspension of Face-to-Face Classes	SHORT-TERM EFFECTIVITY	Students with physical, mental, and financial concerns are incapable of engaging in online learning.	Baticulon et al. (2020)
		Anxiety, stress, and depression were reported to be present in students during the pandemic.	Bawingan et al. (2020)
		The suspension of face-to-face classes was found to have a high prominence and high relation in mitigating the virus.	Ocampo and Yamagishi (2020)

*LONG-TERM EFFECTIVITY: Policies with no adverse effects medically, sociologically, and economically.
 SHORT-TERM EFFECTIVITY: Policies that mitigates the spread of the virus, but is found to have a detrimental effect medically, sociologically, or economically.
 NOT EFFECTIVE: Policies that are found to be irrelevant in countering the pandemic.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the 34 studies accumulated through the systematic search showed that the pandemic had caused multiple adverse effects on the Philippines' economic, medical, and sociological landscape. The different studies obtained, revealed that the government formulated policies that are deemed to have short-term effectivity or no effectivity -- thus, the reason for the nation's state in the current lockdown. To further enhance this study, a meta-analysis is recommended by the researchers for the creation of statistically significant policy recommendations.



REFERENCES