

Beyond contagion: Unveiling the transformative impact of pandemics on lifestyle paradigms

Vicenta T. Escobar, RN^{1*}, Nerlyne C. Concepcion²

^{1,2}Western Mindanao State University, Philippines. admissions@wmsu.edu.ph (V.T.E.R.) nerlyne.concepcion@gmail.com (N.C.C.).

Abstract: COVID-19 has severely affected the economic and social aspects of a community. This research explored the welfare of Zamboanga families to determine distinct yet significant changes in regard to their lifestyle that includes food preferences, recreational activities, and community involvement before and after the pandemic. The study used quantitative research that describes a deeper understanding of the eighteen participant's lifestyle changes. The ethnolinguistic groups in Zamboanga encountered an abrupt economic and social boundary in their everyday lives with the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Food preferences, recreational activities, and community involvement had drastically changed but even with this, the families remained in solidarity and resiliency overcoming the burdens. Healthier food preferences, stronger ties of families and more involvement within and outside of their homes are evident. Specifically, it understood differences among ethnolinguistic groups and socio-economic states and how these determine lifestyle behaviors during a crisis.

Keywords: *Community involvement, COVID-19, Ethnolinguistic groups, Food preferences, Lifestyle, Recreation, Socio-economic state, Zamboanga families.*

1. Introduction

COVID-19 has caused drastic loss of human lives and persisted to worsen the state of public health and the economy, heightening the risk of people falling into extreme poverty. In 2020, governments enforced strict social guidelines and community lockdowns to control the curb of SARS-Cov-2 virus cases which severely stricken the population's livelihoods and limited social interactions. These abrupt changes have affected people's well-being and lifestyles. The study delves into this aspect among families in Zamboanga City, specifically considering their culture, educational background, and their income or socio-economic status and how these factors directly determine their food preferences, recreational activities, and community involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1. Healthy Lifestyle

An individual's health behavior is indicated by a combination of social positions, class status, and group identities rather than independent, agentic choices. One's lifestyle comprises of day-to-day behaviors and one's meaningful contribution in their jobs, activities, and their diet (Mollborn & Hummer, 2017).

2. Methods

The study employed a descriptive qualitative method in conducting an open-ended interview with structured guide questions. The participants' socio-demographic profile was the main distinct factor in investigating lifestyle changes among Zamboanga families pre- and post-pandemic, focusing on their food preferences, recreational activities, and community involvement. Creswell (2013) elaborated that qualitative research is best-suited for exploration and understanding the social problems of individuals, producing a flexible framework as a general translation of individual meanings.

3. Study Population

Eighteen (18) participants, either fathers or mothers, were selected through purposive sampling with equal or within age brackets, their education attainment, whereas their socio-economic status were categorized as lower, middle, and higher conditions. Prior to the survey, a self-made guide questionnaire was validated and pretested aimed to document the specific lifestyle experiences of the participants, regardless of their paternal or maternal roles, before and after the implementation of lockdowns. The specificities are their food preferences, recreational activities, and community involvement.

3.1. Participant Distribution by Ethnolinguistic and Socio-economic Classifications

Individuals from Zamboanga City's major ethnolinguistic communities, which are Tausug, Visayan, and Chavacano fathers and mothers, were the participants in the study. They were grouped accordingly:

Table 1.

Ethnolinguistic group	Socioeconomic classification		
	High income	Medium income	Low income
Tausug	2 (Mother or father)	2 (Mother or father)	2 (Mother or father)
Visayan	2 (Mother or father)	2 (Mother or father)	2 (Mother or father)
Chavacano	2 (Mother or father)	2 (Mother or father)	2 (Mother or father)

4. Results

4.1. Ethnolinguistic Group Classification

4.1.1. Food Preferences

In the pre-pandemic setting, families have had the liberty to either conveniently order meals from fast food chains and/or restaurants or prepare meals at home as traditionally done by mothers/wives. During the socially-restricting pandemic, however, the practice of ordering out had halted and the traditional maternal role of making home-cooked meals has been shared with fathers/husbands, which allowed them to “reconnect” with their families.

4.1.2. Before Pandemic

According to the female Chavacano participant, she prefers cooking food for her family at home to ensure the freshness, cleanliness, and nutrient density of the ingredients.

“Mga bata kere tambien era kusida de casa pero hindi gat kaya ase todol dia. Chenebes tan undertime para pwede yo kusi cosa sila kierre o kumpra yo mga cosa debe kusi na un semana. Aga pa kusi yayo para baun del mga bata para na eskwela hindi ya sila kumpra ulam. Pati tan ready yayo el para na denoche – liga undrato o poko ohra ya lang para kusi – ta mira gat yon a kara mio mga anak y marido bien alegre sila si ta kusi yo kumida. Kere2x gat tamen yo kusi para kumpanyansa yo cosa sila ta kome. Ok lang chenebes ta kumpra kumida pero mas bueno gat kusida de casa kay sabe kita limpyo y bwen preparaw. Iyo mam ta insinsya yo pakimodo kusi, cosa debe buen ingridiente para na mga kumida poreso chenebes duele kumigo na mio mga anak y marido na dila kumida hinde fresh y nutritious. Ta resa gat yo se mam na pwede yo ase se pirmi pero necesita tamen gat yo trabaha hindi mio marido lang, palta na mga gastos na mga cosa necesita na casa y na mga gastos na bata especialmente todo ya sila ta entra eskwela.”

(The kids really wanted home cooked meals but it was not possible every day. Sometimes, I even go home early from work to cook the meals that they want or buy the things that need to be cooked for the whole week. I start cooking their meals early in the morning for them to have their packed lunch so that they will not have to buy it in school. And, I prepare their meals at night - when we go home it will

be easier or less chores for us - I always see my family being happy whenever I cook meals for them. And I also like to cook for them because that way, I will be aware of what they eat. It is also okay to buy ready-to-eat foods outside but it would be much better if it is home cooked so that we will know if it is clean and well prepared. I teach how to prepare good food and use the right ingredients. That is why it bothers me that my kids and my husband do not eat fresh and nutritious foods. I always wish that I could cook for them all the time but I also needed to work. Because if it is just my husband, then it would be hard for our expenses. Especially since our kids are all in school.)

Another participant shared the difficulty in managing their children with picky-eating behaviors which prompts them to order out food just to “feed” their children.

“Ta prepara kame kumida antes si kere, kay manada tiempo ta kumpra lang yo o mio marido ulam. El kanun ta kusi kame. Antes puro karne - fried chicken, adobe, estopao o puro puwerko - hinde kame ta ase gulay, chenebes lang. Hahaha mio mga anak (3) bien mapili, chene gat debe karne kay si nuay hindi kome - puro junk food. Happy family kame, kaminadora. Kame pati mio marido ta buska gat gulay - kere2x kame gulay - malunggay, talbus, kangkong y okra, si puede nuay karne mas bueno. Pero si kunpra lang kumida, para na mga bata, ta sigi ya lang kame di ila gusto. El junkfood primi gat se chene na diamun kumida - most of the time ta kome apuera jollibee, KFC and todo kiere sila - na kame ta dale ya lang kanila. Kere2x gat sila pasya y kome apuera - kome mga na restaurant o barbequehan - o tan takeout. Seldom kame kusi kumida puro apuera kome kay chenebes kansaw ya na trabaho, saka mio marido kunamun anda ya lang kome apuera. Chenebes saturday o sunday ta kusi gat yo para “lutong-bahay” tamen y pwede tamen sila saborya mio kusida - hahaha - ta gusta tamen sila espesyalmente mio marido - bale tamen kay todo ayudahan y alegre.”

(We prepare food beforehand if we want to, because there are days where me and my husband just buy food outside. We cook the rice, and before we always eat meat - fried chicken, adobo, estopao, or pure pork - we rarely cook dishes with vegetables. All my three children are picky eaters, there should always be meat in their meals, or else they would not eat at all - it is always junk food. We are a happy family; we were always going out. Me and my husband always find vegetables - malunggay (moringa), talbus (Camote Tops), kangkong (Ipomoea aquatica), and okra (lady's fingers), the less to no meat at all is much better. But if we are talking about buying foods just for the kids, then we just give them what they want. Junk Food will always be part of our meal. Most of the time we eat in fast food chains such as Jollibee and KFC, and the kids really want those kinds of activities, and we just give ways to their wants. They like family bondings where we eat outside - like in restaurants or barbeque eateries or we do take outs. We seldom cook food because we are all tired coming from work, hence my husband always suggests that we eat outside. But sometimes, during the weekends, I really cook meals so that they can experience my home cooked meals. And they seem to like it, especially my husband. It is delightful because everyone of us is helping and happy.)

4.1.3. During Pandemic

A female Tausug participant shared that before the pandemic, it was only her and her husband that consumed home-cooked meals as they allow their kids to order whatever food they preferred. However, during the pandemic, this situation changed because her kids eventually learned how to prepare meals themselves and completely stopped ordering food.

“Pag pandemic nagbago in mga activities namuuh - katan hihinang namuh di na namuh mahinang minsan pa kaba - yaan pa namuh. In lisud namuh magluto magbago tuud kay bang di kami magluto urway kaunun - na matay hahaha. Biyah way dah malaggu nagpinda sin mga hihinang namuh. In banna ku sali dah hihinang - luba na di namuh makita siya pirmu - aywun bulan mga habuuk adlaw dah nakaurwi ampra ang karayi pa. Aku isab maggugurwa dah, mataud dah isab in hihinang - magtabang ha mga tau iban hala-hala nila. Kiyahuhunitan katan, luba na mga anak namuh - in mga bata kiyabibinan ha bai makaluliy sabab sila lang in nagbuhi buhi - in marayaw ha mga anak amuh nakaingat sila maglutu iban mag adopt ha sitwasyon namuh kiyahatihan nila in sitwasyon namuh - bibisarahan namuh sila. Nakaingat sila magluto iban maghibang ha bai - in mga bata maingat tuud mag adopt sin time nila - kaingatan kuna hiyahuhunitan sila pero sila baran baran nila. Minsan mabaya kami mamih panghaun, arwun tuud adlaw way oagbibihan - nakaingat tuud kami katan maglutu pagkaun, in mga bata nag youtube para maka-ingat maglutu sin kabayaan nula. Kiyahunitan isab kami pagbih panyap - di kami anad magbibih stocks in pagkakaun - nag susa tuud kame mag stock. In pandemic arwun tuud karayawan dihil katu katan. Nahinang kita united iban marayaw tau katan. Kita kuh bariin in mga tao magtabangan, in katan bang arwun idihil.”

(During the pandemic, our activities changed- even those we used to do before, even if we want to, we cannot do it anymore. Then we are too lazy to cook, if we do not cook, we have nothing to eat- dead hahaha. There does not seem to be any big change in what we do. My husband is doing the same thing especially since we do not get to be with him - he only comes home one day in a month and then it is only for a little bit of time. I go out again doing a lot, helping people. Everything has been hard when it comes to our children- the children are just left at home because they are living on their own- well they are learning to cook and adopting our situation. Well, they understand. They are learning to cook and do household chores – these children are smart; they know how to adapt to their own time now - I know they are having a hard time but I am happy that they are already living on their own.)

Another Chavacano participant agreed that his family prepares even more nutritious food at home ever since the pandemic started.

“We have watched our diet and health because it helped us cope with the pandemic. Although we struggled too, we were at least prepared more than the rest. We were used to being conscious of our food consumption, activities plus our medicine and vitamin intake. So, it was easy for us to be adaptive to the changes. Cooking food became more prominent daily in our lives at home. We still eat healthy and prepare our food properly. We did not regret that we have a healthy lifestyle. Supplements were just added to boost our immune system. And learning to cook more became our daily routine. Having time with the family is more appreciated during this time. Quality bonding is really in place. Although, we are all too sad and afraid of what is happening around us.”

4.2. Recreational Activities

Without the lockdown's imposed social restrictions, families either freely travelled locally and internationally for vacation or spent time in malls, resorts, and parks before the pandemic. However, such social activities stopped and shifted to online audio/video calls, online games, and bonding through household chores, praying, and exercising.

4.2.1. Before Pandemic

A male Bisaya participant shared that he personally prefers to stay at home and maintain their home garden rather than going to different places, but he added that they typically go to churches and eat outside as a family for their recreational activities. He shares that their preference of not travelling is mainly due to financial constraints.

“Usahay isa ka beses sa kada semana ra mi makalingaw-lingaw. Kay kasagaran, more on lakaw, ana ba. So ang lingaw lingaw nako, gardening ra jud ko. Ang uban namong silingan didto, lingaw pa sila kay mga subong-sabong man na ilahang gina himo. Ako kay gardening lang, mao nay akong lingaw kada buntag. Manubo usahay mu tan-aw ra sad ko sa kalingawan sa among silingan. Naa mi mga manok pero kanang binuhi ra. Di mi mag-apil apil ananng mga sabong. Akong mga ginatanom ananag akong garden kay kanang mga gulay. Mga alugbati, kanang mga dali ra jud mang tubo nga mga tanom. Dali ra kaayo siya mga pila ka adlaw ana, pila ka semana, naa na kay ma harvest. Unya kay wala may panakot, mao nang mamalit na lang sad mi pero kasagaran jud, kanang mga dali ra jud, kanang mga gulay-gulay nga dali ra maoy ginatanom. Sa balay ra sad ko ana ga tanom. Sa palibot ra. Kay ang among area, kanang hapit sa koral, naa mga dagko nga mga kahoy.”

(Sometimes we only have fun once a week. Because usually, we have to do our own errands. So, as for me, I am gardening. Our neighbors are still amused by the cockfighting that they do. I am only into gardening, that is my entertainment every morning. Sometimes I am having fun watching our neighbors. We have chickens but they are only raised. We will not join those cockfights. My garden is full of vegetables. Alugbati, they are easy to grow. They are easy to harvest because it will only take a few days, a few weeks. We only plant vegetables that are easily planted. I only plant in my house. - just around my area, because our area is right next to the big fences.)

On the other hand, a female Tausug participant mentioned that as a family, they individually attend to their activities, but sees to it that they bond from time-to time by taking a part in events, celebrations, and parties.

“Aku iban banna kuh urway oras ha bai, mataud kiyakadtuh. Sumaan mag agad agad kami, sumaan kanya kanya - in mga bata arun isab mga iban nila-nila lang, dih kaagaran. In banna ku arun isab panaw kaniya. Dih kami mag-aagad bang magpanaw. In katumtuman ku mag agad agad kami bang maglunuk tiyaun, pag birthday sin mga laysiya atawa mga bagay masuuk masuuk ha pamilya. Sumaan bang magtravel abroad atawa pa manila, mag agad dah isab in banna ku sumaan in urway - di makaagad - arun pirmi trabaho. Minsan sumaan bang in mga bata mga baitah tuud na mabaya sila manaw ampa katan kami subway mag agad huminang tuud kami ohras para magkapag agad katan.”

(We both have no time at home. We went out and went to a lot of places. Sometimes we are together, sometimes we go separately.)

Children also go out on their own and do not like to be accompanied. My husband also has one too and we do not go together. We are not together on our walk. I remember we only join when we attend weddings or birthdays of our relatives, or friends who are close to the family or sometimes when we travel abroad or in Manila, sometimes with my wife but sometimes not- because they always have work. Sometimes we get together when the kids really want to go out together, we make a way for them.)

4.2.2. During Pandemic

One participant admitted that they were all initially afraid of the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and their only recourse was each other. Eventually, they realized that bonding with the family is what they needed the most.

“Este gat ya keda diamun “greatest” bonding kay todo kame ta ase hunto-hunto. Mga bata ya pwede gat aprende keda ma pasensya y religious especialmente resa rosaryo. Siguro pwede yo abla daw 90% del diamun pasyada down gat - abla mio marido barwi lang - man bago lang el panahon pwede lang syempre pasya pero siguro keda ya otro mga manera kay mas delikaw ya el mundo necesita pa gat syempre esta bien salud. Todo buen manera para bida “healthy” debe ase pa gat y hinde lang diatyn kwerpo kundi pati el mga hente tan hunto kita. El mga celebration hindi inportante y hindi ya gat necesita anda numa ya anda - debe pensa kita na bien salad kita pirmi. Makamyedo pero nesisita keda mapwersa para na pamilya”

(During pandemic became our “greatest bonding” because it got our family together. The kids learned to become patient and religious, especially, learning how to say the rosary. And maybe I could tell that our bonding outside really went down by 90%. My husband said that we could just get those back because things will eventually change. We could still go out and bond with the family but it will be different because we need to be more cautious and careful of our surroundings. We need to do things to make our life healthier, we need to do it for ourselves and for the people around us. Celebrations are not that important and if it is not needed, then we do not need to go. We always need to think about our safety. It is fearful but we need to be strong for the family)

Another participant shared an account of the experiences that made the family closer with each other after all social travels were restricted during the community lockdown.

“All travels were canceled. We got a refund of tickets from the airlines. During a pandemic, staying home and watching TV is more of a recreational activity for us. We bought gym equipment so we could exercise at home since all gyms are closed. At first, we faced so many challenges but eventually we adopted, and we learned. There are times when we still go to beaches but not to stay, but just enough to get sea breeze, it is enough in terms of good exercise or good ways to better our lives. Our home became a safe space for us. Our family reconnected with each other, and we learned to know each other better, especially on the part of my husband because he is often out working. We also learn how to rebrand our outlook in life, we have seen that it is our family that will stay with us in times of difficult situations.... We reconnected to with God because prayers became our greatest refuge.”

4.3. Community Involvement

Before the pandemic, some families who were actively involved in the community's organized projects and either became more participative or less involved due to financial constraints and/or health concerns during the lockdown. Some who seldomly participated in community activities pre-pandemic became involved in outreach programs and donation drives.

4.3.1. Before Pandemic

A female Chavacano participant shared that as a family, they supported their community's activities and projects by either directly participating in them or by donating essential materials.

“Mio marido chenebes ta pwede kumpra mga matiriales cosa sila ta pidi y mio mga anak ta ayuda na mga program del barangay egual youth orientation - ta ayuda de man organize o man invite mga youth na diamun barangay. Mio anak entramedyo el actibo ansina especialmente si nuay le klase - ok lang kunamun basta hinde apekta suyu studio. Red cross member mio anak pureso kere kere le ayuda y kere le man huntu huntu na mga youth - pa le pureso na suyu ugali ya gat ayuda y ase mga actibidades na barangay. Ele gat se kunamun ta abla na sigi kame y ayuda hahaha - chene gat le corazon para ansina.”

(My husband buys materials that our barangay asks for and my kids help with their programs. Such as youth orientations - they really help organize or invite youths in our barangay. My kids help with those activities and are really involved especially when they do not have classes. And it would be fine for us if it will not tamper with their studies. My kid is a red cross member, that is the reason why they want to help and volunteer with community activities. My kid even tells us to join such engagements hahaha - my kid really has a heart for those kinds of things.)

A Tausug participant explained that they also involved themselves in their community's outreach programs.

“In pagtabang tabang ha hula hula namuh biyah lumaggu pa. Kami inih katan magtaianak mabaya tuud kami magtabang tabang ha mga tau sumaan minsan di kami madtuh pabungay tunatabang dah kami. Minsan ha bai, maghibang pusut pusut kami mga nagkaun atarwa mga kagunahan sin mga tao maskin. Mataud taud in urway makakarwa sabab urway hibang sabab di makgurwa - mahuy katan nakatyun kanni sin sabab iway mahinang - namih kami bugas nag daan hin panna ku ampa pigusut namuh ampa piyagdihil minsan kantiyu nakatabang sumaan mga sardinas iban in mga sayul tiganum pigagdihil da isab namuh. Mataud magkagunahan, laung pa sin banna ku, bang awun madihil, dihilan, tumabang nituhan Allah, na in tumabang balik katuh. In mga anak du dah isab in mabaya maghinang sin ikatatabang ha mga tau. In mga anak namuh magtabang isab. Bang awun ikadaihil.”

(Helping each other in our area is growing even more. All of us, family and relatives are really helping people in our own way. Sometimes at home, we wrap food or snacks, which comes from our own products, especially for those who have nothing. We wrapped goods to give to the less fortunate. There are people who need our help, my husband said, if there is something that can be given, we give. It is up to Allah to grace us. Our children help too. As long as there are things to be given.)

4.3.2. During Pandemic

Believing in the give-and-take principle, a participant believed that she was generously helped by her community because she genuinely helped it before the pandemic.

“El prayers lang dila mam bien ya salva kunamun y mga help ya dale sila - hinde gat yo se ulbida maskin para kwando pwede gat tu mira ken el hente talyi kuntigo si ta necesita tu. el covid mam ya manda gat kumigo/kunamun man pamilya na el bien del hente chene pa gayot - maskin dipisil ta ayuda pa - ese mam el ya mira gat yo na el Dios nurway deha kunamun. Ta ayuda gat kame cosa pwede especialmente el ohra na hente y pamilya. Ta pwede gat tu sinti na manada pa bwen hente na mundo y debe keda kita una dila. El hente na barangay diamun ya ayuda gat especialmente si chene ta nesisita”
(Their prayers helped us and the things they did for us. I will never forget what they did for us, you will really know who will be there if you really need someone. Pandemic really showed us that there is willing to help us. Even though it was already hard for all us, people still managed to help. With that, I could really see that God did not leave us. If we can, we also help those people in need. You can really feel that there are still good people in this world. The people in our barangay helped especially to those who are in need.)

Another perspective shared that all community involvements and activities came into a halt because of health concerns and restrictive policies.

“Nalarwa yadtuh sabab minsan kami nalalarwa - sin bugah urway kami mahinang ha pag-tabang luba na sin mga unum bulan sin pandemic. Ha labrum bai lang kami - mag bih man pagkaun (groceries and necessities) bukun dah pirmi atarwa diditu lang tuud in kadtuan. Ha kanusahan katan - mugah kalinainan. Tu nah kami, subay mag halih tuud di kalaminan. Biyaun nagbalik na in pagtabang tabang iba in business sin asarwa ku nag paraway na. Awun mga realization na minsan bigaun tiyutuntum pa. Uway makatabang kaymu bang bukun baran mu iban pamilya mu - subay sila in kalasahan iban ipatun mu.”
(That was lost, even with us, we were lost because of fear we cannot do anything to help especially in the six (6) months of the pandemic. We were just at home. We only buy food (groceries and necessities) but not always or that is the only way we go. Everyone is sad, scared of others, we must be careful not to get infected. Now helping together is back and my husband's business is doing good. There are realizations that sometimes you think about. No one can help you if not yourself and your family, you must love and take care of them.)

He continued in recollection of the things they experienced and have painfully told his story,

“Lubah na urway tuud na kame community involvement aside from our work. Stayed home more than ever, we became OC in all things especially with crowded areas. Involvement in the community is still the same or went down or zero. We became very conscious on where, what, and how we do things including or especially outside of our house and vicinity. Magdonate dah isab lubah na ha urway sin. Mag badju, pagkaun iban mga unu-unu na awun kadihil. Magdihil mga sayul ha mag kapit-bahay sin mga tiyatanum namuh. Way dah tuud mataud magkadihil lang para makatabang. Mahunit tuud lubah na bang urway pagkaun.”
(We really have no community involvement aside from our work. Staying home more all the time, we became OA in all things we do

especially in crowded areas. Involvement in the community is still the same or went down to zero. We became very conscious of where, what, and how we do things including or especially outside of our house and vicinity. We also donate goods that we have to our neighbors. My wife started giving away clothes, food, and anything that we can give to help others, especially food, give the neighbors vegetables from our crops, for the hungry or those who have nothing. It is really hard if you do not have food to eat.)

4.4. Socio-Economic Status Classification

4.4.1. Food Preferences

A family's socio-economic status is a great determinant of their food habits, preferences, and meal preparations. Before the pandemic, high-income and middle-income families have had the freedom to either order out food or prepare home-cooked meals, while low-income families mostly cooked food at home. Nonetheless, families from every socio-economic status learned to appreciate home-cooked meals and engaged with backyard gardening, while it can be noted that those in the low-income bracket resorted to unhealthy, canned, and processed goods due to financial constraints.

4.4.2. Before Pandemic

According to the high-income participant, she prefers cooking food for her family at home to ensure the freshness, cleanliness, and nutrient density of the ingredients.

“Mga bata kere Tambien era kusida de casa pero hindi gat kaya ase todol dia. Chenebes tan undertime para pwede yo kusi cosa sila kierre o kumpra yo mga cosa debe kusi na un semana. Aga pa kusi yayo para baun del mga bata para na eskwela hindi ya sila kumpra ulam. Pati tan ready yayo el para na denoche – liga undrato o poko ohra ya lang para kusi – ta mira gat yon a kara mio mga anak y marido bien alegre sila si ta kusi yo kumida. Kere2x gat tamen yo kusi para kumpanyansa yo cosa sila ta kome. Ok lang chenebes ta kumpra kumida pero mas bueno gat kusida de casa kay sabe kita limpyo y bwen preparaw. Iyo mam ta insinsya yo pakimodo kusi, cosa debe buen ingridiente para na mga kumida poreso chenebes duele kumigo na mio mga anak y marido na dila kumida hinde fresh y nutritious. Ta resa gat yo se mam na pwede yo ase se pirmi pero necesita tamen gat yo trabaha kay sim io marido lang, palta na mga gastos na mga cosa necesita na casa y na mga gastos na bata especialmente todo ya sila ta entra eskwela.”

(The kids really wanted home cooked meals but it was not possible every day. Sometimes, I even go home early from work to cook the meals that they want or buy the things that need to be cooked for the whole week. I start cooking their meals early in the morning for them to have their packed lunch so that they will not have to buy it in school. And, I prepare their meals at night - when we go home it will be easier or less chores for us - I always see my family being happy whenever I cook meals for them. And I also like to cook for them because that way, I will be aware of what they eat. It is also okay to buy ready-to-eat foods outside but it would be much better if it is home cooked so that we will know if it is clean and well prepared. I teach how to prepare good food, and use the right ingredients. That is why it bothers me that my kids and my husband do not eat fresh and nutritious foods. I always wish that I could cook for them all the time but I also needed to work. Because if it is just my husband, then it would be hard for our expenses. Especially since our kids are all in school.)

A middle-income participant, on the other hand, shared that she seldomly cooks at home since she tends to give in to her kids' demands of dining at fast food chains and/or restaurants, or resorts to buying ready-to-eat foods to alleviate the burden in preparing meals.

“Ta kumpra chenebes ulam na carendiria, lutu ya y ok man el sabor. Si chene budget, ta come apuera kame 3 hehehe pirmi jolibee o mcdo kay ese kere el bata. Kumida not cooked kay nurway ohra - puro ta kumpra lang kay mas barato y nohay kansansya - chenebes ta kusi pero hindi pirmi manada, hassle hehehe - si kumpra undrato pa y kome ya lang. Manda ta bende kumida apuera kunamun”

(Sometimes we will just buy food from a food eatery, it is cooked and the flavor is okay. When we have our budget, the three (3) of us usually eat outside like at Jollibee or McDonalds because that is what my child wants. We do not have time to prepare our food. That is why oftentimes we will just buy our food from a food eatery. I sometimes cook but not that much because it is a hassle hehehe, it is easy to just buy our food that is ready to eat, besides we have lots of food eatery outside our house.)

4.4.3. During Pandemic

Sharing her account, a middle-income participant said that her family took time adjusting to the “new normal”. They had to alter their food preferences and completely change their routine at which resulted to her husband becoming very active in their food preparation.

“Nagbago tuud mam katan bang tagnah mag-order, kami pag-pandemic mam minus na. magad mam ha pag orderan, di kita maka sure bang malanuh atawa halal in pagtutu nila. Pag-pandemic mam ampa ha bai lang kami katan urway na – ang katiyu na in mag-order ha hurwa – namutah na in maglutu tuud ha bai para sure tuud. Riyahuhunitan in mga bata mam pero urway mahinang urway tuud paraan mabih in kabayaan nila – tiis tuud sila mam. Di sila kadudulan sin baya nila misan pa unuhun. Mag adjust tuud sila/kami – maglutu tuud ha bai – kumaun sila kay urway dugang in kabayaan nila. In pag lutu ha bai in na hibang adlarw adlarw – in mga bata nakingat isab na maglutu -katan nakaingat maglutu sabab bukun na mahinang in pag order sin pagbasan. In mga bata katan nag youtube na para maglutu sin paghinang sin pagkaun nila – kami sumaan maghali na sabab in mga bata mabaya maglutu lutu hahaha – Iban in mga bata/kami nag-start na isab mag plant mga gulay iban sangkap para kunu fresh in kaunun masarap iban malanu in fresh mam biyah siya malimuh – minsan in mga gulay kiyakain na sin mga bata. Nakaingat sila kumaun sin liyalutu nila iban naka ingat na sila sin unu marayarw para ha baran nila. In pagkaun mam in gitung sin bai namuh – katan maghati bang pagkaun na in harapan. Ha pandemic kita iban kiyahatihan namuh na in pagkaun subay karayarw sin baran. Tagna in bana ku di daran maglutu, pagpandemic man siya na tuud bang manjari in maglutu sin pagkaun supaya malanuh iban marayarw ha baran sin katan”

(Everything has really changed ma'am, before we just ordered our food, but when we were in the pandemic ma'am we often ordered because we were not sure if their cooking was clean or halal. When in pandemic ma'am we were all at home, we no longer ordered out - we just cooked at home to be safe. The children are having a hard time, but we cannot do anything to buy them their wants - they are patient ma'am. We cannot spoil them from what they want. They/we will really adjust- they just cook at home- they will really eat it even if

they do not want to. Cooking became our daily hobbies at home - even the kids learned to cook. We all learned cooking, we no longer ordered. The children are learning the things they want to eat through YouTube. Sometimes we just rest because the kids want to cook hahaha. Then we and the children started planting vegetables as well as other ingredients even if we want to cook so that the food is fresh and clean and tasty ma'am and it is sweet - sometimes the children eat vegetables too. They have learned to cook the food they like and what is good for their body. Food is the center of our home ma'am; everyone understands when food is in front of them. We are in a pandemic so we understand that food should be good for the body. It was also noted that my husband became very active in the preparation of our food as much as possible. He likes it clean and healthy for all of us)

A low-income participant mentioned that they only ate instant food like sardines, noodles, and dried fish during the pandemic. In an attempt to still eat “healthy”, they incorporated more vegetables from their backyard garden or when shared by their neighbors.

“Mas kame ya lang ta kusi y tan budget gat bueno - nurway sweldo kay job order lang mio marido hindi regular - ta dale lang ayuda kanila so mio sweldo lang diamun sen. El leche dayun de bata kame ya kumpira y kome cosa chene ok ya. Ya kumpira tamen kame gat medisina y vitamins para chene resistensya. Ya syembra tamen kame mga gulay akel undrato krisi hehehe na paso lang kay nurway manada churros na bording house. Dipisil pero yan kaya - el kumida todo lang cosa pwede ase. Ta buska gat kame manera para chene sen y kusi bwenen ulam... equal lang syempre sardinas pero ta icha ya gulay o kosa chene para keda man healthy.”

(Sometimes, we cannot buy fresh ingredients anymore because all the stores are closed. We cannot cook proper meals anymore. So, that is why we just eat instant food like noodles for example. Sometimes we will eat sardines or dried fish. When the cases of covid were at its peak, the eateries were all closed, we did not have anywhere to buy ready-made foods. And that is the reason why we just cook at home. We learned to make our food healthier by adding vegetables which we plant or our neighbors gave us...we really need to eat healthy)

4.5. Recreational Activities

High-income, middle-income, and low-income families alike have travelled and did outdoor activities according to their means for their recreational activities. Some frequently visit abroad, some spend their family time and recreational activities in malls and parks, and some visited their families in other cities and provinces before the pandemic. However, due to the lockdown restrictions, familial activities were confined in their houses, like gaming, watching the television, gardening, cooking and baking, and praying. This situation allowed the family to “reconnect.”

4.5.1. Before Pandemic

A high-income participant shared that they usually planned for trips abroad, bonding frequently with their children.

“Un pamilya gat kame ta planya - abroad, mga bata bien alegre, kere kame ansina sila y experensiya sila cosa bueno para kanila hinde sila ignorante hehehe - abla pa mio mga anak - “travel with style” hahaha - kere kere gat kame man laag, si pwede lang at least 2 per 3 mes mam hay ase gat pero na trabaho y el kansansya hindi gat posible. Na mga laag diamun ta pwede gat yo sinti ta keda kame bien close na uno’y otro - sobra el risas y kwento -

ohala pwede pa gat man hunto-hunto pirmi. Ta ase gat kame se para man relax y mankwento kwento. Ta konose kita bwen na unoy otro”

(As a family, we planned a trip abroad and the kids were happy and we really like them to experience what is good for them and that they will not be unfamiliar with those experiences. As my kids always say "travel with style" hahaha - they really want to go outside, as much as possible we try to make it at least 2 times per 3 months but because of work and our tiredness, it is not impossible. During our bondings, I really feel like we are getting closer with each other. There are so many laughs - I really hope that we get to be with each other often. We do this because we want to relax and talk to each other. We learn to know each other better.)

On the other hand, a low-income participant shared that as a family, they tried to go out as often as possible regardless of how “simple” or nearby their bonding was.

“Ta kamina donde kere mga bata. Chenebes sila ya gat ta abla kay siguro bien kansaw ya sila na kasa o eskwela. Mga bata ta sige tmen chenebes na dila mga amiga/o pero otro gat syempre sin kame pamilya ta sige. Ta kome kame apwera si chene sen y tan sine tmbien. Anda iglesia y fort pilar, plaza y pwelblo. Alegria kame ta kamina hunto hunto maskin simple lang kosa ta ase, alegre todo.

(We go where the children wants to go. There are times when it is our children who request that we really need to go out and enjoy because I think they are bored at home and school. The children also go out with their friends but it is really different if we go as a family. We eat outside if we have money and watch a movie too. We go to church, Fort Pilar, plaza and downtown. We are happy to walk together even if it is a simple bonding but all are happy.)

4.5.2. During Pandemic

A middle-income participant shared that during the pandemic, most of their familial recreational activities became more meaningful and genuine with each other, especially when dealing with their children.

“Nalawa katan sin plano namuh magpanao panao - katan mugah gumurwa iban mugah magkita-kita ha mga tau katan kanya2x. In mga bata di na mabaya gumurwa - nahinang tuud sila ha bai lang. Minsan sila magtai manghud di na mag agad agad. Katan kami biyah nag-arte katan OA. Yan tuud in kabumallan katan kami biyah duppang paglanuh sin katan labi na pagkaun iban in bai. Katan ha laum bai na in pag hinang hinag ha bai in unuh matag namuh recreation yan...maglutuh, mag kulang kulang, magkalang kalang iban mag tv yan lang in mahinang hehehe bukun pa mag agad agad...makaulung katan.”

(We lost all our plans to travel- everyone is afraid to go out and afraid to meet people. The children do not even want to go out-they stay at home and in their own rooms. Most of the time they are not together, they do their work and enjoyment separately. They look pitiful but they cannot do anything- it is scary to have covid. The truth is, we are all Over Acting (OA) in everything we do, we always clean, especially our food and our house – sanitizing everything. All we do for reactional activity is confined at home like, relaxing, singing, and watching tv. That is the only thing we can do hehehe and not doing it together, it is pitiful.)

On the other hand, a low-income participant shared her frustrations during the pandemic. She

accordingly lost her sanity and became depressed due to a complete loss of every source of income.

“Makatangis aku, in katan piyundar ku nalawa, dih makadagang dih makalunsul dih makabih mga panyap para ha negosyo. Mahunit malag sin. In negosyo ku buy and sell - bariin hinangaun yan bang dih maka-panao nalawa katan. Uway mahinang - di makagurwa, ha bai lang katan, biya kita pilisu. Nasusa tuud katan sabab urway kariin kumah sin pamih panyap. Uway pag panas panao, makaluuy tuud kita katan sabab sin bugah. Marih yan isab in hambuuk bai tah aku nadepress, nalawa ha panganal. In marayarw kamu, magdurwaa tuud kami sabab magkahagad kami kay Allah. Pagkugayan nakahati nah aku mag online selling - naka agad aku ha mga bahay ku magdagang online - narayarw rayarw na in pangtayan ku iban naka income aku minsan katiyu pero ha bai dah arwun pick up atawa i-deliver. In mga bata, mga anak ku urwau sah nasusa sabab mag-TV adlaw adlaw iba cellphone. Magpanayan ha larwom bai, ok na sila.”

(It is sad, everything we had was lost. I cannot sell, I cannot go sightseeing, and cannot buy things for business. It is hard to find money. My business is buying and selling- how can I do it if I cannot go out - lose everything. There is nothing we can do-we cannot go out, we are all at home, like we are prisoners. Everyone was worried because there was no way to earn money to buy things. Cannot get out because it is scary. Maybe it is also one of the reasons why I got depressed, lost my sanity. What is good about us, we pray and believe in Allah. But when I learned how to talk online - I became happy again. I can join online selling with my friends- I feel good now, it is good and I earn a little sometimes and it is better than nothing. The children, my children are not too worried even though they cannot go out because they are ok watching tv and playing inside the house.)

4.6. Community Involvement

High-income and middle-income families were either personally involved in communal activities and projects or donated goods prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, while low-income families were actively involved in the activities. During the pandemic, high-income families continued to donate goods, while some middle-income families became participative in outreach programs and have had limited means to donate goods. Low-income families, on the other hand, were in an incessant need of donations and goods, but were actively involved in physical activities as needed.

4.6.1. Before Pandemic

A high-income participant proudly shared that as a family, they regularly help the community by collaborating with its leaders to organize activities.

“Kami mangasawa, mag agad iban magtabang tuud ha barangay namuh para karayawan sin katan. Active kami ha organization namuh ha office man o ha barangay - sabab sin pangakat namuh maglead tuud kami sin mga activities. Mag-join kame ha mga programs iban pagplano sin mga activities. Mataud tuud kami natabang. Mataud da isab kame nadonate pagdihil ha mga tau kiyasunugan atawa kiyabahaan”

(We, as a married couple, join in helping our barangay for the good of everyone. We are active in our organization whether in the office or in the barangay- because of our group we really lead in the activities. We join in the programs as well as planning the activities. We helped a lot. We also help in donations especially those that burned their houses or those that was devastated by floods)

A middle-income participant mentioned that she was actively involved in their community by both organizing and joining activities.

“As a community person bien involved gat yo na diamun community especially in out of school youth. Manada gat yo projects and programs ta ase manera para na mga este bata. Ta ase tamen yo presensya na mga actividades. Ta sinti yo necesita gat sila ayuda pureso tan volunteer gat yo maskin na diamun eskinita na diamun lugar tan lead gat yo na mga hente keda involved y ase manera ayuda na limpyesa y seguridad pureso alya kunamun limpyo el lugar. Manada hende necesita ta convinsi para keda involve na comunidad. Poko man pwede ase pero chene cosa bien para na todo. Chene kame meeting chenebes para kumbersa cosa ase na bien del todo y todo tamen ta ayuda kay sabe sila cosa o para cosa el activity. Ayudahan debe y debe open communication na todo. Necesita unoy otro para ase bien na comunidad. Dipisil man na ohra pero debe ase ohra kay si hinde ayudahan hinde keda bwenno el donde kita ta keda - manada debe man involve para hinde pesaw na todo. Actividades na barangay ma’am akel involve iyo? Training, feeding program, livelihood, buska manera ayuda na buhay, dale kwento - kwento na mga bata porkawsa na diaton kwerpo y environment y manada pa mam - mio marido tan sports program y chenebes ta ase ayuda na limpyesa y balik eskwela program - mio mga anak chenebes ta sige kunamun na mga actividades ta ase kame aki na community. Ta pwede tamen kame man bonding y ta pwede mura mga anak diamun na bwenno di ila buhay y debe sila man gracias. Aki tamen mam ta pwede sila man appreciate kunamun kay ta ase kame todo anera para dila buen pureso ta ase gat kame te actividades mam.”

(As a community person, I am really involved in our community. Especially those children that are out-of-school-youth. I have a lot of projects and programs that I do for these children. I also join and be with them in activities. I feel that they really need help so I volunteer myself to help. I even lead the people in the corners of our neighborhood, it is to promote cleanliness, that is why our place is clean. We have meetings that talk about what we could do for the betterment of the people, and everyone is helping because they also know what activities to conduct. It is needed for everyone to help and establish good and open communication with one another. Every help counts for the betterment of the community. Even though there was not enough time, we encouraged people to make time. Because if we do not do that, then it will hinder the progress that we could make. There should be a good number of people to get involved so people will have lighter workloads. I am involved with training, feeding programs, livelihood, and giving talks or stories about our health and the environment to the children in our community. My husband on the other hand, really likes sports and he also helps with the balik-eskwela program that the school in our community has. We could also bond as a family and we are connected to what we already have, so I always tell my kids to be appreciative of what we have right now.)

4.6.2. During Pandemic

A middle-income participant took the lockdown implementations to his advantage.

“Mas malo tamen yo ya pwede ayuda del pandemic kay na casa lang gat tamen iyo kay lockdown man. Chene sila cosa ta pidi ayuda manda man

repair, ayuda na mga areredor si chene cosa pwede ayuda. Man manada gat time del pandemic kay na casa lang pirmi. Pero chenebes tiene gat iyo trabaho kay on-call man iyo ma'am.

(I was able to help well during the pandemic because I just stayed at home because of the lockdown. If they have something to give me for repairs, then I help them. I also help around the community as much as I can. I had a lot of time during the pandemic because we were just at home. But sometimes, I still attend to our work because we were always on-call.)

Emotional, a low-income participant mentioned the lack of support from her community.

“Mahunit tuud minsan in pagbih pagkaun mahurut. Baya man namuh tumabang, urway katbang sabab minsan pa baran urway, nalawan tuud in pagtabang tabang yan sabab minsan in baran kulang tuud. Urway umih madihil - katan kiyalalawaan. Minsan baran ku malalawa. In banna ku iban mga anak ku biyahuhunitan dah isab - pero maingat sila mag ayad sin baran nila iban sin akkal nila. Yan in urway ku kiyasandalan.”

(Sometimes it is hard to buy food. Although we want to help, no one can help even ourselves, it is difficult to help when even yourself you cannot help. Nothing to give-all was lost. Sometimes I lose myself. My husband and my children are also having trouble-but they know how to handle themselves and their minds. That is what I cannot do.)

Table 2.
Summary of findings.

Aspects of study	Before pandemic	During pandemic
Food preferences	Meals were either home-cooked or ordered out. Frequent dining out. Backyard gardens evident among low-income families only. No health awareness and promotion.	Increased appreciation of home-cooked meals and their nutrient density. Backyard gardening had become evident among high-income, middle-income, and low-income families.
Recreational activities	Frequent travelling and outdoor activities in luxurious places by high-income and middle-income families. Low-income families enjoyed in simpler and nearby events/places.	Confinement to home-based activities like online games, movies, cooking and baking, gardening, and praying. Family bonds were strengthened.
Community involvement	High-income and middle-income families were actively engaged in community projects and shared donations. Low-income families did volunteer work and physical activities as needed.	High-income families continued to share donations yet minimized physical involvement. Middle-income and low-income families alike have had no means of helping financially, but offered manpower.

5. Conclusion

Causing abrupt economic and social restrictions across communities, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the everyday scenery of Zamboanga families and affected their food preferences, recreational activities, and community involvement. Nonetheless, their solidarity and resiliency allowed them to overcome these burdens, and changes were seen: healthier food preferences, stronger bonds because of parents increased direct involvement in familial activities, and a more supportive community.

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