

**#COMMUNITYPANTRY: PERCEIVED IMPACT OF ONLINE  
PUBLIC OPINION ON GOVERNMENT POLICY AMONGST  
COLLEGE STUDENTS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
OFFICIALS OF ILOILO CITY**

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## ABSTRACT

Public opinion, accommodated through public policies, is a precondition to democracy. This study aimed to determine the perceptions of college students and local government officials concerning the impact of public opinion and online activism on Iloilo City's COVID 19 pandemic responses, specifically on community pantries. It probes how public opinion expressed through the social media trending topic of community pantries shaped local government responses. A descriptive design was employed to determine the perceptions of the college students (n=108) and local government officials (n=3). Hybrid quantitative-qualitative research approach was used through survey, interview data and online archives (i.e., social media postings and news reports). Major findings include: college students perceive moderate effectiveness of public opinion in influencing government policies but depict overall low Twitter outputs; local government officials perceive public opinion as essential in governance but not as important as directives from the national government; and the city's local government officials have reservations about social media-conveyed public opinion's direct effect on pandemic-related policies. Employing the Normative Framework of Democratic Theory that deals with the foundations of democracy, democratic institutions, and policy deliberation processes, the theory explained how respondents & key informants varied in their perception of social media as a tool for public policies.