

## Correspondence

# Common good and public service as vital components for government officials in promoting COVID-19 vaccination

### ABSTRACT

Recent reports show that there is resistance in certain countries in regard with receiving COVID-19 vaccination. Different factors contribute to this resistance. With this, if we are to promote COVID-19 vaccination, government officials must build public trust so that the hesitancy among the citizens will be lessened. Thus, this paper proposes that in building public trust, the true essence of common good and public service must be seen from the officials so that their constituents will trust them with their decisions.

**Keywords** COVID-19 vaccination, common good, public service, public trust

For almost a year, the COVID-19 outbreak has pestered the lives of many individuals worldwide. Coronavirus took lives, left some people unemployed and instigated fear. For this reason, citizens have been hoping for a vaccine to this virus. Therefore, many people were elated when the first COVID-19 vaccine was authorized for use in the European Union.<sup>1</sup> However, even though many are thrilled with this news, there are still citizens who are hesitant about being vaccinated. This hesitancy can already be traced from an announcement from Russia in August 2020 wherein some netizens questioned its approval since it was approved for civilian use even before completing clinical trials and shared their thoughts in the social media through memes.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, a previous article reported that even medical students were hesitant in receiving vaccines.<sup>3</sup>

In a news article, it was stated that the prevailing vaccine hesitancy in the world must be addressed for us to end the pandemic.<sup>4</sup> In the Philippines, this is the same issue in the country. However, for Filipinos, they are hesitant to be vaccinated because they distrust the choice of vaccine and handling of the situation by the government. Hence, public trust is not established. Thus, a previous correspondence suggested that building public trust is essential in the promotion of COVID-19 vaccine.<sup>5</sup> To establish public trust, I propose two

main components that are vital in this endeavor—common good and public service.

Common good is to be understood as the goal of the community and the social nature of humans.<sup>6</sup> The first definition implies that a group of persons gears toward a common goal that unites them. In the second one, it implies that common good requires participation with others. This concept teaches us that participating with others requires respect and truthfulness. On the other hand, public service is defined as a service rendered for public interest.

Looking at these two components, if government officials focus on committing themselves toward the common good and public service, then their intentions in work are pure. Hence, if the citizens see these with their leaders, public trust will be gained since achieving common good and doing public service are built on trust and public interest.

### References

- 1 European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, First COVID-19 vaccine authorised for use in the European Union, 21 December 2020. <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/first-covid-19-vaccine-authorised-use-european-union> (21 January 2021, date last accessed).

- 2 Trends Desk, As Russia announces first Covid-19 vaccine, this is how netizens reacted, 11 August 2020. <https://indianexpress.com/article/trending/trending-in-india/russia-claims-first-covid-19-vaccine-netizens-celebrate-with-memes-and-jokes-6550281/> (20 January 2021, date last accessed).
- 3 Lucia VC, Kelekar A, Afonso NM. COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among medical students. *J Public Health* 26 December 2020. doi: [10.1093/pubmed/fdaa230](https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdaa230).
- 4 Said S, 'Vaccine hesitancy' must be addressed 'to protect the world, UNICEF says, 3 December 2020, <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/12/3/-Vaccine-hesitancy--must-be-addressed--to-protect-the-world---UNICEF-says.html> (20 January 2021, date last accessed).
- 5 Vergara RJD, Sarmiento PJD, Lagman JDN. Building public trust: a response to COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy predicament. *J Public Health* 18 January 2021. doi: [10.1093/pubmed/fdaa282](https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdaa282).
- 6 Aguas JJS. *Person, Action, and Love: The Philosophical of Thoughts of Karol Wojtyla (John Paul II)*. Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2014.

Ivan Efreaim A. Gozum  
Center for Christian Formation and Praxis, Angeles City,  
Pampanga 2009, Philippines

Address correspondence to Ivan Efreaim A. Gozum,  
E-mail: [gozum.ivanefreaim@auf.edu.ph](mailto:gozum.ivanefreaim@auf.edu.ph).

**Ivan Efreaim A. Gozum**, Instructor

doi: [10.1093/pubmed/fdab025](https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdab025)