The CNMI and the CWs

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EN-101-06

Northern Marianas College

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**Abstract**

This essay is a study that was conducted by a student researcher named Tiara Babauta, whose topic was based on the contract workers in the Marianas. Though these individuals have been on the island for years, there still was concerns that lingered. Therefore, Babauta had to ask a question that states, “Does the Marianas have enough experienced workers to fill the necessary spaces when the CWs leave?”. By asking this, she organizes her review by creating surveys, interviewing different experts, and also analyzing multiple sources. In order for her to gain contrastive responses, she not only looked into the foreigners but the locals as well. With all the data gathered, the results have surely answered her primary question.

The CNMI and the CWs

In the 1950’s, the Marianas was introduced to the help of the foreign workers as they first set foot on our island. Due to the many years of labor that the Chamorro and Carolinian ancestors had done, they did not entirely need the service but they were appreciative. It suddenly changed as the generations settled. The natives of the island became more sluggish and took advantage of the assistance, which caused them to be necessary to our islands. However, our Chamorro and Carolinians have allowed themselves to gain training for their careers but it is not enough.

It is no surprise that the extension of the contract workers in the CNMI is coming to an end, in which the CNMI is looking towards multiple losses of businesses and its local workers. The issue with the foreign workers are very critical in today's society but are we prepared to continue to build this island with such a loss? If so, this will impact the Marianas in ways that are done without a choice, only if there is a second option that can give the commonwealth a stronger hold. This research is a full report on the CNMI and the issues with our fellow CWs through collecting data by conducting interviews with experts. The writer had found literature and built a solid plan in which, completed the study within the nine weeks. Babauta gained answers to the primary question on who is more prioritized between locals and the contract workers.

**Literature Review**

At one point, the student researcher used a search engine to find sources on the topic of “contract workers in the CNMI” which gave 30,400 hits (Google.com, 2018). Through this, most of these sources were publications like news reports and government review. Each providing opinions and factual evidence about political arguments over the issue. The relevance of the topic to the area is prominent as a bulk of these articles emphasize for an extension and importance of the CWs. Most were non-academic underlining public and personal opinions as well as political views. Rather a few were academic such as sources by the USCIS and the Government Accountability Office (GAO), along with information by Governor Torres. The reviews of literature will discuss numerous outlooks shown on the topic by secondary resources and will be the focal point on the USCIS federal report and the GAO governmental report as well as the reviews from Department of Labor (DOL).

By viewing the source depicted, a GAO report (2017) states that, “the Marianas is the most unemployed” as of May last year because of how many workers we are lacking. In order for us to improve that rate, we must work together to be able to multitask and pull through. Rather, much of the literature came from the news article about a hotel, where it's source chose to be anonymous. As the researcher read through the reviews, she had noticed that there were some areas that would involve “borrow[ing] workers from other establishments (Hotel may lose 54 CWs, 2017)”, due to how much the Marianas is lacking. It sounds demeaning, however, this calls for a serious act to put more effort into training the locals of the Marianas. Small businesses are to be affected as well and “are likely to shut down (Hotel may lose 54 cws, 2017)” because of how many of the workers are not local. As said before, in order for the Marianas to rise and reduce in losses of businesses, locals should enroll in programs to gain training to up the unemployment rate.

All things considered, the researcher conducted a search through EBSCO where most of the results had been dated back to the 90’s. However, through a different search engine, Google, she was able to find two different studies from a local journalist named Sarah Perez and the Department of Labor Chief Edith DLG. In comparison, they both believe that the CWs are very critical to the Marianas. Perez had stated that, “all are interdependent in this matter. This is not a simple us versus them problem. Everyone is involved. Everyone is affected (If all foreign workers leave… , 2017).” It is not an issue to be defensive, but a situation that will affect both the locals and the CWs, rather than to draw a line and deliberate who wins. Also, Chief DLG mentioned that, “the CNMI government would need millions of dollars to train U.S. qualified workers to prepare for the end of the CW program (Labor chief, 2015)”, in which is true because of the facilities, training, and equipment to be used. Governor Torres does believe that “The CW-1 issue is a very critical part of our economy” (Torres, 2016). It all comes at an expense for the U.S. workers to prepare for the possible upcoming loss.

**Methodology**

To begin collecting data, the researcher had started off with two different surveys, a pilot and a final survey created through Google Forms. The first survey was a minimum of ten questions, where it was disseminated to students at the Northern Marianas College. It allowed the researcher to gather information but also to get feedback from her peers to create a solid survey. The first survey was created as a simple draft and given to be peer reviewed. The second survey was more in depth and more enhanced by the feedback of her peers. It contained a minimum of 17 questions, and was distributed to different students and people of the Marianas, which had concluded that area of research. Questions determined how people felt about about the contract workers, how critical they are to the Marianas and what the Marianas must do to continue to thrive.

At the same time, the researcher found herself writing letters to experts from outside of the Marianas. These letters were sent out to five different experts and attached to each letter was a questionnaire. Her questions were based on their research over the years and their own open minded answers (See Appendix C). Sadly, the research had only gotten two responses from Dr. Oliver Richard and Mr. David Gootnick from the Government Accountability Office. The researcher had made time to conduct interviews with experts on the foreign worker issue in the Marianas. One interviewee was Representative Edwin K. Propst who was pleased to answer the questions she had to support her project. Although Mr. Propst was unable to meet in person, he had taken the time to answer her questions via email (See Appendix D). He was asked opinionated questions like, “how can the Marianas survive the extension?”. Through this, she was able to gain both responses and personal knowledge.

**Findings/Analysis**

As mentioned, the researcher had created two surveys: a pilot and a final survey. The two were later disseminated to students and people of the Marianas. Each had contained multiple choice questions, such as “agree or disagree” questions, but the final survey had an extra set of personal opinion questions. The questions were how people felt and what they think about who is being more prioritized. Both surveys were returned and the feedback had contained response that made the researcher think that there was truly more that needed to be done.

In regards to the first survey, which was the pilot survey, it consisted of only 10 questions (See Appendix A). Each question was multiple choice, where the percentage of each question was high. The responses were rated at 80, and majority were both Chamorro and Filipino. The rest consisted of different nationalities. Of those ethnicities, almost all were not children of contract workers. While page two of the survey contained the multiple choice questions, most chose to be mutual about the situation but others had believed that there was a lack of workers. Other individuals chose to say that we do need these workers and their time here is very critical.

On the other survey, it consisted of 17 questions and was distributed to a total of 123 people. (See Appendix B). Again, majority were either Chamorro and Filipino who were not children of contract workers. From questions 5 to 10 were for people to agree or disagree, it goes to show that the Marianas desperately needs these CWs. However, from questions 11 to 17, were more for opinionated answers and if the Marianas can allow for the locals to gain training, so that when an extension does not occur, we can thrive.

In the interviews with Representative Edwin K. Propst, Dr. Oliver Richard and Mr. David Gootnick, there was much ground that was covered. Because Mr. Propst was unable to meet physically, he had answered the questions that he was given. He did mention that we, the government, do not prioritize the locals and do not only focus on the CWs as well, but try to multitask through so no one is left out. Although with Mr. Gootnick and Dr. Richard, they could not answer my question being with so much on their plate, they had Mr. Emil E. Friberg, Jr. attend to the questionnaire. He mentioned that they were limited to what they could answer because “this is determined by policy makers”. It was quite a shock, due to the fact of thinking that they would give Babauta vivid and concrete answers to her questions. However, he had also recommended a source from Father Ken Hezel and more from the Government Accountability Office, or GAO (See Appendix E, Reading Notes 4). This was helpful in finding more information through a source that had already done the research and viewed it first hand. It also gave background knowledge of the contract workers.

**Discussion**

With all things researched, the highlight of it all was based on the feedback from the surveys and the interviews. It is quite a surprise to see how many people of the Marianas want an extension, and for them to introduce ways to enhance the CNMI to where it should be. However, it is questionable as to what can be answered and what cannot be answered because due to certain policy that was given. It was respectable, as it was also convenient for these experts to give the researcher extra sources that allowed her to actually answer the questions they could not.

**Future Plans**

In the future, the researcher hopes that the Marianas does change in favor of the people. Of course, with an election arising, there could be changes in this issue with new leaders. However, Babauta admits she will not be conducting further research after this report, but will be tuning into the situation from time to time. The student researcher believes that the research she has collected can aide students who are looking into this in a much later time.

**Conclusion**

With a final note, the researcher has concluded her research within the nine weeks given. She has succeeded collecting data and answering her most important question of all. The literature reviews what was acknowledged and how sources were also found. Babauta also states exactly how she got feedback from the public and realized the importance of having our locals thrive. In attempting this research, the student researcher hopes that there will be a better result for this. She believed that the locals will make a big comeback and it will drastically change the Marianas for the best.

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from http://www.mvariety.com/cnmi/cnmi-news/local/101103-hotel-may-lose-54-cws

Appendices

Eportfolio

Northern Marianas College

**Appendix**

Appendix A

Pilot Survey

1. Please indicate your ethnicity. (e.g. Chamorro)
2. Are you a child of a foreign worker?
   1. Yes
   2. No
3. Are you born in the United States or outside of the U.S? Please indicate where. (e.g. Philippines)
4. How much and/or what do you know about the CWs?
5. I believe that the extension for foreign workers should be extended.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Mutual
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree
6. In the time that the event may occur, I believe that our island needs the foreign workers.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Mutual
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree
7. The Marianas lacks the training that many of our CWs have.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Mutual
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree
8. Do you think that the CWs bring good impact or bad impact towards the Marianas?
   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. Mutual
9. During your time in the Marianas, what are the jobs that you have witnessed most CWs employed for?
10. Do you think that locals receive a higher paycheck than foreign workers?
    1. Yes, locals receive a higher pay.
    2. No, foreign workers receive a higher pay.
    3. They receive equal pay.
    4. I'm not sure/I'd rather not say.

Appendix B

Final Survey

1. Please indicate your ethnicity. (e.g. Chamorro)
2. Are you a child of a foreign worker?
   1. Yes
   2. No
3. Are you born in the United States or outside of the U.S? Please indicate where. (e.g. Philippines)
4. How much and/or what do you know about the CWs?
5. I believe that the extension for foreign workers should be extended.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Mutual
   4. Strongly disagree
   5. Disagree
6. In the time that the event may occur, I believe that our island needs the foreign workers.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Mutual
   4. Strongly disagree
   5. Disagree
7. The Marianas lacks the training that many of our CWs have.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Mutual
   4. Strongly disagree
   5. Disagree
8. The Marianas can thrive without the CWs.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Mutual
   4. Strongly disagree
   5. Disagree
9. The Marianas will drastically change if an extension is not made.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Mutual
   4. Strongly disagree
   5. Disagree
10. Do you think that the CWs bring good impact or bad impact towards the Marianas?
    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. Mutual
11. During your time in the Marianas, what are the jobs that you have witnessed most CWs employed for?
12. Do you think that locals receive a higher paycheck than foreign workers?
    1. Yes, locals receive a higher pay.
    2. No, foreign workers receive a higher pay.
    3. They receive equal pay.
    4. I'm not sure/I'd rather not say.
13. If you agree that the Marianas lacks training, what can be done for our locals to give them the knowledge to apply for jobs like construction? (Skip if you disagreed).
14. If you disagree towards the lack of training in the Marianas, are we prepared to work through the cracks if the extension is not made? (Skip if you did not agreed).
15. Do we prioritize our locals over these foreign workers? Or are we fighting for the two?
16. Are you satisfied with the work that our CWs have done? Why or why not?
17. How can we help the families with parents that are CWs?

Appendix C

Questionnaire Given to Experts

1. How free should the importation of foreign workers be? Do you believe that it is to a country’s benefit to limit the importation of foreign workers or open their doors  
   completely to them? How do you think this applies to the US mainland and to the  
   islands in the CNMI?
2. Suppose a foreign worker was to leave the CNMI, are foreign workers with the CW status now to travel out of the CNMI? Are they automatically able to enter again on the visa they held or must they re-apply for the appropriate visa to re-enter the premises?
3. Based on your opinion, how does the CNMI only CW visa program impact international and trade affairs in the Pacific? And does it impact the US mainland?
4. In your opinion, what are the impacts on society and families of temporary work programs used as long term residency programs for foreign workers? What are the impacts on the workers, their families and the countries they work in? Particularly, from your experience in the U.S. and any knowledge you may have about the Pacific?

Appendix D

Questionnaire Given to Rep. Propst

1. In the time that the event may occur, does the Marianas have enough experienced workers to fill the necessary spaces when these foreign workers leave? Why or why not?
2. Are we, the Marianas, prepared to survive through these circumstances?
3. Personal opinion: do you support the extension for contract workers or do you believe that the extension should not be extended? Why or why not?

**Reading Notes**

Reading Notes #1

1. Author’s Name: C. E. Villahermosa
2. Publisher: Marianas Variety
3. Heading of Section: Hotel may lose 54 cws
4. Year Written: 2017
5. Pages: 1
6. Website URL: http://www.mvariety.com/cnmi/cnmi-news/local/101103-hotel-may-lose-54-cws

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Main Ideas/Points** | **Important Quotations** | **Supporting Details** | **Relevance to Your Assignment** |
| * The CWs do get hired more than our locals and are employed more in the workforce such as construction. * Locals barely get credited for the things that they do but that is only because we do try our best. | * “the hotel has to borrow workers from other establishments” * “small businesses affected by the CW cap are likely to shut down, and this will affect the entire community and the government’s revenue collections” | * In order for this to not seem as demeaning as it already does, our locals need to put more effort into training themselves so that they can have a higher rate of employment. | * The CNMI may not need these workers but right now, they do. We should let them in and train our locals in the process. * Locals and CWs both argue over who had a higher rate of employment. People have agreed that these foreigners are the root to our success, but also a threat to those who are not able to become employed. |

Article was not biased, was a reputable and an academic source.

Reading Notes #2

1. Author’s Name: Sarah Perez
2. Publisher: Saipan Tribune
3. Heading of Section [title of reading]: *If all foreign workers leave...*
4. Year Written: 2017
5. Pages: 1
6. Website URL: https:// www.saipantribune.com/index.php/foreign-workers-leave/

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Main Ideas/Points** | **Important Quotations** | **Supporting Details** | **Relevance to Your Assignment** |
| * We are all equal, and should have equity rather than to deliberate who should stay. * The CWs do get hired more than our locals and are employed more in the workforce * Locals barely get credited for the things that they do but that is only because we do try our best. | * “This is not a simple us versus them problem. Everyone is involved. Everyone is affected.” * “Some say they do not need CWs here. They say CWs are taking away the job from the locals.” * “What about the children of the CWs that represent the islands [...]That is still CNMI pride right there.” | * We shouldn't be defensive and point out the wrong and the right. We should fight that the equality for ALL. * In order for this to not seem as demeaning as it already does, our love need to put more effort into training themselves. * The CNMI is able to their numbers up, practice does make perfect. | * The CNMI may not need these workers but right now, they do. We should let them in and train our locals in the process. * Locals and CWs both argue over who had a higher rate of employment. People have agreed that these foreigners are the root to our success, but also a threat to those who are not able to become employed. * Children of CWs have the advantage of putting our island out there and we must credit them for that, same goes for our locals!! |

Article was not biased, was a reputable and an academic source.

Reading Notes #3

1. Author’s Name: David Gootnick/Oliver Richard
2. Author’s Credentials: International Affairs and Trade Director
3. Heading of Section: Government Accountability Office: Immigration Laws
4. Year Written: 2017
5. Pages: 97

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Main Ideas/Points** | **Important Quotations** | **Supporting Details** | **Relevance to Your Assignment** |
| * The CNMI relies more on our CWs than our own locals. * Great increase in population * Businesses closed down. | * “The CNMI economy became dependent on foreign labor” * “from 1980 to 2000, the CNMI Cws grew rapidly” * “After a decade of decline, by 2009, almost all garment factories had closed.” | * Employers hire more CWs due to the advancement for certain jobs. * Employers increase in foreign employees. * GDP reflected the declining garment factory. | * CWs are needed now more than before. * Locals need to find more time to train themselves. * Less locals get employed. * International trade caused the industry to decline dramatically, due to lack of workers again. |

Article was not biased, was a reputable and an academic source.

Reading Notes #4

1. Author’s Name: Bea Cabrera
2. Heading of Section: Torres: Contract Workers Are Not Just Numbers
3. Year Written: 2017
4. Pages: 1
5. Website URL: https://www.saipantribune.com/index.php/torres-contract-workers-not-just-numbers/

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Main Ideas/Points** | **Important Quotations** | **Supporting Details** | **Relevance to Your Assignment** |
| * . Contract workers are very critical to the Marianas, in order to thrive, they are what is needed unless the locals decide to take training to be up to their advancement. | * “The CW-1 issue is a very critical part of our economy. They are the driving force of today’s development. Without them, there will be a shortfall of labor here.” | * Local officials also agree that these CWs are very dear to the Marianas. * Labor will be very hard because there will be a low amount of employees. | * The CNMI higher officials are working through an extension to be taken place on 2019 of December. * We need to develop! |

Article was not biased, was a reputable and an academic source.

Reading Notes #5

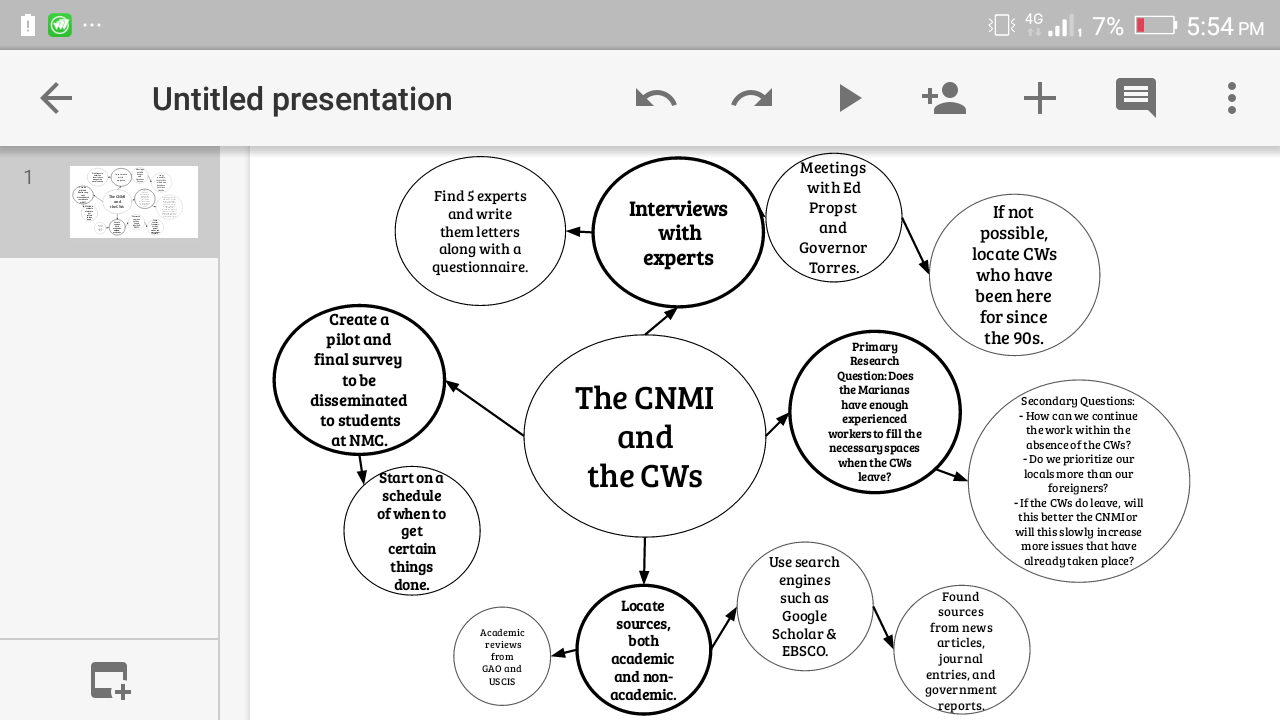
1. Author’s Name: Ferdie De La Torre
2. Heading of Section: CUC projects contractor: Telling CW-1 workers to leave by 2019 ‘horrible thing”
3. Year Written: 2016
4. Pages: 1
5. Website URL: https://www.saipantribune.com/index.php/cuc-projects-contractor-telling-cw-1-workers-leave-2019-horrible-thing/

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Main Ideas/Points** | **Important Quotations** | **Supporting Details** | **Relevance to Your Assignment** |
| * . Contract workers are very critical to the Marianas, in order to thrive, they are what is needed unless the locals decide to take training to be up to their advancement. | * “The CW-1 issue is a very critical part of our economy. They are the driving force of today’s development. Without them, there will be a shortfall of labor here. | * Local officials also agree that these CWs are very dear to the Marianas. * Labor will be very hard because there will be a low amount of employees. | * The CNMI higher officials are working through an extension to be taken place on 2019 of December. * We need to develop! |

Article was not biased, was a reputable and an academic source.

**Research Schedule**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Weekly Schedule** | **Progress in Research** |
| January 15th - January 28th | Select a topic then begin creating brainstorm and outline of the first draft of the proposal. Start on essay, search for sources use for that time and at a later date. |
| January 29th - February 4th | Gain feedback from peers, and begin another brainstorm to conduct the process essay. |
| February 5th - February 11th | Create surveys; pilot and final. Find people to interview. |
| February 12th -February 18th | Create a brainstorm and outline for the teacher's essay, while later filling out reading notes 1, 2 and 3 |
| February 19th - February 25th | Submit both pilot and final survey to be sent to public and student or the Northern Marianas College. |
| February 26th - March 4th | Work on reading notes 4 and 5.8 |
| March 5th - March 11th | Find 5 experts outside the Marianas to ask questions about topic chosen, begin writing letters and creating questionnaire. |
| March 12th - March 18th | Get approval to send letters, once sent, interview Rep. Edwin K. Propst and Governor Torres on the topic. |
| March 19th - March 25th | Analyze all the findings, and begin to locate more sources for the fourth essay. |
| March 26th - April 1st | Collect all survey results and interview responses and begin to create a free write for the process essay. |
| April 2nd - April 8th | Start writing process essay with the information gathered from surveys and interviews. |
| April 9th - April 22nd | Work on brainstorm and outline for literature review. Then begin essay, and conduct a search to find more academic sources. |
| April 16th - April 22nd | Build a brainstorm and outline for final report. |
| April 23rd - April 29th | Submit first draft of report to gain feedback from peers, work on abstract and reflection. |
| April 30th - May 4th | Research complete! |

**Original Proposal/Brainstorm**

**Hyperlinks Used**

1. <http://www.mvariety.com/cnmi/cnmi-news/local/77978-labor-chief-says-cw-allocation-needs-to-be-revisited>
2. <https://www.saipantribune.com/index.php/torres-contract-workers-not-just-numbers/>
3. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/684778.pdf>
4. <https://www.saipantribune.com/index.php/foreign-workers-leave/>
5. <https://www.saipantribune.com/index.php/cuc-projects-contractor-telling-cw-1-workers-leave-2019-horrible-thing/>
6. <https://www.uscis.gov/legal-resources/immigration-commonwealth-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi/us-immigration-law-commonwealth-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi>
7. <http://www.mvariety.com/cnmi/cnmi-news/local/101103-hotel-may-lose-54-cws>
8. <https://goo.gl/forms/SsEEqc0vu9aFHs133> (Pilot survey as seen on Appendix A)
9. <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfFUjSQ80bSl1TqkExoKpSuNzYVyj_Kn38V4Dn2J-JFA93MJw/viewform?c=0&w=> (Final survey as seen on Appendix B)