MULTIPLE CHOICE: AVOIDING THE FALLACY OF FALSE DICHOTOMY

by:
Jexter D. Demerin
Lamao National High School

The most favored part of exams is the multiple-choice type for it will not induce a brain-wrecking moment because answers are already presented. We just have to choose. But of course, it is not always that the correct answer is given in the options. It may not be in the exam, but this moment can be encountered in real life. You know how sometimes it is assumed that if you do not agree with option A, then it means that you agree with option B. While there can be another option that will answer the question, it is not just presented on the given options. It is often forgotten that we can answer “neither” or just do not answer at all. During serious moments in life, if you believe that there is another best resolution, do not be afraid to speak up. Choices are seldom limited. Assuming one’s decision based on limited presented answers can be categorized as false dichotomy.

Let us first define the meaning of false dichotomy. According to several definitions from the internet, false dichotomy is a kind of logical fallacy in which the options are being viewed limitedly. It is widely used in arguments where people forgot to think or meant not to look for other options and settle for what is in front of them. It is very common to encounter this fallacy in political arguments being discussed over the internet. Especially with people who are fond of defending their political bias.

To cite an example, the famous issue of the Manila Bay White Sand. To generalize the claims of the people who agree about the beautification project, the argument presented was that if you did not like the development that was done, it means that you would rather like it being dirty. This argument is definitely wrong. In this case, you have to consider the events and situations that come along with the project. Here are the facts that
should have been considered on this issue: (1) A mountain was literally crushed to produce the needed materials; (2) It has been a concern for the environmentalists for it will cause an abrupt change on the existing already damaged ecosystem of the Manila Bay; (3) The Fecal Coliform level on the waters of manila bay is quite high. Swimming on its waters is highly prohibited; (4) It happened in the middle of the pandemic where it is very obvious that it should not have been prioritized. It triggered an intrigue for the people living near the area and health protocols were breached; (5) Claiming it was allegedly proposed a couple of years ago. The president has attained special powers where he is allowed to make sudden decisions and tourism should have not been one of it; and (6) The synthetic white sand also known as dolomite is being swallowed by the waters. The manila bay is reverting back to its original black sand beach. Would the people be able to pull their 300 million back?

During the pandemic, students were asked via modular learning about their opinion on this matter. Answers were very near from what you can read on the internet. Most of the students were not able to attain broader perspectives and choices. Most students have stated that they would rather have the beautification rather than it being dirty. While there are other options for the development of the place such as rehabilitation and conversion into an eco-park where mangroves will be planted along some parts of its coast.

It is saddening that only few were able to realize that life is not about having just two colors. It is not about A and B or 1 and 10. We have plenty of options regarding this kind of matter and this issue in only one of the few alterations that should have been addressed seriously because the funds were from the taxes of the people. These funds could have been allocated to the Department of Education as an aid to the challenging obstacle of pandemic.

This topic is one of the best examples where false dichotomy is present. Since the youth is quoted to be the hope of the future, they are the most vulnerable too. Especially those
that only take what is being served. If this kind of behavior were to continue then the future will not become as bright as we desire. It is high time to make the students re-evaluate their choices and decision-making because this kind of thinking can be brought into their lives. Their capacity to think of choices should not be limited. Students should be taught to be creative, smart, and resourceful.

References:


