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The Alpha Female: Speech and Thought Presentation of the contemporary Filipino woman in *Magnificence*

Maria Cecilia Jhadziah Diva

Abstract

This paper sought to unravel the contemporary views on Filipino woman through speech and though presentation using Magnificence written by Estrella Alfon. Speech and thought presentation is primarily concerned as to how a writer reveals the speech and thought of their characters as they interact with other characters in the literary work. As literature remains a reflection of the society, speech and thought presentation gave way to the perception of how a Filipino woman is now seen in the society. The analysis revealed the following views: an unconventional woman as a mother; an equal partner; and a 'magnificent' and headstrong woman. As these contemporary views on Filipino were explored, an acceptance to more progressive perspective on the Filipino women will most likely emerge in the future.

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1. Introduction

For years, Philippines has been considered a patriarchal country where there seems to be a special homage for the male gender. This is further reinforced by stereotypes as the male being strong, competent, and highly-active while female is usually typified as someone who is meek, submissive, and passive. Throughout the years, this ideology has been repeatedly challenged particularly in literature. For a long time, Philippine literature provided Filipino readers a well-pictured image of a Filipina in the society. As how Filipinos viewed women and their roles changed, so did how she is portrayed in different literatures specifically in the Philippines. After all, literature is a reflection of a culture and society.

Unlike other countries, Philippines is a country considered as having 'one of the smallest gender disparities in the world' (Casambre & Rood, 2012) mainly because, the country had two female presidents and a female Supreme Court Justice (Cecilia Muñoz Palma) even before the United States had one. How the Filipina gained its rights in the country was a long journey.

According to the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in an article published in 2015 entitled The Literary Forms in Philippine Literature, contemporary Philippine literature refers to the resurgence of literary works in the 1960s and 1970s and publications which emerged after the Martial Law years. It was also during this time that Filipino writers, poets, novelists, and the like became socially committed and began writing which is gender/ethnic related. As such, works published during this period would likely show and reveal how the Filipino woman is presented and how it shaped our consciousness of a *Filipina*.

One of the leading examples of literature which opened the idea of shifting gender roles in Filipino women was Estrella Alfon's *Magnificence*. It was acclaimed as it presented how a woman, a mother, particularly challenged the patriarchal view of the Philippine society. With such view being opened and presented to readers, a stylistic analysis of the short story would unveil and uncover the contemporary view of the *Filipina* in the society of the Philippines.

2. Literature review

2.1 The Filipino Female

The *Filipina* has a come a long way before it received the veneration it deserves. Even so, there is still a continuous and ongoing battle as to where women should stand and where she should

be (Tarrayo, 2015). In the pre-colonial period, women in the Philippines already played an important role in the community. The most notable role given was being a *babaylan* which is similar to a seer, healer and priestess. A *babaylan* is often regarded with much respect and is considered to be next in rank to the *datu* or the chieftain.

Siftung (2001) further retold the history of struggle of Filipino women before it has reached its pedestal right now. He recounted the following:

When the Spanish colonial period came, it was believed and some historians claim that it was only at this time that women were viewed unequally which is a direct contrast to how women were treated during the pre-colonial period. However, this did not stop Filipinas from fighting the war. Some women joined the underground movement called KATIPUNAN and fought along-side with men. This allowed women to break the conventional roles given to women such as being a home-maker and care-giver that the Spanish rule imposed to the Philippine culture.

During the 1940s, which is also the time of American occupation, education also became accessible to women. Having the privilege to finally be able to study and go school, Filipina pursued their right to suffrage or right to vote. During those times, only literate men had the right to vote and hold an office. The Suffragist Movement paved the way for Filipina to finally be able to exercise their right of suffrage. Women fighting for the right to vote became the entry of feminism in the country. On April 30, 1937, after three decades and on the ratification of the Commonwealth Government National Assembly, Filipinas were finally allowed to exercise their right of suffrage.

In World War II, Filipina also participated in war. The women who fought the war were the same women who tried to participate in a post-war government, however, during this time, only few women were visible in mainstream politics. In 1951, the Filipina tried to form a National Political Party of women but got rejected. On the other hand, on the same year, a separate group assembled a Women's Magsaysay-for-President Movement to support the presidential run of Ramon Magsaysay.

The 70's was known for its Marcos' Martial Law dictatorship and many Filipina joined the resistance against the government. Women became more politicized and a number joined ideological groups while some joined rebel movements. At the climax of anti- dictatorship movement, a women's group emerged known as MAKIBAKA or Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (Free Movement of New Women) with explicit feminist agenda. The organization of MAKIBAKA proved to be of great significance in women's movement in the Philippines.

Unfortunately, MAKIBAKA's agenda was soon abandoned when the Martial Law was imposed but it allied with the Communist Party of the Philippines for the nation's liberation under Marcos' regime.

In the height of Martial Law years, two feminist groups emerged. The Kilusan ng Kababaihang Pilipina (Movement of Filipino Women) or PILIPINA which had a main objective of addressing gender issues in the society. Another group that emerged was Katipunan ng Kababaihan para sa Kalayaan (Women's Collective for Freedom) or KALAYAAN with the aim of addressing gender issues in the national level.

On 1983, these women groups called for a women's march, a first in history. This event led the way for the establishment of General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action which is also known today as GABRIELA. GABRIELA fosters women and women's group from different backgrounds and ideological leanings. Until this day, GABRIELA fights for women's right across the country and proved that women's organizations have played an important role to women to acquire knowledge, orientation, and skill necessary to advance women's interest in different fields.

2.2. Women in Philippine Literature

The changing views about female contributed to many contemporary Filipino female portraying a new perspective to a *Filipina* through literature. As literature is a reflection of the society and its ideals, the new female character was seen in a new light: autonomous, decisive, capable and professional (Dials, 2017).

Much has been said and studied as to how Filipino women were portrayed in Philippine Literature. They went from being confined to the stereotype that females are homemakers and should essentially be looking after only and nurturing their children to women who show strength of character, breaking gender roles and stereotypes, and being unconventional. Tarrayo (2015) posited that the roles women in Philippine Literature varied from being a "martyr, social victim, homemaker, mother, and fighter" and has "evolved from traditionally coy Maria Clara to the modern Filipina who is daring and committed to her endeavors."

Aside from the strong characterization given to the female characters, themes of courage, vigilance, assertiveness were also attributed to the contemporary Filipino female characters in Philippine literature (Tiangson, 2018) in contrast to the humble, meek, and submissive women which was how, throughout the decades, the Filipino women were presented.

Throughout the years, though there is an evident struggle to defy the unequal footing of male and female in the society, women were no longer bound inside the household and no longer burdened with chores only but instead she is now accepted in the office, the factory, or in any labor that basically favors the male gender. Pura Santilllan Castrence (1977) once said in a speech:

"We have shown the Filipina in the sweeping scenes of her life as heroine in the story of her country. We see her now, active in almost every field of endeavor, in agriculture, in industries both as worker and as administrator, in educational institutions, both as teacher and as head in offices, as clerks and secretaries but also as managers in hospitals, as doctors, nurses or attendants in high government and in low government positions, in foreign service, a chief or helper. She is ubiquitous, and her everywhereness is taken for granted. True, she is still dissatisfied with the inequities caused by sex discrimination, but she is taking these things in stride and continues fighting for man-woman equality along with her other work." (pp. 16-17).

2.3 Speech and Thought Presentation

The speech and thought presentation model was developed by Leech and Short (1981) and it may also be known as 'discourse analysis'. It is necessary, however, to create a border between speech presentation and thought presentation. Speech being the external discourse being spoken while thought presentation deals with how an internal discourse is presented (Zebari & Mohammadzadeh, 2021).

Leech and Short presented the five categories of speech and thought presentation. The following are the categories for speech presentation: Direct Speech (DS), Indirect Speech (IS), Free Direct Speech (FDS), Free Indirect Speech (FIS) and Narrative Report of Speech Acts (NRSA). On the other hand, the following is for though presentation: Direct Thought (DT), Indirect Thought (IT), Free Direct Thought (FDT), Free Indirect Thought (FIT), and Narrative Report of Thought Acts (NRTA).

The following explanation and examples are elaborated by Simpson (2004):

2.3.1 Speech Presentation

Direct Speech

DS is considered as the 'baseline' form as it is where the other forms are measured (Simpson, 2004). DS accurately states what has been said by the character using the actual words in the reported speech.

e.g.: She said, 'I'll come here tomorrow.'

'I'll come here tomorrow,' she said

Indirect Speech

In IS, the narrator reports the speech with changes in tense, pronouns, and deictic expressions.

e.g.: She said she would go there the following day.

Free Direct Speech

FDS is the 'freer' form of DS. It is characterized by the absence of a narrator and quotation marks.

e.g: I will come here tomorrow, she said.

"I will come here tomorrow."

I will come here tomorrow. (freest form)

Free Indirect Speech

FIS is is the 'freer' version of IS. There is no intervention from the narrator in FIS.

e.g.: She would be there the following day.

She would be there tomorrow. (freest form)

Narrative Report of Speech Act

In NRSA, the act of speech is presented, often with a topic but offers no indication of the actual words used.

e.g.: He asked their friends for advice.

2.3.2 Thought Presentation

Direct Thought

DT is similar to DS except that the reported speech is an 'internal discourse' which is characterized by words that show mental activity rather it being spoken (think, decide, wonder, ponder, etc.)

e.g.: "I will speak with him tomorrow," she thought.

Indirect Thought

The narrator reports the thoughts of the character with some shift in verb tense, pronouns, and other deictic features.

e.g. She thought that she would speak to him the following day.

Free Direct Thought

FDT shows the character's thoughts with minimal or no intervention at all of the narrator. Either quotation marks or the reporting clause is omitted or both.

e.g.: I will speak with him tomorrow, she thought.

"I will speak with him tomorrow."

I will speak with him tomorrow. (freest form)

Free Indirect Thought

FIS is the 'freer' form of IT. Like FIS, there is no intervention of the narrator.

e.g.: She would speak with him tomorrow.

Narrative Report of a Thought Act

The narrator presents the thought act but it does not show the exact words of the character/s.

e.g.: She thought about her decision.

The study of speech and thought presentation can be difficult as stylisticians make use of the different techniques for reporting speech and thought. Moreover, stylisticians also have look

closely at the methods used by the author to represent a character's speech and thought and how it would affect the other characters and the array of events in a literary work (Simpson, 2004).

3. Methodology

This study examined the speech and thought presentation to Estella Alfon's Magnificence in order to reveal a contemporary view on Filipino women. Magnificence was chosen as it was published during the contemporary period of Philippine literature and it exhibited the banality of women in contrast to being in a "brutalizing, humiliating, and sexist environment" (Grow,1990). The short story will be analyzed using Leech and Short's categories for speech and thought presentation.

The following are the steps in order to discuss the contemporary view on Filipino women through speech and thought presentation in Magnificence:

1. Utterances and thoughts as shown by the characters particularly the Mother and Vicente are categorized based of Leech and Short's speech and thought presentation model.
2. Utilizing discourse analysis to the text to discuss and reveal the contemporary view on Filipino women using the representative text.

Through speech and though presentation model and categorization, the contemporary view with Filipino women may be seen and examined and contribute as to how women in the progressing society are represented.

4. Findings and Discussion

Magnificence follows the story of a mother who entrusted her children under Vicente who promised to "help solve fractions for the boy, and write correct phrases in language for the little girl". In a seemingly harmless act to help tutor her children, the mother agreed to Vicente's offer where he would drop by their house at night and help the children with their homework. Vicente was described as a man who "was always so gentle, so kind". Aside from these traits, he knows to get the attention of the children by giving them pencils which were the "rage" for those days. The children loved it when he would bring them pencils as they get to brag it in their school to their

classmates. As such, this bribery became a routine for Vicente and children and eventually insinuate his real cause for being a tutor to the children.

Unknowingly, Vicente's intention was not really after helping and teaching the children after their homework but rather focused on an immensely different and unacceptable intention – sexual abuse to the mother's daughter. An intention that was masked by his "warm" outward appearance and demeanor to the children as well as to the mother.

However, this was soon discovered by the mother who confronted Vicente and it was also the event where she showed her "magnificence" not only as a mother but also as a woman. It was also where the narrative of the story shifted from a stereotypical mother (or woman) who was submissive, meek, and passive to a female character typifying strength and even with a domineering attitude against the opposite gender.

The speech and thought presentation model of Leech and Short allowed how the mother gained complete control and how she was presented differently in the end in contrast to how she might seem a stereotypical mother in the beginning of the story. The following table shows the frequency of speech and though presentation throughout the whole story:

Table 1

Frequency Table of Speech and Thought in Estrella Alfon's Magnificence

Speech Presentation			Thought Presentation		
Category	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Category**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
IS	5	13.51 %	IT	5	71.43 %
FDS	28	75.68 %	NRTA	2	28.57 %
NRSA	4	10.81 %			
Total	37	100 %	Total	7	100 %

As presented in table 1, there is a total of thirty-seven speech presentation in *Magnificence.* Free Direct Speech was the most the most used speech presentation with a frequency of twenty-eight. FDS is exemplified by the absence of either the narrator or quotation marks. In the story, FDS was presented with the omission of quotation marks and few narrative phrases. Indirect Speech (IS) has a frequency of five which is followed by Narrative Report of Speech Acts (NRSA) at four. FDS having the highest frequency molded and shaped each character's presentation in the

story as these are verbalized by the character themselves without the narrator's intervention in the narrative.

On the other hand, the total thought presentation in the story was seven wherein Indirect Thought (IT) has a frequency of five while the Narrative Report of a Though Act (NRTA) was two. As the story used a limited third-person point-of-view, the characters' thoughts were of rather limited access but there are few but significant instances which showed what could be the mental process that a character is undergoing.

To further breakdown and get the 'perspective' on the view of the contemporary Filipino women, the following table shows the distribution of the speech and thought presentation amongst the characters in the short story:

Table 2

Distribution of Speech Presentation in Estrella Alfon's Magnificence

	Mother	Vicente	Oscar	Girl	Father
IS	1	2	0	1	1
FDS	15	7	3	3	0
NRSA	2	1	1	0	0

In the speech presentation frequency table, out of the thirty-seven utterances of all the characters, fifteen FDS belongs to the mother implying that from the start until the end of the story, she has the complete control of narrative and figuratively 'oversees' everything. This proves to be true as she is a character who is head-strong particularly when it comes to be welfare of her children. Upon catching Vicente abusing her daughter, her anger masked but her still movement was expressed through the following FDS: *"she said, very low, but very heavily, Do not move."*

Table 3

Distribution of Thought Presentation in Estrella Alfon's Magnificence

	Mother	Vicente	Oscar	Girl	Father
IT	1	0	0	4	0
NRTA	1	0	1	0	0

In the thought presentation frequency table, four out seven thought presentations where from the daughter. As she is the youngest character in the story, it is most likely that she cannot express her thoughts well verbally so they are most likely contained as thoughts.

The daughter's thought presentations were usually signified by the following words: shyly, disturbed, and felt. However, in contrast to the daughter's confused and innocent thoughts, the mother had a thought presentation which, in a way, overcame Vicente's advances to her daughter which was expressed in the following thought presentation in IT: *the woman herself stricken almost dumb, but her eyes eloquent with that angered fire.*

Not only did the mother displayed her 'magnificence' in the story itself but rather it may be more appropriate that her character itself shows magnificence presented in her speech and thought. Moreover, as the representative text of the contemporary Philippine literature, the following perspectives on the Filipino women were revealed:

1. *The Unconventional Woman as a Mother*

Mothers are often portrayed as the primary nurturer of their children and it is one of the virtues that was presented early in the story. It was revealed in the thought presentation in NRTA that: "*Their mother saw them with eyes that held pride, and then to partly gloss over the maternal gloating.*" It was clear that she takes pride on how she takes care of her children and how they grew up to fine young children as admired by the people around them.

However, as the story of Magnificence continues, it was also later shown that the mother was not bound in her motherhood duties only – in fact, at the beginning of the story, it was already revealed that she is the president of the association of where they are residing: "*The praise had made their mother look over them as they stood around listening to the goings- on at the meeting of the neighborhood association, of which their mother was president.*"

The mother was no longer the stereotypical mother whose role is limited inside the household and whose primary task is to do the chores. The contemporary Filipino woman is now a nurturer and at the same time holds and participates in activities outside her home such as involving civic and social responsibilities.

2. The Equal Partner

In a usual Filipino household setting, it is mostly acknowledged that the father usually has the "final say" in every decision which includes family matters. Aside from being the provider, this is a revered privilege that are often given to them as the *'haligi ng tahanan'* but the representative text actually challenged this notion by putting the mother in an equal threshold with the father. This concept was presented in the following speech presentation:

<NRSA>

And this observation their mother said to their father, who was eating his evening meal between paragraphs of the book on masonry rites that he was reading.

<FDS>

It is a pity, said their mother, People like those, they make friends with people like us, and they feel it is nice to give us gifts, or the children toys and things. You'd think they wouldn't be able to afford it.

<IS>

The father grunted, and said, the man probably needed a new job, and was softening his way through to him by going at the children like that.

In a more traditional setting, this conversation might not have happened or the mother might not be able to say what she thinks about to her husband. However, as seen in the speech presentation in the representative text, the mother freely expressed what she feels and thinks.

3. A 'Magnificent' and Headstrong Woman

A Filipino woman is usually confined in the picture of being a *Maria Clara* – one who is always gentle, kind, and submissive. For decades, this has been taught to young girls where most people would dictate that this is how a woman should act but it cannot be the case always as there are instances when it is no longer appropriate which was the case in the representative text. As the mother, she cannot and would not tolerate abuse, particularly sexual abuse to her young daughter. Her 'magnificence' shone when without any hesitation she faced her daughter's predator.

During her confrontation with her daughter's abuser, a rather symbolical interaction was presented the story: "*The mother kept coming into the light, and when Vicente made as if to move*

away into the shadow, she said, very low, but very heavily, Do not move." The mother was portrayed as someone who is in light while Vicente cowered in fear in the shadows (darkness) as she her 'light' symbolically consumes him as she gets closer.

In the final and grand display of her 'magnificent' Alfon's wordplay can be easily missed but it was a clever transformation of the "mother" to a "woman": "*Finally, the woman raised her hand and slapped him full hard in the face. With her other hand she slapped him on the other side of the face again. And so down the stairs they went, the man backwards, his face continually open to the force of the woman's slapping. Alternately she lifted her right hand and made him retreat before her until they reached the bottom landing."*

5. Conclusion

Analyzing the speech and thought presentation of the mother in Magnificence revealed important contemporary views of the Filipino women. It was a progressive view which no longer confines women in her household chores while wearing her apron but rather now presented as an active and engaging character. The contemporary Filipino woman can be both a nurturing mother and at the same time works outside her home – a concept that was before criticized as mothers are painted supposed to be focused on nurturing her children. She is also no longer the subordinate of her husband but rather an equal partner especially when it comes to the family's affair and matters. Lastly, breaking the stereotype of passive and submissive women, the contemporary Filipino woman is ready to show her authority especially when she and her family is at stake.

As the Free Direct Speech and Indirect Thought were frequently used throughout thestory, it contributed in the unveiling of the contemporary Filipino women by exposing the character's speech and thought acts to the readers. Following this, the transformation of a conventional mother into a fierce woman was seen. Though it might be a long way still to openly accept the changing perspectives on women, the Filipino women is now freer to choose who she ought to be.

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Appendices

Appendix 1
Summary of Speech Presentation

No.	Speech Presentation	Category
1	They could remember perhaps two weeks when he **remarked** to their mother that he had never seen two children looking so smart.	IS
2	she **said** to the man, in answer to his praise, But their homework. They're so lazy with them.	FDS
3	And the man **said,** I have nothing to do in the evenings, let me help them.	FDS
4	Mother nodded her head and **said**, if you want to bother yourself	FDS
5	his **promise** that he would give each of them not one pencil but two	NRSA
6	for the little girl who he **said** was very bright and deserved more, he would get the biggest pencil he could find.	IS
7	Until their mother **called** from down the stairs. **What are you shoutingabout?**	FDS
8	And they **told** her, **shouting** gladly, Vicente, for that was his name.	FDS
9	Thank him, their mother **called**.	FDS
10	The little boy smiled and **said**, Thank you. And the little girl smiled, and **said**, Thank you, too.	FDS
11	But the man **said**, Are you not going to kiss me for those pencils?	FDS
12	but Vicente slapped the boy smartly on his lean hips, and **said,** Boys do not kiss boys.	FDS
13	And their mother had finally to **tell** them to stop talking about the pencils,	NRSA
14	Their mother **said**, Oh stop it, what will you do with so many pencils, you can only write with one at a time.	FDS
15	And the little girl **muttered** under her breath, I'll ask Vicente for some more.	FDS
16	Their mother **replied**, He's only a bus conductor, don't ask him for too many things. It's a pity.	FDS
17	And this observation their mother **said** to their father, who was eating his evening meal between paragraphs of the book on masonry rites that hewas reading	NRSA

18	It is a pity, **said** their mother, People like those, they make friends withpeople like us, and they feel it is nice to give us gifts, or the children toys and things. You'd think they wouldn't be able to afford it.	FDS
19	The father **grunted**, and **said**, the man probably needed a new job, and was softening his way through to him by going at the children like that.	IS
20	And the mother **said**, No, I don't think so, he's a rather queer young man, Ithink he doesn't have many friends, but I have watched him with the children, and he seems to dote on them.	FDS
21	The children immediately put their lessons down, **telling** him of the envyof their schoolmates, and would he buy them more please?	NRSA
22	Vicente **said** to the little boy, Go and ask if you can let me have a glass of water.	FDS
23	the little boy ran away to comply, **saying** behind him, But buy us some more pencils, huh, buy us more pencils	FDS
24	Vicente held the little girl by the arm, and **said** gently, Of course I will buy you more pencils, as many as you want.	FDS
25	the little girl **giggled** and **said**, Oh, then I will tell my friends, and they will envy me, for they don't have as many or as pretty.	FDS
26	and held her to sit down on his lap and he **said**, still gently, What are your lessons for tomorrow?	FDS
27	she **told** him that that was her lesson but it was easy.	IS
28	Then go ahead and write, and I will watch you.	FDS
29	Don't hold me on your lap, **said** the little girl, I am very heavy, you will get very tired.	FDS
30	The mother **said**, I brought you some sarsaparilla, Vicente	FDS
31	when Vicente made as if to move away into the shadow, she **said**, very low, but very heavily, Do not move.	FDS
32	The mother **said** to the boy, Oscar, finish your lessons. And turning to the little girl, she said, Come here…Turn around...Go upstairs.	FDS
33	with a look and an inclination of the head, she **bade** Vicente go up the stairs.	IS
34	When they had reached the upper landing, the woman **called** down to her son, Son, come up and go to your room.	FDS
35	Hush, the mother **said**. Take a bath quickly.	FDS
36	Take also the pencils, **said** the mother to the watching newly bathed, newly changed child. Take them and throw them into the fire.	FDS
37	But when the girl turned to comply, the mother **said**, No, tomorrow will do.	FDS

Appendix 2

Summary of Thought Presentation

No.	Thought Presentation	Category
1	Their mother saw them with eyes that held **pride**, and then to partly gloss over the maternal gloating.	NRTA
2	The little girl went up to the man **shyly**, put her arms about his neck as he crouched to receive her embrace, and kissed him on the cheeks.	IT
3	the little girl squirmed out of his arms, and laughed a little breathlessly, **disturbed** but innocent	IT
4	All through that day, they had been very **proud** in school showing off their brand-new pencils.	NRTA
5	The little girl kept squirming, for somehow, she **felt** uncomfortable to beheld thus, her mother and father always treated her like a big girl, she was always told never to act like a baby.	IT
6	But the little girl **felt** very queer, she didn't know why, all of a sudden, she was immensely frightened, and she jumped up away from Vicente's lap	IT
7	the woman herself **stricken almost dumb**, but her eyes eloquent with that angered fire.	IT

Community Awareness and Knowledge on the Nature, Scope and Concept of Human Trafficking

Jennifer M. Nayoyos-Refugia

Abstract

Human trafficking is a crime that most people have limited knowledge of. While there are numbers of programs introduced and implemented, research on public awareness and knowledge on human trafficking is scant. Hence, this study focused on the level of awareness and knowledge of San Pablo City community members about the nature, scope, and concept of human trafficking in terms of the acts, means employed, and purposes of human trafficking. The study employed a descriptive research design in the form of a survey questionnaire. The sample size of two hundred sixteen (216) people was drawn from various sectors using a purposive and convenience sampling. From the gathered quantitative data, frequency count, weighted mean, and ANOVA were used for analysis. The findings indicated that the community is aware and knowledgeable about human trafficking, however, some people still do not understand the nature, extent and concept of human trafficking due to their reliance on the media rather than direct participation as a social responsibility. The level of awareness and knowledge among the different group of respondents significantly varies since they have different level of perception. Further, along with other media platforms including the internet, seminars at the barangay level, radio, newspapers, seminars at educational institutions, posters, and pamphlets to familiarize the public with human trafficking, the majority preferred television as their primary source of information.

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1. Introduction

Human Trafficking (HT) or Trafficking in Persons (TIP) is a transnational crime (Litam, 2021), a widespread lucrative international criminal activity across a variety of industries (Van Buren et al., 2021) and regarded by many authors, researchers, and practitioners as 'the new era of slavery' (Rogers & Bryant-Davis, 2022) that endangers vulnerable individuals from around the globe severely (Zhu et.al, 2020). The nature of human trafficking is hidden (Tomkins et al., 2018; Bryant & Landman, 2020) and it is a crime that is often described as "hidden in plain sight," because victims may appear "normal" and even cope with daily life (Dummermuth, 2019). To keep the exploited individual under the control of the trafficker, HT frequently uses trickery, deceit, or force. People who become victims of human trafficking are frequently vulnerable; typically, these are people who lack the required social or governmental supports to survive (End Slavery Now, 2022). To gain labour or sex acts for a charge, people traffickers often utilize force, fraud, or other forms of compulsion.

Millions of men, women, and children are trafficked every year, including United States. Any culture can experience victims of any age, ethnicity, gender, or nationality. In order to lure victims into situations where they are being trafficked, traffickers may adopt strategies such as assault, manipulation, presenting fictitious promises of lucrative work, or love relationships (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2022). The U.S. TIP reports cited number of deficiencies, including the absence of a centralized database and aggregated data on the scope, nature, and extent of human trafficking in the nation as well as the government's failure to report on ongoing criminal investigations and the number of cases that have been prosecuted (Van der Watt, 2018). Given the obscured nature of human trafficking, understanding the full scope and scale of the problem is nearly impossible. While the true extent of human trafficking and modern slavery is unknown, an estimated 40.3 million people are trapped in modern slavery (Stop The Traffik, n.d.).

It is estimated that 27 million people are victims of human trafficking worldwide which makes a widespread impact that extends across all states. Because human trafficking is a hidden crime, many people are unaware of its existence and are unprepared to respond to it (Shoop, 2020). Similarly, in the study of Gatza (2018) due to the ephemeral and covert nature of trafficking, the variety of definitions associated with trafficking words, and the absence of a centralized reporting and documenting agency, it is challenging to compute data about trafficking effectively.

Additionally, researching human trafficking is made difficult by its illicit nature and the obscurity of high-quality data (Tomkins, et.al, 2018).

Human trafficking has been criminalized as a primary anti-trafficking response by nations all over the world. Despite the promise of laws designed to encourage the prosecution of human trafficking crimes, global reports show that only a small number of offenders have been prosecuted (Farrell & Kane, 2020). According to Farrell & de Vries (2020), the public's consideration about human trafficking has increased interest in measuring the extent of victimization. Despite efforts to develop comprehensive methods for studying human trafficking, there are few reliable measures available and to guide efforts, evidence about the nature and scope of the problem is required.

Anti-trafficking program evaluations have primarily focused on assessing project's progress and output achievement, rather than tracking realization of outcomes or impact that is complicated further by the hidden nature of human trafficking and the trauma experienced by victims. As a result, despite some evidence of increased awareness and funding, organizations continue to struggle to demonstrate impact and determine what works to combat human trafficking (Bryant & Landman, 2020).

Meanwhile, the Philippine government completely complies with the minimum standards for stopping human trafficking under Tier 1 (United States Department of State, 2022), still, the Philippines has a serious problem with human trafficking; it has one of the highest victim populations in the world, with an estimated 784,000 individuals being used as modern-day slaves (McGeough & The Anti-Human Trafficking Intelligence Cell of Mercyhurst University, 2022) and regarded as a major source country for trafficking, as well as a transit and destination country (Gatza, 2018). Hence, the purpose of this study was to ascertain the level of awareness and knowledge of community members in San Pablo City, Laguna on the nature, scope, and concept of human trafficking for possible information dissemination program/project based on what the community understands on the background, extent and notions relative to human trafficking specifically in terms of the (a) acts promoting HT, (b) means employed, and (c) purposes of human trafficking. Likewise, the study tested if there is a significant difference on the level of awareness and knowledge on the nature, extent and concept of human trafficking as perceived by the different group of respondents. Furthermore, the study assessed the information dissemination medium

preferred by the community to increase public awareness and knowledge in their area on human trafficking.

2. Literature review

2.1. Awareness and Knowledge

While human trafficking occupies a prominent place on the global policy agenda, many aspects of this phenomenon remain empirically underdeveloped (Blanton et al., 2020). Raising public awareness about the risks and symptoms of human trafficking is a critical component of any anti-trafficking strategy. Effective public awareness and outreach can help identify incidents of human trafficking, increase public support for governments and communities to take action, and eventually aid in the prevention of human trafficking (United States Department of State, 2021).

In the dissertation of Terwilliger (2021), she mentioned that the lack of knowledge about human trafficking, along with advances in technology and social media, have made it easier for people to be exploited. Further, the study revealed that there is a need for more information and understanding about the risks and hazards of using social media, especially among younger users. To lessen the risk of social media users becoming victims of human trafficking, increased awareness and safety measures are essential. Although public awareness is critical in the fight against human trafficking, little academic research has been conducted to examine the public policy implications of various types of messaging that the public may use in recognizing human trafficking (Farrell, 2018).

Despite the promise for social change, anti-trafficking programs frequently fall short. This is a result of inaccurate portrayals that downplay the complexity of human trafficking for sexual exploitation (THBSE) as a system of exploitation and by maintaining unfavorable assumptions about what a victim should or should not look like, which helps to silence and marginalize victims. Additionally, rather than advocating for social change, anti-trafficking initiatives typically focus on raising awareness (Costa da Silva Catela Teixeira, 2021).

In a study conducted by Shrestha et al. (2015), 76% of the students surveyed said they were aware of sex trafficking, and 94.6% said they learned about it from the media (radio or television). The results have significant implications for anti-trafficking programs, particularly those aimed at educating adolescent females who are most vulnerable to sex trafficking. Moreover, the findings of Gonçalves et al. (2020) showed that college students knew a lot about the dynamics of the

phenomenon, trafficker profiles and criminal dynamics, and human trafficking trajectories, but they knew less about the goals of human trafficking, victim characteristics and victimization dynamics, and Portuguese-specific aspects of human trafficking. Age, study area, and contact with sources other than academic institutions all have an impact on the knowledge, suggesting that academic institutions are not adhering to Portugal's third National Action Plan against Human Trafficking, which was put into effect from 2014 to 2017.

Sharapov (2019) concluded that the "snapshot" of public perceptions of human trafficking in the three case-study nations (Great Britain, Hungary and Ukraine) demonstrates the complexity of the issue, as several "vectors" meet to create a complicated pattern of personal responses that results in three diverse national-level patterns of views. The patterns seem to match the prevalent concepts of human trafficking that are reflected in national anti-trafficking legislation and media coverage. The findings call into doubt the relevance, scope, and goals of numerous anti-trafficking initiatives.

2.2. Acts, means and purposes of human trafficking

Human trafficking has many forms and the three most prevalent include sex trafficking, forced labor, and debt bondage. In coerced involvement in commercial sex acts, sex trafficking disproportionately affects women and children. According to the US State Department, forced labor, also known as involuntary servitude, is the main form of trafficking in the globe. Another type of human trafficking is debt bondage, in which a victim is made to work against their will to repay a debt (Human Rights Commission - San Francisco, n.d.). Meanwhile, the most common types of trafficking to occur in the Philippines are forced labor and sexual abuse (Gatza, 2018).

In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 10364 which amended Republic Act No. 9208 defines human trafficking as:

> "recruitment, obtaining, hiring, providing, offering, transportation, transfer, maintaining, harboring, or receipt of persons with or without the victim's consent or knowledge, within or across national borders by means of threat, or use of force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of position, taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person, or, the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation which includes at a minimum, the exploitation

or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude or the removal or sale of organs" (Section 3 (a), Republic Act No., 10364).

To be considered as falling inside the scope of trafficking in person, a scenario must have three (3) linked and interdependent components to include act(s), means and exploitative intent/purpose. Each of these elements must be present and connected: the act/s must be carried out by one of the means, and both must be linked to the achievement of the exploitative goal. If one of the three (3) elements is missing, the situation may not involve human trafficking, unless child trafficking is involved (Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2020).

Act or acts of human trafficking refers to what is done which involves the recruitment, obtaining, hiring, providing, offering, transportation, transfer, maintaining, harboring, or receipt of persons, with or without the victim's consent or knowledge, within or across national borders, whereas, means can be committed by use of threat, force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or position, taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person, or giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person. While purpose of human trafficking includes exploitation or prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, involuntary servitude, or the removal or sale of organs (Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2020; The Lawphil Project - Arellano Law Foundation, Inc., n.d.; International Labour Organization, n.d.).

According to McGeough and The Anti-Human Trafficking Intelligence Cell of Mercyhurst University (2022), the Philippines has one of the highest victim populations in the world wherein recruitment phase of human trafficking frequently involves native Filipinos. False promises of job placement are the most popular human trafficking recruitment technique. In many cases, victims are sought out to work as "entertainers" but wind up being coerced into prostitution, transported both locally and abroad, as strippers or nightclub hostesses. In real-time internet broadcasts, traffickers sexually abuse minors. Additionally, to get around the Philippine government's and the destination nations' regulatory frameworks for foreign workers and avoid detection, traffickers also employ false childcare jobs, student and intern exchange programs, and programs for unpaid internships including porous maritime boundaries. According to one study, the Philippines employs almost 50,000 Filipino children as domestic servants, including nearly 5,000 who are

under the age of 15. Children who worked often endured dangerous working conditions, maybe including signs of forced labor, in places including mines, factories, and farms.

3. Methodology

Since the purpose of the study is to assess community members' awareness of human trafficking in San Pablo City, Laguna, it employed a descriptive survey. The research is based mostly on survey questionnaires and informal interviews, which provided supplemental data for this study's completion.

Respondents of the study were divided into five groups: (1) residential area which involve the resident, house owners, and household helpers); (2) local government units to include LGU personnel and barangay officials; (3) business establishments that comprise the employers or business owners and employees/helpers; (4) educational institutions, which included students, school personnel/attendants; and (5) churches, which encompasses its personnel/members. The study was conducted in San Pablo City, Laguna and involved a total sample size of 216 respondents.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents:

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents

Group of Respondents		Number	Percentage
Business Establishments	Business owners (employer); business helpers/employees	44	20.37%
LGUs	LGU personnel; barangay officials	39	18.06%
Residential Areas	Residents, house owners and helpers	72	33.33%
Educational Institution	Students; school personnel/attendants	35	16.20%
Church	Church personnel; church members	26	12.04%
	Total	216	100%

Given the size of the population, the study focused on the central business district of San Pablo City, Laguna, where the different public sectors can be found (Business Establishments, LGU, Residential Areas, Educational Institution, Church) in which respondents were chosen based

on their suitability for the study's completion and availability as well as their relevance to the study's purpose. The respondents for this study were chosen using the purposive and convenience sampling method. To identify and choose the respondents for the study, fixed criteria were utilized. First, the respondents must belong to a group that is particularly vulnerable to human trafficking (youth, men, women, jobseekers and the like). Second, they must have resided in San Pablo for more than a year, and third, geographical proximity, availability and/or willingness of the respondents to participate in the research at a given time.

The main basis for the questionnaire's formulation is Republic Act Number 10364, also known as the "Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012," which was validated by the Office of the Regional Anti-Trafficking Task Force-Region IV (RATTF4) and likewise checked and verified by the Office of the City Social Welfare and Development-San Pablo City (OCSWD-SPC). Further, to examine the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher ran a pilot test. Using a Cronbach alpha, the overall results show that community members' understanding of the nature, breadth, and idea of human trafficking is .926 or high acceptability which set very stable reliability for the researcher-made instrument. Three (3) composites under the extent of knowledge of the community members on the nature, scope and concept of human trafficking gave their respective reliability scores: acts of trafficking in persons (.878, above acceptability) means employed in human trafficking (.843, above acceptability) and purpose (forms) of human trafficking (.863, above acceptability). The general rule of thumb is that a Cronbach's alpha of .70 and above is good, .80 and above is better, and .90 and above is best. While Taber (2018) mentioned in his study that alpha values were described as excellent (0.93–0.94), strong (0.91–0.93), reliable (0.84–0.90), robust (0.81), fairly high (0.76–0.95), high (0.73–0.95), good (0.71–0.91), relatively high (0.70– 0.77), slightly low (0.68), reasonable (0.67–0.87), adequate (0.64–0.85), moderate (0.61– 0.65), satisfactory (0.58–0.97), acceptable (0.45–0.98), sufficient (0.45–0.96), not satisfactory (0.4–0.55) and low (0.11). This indicates that the questionnaire used to assess how well-informed community people are about the nature, scope, and idea of human trafficking is strong or above the level that is considered acceptable and valid. According to Bujang et al. (2018), the internal consistency or dependability between a number of objects, measurements, or ratings is measured by Cronbach's alpha.

The questionnaire was initially written in English before being translated into Filipino, a local tongue that is widely spoken in the study area. As the survey questionnaire contained legal terms, it was translated by expert for the respondents' convenience.

The questionnaire was individually distributed, and because of the nature of the study, the data collection process was handled with the highest confidentiality, and the respondents' identities were kept anonymous for the whole course of the study. Before participants were requested to participate in the survey, the study's principal goal was fully explained. The study secured voluntary participation, provided instructions on how to respond, and informed participants that all responses were confidential. After respondents completed the survey questionnaire and provided their answers, the study needed to clarify some of the questions by conducting an informal style of interview. These supplemental data were used to complete the study.

In the study, the statistical data were analyzed using the frequency count, weighted mean and ANOVA.

4. Findings and Discussion

As presented in table 2, statement 1 obtained the highest mean and statement 5 obtained the lowest mean but all are interpreted as "Aware and knowledgeable which shows that community are aware and knowledgeable on the acts that promote human trafficking. The community is aware and knowledgeable especially on the recruitment, obtaining or hiring of women and children on the acts that promotes HT as a result of their exposure to human trafficking cases flashed in the media, seminars conducted by various government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and their friends/neighborhood who are already knowledgeable about the issue. Yet, there are still some who fail to understand its very nature and concepts due to their failure to participate or, in some cases, their lack of interest, and who need to be educated about the said offense. Similarly, Szablewska and Kubacki (2018) discovered in their study that anti-human trafficking campaigns typically use advertising techniques to reach vulnerable groups and the general public, with the primary goal of informing and educating.

Table 2

Awareness and knowledge of the community members on the acts promoting human trafficking

Indicators	Business Establishment		LGU		Residential Areas		Educational Institutions		Church/es		Over-all mean	DI
	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI		
1. Recruitment, obtaining or hiring of women and children	2.91	AK	3.36	AK	3.01	AK	2.74	AK	2.96	AK	3.00	AK
2. Providing and offering clients a trafficked women and children	2.89	AK	3.21	AK	2.79	AK	2.71	AK	2.73	AK	2.87	AK
3. Transporting or transferring women and children from one place to another (not necessarily outside the country)	2.64	AK	3.33	AK	2.83	AK	2.57	AK	2.50	AK	2.77	AK
4. Maintaining (keeping) or harboring (concealing) trafficked persons	2.64	AK	3.26	AK	2.67	AK	2.57	AK	2.65	AK	2.76	AK
5. Receiving(accepting) of clients of trafficked persons	2.55	AK	3.21	AK	2.56	AK	2.46	SAK	2.54	AK	2.66	AK
over-all	2.72	AK	3.27	AK	2.77	AK	2.61	AK	2.68	AK	2.81	AK

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 Highly Aware and knowledgeable (HAK)
               2.50 – 3.49 Aware and knowledgeable (AK)
               1.50 – 2.49 Slightly Aware and knowledgeable (SAK)
               1.00 – 1.49 Not Aware and knowledgeable (NAK)

According to Shoop (2020), being a clandestine crime, human trafficking leaves many individuals uninformed of it and unprepared to respond to it. Legislators can help the public become partners in a comprehensive legal structure to combat human trafficking—one that not only prosecutes traffickers and rehabilitates victims, but also takes the critical step of identifying traffickers and victims—by improving existing laws to raise public awareness of human trafficking, extending training requirements, providing tax breaks to businesses, and establishing human trafficking councils. Studies on trafficking offer a potentially fruitful field for population geography to conduct multidisciplinary, significant research on a major global issue, to guide the development of laws to stop and lessen the effects of trafficking, and to advance conceptual and theoretical understandings of the phenomenon (Smith, 2018).

However, it should be noted that among the five groups of respondents, majority from educational institutions, and churches, only slightly aware and knowledgeable that moving women and children from one location to another (not necessarily abroad), maintaining or hiding trafficked people, and accepting clients of trafficked people are among the behavior patterns that promote trafficking. The slight awareness and knowledge among this group of respondents is to be expected, and it only serves to highlight how subtle the behavioral patterns, tendencies, or actions associated with human trafficking are given that even victims and law enforcement officials are unable to identify these lucrative acts easily. As previously stated, if one of the three (3) components (act, means, and purpose) is absent, the circumstance might not constitute human trafficking unless child trafficking is included (Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2020).

Table 3

Awareness and knowledge of the community members on the means employed human trafficking

Statements	Business Establishments		LGU		Residential Areas		Educational Institutions		Church/es		Over-all mean	DI
	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI		
1. The use of threat, force or coercion to obtain women and children; or	3.00	AK	3.36	AK	3.01	AK	3.14	AK	3.04	AK	3.11	AK
2. Abduction or taking away of person to be involved in human trafficking; or	2.80	AK	3.23	AK	2.88	AK	3.03	AK	2.88	AK	2.96	AK
3. Use of fraud, deception or tricks to deceive women and children such as offering good job and salary to other city or country; or	2.98	AK	3.36	AK	2.85	AK	3.03	AK	2.81	AK	3.01	AK
4. Abuse of power, or taking advantage on the vulnerability (weakness or helplessness) of person (women and children); or	2.95	AK	3.28	AK	2.86	AK	3.00	AK	2.92	AK	3.00	AK
5. Giving or receiving payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person who has control over another.	2.80	AK	3.18	AK	2.79	AK	2.71	AK	2.77	AK	2.85	AK
over-all	2.90	AK	3.28	AK	2.88	AK	2.98	AK	2.88	AK	2.98	AK

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 Highly Aware and knowledgeable (HAK)
2.50 – 3.49 Aware and knowledgeable (AK)
1.50 – 2.49 Slightly Aware and knowledgeable (SAK)
1.00 – 1.49 Not Aware and knowledgeable (NAK)

As shown in table 3, statements 1 and 5 have the greatest and lowest means, respectively, but all are interpreted as "Aware and knowledgeable", which suggests that public are aware and knowledgeable on the activities or means employed by traffickers in human trafficking. The community are conscious and have sufficient information especially when traffickers use of threat, force or coercion to obtain women and children. It would imply that the community is well informed, but some people still struggle to discern and recognize the different behaviors that make up human trafficking because they choose not to engage or, in some situations, they lack curiosity. Similar to this, public and private groups' mass media and information distribution activities had a big impact. It can be noted that community members are aware and knowledgeable yet, human trafficking continuously grow as observed. As mentioned by Shoop (2020), due to the fact that human trafficking is a hidden crime, many individuals are ignorant of it and unprepared to deal with it. Accordingly, United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime (n.d.), to trick and coerce their victims, traffickers frequently use violence or fraudulent employment agencies, as well as false promises of education and job opportunities.

Although there is no single defining characteristic shared by all human trafficking victims, traffickers all over the world prey on individuals whose vulnerabilities, such as poverty, limited English proficiency, or lack of lawful immigration status, are exacerbated by a lack of stable, safe housing and limited economic and educational opportunities. Victims of human trafficking are duped by false promises of love, a good job, or a stable life and are lured or forced into situations in which they are forced to work in deplorable conditions for little or no pay (U.S. Department of Justice, 2022). The interconnected "push" and "pull" factors make people more vulnerable to human trafficking. Poverty, gender inequity, unemployment, limited access to education/social programs, political instability, war and conflict situations are examples of "push" factors. Other "pull" factors include increased demand for cheap labor and/or exploitative labor practices, as well as the promise of money and a better life (Ontario Women's Justice Network, 2018).

In an informal interview with a social welfare officer from CSWDO-San Pablo who dealt with cases of human trafficking, the community is aware because they have already held some seminars, but some people still become victims because they were willing to take a chance in order to escape difficult circumstances in their lives, such as poverty (Personal communication, June 08, 2016). The development and enhancement of legislation, including programs or materials to enlighten or boost public awareness for crime prevention, are likely based on the findings and

recommendations of studies and reports for the related agencies and organizations. As a matter of fact, R.A. 9208, which was revised by a more extensive clause in R.A. The Philippines' Act 10364 improves human trafficking-related programs.

Clinching from these, despite their awareness and knowledge employed by traffickers in human trafficking, people nonetheless choose to take risks in order to survive or move to greener pastures as a result of various circumstances. Studies have been done on how people become victims, and organizations and entities that are concerned have made efforts to address the issue. Despite increased awareness, it appears that some people are still unaware of the problem or fall for its tricks because of the methods that human traffickers use to entice victims. As a result, it can be assumed from the results of this study that, despite being aware of it, people's attitudes and behaviors when faced with challenging circumstances expose them to the practices used by traffickers. Since no one is safe from the threat of such unlawful activity, coordination, cooperation, and engagement of responsible agencies and the community play a crucial role in the fight against human trafficking.

Table 4

Awareness and knowledge of the community members on the purpose's human trafficking

Statements	Business Establishments		LGU		Residential Areas		Educational Institutions		Church/es		Over-all mean	DI
	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI	M	DI		
1. Prostitution and/or other forms of sexual exploitation such as sex tourism; or	3.20	AK	3.36	AK	3.11	AK	3.43	AK	3.00	AK	3.22	AK
2. Forced labor and/or services; or	3.05	AK	3.15	AK	2.85	AK	3.00	AK	3.00	AK	3.01	AK
3. Slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude; or	2.95	AK	3.18	AK	2.85	AK	2.89	AK	3.00	AK	2.97	AK
4. Removal or sale of organs; or	2.73	AK	3.21	AK	2.74	AK	2.89	AK	2.62	AK	2.84	AK
5. Child exploitation (for illegal production and trafficking of drugs or for illegal militant activities).	3.05	AK	3.31	AK	2.76	AK	3.09	AK	2.85	AK	3.01	AK
over-all	3.00	AK	3.24	AK	2.86	AK	3.06	AK	2.89	AK	3.01	AK

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 Highly Aware and knowledgeable (HAK)
2.50 – 3.49 Aware and knowledgeable (AK)
1.50 – 2.49 Slightly Aware and knowledgeable (SAK)
1.00 – 1.49 Not Aware and knowledgeable (NAK)

As seen in table 4, statement 1 received the highest mean score and statement 4 received the lowest score, but all are regarded as "Aware and knowledgeable," demonstrating that the community is mindful of the objectives or purposes of human trafficking. This indicates that the majority of respondents have a higher level of awareness or knowledge about prostitution and/or other forms of sexual exploitation, such as sex tourism, which has received a lot of attention from reporters in the media. Videos, documentaries, reported cases in the news and live interviews that covers issues on human trafficking are available on the internet. Due to the media's focus on exposing these types of illegal activities, the community members were likely aware of other forms of human trafficking. However, some may be confused by the various forms, and others may not be aware of them due to a lack of interest in what is occurring domestically or abroad. As mentioned, sex trafficking, forced labor, and debt bondage are the three most prevalent forms of human trafficking (Human Rights Commission - San Francisco, n.d.) and as more awareness of the global issue of sex trafficking comes to light, counselors must prepare to provide therapeutic services to this specific client population (Litam & Lam, 2021; Mays, 2021). Most significantly, perhaps, people needed to know so that they would care and raise their voices. This applies to people from all walks of life and from all of our diverse and intersectional groups (Polaris, 2022).

Settling from the several types of human trafficking, it can be concluded that while media, seminars, IEC materials, and other programs have all contributed to raising public awareness, some people are still unaware of or unable to comprehend various types of human trafficking. One explanation could be that some of it has traits in common with other crimes.

At any point, the media and other mediums play a crucial part in spreading knowledge and educating the public because they help people of the community become more aware of and knowledgeable about human trafficking. Since crime occurs everywhere, no one is exempt, there is no typical victim, and it is everyone's duty to be aware of what is going on in the neighborhood.

Table 5

Test of Difference on the Level of Awareness and knowledge on the nature, extent and concept of human trafficking as Perceived by the Different Group of Respondents

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision	Decision
acts promoting human trafficking	Between groups	1.409	4	0.352	16.460	0.000	Significant	Reject H$_o$
	Within groups	0.428	20	0.021				
	Total	1.837	24					
means employed in human trafficking	Between groups	0.580	4	0.145	12.185	0.002	Significant	Reject H$_o$
	Within groups	0.238	20	0.012				
	Total	0.818	24					
purposes of human trafficking	Between groups	0.459	4	0.115	4.173	0.013	Significant	Reject H$_o$
	Within groups	0.550	20	0.028				
	Total	1.009	24					

Legend: $*p < .05;**$, significant $*p > .05;**$ not significant

As reflected in table 5, there is a significant difference on the level of awareness and knowledge on the nature, extent and concept of human trafficking as perceived by the different group of respondents which implies that different public sectors (business establishment, LGU, Residential areas, educational institution, and church) have different level of consciousness and information acquired. Moreover, the significant media impact and participation in seminars, the majority is aware and knowledgeable, however, some respondents are still unclear about those act that promotes human trafficking or have not grasped these differences. As expected, majority have higher level of awareness and knowledge among LGU and residential areas since most of the information dissemination campaign conducted are on the barangay level and LGU officials are likely to have more knowledge since they are required to attend mandatory seminars relative to human trafficking. On the other hand, there are some especially among the educational institution and churches who are slightly aware on the acts promoting human trafficking particularly on the transporting or transferring, keeping, or concealing and accepting of victims, thus, information dissemination campaigns shall be strengthen among schools and universities, and churches. As previously stated, majority of the respondents admitted that their level of awareness and knowledge mostly relied on the reports shown in media platforms.

Media reporting on human trafficking matters and has an impact; human trafficking victims are idealized in media coverage of the issue (Gregoriou & Ras, 2018), however, there are lots of false beliefs about human trafficking. The stories that have been told about the crime have been

significantly impacted by media representation, a lack of hard evidence, and social preconceptions (Greater New Orleans Human Trafficking Task Force, n.d.).

The public is inundated with stories of human trafficking, which are incredibly effective at illuminating the issue and providing concrete information on which to build future policies and initiatives. These accounts, however, also exaggerate the issue by generating a prevailing narrative that stifles competing accounts and fails to adequately convey the complexities of human trafficking (O'Brien, 2018). Unfortunately, media outlets can misrepresent the realities of human trafficking, and anti-trafficking campaigns and media portrayals of the issue routinely mislead the problem (Rister, 2020). Due to the complexity of human trafficking, any method of educating the public must be sensitive to prevent misinformation or misconceptions because their (media) widespread influence affects every individual's knowledge and perception. This is true even though the community is sufficiently aware of the nature, extent and concepts surrounding human trafficking. To prevent factual distortion or misinformation, more actions should be added to the media to address issues on misinformation since it is considered as the majority of the population's primary source of information similar to how coverage and reporting aided by professionals to work on complicated issues are empowered to stop public misunderstandings or misinformation

Table 6

Preferred Information dissemination medium of the respondents to increase public awareness and knowledge on human trafficking

Preferred medium	Business establishments	LGU	Residents	Schools	Church	TOTAL	%
1. Television	32	28	52	27	21	160	74 %
2. Radio	14	12	20	16	12	74	34 %
3. Newspaper	18	14	20	11	10	73	34 %
4. Brochures	3	13	7	4	5	32	15 %
5. Internet	25	17	33	20	14	109	50 %
6. Brgy Seminars	22	28	26	19	11	106	49 %
7. School seminars	18	11	18	19	8	74	34 %
8. Posters	11	18	18	7	12	66	31 %

Multiple response

As seen in table 6, the 160 or 74% out of 216 participants which obtained the highest rank preferred "television" as their main source of information, since it is the most convenient to them because majority have televisions, while 50% or 109 respondents chosen "Internet" as their main source of information since they are more comfortable or accustomed with especially to the

internet users who participated in the study. The next preferred medium of information dissemination according to 106 or 49% from the participants, is the "conduct of seminars at the barangay level" since they believe that direct participation is better for them to understand it more.

In summary, the preferred information dissemination medium of the community based on ranking are (1) television; (2) Internet; (3) Seminars at the barangay level; (4) Radio, Newspaper and Seminars on educational institutions; (5) posters; and (6) brochures. It is assumed that majority preferred television as their main source of information but not limited to other mediums such as the Internet, Seminars at the barangay level, Radio, Newspaper and Seminars on educational institutions, posters, brochures for them to be acquainted and obtain information about human trafficking.

Most of the respondents' answer would mean that even if they preferred television or other mediums, seminars shall be conducted regularly at the barangay level even in schools for them to be acquainted. It is better to have these seminars so that they can ask questions and clarify matters that they cannot understand. On the other hand, although other mediums such as posters and brochures received the least rank, still, these mediums will help to make them aware about human trafficking since the way that people understand varies and sometimes will depend on their interest with the aid of different medium. As mentioned, Szablewska and Kubacki (2018) found in their study that advertising techniques are typically used on anti-human trafficking campaigns, significantly added that in order to demonstrate which social marketing tactics are effective and to create a foundation for future efforts, studies presenting the findings of evaluations of social marketing anti-human trafficking campaigns are desperately needed. Similarly, Arulrajah and Steele (2018) discovered in their study of assessing uptake of the opportunity to shape awareness, safeguarding, and referral in the curriculum that the majority (72%) of schools did not provide trafficking education, but 13% of these offer opportunities outside the formal curriculum. 70% had no plans to pursue educational opportunities. Similarly, 56% of the 28% of schools that offered instruction included it in their core curriculum. 56% only delivered this in their first year of study. 67% provided in-person instruction, while 78% used a combination of methods. They have significantly concluded that there is a need for more education on human trafficking and research into optimal curriculum design in order to produce competent and capable future clinicians. This would suggest that educational institution can be one among the potential mediums to provide trafficking education.

5. Conclusion

The findings indicate that the community is aware and knowledgeable about human trafficking, however, some people still don't understand the nature, extent and concept of human trafficking due to their reliance on the media rather than direct participation. This would suggest that the community's interest, attitude, and conduct in knowing about, reacting to, and being able to grasp social concerns and crime can all have an impact on the level of knowledge and awareness on human trafficking. Practically speaking, the findings of this study provide a collection of baseline facts that policymakers, anti-trafficking advocates, and the media may utilize to create more effective awareness-raising initiatives and campaigns. The information dissemination programs and means needs empowerment to prevent misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the real nature, extent and scope of HT. Knowledge and awareness should not only be viewed as personal but also as communal obligations or a social responsibility because human trafficking can affect anyone at any time or place. Moreover, educational institutions can be seen as one potential medium to provide trafficking education and shall be seen as an opportunity to shape awareness among the youth and its personnel.

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Teen Suicide in One Province in Cordillera

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Abstract

As the teenage suicide was increasingly happening during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, this study was conducted purposely to determine the profile of victims of suicide as to age, sex, and educational background and identify the causes of teen suicide in one province in Cordillera. The qualitative design and snowball sampling method were used with the study. There were eight key informants composed of Philippine National Police (PNP) officers, teachers, and DSWD personnel. The study revealed that teens who committed suicide were between 1-21 years old and 22-41 years old. The majority of the suicide victims are males, senior high school, and college students. The causes of teenage suicide are the unseen image of suicide, depression, stress, personal problems, and promises not fulfilled due to poverty and hanging. This study finds that teen suicide can be prevented by giving importance to and acting upon family members' unseen images of suicide. In the light of the findings, this study proposes an intervention program dubbed as "Psychosocial Intervention Program for Teen Suicide." In the prevention of such acts, the family, along with government authorities such as the PNP and the DSWD, work hand in hand in helping individuals who are at the brink of their mental states to consider designing a psychosocial intervention geared toward this goal to incorporate activities that promotes prosocial behaviors and rekindling essential information on the unseen image of suicide.

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1. Introduction

Suicide is a phenomenon that is present in every society or culture. It is considered as one of the problems and challenges of modern society of the individual and the family as a functional unit (Gripshi, 2022). It is a growing concern worldwide and impacts family, friends and community (Bilsen, 2018). According to the World Health Organization (2021), 703,000 people commit suicide each year, and more are attempting suicide. Teen suicide, for instance, is a terrible and painful phenomenon. There is a sharp increase in teen suicides from time to time, which is becoming an epidemic (Chekstere et al., 2017). This made teen suicide the second leading cause of death among younger people aged 10 to 24 (Philip, 2022). Suicide among young people is one concern that needs to be prevented. Hence, it is important to gain as much insight as possible into the risk factors contributing to suicidal behavior in youth (Bilsen, 2018). All suicides are a tragedy that affects families, communities, and the country, with lasting effects on those left behind.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 in the United States. The incidence has been steadily rising, and 5.1% of male and 9.3% of female high school students are involved in these cases (Hink et al., 2022). Similarly, a nationwide survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007) and the Suicide Prevention Center (2004) cited suicide as the third largest cause of death for youths between the ages of 15 and 24, behind unintentional injury and homicide. In India, students die from suicide every hour, with 28 deaths occurring daily. In the Philippines, the estimated number of suicides in 2012 was 2,558 (550 females, 2009 males) (WHO, 2015). In the latest statistics from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), there was 25.7 % increase in suicide cases in 2020, making it the 27th leading cause of death in 2020 compared to 21st in 2019. As predicted by the World Health Organization (2012), by 2020, 1.53 million people will commit suicide for various reasons.

Due to the restrictions on social and economic activities imposed by governments through lockdowns around the world in response to COVID-19, including the closure of schools, have had a detrimental impact on children's mental health and well-being (MacLachlan et al., 2022). Staying home during lockdown is a stressful and difficult situation for some children. Pandemics are significant psychology that leads to developing or exacerbating anxiety, stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental disorders (Philip, 2021). As such, schoolchildren suicidal tendencies have increased significantly. Reports from other countries show a significant increase in suicide-related deaths in children during the blockade compared to the pre-blockade period. In addition, this is a

serious psychosocial and preventable problem, often underreported and ignored by others, even though it must be addressed promptly (Philip, 2021).

Before committing suicide, suicidal ideation, a suicidal thought of wishing to be dead, in teens occurs, ranging from a detailed plan to a fleeting consideration but does not include the final act of killing oneself (Joiner et al., 2003). Suicidal ideation refers to the belief that life is not worth living and the thought of intentionally ending life due to several reasons. These thoughts arose as a final solution to life's problems (Pederson, 2018). The American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment Survey (ACHA-NCHA) in 2000 found that 20% reported having suicidal ideation. In addition, The National Institute of Mental Health (2008) estimated 100-200 attempts for every completed suicide among youth. However, the majority of people who experience suicidal ideation do not carry it through. Some may, however, make suicide attempts. Suicidal ideations can be meticulously prepared to fail or be discovered in some instances, while others can be carefully planned to succeed. Suicidal thoughts are not commonplace in people who are stressed or depressed.

The concept of suicidal ideation is gaining more attention among researchers. Interestingly, suicidal ideation evolved during and after the major lockdowns around the world in which teens or children, including adults, started to form this behavior. The mounting rate of suicidal behaviors among children is a very serious psychosocial issue that requires a pressing concern in its prevention during and after the COVID-19 era. It calls for the collective efforts of all societal stakeholders to intervene effectively at the individual, family, and community levels to address suicidal behaviors among children (Philip, 2021).

Documented literature (i.e. Jayervand et al., 2013; Moran cited by Ganaprakasam, 2018) shows that psychological well-being includes self-acceptance, quality relationships with others, autonomy, and the purpose of life. In complex situations, coping is an important factor in predicting suicidal ideation. Currently, the causes of suicide are poorly understood, partly because very few studies have investigated the acute suicidal crisis. Although some biomarkers for predicting risk have been developed, none have been sufficiently validated (Nugent et al., 2019). Randall et al. (2010) discovered that a lack of parental permission contributed to suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Geographic characteristics are also crucial to the incidence of suicidal ideation, primarily resulting in suicide attempts.

Suicide is a highly complex issue, and the impact of preventive factors can be difficult to measure. However, looking purely at the ever-rising suicide rates, one could easily argue that the strategies in place today are missing the mark (Swan, 2022). With this number of suicide cases, from having suicidal thoughts or suicidal ideation to completing suicide, intervention, and assistance for suicidal teens seems to be lacking. Hence, looking into the behavioral aspect of what triggers teen suicide is essential and be able to lessen (at least) the prevalence of such acts through devising an intervention program in cooperation with the academe and other non-government institutions to hear adolescents in their silent cries for help.

The current study's core is discovering the factors attributed to adolescents' suicidal ideation. Specifically, describe their profile (age, gender, and educational level), the manner of suicidal attempts, and the factors contributing to suicide.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Demographic Pattern of Suicide

2.1.1 Age

A World Health Organization (WHO) report in 2015 indicated suicide as the second leading cause of death among people aged 15–29. In the USA, suicide is the main cause of death among people aged 24–44 years, and every year, more than 30,000 people die by suicide. In Indonesia, suicide is the second leading cause of death in the productive age of 15–29 years, the incidence of suicides increased during adolescence, and the adolescent suicide rate has tripled in the past 2 decades (Nurtanti et al., 2020). Adolescence refers to children between 13 and 19, but the term is used interchangeably with "teenager." This period is associated with increased behavioral and emotional responsiveness at risk in the context of developmental changes affected by external and internal factors that produce and enhance behavior (Salle et al., 2022).

Several studies found suicide victims in students and teens. For instance, the study of Manzar et al. (2021) revealed that 23 victims were students, of which 14 were school students. One of the disturbing trends was that one-third of suicides were in school-going teens. Similarly, Oregon Suicide Prevention (n.d.) recorded more than 500 young people between the ages of 10 and 24 hospitalized yearly for self-harm, including suicide attempts. In 2017 alone, more than 750 teens were hospitalized, and 107 committed suicide (Salle et al., 2022).

The subject of suicides in teens during a pandemic is less understood and continuously developing. Apart from the problems of age at which children cannot fully recognize the outcome of their actions, there are frequently domestic issues involved in suicides in this age group. Suicide statistics among people between the ages of 15-24 are particularly alarming; they rank 2-3 among the causes of death in developing countries (Natalia & Julie, 2021). Recently, it has been a great concern to examine suicide trends among teenagers. They are emotional and cannot tolerate difficult situations (Sadek et al., 2019). In addition, during the overall developmental stage of adolescence, youth must adjust to their physical and sexually maturing bodies and feelings; define their sense of identity and, adopt a personal value system; renegotiate their relationships with parents (Salle et al., 2022).

2.1.2 Sex

Suicide is more prevalent among men, whereas nonfatal suicidal behaviors are more prevalent among women and persons who are young, are unmarried or have a psychiatric disorder. In Indonesia, the Wonogiri Regency Police Completion Report (2016) showed 21 suicide cases: 14 cases (66%) occurred among males, and seven cases (34%) occurred among women (Nurtanti et al., 2020). The study of Lim et al. (2014) proved that males use more lethal methods of suicide (90% of adolescent males used hanging) compared to females (60% of females used overdose), making completion more likely to occur with less opportunity for last minute intervention. Meanwhile, women as a group more frequently attempted suicide rather than committing it, whereas men were more likely to complete suicides and choose more violent suicide methods; thus, women are the "attempters" and "survivors" of suicide attempts (Tsirigotis et al., 2011).

The most significant risk factors were being male, having a previous personal and family suicide attempt, mental health problems, substance abuse, previous physical and sexual abuse, low socioeconomic level, belonging to a single-parent family, underachievement, family dysfunction and violent environment (Cuesta et al., 2021). However, the multiple regression modeling of Galligan et al. (2010) revealed a complex relationship: competition and motivation for success in males were protective against suicidality while associating emotional disclosure with anxiety or negativity served as a risk factor. For this, Jung et al. (2019) suggested a gender difference in suicide. In general, suicide ideation and attempts are more common among females than males, but the suicide mortality rate is higher among males. This feature is referred to as the "gender paradox" in suicide. The most common explanation for the gender paradox is that males are more

likely to choose lethal suicide methods than females. The gender difference in suicide also appears to vary among countries and cultures, even within a single country.

2.1.3 Educational background

While teen suicide can be prevented through school-based intervention programs (Cooper et al., 2011), the analysis indicates that tertiary education attainment has mostly higher rates of suicide (Sharma, 2022). According to the findings of Hallfors et al. (2006), 17% of high school students in the United States seriously considered suicide attempts that year, and nearly 9% had at least one suicide attempt in the last 12 months whereas students in 9th (10%) and 10th (9%) grades were more likely than those in 11th (7%) and 12th (6%) grades to have attempted suicide in the past year.

In response to the problem of suicide, many schools acknowledge that suicide issues are often unavoidable, and school professionals are increasingly accepting the role of "gatekeeper" in dealing with suicidal students. As students disclose information about themselves in their daily interactions through conversations with peers, their writing, and general behavior towards school staff, they provide a gateway for teachers to detect warning signs of suicidal behavior and to offer support or refer them for professional help (Shilubane et al., 2015).

2.2. Depression and Suicidal Ideation

As suicides are considered secondary deaths due to their nature (Wanyoike, 2014), depression has been identified as a significant contributing factor. As per the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), an increase of 25.7 % showed that suicide incidents rose 25.7% in 2020, making it the 27th leading cause of death in 2020 from the 21st in 2019. As the Philippines' economy struggled to reopen amid a failed pandemic response, the number of deaths attributable to self-harm soared. In addition, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recorded one out of every four people aged 18 to 24 seriously considered suicide. Series of reports highlighted increased anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Literature shows an essential link between depression and suicidal ideation. Depressive symptoms were found to have the most significant predictive impact on suicide thoughts in college students compared to hopelessness and unpleasant life events (Guiterrez, 2005). The same finding was discovered in Asian adolescents and adults (Chen & Fan, 2004) and African American and European American college students. Even though suicide studies have various objectives and emphasis, researchers believe several elements frequently trigger suicidal ideation. Depression, hopelessness, low self-esteem, loneliness, student stress, academic problems, relationship, and

family issues, financial concerns, adjustment to college, adverse life events, and substance abuse are among the most identified and empirically supported risk factors contributing to suicide ideation among adolescents (Gutierrez, 2005). Although some suicides are not deliberate, suicidal ideation can be an essential associated factor in depressed individuals and one of the most urgent to address for individuals' safety.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Design

The study is qualitative, and a case study since it deals with an intensive systematic investigation conducted individually on the teachers, DSWD personnel, and PNP officers related to teen suicide. The study used qualitative research method because the topic suggests multiple realities that could not be reduced to simple variables but require open-ended questions that allow depth of expression. The qualitative investigation method is suitable for investigation as it requires the investigation of questions related to the involvement of police officers in the investigation of teenage suicide and leads to an overall and detailed understanding of the phenomenon. This study used qualitative research, particularly narrative design. It is the preferred method considering that the study conducted an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon within its context using various data sources. Further, using qualitative narrative design ensures that the topic underwent investigation and exploration thoroughly and deeply.

3.2. The Population of the Study

The key informants were the individuals who were able to deal with the victims and cases like the teachers who have a direct connection to their students in their performance at school, DSWD personnel in charge of assisting the family of the victims, and PNP officers who handle the investigation on teen suicide cases and can give detailed information about the causes. Snowball sampling was used to select the participants. The researchers generated a pool of participants based on the referrals from PNP who knows the causes of teen suicide. The study was conducted in Ifugao Province.

3.3. Data Gathering Tools

The primary tool to gather the data was interview guide questions prepared by the researchers converted through Google forms. The study also used secondary data to answer the

objectives of the study. Documentary analysis was used to analyze the age, gender, educational background, and causes of suicide based on the records of PNP. The profile of the respondents was ascertained from the said records, as well as the narrative of the suicidal attempts/ideation. Recorded data regarding suicidal ideation were used as a data gathering procedure.

3.4. Data Gathering Procedures

The researchers asked permission from the Provincial Director to gather data at the Provincial Police Office through the Investigation Section. The Non-Uniformed Personnel (NUP) under the investigation section prepared the requested data and released through the Police Community Relation Section (PCR). The assigned PCR staff gave the names and contact details of the Police officers on-case for the conduct the interview. The researchers then called police personnel who conducted the investigation on suicide cases and explained the research objectives. While waiting for the requested data from the PNP, the researchers visited the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office to personally hand in the letter for approval and explain to them the nature of the study. After visiting the DSWD, the researchers identified the schools with suicide cases through the referral of the PNP Officers and send the letter personally to explain a little background of the study being conducted.

After informing all the respondents about the ongoing study, researchers sent the survey with a consent form converted through Google form. Aside from the informed consent, the researchers ensured the confidentiality and anonymity agreement to protect the identity of the key informants that in no way their identity be disclosed or published in any part of the study unless they approved. All respondents' answers were recorded and collected from the Google forms.

The researchers did Documentary Analysis after collecting the requested data on the Age, Gender, Educational Attainment, and causes of suicide. The researchers transcribed the interview from the Google forms and collated all the data from the result of the documentary analysis together with the result of the interview.

3.5. Treatment of Data

The grouped data were mapped to arrive at codes for easier organization. The codes were then analyzed using Thematic Analysis (TA). The study used the method established by Braun and Clarke in doing TA. The six steps are as follows:

1. The researchers familiarized themselves with the data. This step required the researchers to be fully immersed and actively engaged in the data by transcribing the interactions,

reading (and re-reading) the transcripts, and listening to the recordings. Initial ideas were noted down. The researchers comprehensively understand the interaction's content and have familiarized themselves with all aspects of the data. This step provided the foundation for the subsequent analysis.

2. The researchers generated the first code. As researchers became familiar with the data, they identified tentative code, a feature of the data that looked interesting and meaningful. These codes are more specific than topics but provide context for the conversation.

3. The third step in the process is the start of an interpretive analysis by the researchers of the collected code. Relevant data extracts are sorted (joined or split) by parent topic.

4. The researchers reviewed the subject. A more detailed review of the identified theme follows. Here, researchers combined, refined, and separated the first themes. Researchers have created thematic maps to identify new problems.

5. Researchers have defined and named the topic. Inductive and semantic analysis was used to discuss the identified issues. A unified history of data has emerged from the theme

6. The researcher has created the report. Researchers turned the analysis into interpretable text using descriptive and compelling excerpts related to topics, research questions, and literature. The report communicated the results of the analysis in a way that convinced the reader of the value and validity of the analysis.

In addition, inductive analysis was used by researchers. The main purpose of the inductive approach was to derive research results from common, dominant, or important themes that are unique to raw data.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The study ensured that the key informants were well-informed about the study and its purpose. Before the interview, the researchers explained to the teachers, DSWD Personnel, and PNP Officers that their participation in the study was voluntary. They were not forced to answer information that may cause them discomfort. The researchers, before the interview, showed the list of questions to be asked through the link in the Google form. Further, the researchers maintained the confidentiality of the names of the people involved, and they were not named unless with their consent. The use of codes was also established to protect the identity of the respondents. Moreover, it was explained to the teachers, DSWD personnel, and PNP officers that they can withdraw from the study at any time with no adverse repercussions.

The study result will be disseminated by giving copies of the finalized paper to the schools with suicide cases in Ifugao, the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office, and Ifugao Police Provincial Office as a basis for the lessening and prevention of suicide cases in Ifugao.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Demographic Profile of the Suicide Victims

Obtained profile of the victims on the age, gender, and educational background was derived from the requested data from the Ifugao Police Provincial Office. Using the interview guide questions converted to Google forms, the researchers were able to get the causes of suicide as per record of the PNP and DSWD. Each respondent was allowed to answer questions in the Google form through the shared link. The eight (8) respondents came from PNP, DSWD, and Teachers. They were given pseudonyms with their code names as follows: KI1- PNP; KI2-PNP; KI3-Teacher; KI4-Teacher; KI5-Teacher; KI6-Teacher; KI7-Teacher; KI8 – PNP. The names of the informants were not disclosed to protect their identity.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the suicide victims

Characteristics	F
Age Range	
1-21	7
22-41	2
Gender	
Male	8
Female	1
Educational background	
Senior High School	7
College Student	2

As shown in table 1, based on the data provided by the Ifugao Police Provincial Office, the age bracket of teens who committed suicide is between the ages of 1-21 and 22-41 years. This particular age group is an important part of tracing the age who are prone to suicide. Most teens who commit suicide are from the ages of 1-21. For youth between the ages of 10 and 24, suicide is the third leading cause of death and loss each year (Singh et al., 2021). The prevalence of suicide among adolescents increases markedly with age. Due to their age, they are emotional and can't

tolerate the difficult situation. They think it is a permanent problem, so suicide is the only solution (Sadek et al., 2019).

The result further shows that most teens who commit suicide are males compared to females. Out of 8 teen suicide cases, 8 were males, and 1 was a female teen. It shows that males mostly commit suicide due to their nature that men are not expressive of what they feel. Many of these men did not know how to talk about these feelings or felt embarrassed to do so (McKenzie et al., 2018). They tend to keep their problems and cannot express them openly to others compared to a female who has more alternatives to expressing their problems. Identification of gender in suicide cases showed who is mostly to commit suicide, male or female. Manzar et al. (2021) found that more male suicides were reported. It was also revealed by O'Connor et al. (2021) that adolescent males are at significant risk for suicidality, and there is a need to assess and treat this life-threatening behavior. On the other hand, some men with depression wanted to talk to family or friends about their difficulties but had few or no people in their social networks with whom they trusted to share their feelings (Liang & George, 2012, as cited in McKenzie et al., 2018). Seeking advice from the victims to other people is impossible if they do not trust the person to share their problems. Victims keep themselves their problems if they cannot trust the person.

While these studies draw attention to the significant difficulties some men experience in seeking social support during times of distress, the authors are unable to theorize why men, in particular, might struggle to talk to other men or women about their struggles or how the gendered nature of men's social relationships may hinder their social connectedness (McKenzie et al., 2018). Further, suicidal men feel the need to be self-reliant and that they cannot find another way out of the relationship or socioeconomic issues. Suicide prevention is of crucial importance worldwide. The much higher rate of suicide in men engenders action. Men may not realize a change in their thinking and behaviors, which makes it more difficult to seek and get help, thereby interrupting a "downward spiral" (Balcombe & De Leo, 2022).

Most teens who commit suicide are senior high school students and college students. Usually, schools have suicide cases catering to teens studying in their school but did not continue due to this factor. Most suicide victims were senior high school students, followed by college students. It shows that most senior high school students are not adept at becoming independent to handle their problems since this grade requires independence from parents. These adolescents are inherently vulnerable to mental health problems, especially during adolescence. This period of life is characterized by movements, changes, and transitions from one state to another in several areas.

They also have to face new challenges regarding identity formation, self-esteem development, increased independence and responsibility, and building new intimate relationships (Bilsen, 2018).

4.2. Causes of Suicide

4.2.1. Unseen image of suicide: depression and stress

The unseen image of suicide characterizes the silent cries of individuals (particularly teen suicides) for help. The psychology of suicide posited that the causes of suicidal behavior are not fully understood; suicide happens due to the complex interaction of many factors. These factors may include personality and individual differences, cognitive factors, social aspects, and negative life events (O'Connor & Nock, 2014). It is a common perspective that behind every suicide attempt is a person at the edge of his state of mind to remain in homeostasis, but this goes beyond what is not conveyed. There have been myths and facts that revolve around how society views suicide; for example, adolescents or adults who talk about suicide will never commit the act, but the fact of the matter is talking about suicide can be a plea for help as the suicide attempt progresses. Another myth about suicide is that suicide happens without warning. The survivors of suicide often say that the intention was hidden, or it is better to say that the intention was just not recognized. The data gathered on the behaviors of those who committed and attempted suicide such as "*had a drinking spree with friends; singing gospel songs; asking for parents where they are"; "healthy"; "doing his routine activity"; "normal"; "the victim was acting the way he was";* "accordingly, *they said that he was a bit quiet, wake up early than usual. He cooked breakfast than he usually does"; "she wants to be alone"; "self-conscious and romantic"* seem to be manifestations of suicide that are not recognized.

The Nevada Office of Suicide prevention (2021) stated some information surrounding suicide that conforms to the data gathered for the study. Depression and self-destructive behaviors are rare in young people, but both forms of behavior are common in adolescents. However, varies in ways of manifestations from person to person. The respondents of the study at hand revealed in their transcripts of an interview that depression had been mostly the cause of suicide. Beirao et al. (2020) conformed to this and stated depression is a common mental health disease, especially in mid to late adolescence. Another myth is that all young people with suicidal thoughts or attempts are depressed, but this may not be true. While depression is a contributory factor in most suicides, it need not be present for a person to attempt or die by suicide. In other words, there have to be various intermingling reasons for committing suicide, as mentioned by the responses of the

respondents revealed that the survivors "did not submit school require"; "needed a touch screen cellphone for her online module, but her parents cannot afford to buy"; "stressed"; "preoccupied"; "the victim was previously suffering from an unknown disease." This implies that several elements frequently trigger suicidal ideation. Each suicide results from a complex dynamic and unique interplay between numerous contributing factors such as previous attempts, specific personality characteristics, and family processes combined with triggering psychosocial stressors (Bilsen, 2018). Aria et al. (2009) further agree with this claim that depression, hopelessness, low self-esteem, loneliness, student stress, academic problems, relationship, and family issues, financial concerns, adjustment to college, adverse life events, and substance abuse are among the most identified and empirically supported risk factors contributing to suicide ideation among college students.

Even though suicide studies have various and dissimilar objectives, researchers believe several elements frequently trigger suicidal ideation. Depression, hopelessness, low self-esteem, loneliness, student stress, academic problems, relationship, and family issues, financial concerns, adjustment to college, adverse life events, and substance abuse are among the most identified and empirically supported risk factors contributing to suicide ideation among college students (e.g., Arria et al., 2009; Konick & Gutierrez, 2005; Paladino & Minton, 2008).

Suicidal ideation occurs when a person is depressed and thinks about death, how to commit suicide, the consequences of suicide, and any other possibilities related to suicide or death. One out of every ten college students has had suicidal thoughts or attempted suicide during their time there (Emory University, 2015). Suicidal ideation can be a significantly associated factor in depressed individuals and one of the most urgent to address for individuals' safety. Although some suicides are not deliberate, suicidal ideation can be an essential associated factor in depressed individuals and one of the most urgent to address for individuals' safety. Feelings of hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, and being physically harmed by the physical features of depression and suicidal ideation concern an individual's capacity to attain their full potential and live a satisfying life (Comer, 2014).

4.4.2. Contained personal problems

Online education emerged as an effective stopgap for continuing education during COVID-19- induced school closures. However, the transition to online learning might have been challenging for some students for varying reasons (Kadse et al., 2022). Students go through a

transitional phase as they have to the different pressures of distance learning, followed by traditional or face-to-face learning once they are back in school (Neal, 2020 as cited in Windarwati et al., 2022).

Although online education has helped millions of children continue learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, it underscores the important challenges experienced by students frequently reported associated with student suicides, the inability to access online education, which indicated unequal learning opportunities. As presented by Khadse et al. (2022), a recent National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) survey reported that students lack smartphones and laptops to study online. The lack of smartphones to study online is one of the factors that hamper students from complying with their online activities and attending their classes. The respondents proved this in their statements.

"She told one of her friends that she needed a touch screen cellphone for her online module, but her parents cannot afford to buy it."

Another statement of the respondents below shows a contained problem encountered by some students before the suicide.

"Didn't submit some important requirements of the subjects I handled."

It proves that some students could not submit their academic requirements due to the lack of smartphones used in submitting their activities and attending online classes. Further, the opportunity of students to learn was deprived. Their failure to perform the requirements given by their teachers cannot be achieved on the specific time and date, causing them to be pressured and feel wrong about themselves, which leads them to the idea of committing suicide. Affirmed in the study of Khadse et al. (2022) that the second most frequent reason underlying student suicide was an inability to cope with online education. Also, the issues related to connectivity and unavailability of smartphones, televisions, and other gadgets add to students' mental imbalance and well-being (Bisht et al., 2020).

Suicide occurs when individuals have some problems that they cannot solve because of a lack of family support. The causal factors related to one another caused the suicidal behavior. One of the most effective suicide prevention strategies is educating the community on how to identify suicidal signs and increase social support (Nurtanti et al., 2020).

4.2.3. Promised but not fulfilled due to poverty

Socioeconomically weaker sections of society, especially in rural areas, have lesser utilization of digital technology, which might also be reflected in online education (Khadse et al.,

2022). Students are very hard to purchase smartphones for their studies due to the poor economic situation of their parents. In one of the COVID-19 suicide cases, it was reported that financial problems caused by the national lockdown are the most prominent risk factor, followed by fear of COVID-19 infection (Bhuiyan et al. 2020; Mamun and Griffiths 2020, as cited in Mamun et al., 2020).

Results showed that some parents of victims of suicide could not afford to buy new cellphones because of financial constraints due to poverty. They advised their teens to buy it later, but it has not happened. This creates pressure on the victim's part to commit suicide due to failure or non-compliance with school requirements. The inability of the parents to produce such gadgets as smartphones cause the victim to end his life.

"Her mother promised to buy her a touch screen cellphone; however, time passed and never fulfilled due to poverty."

Suicide is a personal way to end one's life. Some risk factors for suicide include instability of socioeconomic conditions, poverty, unemployment, and orientations of individualism and collectivism. Moreover, poverty, high unemployment rates, and low health status are risk factors that can lead to suicide cases. The characteristics contributing to suicide attempts were male gender, age (adolescence and old age), lack of religious activities, introverted nature, low economic status, chronic diseases, unemployment, and a history of family members with suicide attempts (Nurtanti et al., 2020).

4.3. Common Form of Suicide

Hanging was the most common suicide method accounting for suicide cases (Manzar et al., 2021). It is one of the most commonly used methods for suicide in both sexes worldwide. Hanging was adopted or contemplated for two main reasons: the anticipated nature of death from hanging; and accessibility.

Results revealed that hanging is the most common method used by victims who committed suicide due to its availability and easiest method to perform through strangulation. Victims easily hung themselves and were strangulated with rope and electrical cord. Out of 8 respondents, 6 answered that victims of suicide used hanging in committing suicide.

"Hanging by using an extension cord."

"Strangulation by hanging herself."

Those favoring hanging anticipated a certain, rapid, and painless death with little awareness of dying. They believed it was a 'clean' method that would not damage the body or leave harrowing

images for others. The victims easily accessed hanging materials, and respondents considered it 'simple' to perform without planning or technical knowledge. Hanging was thus seen as the 'quickest' and 'easiest' method with few barriers to completion and sometimes adopted despite not being a first choice (Biddle et al., 2010).

The accessibility in their homes and its easy use aids them in committing suicide quickly without attracting the attention of their family members during the commission of suicide. Previous studies support that some authors indicated that males more frequently use highly lethal methods of suicide, such as hanging or firearms, than females (Ilic & Ilic, 2022).

5. Conclusion

Teen suicide can be prevented by giving importance to and acting upon family members' unseen images of suicide. Maintaining closer relationships and knowing the problems of their teens are the role of parents and family members to perform. The provision of school needs of teens to continue their studies must be fulfilled by parents. Their teens should understand its provision that it must be given based on financial capacity at a specific time. Lastly, saving the lives of teens attempting suicide and its prevention is the role not only given to families but also to the whole community.

In the light of the findings and conclusions of this study, the study recommends the following to address the causes of teen suicide in one province in Cordillera:

- Parents with teens must be oriented to be aware of the warning signs of suicide in the form of symposiums or seminars in the community, including their role in the provision of their children's school needs.
- Parents and family members should inquire about the situation and problems of their teens to help them address them.
- Parents should be responsible enough to provide for the school needs of their teens.
- Teens must attend a symposium or seminar on mental health to help them become resilient to the challenges in their studies.
- Schools must organize a program on mental health for teens through their guidance counsellor to activate its implementation.

In the light of the findings, this study proposes an intervention program dubbed as "Psychosocial Intervention Program for Teen Suicide." In the prevention of such acts, the family,

along with government authorities such as the PNP and the DSWD, work hand in hand in helping individuals who are at the brink of their mental states to consider designing a psychosocial intervention geared toward this goal to incorporate activities that promotes prosocial behaviors and rekindling essential information on the unseen image of suicide.

Objectives	Activities	Persons Involved	Duration	Learning Outcome
To inform the community of the prevalence and the psychology of suicide	Information Drive utilizes flyers, lectures on the topic	PNP DSWD	It can be done once a month	An informed community will immerse themselves, making a community a safe place.
To inculcate prosocial behaviors and cohesiveness within the family	Family day is a form of socialization in the barangay Sensitivity activity on "roots and wings of my personhood."	DSWD/Social workers Barangay Council The Family	It can be done after every 2 months.	Revitalizing the basic unit of society can be beneficial in deviating suicidal ideations.
To recognize one's strengths and weaknesses.	Seminar/Workshop on Personality Enhancement/Personality Assessment/Reorientation of values	DSWD/Social workers/Psychologist; The family	Can be conducted twice a year	Knowing oneself makes a high probability of understanding and coping with pent-up emotions. Distinguishing one's moral values is a springboard to understanding the essence of life.
Follow-up	Follow-up	DSWD The Family	It can be conducted once every 2 months	Follow-ups are important to evaluate the program's effectiveness and learn better ways of sustaining the helping program.

Psychosocial intervention refers to an individual's psychological development and interaction with his social environment, including case counseling, seminars, and motivational enhancement. Non-pharmacological interventions include psychological and educational components such as relaxation training, cognitive and behavioral coping strategies, information sessions, and group social support (National Cancer Institute, nd). The intervention selection is guided by the nature of the problem, the orientation of the lecturer/speaker/social worker/therapist, the setting, and the willingness and ability of the client to undergo coping strategies/treatment (Juan & Bollecer, 2019). Thus, psychosocial intervention is designed to reduce psychological

distress and maladaptive behavior and to increase adaptive behavior, typically through counseling, support, interaction, or instruction.

The Psychosocial intervention is based on the result of the transcribed responses of the respondents with emerging and core themes derived as *"nakatagong emosyon" (hidden emotions)* to describe the unseen image of suicide, specifically the overt and covert manifestations of suicide, also is *"pagtulong"* (Helping) illustrating a psychosocial intervention as an important component for helping both the family and the community to understand their role in preventing suicide fully.

It was mentioned in the gathered data that those who committed suicide show a healthy disposition, which appears to be normal since everyday routine is evident; however, there are unspoken silent cries for help that these adolescents cannot talk about; hence they become anxious, depressed, stressed but still show some ways of coping by singing gospel songs and drinking spree with friends. A family's biggest gift is to spend time together despite a busy schedule. Sharing quality time not only strengthens and builds family ties but also brings a sense of belonging and a sense of security to the whole family. Enjoying activities together benefits children by learning important social skills and fostering higher self-esteem. Strong family ties also encourage better behavior for children, improve academic performance and enhance parent-child communication (Witmer, 2020).

As part of the psychosocial intervention program are information drives regarding suicide: team building, re-orientating values, and personality enhancement are believed to promote prosocial behaviors. These are included in the program, for it is well known that most young people will not actively seek help from professionals, parents, teachers, and often not even from their peers (Howard, 2006 cited by Wasserman et al., 2012). This notion is based on a pilot study conducted by the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) in 2002 to raise knowledge and awareness about mental health in young people. The assumption was that useful information would enable communication concerning mental health without raising unrealistic expectations about generally unavailable professional help. The results showed that it was possible to change attitudes, including those about suicide, by influencing the behavioral responses of the pupils and parents (Hoven, 2009).

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The Effect of Expressive Writing on the Health Conditions of College Students Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

Portia R. Marasigan

Abstract

Expressive writing alludes to composing in which a person depicts profound considerations and sentiments encompassing the important event, the topic, or the area. As the world suffers from the COVID-19 pandemic, school and universities changed their teaching modalities from face-to-face teaching-learning process to online classes. Students were affected especially from lower socioeconomic localities of their limited financial ability to acquire the necessary equipment for learning and internet connection. In addition, they felt social isolation, lack of interaction with fellow students and the uncertainty of when the pandemic will be over. Hence, the study aimed to determine the effect of expressive writing on the psychological and physical conditions of the college students. The study used experimental design with pre-test and post-test and randomly assigned the respondents into the control group writing about their daily activities and the experimental group using expressive writing with each group has 60 respondents. The results showed that there is a significant difference in the health conditions between the experimental group treated with expressive writing and the control group treated with neutral condition. In conclusion, using expressive writing can overcome traumas and emotional upheavals thus resolves issues and improves health conditions.

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1. Introduction

As the world suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, the Philippines is one of the highly affected (Hemly et al., 2020) that led to the imposition of enhanced quarantine on school activities in Luzon, the country's northernmost and most populous island. Accordingly, the government closed schools and allowed some of the workforce, including professors, to work from home. Educational institutions moved from face-to-face activities to popular online learning modalities (Malolos et al., 2021). Although majority of the students are affected, those from lower class families had a greater psychological burden due to their limited financial ability to purchase the necessary equipment and internet connectivity. Given this, the information divide resulting from socioeconomic inequality may result in inequalities in student mental health during the pandemic (Cleofas & Rocha, 2021).

Dumalao-Abadilla (2022) cited the research conducted by Phinma Education network that the pandemic has severely impacted the mental health of college students, especially those from poor families. They were more concerned about tuition fees, devices, internet reliability and future job prospects compared to their wealthier peers. As the household financial status is related to student psychological well-being during the pandemic, they find that the prevalence of loneliness, anxiety and stress is increasing across socioeconomic classes. Their concerns relate to household expenses such as medical expenses, sick family benefits, adequate household income, enrollment and distance learning costs. However, those experiencing loneliness, anxiety, and stress increased across all income segments. High-income students have facilities and enough space to study, whereas low-income students have little or no technical resources, cramped spaces, inadequate lighting and ventilation, and noisy environments. They suffer from environments that are not conducive to learning, such as neighborhoods. In addition to the psychological distress, there is a high level of uncertainty about how the pandemic will affect their willingness to work. Students become distracted and unmotivated due to fast changing of the future (Dumlao-Abadilla, 2022).

The abrupt transition to online classes brought psychological effects to college students due to continuous isolation and lack of interaction with fellow students and teachers (Lim et al., 2022). According to Curtis (2020), the pandemic has a negative impact on the mental health of many students. In fact, the May 2020 survey found that 7 in 10 teens said they had mental health problems, 61% said they experienced increased loneliness, and 43% said they experienced depression. 55% said they experienced anxiety. This suggest that educators should be on the lookout for signs that students are struggling. While Loades et al. (2020) suggest that child

social isolation and loneliness are associated with increased mental health problems, people additionally want to undertake new techniques to help the social and emotional wellbeing of college students for the duration of distance learning. There are many uncertainties in the world, and many students can experience feelings of hopelessness and depression as they think about when things will return to normal. Depression actually alters the ability to think, impairs concentration and memory, and impairs information processing and decision-making. Curtis (2020) concludes that when students stop discussing in class, never finish their homework, say their work is meaningless, have a negative attitude, or report of loss of energy or are unmotivated, students develop depression and despair. The consequences of COVID-19 to the students' mental health are already visible and the most common psychological disorders emerging are anxiety and panic, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, insomnia, digestive problems, as well as depressive symptoms and post-traumatic stress (Pietrabissa & Simpson, 2020).

Psychologically, personal upheaval causes severe and prolonged emotional changes. Unforeseen phenomenon is commonly related with mental deficits such as deep thought about something and trying to comprehend what is happening and why. Trauma is said to be due to massive disruption of people's social interactions and personal relationships (Pennebaker & Chung, 2007)). Trauma due to behavioral and possibly social and psychological changes are often related with change of way of living such as smoking and drinking heavily, lack of exercise, sleep and eating habits. Each of the physical and behavioral effects is associated with different biological changes, such as elevated cortisol, immune system dysfunction, cardiovascular changes, and a cascade of neurotransmitter alterations (Pennebaker & Chung, 2007).

Coping with trauma from a natural and man-made disasters can present unique challenges, even if they are not directly involved in the event. Plane crashes and mass shootings are unlikely to occur even if they are the direct victim of a terrorist attack, or the COVID-19 pandemic, they are all aware of these threats on social media and news sources. They are regularly exposed to horrific images of people. Repeated viewing of these images can overload the nervous system and cause traumatic stress (Robinson et al., 2022). Mendelson (2020) suggests several ways to get past a trauma, improve health, and build resilience: relaxation techniques including yoga and meditation; strenuous exercise and improved eating habits; and rewrite one's story. In some cases, writing about own experience can be helpful.

Unlike communicative forms of writing, expressive writing is personal, free flowing, and informal, often without concern for style, spelling, punctuation, or grammar (Lepore & Kliewer,

2013). Expressive writing often contains value affirmations that are personally relevant and/or provide a useful connection between subject understanding or mastery. Expressive writing can unlock some of additional resources by facing, labeling, and organizing thoughts and feelings (Stafura, 2019). As such, expressive writing can decrease the level of stress, anxiety, and depression, improve sleep and performance, and brings focus and clarity (Siegel-Acevedo, 2021). There is reason to believe that physical and mental health often improves when people translate their feelings and thoughts about personally distressing experiences into language. However, a growing body of research indicates that people who write about trauma can lead to better health on psychological, behavioral, biological and social measures. According to Pennebaker and Evan (2014), using expressive writing to overcome traumas and emotional upheavals, resolve issues, improve health, and build resilience.

With the various arguments on expressive writing, this study determines the effect of expressive writing on the health conditions of the college students during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the results of the study, expressive writing can be integrated by teachers in their subject matter to improve the psychological well-being of their students. As such, the study argues that the independent variable (expressive writing) influences the dependent variable (health conditions) of the study as shown in figure 1. The health conditions are manifested by anxiety symptoms, depressive symptoms and physical symptoms.

Figure 1

Research Paradigm
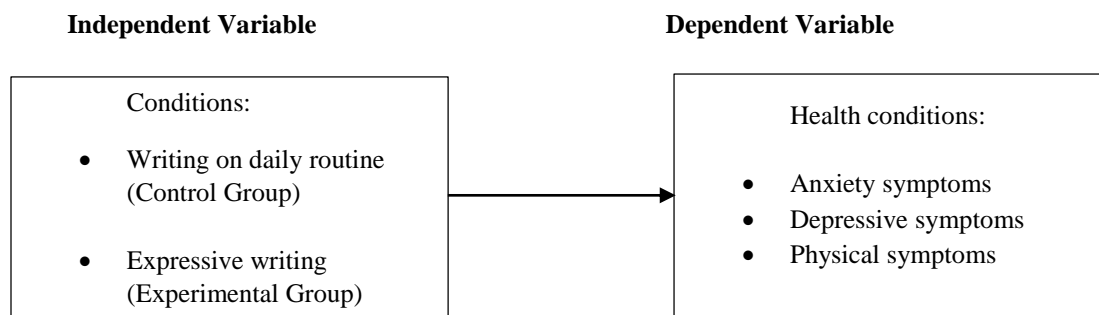
2. Literature review

2.1. Effects of Expressive Writing

According to Baikie and Wilhelm (2018), writing about trauma, stress, or emotional events has been found to lead to improvements in both physical and mental health in nonclinical and

clinical populations and those who wrote about these events this generally have significantly better physical and psychological outcomes than with those who write on neutral topics. However, in the study of Niles et al. (2014), they assessed the major effects and mediators (including emotional expressiveness, emotional processing and ambivalence over emotional expression) of the effects of expressive writing in a sample of healthy adults. It was found out that no significant effect of writing condition was evident on anxiety, depressive symptoms, or physical symptoms but emotional expressiveness emerged as a significant mediator of anxiety outcomes. In contrast, Colino (2016) found out that whether people are holding pen to paper or typing on a computer, writing about stressful experiences and emotional problems in life is good for health and emotional well-being. Expressive writing, based on putting their heart and mind into words without worrying about spelling, punctuation, grammar, or other writing conventions, is good medicine. It aids recovery from childhood sexual abuse and postpartum depression, and improves mental health in people with Parkinson's disease, cancer, and many other health conditions.

In the study conducted by Procaccia et al. (2021), participants who were treated with expressive writing resulted to significant decreased in symptoms of PTSD, depression, and global mental disorders. Their improvement was also related to age, sex, civil status, and baseline values: those who are young, male, married and have higher baseline scores resulted with decreased psychological symptoms whereas those who are female, single and have lower baseline value resulted in higher social support, and resilience. Thus, expressive writing intervention has caused positive effects according to the profile of the health workers.

Russell (2020) also examined the students' experience meaningful through expressive writing process. The impact on practice includes helping college students learn from stressful events in their academic careers, process thoughts and emotions, release fears, and develop new ideas about their goals through a process of self-reflection, such as how expressive lighting can help. gain perspective. For this, Travagin et al. (2015) suggested expressive writing as it is likely to result little but significant improvements on well-being, which highlights the relevance of changing conventional expressive writing protocols so as to improve their effectiveness and lower possible unfavorable effects.

In another study, Krpan et al. (2013) assessed forty people diagnosed with current Major Depressive Disorder (MDD). The result showed patients diagnosed with MDD treated with expressive writing showed significant decreases in depression scores (Beck Depression Inventory and Patient Health Questionnaire-9 scores) right after the Day 5 experimental manipulation. These

data suggest that expressive writing may be a useful supplement to existing interventions for depression. This is the exact findings of Wiora (2021) in a study that explores how expressive writing can help individuals process trauma, and how the introduction of expressive writing exercises into first-year writing classes in particular can benefit students. It shows that expressive writing is beneficial for both physical and mental health, and that people instinctively seek to understand themselves and their experiences, and seek understanding from others Just as students seek academic success, they seek understanding of themselves and the world, especially after a global pandemic. Thus, introducing expressive writing into first-year writing classes is a step towards helping students achieve both and achieve more.

The ANCOVA regression model of Di Blasio et al. (2015) showed that depressive symptoms and post-traumatic stress decreased in women performing expressive writing tasks than in the non-expressive writing group at three months. Furthermore, the treatment condition was significantly related with lowering of depression at high and moderate levels of baseline depression. As for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the results presented that the treatment was significantly related with symptoms reduction at all levels of baseline PTSD. In large part, these results suggest that expressive writing can serve as an early, inexpensive and universal intervention to prevent postpartum stress in women. For this, Argudo (2021) concluded that writing expressive texts in their native language before the formal assessment helped participants reduce the academic stress levels caused by participating in the formal assessment. Additionally, using another strategy, such as expressive writing, aimed at reducing particular sources of stress and anxiety, may significantly reduce academic stress.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the Habituation Theory. Habituation is a decrease in response to a stimulus after repeated presentations. The American Psychological Association describes habituation that involves "growing accustomed to a situation or stimulus," thereby diminishing its effectiveness (Cherry, 2022). According to Lustbader (2022), habituation is another way of describing adaptation. As humans, they gradually adapt to changing circumstances so that they are less affected than they were before. Reactions to stimuli diminish over time with constant exposure. One way to think about it is to compare it to building tolerance to a medicine. Habituation theories vary somewhat, but all agree that what matters is the stimulus that elicits a weaker response in the brain over time. The problem is, people tend to overestimate the impact that experiences and situations will have on them in the future. In some cases, this is good

considering the grief someone feels after breaking up with a romantic partner can get used to the idea and move on (Lustbader, 2022). In addition, Mukherjee (2022) stated as people get used to repeated exposures, develop certain routines, and know it will happen again. Because the stimulus is no longer new, the response slowly and steadily diminishes over time, adapts to changing environments and situations and becomes less susceptible to them than it used to be. In this way, habituation also becomes a kind of tolerance and adaptation. Another to take note about habituation is that the decreased behavioral response is not due to motor or sensory fatigue. From this, it can conclude that the stimulus is ignored after repeated exposure (Mukherjee, 2022).

3. Methodology

This study used experimental approach, which the primary purpose was to assess the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. This design was used since it complies to the two criteria of experimental approach: control of the independent variable and the randomization of the samples.

The respondents of this study were the four (4) sections of third year BS Psychology students during the school year 2020-2021. The two (2) sections were assigned as the control group with sixty (60) students and the other two (2) sections were assigned as the experimental group also with sixty (60) students, with a total of one hundred twenty (120) students. The study used sample through randomization to select the respondents of the study. To randomly select which sections will be assigned to the two groups, the study used fishbowl technique. Using this technique, the researcher draws lots and the first two (2) sections drawn were assigned as the control group and the remaining two (2) sections were assigned as the experimental group.

This study utilized the following standardized tests namely: (1) Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS) developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995b) to measure anxiety, depression, and stress with 42 items; (2) Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), a 21-item self-reporting questionnaire for evaluating the severity of depression in normal and psychiatric populations created by Aaron T. Beck in 1961; (3) Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), published originally in 1977 by Radloff, which is composed of 20 items to rate the frequency over the past week a person experienced symptoms associated with depression, such as restless sleep, poor appetite, and feeling lonely; (4) Brief Symptom Inventory, developed by Derogatis in 1975, it represents an important standardized screening instrument that can quantitatively record mental stress and mental disorders; and (5) Pennebaker Inventory of Limbic

Languidness (PILL), 54-item self-assessment test that measures people's propensity to perceive and report various physical symptoms and sensations.

The researcher distributed the consent form to the respondents which includes, the purpose of the study, the procedure on conducting the study, and its benefits. It also includes the terms regarding confidentiality, contact information, and conditions regarding their voluntary participation and consent. The researcher created the pre-test which contains: (a) the 7 items of Depression subscale of the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale, the 21 items of Beck Depression Inventory, and the 20 items of Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale to measure the depressive symptoms; (b) the 7 items of Anxiety subscale of the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale and 13 items of the Anxiety and Somatization subscales from the Brief Symptom Inventory to measure the anxiety symptoms; and (c) the 54 items of Pennebaker Inventory of Limbic Languidness (PILL)) to measure the physical symptoms. Upon acceptance, the researcher sent the link of the Google form containing the pre-test to measure their health conditions. Afterwards, their scores were tabulated and the participants with low scores were eliminated since this shows that they do not feel distress and were not affected so much of the current situation. After identifying the participants, the researcher randomly assigned two sections as control group which was treated with neutral condition and the other 2 sections were assigned as the experimental group and was treated with expressive writing condition.

The researcher met the control group and experimental group separately for four (4) consecutive days to conduct the experiment every 9:00 am and 10:00 am, respectively. In the control group, the researcher instructed them to write for 20 minutes about their day-to-day activities. It's like writing a daily journal, writing the things that they did from the previous day from the moment they wake up until the night they went to bed. Once they began writing, they should not stop writing and do not have to worry about spelling or grammar, may write in any language they were comfortable. Lastly, they photographed their writings and uploaded them in the google classroom. They did the same activity for four (4) consecutive days.

As for the experimental group, same instruction was given but the participants were instructed to write about a trauma or emotional upheavals that have profoundly affected their life. They may write about the same event on all four days or about different events each day. In order to assure the respondents to really write their deepest thoughts and feelings, they were informed that the writings they will do are for their eyes only. Finally, after the four writing activities, both

groups were given post-test containing the same measures as the pre-test to determine their health conditions after the experiment.

The results of the scores were tabulated and then conducted statistical analysis of data. This study used the following statistical tools: Mean to measure the average scores of the respondents and t-test to compare the mean of the control and experimental groups in a statistical method.

4. Findings and Discussion

This part presents the results of the study using tables and figures with their respective discussion and interpretations.

Table 1

Mean scores of Pre-test and Post-test

Variable	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Mean Score	**S.D.**	**Mean Score**	**S.D.**
Control Group				
Anxiety	26.15	12.95	26.37	12.52
Depression	51.62	17.98	51.83	17.47
Physical	71.73	26.73	71.08	26.42
Experimental Group				
Anxiety	24.62	13.83	19.82	11.93
Depression	53.77	24.57	44.38	21.21
Physical	73.55	31.03	67.2	30.05

Table 1 shows the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test of the control group. It is evident that the scores of the respondents in the pre-test and post-test are both high which indicate an increased level on anxiety, depression and physical symptoms due to the distressing situations. Furthermore, their scores are closed to each other before and after the experiment since the condition given to them was writing their daily activities and thus after the experiment, the respondents still garnered the same level of health conditions.

As to the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group, it presents that the scores of the respondents in the post-test have lowered thus it can be assumed that after the treatment was given which is writing their deepest thoughts, traumatic and stressful experiences, their health conditions have improved since it has reduced the levels of their anxiety, depression and physical symptoms.

Table 2

Test of Difference Between Pre-Test and Post-Test

Test	Mean	Difference	T-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Control Group					
Pre-Test	149.5	0.22	0.416	0.063	Not Significant
Post-Test	149.28				
Experimental Group					
Pre-Test	151.93	20.53	4.67	0	Significant
Post-Test	131.4				

p < 0.05, significant; p > 0.05, not significant

Table 2 shows the t-test result between the means of the pre-test and post-test of the control group and experimental group.

In the pre-test, the control group gained a mean of 149.50 while the post-test has 149.28. The mean difference of 0.220 shows a very little or no change at all in the behavior of the participants. With a t-value of 0.416 and p-value of 0.063 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference between the means of the pre-test and post-test of the respondents who were treated with non-expressive writing. This shows that the condition in which the respondents were exposed to which is writing only their daily activities did not change their behavior at all, and that they still have the same health conditions. Furthermore, it indicates that the anxiety, depression and physical symptoms of the respondents were still the same since they were not constantly exposed to the stimulus that causes their discomfort or distressed.

In the pre-test, the experimental group gained a mean of 151.93 while the post-test showed 131.40. The mean difference of 20.530 shows a change in the behavior of the respondents. With a t-value of 4.670 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies a significant difference between the means of the pre-test and post-test of the respondents who were treated with expressive writing led to the change in their behavior thus it has reduced their symptoms. The results infer that due to the constant exposure of the respondents to their trauma or emotional upheaval through writing or journaling have alleviated their discomfort or distressed since the respondents have gradually adjusted to the changed situation and have built tolerance to the circumstances and finally develop a kind of routine due to

the repeated exposure to the stimulus. As cited by Pennebaker and Evan (2014), expressive writing may make the person sad for a brief time after writing, but the long-term effects are far more positive. People who engage in EW report feeling happier and less negative than they felt before writing.

The result of this study can be compared to the study of Hines et al. (2016) in which both studies administered pre-test and post-test measures for physical symptoms of stress and anxiety. The EW intervention was given to two groups where the experimental group wrote on a value latent topic and the control group wrote on a neutral topic. The difference of this study with the mentioned is that it only showed significant reduction in the level of anxiety, depression and physical symptoms in the experimental group whereas in the other study, it showed that the experimental group reported significantly decreased levels of general and mathematics anxiety after the writing intervention and the control group had decreased in mathematics anxiety after the expressive writing intervention.

Table 3

Test of Difference Between Pre-test Scores of Control and Experimental Group

Group	Mean	Difference	T-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Control	149.50	2.430	0.708	0.103	Not Significant
Experimental	151.93				

p < 0.05, significant; p > 0.05, not significant

Table 3 shows the t-test result between the mean scores of the pre-test of the two groups. The mean difference of 2.430 shows a very little difference in their scores. With a t-value of 0.708 which is greater than the p-value of 0.103, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it is not significant. This implies that the respondents on both groups have the same level of discomfort or health conditions before the start of the experiment.

Table 4 shows the t-test result between the mean scores of the post-test of the two groups. With mean differences of 6.550, 7.450 and 3.880 for anxiety symptoms, depressive symptoms and physical symptoms, respectively, it can be assumed that in all aspects, the respondents have gained changes in their behavior and with p-value of 0.000 in all variables, this infers that the hypothesis was rejected, which means that using the expressive writing was the cause of the change in the respondents' behavior and that it is the expressive writing done by the respondents had reduced

their discomfort due to traumatic or stressful experiences and has improved their health conditions. It further shows that due to the repeated exposure to the trauma or stressful events through writing them constantly, it had lowered the levels of their anxiety, depression and physical symptoms since the respondents have developed tolerance to the circumstances and gradually adjusted to the situations. Through the EW, they were able to release emotional tension and pent-up emotions. Reports of depressive symptoms, rumination, and general anxiety tend to drop in the weeks and months after writing about emotional upheavals. Furthermore, as people write about traumas, they often show immediate signs of reduced stress; lower muscle tension in their face, have lower blood pressure and heart rates (Pennebaker & Evan, 2014).

Table 4

Test of Difference Between Post-test Scores of Control and Experimental Group

Variable	Control	Experimental	Difference	T-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Anxiety Symptoms	26.37	19.82	6.550	10.000	0.000	Significant
Depressive Symptoms	51.83	44.38	7.450	11.001	0.000	Significant
Physical Symptoms	71.08	67.20	3.880	4.892	0.000	Significant

$p < 0.05$, significant; $p > 0.05$, not significant

The result of this study is similar to the study of Kennison et al. (2019) wherein both studies aimed to determine the effects of expressive (EW) interventions on respondents' mental and physical health and stress levels. In the said study, it compared the SF-36v2® before and after testing showed significant improvements in the experimental group of their mental health compared to the control group. They said that they would suggest the EW to someone to deal with stress or traumatic experiences. In summary, expressive writing can assist freshman self-care when dealing with any stressful or traumatic situations. Similarly, in this study, results also showed that the participants in the experimental group, there was a decreased in the level of depressive, anxiety and physical symptoms before and after the expressive writing. Furthermore, there was difference in the improvement of health conditions between the experimental group and control group.

5. Conclusion

The study aimed to determine the effect of expressive writing on the health conditions of the college students. Specifically, it sought to find out the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group and experimental group. Findings showed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the pretest and post-test of the respondents whose writings were about their daily activities while there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test of the respondents who used expressing writing. Furthermore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test of the group who wrote about their daily activities and the group who used expressive writing while there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the post-test of the two groups as to anxiety symptoms, depressive symptoms and physical symptoms. In conclusion, using expressive writing can overcome traumas and emotional upheavals thus resolves issues and improves the health conditions.

This study finds expressive writing to have great potential as a therapeutic tool and a means of self-care incorporating both the thought and feeling components of the traumatic and emotional experiences that will be helpful, both physically and emotionally. Hence, future researches can explore more of the emotion words, compare different social, race, and gender characteristics in different college populations. Expressive writing may be integrated in the students' courses to facilitate motivation of students and to expose them in their emotional upheavals so that they can build tolerance to their circumstances so that they will gradually adjust to their changed situation.

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