

EXPLORING THE SUICIDAL IDEATION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ON MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Balita, Jasper L.¹
Bancoro, Czareen Faith M.²
Corneja, May Marcell M.³
Culabat, Mark Brian B.⁴
Moster, Raizel Anne O.⁵
Rodeno, Mark Clifford E.⁶
Subing, Krishna Marie C.⁷

^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} University of Batangas, Lipa City, Philippines

Corresponding author: 2420833@ub.edu.ph

Abstract

The study “Exploring Suicidal Ideation among College Students: A Development Program on Mental Health Challenges” investigates the underlying factors contributing to suicidal thoughts, behaviors, and coping mechanisms among college students. Using a qualitative research design and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), it explores student’s lived experiences to understand how academic pressure, social expectations, and emotional distress influence suicidal ideation. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and validated tools such as the Suicide Behaviors Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R) and the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS). Findings revealed two major themes: Cultivating Emotional Balance and Transforming Mental Health through Support and Action. These emphasize the importance of emotional regulation, self-compassion, reflective decision-making, and accessible support systems in preventing suicidal tendencies. Moreover, resilience, social connections, and proactive coping strategies emerged as vital protective factors that promote psychological well-being. Based on these insights, the study proposes the “SELF: Suicidal Behavior Awareness, Exploration, Linking, and Future Planning” program, which focuses on awareness, early intervention, and empowerment through counseling and psychoeducation. This program aims to help students recognize warning signs, manage stress, and seek timely support. Overall, the study underscores the urgent need for universities to enhance mental health services and create supportive academic environments that nurture resilience, hope, and life satisfaction among students.

Keywords: College Students, Coping Strategies, Mental Health, Prevention Program, Support Systems

INTRODUCTION

College is meant to be a time of fresh ideas and starts. However, for a large number of American students, this move to college is complicated by vulnerability, which increases their risk of developing mental health problems, including suicide. Recent studies have shown a rise in the prevalence and seriousness of mental health problems among college students cited by Conley et al. (2020). The American College Health Association discovered that 12% of college students said they had thought about suicide in 2018 (ACHA, 2018). As the second most significant cause of mortality for college-age students, suicide is a critical issue that administrators and students must address, as stated by Hedegaard et al. (2018). In the current study, 733 community college students' complicated links between stress and coping strategies and suicide risk were examined.

Thus, the prevalence of suicide is still rising, and men and women are at distinct risk because of social pressures, the stigma associated with mental illness, and the lack of access to support networks. Moreover, there is a great deal of concern about college students' suicidal tendencies. College is indeed a developmental stage that presents several psychological and social difficulties, in addition to academic

challenges, familial history, environmental stressors, and interpersonal trauma. All of these factors can make a student particularly vulnerable to mental health disorders, including suicidal thoughts and attempts.

Article 3 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) guarantees the right to life, liberty, and personal security. The fundamental rights of Filipinos in need of mental health care are enshrined in the implementation guidelines and procedures of Republic Act 11036, also referred to as the Mental Health Act. The effort of respecting each person's right to self-determination, doing the maximum benefit, meaning to do no harm, and being equitable in granting access to care are all guided by ethical values. Thus, the Republic of the Philippines' 1987 Constitution. The right to life, liberty, and security for all people is guaranteed by Article II, Section 11, which states, "The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights." This section aligns with the ideas of Article 3 of the UDHR.

While adjusting to college life is something every student must master, community college students face particular difficulties. Furthermore, over a few years, it has become increasingly apparent that college students require additional mental health treatments. There is growing concern regarding the mental health requirements of students cited by Eisenberg (2010). Although it is evident that students are in pain, the majority of students who have mental health concerns are not receiving enough assistance, which exacerbates the problem stated by Gallagher (2014). Thus, giving tailored interventions to prevent suicides and promote student well-being requires an understanding of these issues. By addressing these issues with focused interventions, suicide rates can be lowered, and college students' general well-being can be enhanced.

There are several reasons why community college students engage in complex suicide behaviors, such as social pressures, the stigma attached to mental illness, and restricted access to support systems, as highlighted by Hedegaard et al. (2018). These unhealthy coping techniques are how most college students deal with suicidal behavior, and they always make the issue worse, as stated by Gallagher (2014). Of course, interpersonal trauma and environmental stresses render this demographic particularly vulnerable to these issues. Thus, a mental health suicide prevention program with focused treatments that prevent suicide and enhance the well-being of the students whose lives are the subject of this study must be put into place to address the rising suicide rate in this same demographic.

Universities have always been regarded as the primary forces behind human advancement. However, attending school has many drawbacks, such as excessive workload, stress, anxiety, rivalry, and sleep deprivation, as quoted in Denenech et al., (2021). Rumination is one of the things that causes suicidal thoughts in college students, Wang et al., (2020). Moreover, worrying about the consequences of unfavorable life events and the unfavorable feelings connected to them is known as rumination. Under pressure from their studies, personal lives, and failure, college students are more likely to experience negative emotions like anxiety and despair since their minds are still maturing, as highlighted by Wang et al. (2020). Therefore, Students will experience suicidal thoughts as a result, believing that suicide is the only viable alternative.

The study examines the manifestations of suicidal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in college students. Suicidal ideas, plans, and even attempts are among them. Recognizing these elements is crucial to determining who is having difficulties and providing support. It will also examine how students manage these feelings about the help they get from peer support groups, on-campus counseling, and self-management techniques. With recommendations for potential new initiatives to be launched to provide more significant support, this will also identify gaps in the current offerings. The goal of this project is to significantly improve the availability of mental health options for students who may be at risk of suicide by fostering a more secure and encouraging atmosphere.

METHODS

Research Design

To better comprehend and investigate the subjective experiences of college students who are contemplating suicide, the researcher employed a qualitative research approach. To capture the core of the participants' experiences, as stated by Braun and Clarke (2006), one technique for finding and examining

meaningful patterns in data collection is thematic analysis. The term "thematic analysis" refers to themes; the concept of a theme needs closer examination. A particular pattern of meaning in the data is a theme. It may include manifest content, which can be seen with the naked eye, such as references to stigma in several interview transcripts.

Key themes and patterns help the researchers understand the students' experiences and show how particular difficulties relate to developmental problems like identity struggles, social isolation, and academic pressure. This shows how these issues relate to suicidal thoughts and actions. However, it also considers the risk factors and possible protective variables for creating a more supportive environment for college students with special developmental needs and mental health.

Research Locale

The researcher chose the University of Batangas Lipa Campus, located in Lipa City, Batangas, Philippines, for a broader community to screen participants with suicidal ideation. With its student body, UBLC provides a full range of graduate and undergraduate programs. Campus settings are ideal for addressing the research topic because they offer a natural framework for college students' challenges and growth.

Sampling Technique

The researchers will use the snowball sampling technique to find several people eager to participate in the study. This approach works well for finding a representative sample of college students who may have engaged in or observed suicide conduct or who may have insightful thoughts or information about the topics at hand.

The following will be part of the snowball sampling process:

Researchers will find the first participants by contacting student support services, networking with academics and staff, and utilizing pre-existing networks. Additionally, they will ask students to suggest other people who might have seen suicidal conduct or who might know important information. The study will be a "snowball" to reach more kids who might be hard to reach. Participants must be over eighteen and enrolled in University of Batangas undergraduate or graduate programs at the Lipa Campus. The researchers will use Snowball sampling to collect important data on pupils' suicidal actions.

Data Gathering Procedure

Research Instruments

Using a modified questionnaire, the researcher conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with college students regarding suicidal behaviors to obtain precise and targeted information from the participants. The Suicide Behaviors Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R) was a screening tool used by the researcher before the interviews. Using the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS), the study's open-ended questions are designed to encourage participants to discuss their individual experiences and viewpoints on suicidal ideation and getting treatment. One tool for identifying and assessing individuals who may be at risk for suicide is the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) (Am J Psychiatry, 2011). The questions can be completed as a self-report exercise, even though they are designed to be used in interviews. The psychometric properties of the C-SSRS demonstrated internal consistency of the intensity subscale, sensitivity, specificity, instrument sensitivity to change, and convergent, divergent, and predictive validity.

The C-SSRS intensity subscale was also evaluated within the last week and following the prior appointment. Cronbach's alpha for the intensity subscale was 0.937 for the most recent visit and 0.946 for the most recent week, indicating high internal consistency. The intensity subscale in trials 2 and 3 had a modest level of internal consistency across all visits, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.73 (Am J Psychiatry, 2011).

Data Analysis

The researcher used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyze the data for the study, a qualitative methodology that looks at how people make sense of their personal and social experiences, especially in response to significant life events. There will be six main steps in the analysis. To fully comprehend participant's lived experiences, the researcher will first immerse themselves in the

data by carefully reading interview transcripts several times. Second, to capture the range of meanings that participants expressed, the first noting will include thorough annotations highlighting important language, emotional reactions, and these insights. Third, grouping notes into thematic clusters and spotting recurring themes and concepts across interviews will be necessary to develop preliminary themes. Fourth, these insights will be refined by developing superordinate and subordinate themes, distinguishing between more general, overarching patterns, superordinate themes and more specific, granular aspects of participants' experiences, subordinate themes. Fifth, a cross-case comparison is conducted to identify similarities and differences in the participants' experiences in order to gain a better understanding of the Suicidal Behaviors among College Students. Through analysis and interpretation, these themes will ultimately be placed within the research questions. They will also cover the participants' views of life, suicidal behaviors, and possible mental health interventions aimed at preventing suicide. Thus, a comprehensive, nuanced picture of the participants' experiences will be obtained from this meticulous process, which will help develop targeted treatments (Smith et al., 2009).

Research Ethics Protocol

Because of the subject's delicate nature, researchers ensure that ethical considerations are considered when gathering data. Researchers submit an internal validation letter to the research adviser to approve and explain research questions and processes. A separate external validation letter is submitted to an expert to approve the research tool and authorize the use of the questionnaire. A consent letter, which requests respondents' permission to participate in the study, is attached to the questionnaire. This authorization request complies with Republic Act 10173, often known as the Data Privacy Act, and ethical guidelines for data collection. Respondents are advised of their flexibility to accept or reject participation in the study, and the questionnaire includes details about the study's objectives and possible subjects.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Derived from the responses, two superordinate themes emerged regarding the participants' ways to perceive the things that happened in their lives. Cultivating Emotional Balance and Transforming Mental Health via Support and Action, reflect how individuals interpret life's experiences. The significance of support networks, thoughtful decision-making, maintaining self-compassion, and handling psychological discomfort are all emphasized by cultivating emotional balance. However, transforming mental health underscores the need for resilience, advocacy, validation, and mental health knowledge in preserving wellbeing. According to research, resilience and coping mechanisms, including self-reflection, meaning, and purpose, are essential for improving wellbeing and lowering distress (Burrow & Patrick, 2020; Wilson et al., 2021).

Table 1. Superordinate and Subordinates Themes of Perceive Suicidal Behaviors in College

Key Area	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
Mental Health Challenges	Cultivating Emotional Balance	Support Systems and Reflective Decision-Making Balancing Self-Compassion and Social Interaction Managing Psychological Distress and Daily Challenges
	Transforming Mental Health through Support and Action	Mental Health Awareness and Proactive Strategies Support, Validation, and Emotional Well-being Advocacy, Resilience, and Support Resources

Theme 1: Cultivating Emotional Balance

Six participants (n=6) respond of ways to perceive the things that happened in their lives which is Cultivating Emotional Balance, as superordinate theme explores how college students manage their emotions, especially in reaction to obstacles and life events, with subordinate theme Support Systems and Reflective Decision-Making, Balancing Self-Compassion and Social Interaction and Managing Psychological Distress and Daily Challenges. It includes methods for utilizing self-reflection, adaptive coping mechanisms, and support networks to manage emotional well-being. The subject emphasizes how crucial it is to strike a balance between one's internal emotional control and social relationships to preserve mental health and stop suicidal thoughts and actions.

Support Systems and Reflective Decision-Making

“Pag-iisip muna bago kumilos depende sa problema”

“Kapit sa mga kaibigan, pamilya, at pananampalataya para maiwasan ang psychological distress”

“magwait po muna ako bago ko po siya mafix mga past na nangyari alam ko na po ang gagawin mga past na nangyari alam ko na po ang gagawin let go easily or... as soon as possible”

Participants used reflective decision-making and outside support networks to deal with life's obstacles. As one participant put it, “*Kapit sa mga kaibigan, pamilya, at pananampalataya para maiwasan ang psychological distress,*” social and spiritual ties like family, friends, and faith serve as stabilizing influences that promote a sense of belonging and reduce discomfort (Cohen & Wills, 1985). In addition to providing emotional support, these systems offer a range of viewpoints, which helps students constructively reframe challenging situations. Statements like “*Magwait po muna ako bago ko po siya mafix*” and “*Pag-iisip muna bago kumilos depende sa problema*” demonstrate the importance of reflective decision-making, which also helps students use their past experiences to evaluate situations, gain insightful knowledge, and make wise decisions, promoting resilience and adaptive problem-solving. (Neenan, 2009). Reflective practices and supportive connections work together to give students the tools and mindset to overcome life's challenges.

Balancing Self-Compassion and Social Interaction

“Gusto ko mag-isa”

“Natututo na po akong ihandle na magshare sa friends ko”

“I'm trying to learn to be kind to myself”

This analysis explores the relationship between self-compassion and social contact as emotional regulation strategies. One participant said, “Gusto ko mag-isa,” indicating a desire for privacy, which might be a private setting for dealing with feelings. However, statements like “*Natututo na po akong ihandle na magshare sa friends ko*” show a slow change and a growing understanding of the importance of social ties. Sharing with others reduces feelings of loneliness by promoting a sense of connection and emotional validation. The remark, “*I'm trying to learn to be kind to myself,*” emphasizes self-compassion by highlighting an attempt to recognize one's challenges without criticizing oneself. This dual strategy aligns with studies demonstrating how self-compassion promotes emotional regulation and resilience, while social ties improve coping ability and support mental health (Neff, 2018; Pyszowska & Rönnlund, 2021). Combined, these procedures give people the internal and external tools they need to handle emotional difficulties successfully.

Managing Psychological Distress and Daily Challenges

“Parang manageable pa siya.”

“Sasabihin ko ulit sa sarili ko na kaya ko to”

“Bumabalik ako sa negative thoughts kasi may familiarity”

“Ang approach ko na lang is to fly it and do not deal with it”

“Mas nagagawa ko na siyang balansihin”

This subordinate theme examines how students use proactive techniques, emotional acceptance, and psychological flexibility to manage stress and sustain productivity. One participant said, “Parang manageable pa siya,” expressing the belief that stress can be handled with the correct attitude. Positive self-affirmations, such as “Sasabihin ko ulit sa sarili ko na kaya ko to,” emphasize the importance of internal drive in bolstering resilience. But the battle with “Bumabalik ako sa negative thoughts kasi may familiarity” highlights how difficult it is to overcome deeply rooted emotional patterns. Tactics like “Ang approach ko na lang is to fly it and do not deal with it,” demonstrate selective engagement, which balances avoidance and action to preserve functionality. Statements such as “Mas nagagawa ko na siyang balansihin” highlight the development of competent emotional and responsibility management. This adaptation is supported by intervention and Commitment Therapy (ACT), which promotes long-term well-being and emotional acceptance (Hayes et al., 1999; Pyszkowska & Rönnlund, 2021).

Cultivating Emotional Balance, the superordinate theme examines how college students control their emotional reactions to obstacles, which affect psychological suffering and life satisfaction. The subordinate theme of Support Systems and Reflective Decision-Making emphasizes the significance of social support and self-reflection in managing stress. Last but not least, Managing Psychological Distress and Daily Challenges shows how students handle everyday pressures, which have a big influence on their ability to control their emotions and their mental health.

Theme 2: Transforming Mental Health through Support and Action

Transforming Mental Health through Support and Action, the study’s superordinate topic, demonstrates how six participants (n=6) perceived their life experiences. This change is shown in three secondary themes: Mental Health Awareness and Proactive Strategies; Support, Validation, and Emotional Well-Being; and Advocacy, Resilience, and Support Resources. By emphasizing the value of recognizing mental health concerns and implementing proactive coping strategies, participants gain a greater understanding of self-care and emotional regulation. Support networks, such as approval from loved ones, friends, or coworkers, offer emotional stability and a feeling of community, which enhances general well-being. Additionally, participants’ support of resilience-building and mental health awareness shows that they are able to use resources and get through difficult times. These findings align with previous studies that highlight the value of social support, self-advocacy, and psychological flexibility in promoting mental health and well-being (Neff, 2018; Pyszkowska & Rönnlund, 2021). When taken as a whole, these themes show a holistic approach to mental health that combines knowledge, social support, and artistic endeavors for sustained emotional health.

Mental Health Awareness and Proactive Strategies

“Pagbabago ng pananaw sa mental health sa pamamagitan ng mga estratehiya at suporta”

“Pagsasagawa ng seminar para sa suicide prevention at counseling”

“Easier for us to have different strategies to cope up with stress”

“Try and reach out to their students”

The participants’ stories show a radical change in how they see and handle mental health, highlighting the importance of proactive measures, support, and tactics. “Pagbabago ng pananaw sa mental health sa pamamagitan ng mga estratehiya at suporta,” as one participant states it and emphasized the significance of creating coping strategies and obtaining institutional or social support. “Pagsasagawa ng seminar para sa suicide prevention at counseling” is one example of an initiative that demonstrates how awareness programs promote an open discussion on mental health, promoting early intervention and lowering stigma. Phrases like “Easier for us to have different strategies to cope with stress” emphasize the importance of giving people flexible coping mechanisms to handle stress properly. Furthermore, since mentors and teachers are essential in maintaining emotional health, the sentiment “Try and reach out to their students” highlights the value of relational support. These results align with recent studies highlighting the interaction of personalized tactics, community support, and psychoeducation in fostering mental health resilience (Neff, 2018; Pyszkowska & Rönnlund, 2021). Collectively, these themes emphasize how crucial

it is to integrate practical, interpersonal, and educational treatments to establish a more encouraging environment for mental health.

Support, Validation, and Emotional Well-being

“Hinahayaang ko lang na magkagulo yung thoughts ko sa utak ko”

“Mas nagiging aware po ako sa mga bagay-bagay”

“Hindi ko gusto mamamatay, gusto ko lang talaga matapos ang iniisip ko”

“Nagresulta ng suicide means kailangan ng help”

“Feeling ko po empathy from the lecturers”

Furthermore, since mentors and teachers are essential in maintaining emotional health, the sentiment “Try and reach out to their students” highlights the value of relational support. These results align with recent studies highlighting the interaction of personalized tactics, community support, and psychoeducation in fostering mental health resilience (Neff, 2018; Pyszkowska & Rönnlund, 2021). Collectively, these themes emphasize how crucial it is to integrate practical, interpersonal, and educational treatments to establish a more encouraging environment for mental health. By assisting people in recognizing their emotions and starting to address their mental health issues, this awareness is an essential first step in managing emotional turbulence (Pyszkowska & Rönnlund, 2021). The expression, “Hindi ko gusto mamamatay, gusto ko lang talaga matapos ang iniisip ko,” emphasizes the significance of getting treatment when overcome by negative thoughts and expresses a desire for relief from distress rather than a want for death. This supports the claim that “Nagresulta ng suicide means kailangan ng help,” which affirms the significance of intervention and expert assistance by acknowledging that suicidal thoughts are signs that one needs support (Hoge et al., 2020). Last, “Feeling ko po empathy from the lecturers” emphasizes the value of sympathetic relationships with teachers, who provide emotional support and validation, both of which are critical for well-being et al., 2020). These incidents highlight how support networks, such as external validation, build resilience, and motivate people to ask for assistance when necessary, are essential for promoting emotional well-being.

Advocacy, Resilience, and Support Resources

“Mas nareduce na po talaga yun yung pagkakaroon ko ng distress when it comes on having thoughts nga po about suicide”

“Nababalanse ko na nga po ng mas maiki yung aking feelings and ang aking sarili to not deal with the negative situations alone”

“Marunong na ako mag-reach out sa mga pamilya ko and at the same time friends so that may outlet po ako na mapaglalabas sa mga sama ng loob”

This demonstrates a growing capacity to cope with emotional distress and the significance of getting help, two things that are essential for resilience in mental health. “Mas nareduce na po talaga yun yung pagkakaroon ko ng distress when it comes on having thoughts nga po about suicide,” one participant said, suggesting a considerable decrease in discomfort over time, maybe as a result of better-coping mechanisms and emotional control (Neff, 2018). Furthermore, “Nababalanse ko na nga po ng mas maiki yung aking feelings and ang aking sarili to not deal with the negative situations alone” highlights the significance of not isolating oneself in times of distress and reflects the development of a balanced approach to emotional challenges (Pyszkowska & Rönnlund, 2021). As stated in “Marunong na ako mag-reach out sa mga pamilya ko and at the same time friends so that may outlet po ako na mapaglalabas sa mga sama ng loob,” the capacity to seek emotional support from friends and family demonstrates the vital role that social ties play in fostering emotional relief and lowering feelings of loneliness. One participant emphasized the need for readily available mental health resources by saying that the university should “focus more on establishing kinds of facilities wherein students can go or have someone to talk to.” These results also highlight how important institutional support is. Establishing counseling services and other supportive environments can foster personal growth and help students overcome emotional challenges, according to research. (Hoge and others, 2020; Tennant and others, 2020).

Examining how respondents view and interpret life events, the study “Exploration of Life Satisfaction, Psychological Distress, and Suicidal Behaviors Among College Students: A Mental Health Challenge” Cultivating Emotional Balance and Transforming Mental Health through Support and Action are the two main topics identified by the study. The first theme focuses on techniques like self-compassion, reflective decision-making, utilizing support networks, and handling psychological distress. The second topic highlights the significance of proactive tactics, emotional validation, mental health awareness, and promoting well-being. These themes draw attention to the various strategies’ students employ to deal with mental health issues and improve their general well-being.

By actively implementing techniques to enhance their resilience and mental health, participants’ perceptions and reactions to life situations are examined in the superordinate subject Transforming Mental Health via Support and Action. Mental Health Awareness and Proactive Strategies are one facet of this, highlighting participants’ understanding of the significance of early mental health issue identification and preventive measures like stress management, mindfulness, and professional support (Nguyen & Le, 2024). Support, Validation, and Emotional Well-Being is another secondary theme highlighting the need for supportive environments, emotional affirmation, and constructive social interactions to promote psychological well-being. For emotional support and to foster a feeling of community, participants frequently turn to friends, family, or counselors (Wang, Xu, & Qian, 2023). Finally, Advocacy, Resilience, and Support Resources highlights how participants try to strengthen their resilience and use resources, including peer support groups, community advocacy groups, and mental health programs. These initiatives foster long-term mental health stability and enable effectively e people to confront obstacles (World Health Organization, 2022) effectively; these themes show how to deal with life’s obstacles in a proactive and resourceful way, emphasizing the transformational power of action and support in mental health.

Table 2. Superordinate and Subordinates Themes of Coping Strategies with Suicidal Thoughts

Key Area	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
Coping Strategies	Building Resilience	Resilience Through Joy and Support Networks Seeking Courage to Act
	Navigating Emotional Challenges	Stress, Satisfaction, and Emotional Dynamics Life Satisfaction and Emotional Well-being

Derived from the responses, two superordinate themes emerged regarding the participants’ protective factors in how they perceived life satisfaction, influencing the relationship between psychological distress and suicidal behaviors. These superordinate themes provide a better insight into participants’ emotional and psychological experiences by delving into how they interpret and make meaning of the events in their lives. In addition to highlighting the various ways participants interpret their own experiences, this analysis offers a thorough understanding of how life satisfaction and distress interact to shape suicidal behaviors.

Theme 1: Building Resilience

Six participants (n=6) perceived life satisfaction, psychological distress, and suicidal behaviors as building resilience in how college students create tools and plans to deal with mental health issues. Resilience includes developing positive emotional states, using support systems, and having the inner fortitude to behave in ways that advance well-being even in the face of adversity. Therefore, Seeking Courage to Act and Resilience Through Joy and Support Networks are the two subordinate themes that comprise the superordinate theme.

Resilience Through Joy and Support Networks

“Suporta ng pamilya at kaibigan na nagbigay ng lakas laban sa suicidal thoughts”

“I wait for the courage to do what I need to do”

The subordinate subject of resilience through joy and support networks demonstrates how resilience is a result of the interaction of meaningful connections, life satisfaction, and the courage to face challenges head-on. College students’ mental health depends on how happy they are when they are with their loved ones. The statement "Suporta ng pamilya at kaibigan na nagbigay ng lakas laban sa suicidal thoughts" highlights the protective nature of social bonds. Friends, family, and mentors offer emotional support networks that reduce loneliness and foster a feeling of belonging. And the feeling "I wait for the courage to do what I need to do," on the other hand, captures the internal struggle to discover one’s strength, which is often supported by important relationships. These relationships reduce misery and suicidal thoughts by enhancing life satisfaction and a sense of purpose (Yang et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022).

Seeking Courage to Act

“I break down, pause, and wait to be okay”

The Seeking Courage to Act as a subordinate theme shows how students deal with emotional upheaval by acknowledging their limitations, giving themselves time to heal, and progressively gaining the courage to ask for assistance. Self-awareness is a vital first step toward resilience, demonstrated by the readiness to pause. *“I break down, pause, and wait to be okay,”* is a sentence that captures a very personal battle with psychological pain and the intricate process of cultivating mental resilience. This focuses on Fighting stigma and promoting self-efficacy, which are necessary for gaining the bravery to face distress, look for help, and receive mental health treatment. Ultimately, these initiatives lessen susceptibility to suicidal behaviors by fostering agency and confidence in one’s ability to handle difficulties (Cheng et al., 2021; Xiang et al., 2023).

College students’ perceptions of life satisfaction have a significant impact on resilience, which in turn shapes the link between psychological distress and suicide behaviors. Resilience is strengthened by high life satisfaction, which also promotes more robust social networks and more joyful experiences—which act as protection against anxiety and thoughts of suicide. On the other hand, low life satisfaction can increase the likelihood of poor mental health outcomes by lowering bravery and motivation to seek help. By mitigating the effects of psychological discomfort, resilience techniques—like pursuing joy, forming uplifting connections, and acting bravely—assist students in overcoming obstacles. Students who develop resilience are more capable of handling stress and are less likely to engage in suicidal thoughts and actions (Luo et al., 2022; Cambridge University Press, 2023; Mental Health America, 2022).

Theme 2: Navigating Emotional Challenges

Six participants (n=6) perceive life satisfaction, psychological distress, and suicidal behaviors as navigating emotional challenges. This study looks at how college students handle emotional problems that arise from mental health challenges. Thus, the superordinate theme comprises two subordinate themes: Life Satisfaction and Emotional Well-Being and Stress, Satisfaction, and Emotional Dynamics.

Stress, Satisfaction, and Emotional Dynamics

“Nagkekeep po sa akin is yung makatulong sa iba”

“It's worth it being stressed if you're satisfied with what you've done”

“Kapag masaya ka, it temporarily stops you from thinking or committing suicide”

This subordinate theme examines the complex interactions between stress, emotional control, and life satisfaction that affect psychological suffering. The adage, *“Nagkekeep po sa akin is yung makatulong sa iba,”* emphasizes the value of selflessness in offering a feeling of direction that lessens suffering. Similarly, the statement *“It's worth it to be stressed if you're satisfied with what you've done”* demonstrates how feelings of accomplishment balance stress in life. Finally, the statement *“Kapag masaya ka, it temporarily stops you from thinking or committing suicide”* emphasizes how vital joy is in reducing

suffering. College students frequently experience stress from social, academic, and personal demands, aggravating emotional instability and making them more susceptible to discomfort (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Cheng et al., 2021). Positive experiences, on the other hand, can strengthen emotional resilience, act as a stress buffer, and promote self-worth (Xiang et al., 2023). Conversely, dysregulated emotions can increase the likelihood of suicidal thoughts and cause depressing feelings (Gross & Jazaieri, 2020).

Life Satisfaction and Emotional Well-being

“Having life satisfaction po kasi is nakakatulong po talaga siya to regulate one’s emotions.”
“Hindi ko pa po talaga alam yung feeling ng pagiging satisfied sa buhay”

The association between psychological distress and suicidal behaviors in college students is significantly moderated by life satisfaction. The remark, *“Having life satisfaction po kasi is nakakatulong po talaga siya to regulate one’s emotions,”* emphasizes how positive life satisfaction helps control emotions and lower stress (Cheng et al., 2021). Adaptive coping methods, which protect against stress and reduce the likelihood of suicidal thoughts, are frequently used by students who report greater levels of life satisfaction (Xiang et al., 2023). On the other hand, students who are dissatisfied with their lives, as seen by the opinion, *“Hindi ko pa po talaga alam yung feeling ng pagiging satisfied sa buhay,”* have trouble controlling their emotions, which might worsen depression symptoms and make them more susceptible to suicidal behaviors (Zhao et al., 2022). Additionally, a lack of subjective life satisfaction exacerbates psychological suffering by making it more difficult to find meaning and purpose in life (Yang et al., 2021). These results highlight the stabilizing role that life pleasure plays in promoting resilience and reducing threats to mental health.

Therefore, it gives people a feeling of direction and stability, life satisfaction is essential in mediating the link between stress and emotional health. A high level of life satisfaction improves emotional resilience, which helps people deal with stress better and lowers their likelihood of suicidal thoughts or actions (Gross & Jazaieri, 2020). Encouraging adaptive coping strategies and lessening the severity of psychological discomfort promotes positive emotional dynamics. Life satisfaction is a protective barrier against emotional difficulties for young people, particularly college students, enabling them to cope with everyday stressors and preserve their mental well-being. The ability to manage interpersonal and intrapersonal disputes is further strengthened by this protective factor, which also promotes the growth of emotional intelligence (Luo et al., 2022; Cambridge University Press, 2023). People who cultivate life happiness are more able to withstand hardship, which promotes resilience and long-term well-being.

Table 4. Mental Health Program

Key Areas	Objectives	Activities	Persons Involved	Success Indicators
Perceived Suicidal Ideation	To understand the cognitive processes involved in the development and progression of suicidal ideation, focusing on self-awareness of suicidal thoughts. Exploration of potential methods, linking thoughts to negative emotions, and the ability	“Reclaiming Hope” Seminar lecture. To enhance individuals' ability to cope with life challenges, offer workshops on stress management, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.	College Students; Mental health care practitioners	Evaluated by decrease in frequency and severity of self-harm behaviors, improvement in emotional well-being, life satisfaction, and perception of situation.

Perspectives of the Things that Happened in their Life	to engage in future planning. To empower individuals to develop healthy coping strategies, enabling them to navigate life's challenges confidently and adaptably. To emphasize participants' positive thoughts and feelings, which will shape their outlook on life.	“Building Inner Strength” Coping Skills Training. Journal – platform to share experiences, insights, successes.	College Students; Mental health care practitioners	Measured by improved coping skills, emotional regulation, sense of empowerment, positive thinking, and purposefulness.
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Participants’ ability to develop emotional balance—which is impacted by support networks, thoughtful decision-making, and techniques for coping with psychological discomfort—substantially impacts how they view and interpret life events. Achieving emotional balance enables people to manage everyday obstacles with resilience by balancing social relationships with self-compassion. Proactive mental health techniques like practicing mindfulness and connecting with support networks improve emotional well-being by empowering people to reframe stressful situations more well-being. In interpersonal and professional settings, robust decision-making processes and meaningful connections are fostered by high emotional intelligence (EQ), which includes self-awareness, empathy, and self-regulation (Hellebuyck et al., 2021; Luo et al., 2022). Furthermore, peer or mentor validation and mental health advocacy help to lessen stigma, making it easier for people to seek help and use healthy coping strategies. Therefore, participants may turn mental health issues into chances for development and stability by incorporating these practices into their everyday lives, highlighting connection and resilience as essential components of well-being 2019; Cambridge University Press, 2023).

“SELF: Suicidal Behavior Awareness, Exploration, Linking, Future Planning”

The SELF: Suicidal Behavior Awareness, Exploration, Linking, Future Planning program’s activities are intended to help people on their path to recovery, self-determination, and a revitalized feeling of hope for the future. The “Reclaiming Hope” course, for instance, addresses the mental processes that underlie suicidal behavior in an effort to improve self-awareness and coping mechanisms. Clear goals and performance indicators, such as enhanced mental health, less suicidal thoughts, and a higher sense of life satisfaction, serve as the foundation for this activity. In a similar vein, “Building Inner Strength” emphasizes resilience, flexibility, and self-assurance via peer support and coping skills training. The curriculum promotes independence and optimistic thinking by including workshops and forums for exchanging personal stories.

College students who are displaying low life satisfaction, psychological distress, and suicidal behaviors will benefit greatly from this program. By helping participants understand their emotions, interact with others experiencing similar challenges, and create practical plans to deal with future crises, the program offers a complete approach to mental health care. Furthermore, because of its flexibility, the SELF program can be used in a variety of contexts, including community centers, mental health clinics, and internet platforms. It is a scalable tool for addressing a large audience of at-risk students because of its user-friendly interface and captivating design. This program can greatly lower suicidal behavior among college

students while creating a more resilient and cohesive community by offering organized support and encouraging long-term mental health practices.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, It was concluded that participants perceive suicidal behaviors as a means of building resilience and navigating emotional challenges. They cope with life by cultivating emotional balance and transforming their mental health through support and proactive actions. Furthermore, they developed a program for college students with suicidal behaviors titled SELF: Suicidal Behavior Awareness, Exploration, Linking, and Future Planning, which aims to promote awareness, connection, and positive future development.

It is recommended that individuals seek professional help to better understand and manage their mental health challenges. Talking to someone they trust about their experiences can help them feel less isolated and more supported. Additionally, joining a support group can provide emotional comfort and shared understanding from others who have faced similar situations. It is also advised to review the developed program for potential implementation to benefit other populations experiencing comparable challenges. Lastly, follow-up studies on mental health concerns and self-seeking intervention programs should be conducted to further validate and strengthen the findings across different regions of the Philippines.

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