

Suicide Prevention Mechanism Survey: Basis for Mental Health Intervention Program

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Date received: August 4, 2024

Date revised: August 20, 2024

Date accepted: August 27, 2024

Originality: 87%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 13%

Recommended citation:

Tura, R., & Cadorna, M. (2024). Suicide prevention mechanism survey: Basis for mental health intervention program. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 2(10), 81-92. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0390>

Abstract. To answer the call for a race against suicide, the study was conducted in pursuit of identifying the situation of the learners in their mental well-being as a key in determining a school's mental health intervention program. The study used a mixed method research design, which utilized convergent parallel mixed method using an adopted and modified survey questionnaire for quantitative data and data triangulation for qualitative data and assessing whether the data converge or diverge. The study involves one hundred (100) pupil respondents chosen through purposive sampling. The study used descriptive statistics to analyze and interpret the data using weighted mean and standard deviation. Meanwhile, Colizzi's 1978 method of analysis and interpretation was adopted for qualitative data. Results revealed a high prevalence of mental health problems experienced in terms of education, physical body, sexuality, and depression, which needs an intervention plan. However, there is a low prevalence of mental health problems among respondents in terms of home, violence, and drugs, which does not need an intervention plan. Meanwhile, the challenges encountered by the learners' themes, such as education, stress/depression, and violence, emerged. For the impact, the emergent themes are mentally disturbed, low academic performance, and personal growth. On the other hand, prayer and communication emerged for coping mechanisms and positivity, and stress tolerance and communication emerged for insights. The study found that mental health fosters huge problems, especially for vulnerable individuals like children. They are the ones who cannot handle the anxiety and depression surrounded by many factors. Learners have experienced mental health issues, specifically in education, physical body, sexuality, and depression, which should not be disregarded because this can greatly affect their mental well-being. The study recommended having a school's mental health intervention plan focusing on education, physical body, sexuality, and depression.

Keywords: Intervention program; Mental health; Prevention mechanism; Resilient education; Suicide.

1.0 Introduction

Mental health continues to be a significant issue, particularly in the Philippines. According to Maramag (2020), the Department of Health (DOH), in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), is raising awareness of the importance of public mental health, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Philippines has consistently ranked in the Top 5 of a global optimism index; however, the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH) has reported a significant increase in monthly hotline calls related to depression, with numbers rising from 80 calls pre-lockdown to nearly 400. The most vulnerable population is those aged 15-29, with mental health-related deaths being the second leading cause of fatalities in this age group. Moreover, the DOH has launched a multi-sectoral approach to mental health, implementing programs and interventions across various settings (e.g., workplaces, schools, and communities) targeting high-risk groups. The commemoration of World Suicide Prevention Day also highlights the plight of those suffering from severe depression.

In the school setting, learners are still in the process of healing and coping with the trauma and depression caused by COVID-19. According to Thakur (2019), challenges related to the impact on students' mental health persist beyond the pandemic phase. While learners are now in the recovery phase, coping with learning loss remains a continuous challenge, potentially leading to anxiety and depression that affect their mental well-being. Supported by Li's (2022) findings, the pandemic has adversely affected student mental health, resulting in an increased prevalence of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). These conditions may significantly impact students, causing frustration, stress, and sadness. Republic Act No. 11036, or the Mental Health Act, mandates the provision of comprehensive suicide prevention services, including crisis intervention and response strategies on a nationwide scale. The Department of Education (DepEd) incorporates mental health into various activities and the curriculum, such as the Homeroom Guidance program through DepEd Order 74, s. 2021, which promotes mental health in all DepEd events and programs. Additionally, DepEd Order 14, s. 2020, which guides the required health standards in basic education offices and schools, emphasizes the importance of mental health and psychological support services to improve and strengthen the mental resilience of all learners and DepEd personnel.

In Cagayan de Oro City, Jayme Leonen-Pagaspas, the head psychologist at the Psychosocial Division of the City Social Welfare and Development (CSWD), cited data from the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Department (CDRRMD) showing a 162% increase in suicides in the city compared to the same period in 2022. The CDRRMD data revealed at least 47 self-inflicted deaths in the city from January to April. In response to the alarming rise in suicides, local officials emphasized the need for a whole-of-society approach to address mental health issues. The spate of suicides in the city should serve as a wake-up call to the reality of depression as a mental health ailment (Corrales, 2023). City Mayor Rolando Uy announced plans to set up "mental health corners" in the city's 80 barangays and to train public school teachers in early detection and response to depression among students (Rappler.com). Furthermore, Salgados (2023) reported that Cagayan de Oro's Maharlika Bridge (formerly Marcos Bridge) claimed the lives of two young individuals who jumped into the strong currents below in apparent suicides.

In response, the Division of Cagayan de Oro City conducted suicide prevention training for guidance counselors designated through Division Memorandum No. 210, s. 2023. This training aimed to enhance participants' knowledge about suicide and self-harm, identify and classify students at risk who need immediate intervention, provide suicide risk assessment and intervention, and underscore the importance of a school mental health referral system. Chaudhry et al. (2022) stated that schools play a major role in promoting children's physical and psychological health and well-being. The mental health literacy of all key stakeholders, especially teachers, is critical to achieving this goal. Teachers' knowledge and beliefs about psychological problems influence how they address their students' mental health issues.

In parallel, Camp Evangelista Elementary School, through the initiative of the designated Guidance Counselor, conducted early intervention by surveying Grades IV to VI learners using a psychosocial history assessment. This assessment helped identify students at risk who need to be included in the suicide intervention program. Colizzi et al. (2020) emphasized the pressing need to develop or improve youth mental healthcare models that can implement prevention and early intervention strategies. The suicide intervention program aims to respond to the urgent call for a collective effort among parents and stakeholders to create a suicide-free community in the school and barangay.

This study aims to assess the mental well-being of learners, which will serve as a baseline for crafting and conducting a mental health intervention program. This study is intended to be a school prevention program to avoid cases such as suicide and other mental health-related issues. It is considered one of the school's best practices designed to combat mental health issues globally. This study is expected to significantly reduce the number of suicide cases not only in Cagayan de Oro City but also in the Philippines and worldwide. The researchers believe that conducting this study will help realize the Division of Cagayan de Oro City's mantra, "Nindot nga Tulonghaan sa Nindot nga Cagayan," by prioritizing the mental well-being of children in schools and ensuring that all learners are mentally safe, healthy, and protected, thus helping to break the stigma surrounding mental health.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This basic research used a mixed method research design using convergent parallel mixed method. Creswell, Plano, and Clark (2011) defined convergent parallel mixed method design where the researcher collects quantitative and qualitative data, analyzes them separately, and then compares the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm

each other. It aims to identify the issues and problems faced by the pupils related to mental well-being and dig deeper into their responses through employing the data triangulation method, which involves interviews and Focus Group discussions. For quantitative data, the study used an adopted and modified survey.

A questionnaire entitled Psychosocial History Assessment provided by the Department of Education, Division of Cagayan de Oro City, presents different factors affecting the mental health issues of the learners, such as Home, Education, Physical Body, Sexuality, Violence, Drugs, and Depression. The research adopted Colizzi's 1978 method of data analysis and interpretation to gather qualitative data, which involves reading and transcribing transcripts into meaning and from meaning into an emergent theme. This research design is best suited for this study since it would want to know the current mental health condition of the learners in school and, at the same time, investigate their challenges and coping mechanisms, which the result will serve as the basis for an intervention program.

2.2 Research Participants

The total population of elementary pupils in Camp Evangelista Elementary School is one thousand seven hundred (1300) learners from kindergarten to Grade Six. The total respondents of this study are the one hundred (100) pupil respondents from Grades IV-VI of Camp Evangelista Elementary School, which was determined using a purposive Sampling Method following specific criteria a.) The learner is a bonafide Camp Evangelista Elementary School pupil, b.) The learner is identified at risk based on the pre-evaluation survey. Nikolopoulou (2023) defined purposive sampling as a technique in which units are selected according to their characteristics to be used in the study.

2.3 Research Instrument

This study used an adapted and modified survey questionnaire from the Psychosocial History Assessment provided by the Division of Cagayan de Oro City using a 4-point Likert Scale. The study used descriptive statistics to analyze and interpret the data, including the frequency, mean, and standard deviation as a table. The questionnaire underwent validation by the master teachers and school principal, and a sampling of five (5) pupils from another school were excluded as study respondents.

2.3 Data Gathering Procedure

This study used specific steps to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. A preliminary preparation before the study was conducted was securing permission from the school principal through a consent letter. After the approval, the author submitted a research proposal to the Schools Division Research Committee for approval subject to implementation. After approval, the authors sent a letter of consent to the respondents' parents. The letter's content includes the research title, the author's name, the number of respondents, the study's duration, and the study's objectives. To ensure full support and cooperation, an online orientation was conducted with the learners, parents, and school head through video conferencing using the Zoom Meeting Cloud App following the DepEd Order No. 026 s: 2021 or the Research Management Guidelines in the New Normal. After the orientation, the researcher started administering the survey questionnaire to the respondents. The data was gathered by administering survey questionnaires to the respondents by grade level. The teachers in charge were instructed to explain the questions if the respondents could not understand them. After administering the assessment survey, they were instructed to collect and return the questionnaires to the designated school guidance counselor. After gathering the quantitative data, the qualitative data was gathered through interviews and Focus Group discussions (FGD) to gather data from various sources.

2.4 Data Analysis

To interpret and analyze the data, the study used descriptive statistics, including weighted mean and standard deviation, for qualitative data using SPSS software. Meanwhile, Colizzi's 1978 method of analysis and interpretation was adopted for qualitative data. Results revealed a high prevalence of mental health problems related to education, physical body, sexuality, and depression, which needs an intervention plan.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The learners' responses were treated with utmost confidentiality in adherence to RA 10173, the Data Privacy Act. This research study followed ethical guidelines, such as asking for permission from the rightful authors to adopt and modify their questionnaire through email and not disclosing any sensitive information since the study covers sensitive issues from the respondents.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Mental Health Issue Experienced

Home

Table 1 depicts the responses of the learners about their mental health issues at home.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the mental health issues experienced in terms of home

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. My family's problems directly or indirectly concern me.	2.73	0.95	High
2. My parents/ guardians listen and take my feelings seriously.	2.03	0.94	Low
3. I have seriously thought of running away from home.	3.02	1.10	Very High
4. I have experienced major family changes which affect my mental well-being.	2.45	0.86	Low
5. I have faced quarrels and misunderstandings among other family members.	1.86	0.84	Low
Total	2.42	0.94	Low

The statement “I have seriously thought of running away from home” acquired the highest mean of 3.02 (SD 0.94), described as High. This indicates that most respondents feel unsafe and uncomfortable in their homes. The thought of running away from home further implies that they cannot face the problem anymore and that they have not found someone in their homes with whom they can talk to help ease their feelings. The study of Rado (2019) supports the idea that running away from home is a serious problem among youth. It has been linked to numerous negative social, psychological, and behavioral outcomes. It is well established that family dysfunction is one reason that youth run away from home. Additionally, according to 2019 Statistics on Runaway and Homeless Youth, socioeconomic status, education level, gender and sexual identity, peer groups, and family dynamics – are all examples of factors that may be related to youth running away or becoming homeless. In addition, the study of Borah (2023) asserted that the quality of the home affects the mental health of children and academic achievement of the child. Children develop good mental health if they are treated properly at home. Determining the determinant factors of the mental health of adolescents and how it prevents mental illness among adolescents is crucial so we can evaluate further the causes of the problems of the children that affect their mental well-being. In a mile state, when children are treated well at home, they will have good academic performance in school because they are not mentally disturbed, and they have peace of mind. So, it can be inferred that how the learners were nurtured at home will reflect how they behave in school.

On the other hand, the statement “I have faced quarrels and misunderstandings among other family members” obtained the lowest mean of 1.86 (SD 0.84), which is described as Low. This indicates that several respondents have experienced family quarrels with other family members. As observed, when family conflict arises, only the parents are involved in the quarrel, and they exclude their siblings from getting involved in the family conflict because they want to protect them against any possible impact on their mental well-being. It is already a Filipino practice to protect the children amid conflict and misunderstanding with other family members because they are not mature enough to handle such situations. Supported by Kouros (2020), reducing this type of chronic interparental conflict and tension helps children feel the emotional security they need for robust mental health – not only when they are young but also as adults. The finding postulates that there are still children who are mentally affected due to family quarrels and misunderstandings. Though it is considered “normal” for parents to have misunderstandings at home, proper parenting style and practice should be observed, especially in challenging situations like this. It is okay to have quarrels, but make sure that the children cannot hear especially bad words because, psychologically, it greatly impacts their mental well-being. This is congruent with the study of Hess (2022), which reveals that the increased inter-parental conflict is strongly related to decreased emotional warmth and increased negative communication in parents and to increased peer problems and decreased prosocial behavior in children.

Education

Table 2 illustrates the learners' responses about their mental health issues regarding education.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the mental health issues experienced in terms of education.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. My teacher is very strict and inconsiderate to me.	2.28	1.00	Low
2. I was involved in trouble with my classmates and schoolmates inside the school.	3.11	0.92	High
3. I had difficulty complying with the performance tasks due to financial constraints.	3.57	0.63	Very High
4. I was bullied in school or on any other occasion.	3.42	0.89	Very High
5. I had difficulty understanding my lessons in different subject areas.	2.18	1.12	Low
Total	2.91	0.91	High

The statement “I had a hard time complying with the performance task due to financial constraint” attained the highest mean of 3.57 (SD 0.63), described as High. This shows that most respondents struggle to comply with their performance tasks because they lack financial support. Although financial support from parents does not hinder success in education, it greatly impacts the learners' ability to comply with the requirements needed to achieve a better grade. Hence, when parents fail to support their children in school by providing financial assistance in complying with their projects, they can feel stressed, which affects their mental well-being. This is evident in the study of Polinar et al. (2023) that pupils in public schools frequently have financial issues that negatively affect their mental health, academic achievement, and physical wellness. It can be inferred that the lack of financial support affects not just the mental stability of the learners but also their academic performance in school. Additionally, the study by Moore et al. (2021) states that the inability to participate in activities with peers is one of the students' most salient financial stressors. Furthermore, as demonstrated by students' firsthand experiences, their inability to participate in on-campus events or more informal social gatherings led to embarrassment, shame, and frustration. These adverse effects on peer-to-peer relationships are striking, as social support is one of the strongest predictors of one's well-being. Aside from financial difficulties, they also need help academically, particularly as they adjust to the Department of Education's mandate that all public schools return to face-to-face instruction. As a result, the researchers conclude that teachers should devote some of their time to engaging in in-depth interactions with their learners and learning about their personal lives and routines. The fact that someone is willing to listen to their concerns will make students happy and content, and they will gradually place their trust and confidence in that teacher.

On the other hand, the statement “I had a hard time understanding my lessons in different subject areas” attained the lowest mean of 2.18 (SD 1.12), which is described as low. This implies that some respondents had difficulty understanding their lessons because they came from a modular distance learning modality. Now that they are in face-to-face classes, they have learning loss and learning gaps in different subject areas. If the teacher does not return to basic competencies from the previous grade levels, learners will have difficulty understanding the lesson since they lack prior knowledge. Connectedly, the study of Engzell et al. (2021) supported that losses are up to 60% larger among students from less-educated homes, confirming worries about the uneven toll of the pandemic on children and families. In a mile state, it can be inferred that learners from the pandemic have difficulty learning since they have experienced learning loss due to distance learning. Hence, they had a hard time coping with difficult lessons, and their mental well-being was affected. According to turnbridge.com (2021), when facing academic stress, adolescents and young adults are more likely to develop anxiety or depression. They also experience less well-being and tend to do poorly in school. When given a better academic situation or academic support, research suggests that students experience improved mental health, meaning they can do their best in school.

Physical Body

Table 3 displays the responses of the learners about their mental health issues in terms of physical health.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the mental health issues experienced in terms of the physical body.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. I am satisfied with the way I look/ I weigh.	2.58	0.98	Very High
2. I am conscious of my body physique, e.g., fat or thin	3.48	0.82	Very High
3. I am aware of the changes in my body, and I feel insecure about it.	3.28	0.96	Very High
4. I tried to lose weight or maintain weight by vomiting, taking diet pills, laxatives, or starving myself.	2.56	1.20	High
5. I was bullied at home and in school about my body physique.	3.27	0.79	Very High
Total	3.03	0.95	High

Table 3 displays the responses of the learners about their mental health issues in terms of physical health. The statement “I am conscious of my body physique, e.g., fat or thin,” acquired the highest mean of 3.48 (SD=0.82), which is described as “At all Times.” This pertains to most respondents in their adolescent stage, where they can experience rapid growth and body changes. During their young ages, they need someone who can help them understand their body changes, such as parents and teachers. Failure to do this can lead to body consciousness and affect their mental well-being. Almarshad et al. (2019) stated that parents should be more aware of the mental status of their children, especially during adolescence, as the prevalence of mental disorders has significantly increased over time. In a mile state, parents' and teachers' collaboration on nurturing students' good behavior will decrease the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress among students in society. Children at their adolescent

stage suffer anxiety and depression, especially in the face of their body changes. They are very sensitive when it comes to their weight and physical appearance as their emotion start to mature and develop feelings toward the opposite sex. Hence, this needs thorough guidance from the parents so that they can understand their body changes. According to the World Health Organization (2021), adolescence is crucial for developing social and emotional habits that are important for mental well-being. These include adopting healthy sleep patterns, exercising regularly, developing coping, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills, and learning to manage emotions. Protective and supportive environments in the family, school, and wider community are important. This proves that young adolescents have personal problems regarding their physique and appearance, which is why parents need to guide their children so they can understand throughout the adolescent stage.

On the other hand, the statement “I tried to lose weight or maintain weight by vomiting, taking diet pills, laxatives, or starving myself” obtained the lowest mean of 2.56 (SD=1.20), which is described as “Most of the Time.” This means some learners opt to lose weight through taking medicines or having a diet because, during adolescence, they grow fast, so their body needs food and nutrients for their growth and development. They have their ideal body figure so they will be accepted in a certain group, such as a circle of friends or admirers. Supported by Fleming (2020), many adolescents experience a growth spurt and an increase in appetite and need healthy foods to meet their growth needs. It is notable that during the adolescent stage, their body needs more energy and nutrients, which makes them eat too much until this becomes a hobby, which can lead to obesity. This is why children choose a healthy diet to maintain healthy bodies and avoid obesity. When they are obese, they will be prone to bullying in school, which can affect their self-esteem and mental well-being. According to the National Institute of Health (2024) states that teenagers who experience significant psychiatric symptoms, particularly depression and anxiety, are more likely to engage in extreme dieting practices. It can be inferred that when adolescents have more problems, they are more likely to have eating disorders, which greatly affect their health and mental health, resulting in obesity.

Sexuality

Table 4 depicts the responses of the learners about their mental health issues in terms of physical health.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the mental health issues experienced in terms of sexuality

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. I found the joy of playing with my sex organ.	1.74	0.91	Very Low
2. I felt strongly attracted to somebody, which bothered me.	3.62	0.62	Very High
3. I have experienced gender and role confusion (I think I may be gay, lesbian, or bisexual.)	3.34	0.79	Very High
4. I was bullied due to my sexual preference.	3.49	0.85	Very High
5. I have experienced sexual abuse.	1.04	0.25	Very Low
Total	2.65	0.68	High

The statement “I felt a strong emotional attraction to somebody which bothered me” obtained the highest mean of 3.62 (SD=0.62), described as Very High. This means that during adolescence, learners experience strong emotional attraction or the so-called “crush” with their classmates and schoolmates. Based on the study of Tianyu et al. (20221), adolescent romance should be regarded as a natural physiological development. It is an important opportunity for adolescents to learn how to maintain intimacy and build a positive self-concept. Simply prohibiting and opposing adolescent romance is not an effective educational strategy. Instead, it will increase the psychological pressure of young people in a relationship and increase the risk caused by romance. On the other hand, the statement “I have experienced sexual abuse” garnered the lowest mean of 1.04 (SD=0.25), which means Very low. This means that a minority of the respondents have experienced sexual abuse. It sounds alarming that there are learners in school who are victims of sexual abuse and are mentally affected because of this issue. In fact, according to the study of Radmanoviü (2020), the impact of sexual abuse on a child’s health is associated with several negative medical and psychological consequences, violent behavior, and psychological problems. Sexual abuse in childhood is correlated with higher levels of depression, guilt, shame, self-harm, eating disorders, somatic symptom disorder, anxiety, dissociative disorders, sexual problems, and problems related to interpersonal relationships as well as psychoactive substance abuse.

Violence

Table 5 shows the responses of the learners about their mental health issues in terms of physical health.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of the mental health issues experienced in terms of violence

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. I have been touched/hit/slapped/kicked/pushed or shoved in any way by any person.	1.69	0.92	Low
2. I am physically hurt, threatened, or made to feel afraid by my family or relatives.	2.09	0.99	Low
3. I have someone in my family who has a gun, rifle, or firearm, and they taught me how to use them for self-defense.	1.63	0.65	Very Low
4. My parent's way of discipline is through hurting me.	3.27	0.91	Very High
5. When I encountered trouble in the classroom, my parents punished me and uttered hurtful words.	2.92	1.08	High
Total	2.32	0.91	Low

The statement "My parent's way of discipline is through hurting me" acquired the highest mean of 3.27 (SD=0.91), which means Very High. This postulates that children experience punitive discipline from their parents at home whenever they commit mistakes or are involved in trouble, whether at home or in school. This greatly impacts their mental well-being because, as children, it is part of their growth and development, which parents fail to understand. In line with the study of Fang (2022), punitive discipline can have harmful consequences on children, such as anxiety, depression, and aggressive behavior. These negative impacts further undermine children's mental and social development.

Meanwhile, the statement "I have someone in my family I live with who has a gun, rifle, or firearm, and they taught me how to use it for self-defense" got the lowest mean of 1.63 (SD=0.65), described as Very low. This pertains to the fact that a minority of the respondents lived in a family with a gun, rifle, and firearms. Since Camp Evangelista Elementary School is located inside the soldier's camp 4th Infantry Diamond Division, it is understood that the parents of these respondents are members of the Philippine Army; thus, they are exposed to guns at home. On the same line, Rajan and Nickerson (2022) stated that the impact of firearm violence on youth is significant. Exposure to violence is consistently associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms and other internalizing symptoms, such as anxiety and depression, associated with a higher risk for suicide attempts and deaths.

Drugs

Table 6 displays the responses of the learners about their mental health issues in terms of physical health.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of the mental health issues experienced in terms of drugs

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. I used to get along with my friends who are cigarette and alcoholic users.	2.05	1.06	Low
2. I drink alcohol as a way of releasing my anxiety and depression.	2.64	0.52	High
3. I have experienced using street drugs / prohibited drugs with my classmates brought by curiosity.	1.20	0.52	Very Low
4. I experienced living in a chaotic environment where people are involved in different vices.	2.99	1.07	High
5. I experienced firsthand using prohibited drugs as a way of escaping from my problems.	1.21	0.44	Very Low
Total	2.02	0.72	Low

The statement "I experienced living in a chaotic environment where people are involved in different vices" acquired the highest mean of 2.99 (SD=1.07), which is described as high. This means most respondents lived in a chaotic environment surrounded by neighbors involved in different vices. Notably, the environment plays a huge factor in children's development, especially in learning. The theory about nature vs. nurture supports the idea that learners can learn and be influenced by the environment that surrounds them.

If the environment is chaotic, it hinders them from learning efficiently, which can negatively impact their mental well-being. Congruent with the study of Marsh (2020), chaotic home environments appear to correlate with a broad spectrum of adverse child, parent, and family outcomes. Meanwhile, the statement, "I have experienced using street drugs / prohibited drugs with my classmates brought by curiosity," received the lowest mean of 1.20 (SD=0.52), described as Very Low. This pertains to the fact that a minority of the respondents have experienced using street drugs at an early age. This is due to factors like lack of parental guidance, involvement in a gang, or having a family under the influence of prohibited drugs.

Depression

Table 7 reveals the responses of the learners about their mental health issues in terms of physical health.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of the mental health issues experienced in terms of depression

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. I easily feel anxious, sad, or depressed in any way.	3.58	0.64	Very High
2. I have thought of hurting myself or ending my life in any way.	1.84	0.82	Low
3. When I fail at times, I lose self-esteem and self-worth.	2.64	0.91	High
4. I am afraid to tell my parents whenever I encounter a problem, so I solve it in my way.	3.17	0.93	High
5. I prefer to be alone and trust no one when I suffer from depression.	3.02	0.89	High
Total	2.85	0.84	High

The statement “I easily feel anxious, sad, or depressed in any way” garnered the highest mean of 3.58 (SD=0.64), which means Very High. This indicates that most of the respondents are not emotionally vulnerable. They easily experience mood swings because this is part of their growth and development. However, when parents and teachers disregard these, their health can be affected. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescence is crucial for developing social and emotional habits that are important for mental well-being. These include adopting healthy sleep patterns, exercising regularly, developing coping, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills, and learning to manage emotions. Protective and supportive environments in the family, school, and wider community are important. Additionally, Beirão (2020) supported the idea that depression in adolescence is a common mental health disease with a prevalence of 4–5% in mid to late adolescence. It is a major risk factor for suicide and can also lead to social and educational impairments. In line with this, it can be inferred that adolescents are prone to mental health problems because it is through this stage that their emotions and bodies begin to change. They easily feel attracted to their peers and are conscious of their bodies. In short, they are in the process of adjusting to the changes both physically, emotionally, and mentally. Thus, parents and teachers must teach and monitor them by giving counseling and advice that helps them understand the changes in themselves.

However, the statement “I have thought of hurting myself or ending my life in any way” received the lowest mean of 1.84 (SD=0.82) described as Low. This means that a minority of the respondents have thought of hurting themselves or ending their lives. This sounds very alarming because there are learners in the school who need prompt counseling to address their mental health condition. These learners suffered too much depression because they had already come up with hurting themselves. According to the study of Mani and Molazem (2019), attempting suicide by adolescents is influenced by numerous factors; the purpose of primary prevention is to identify individuals predisposed to attempting suicide based on the risk factors found in this study thus, educating the adolescents, families, and community, especially the schools, about the risk factors through workshops, brochures, seminars, media, promoting effective stress management strategies, and providing a support system for this group by healthcare providers. This requires immediate action through a collaborative effort of teachers, parents, and community stakeholders to work together in providing an immediate solution to this problem since it is evident that many suicide cases are happening in the city of Cagayan de Oro. This scenario reflects the lack of follow-up and communication between the parents and their children regarding the problems that affect their mental well-being. Too much exposure to these problems will result in committing suicide because they cannot handle the stress and pressure. A pleasant environment for these children always begins at home; thus, parents should know how to provide a good atmosphere where they can nurture the children to grow up responsibly, bringing these values as they engage in society.

Summary

Table 8 presents a summary of the responses of the respondents regarding their mental health problems in terms of seven (7) factors. The data revealed that the Physical Body received the highest overall mean of 3.03 (SD=0.95), which means High—followed by Education, which got an overall mean of 2.91 (SD=0.91), which means High; Sexuality, with an overall mean of 2.65 (SD=0.68), which means High; and Depression, with an overall mean of 2.85 (SD=0.84), which means High. This further implies that learners have experienced a high prevalence of mental health problems in terms of these factors. Since their overall mean is high, the school needs an intervention plan. Moreover, data also revealed that factors home received an overall mean of 2.42 (SD=0.94), which means Low; Violence received an average mean of 2.32 (SD=0.91), which means Low; and Drugs got an average mean of 2.02 (SD=0.72), which means Low. This implies that there is a low prevalence of mental health problems among these

factors since their overall mean is low. From the result, it can be inferred that it does not need an intervention plan since learners do not experience a high prevalence of mental health issues from these factors.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of the summary of responses in terms of the seven (7) factors

Components	Overall Mean	SD	Description	Intervention Priorities
1. Home	2.42	0.94	Low	No Intervention Plan Needed
2. Education	2.91	0.91	High	Need an Intervention Plan
3. Physical Body	3.03	0.95	High	Need an Intervention Plan
4. Sexuality	2.65	0.68	High	Need an Intervention Plan
5. Violence	2.32	0.91	Low	No Intervention Plan Needed
6. Drugs	2.02	0.72	Low	No Intervention Plan Needed
7. Depression	2.85	0.84	High	Need an Intervention Plan

3.2 Challenges encountered by the Learners that Impact their mental well-being

Table 9. Emergent themes and supporting statements of the challenges encountered by the learners that impact their mental well-being

Emergent Themes	Sample Significant Statements
	"I had a hard time completing projects and other performance tasks in school due to poverty."
Education	"I felt down every time my parents quarreled because of financial problems, which affected my studies." "I felt depressed whenever my parents had family problems."
Stress/Depression	"I had difficulty understanding math lessons, and my parents and siblings could not coach me." "I have experienced sexual abuse from my father, which led me to think of committing suicide."
Violence	"I was bullied inside the school because of my body physique, which killed my self-esteem."

Based on Table 9, the emergent themes from the challenges encountered by the learners that impact their mental well-being are education, stress/depression, and violence. This converges with the quantitative data that factors such as education, depression, and violence have impacted the well-being of the learners. It can be inferred that learners experienced these problems at home and school. For instance, factors such as family problems and financial constraints in education result in stress and depression that affect their mental well-being. Aligned with the study of Deng et al. (2022) that academic and family stress leads to depression among students, negatively affecting their academic performance and learning outcomes. This provides valuable information to parents, educators, and other stakeholders concerned about their children's education and performance. In a mile state, there is a connectedness between the learners' mental health and education. When the learners experience mental illness, they perform poorly in academics because they are affected by their mental health condition.

3.3 Impact of the Challenges Encountered to their Mental Well-being

Table 10. Emergent themes and supporting statements of the impact of the challenges encountered to their mental well-being

Emergent Themes	Sample Significant Statements
	"Due to the challenges I have encountered, I become mentally disturbed, which leads me to insomnia or difficulty sleeping."
Mentally disturb	"I had a hard time focusing on the lessons, and I was pressured on how to pass the subjects due to family and financial problems."
Low Academic Performance	"I obtained low academic grades because I was affected emotionally and mentally by the challenges I have encountered as a pupil."
Personal Growth	"I have lost my self-confidence to show up myself in different school activities because I have experienced being bullied by my classmates."

Based Table 10, emergent themes shown, such as mentally disturbed, low academic performance, and personal growth, are impacts of the challenges towards their mental well-being. The result shows that when learners experience various challenges in life, they will be affected emotionally, physically, and mentally. The data converge to quantitative data, which shows that education-related problems can cause mental problems and affect their academic performance, personal growth, and mental well-being. Connectedly, the study of Delfin et al. (2021) asserted that the new learning normal had affected Senior high school students physically, mentally, and

academically. Most challenges students have encountered are a lack of devices, slow internet connection, difficulty adjusting to the new normal, and time management with the number of tasks they have. Because of these, the students struggle to catch up with their academics, lose motivation, and endanger their mental well-being. Most of these students handle these struggles by having coping mechanisms, such as better time management, finding alternatives, and seeking support.

3.4 Learners' Coping Mechanism

Table 11. Emergent themes and supporting statements of the learners' coping mechanism

Emergent Themes	Sample Significant Statements
Prayer	"I always believed the power of prayer to combat the challenges along the way." "I strive to go to church and pray to relieve my stress and anxiety." "There is no better solution to overcoming challenges than a prayer." "Communicating my problems with my close friends, siblings, and teachers helps me in overcoming my fears, stress, and anxiety."
Communication	"I find it very effective because when you communicate your problems, it becomes lighter on my part." "

Table 11 presents the emergent themes for learners' coping mechanisms towards the challenges encountered in the school. The themes emerged, such as prayer and communication, as their coping mechanisms towards the challenges they have experienced. It further signifies that the respondent's way to combat these during the trying times is through prayers. It is believed that fostering a strong relationship with God will help you overcome various challenges in life. Moreover, the power of communication is not practiced today due to the presence of gadgets. Communication with their friends and families relieves the stress and anxieties brought on by the challenges in their lives as a student. The study of Deak and Mengga (2023) supported the notion that prayer and communication as coping can be more effective and beneficial in the healing process if it is done not only as a normal human reaction when anxious but in a relationship built consistently with God. Because when there is consistency and close connection, a strong sense of trust in God will grow solidly. It is this feeling of trust or faith in God that will create a sense of security and dispel the emergence of anxiety and other psychological problems that can lead to physical health problems. Christian psychology can encourage religious behavior, such as prayer, to help patients heal.

3.5 Learners' Insights on the Challenges

Table 12. Emergent themes and supporting statements of the learners' insights on the challenges

Emergent Themes	Sample Significant Statements
Positivity	"I have learned from the experience always to have positivity in every challenging situation." "I have learned that overcoming challenges depends on how we react to situations." "Having stress tolerance taught me to be patient in every challenging situation, whether at home or school."
Stress Tolerance	"During the difficult times in my life, I have learned to deal with stress and became emotionally mature." The trying times of my life have taught me to foster strong connections with God and surrender all my worries and pains."
Connection/Partnerships	"I have learned to have a strong connection with my family and friends who are always there through my ups and downs."

The table presented the emergent themes for the learners' insights based on the challenges encountered and the coping mechanisms employed by the learners. Data shows emergent themes such as positivity, stress tolerance, and connection or partnership as crucial skills to possess when facing life's challenges and adversities. It is very hard to combat mental illness. However, if you always uphold positivity, stress tolerance, and strong partnership with people you trust, you can surpass the challenges easily and confidently. We are into embracing resiliency in education, and if teachers are the ones to model those values and then radiate them to the learners, they will be able to combat every problem, and it will pave the way to living a life with healthy mental well-being.

4.0 Conclusion

Mental health issues continue to be a detrimental problem in the society. This creates huge problems, especially for those vulnerable individuals. They are the ones who cannot handle the anxiety and depression surrounded by many factors. For instance, the children. They are one of the most vulnerable members of the community when it comes to mental health issues. The study found that the learners have experienced mental health issues, specifically in education, physical body, sexuality, and depression. This should not be disregarded because several students committed suicide, claiming that their problems are related to education. We are just recovering from the pandemic, and learners suffer anxiety and depression from it; now that they are exposed to face-to-face classes, teachers must learn to understand them because they are the product of distance learning. It is anticipated that we need to bridge the gap in learning because of the pandemic. If the teachers disregard this, it can create depression, stress, and anxiety, which can lead to mental health problems. Physical body and sexuality factors are personal problems. Hence, communication and collaboration between teachers and parents should be prioritized to address issues related to their physical bodies. However, the school is challenged in assessing the learners who suffer from mental issues, an expert professional with appropriate assessment tools intended for them. What the school can provide is only a proactive measure through the guidance counselor's help through the guidance counseling program.

The study recommends that the school should have a mental health intervention program that focuses on the physical body, education, sexuality, and depression. The intervention will serve as a proactive measure to address learners who suffer from mental illness. Furthermore, the school should work collaboratively with the community to provide programs and projects for learners with mental health problems. Teachers and guidance counselors may work hand-in-hand to ensure the children's safety and healthy mental well-being. Moreover, SDO Cagayan de Oro City may continuously provide training and seminars to the school's designated guidance counselors to hone their craft in providing counseling services to the learners in school. Future researchers may conduct the same study but focus on the impact of the mental health intervention plan on the academic performance of the learners in all subject areas.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Ryan C. Tura, thank you for leading this research study and for patiently contributing his suggestions, given his profound background and expertise in research. Marian C. Cardona, thank you for taking more time to check this study's grammar and for explaining the discussion, analysis, and interpretations further.

6.0 Funding

The researchers personally shoulder the funding of the study.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

8.0 Acknowledgment

Dr. Gemma Ethel B. Ong, thank you for your technical assistance.

Thank you to Dr. Joel D. Potane for patiently sharing his insights on improving the paper further by sharing his suggestions and comments.

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