



Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 and Holistic Development of Secondary Students in term of Emotional Development, Mental Development, and Social Development

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to address the issues of bullying by determining the students' level of awareness, the level of implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, and the secondary students' holistic development. The survey was conducted among randomly selected Grade 7–12 students to gather relevant data for this study. We employed a self-made questionnaire that was validated using Aiken's V formula. The results were analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics. The total mean of the student's level of awareness is extremely high. The level of implementation at Sultan Kudarat State University is only observable. The students are concerned with all three aspects of holistic development and are influenced by the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013. Social development gained the highest mean, followed by mental and emotional development. A low positive correlation was found between the two. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected. Moreover, the three main concerns of the students regarding the implementation are the implementation's lack of consistency, the bullying that comes from teachers, and others having connections within the school, resulting in a fear of reporting them. It is recommended that the Department of Education further strengthen its security and rules for the schools by making sure that those involved in bullying cases do not get away from their wrongdoings just because they are teachers by profession or they have inside connections within the schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Violence and bullying are widespread issues that affect educational systems throughout the world. Bullying has a long history, especially in schools. Bullying can refer to a form of verbal, physical, emotional, racist, sexual, or cyber abuse (Vione et al., 2011; Hellström et al., 2021). It is a complicated and pervasive public health problem that affects both children and adults. Being bullied as a youngster has been stigmatized for decades as a harmful experience with long-term effects (Rettew and Pawlowski, 2016). In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 10627 also known as the anti-bullying act was passed on the 12th day of September, 2013. Under this law, all elementary and secondary schools are directed to implement policies to combat bullying in their respective institutions as it was stated in the third section of the article. This was solely to reduce the cases of bullying and give justice to those victims of bullying.

Bullying occurs on occasion in school (Olweus, 2010; Rigby & Smith, 2011), prompting kids to rarely report the incident to the appropriate authorities. In Sultan Kudarat, there was a study conducted by Lapada and Lapada (2021) that highlighted that bullying was less prevalent at Esperanza National High School because it maintained a healthy school climate that is appropriate for many sorts of learners. They recommend that the school should continue to promote a positive school atmosphere and have a zero-tolerance policy for any bullying incidents in the school.

Hence, we were motivated to conduct this study to determine the student's level of awareness, the level of implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, and the students' level of holistic development at Sultan Kudarat State University – Laboratory High School to serve as reliable data in combating bullying within the school.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

The relationship between the Anti-Bullying Act's level of implementation and its influence on the student's awareness and holistic development is important. The predictor variable is the student's level of awareness and the level of implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, whereas the outcome variables are students' level of holistic development, specifically the emotional, mental, and social aspects. Generally, this study aimed to determine the student's level of awareness, the level of implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, and the student's level of holistic development.

Specifically, this sought to answer the following:

- (i) What is the student's level of awareness of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013?
- (ii) What is the level of implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013?
- (iii) What is the student's holistic development in terms of Emotional Development, Mental Development, and Social Development
- (iv) Is there a significant relationship between the level of implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 and students' holistic development?
- (v) What are the issues and concerns of the students in the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 in SKSU – Laboratory High School?

In the research hypothesis, there is no significant relationship between the level of implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 and the level of influence on the student's holistic development.

2. METHODS

The study used a descriptive-correlation research design with a quantitative approach. In this study, the specified research design was used to determine the relationship between the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 and the holistic development of secondary students. The study took place at Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School to determine the secondary students' level of awareness, the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, and the student's level of holistic development. The respondents of the study were 176 randomly selected students out of 315 students from Sultan Kudarat State University's Laboratory High School. These students must be officially enrolled in the school year 2022-2023.

We used the stratified sampling technique and the Slovin formula to determine the number of participants for the study. We then utilized a survey questionnaire to acquire the data for the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the analysis and interpretation of all data. The mean, frequency, and Pearson r moment correlation were used to compute the data gathered. **Figure 1** shows general schematic diagram of the study.

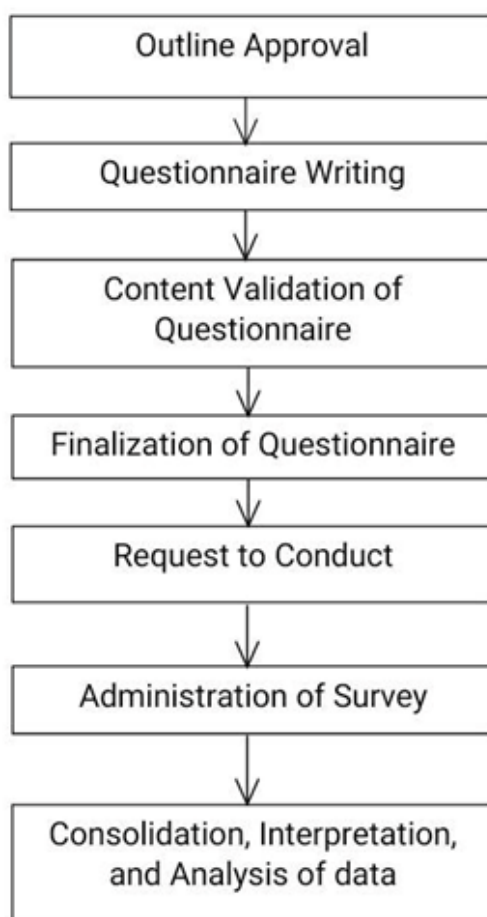


Figure 1. General schematic diagram of the study.

2.1. Data Gathering Procedure

We presented an outline of their proposed study to the panel committee to ask for their suggestions on improving the plan. Based on the SOP for the study, we created the survey questions. For us to evaluate and respond to the questions that pertain to this study, the survey questionnaire is expected to include personal questions that will be drawn from the student's experiences.

We seek approval from their committee and adviser after writing the initial draft of the questionnaire to receive any further comments and recommendations that might help them polish it.

The comments and recommendations are carefully edited thereafter to improve the survey form. We got an authorization letter from the Laboratory High School Chairperson asking for permission to conduct the study.

The survey was carried out to collect enough data for the study. To avoid interfering with the students' classes, we distributed the questionnaire face-to-face in their free time. To encourage individuals to participate in the research, we guaranteed the confidentiality of the responses. The survey took one week to complete and get the whole idea. The study's findings were analyzed and explained using descriptive statistics.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Students' Level of Awareness of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013

According to the survey's result, the total mean of the students' level of awareness is 4.25 with a standard deviation of 1.03, which means that they are extremely aware of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013.

Republic Act No. 10627 of the Philippines, commonly referred to as the "Anti-Bullying Act of 2013," is a law that strives to address adverse circumstances at school that disrupt the process of learning, which is not good for a child's overall growth.

Table 1 presents the secondary students' level of awareness of the act. The statement about the students' being aware that bullying can happen anywhere gained the highest mean of 4.78 and standard deviation of 0.48, followed by their awareness of the negative effects of bullying (4.72 mean and 0.68 standard deviations). It was also found that the students are aware of their rights if they are bullied, with a 4.31 mean and 0.85 standard deviation. The mentioned statements were all interpreted as extremely aware. This means that the students possessed knowledge about bullying in general.

Table 1. Results of the secondary students' level of awareness of the anti-bullying act of 2013.

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. I am aware of the Republic Act No. 10627 or Anti-Bullying Act of 2013.	3.81	1.13	Aware
2. I am aware of the consequences that I will face if I disobey Republic Act No. 10627.	3.64	1.26	Aware
3. I am aware that bullying can occur anywhere in schools, etc.	4.78	0.48	Extremely Aware
4. I am aware of the negative effects of bullying.	4.72	0.68	Extremely Aware
5. I am aware of my rights as a student if I am bullied.	4.31	0.85	Extremely Aware
Mean	4.25	1.03	Extremely Aware

However, when asked if they were aware of Republic Act No. 10627, or the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, it was found out that they were only aware of it but somehow still lacked knowledge of the provisions and consequences of the act. This is supported by the first statement about their awareness of the act, which gained a mean of 3.81 and a 1.13 standard deviation, leaving their awareness of the consequences if they disobeyed the act at the lowest mean of 3.64 and a 1.26 standard deviation.

This set of statements contradicts the general interpretation that the students are extremely aware of the anti-bullying act, given that the direct statement about them being

aware of it only gained an "aware" interpretation. We noted that, in terms of awareness, the students may be aware of bullying and levels of influence as part of their general knowledge, but in terms of the act itself, some of them still lack awareness of it, which resulted in the statement being 4th among the five.

These findings are supported by a report from the Department of Education (2023), which states that the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act in the Philippines has been challenging due to several factors, such as a lack of awareness and understanding of the law. This refers to the student's awareness of the existence of the act but lack of in-depth knowledge regarding its provisions.

3.2. Anti-Bullying Act of 2013's Level of Implementation

The Anti-Bullying Act of 2013's level of implementation at Sultan Kudarat State University was found to have a 3.37 mean and a 1.05 standard deviation, which is interpreted as observable. According to **Table 2**, it was observed by the secondary students that bullying is less rampant in Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School, with a 3.55 mean and a 1.05 standard deviation. It is the only statement that is interpreted as very observable among the five.

Following that, it was found that the students felt safer because of the current implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 in their university (3.38 mean and a 1.04 standard deviation). It is supported by the succeeding statement, which gained a 3.32 mean and 1.06 standard deviation and is all about the students' observing the act being implemented. Then, the statements about the act affecting the rate of bullying in the school and the student's satisfaction with its implementation both gained a 3.31 mean and a 1.01 standard deviation. The aforesaid statements were all interpreted as observable, which is between very observable and slightly observable.

This shows that the level of implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act at SKSU-Laboratory High School is mid-level. It is observable, but not to the extent that it is extremely evident, and also not to the point that the students cannot observe it anymore. However, considering the statement about bullying being less rampant at the university, it makes sense that the implementation is only observable since bullying is not that prevalent in the area.

Bullying being less rampant in SKSU Laboratory High School also had the same findings as a study conducted by [Lapada and Lapada \(2021\)](#), who found out that bullying was also less prevalent at Esperanza National High School because it maintained a healthy school climate that is appropriate for many sorts of learners. This therefore shows that through appropriate practice of the law, bullying cases can still be lessened in the country.

Table 2. Results of the anti-bullying act of 2013's level of implementation at Sultan Kudarat State University – Laboratory High School.

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. I can observe the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 being implemented in my school.	3.32	1.06	Observable
2. The implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 affects the rate of bullying in my school.	3.31	1.01	Observable
3. I feel safer because of the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 in my school.	3.38	1.04	Observable
4. It is evident that bullying is less rampant in my school	3.55	1.05	Very Observable
5. I am satisfied with the Anti-Bullying Act's level of implementation in my school	3.31	1.10	Observable
Mean:	3.37	1.05	Observable

3.3. Students' Level of Emotional Development

Table 3 shows the level of emotional development of secondary students, obtaining a 3.65 total mean and a 1.09 standard deviation that is interpreted as agreeing. Bullying someone can affect the emotional development of that person, as it is defined to reflect the most important intellectual and relational influences in early life.

Table 3. Results of the secondary students' level of emotional development.

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
I can freely show my emotions without the fear of being bullied because of them.	3.34	1.09	Neutral
I feel more confident in voicing out my concerns because of the protection that the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 gives me.	3.34	1.08	Neutral
I communicate my feelings and concerns directly to the person involved, rather than talking behind their back and bullying them	3.72	1.03	Agree
I am extra careful with my words and actions to avoid bullying people	4.06	0.93	Agree
I do not hold grudges against other people and try to address my concerns and others' concerns about me nicely because I know that bullying would only make the situation worse.	3.80	1.13	Agree
Mean:	3.65	1.09	Agree

In the study, it was found that the statement about the students being extra careful with their words and actions gained the highest mean of 4.06 and the lowest standard deviation of 0.92. It is followed by a statement about not holding grudges against other people and students trying to address their concerns nicely because they know that bullying would only make the situation worse (3.80 mean and a 1.13 standard deviation). It is supported by the statement, that students communicate their feelings and concerns directly to the person involved rather than talking behind their backs and bullying them (3.72 mean and a 1.03 standard deviation).

We interpreted these three as interconnected with one another since, for someone to not hold grudges against other people, they must learn how to communicate feelings nicely and directly to avoid bullying others and to imply carefulness with their words and actions. This therefore explains the students' assessments of the three, which are all "agree".

These are followed by a statement about freely showing emotions without the fear of being bullied and feeling more confident in voicing out concerns because of the protection of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, as statements gaining 3.34 mean, interpreted as neutral.

This means that in terms of emotional development, it is evident that the students are sensitive and mature enough to acknowledge the possible negative effects of bullying, which is why they are not doing such an act. A study published in 2019 by Creswell supports these findings because it was found in their study that school-based mindfulness interventions such as the Anti-Bullying Act led to improvements in self-esteem and emotional regulation in secondary students.

However, in terms of freely expressing themselves, they are still hesitant or in between doing it or not because of fear that they might get bullied for it.

3.4. Students' Level of Mental Development

Table 4. presents the secondary students' level of mental development. The total mean is 3.77 and the total standard deviation is 1.10, which is interpreted as agreeing. Mental development is connected to a child's brain development and includes the ability to comprehend various things, think about them, analyze them, solve problems, and express their ideas. It can be affected if someone bullies a person, as they may think about the situation over and over again, resulting in trauma.

This is supported by the statements above, with the students overthinking others' views of them, even with the existence of the Anti-Bullying Act (4.11 mean and 0.99 standard deviation) and the statement about them being bothered when they are bullied (4.04 mean and 1.14 standard deviation). This shows that bullying can greatly affect the students' mental capacity, which later leads to serious problems like anxiety and depression.

Table 4. Results of the secondary students' level of mental development.

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. I still overthink others' views of me, even with the existence of the Anti-Bullying Act.	4.11	0.99	Agree
2. I feel more safe opening up about my mental state because I know that there is an act that can protect me from being bullied for it.	3.10	1.11	Neutral
3. Before doing something, I put myself in someone else's shoes to see if that action is not offensive on their end.	3.92	0.94	Agree
4. I am mentally capable of handling constructive criticism.	3.69	1.04	Agree
5. I will be bothered if I am ever bullied.	4.04	1.14	Agree
Mean:	3.77	1.10	Agree

The third on the list is the statement about students putting themselves in someone else's shoes first to see if that action is not offensive, with a 3.92 mean and 0.94 mean, followed by being mentally capable of handling constructive criticism about their behavior (3.69 mean and 1.04 standard deviation). The mentioned four statements are all interpreted as "agree", leaving the statement about students feeling safer in opening up about their mental state as least agreed by the students, with a 3.10 mean and 1.11 standard deviation, interpreted as neutral.

The statement that gained the highest agreement from the students, as well as the least agreement, was found to have a connection with another, as the students may not be feeling that safe because they overthink what others may say to them.

It is then concluded that, in terms of mental development, the act can affect secondary students by making them more empathetic and understanding about others' situations by putting themselves in their shoes, as it was stated in the literature that mental development can be identified when a person has acquired the ability to comprehend various things and analyze them to express their ideas or provide solutions.

In this case, it is through comprehending and analyzing others' experiences that the students' way of thinking is developed. Also, they are aware that bullying can bother others and make them overthink, which is why they try to avoid it.

3.5. Students' Level of Social Development

Table 5 shows the secondary students' level of social development. The holistic aspect received a 3.83 mean and a 1.12 standard deviation, interpreted as agreeing. Social

development refers to the process of developing social skills and relationships throughout the lifespan. It includes learning how to communicate effectively, cooperate with others, and form meaningful connections with friends, family, and community members.

According to the **Table 5**, the statement that got the highest mean of 4.24 and a 0.95 standard deviation is the statement about going out with friends, which had a 0.01 difference with the statement about acknowledging students’ own mistakes and trying to be accountable for them (4.23 mean and a 0.86 standard deviation).

The two statements were interpreted as strongly agree, which means that the students agree with the act’s impact on their lives, as they are freer to go out with its protections and more accepting that they can sometimes make mistakes but also hold themselves accountable for them.

Table 5. Results of the secondary students’ social development.

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. I am confident in showing off my talents and skills without fear of being bullied.	3.26	1.16	Neutral
2. I freely socialize with others without the fear of being bullied.	3.37	1.08	Neutral
3. I usually go out with my friends.	4.24	0.95	Strongly Agree
4. I know how to acknowledge my own mistakes and try to be accountable for them.	4.23	0.86	Strongly Agree
5. I choose my friends wisely to avoid being bullied, for who I am.	4.06	1.08	Agree
Mean:	3.83	1.12	Agree

Then, the statement about students choosing their friends wisely to avoid being bullied, for which they gained a 4.06 mean and a 1.08 standard deviation, is interpreted as agreeing. It was followed by the statements about freely socializing with others without the fear of being bullied (3.37 mean and a 1.08 standard deviation) and students confidently showing off their talents and skills without fear of being judged by others (3.26 mean and a 1.16 standard deviation), which are both interpreted as neutral.

We interpreted these data to support one another by connecting the statements. In terms of social development, the students usually go out with their friends, who accept them for who they are since they are still holding back on freely socializing with others and confidently showing what they have with the thought of being bullied because of it.

Also, the statement about the students being accountable for their mistakes greatly aligns with the concept of social development, which includes learning how to communicate effectively, cooperate with others, and form meaningful connections with friends, family, and community through responsible socialization.

3.6. Students’ Level of Holistic Development

According to the **Table 6**, the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 had the greatest effect on the secondary students’ social development with a 3.83 mean and a 1.12 standard deviation, followed by mental development with a 3.77 mean and a 1.10 standard deviation, and finally, emotional development with a 3.65 mean and a 1.09 standard deviation. **Table 6** presents the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013’s level of effects on secondary students’ holistic development in general.

Five (5) questions were prepared for each holistic aspect that the study aimed to determine, resulting in a survey consisting of 15 questions to answer SOP 3. We first

computed the statement's mean individually (presented in the next tables) and then gathered the combined totals to get the result needed for the study. We computed the holistic aspects' mean by using the same formula to get the statements' mean individually.

Table 6. Level of holistic development of the secondary students.

Holistic Aspect	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Emotional Development	3.65	1.09	Agree
Mental Development	3.77	1.10	Agree
Social Development	3.83	1.12	Agree
Grand Mean:	3.75	0.02	Agree

In line with that, the mean was incorporated with the Likert scale applied. This resulted in all three developments being agreed upon by the majority of the students, with a grand mean of 3.75 and a grand standard deviation is 0.02.

We found out that in terms of social development, the students usually go out with their friends, who accept them for who they are since they are still holding back on freely socializing with others and confidently showing what they have with the thought of being bullied because of it. In terms of mental development, the Anti-Bullying Act can affect secondary students by making them more empathetic and understanding about others' situations, as they are aware that bullying can bother others and make them overthink, which is why they try to avoid it.

Furthermore, in terms of emotional development, it is evident that the students are sensitive and mature enough to acknowledge the possible negative effects of bullying, which is why they are not doing such an act. However, in terms of freely expressing themselves, they are still hesitant or in between doing it or not because of fear that they might get bullied for it.

In general, the Anti-Bullying Act can affect the students' holistic development as it provides them with guidelines, they should acknowledge to avoid hurting others emotionally, mentally, and physically. Additionally, research has also shown that holistic approaches to mental health can improve students' academic and personal success. For instance, a mindfulness-based intervention program like the Anti-Bullying Act improved the students' well-being, social competence, and academic performance, proving that the act contributes to the holistic development of the secondary students.

To find a significant relationship between implementation and effects, we used the Pearson r-moment correlation. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is the most common method of assessing a linear connection. It is a number between -1 and 1 that indicates the intensity and direction of the link between two variables. In this study, the two variables are the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 and the holistic development of secondary students.

3.7. Implementation's Significant Relationship with the Holistic Development of the Secondary Students

In the **Table 7**, it is shown that there is a significant relationship between the act's implementation and the holistic development of secondary students, with a 0.05 level of significance. The computed r value is 0.397, which is close to 0. This signifies that there is only a weak association between the two. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected as there was a low positive correlation identified.

Table 7. Results of the implementation's significant relationship with the holistic development of the secondary students.

Source of Relationship	n	df	computed r	p-value	Interpretation
Implementation	176	1	0.397	.000	Significant
Holistic Development		174			

At 0.05 level of significance

3.8. Issues and Concerns of the Secondary Students

Table 8 presents the issues and concerns of the secondary students on the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 at Sultan Kudarat State University - Laboratory High School.

Table 8. Results of the issues and concerns of the students regarding the implementation of the anti-bullying act of 2013.

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
1. Every time I report someone for bullying me, I am not accommodated immediately.	61	34.66%
2. Even though actions have been taken, bullying can still happen due to the implementation's lack of consistency.	158	89.77%
3. Bullying comes not only from students but sometimes from teachers, too.	139	78.98%
4. I'm having a hard time reporting someone for bullying me because I am afraid it might worsen the situation.	114	64.77%
5. I'm afraid to report someone, especially if they have connections in school.	117	66.48%

The study of [Sunga \(2018\)](#) revealed that the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 in Philippine schools has been challenging due to several factors. One of the main factors is the lack of awareness and understanding of the law among school administrators, teachers, and students.

In this study, we included some issues and concerns that the students may choose from optionally to identify the top three issues and concerns of secondary students regarding the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 in SKSU-Laboratory High School.

From the data in **Table 8**, it is shown that the primary concern of the students' is the act's lack of consistency, which is why bullying still exists with 158 yes votes out of 176. Following that is the students' concern that bullying comes not only from their co-students but also from their teachers, with 139 votes, and the third one is about their fear of reporting someone because they may have connections in school, with 117 votes.

The following issues are also close to the top three, including the students' concern about having a hard time reporting someone because they are afraid that it might worsen the situation, with 114 votes. Also, the last issue and concern from the data gathered is all about students not reporting someone because they are accommodated immediately, with only 61 votes.

With that, we interpreted that at SKSU Laboratory High School, students are accommodated immediately when bullying occurs, but they wish that there would be a consistent effort to maintain a peaceful and healthy environment through the proper implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 to avoid bullying in general.

These concerns are the same as the findings of Inoncencio et al., in their study about the Public School District of Castillejos, where bullying prevention is viewed favorably, but it was recommended that the schools keep up their enthusiasm for putting the anti-bullying law into

practice; keep up their anti-bullying campaigns to inform students about the harm bullying causes to their physical and emotional well-being, and keep letting students participate in all anti-bullying campaigns so they can spread the word to others.

4. CONCLUSION

The majority of parents view the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) as a program that can help their children be disciplined and aware of their responsibilities as a citizen. Parents commonly view the ROTC program as a good program to develop the senior high school students' sense of responsibility, leadership, and discipline among themselves. Aside from that, they could use what they have learned as a form of self-defence to keep themselves safe. There were also issues and concerns found in the study that were classified into four categories: (1) the student's age and strength to undergo the program; (2) the program's possible effect on their academic studies; (3) the exemption of the students with health conditions; and (4) acts of violence like hazing that are said to be the reason why the mandatory implementation of the program was abolished. Therefore, while the majority of parents support the proposed Philippine mandatory ROTC for senior high school students, there are still concerns that should be first investigated and, if necessary, considered by the national government to successfully implement the revival of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps program.

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6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors guarantee that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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