

PARENTAL COMMUNICATION PATTERNS IN SEX DISCUSSIONS AS PREDICTOR OF SEXUAL SELF-EFFICACY OF FILIPINO TEENAGERS

Edalvinne H. Manuguid¹, Mariam Shariffa J. Mangansakan¹, Trixia Kharla S. Ordoño¹,
and Paul John D. Albon¹²

¹Psychology Department, Our Lady of Fatima University, Antipolo City, Philippines

²Research Development and Innovation Center, Our Lady of Fatima University, Antipolo City, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the different parental communication patterns using the Family Communication Patterns Theory regarding sex discussion and how it predicts the sexual self-efficacy of Filipino teenagers. Using cluster sampling method, four hundred teenagers with ages ranging from 15 to 19 years old were gathered to answer a two-part survey questionnaire. Using regression analysis, it was determined that parental communication patterns do predict the level of sexual self-efficacy of teenagers ($R = 0.207$, $F(2,397) = 8.93$, $p < .001$). The results also showed that Filipino teenagers have a high sexual self-efficacy (Contraceptive Use $\bar{X} = 3.30$ $SD = 0.57$, Consent $\bar{X} = 3.51$ $SD = 0.49$, Reproductive Health $\bar{X} = 3.35$ $SD = 0.58$, Sex Education $\bar{X} = 3.47$ $SD = 0.52$) which leads to the conclusion that they have the ability to control their sexual behavior. It was also found out that the protective pattern ($n = 134$, 33.5%), is the most used parental communication pattern. However, parental communication patterns predict sexual self-efficacy by 3.82% (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.0382$) which suggests that there are other factors that predict sexual self-efficacy. Results show that parental communication patterns do predict the sexual self-efficacy of Filipino teenagers.

Keywords: *parental communication, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, Filipino teenagers, sexual self-efficacy, contraceptive use, reproductive health*

INTRODUCTION

There are numerous consequences to risky sexual behavior, such as teenage pregnancy, and HIV/AIDS infection. There is an alarming increase in the rate of live births among 10–14-year-old girls. According to PSA (2022), an increase from 1,903 in 2016 to 2,113 births was recorded in 2020. Teenage pregnancy remains as a threat to Filipino girls, as maternal conditions are the second most cause of mortality and fourth in disability-adjusted life years worldwide among girls aged 15-19 years, as stated by UNICEF (2022). On the other hand, the Philippine Statistics Authority (2023) reported decline in the teenage pregnancy rate in the Philippines from 2017 to 2022, wherein from 8.6 percent, it went down to 5.4 percent, counting 5,531 young women from ages 15-19 years old. Aside from teenage pregnancy, unprotected sexual intercourse increases the risk of acquiring sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). HIV is considered a "youth epidemic" in the Philippines by the National Youth Commission (NYC), as reported by Montemayor (2018). Over 150,000 adolescents aged 10-19 were newly infected with HIV in 2020 worldwide. With that, it brings up the total number of adolescents living with the virus to 1.75 million. Additionally, 39,000 adolescents succumbed to complications caused by AIDS in the same year (UNICEF, 2021).

In the Philippines, the inadequacy of open communication between parents and their children about sex, contraception, and pregnancy is one of the factors that influences the high incidence of teenage pregnancy. Based on the study of Gregorio (2018), young Filipino women usually rely on their partners for information about sex, who themselves may have learned from sources such as friends, magazines, or the internet, where explicit materials are easily accessible. This limited and often unreliable information about sexual topics leaves young people with little guidance, resulting in risky sexual behavior. Additionally, in the 2021 study conducted by the University of the Philippines Population Institute (2022) showed that HIV/AIDS awareness among youth in the Philippines had hit an all-time low since 1994, where a considerable decline was seen from the 95-percent awareness in 1994 to 76- percent in 2021. Thirty-five percent of these young individuals lacked the belief that the use of condoms during sexual intercourse lowers the chance of being infected by HIV. Furthermore, James, Kawano, Sunday, and Chullapant (2022) cited the study of Tuason, Bernarte, and Dong (2017), stating that religious beliefs and the lack of parental discussions about sex lead to a low rate of condom usage among young Filipino men. Arguilla and Habitan (2014) stated that the role of parents in parent-adolescent communication plays a significant role as it can predict if whether they can create a good relationship to their child, which can help in both discussing risky sexual behavior and making decisions on whether one act should be done or not. Aforementioned evidences indicate that inadequate parental communication with their children about sex can increase the likelihood of adolescents engaging in risky sexual behavior, which in turn can lead to issues such as teenage pregnancy, as well as the acquisition of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

This research aims to determine the patterns of communication regarding sex discussion of Filipino Parents as perceived by their teenage children. Additionally, this study also

aims to determine if parental patterns of communication regarding sex discussion predict sexual self- efficacy of Filipino teenagers. Moreover, the researchers intend to know what parental communication pattern is most frequently used by Filipino parents when discussing sex, pregnancy, contraceptive use, and the risks of unprotected intercourse, such as acquiring STDs and HIV/AIDS, as well as the frequency of communication between parent and child. Lastly, the researches aim to know the level of sexual self- efficacy of Filipino teenagers.

The study may contribute to the existing studies regarding parental communication patterns and guide future researchers to explore more areas that could be affected by different parental communication patterns. Moreover, the study may contribute to existing studies in Family Psychology, and to the Filipino community, especially to parents with adolescent children, wherein the study may impart additional knowledge on the different ways of communicating with their child regarding sex discussions in a way that may improve their child's sexual self-efficacy. Aside from this, the study may contribute to the existing studies in Adolescent Psychology on how the parent-child communication influences their perceived ability to manage and control their sexual behavior, negotiate sexual situations, and engage in sexual activity that is safe and consensual.

Research Questions

The following queries will be answered by this study:

Research Question 1: What is the most often used parental communication pattern as perceived by Filipino teenagers?

Research Question 2: What are the levels of sexual self-efficacy of Filipino teenagers?

Research Question 3: Do parental communication patterns predict the sexual self-efficacy of Filipino teenagers?

H₀. Parental communication patterns do not predict the sexual self-efficacy of Filipino teenagers.

H_a. Parental communication patterns predict the sexual self-efficacy of Filipino teenagers.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish the objectives of the study, a quantitative survey design was used. According to Creswell & Creswell (2017) it is defined as a study that is focused on reviewing attitudes, trends, and opinions of a population using questionnaires and studying the population.

This study was conducted on selected secondary schools located in Region IV-A CALABARZON of the Philippines. Based on the Census of the Population and Housing released by the Philippine Statistic Authority (2021), CALABARZON has the highest population of adolescents ages 15-19 years with a total of 1,470,129, both male and female.

The researchers used cluster sampling method wherein they randomly selected the participants from already-existing or naturally occurring groups. For instance, towns or schools within a district, and families within a society are examples of clusters where the researchers can narrow down the selection of their participants. Cluster sampling was defined as a type of probability sampling technique where the researchers divide the population into groups and the selected participants will have an equal chance of being a part of the sample. (Bhardwaj, 2019).

With the use of cluster sampling method, the researchers of this study gathered a total number of 400 adolescent participants from the non-sectarian private and public secondary schools in CALABARZON. These participants had met the criteria set by the researchers who are teenagers from age 15 to 19 years old that reside within the area of CALABARZON that has the highest population of adolescents. The researchers excluded those adolescents who no longer has communication with both parents.

The researchers used a researcher-made questionnaire and a modified questionnaire to measure the variables. In this study, the researchers used a Sexual Self-Efficacy Scale (SSE) and the modified Revised Family Communication Pattern Instrument. The Sexual Self-Efficacy Scale is a 30-item researcher-made that consists of four (4) domains: contraceptive use, consent, reproductive health, and sex education which helped measure the sexual self-efficacy of adolescents. The Revised Family Communication Pattern Instrument (RFCP) by Koener and Fitzpatrick (2002) is a 44-item instrument that will determine the communication of parent-child by measuring their two dimensions: (1) conversation and (2) conformity orientations. The researchers have made modifications with the RFCP to further fit the objectives of the study. Using the Cronbach's alpha, it was seen that the researcher-made questionnaire yielded an excellent reliability rating ($\alpha = 0.895$), while the modified RFCP yielded a good reliability rating ($\alpha = 0.857$). According to Jones, Baxter and Khanduja (2013), using a survey design creates a higher statistical power with its large population. It can also collect vast amounts of data with the availability of validated models. This will help the researchers gather information to explain how parental communication helps the sexual self-efficacy of Filipino teenagers.

Upon the ethical approval of the university's ethics committee, the researchers sought out the approval of the principal of the selected school for the distribution of the questionnaires amongst the target population. Upon approval, the researchers provided assent forms to participants who are ages 15-17 years old, and informed consent forms for those who are of legal age. Those who have signed to participate was given one printed questionnaire at a time, and was given ample time to answer. The use of paper-based questionnaires is for the researchers to have more liberty to monitor the respondents while they answer to ensure that they were not be influenced by the answers of their peers, as well as being able to ask questions from the researchers immediately for clarifications when needed. After the respondents have finished answering, the researchers gathered all answered questionnaires, tallied and organize the data then ran the data for analysis.

The study was interpreted using Linear Regression Analysis in order to examine whether parental communication pattern in sex discussions is a predictor to the sexual self-efficacy of Filipino teenagers. The software that was used was the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21.

RESULTS

Table 1

Frequency and Percentages of Participants' Demographic

Age	No. of respondents (n=400)	%
15	48	12%
16	185	46%
17	68	17%
18	59	15%
19	40	10%
Total	400	100%

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of 400 participants by age. The average age being 16.65, and a standard deviation of 1.17. The most common age was 16 years old with 185 participants (46%). The least common age was 19 years old with 40 participants (10%).

Table 1

Evaluation Scale for Parental Communication Pattern in Sex Discussion

Scale	Interpretation
1.00 – 2.50	Low
2.51– 4.00	High

Table 2 shows the scale and verbal interpretation of parental communication pattern in sex discussion, in which 1.00 to 2.50 were interpreted as low while 2.51 to 4.00 were interpreted as high.

Table 2

Frequency and Percentages of Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions and its Dimensions among Four Hundred (400) Filipino Teenagers

Parental Communication Pattern in Sex Discussions	No. of Results	Respondents' %
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Conversation Orientation

High	180	45%
Low	220	55%
Conformity Orientation		
High	205	51.25%
Low	195	48.75%

Table 3 shows the two dimensions of parental communication pattern in sex discussion: conversation orientation has a high percentage of 45%, and 55% as its low percentage. Conformity orientation, on the other hand, has a high percentage of 51.25% and a low percentage of 48.75%.

Table 3

Frequency and Percentages of Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions among Four Hundred Filipino (400) Teenagers

Parental Communication Pattern in Sex Discussions	No. of Respondents Results	%
Consensual	71	17.75%
Pluralistic	109	27.25%
Protective	134	33.5%
Laissez-faire	86	21.5%

Table 4 displays the frequency and percentages for the 400 participants across the 4 parental communication patterns of consensual, pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire. The most common pattern was protective, represented by 134 participants (33.5% of the sample). Pluralistic was second most common with 109 participants (27.25%). Laissez-faire was third with 86 participants (21.5%). The least common was the consensual pattern with only 71 participants (17.75% of the sample).

Table 4

Sexual Self-Efficacy Scale and Verbal Interpretation

Scale	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.74	Low
1.75 – 2.49	Moderately Low
2.50 – 3.24	Moderately High
3.25 – 4.00	High

Table 6 presents that each four domains of the sexual self-efficacy scale were able to have both low and high percentages. For the contraceptive use, moderate low got the lowest percentage of 7%, while high got 58.5%. Consent domain has a lowest percentage of 0.5%, and 74% as its highest. Reproductive health with 1.75% being the lowest and

59.25% as the highest one. Lastly, sex education had its lowest percentage of 1.75%, and 74.25% as the highest. Majority of participants scored in the high range across all domains. The lowest area of sexual self-efficacy was contraceptive use, where 11 participants (2.75%) scored low. All other domains had 1.75% or less of participants scoring low self-efficacy. The highest levels of high self-efficacy were found for consent (74%) and sex education (74.25%).

Table 5

Frequency and Percentages of Sexual Self-Efficacy and its domains among Four Hundred (400) Filipino Teenagers

Sexual Efficacy	Self-Results	No. of Respondents	%
Contraceptive Use			
Low		11	2.75%
Moderately Low		28	7%
Moderately High		127	31.75%
High		234	58.5%
Consent			
Low		2	0.5%
Moderately Low		13	3.25%
Moderately High		89	22.25%
High		296	74%
Reproductive Health			
Low		7	1.75%
Moderately Low		19	3.25%
Moderately High		137	22.25%
High		237	74%
Sex Education			
Low		7	1.75%
Moderately Low		10	2.5%
Moderately High		86	21.25%
High		297	74.25%

Table 6

Mean and Standard Deviation of Parental Communication Dimensions

Measure	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
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Conversation Orientation	2.42	0.56	Low
Conformity Orientation	2.56	0.56	High

Table 7 presents the results of the Parental Communication Patterns with the Conversation Orientation having a mean of 2.42 and a standard deviation of 0.56 and Conformity Orientation with a mean of 2.56 and a standard deviation of 0.56.

Table 7
Mean and Standard Deviation of Sexual-Self Efficacy Domains

Measure	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Contraceptive Use	3.28	0.59	High
Consent	3.48	0.49	High
Reproductive Health	3.32	0.61	High
Sex Education	3.48	0.52	High

Table 8 shows the result of the Sexual Self-Efficacy with the Contraceptive Use having a mean of 3.28 and a standard deviation of 0.59, Consent with a mean of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 0.49, Reproductive Health with a mean of 3.32 and a standard deviation of 0.61 and Sex Education with a mean of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 0.52. All domains showed high mean scores ranging from 3.28 for contraceptive use to 3.48 for both consent and sex education. Variability among the dimensions of sexual self-efficacy is relatively even. The lowest variability was found for consent (SD=0.49) and the highest for reproductive health (SD=0.61).

Table 8
Linear Regression between Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions and Sexual Self-Efficacy among Filipino Teenagers

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R ²	F (2,397)	p
Conversation Orientation Conformity Orientation	Sexual Efficacy	Self-0.213	0.0405	9.43	< .001

Table 9 shows the results of the linear regression analysis examining Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions as predictor of Sexual Self-Efficacy among Filipino Teenagers. Results provide evidence that Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions is a statistically significant predictor of Sexual Self-Efficacy among Filipino Teenagers at 95% Confidence Level (R = 0.213, F (2,397) = 9.43, p < .001). The adjusted R² value of 0.0405 indicates that Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions explained 4.05% of the variance in Sexual Self-Efficacy.

Table 9

Linear Regression between Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions and Contraceptive Use among Filipino Teenagers

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R ²	F (2,397)	p
Conversation Orientation Conformity Orientation	Contraceptive Use	0.206	0.0377	8.81	< .001

Table 10 shows the results of the linear regression analysis examining Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions as predictor of Contraceptive Use among Filipino Teenagers. Results provide evidence that Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions is a statistically significant predictor of Contraceptive Use among Filipino Teenagers at 95% Confidence Level (R = 0.206, F (2,397) = 8.81 p < .001). The adjusted R² value of 0.037 indicates that Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions explained 3.77% of the variance in Contraceptive Use.

Table 10

Linear Regression between Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions and Consent among Filipino Teenagers

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R ²	F (2,397)	p
Conversation Orientation Conformity Orientation	Consent	0.183	0.0285	6.85	.001

Table 11 shows the results of the linear regression analysis examining Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions as a predictor of Consent among Filipino Teenagers. Results provide evidence that Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions is a statistically significant predictor of Consent among Filipino Teenagers at 95% Confidence Level (R = 0.183, F (2,397) = 6.85 p = 0.001). The adjusted R² value of 0.0285 indicates that Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions explained 2.85% of the variance in Consent.

Table 11

Linear Regression between Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions and Reproductive Health among Filipino Teenagers

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R ²	F (2,397)	p
Conversation Orientation Conformity Orientation	Reproductive Health	0.166	0.0226	5.62	.004

Table 12 shows the results of the linear regression analysis examining Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions as a predictor of Reproductive Health among Filipino Teenagers. Results provide evidence that Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions is a statistically significant predictor of Reproductive Health among Filipino Teenagers at 95% Confidence Level ($R = 0.166$, $F(2,397) = 5.62$, $p = 0.004$). The adjusted R^2 value of 0.0226 indicates that Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions explained 2.26% of the variance in Reproductive Health.

Table 12

Linear Regression between Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions and Sex Education among Filipino Teenagers

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R^2	F (2,397)	p
Conversation Orientation Conformity Orientation	Sex Education	0.181	0.0278	6.71	.001

Table 13 shows the results of the linear regression analysis examining Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions as a predictor of Sex Education among Filipino teenagers. Results provide evidence that Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions is a statistically significant predictor of Sex Education among Filipino Teenagers at 95% Confidence Level ($R = 0.181$, $F(2,397) = 6.71$, $p = 0.001$). The adjusted R^2 value of 0.0278 indicates that Parental Communication Patterns in Sex Discussions explained 2.78% of the variance in Sex Education.

DISCUSSION

It was seen that majority of Filipino teenagers have a high sexual self-efficacy which suggests that they have good control over their sexual behavior- make informed decisions, practice sex that is safe and consensual. It could be supported by the fact that there is a decrease on the rate of teenage pregnancy in the Philippines from 8.6% in 2017, it has gone down to 5.4% in 2022 (PSA, 2023).

The protective pattern was found to be the most used parental communication pattern through the lens of Filipino teenagers. This pattern suggests that these families rarely engage in conversations regarding sexual topics, but parents more often than not implement rules and ideologies that should be followed by their children. Habito and their colleagues (2021) emphasized how Catholic conservative beliefs and ideologies have a strong hold on how Filipinos view, talk, and act when it comes to sex, as it is believed to

be way for procreation for married couples, it puts the premarital use of contraceptives in a bad light. Melgar, Melgar, Festin, Hoopes, and Chandra-Mouli (2018) showed how it is evident how the Philippine government, its politicians and lawmakers are influenced by these beliefs despite the separation of the church and government. The lack of government policies and services that will better the accessibility of contraceptives to adolescents' is evident, which, if given proper attention, would tremendously help reduce the risks of engaging in adolescent unprotected sex such as teenage pregnancy, and contracting HIV/AIDS or sexually transmitted diseases. Since sex, in general, is not a widely talked about topic by Filipinos, many Filipino parents frown upon and keep mum about adolescent sex which may have been a result of their parents not opening up these topics as well.

However, despite the avoidance to go into in-depth conversations about sexual topics with their children, Filipino parents are still made aware of the consequences and the risks that come with adolescent sex, more specifically, risky sexual behavior such as engaging in unprotected sex. Infomercials online on teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and STDs, the Filipino television drama *Angelito: Ang Batang Ama*, radio stations reading confessions from teenagers who got pregnant early, these are the products of mass media and its attempt to discuss and inform the mass of underage sex and its effects. Filipino parents being consumers of these media are able to grasp how "bad" engaging in adolescent sex is, hence they set rules to their children to ensure that their children do not have sex while they are still young and unmarried.

The study of Ventanilla and Villaruel (2022) showed that majority of their respondents who are women who have experienced teenage pregnancy have a protective family communication pattern which shows that despite the parents setting rules and expecting their children to conform to their decisions and beliefs, teenage pregnancy was not prevented. This suggests that these women might not have made informed decisions when they engaged in adolescent sex, and thus contradict the results shown in this study.

The research findings suggest that parental communication patterns predict the sexual self-efficacy of Filipino teenagers. However, results also indicate that parental communication patterns in sex discussions account for a small percentage of the variation in sexual self-efficacy. This indicates that there are other factors that contribute substantially including [1] education, [2] the internet, [3] peers. Teenagers spend most of their time at school, and it is a place where their most important task is to learn. Education on sexual and reproductive health may shape a teenager's perceived ability to practice safe and consensual sex. As recommended by the WHO (2018), implementing a program such as the Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) is helpful for teenagers as they transition to adulthood, as it is helpful tool in the improvement of their sexual and reproductive health. Meanwhile, the internet has readily available resources that may also affect the SSE of teenagers such as social media posts, news articles, discussion and articles by the WHO and DOH. Especially with the internet bridging the gap between countries, it is easy to learn and be friends with people from more liberated countries and talk about the ways in engaging in safe sex.

Conclusions

The study's main objective was to ascertain the patterns of communication regarding sex discussion of Filipino Parents as perceived by their adolescent children. Additionally, this study also determined that a Filipino adolescent's sexual self-efficacy can be predicted by the parental communication patterns on sex topics.

Based on the responses of the participants through a survey form, it was revealed that the parental communication pattern is a significant predictor of Filipino teenagers' sexual-self efficacy at 95% Confidence Level ($R^2 = 0.0382$ (3.82%), $F = 8.93$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result led to the conclusion that any from the aforementioned parental communication pattern, can predict a teenagers' sexual-self efficacy.

Furthermore, through the above findings, the researchers came to the conclusion that practicing appropriate parental communication patterns inside every household can lead to a teenager's healthy sexual-self efficacy.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made so that the research can further widen the scope of the research. The researchers recommend imploring the mixed method approach when creating a similar study to broaden the perspective of the study.

The researchers would also suggest changing the demographics and the locale of the study. Varying the ages, focus on the socioeconomic status, and the location of the study. Other factors should also be considered such as social media, peers, partners etc.

It is also suggested to inquire with an external statistician in order to eliminate bias.

Making qualitative research connected to this study may also yield a deeper understanding and a more in-depth analysis regarding the topic.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

There were ethical challenges that the researchers of this study have dealt with, hence, the researchers adhered to the APA ethical guidelines (2017, pp. 6, 7); [1] Privacy and confidentiality. The researchers kept all information collected for this study strictly confidential and only used it for research and academic purposes. Rest assured that there were no names or other identifying information used when discussing or reporting the data. [2] Inflicting no harm to the respondents. Researchers secured the safety of the participants; any form of discomfort was taken into consideration and risk was not overlooked to secure their safety. [3] Dissemination of informed consent forms. The participants were oriented on every part of the study and every detail of the approved informed consent form as deception did not occur in conducting this study. [4] Distribution of assent forms. This study gathered participants below the age of 18, thus, the

researchers appropriately distributed assent forms to the selected minor participants. [5] Institution's approval. The researchers had the approval from both selected secondary high school and Research Development and Innovation Center in gathering the needed data of this study. Prior to commencing the study, the researchers ensured accuracy of information and obtained all the necessary approvals. Rest assured that the approved research protocols was followed. This also to comply with the law of the Executive Order No. 209, Family Code of the Philippines, Article 218, wherein it was stated that a minor child is subjected to the particular parental authority and duty of the school, its administration and instructors, or the person, business, or institution providing child care while the kid is in their care, supervision, or custody (Exec. Order No. 209, 1987).

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Corresponding author's email: ehmanuguid1@student.fatima.edu.ph