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Research Article

A Critical Inquiry on Mental Health Vocabulary Use on Tiktok

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ABSTRACT

Mental health discourse has reached a broader audience on TikTok, intensifying awareness through content creation. However, several mental health vocabulary usages are evident in language trends and permeate online. Hence, the researchers aim to examine [a] the pre-conceived definitions of TikTok users via comments about mental health terms, [b] the implications of online mental health discussion on mental health's status quo from an expert, and [c] the dominant ideologies of the construction and deconstruction of social norms about mental health by TikTok users. The Usage-based Theory of Tomasello (2003) and the Ideological Theory of van Dijk (1998) anchored the study's conjecture. Notably, the researchers descriptively, interpretatively, and socially investigated the language use of mental health vocabulary on TikTok under Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework. In the text analysis, the study revealed that most TikTok users utilize mental health vocabulary inappropriately in various contexts. In the interviews, TikTok users see social media as a double-ended variable for *promoting awareness and misinformation*, whereas the expert intensifies its role in *exposing stigma. Remarkably,* the expert is more concerned with the *trivializing and misusing clinical terms* phenomenon, while TikTok users lean on *oversimplification* and *social media influence* upon using a vocabulary. Notably, TikTok users acknowledged the *risk of trivialization* and *the potential for destigmatization.* Finally, the expert highlighted the *escalated stigmatization due to confusion* of mental health terms discussion. Consequently, this study is relevant to today's mental health studies concerning newly-coined internet slang, which derives from psychological terminologies, to combat mental health misconceptions.

Keywords*: Critical discourse analysis, Mental health, Philippines, TikTok*

Introduction

Mental illness throughout the years has developed to be an important topic of study, yet still remains as the most neglected health problem particularly in the developing world (Banis, 2023). The World Health Organization (WHO) and numerous non-government organizations (NGOs) have implemented and revised

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various mental health policies, plans, and programs to advocate mental health awareness and mitigate the stigmas and misconceptions surrounding mental illnesses. However, progress in improving mental health outcomes has been frustratingly slow despite the several efforts and initiatives being made (Revankar, 2023). From 2000 to 2019, the proportion of people living with a mental health condition has remained unchanged at 13 percent. In 2019, suicide was the fourth leading cause of death for people ages fifteen to twenty-nine, and mental health conditions accounted for 7.3 percent of all disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) globally.

Mental health problems exist in almost every country. However, reports suggest that there is a difference in terms of perception and availability of treatments between developed and developing countries. In developing countries especially in Asia, where many cultures value "conformity to norms, emotional self-control, and family recognition through achievement", mental illnesses are often stigmatized. Stigmatization of mental health problems leads to the rise of stereotypes and the way the media portrays them leaves them misunderstood for what they truly are, marginalizing them from society. According to Malolos, et. al. (2021), in the Philippines alone, the COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented growth in the number of cases where children are left most vulnerable by its impact. The Philippine government has tested multiple strategies to mitigate this problem such as implementing the RA 11036, otherwise known as the Mental Health Act aimed to enhance the attention given to people with Mental Illness (DOH, 2021). Yet despite these efforts, thousands are still neglected due to negative perceptions and stigmas (Mental Health Foundation, 2021). A study by Siddique, et. al. (2022) on Bangladeshi students also explains that negative views and social stigma toward mental health problems are due to a misguided view and a lack of education regarding the subject. This makes it harder for people to seek professional and proper help. People, especially the younger generation, feel that they have no choice but to address and identify their affliction on their own with the help of the internet, specifically social media.

Social Media nowadays has become an integral part of our everyday lives. We cannot live a day without checking our phones, and staying up to date with the latest news and trends around the world (D'Souza, 2024). The convenience and advantages that social media offers quickly popularized and expanded its network and users. Among the popular and widely used social media platforms, TikTok has become one of the fastest-growing, surpassing older platforms while creating a new culture of entertainment and information dissemination. Among the social media platforms, TikTok has been the most responsible for many of the viral trends on the internet, making it an ideal platform for content creators to reach audience with high visibility and engagement. One of the most popular hashtags and topics in this app is about mental health and disorders. As of May 2024, the hashtag #MentalHealth alone has accumulated more than 16.1 million posts, showing how big it is in cyberspace. Numerous mental health practitioners and people that struggle with mental health utilize this opportunity for self-expression and information dissemination with the hopes of destigmatizing and raising awareness about mental health. This easily accessible information also becomes a beacon of hope for the people who do not have the privilege and resources to access professional help due to fear of judgment and prejudice.

Content creators have become creative in their approach when it comes to disseminating mental health information to cater to the dominant users of the app which are the Gen Zs. Skits, Point-of-View (POV) scenarios, and other forms of humorous content were utilized to make the subject light and watchable for the audience. For them, it is an effective way of changing the negative mental health narrative by incorporating humor to diminish the sensitivity and negative connotations it has. This style of information dissemination makes it enjoyable and informative for the audience at the same time. As the general public becomes more comfortable and aware of mental health-related topics, they have also become more acquainted with using mental health-related and psychological terms. This phenomenon is mostly observed among Gen Zs or the younger generation in particular as these terms have penetrated and engrained in the language of

Gen Z. This unique language, which evolves so fast, is often described as weird, cynical, and often incomprehensible as it is a heavily context-based language that continuously adopts and extracts vocabularies from everyday social media trends. In the present, this unique language is also known to commonly incorporate various mental health terms.

Among all generations,Gen Z is observed as the most involved and conscious of social issues. As the most connected and progressive generation yet, Gen Z is on the forefront of many trending social issues that directly affect them, especially mental health. Due to the high demands of modern life, this generation is more prone to anxiety and stress than any other before it. In response, members of Gen Z are working to destigmatize mental health issues and break down barriers to seeking help (United Way of the National Capital Area, 2023). While there are studies related to how social media can be an innovative way for addressing the stigma related to mental health conditions (Pelt, 2021) there are no available ones focusing on how Gen Z impacts the perception towards mental health despite being the most dominant and proactive generation when it comes to addressing social issues. In addition, despite having the most awareness and knowledge among generations about mental health, they are still the most vulnerable and susceptible to mental health concerns. Coe et al. (2023) in their study about Gen Z's mental health and social media found that negative effects in mental health seem to be greatest for younger generations, with particularly pronounced impacts for Gen Zs who spend more than two hours a day on social media and Gen Zs with poor mental health. Lastly, studies that delve into the complex realm of Gen Z language and discourses on a virtual common particularly in the Philippine setting are scarce due to it being a relatively new language. While there are studies such as Forda Ferson: The Morphological Structure of Generation Z slang in Social Media (Grandez et al., 2023) that analyzed the linguistic features of Gen Z language in the Philippines, there is nothing that focuses on how Gen Z uses this language in creating discourses, particularly about the mental health narrative, on a virtual common.

In line with this, the study aimed to identify how Filipinos, especially Gen Z, perceives the subject of mental health through their language use on social media, particularly on TikTok. As this study employed critical discourse analysis (CDA), this paper unraveled and investigated certain ideologies the researchers have extracted from the research participants. Hence, this study aimed to provide answers to the following questions: [1] What are the preconceived definitions of mental health terms by TikTok users on Philippine-based contents? [2] What are the implications of mental health terms usage toward people with mental health conditions, proper diagnosis, and the public's general outlook to mental health? and [3] What ideologies are dominant in the construction and deconstruction of the social norms about mental health? More specifically, this study analyzed the lexical choices, particularly the usage of mental health vocabulary of Filipinos through the comments on social media platforms, specifically on TikTok. Also, in-depth interviews were conducted on TikTok users focusing on Gen Zs and a registered expert on Psychology to extract their ideologies regarding the trend on mental health discourse online.

With the skyrocketing attention given to mental health on social media platforms, this study may be significant in raising awareness in regards to the type of information disseminated online regarding mental health. Knowing the rampant and fast-paced spread of information and discourses about mental health, this study could be of significant help in revealing how the current generation perceive mental health and how they handle the subject through online discourses. Through this study, significant insights regarding how the current generation's language use influences mental health discourse and how it is shaping the current ideologies, social norms, and narrative about the subject may be extracted. Moreover, this study may be beneficial to TikTok users and content creators as they gain insights and realizations regarding the importance of fact-checking before disseminating and consuming information that they see online. With a subject as sensitive and complex as mental health, it is crucial to be aware and gain full understanding before engaging and participating in discourses

online regarding the subject matter. In addition, this study may also help mental health advocates and experts gain valuable information in regards to the current status of mental health in the Philippines and formulate ways to properly address possible concerns proliferating online. Most importantly, may this paper serve as a tool to help people with mental health conditions in their long-running battle against the stigma surrounding mental health and empower them. It is hoped that this research could be used as an eye-opener for everyone and realize the importance of fully understanding mental health as a serious matter and the complexity that it entails. Furthermore, this research may be helpful for future researchers in strengthening the quality of research works regarding mental health in the Philippines with the hopes of progressing the understanding of the subject and to slowly but surely eliminate the stigmas instilled upon it by society.

This study employed Tomasello's (2003) Usage-based Theory which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the acquisition of language. This theory supports examining how the frequent and context-specific use of mental health vocabulary on TikTok shapes users' language structure and knowledge. Also, van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Theory is also used in analyzing the ideologies of research participants to uncover their underlying power structure and belief systems regarding the subject of mental health. Through this, the underlying ideologies among the participants are unraveled which contributes to identifying the different perceptions and insights about mental health in the Philippines in the present.

Materials and Method

This study centers on addressing the pervasive use of mental health terms on social media; therefore, the researchers employed a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a rigorous research design that explores and lays out awareness, solutions, and recommendations about societal issues through thorough interpretation rather than numerical scrutiny (Tenny et al., 2022). Thus, the technicalities of mental health vocabulary usage through various social media discourses and ideologies of mental health experts and TikTok users were revealed through this approach. Principally, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was the preeminent ground of this study, which is seen as a framework of resource for people who struggle against domination and oppression in their linguistic forms, driven by a discursive power with an unequal capacity to control how languages or texts are produced, distributed, and consumed in particular sociocultural contexts (Fairclough, 1995). Hence, CDA does not only examine the surface meanings of the used terms but also unravels the power dynamics, social norms, and ideologies behind how and why such a language is produced and consumed this way, affecting the status quo of mental health care in the Philippines by undermining its gravity. At large, through CDA, the issue between language, hegemony, and power in the language of mental health on social media, mental health experts, and TikTok users was descriptively, interpretatively, and socially investigated and addressed constructively.

As the background exemplifies, this study concerns mental health vocabularies, discourse, and social media algorithms, specifically TikTok. The language used on the said social media platform is the source of this analysis. Specifically, a total of fifty (50) TikTok comments with mental health vocabularies, such as delulu, ADHD, gaslight/ing, trauma/tize/d, and mental breakdown/breakdown. TikTok's algorithm is reasonably expeditious in accessing or searching for content and recognizing the captivated comments, as these are placed on top of the comment section (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022). Ten (10) terms were randomly selected from Psychologs; however, these were finalized through an online survey about which five (5) mental health terms are familiar and widely used on social media among the provided choices. Additionally, inclusion and exclusion criteria were precisely followed. Firstly, TikTok comments must consist of mental health vocabulary in their proposition; be semantically and pragmatically analyzed; be in the medium of either English or Filipino, or both languages; be found through hashtags: #TikTokPH + #POV+term; and be posted by active Filipino netizens since the last five (5) years. Multimodal texts (GIFs, stickers, videos, and images) are excluded from the selection of comments since these are not part of the research's scope.

Also, only stickers and emojis were appended to the TikTok comment's features since emoticons only supplement the meaning of the discourse and the sender's affect (Boutet et al., 2021).

Apart from analyzing the vocabulary use (linguistic facet) within TikTok comments, the researchers also explored the frames of reference of mental health experts and TikTok users regarding the subject matter. This was decided to balance the weight of the analysis, wherein TikTok users have explained their language use and legitimized it by mental health experts or psychologists. Hence, the psychologist's insights were used more as an affirmant to ensure the validity of the findings through mediating text and social analyses. Mainly, qualified participants must be strict of legal age, registered mental health experts such as psychologists, psychometricians, or psychiatrists, and active Gen Z TikTok users who tag along with language trends. Particularly, purposive or judgmental sampling was used in respect of participant selection since experts in a particular field are involved, as well as TikTok users whose vocabularies include newly-coined and normalized mental health vocabularies due to social media trends such as gaslighting, depression, OCD, anxiety, trauma, and more. Most importantly, the study participants were given an Informed Consent Form (ICF), wherein terms and conditions are presented vis-à-vis their right to decline the interview anytime and for whatever reason they have.

Accordingly, given that this study has examined the provided corpora and further inquiries about an expert's and social media users' knowledge, an online structured interview was used. The researchers formulated an interview guide instrument containing questions about the participants' prior knowledge, takes, and reasons for the study's problem statement. Also, some corpora were provided for the participants' context and reference in answering, especially on the part of mental health experts. Interviews were done in face-to-face settings and through online and video calls on different social media platforms, such as Google Meet, Zoom, and Messenger, based on the interviewees' availability. To ensure the objectivity of the research instruments, interview questions were validated by an expert.

The analysis of this study draws on the Three-Dimensional Model of Fairclough (1993) as its primary framework. Various conceptual considerations were followed for the analysis, namely text, processing, and social analyses. In particular, the text focused on the linguistic description of the chosen comments. Also, processing analysis delved into the perspectives of a mental health expert regarding the study's objectives, implications, and ideologies through a face-to-face interview. In the last phase, social analysis has comprehensively explained based on TikTok users' worldviews of mental health vocabulary usage on TikTok. Moreover, since the researchers made use of Fairclough's (1993) CDA framework, they analyzed the comments per the chosen vocabularies pragmatically and semantically, noting their contexts, denotations, connotations, possible meanings, and social implications (Hassan et al., 2019). The APA Dictionary of Psychology (2018) was mainly used as a reference for the text analysis. Following this, the researchers analyzed the accounts extracted from the interview, in which themes and codes were determined. The said step led to deriving (1) psychological explanations and (2) ideologies stemming from the prevailing vocabularies on social media and their implications through themes elicited by the interviewed expert and TikTok users, respectively. Having this established, the researchers then engaged in a substantial comparative discussion of the results with the support of psychological and other social media-related studies.

The researchers ensured that the highest standards of ethics were upheld by following the legal and just procedures in the study. They have provided an Informed Consent Form (ICF) encompassing the study's objective, method, and probable risks, i.e., to be carefully reviewed and signed by the participants before the interview. With this, they were fully aware of the purpose of their participation. Besides, confidentiality and anonymity are prioritized in keeping the participants' data and information private and well-protected. On top of this, the participants' overall well-being has been uncompromised, acknowledging their right to withdraw at any time unconditionally, with adequate assistance if any distress may arise. To ensure the integrity and objectivity of the

results and discussion, the researchers were conscientious enough to avoid conflict of interest and baseless subjectivity. Diversity-wise, cultural inclusivity and sensitivity to participants' backgrounds are integral to the researchers' approach. While held accountable for compliance with ethical guidelines, the researchers observed transparency, rigor, retrieval, and replicability throughout the study. Overall, the researchers maintained the ethics with voluntary participation as the cornerstone of this study.

Results and Discussion

Based on the collected data, this study provides textual, process, and social critical analyses, demonstrating how mental health vocabulary was used [Mental health vocabulary usage) and defined (TikTok users' ideologies) by TikTok users, and clarified by psychology experts (A psychologist's perspective). Hence, this part is divided into three (3) sections following the said dimensions, each with respective semantic revelations and ideological themes.

Mental Health Vocabulary Usage

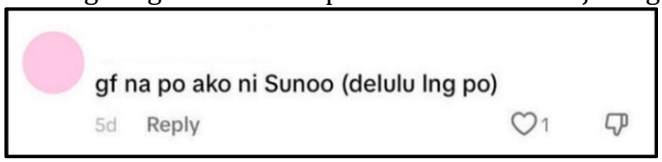
Delusional Disorder or Delulu. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), it is any one of a group of psychotic disorders with the essential feature of one or more non bizarre *delusions* that persist for at least 1 month but are not due to schizophrenia. The delusions are non bizarre in that they feature situations that could conceivably occur in real life (e.g., being followed, poisoned, infected, deceived by one's government).

Delusion (n.) is an often highly personal idea or belief system, not endorsed by one's culture or subculture, that is maintained with conviction in spite of irrationality or evidence to the contrary. Common types include: [1] Erotomanic: The belief that another person, oftensomeone important or famous, is in love with them. They may attempt to contact the person of the delusion and engage in stalking behavior. [2] Grandiose: People with this type have an overinflated sense of self-worth, power, knowledge or identity. They may believe they have a great talent or have made an important discovery. [3] Jealous: People with this type believe that their spouse or sexual partner is unfaithful without any concrete evidence. [4] Persecutory: People with this type believe someone or something is mistreating, spying on or attempting to harm them. [4] Somatic: People with this type believe that they have a physical issue or medical problem, such as a parasite or a bad odor.

In 2022, the term has gained popularity on social media platforms such as TikTok and is now widely used as a slang term for "delusional" which has been used in a variety of contexts in social media.

To know how delusional or delulu is commonly used on a virtual common, see the following comments, encompassing different ways of using the term delulu:

Excerpt 1. Imagining a relationship with someone in a joking manner

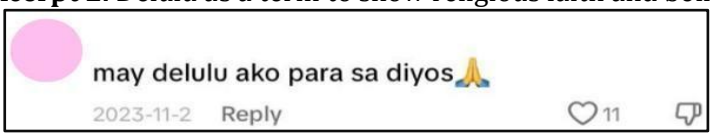


'I am now Sunoo's gf (just being delulu)'

The use of the term delulu originates from the K-pop fan community to criticize other fans' beliefs and theories about K-pop celebrities. Here in the comment, the commenter is a K-Pop fan who idolizes Sunoo (a K-Pop boy group member). The commenter states that she is Sunoo's girlfriend and tries to reason it out by her only being delulu. Despite the originating meaning of the word that was established before (which is a word of criticism of other fans), the word in the comment is used differently. The commenter used the word to describe herself as a means of justifying why she thinks that she is the girlfriend of the idol. The use of the word 'lng/just' *(delulu lng po/just being delulu*) is used not only to reason out why she declared the statement, but also to lighten it or to say it in a jokingly manner to avoid

people criticizing her declaration as the idol's girlfriend since she is self-aware that it is not real by adding the *'delulu lng po'* as an excuse. In this context, the term is used to describe her fantasy, and is not a delusion as it does not qualify to the APA given definition of the word.

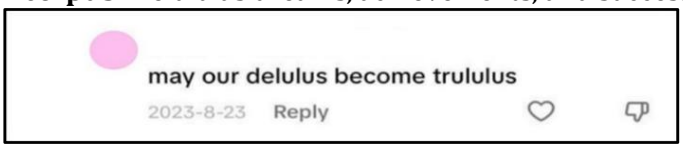
Excerpt 2. Delulu as a term to show religious faith and belief



'I have delulu for God 🙏'

In this comment, the word delulu is used to express the commenter's belief in God. Upon analysis, the commenter must have associated the word delulu with words such as *believe* and *faith*. This is reinforced by the use of the folded hands emoji which is an emoji used to communicate or express hope and prayer. In this context, the term delulu is used to describe the commenter's belief in the supreme being. For him/her, God is real and that he/she believes in the existence of God, hence, using the word delulu to express it in the comment. According to APA, a delusion is an unshakable belief in something that's untrue. The belief isn't a part of the person's culture or subculture, and almost everyone else knows this belief to be false. Since most people acknowledge the existence of God and the term is used in Excerpt 2 to express his/her belief/faith, it does not qualify to the APA given definition of the word.

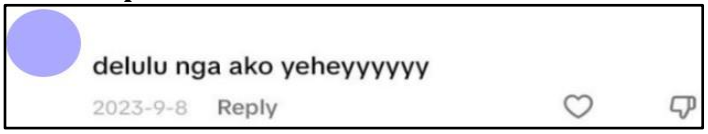
Excerpt 3. Delulu as dreams, achievements, and success



'May our delulus become trululus'

Derived from the mega-viral quote of Creator Moses Wong ("*Delulu is the solulu"*) on TikTok racking up five million likes and follow-up posts, the statement has become the new "*fake it 'till you make it*" aphorism, inspiring people online to believe until their manifestations or dreams become reality. In this context, *delulus* refers to goals, dreams, ambitions, success, and other positivity in life that leads to self-improvement. Excerpt 3, in Gen Z definition, can be roughly translated as '*may our delusions (dreams) become true*' that is delivered in a light and humorous way. The word delulu is used in a positive and inspiring discourse to encourage people to believe in their "*delusions*" until they become reality. This contradicts the narrative of delusions being negative and harmful in accordance with the official clinical definition of this word. Therefore, its usage in this context does not align to the given definition of the term found in the APA Psychological Dictionary.

Excerpt 4. Delulu as a condition to be celebrated

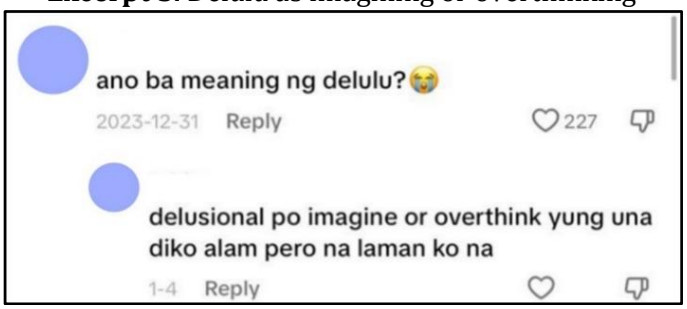


'I really am delulu yeheyyyyyy'

In this comment, the commenter celebrates the 'confirmation' of him/her being delulu, using the interjection "*yehey*" to further support and express joy or elation. The term delulu here is seen as something positive, a condition that is worth to be celebrated or to be happy about.

According to WebMD, delusional disorder is a serious mental illness where a person cannot tell what is real from what is imaginary. The American Psychological Association (APA) also states that certain types of delusions such as Persecutory, Grandiose, and Erotomanic can spur a person to violence or aggression which are negative and harmful behaviors. Therefore, contradicting the positive connotation that the term has in the context of the comment.

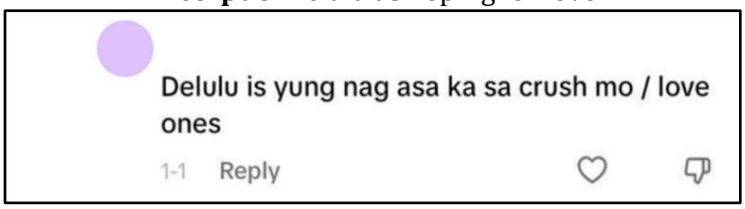
Excerpt 5. Delulu as imagining or overthinking



'1. What is the meaning of delulu? 🤔 — 2. It's delusional, imagine(ation) or overthink(ing). At first I didn't know but I found out)'

In this thread, the commenter Seb asked for the meaning of the word delulu. This was replied by Adrian., stating that it means delusional and used the words *imagine* and *overthink* to further supplement his answer. He also admitted that at first he didn't know what it meant and he also just found out its meaning. This comment represents one of the most common understandings of the word based on its usage on social media platforms, especially on TikTok, which is being associated with words such as *imagination*, and in this context, involves the term *overthinking*. For the commenter named Adrian, his understanding of delulu means imagining or overthinking, which deviates from the description of the real mental health condition that this term was derived from. Although imagining and overthinking can possibly lead to delusions, these conditions have to be extreme to the point that the person will ultimately struggle to tell what is real from what is imagined. There are criteria that need to be checked before one can be diagnosed as delusional. This comment fosters the condition to be simply imagining or overthinking which can lead to the simplification of the condition and using it interchangeably with the two actions.

Excerpt 6. Delulu as hoping for love

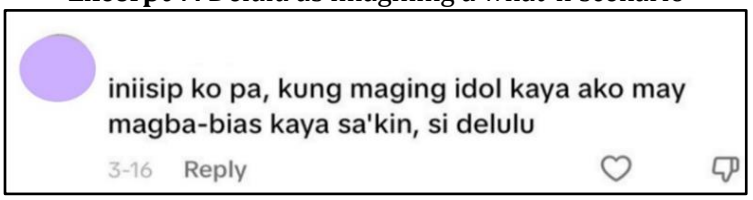


'Delulu is when you hoped for your crush / love(d) ones'

In this comment, the commenter defined delulu as hoping for your crush or those that you love. The meaning of the term delulu in this context is synonymous with hoping, specifically for something romantic towards a person (such as hoping the person will like you back or reciprocate your feelings). Upon initial analysis, the usage of the term is believed tobe the closest to the Erotomanic type of delusion as it involves love or romantic feeling towards someone. However, Erotomanic delusion is a belief that another person, often someone important or famous, is in love with them. Apart from the delusion aspect, the person under this type may also attempt to contact the person of the delusion and engage in stalking behavior. However, in the context of the comment, delulu means to hope for the crush/loved

ones, not fully implying that they believe their crush/loved ones are in love with them which is the primary criteria needed to be fulfilled in order to qualify for the Erotomanic type of delusion. To add, the commenter used the word *nag asa (umasa)* or *hoped* which is a verb that denotes a positive mindset of wanting or expecting something to happen (in this case, hoping for the crush/loved one to possibly reciprocate the feeling), hence, does not carry the heaviness and negativity of the term's clinical definition.

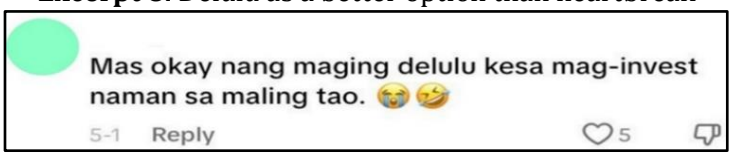
Excerpt 7. Delulu as imagining a what-if scenario



'I even think, if ever I become an idol will there be people who will pick me as their bias, the (I'm) delulu'

The commenter shared his/her thought, particularly her what if's about becoming an idol, thinking if there will be people who will pick her as their bias or favorite. Upon analysis, the comment is an outlet for the person to share their imagination and lay out a scenario, thinking of how it will be for him/her if he/she ever becomes an idol. The term *delulu* in this context is used to describe him/herself after sharing his/her thought of being an idol which is just the person being imaginative with his/her thoughts. Idol culture or being an idol is a common desired career of most idol fans. It is normal, especially since most fans are teenagers, to experience a phase of wanting and visualizing themselves as idols. This, in general, is harmless and a phase that most fans (especially of pop groups) experience and eventually will move on as they grow older. Therefore, the usage of *delulu* in Excerpt 7 does not align with the APA Psychology Dictionary's definition.

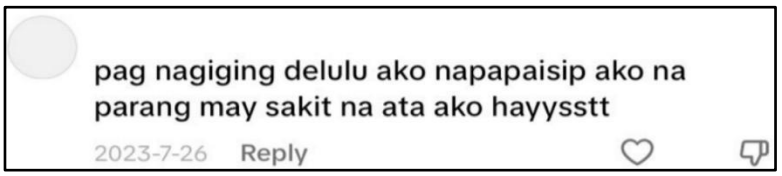
Excerpt 8. Delulu as a better option than heartbreak



'It's better to be delulu than to invest again in the wrong person. 😭🤣'

In this comment, the commenter stated that it is a better option for them to be delulu than to invest (romantically) in the wrong person again. This comment undermines the seriousness of the condition, stating that they prefer to experience it rather than going through another potential heartbreak of loving the wrong person. It can be understood that the person thinks that investing in the wrong person is a much heavier and painful experience that they don't want to go through again compared to being delusional. Furthermore, the commenter used the loudly crying (😭) emoji then followed by an overly happy (🤣) emoji. According to Kryger (2023), rather than expressing sadness, Gen Z uses the emoji as an indication of happy tears or the Gen Z version of LOL (laugh out loud). The use of these emojis that are meant to express humor or extreme happiness means that the commenter commented it in a light-hearted manner, reinforcing the idea that being delulu is not taken seriously in this context. The person may or may not be aware of how grave the condition is and what it entails to have one, therefore, choosing it as a better option.

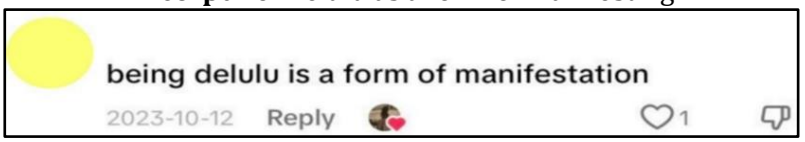
Excerpt 9. Delulu not a mental disorder but as a sign of a probability of having one



Whenever I am delulu, it makes me think that I may have an illness already'

In this comment, the commenter shares that whenever she is in a state of being delusional, she has thoughts of the possibility of being (mentally) ill because of her delusions. Based on the APA Psychology Dictionary, the state of being delusional or when we are referring to the clinical use of the term (Delusional Disorder), it is already identified and is an officially recognized psychotic disorder. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) defines a disorder as, 'a disturbance of normal functioning of the mind or body.' However, this term is a little bit outdated, and mental illness is the term that is used most commonly today (Florida Recovery Group, 2023). Considering this information in the analysis, it can be inferred that the commenter lacks awareness that being delusional is already a mental illness. The person may have a different understanding of the term delulu and have been using the term without knowing that it is a real mental condition, therefore thinking whether he/she may be (mentally) ill because of her delusions. To add, Cleveland Clinic (2022) states that another characteristic of this condition is that the person often lacks self-awareness that their delusions are problematic. Comparing it to the nature of the comment, the commenter having doubts conveys that he/she possesses the awareness that his/her delusions may be problematic or serious enough to consider the possibility of him/her being ill. Hence, the usage of the word delulu in this context does not fully align with the APA definition of the term.

Excerpt 10. Delulu as a form of manifesting



'Being delulu is a form of manifestation'

Correlated with Excerpt 3, the trend of using the term delulu is now commonly associated with believing for yourself to achieve a dream, success, and other positive things aimed for self-improvement. Embracing delusion has become a worldwide movement. According to Harry Hill, a NYC-based creator, delulu is an umbrella term under which manifestation, positivity, and visualization can live (Hirsch, 2024). Since the term in this context is used to represent positive beliefs for self-improvement and success, it does not correspond to the traditional meaning of the word which entails negativity and problematic behaviors while engaging in delusional thoughts. The type of delusion that this term also refers to (dreams, ambitions, etc.) does not align with any of the existing clinical types of delusions. In addition, one thing that people acknowledge while using the term in this context is its self-awareness. Hirsch (2024) states *that delulu* lays bare the inherent silliness in someone's most outlandish beliefs and that it rejoices in the ridiculous. To sum it up, what sets this usage apart from the clinical one is that it means that a person is self-aware of the silliness of their beliefs and instead of treating it as a negativity, embracing its ridiculousness is needed in order for it to become true or manifested. Hence, being delulu is a form of manifestation according to this comment.

The analyzed data shows that the term *delulu* has fully dissociated from its origin and has turned into a completely different word with its own meaning. A shortcut of the phrase delusional disorder, *delulu* has evolved and grown in popularity in social media platforms. In the excerpts, *delulu* is observed to be used as something positive, associating the term to success and dreams (Excerpt 3), imagination

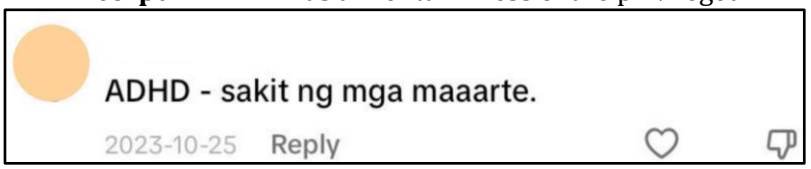
(Excerpts 1, 5, and 7), and religion (Excerpt 2). Majority of the usage were also observed to be love and romance related, further reinforcing the romanticized and glorified concept of *delulu* created online, as manifested in the content of the analyzed excerpts. Overall, the gathered data shows that the term *delulu* has been used differently and did not align with the APA Psychology Dictionary's definition of the term's origin. Hence, it can be noted that the term *delulu* is to be considered a completely different term with different meaning and connotation among social media users.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The American Psychological Association (APA) Psychology Dictionary defines ADHD behavioral syndrome characterized by the persistent presence of six or more symptoms involving (a) inattention (e.g., failure to complete tasks or listen carefully, difficulty in concentrating, distractibility) or (b) impulsivity or hyperactivity (e.g., blurting out answers; impatience; restlessness; fidgeting; difficulty in organizing work, taking turns, or staying seated; excessive talking; running about; climbing on things). The symptoms,which impair social, academic, or occupational functioning, start to appear before the age of 7 and are observed in more than one setting. ADHD has been given a variety of names over the years, including the still commonly used attention-deficit disorder (ADD).

ADHD, or attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, is trending on TikTok, with videos tagged #ADHD has been viewed more than 11 billion times (Korducki, 2022). With its popularity, a variety of perceptions and understanding of the term have been exposed through the comment sections of videos tagged under the hashtag.

To know how ADHD is commonly used on a virtual common, see the following comments, encompassing different ways of using the term *ADHD*:

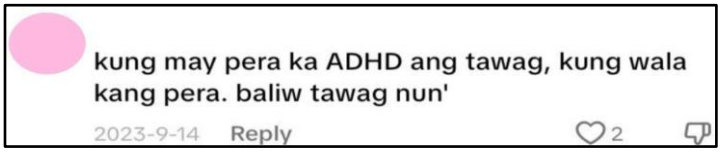
Excerpt 11. ADHD as a mental illness of the privileged



'ADHD - illness of the dramatic/nitpicky.'

In this comment, ADHD is defined as an illness that is found in people who are '*maaarte*'. Nitpicky is the common English translation and understanding of the Filipino word *'maarte'*. However, it is also now commonly understood by the younger generation (Gen Z) as being dramatic or overacting (OA). It is a Tagalog word that is often associated with the upper class society or the rich due to the stereotype of rich people having the privilege to be nitpicky or dramatic over things and circumstances that the poor have to go through normally on a daily basis. It is a word that often connotes elitism, and is also associated with the *conyo* culture in the Philippines. This social classism leads to disparity in treatment and privileges based on social class, which affects each group's access to necessary things such as opportunity to access proper education and professional help regarding mental health. Since poor people are not financially stable enough to actively seek help for their conditions, it is a common idea that health is a privilege only accessible for the rich. Therefore, stereotypes, generalization, and misconceptions regarding mental health usually foster in the lower class society in the Philippines. As a result, mental health disorders are more prevalent in Filipinos from low-income communities Flores, J. L. et al., (2018). In this context, ADHD is defined as an illness of the nitpicky/dramatic, hence, does not align with the APA Psychology Dictionary definition of the term.

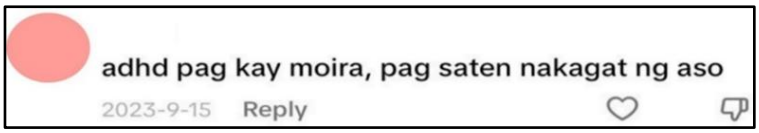
Excerpt 12. ADHD as a classy term for insanity



'If you have money it's called ADHD, if you don't have money it's called (being) crazy/lunatic'

This comment correlates with Excerpt 11, with the commenter differentiating how the condition is perceived and treated depending on the money or wealth a person has. According to the commenter, if a person has money, then the condition is classified as ADHD. However, if a person doesn't have money, then it is only classified as being crazy or lunatic. This comment reinforces the idea that people who are challenged financially are the ones vulnerable to misconceptions and lack of awareness regarding mental health due to limited access and resources. In this context, ADHD is identified as synonymous to being crazy, which also fosters the misconception and generalization of mental illnesses to as a person who is deranged or mentally unsound. Therefore, the meaning of the term ADHD in this comment does not align with the APA Psychology Dictionary definition of the term.

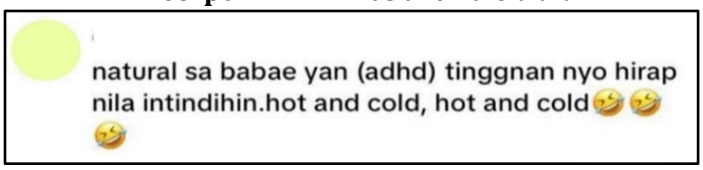
Excerpt 13. ADHD as an exclusive term for famous individuals or ADHD as a classy term for rabies



'ADHD if it's Moira, but if it's us it's (called) being bitten by a dog'

Similar to Excerpt 12, the commenter in this comment also differentiates the term or changes the term being used when it is utilized to describe Moira's condition versus us (referring to everyone else). For context, Moira dela Torre is a famous singer-songwriter in the Philippines. By using this information, it can be inferred that the commenter perceives Moira as someone above *us* (referring to normal people or everyone else) since she is a well-known artist or figure. The comment reinforces the idea that ADHD is not a condition that we can have and it's only the likes of Moira who can have this label for her condition. The commenter stated that if it's us, then it's called being bit by a dog, referring to the disease that is commonly known to be acquired through getting bitten by a dog (rabies). With this, the commenter associated the term ADHD with Rabies, which is a zoonotic disease affecting the central nervous system (World Health Organization, 2023). Hence, the usage of the term ADHD in this comment does not align with the definition of the disorder given by the APA.

Excerpt 14. ADHD as a female trait.

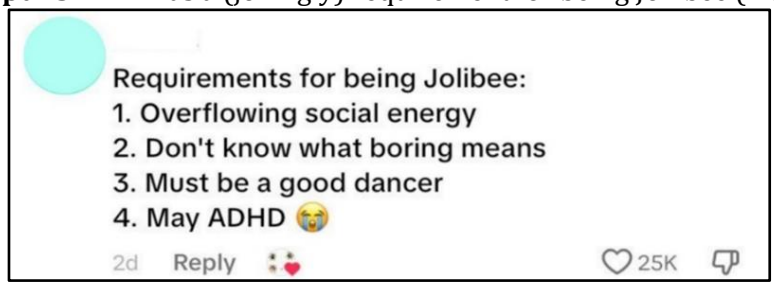


'It's natural for girls (ADHD) if you observe, they are difficult to understand. hot and cold, hot and cold 🤣🤣🤣*'*

In this comment, the commenter generalizes ADHD as a condition that is natural for girls. He/she attempts to support this by adding his/her observation about girls which are difficult to understand as they normally switch from being hot to cold. Mood swings are commonly associated with women. However, this can be caused by many factors such as shifts in estrogen hormone or hormonal balance in general (Holland, 2019). These characteristics of being difficult to understand and sudden mood

swings are stereotypical traits given to women and are considered natural by many. However, the commenter listed these traits under ADHD and stated that it is natural for girls to have this condition. According to Tee-Melegrito (2022), ADHD affects males and females, but research suggests an increased prevalence in males. This information debunks the statement of the commenter. The traits for ADHD given by the person in the comment also undermines the clinically given symptoms for the disorder. Therefore, the usage of the word ADHD in this context does not align with the APA Psychology Dictionary definition of the term.

Excerpt 15. ADHD as a (jokingly) requirement for being Jollibee (mascot)



'Requirements for being Jollibee: 1. Overflowing social energy, 2. Don't know what boring means, 3. Must be a good dancer, 4. Have ADHD 🌈'

In this comment, the commenter listed the 'requirements' to be qualified for the job of wearing the mascot of Jollibee. For context, Jollibee is popularly known as a very jolly and energetic bee character (Jolly-bee). Hence, all of the workers who play as the character must bring out that energy to bring joy to the mass. Among the "requirements" listed by the commenter, the 4th one states that one must have ADHD with the overly crying emoji. The emoji is an indication that this comment must have no ill-intention and is presented in a humorous manner. However, the prior listed traits may be mistaken or associated with ADHD. According to an article entitled *Relationships & Social Skills* by CHADD (2018), Individuals with ADHD often experience social difficulties, social rejection, and interpersonal relationship problems as a result of their inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity. Furthermore, their social interactions with others in their social environment are often filled with misunderstanding and miscommunication. This contradicts the first trait listed by the commenter which is that one must have overflowing social energy to be Jollibee. The second trait which is that the person must not know what boring means, can also instigate the stereotype towards the link between people who have ADHD and boredom. Although research has shown that high rates or intensity of boredom is a core symptom of people with ADHD (Fletcher, 2021), it is crucial to consider that not all symptoms are the same and there's a spectrum to ADHD. Although the commenter may or may not have used the term for joking or humor, the use of it in this context especially with listing it among the traits as 'requirements' to be Jollibee is still inappropriate and can lead to further misconceptions regarding the condition. Therefore, the usage of the word ADHD in this comment does not fully equate with the definition given by the APA Psychology Dictionary.

Excerpt 16. ADHD being synonymous to the zodiac sign Gemini

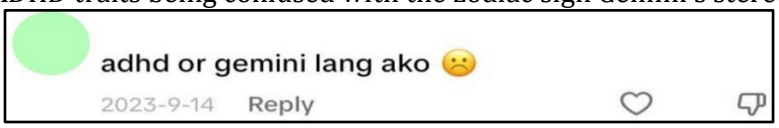


'ADHD 🤝gemini'

In this comment, the commenter used the shaking hands emoji to draw connection between ADHD and Gemini (zodiac sign). In Gen Z definition, the use of shaking hands to connect two ideas means that these two are the same and work hand-in-hand together. Therefore, the commenter is stating that having ADHD and being Gemini are the same. Astrology and Zodiac Signs are big topics on TikTok, garnering over millions of posts under the hashtag #Astrology alone. One characteristic of AstroTok (Astrology TikTok) is the popularity of creating videos listing biased assumptions and stereotypes about each zodiac sign (Jackson, 2023). Under Gemini, some characteristics are two-faced, playful, and intellectually curious. In addition, Gemini is said to be constantly juggling a variety of passions, hobbies, careers, and friend groups. They are the social butterflies of the zodiac. These characteristics get mixed up with the traits listed about ADHD on TikTok, hence the association of the disorder with the zodiac sign.

This trend of associating mental conditions to zodiac signs stereotypical personalities has sparked confusion among TikTok users. They are having a crisis as they question whether they have the condition or is it just part of their personality as the zodiac sign they represent. This dilemma can be seen in the following comment:

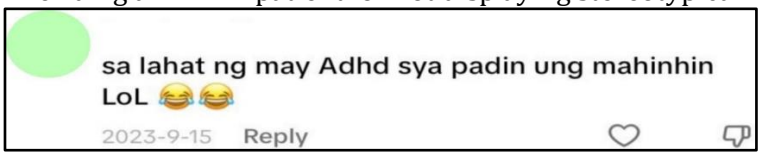
Excerpt 17. ADHD traits being confused with the zodiac sign Gemini's stereotypical trait.



'ADHD or am I just a gemini 😰'

Corresponding to Excerpt 16, this mix-up between zodiac sign personalities and disorder leads to confusion. Furthermore, it undermines ADHD as a serious condition since its traits are being stereotypically used and associated with personalities given to zodiac signs. It is important to note that some of these Gemini characteristics such as being the social butterflies of the zodiac are stereotypical and do not represent the totality of ADHD as mentioned in Excerpt 15 regarding the concept about overflowing social energy. Researchers have found that the social challenges of children with ADHD include disturbed relationships with their peers, difficulty making and keeping friends, and deficiencies in appropriate social behavior. Long-term outcome studies suggest that these problems continue into adolescence and adulthood and impede the social adjustment of adults with ADHD (*Relationships & Social Skills - CHADD*, 2018). Therefore, refutes the idea that both ADHD and Gemini people are social butterflies. The perception and usage of the term ADHD to the zodiac sign Gemini in this context does not align with the definition of the term given by APA.

Excerpt 18. Deriding an ADHD patient for not displaying stereotypical ADHD traits

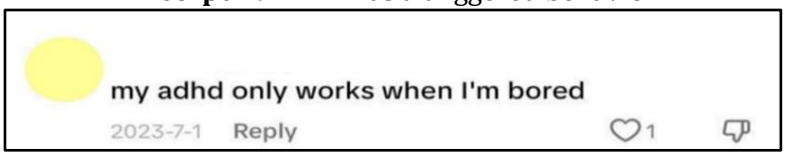


'Among those who have ADHD she's the one who is still demure 😂😂'

In this comment, the commenter states that Moira (the person being referred to) is the only one she knows that has an ADHD but is still demure. The statement is followed by LoL (laugh out loud) and two faces with tears of joy emoji. It can be inferred that the commenter does not take Moira's condition seriously and may be doubtful whether it is real or not since Moira's personality does not match with the person's perception of ADHD, hence, using the phrase "sa lahat ng may Adhd'' to separate her from the group. Moira not being taken seriously by the commenter because of her demure and reserved personality suggests that the latter's

perception of the qualities of having ADHD is the opposite of being demure which is being hyperactive or extremely energetic. Tee-Melegrito (2022) states that there are differences in the diagnosis across sexes due to several factors. As males tend to exhibit hyperactive symptoms that may be bothersome and disruptive to others, they tend to receive a diagnosis earlier than females. Meanwhile, females may not display this inattentive behavior prominently so doctors may miss the condition. To further support this, Martin et al. (2018) found that ADHD risk is more likely to manifest or be diagnosed as anxiety or depression in females than in males. As ADHD symptoms are less overt in females, experts are more likely to diagnose them with personality or internalizing disorders, further delaying diagnosis and treatment. Therefore, refuting the statement of the commenter regarding Moira's condition and proving that her demure personality does not affect the legitimacy of her ADHD disorder. Although the commenter has common understanding of ADHD, particularly the Hyperactive presentation, it is not adequate as ADHD is a spectrum and not everyone experiences the same symptoms. Therefore, the usage of the word in this context does not fully represent the disorder.

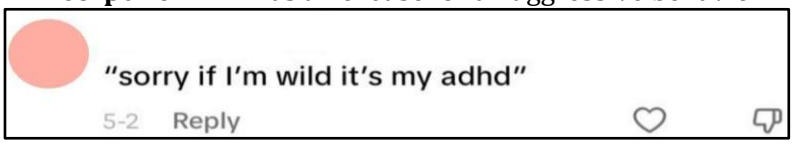
Excerpt 19. ADHD as a triggered behavior



'My ADHD only works when I'm bored'

In this comment, the person stated that his/her ADHD disorder only works or functions when he/she's bored. While it is common to link ADHD with boredom, Pedersen (2023) states that boredom isn't considered an official symptom of ADHD according to the diagnostic criteria in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition, text revision (DSM-5-TR). However, individuals with ADHD often experience a heightened sense of restlessness and difficulty engaging in activities they find uninteresting or not stimulating enough, which can lead to feelings of boredom. In addition, ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder, which means that the brain hasn't developed neurotypically from birth. Research suggests that a brain with ADHD is likely to show impairments in various areas, and that these impairments are evident from birth (Dov 2021). Which means that it is not something that you can grow out of, develop at any stage in your life and is curable. Hence, while boredom is something that most individual with ADHD experience, it is not a factor that will make ADHD work or appear at any time. It is a misconception that ADHD will only work when an individual is bored like stated by the commenter. Therefore, the usage of the word ADHD in this context does not fully represent the disorder and may cause misconception about the disorder.

Excerpt 20. ADHD as an excuse for an aggressive behavior



'Sorry if I'm wild, it's (because of) my ADHD'

This comment follows a trend on TikTok where people will 'blame' other things for their behaviors and personality (mostly unpleasant) in a supposedly joking manner. It ranges from using their zodiac signs (e.g. *saying 'sorry it's the scorpio in me acting up'* as excuse for toxic behavior), MBTI (e.g. saying *'sorry, INTJ things'* to reason their behavior), and in this case, a mental disorder. Here, the commentator apologizes for being wild and uses his/her ADHD as

an excuse. However, since the comment is in quotation marks, which are used to cite something that is written or said by another person or author, it might be the person citing the sentence as reference to the trend and may not necessarily intend to mean it as something to take seriously. Whether it is serious or is meant as a humorous entry to the trend, the association of the word wild to having ADHD can be concerning. There are already a lot of misunderstandings about the disorder, and using the word to describe the disorder can lead to more stereotypes. The term *wild* may have been derived from the hyperactivity which the disorder is commonly known for, but using the word can further reinforce the negative perceptions regarding ADHD. Therefore, using the term ADHD as an excuse for being wild in this comment does not accurately represent the disorder.

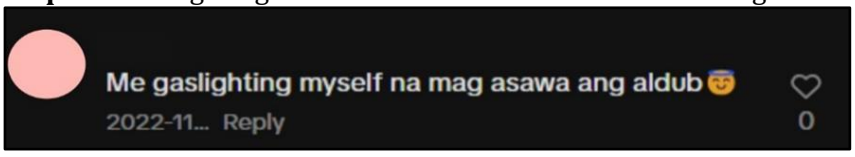
The collected data regarding the usage of the term 'ADHD' suggests that a grave misunderstanding of its true meaning exists on the online medium. Instead of proper mental awareness, the widespread notion about the term is incorrect and does not reflect its true meaning. What instead takes over its stead are definitions crafted without any fact-checking nor sources that could back their claims. For instance, some see ADHD as a synonym for unwarranted aggressive behavior or pure insanity (Excerpt 12, 19, and 20). This however cannot be proved as the true meaning is neither. Furthermore, it is even pushed to a degree designating the condition as something related to a person's biological sex or even a mere astrological construct (Excerpt 14, 16 and 17) which seriously undermines the true meaning behind the term. Overall, the data gathered suggests that the term ADHD is mostly used incorrectly on TikTok.

Gaslight. According to the American Psychological Association (APA) Psychology Dictionary, Gaslight refers to manipulating another person into doubting their perceptions, experiences, or understanding of events. It is a type of psychological abuse aimed at making victims seem or feel "crazy," creating a "surreal" interpersonal environment. The term once referred to manipulation so extreme as to induce mental illness or to justify commitment of the gaslighted person to a psychiatric institution but is now used more generally. It is usually considered a colloquialism, though occasionally it is seen in clinical literature, referring, for example, to the manipulative tactics associated with antisocial personality disorder. Gaslighting is just one tactic or behavior, among many, that a person may use to manipulate others.

During the surge of pandemic, the word gaslighting has grown in popularity. In fact, it was Merriam-Webster's Word of the Year in 2022 (Sweeney & Dolgoff, 2024). It has become one of the most widely used word among netizens, with its origin most likely coming from TikTok, garnering more than 289k posts alone under a single hashtag (#gaslighting).

To know how *gaslighting* is commonly used on a virtual common, see the following comments, encompassing different ways of using the term *gaslighting*:

Excerpt 21. Gaslighting to force the self to believe in something fictional.

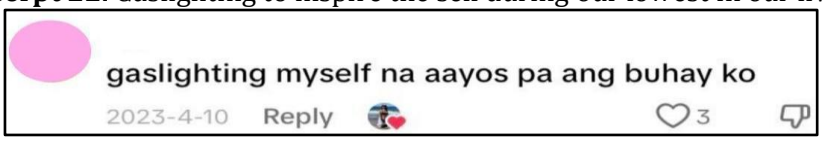


'Me gaslighting myself that aldub is married'

In this comment, the commenter states that she is gaslighting herself that AlDub (Alden and Maine ship name) is married. According to APA, Gaslighting is a form of emotional abuse where one person manipulates another person into doubting their own perceptions, memories, and sanity. It is important to note that the criteria of gaslighting entails manipulating another person into doubting themselves. Hence, it is not something that an individual can do to him/herself. In addition, Huizen (2024) asserts that people who experience gaslighting may

feel confused or as though they cannot do anything right. Comparing this to the comment's essence, the intention of the commenter is to convince herself of something to be true while being aware of it being not to satisfy her desire (her ship being married). This happens with no outside or another person involved in instigating the manipulation other than herself. Therefore, the use of the term *gaslighting* in this context does not fit the definition given by APA.

Excerpt 22. Gaslighting to inspire the self during our lowest in our lives.



'Gaslighting myself that my life will get better'

Corresponding to Excerpt 21, the usage of gaslight in this comment is also used to one's self. In this comment, the commenter refers to gaslighting as a way to convince him/herself that life will get better. Hence, associating the term to encouragement, reassurance, and hope. With this, it can be observed that the commenter connotes positivity in the term gaslighting, which is the opposite of what it really is and also undermines the possible harm and devastating effects it can inflict on an individual's mental and emotional well-being. APA refers to gaslighting as the manipulation of another person into doubting their perceptions, experiences, or understanding of events. This definition (i.e. manipulating a person to foster doubt in themselves) contradicts the essence of how the term was used in the comment (i.e. manipulating one's self for motivation and reassurance). Therefore, the word gaslighting in the comment does not align with the APA Psychology Definition of the term.

Excerpt 23. Gaslighting as a form of invalidation towards the feelings of others



'GASLIGHTING - invalidating (the) feelings of others.'

In this comment, the commenter defined gaslighting as an action of invalidating the feelings of others. Mayfield (2023) clarifies that gaslighting is invalidating but not all invalidation is gaslighting. They are similar at core as both tell a person, either directly or indirectly, that their thoughts and feelings are wrong. However, one important piece that separates the two is that gaining control over someone and creating an alternate reality that best serves the gaslighter is the very root of gaslighting. While invalidating someone's feeling is a trait that a gaslighter can have, it does not mean that it is already a form of gaslighting. As APA Psychology Dictionary states, gaslight is a type of psychological abuse aimed at making victims seem or feel "crazy," creating a "surreal" interpersonal environment. The comment generalizes gaslighting as only a form of invalidating the feelings of others which undermines the complex psychological process and impact it inflicts on its victim. Therefore, its usage in this context does not fully align with the definition given by APA.

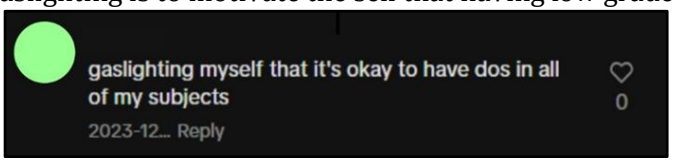
Excerpt 24. Gaslighting as a fictional ability from a Japanese anime tv-series



'Gaslighting is Itachi's genjutsu'

The comment above portrays a comparison of gaslighting between a fictional ability of a character named Itachi found within a Japanese animated tv-series called Naruto. Genjutsu is one the main types of techniques found within the fictional universe, pertaining to abilities centered around the use of illusions or mind control to create an advantage against foes (Comicvine, 2019). Therefore, what the user is implying is that gaslighting, similar to genjutsu, is used as an illusionary tactic or to control the minds of others into doing the gaslighter's bidding. According to the APA Psychology Dictionary, gaslighting is a psychological abuse which affects the mind of the target which can make them doubt what they're seeing or their beliefs. This comparison may seem outlandish but it's not far-fetched when thinking about the basic effects of both worlds. Although the big difference is that gaslighting does not necessarily make a person become a slave to someone else, and gaslighting is usually to play with someone else's emotions and not mind control. In conclusion, the user's comparison does not align with the correct APA definition, and is used incorrectly.

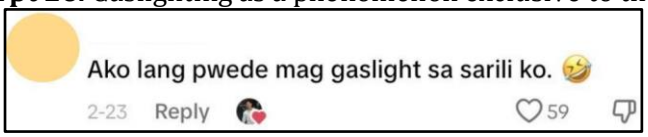
Excerpt 25. Gaslighting is to motivate the self that having low grades isn't the end



'Gaslighting myself that it's okay to have two (2.0) in all of my subjects.'

This comment presents another user that is gaslighting one's self, easily described as lying to one self to create a positive perception on one's somewhat negative reality. In an article by Anchor Therapy (2022), self-gaslighting is a real phenomenon, quoted as being a 'manipulation tactic' to make one's self question their own understanding of their own reality. It is a result of an internalized doubt mixed with a disapproving external voice. The user states that it's okay to have twos (2.0) in all his subjects. According to Albert (2024)'s findings regarding the Philippine Grading System, a grade of 2.0 commonly means a 'Good'grade. Although, the fact that the user has to gaslight themselves in this situation despite what seems to be an acceptable grade can mean that the user is not satisfied with that. It can be assumed that the person must have factors that are forcing them to hold themselves to high standards. Going back to the definition of self-gaslighting, it can be a result of a disapproving external voice. The APA Psychology dictionary also defines the term as a way to manipulate someone else's beliefs. Therefore, the user wants to pretend that their situation is still acceptable despite an inner belief telling them otherwise.

Excerpt 26. Gaslighting as a phenomenon exclusive to the self

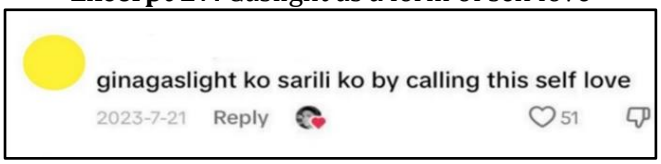


'Only I can gaslight myself 🤣'

Another self-gaslighting phenomenon. This comment states that only the user can gaslight themselves. According to the APA Psychology dictionary's definition, it's a type of manipulation towards someone else that can reach the extremes which can induce mental illness. In the comment, however, self-gaslighting does not connote any sort of manipulation to someone else. From the word itself, and if we refer to previous excerpts such as *Excerpt 22* and *Excerpt 25*, it implies more of a self-help tactic rather than to cause any harm to the mental state of an individual. Another is that the user seems to be portraying gaslighting as more of a positive phenomenon than what it is defined as. The inclusion of a 'rolling on the floor laughing' emoji also connotes that the term is being taken

as a joke rather than a serious concern. Thus, the conclusion arrived at is that the usage in the comment above misaligns with the correct definitions given by the dictionary.

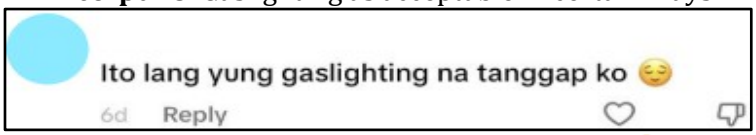
Excerpt 27. Gaslight as a form of self love



'I gaslight myself by calling this self love'

The comment shows gaslighting in a different light than what is rightfully defined by the APA Psychology Dictionary. The user calls gaslighting as a form of self-love, by also 'gaslighting' one's self into believing that the context of the word or its use connote that specific meaning. Furthermore, as cited in *Excerpt 21*, Huizen (2024) asserts that people cannot properly function cognitively or emotionally when exposed to being gaslighted. Therefore, denoting gaslighting as self-love is comparing it to its very antithesis. In conclusion, in this comment, the term was used in the wrong context and does not align with the correct definition constructed by psychologists after a long history of research which follows a similar pattern with the other terminologies' usages.

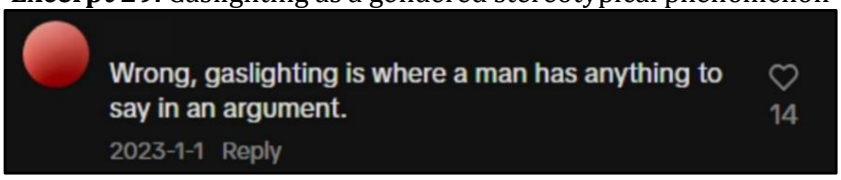
Excerpt 28. Gaslighting as acceptable in certain ways



'This is the only gaslighting that I will accept 😔*'*

As previously introduced, gaslighting, according to the APA psychology dictionary, is an action taken in order to manipulate a person into doubting their beliefs, experiences and understanding of certain events; so much manipulation could induce a real mental illness into a person. The further addition of the 'relieved' emoji implies that the term is taken less seriously than how it should be used. Also saying that it is the only 'gaslighting' that the user will accept means that at a certain extent, gaslighting is still seen as an acceptable phenomenon despite its obvious negative connotations, especially as defined by APA. Similar to *Excerpt 30*, Huizen (2024)'s findings also do not align with the way or the context in which the term is used in this comment.

Excerpt 29. Gaslighting as a gendered stereotypical phenomenon

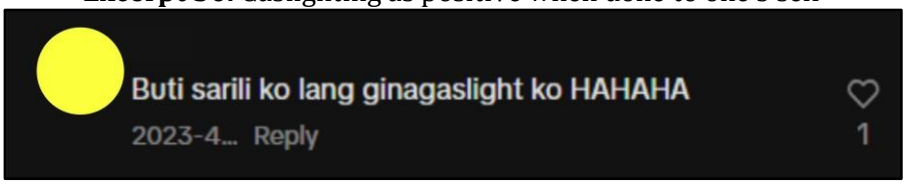


'Wrong, gaslighting is where a man has anything to say in an argument.'

The user seems to signify that gaslighting is a phenomenon only initiated by men, therefore portraying it as a concern caused by the masculine population. By saying 'wrong' in the beginning of the comment, they seem determined to prove another definition as wrong, unfit and out of context. Although compared to the APA psychology dictionary's definition of the term, there is a clear contradiction between the definition provided by the user and one built upon multitudes of research done on the cases. It can be argued that the person might be referring to arguments as relationship arguments. In WebMD (2024)'s definition of gaslighting of

relationships, it is described as a common form of abuse. In it, it mentions that studies pointed out that gaslighting happens when people use gender-based stereotypes and other inequalities against their victims to manipulate reality. Therefore, based on this understanding alone, the comment seems to portray the case of gaslighting, using a stereotyped notion directed towards other genders.

Excerpt 30. Gaslighting as positive when done to one's self



'It's a relief that I only gaslight myself HAHAHA'

This comment shares particular sentiments with most prior excerpts, namely: *Excerpts 25, 26,* and *27.* Similarly, it puts the term 'gaslighting' in a positive light, one that can be normally done unto oneself rather than the preconceived notion shared by the American Psychologists Association (APA) in their Psychology dictionary. Not only that, it also goes against Huizen's findings and although self-gaslighting is a real happening according to Anchor Therapy (2022), it still is and does not denote the same meaning and thus putting it as an example of inappropriate usage of the word, as well as the inappropriate context for it. The user finds relief that they only induce gaslighting upon themselves, which not only is not right when the correct definition is used, but according to WebMD (2024), it is a common form of abuse, and is not something one should wish upon themselves. The fact that it is humorous and not serious already tells that it is not used in the right context whatsoever.

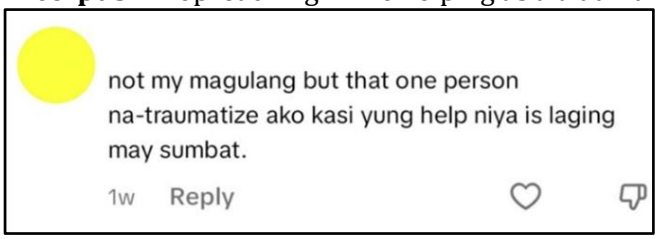
Overall, with the ten (10) analyzed comments, merely one user has correctly used the term gaslight, making the word primarily misused. The specific usage where it has been used appropriately reflects it as a form of invalidation in Excerpt 23. On the other hand, the majority of excerpts employed the word gaslight inappropriate, i.e., to convince oneself (Excerpt 21), comfort oneself (Excerpt 22), as a fictional ability (Excerpt 24), as a form of optimism (Excerpt 25), as only a self-induced phenomenon (Excerpt 26), a form of self-love (Excerpt 27), an acceptable and considerable option (Excerpt 28), a gendered phenomenon (Excerpt 29), and as a form of positive act when done to the self (Excerpt 30). The misuse of the said vocabulary is popular among new generations nowadays, undermining its psychological meaning and rather making a new propositional meaning such as self-empowerment. In sum, it was reinterpreted as a positive, self-directed, or personal growth-oriented concept rather than a form of psychological manipulation.

Trauma. The use of the term *trauma* has been widely used not only in social media discourse but also in daily face-to-face conversations. It is generally used as a term for describing disturbing experiences from the past. However, certain states of affairs and definitive components are highly considered before they are tagged as trauma.

Based on the APA Dictionary of Psychology (2018), it defines trauma in two different ways. As such, *trauma* (n.) refers to an emotional response to any *disturbing* experiences or events caused by either humans's behavior (e.g., rape, violence, industrial accidents) or natural phenomena (e.g., earthquakes, death). In particular, trauma results in [1] fear, [2] helplessness, [3] dissociation, [4] confusion, and other intense disruptive feelings that negatively influence one's attitude, behavior, and many more aspects of well-being. Accordingly, *trauma* (n.) may also be any serious physical injury, such as a dislocated bone near one's knee. Thus, trauma challenges individuals' perspectives towards a person or the world in general as safe and predictable, making traumatic (adj.) encounters more frequent.

Hence, to know how *trauma* is used on a virtual common, see the following comments, encompassing different ways of using the term trauma:

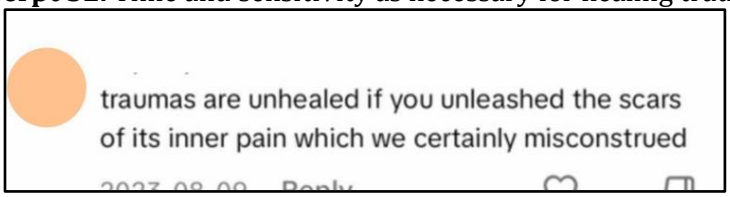
Excerpt 31. Reproaching while helping as a trauma.



'Not my parents, but that one person whom I was traumatized by, since s/he reproaches me every time s/he helps.'

The presented comment arises from the context of a person who is afraid to be treated by his friends during hangouts. This fear stems from his parents' constant reproaches about their sacrifices, which began in his toddlerhood and continue to this day. Similarly, the commenter, through the provided comment, expresses her own experience of being traumatized by a certain person who reproaches her whenever she is being extended help, regardless of the timing. While constant criticism or being reproached can be upsetting, it is not as severe as the given definitive components (rape, war, and disasters) to impact one's mental well-being. However, one cannot immediately conclude or invalidate one's statement regarding the said context. Instead, *trauma* may not sound inherently traumatic in the said situation, but it can still be traced through a recurring pattern of such behavior, technically called an unresolved acute trauma response, whose perceived threats carry on and lead to a chronic trauma that triggers past traumas and insecurities (Feriante & Sharma, 2023). Therefore, since the commenter relates her experience at merely a surface level for the given context, it does not align with the APA Psychology Dictionary's definition. Unless the discussed *'reproached'* is associated with emotional and physical *abuse.*

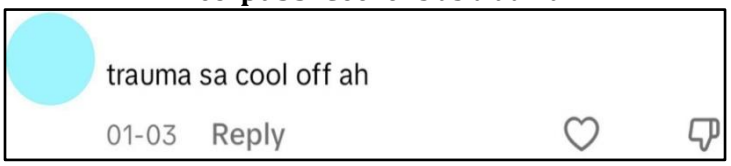
Excerpt 32. Time and sensitivity as necessary for healing trauma



'Traumas are unhealed if you unleash the scars of its inner pain which we certainly misconstrued.'

As shown in the comment, a further explanation of the context stating a point of view of someone triggering one's unhealed trauma (*POV: May nag trigger ng unhealed trauma mo/Someone triggers your unhealed trauma)* has been expressed. Hence, the commenter did not use it in answering what trauma is, but rather expounds how trauma works in certain circumstances after it actually happened. On the grounds of the sentence structure, *unhealed in* the main clause mainly describes trauma, along with the conditions as seen starting from the complementizer *if* in the subordinating clause, where scars and inner pain connote *past pain* and *vulnerability*, respectively. Additionally, the relative clause includes the word *misconstrued*, emphasizing how the concept of trauma is misinterpreted nowadays which prevents sensitivity that triggers trauma. In brief, according to the definition of APA Psychology Dictionary, *unhealed* may refer to as *unresolved*, denoting emotional or mental conflicts that are not fully worked through, accepted, or understood yet. Hence, the way trauma was utilized in the comment depicts truth since it is caused by a perturbing phenomenon from the past which cannot be easily healed. Healing requires enough time and space of overcoming trauma; hence, language must be observed for it is injurious and may hinder the healing process (Busch & McNamara, 2020).

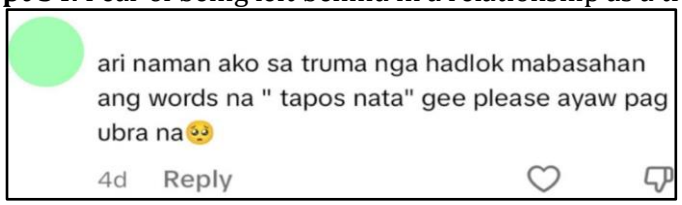
Excerpt 33. Cool offs as trauma



'Traumatized by cool offs, huh'

The comment above was extracted from a post, stating that the woman had the worst trauma before, but she still took the risk for the man. However, the man did the same thing. It might be cheating, manipulating, gaslighting, or other traumatizing proceedings. In terms of the comment of the post, the slang word *cool off,* i.e., particularly common among new generations, was linked to the concept of trauma. As per the Merriam-Webster's Dictionary (n.d.), cool-off derives from the cooling-off period, wherein a period of time must pass before someone can do something or before an agreement becomes final. In relationship contexts, *cool off* suggests for both parties to take some time apart through giving spaces. This is to step back from their conflicts and emotions and eventually do self-reflection (Dela Pena, 2015). There may be conflicts prior to the cool-off in relationship contexts; the cool-off per se cannot be reasonably associated with trauma as its essence heavily leans on the positive interests of people within relationships, despite pre-existing conflicts. Thus, from the perspective of the textual basis of the analysis, trauma was used incorrectly in the comment, considering the given situation involving disturbing-free episodes. As a result, the analyzed comment fails to fulfill the conditions of trauma's psychological sense, perhaps due to the commenter's misunderstanding of the context and the term trauma itself.

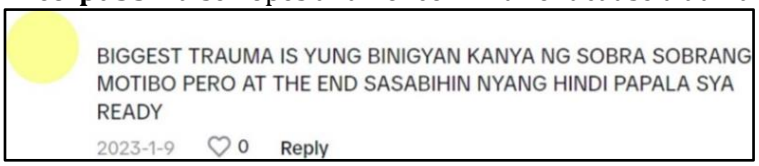
Excerpt 34. Fear of being left behind in a relationship as a trauma



'I have that trauma that makes me afraid to hear the phrase 'we're over.' Please, don't say it to me anymore. 🥺'

Trauma in relationship situations has already been established in Excerpt 33. Similarly, the given comment concentrates on the fear of breakups, which are case-to-case. While breakups cannot be classified as trauma in all situations, there are cases of people whose fears are derived from their resolute relationships, not only with one's partner in life but also with parents or guardians, ergo precipitating a trauma response (Goff et al., 2006). So, trauma could be justified in the comment if the context heavily entails psychic distress. Nonetheless, the certain context of the comment is about a video of a girl holding a phone while crying, along with the text, *'What I despise to experience happened again'*. Also, the majority of the comments are in line with relationship issues. Hence, the commenter's context gravitates toward an experimenting or intensifying stage in relationships (Knapp, 1978), which mostly occurred on social media rather than in person. Therefore, looking at the weight of the comment's surface context, the usage of trauma is not suitable, except for serious cases, namely annulment, divorce, a parent's abandonment, and the sudden death of loved ones. The succeeding comments are placed on the proposition, *'My biggest trauma is falling in love. Because the last time I was sure of someone, they weren't sure about me.'* Observe the following various usages of the term trauma in a common context:

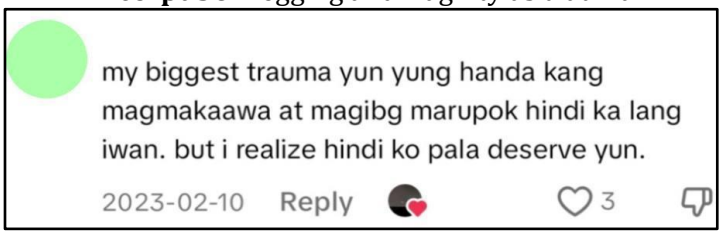
Excerpt 35. False hopes and noncommitment cause trauma



'(The) biggest trauma is when someone gives us hopes, but will eventually tell us that he or she is not yet ready (for commitme- nt).'

Corresponding to the recent comment analyses, the use of trauma in relationship issues is pervasive. As exemplified by the comment, the superlative 'biggest' is linked with trauma, emphasizing the situation wherein someone gives false hopes in dating but actually is not ready for commitment, as a severe trauma. Unfortunately, according to trauma's actual term in APA, the commenter used *trauma* inappropriately, especially the way it was delivered in exaggeration by the word 'biggest'. This is due to the comment's lack of intense negative influence in the given situation, as it is rather a manifestation of natural tendencies in dating: expectations mostly remain as is, absence of reciprocity is inevitable, and other situations that are not mentally and emotionally disturbing yet may cause self-inflicted harm.

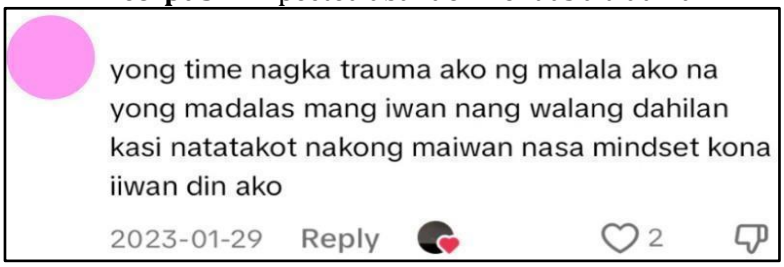
Excerpt 36. Begging and fragility as trauma



'My biggest trauma is when you are ready to beg and be fragile to someone as long as you will not be left behind, but I (also) realized that I don't deserve it.'

The presented comment shared the way trauma is used in Excerpt 36, where it uses the *biggest trauma* to describe what trauma is like based on their experience. In this comment, the persona refers to trauma as begging and being fragile for someone just to prevent them from being left behind. But eventually, the commenter realized that she did not deserve it. In short, trauma is pertained in the comment as conditions (begging and being easily swayed off) of something to avoid the unwanted effect (to be abandoned). Nevertheless, trauma is not conditional but rather an unintended upsetting experience leading to long-term mental health suffering (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (US), 2014). Therefore, trauma has been described mistakenly, as seen in the terms associated with it, making it incongruent with the APA Psychology Dictionary's explication of trauma.

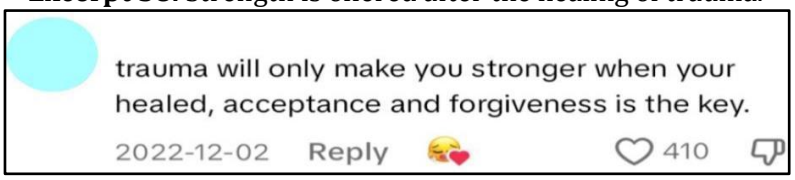
Excerpt 37. Expected abandonment as a trauma



''The time that I developed a trauma whenever I remember that I'm often being left with no reason. I'm afraid to be alone, it's already embedded in my mind that I will be left behind eventually.'

Furthermore, in this instance, trauma was explained as something that occurs when one remembers his or her abandonment experience. The commenter included that being abandoned is already embedded in his or her cognition. Hence, when the commenter enters a relationship in keeping with the context, he or she will first think that the other party will leave him or her in the long run. While this comes across in other cases, it cannot be immediately considered a trauma. Based on the basis of this study, trauma is possible in terms of mental and physical injuries, which is far different from abandonment in relationships, excluding sensitive cases like abandoning a child. In short, similar to the first two comments under the common context, the critical word *trauma* has been misunderstood and misused.

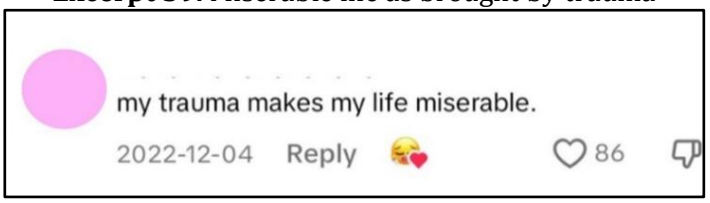
Excerpt 38. Strength is offered after the healing of trauma.



'Trauma will only make you stronger once you're healed; acceptance and forgiveness are the keys.'

The shown comment supports the content, asserting, *'Your trauma made you stronger. (But) no. My trauma made me traumatized; it made me weak, gave me sleepless nights, and caused me memory loss. It gave me feelings I never wanted. So no, my trauma didn't make me stronger. Instead, I made myself stronger by dragging myself out of the dark place and dealing with consequences that weren't my fault.'* As a response, the commenter limited the thought, stating that trauma makes the victims stronger. As for the commenter, it is only applicable when one is healed already, and the keys to such are acceptance and forgiveness. Trauma, as defined by the APA Psychology Dictionary, is an alarming concept, given that what it brings to traumatized people negatively affects their overall well-being. It makes them helpless, afraid, dissociated, confused, and more, which do not last in an instant. Hence, trauma is primarily disruptive to one's life in lieu of being a source of strength. Resilience sounds possible, but taking into account the nature of trauma, it is not ideal unless a person resolves his or her trauma and finds growth (Collier, 2016). Additionally, the mentioned ways of healing trauma are subjective, as there is no universal means of dealing with trauma. In short, the commenter hit the gist of trauma, excluding the notions of forgiveness and acceptance.

Excerpt 39. Miserable life as brought by trauma



'My trauma makes my life miserable'

The commenter simply elucidated the ramification of trauma, which is a miserable life. In the same context as Excerpt 38, all kinds of trauma cannot ever be justified because of the anguish they engender in their victims. This is supported by the definition of the core of this text analysis, which propounds that trauma is any disturbing experience undertaken by merciless behaviors, accidents, and disasters, such as cheating, plane crashes, and typhoons. Thereupon, the said instances are no joke and can cause wretched sorrow and uncomfortability to traumatized people. At large, the term trauma is used in this context as generally pertinent. It is an indication that a hurtful narrative is expected once they encounter the term trauma.

Excerpt 40. Humiliation and bullying as trauma



'Yes, I was humiliated in front of my classmates and all of them laughed out loud while our teacher was furious at me. I really got traumatized and embarrassed. After that, my classmates severely bullied me. As a victim of bullying, I reached the point of losingmy interest to attend classes that time as (what they have done) is frightful (on my end).'

As per the analyzed comments, the commenter experienced humiliation, which was done by her teacher. The aftermath is that, unfortunately, the commenter became a victim of bullying, making him or her lose interest in attending classes. Bullying, according to the APA, is a form of aggressive behavior that causes intentional and repeated discomfort or injury to the victim. Notably, in the Philippines, it is considered a crime under the provisions of Republic Act No. 10627 of 2013 (Official Gazette, 2013). Also, various studies claim that one of the reasons for mental conditions includes bullying. Therefore, the term trauma in the studied state of affairs characterizes the nature of trauma, which is agitating. Worse, trauma causes psychological ripple effects, such as humiliation, bullying, and discouragement (Peterson, 2013). Overall, it is indeed a trauma.

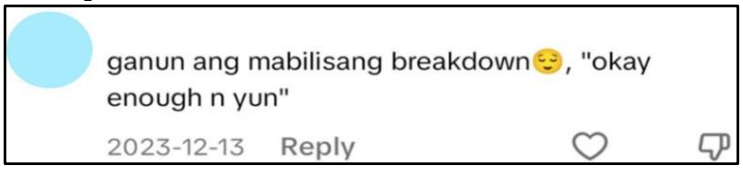
The term *trauma* has been found to have multiple usage in the collected data. Out of ten excerpts analyzed, six have been identified to have used the term inappropriately. The term *trauma* appears to have been used casually, for instance, in excerpt 33 wherein the user states that he/she has been traumatized by cool offs. While cool offs can have negative connotation in it and may instill fear towards the person experiencing it, it does not fully fulfill the conditions for it to be considered as a traumatic experience. In the data, the inappropriateness of usage comes from the association of trauma to any negative experiences such as fear (Excerpt 34) and actions/situations where they felt vulnerable and pained (Excerpt 35, 36, and 37). The complexity of *trauma* as a concept makes it prone to misinterpretation and misuse, undermining its true meaning as per APA Psychology Dictionary's definition and standard.

Mental Breakdown. Mental breakdown (n.) refers to nervous breakdown (n.) as defined by the APA Dictionary of Psychology (2018). It is a non-medical term used to describe a period of intense mental distress, emotional crisis, and an inability to function accordingly. It often happens out of nowhere and is triggered by overwhelming stress, anxiety, or trauma. However, according to Huizen (2023), the medical community no longer utilizes such a term, but it remains an indication of underlying symptoms of mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Hence, seeking professional help if a mental breakdown persists is imperative.

In the emergence of language trends on social media platforms, especially on TikTok in pandemic times, the use of mental breakdown has been widely employed up until present in certain situations. Thus, to know how *mental breakdown* is used on a virtual common, see the following comments, encompassing different ways of using the said term:A TikTok POV stating, '*Sobrang pagod na yung utak 'ko, nap-pressure ako sa lahat ng bagay, and the saddest thing is wala man lang akong magawa para gumaan lahat,'* has inflicted different reactions from netizens along with the use of the term *(mental/nervous) breakdown.'*

Primarily, three phrases are considered upon the succeeding analyses of the reactions: exhausted mind, pressured from everything, and helplessness:

Excerpt 41. Mental breakdown as a controllable situation



'That's what a quick breakdown is like 😌, 'okay, that's enough."

The presented comment contains ambiguity in terms of the commenter's experience, emotions, and reason for breakdown. But based on the provided context, the commenter may relate to an extremely tired mind, pressure, and helplessness. As far as the usage of the mental health term is concerned, mental breakdown was used in an opaque context. The comment delineated *breakdown* as something that can occur for a short period of time and has a level of sufficiency. Nonetheless, although a nervous breakdown is temporary, it is still serious and must be regarded as a mental health crisis (Bridges to Recovery, 2020). Such an approach to delivery may portray the entire text as a comforting statement to the persona who experiences a mental breakdown due to personal reasons or bearing on the post's idea. On the other hand, the commenter might have used the term *breakdown* as a deviation from taking mental health slightly, preventing the destigmatization of mental health. Also, the APA did not include specifics about the duration of mental breakdown, which they believe is subjective to one's ordeal and vulnerability. Therefore, although the commenter may or may not have used the term for joking and distraction alone to lessen the weight of the topic at hand, the use of it on social media is inappropriate, provided that the term per se remains a sensitive topic, as per the APA's description.

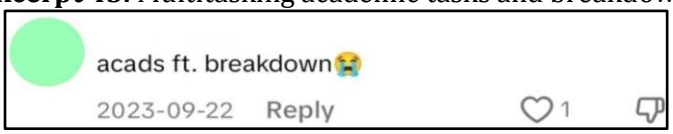
Excerpt 42. Mental breakdown as something humorous



'I really can't make a video while I'm breaking down, I would just laugh 🤭 🤭'

Gen Zs are known as the generation with an open mind concerning mental health. They are also technologically inclined, and recording themselves is one of their preferences or hobbies. Regarding the shown comment, different angles are captured about thecommenter's message or meaning according to his or her usage of the term *(mental or nervous breakdown).* While breakdown is not a clinical term, it still depicts twenty-one (21) psychological implications that are crucial in clinical psychology (Huizen, 2023). Based on the APA's definition, breakdown may be triggered due to stress, anxiety, or total mental and physical exhaustion. So, taking videos is a normal way of documenting one's suffering and experience during a mental breakdown (e.g., crying, gaping, shouting), but laughing in times of unwanted distress appears to be implausible, unless it is likely to be a coping strategy. By and large, balancing the APA Dictionary of Psychology and the comment's ground, *mental breakdown* was not employed aptly.

Excerpt 43. Multitasking academic tasks and breakdown



'Acads ft. breakdown 🤭'

Acads ft. breakdown contains abbreviations wherein *acads* for *academics* and *ft.* for *featuring,* as noted by Abbreviations ™ (n.d.). Usually, the abbreviation *featuring* is used in the music industry, especially when there is an artist collaboration. For instance, *Happier by Taylor Swift ft. Selena Gomez.* In the context of the comment, a narrative of a woman was emphasized, stating, *She's tired; she's trying to continue with life even though deep inside, she's fading. She's me.'* In relation to it, the shown comment appeared, expressing one's thoughts and sentiments. The abbreviation *ft.* mediated *acads* and *breakdown,* which explains that the two concepts and events took place at the same time, Importantly, it includes a bowling emoji, ergo connecting the proposition of the comment to its context as a despairing phenomenon. In the Philippines, immense pressure to excel academically is experienced by a consequential portion of Filipino students, where one (1) out of (10) stated, *'Mas pipiliin kong mag-breakdown dahil hindi ako satisfied sa score ko, at 'di dahil pagod ako sa school.''* (Ruiz, 2023). Hence, students nowadays normalize the use of breakdown in such instances due to pressure. However, the researchers cannot invalidate the students, as academics may appear difficult to many but be bearable to a few, and vice versa. However, based on the definition of APA, when one faces a mental breakdown, one cannot function well, which contradicts the concurrent events of *doing academics* and *having a mental breakdown*. In short, the term *breakdown* was misused in this expression.

Excerpt 44. Mental breakdown occurs out of sudden



'Having a breakdown while riding on a jeepney also hits different'

As revealed by the commenter, she experiences mental breakdowns while on vacation. The said expression is accentuated by the afterthought idiom '*hits different',* conveying that it occurs differently than usual. It can be presumed that the commenter faces struggles along the way, weighing up the context that pertains to someone's point of view in which a sudden mental breakdown hits again. Also, there is a vague distinction between whether one is mentally, physically, or emotionally tired or not. All he or she does is either cry or scream until things get better again. If taken into account based on the study's textual framework, the term *breakdown* is correctly used in its circumstances; although vague, it still manifests an emotional episode, perhaps due to the inevitable personal stress and panic attacks of individuals in a public setting. In short, the term breakdown effectively communicates its complexion in the context of the comment.

Excerpt 45. Mental breakdown as an unforeseen situation

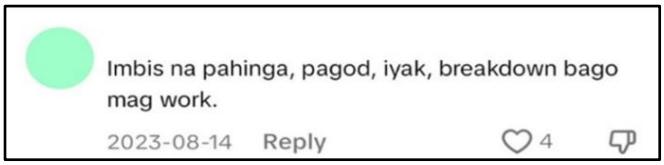


'I just finished breaking down. What the heck, I still have an exam now 😭'

Similar to the case of Excerpt 42, the proposition of the given comment explores mental breakdown in academic settings. Also, in the shared context of Excerpt 44, the term *breakdown* used in the corpus refers to unanticipated mental distress. As a result, the commenter developed worry as he or she has an exam to take on the same day that the breakdown comes to pass. Such a phenomenon was recorded as existing in the Philippines, where over 92.6

percent of students suffer from stress owing to academic and learning endeavors (Geronimo et al., 2023). The APA Dictionary of Psychology as a reference confirms the suitable usage of *mental or nervous breakdown* in the scrutinized comment, noting its unforeseen effects on people and the reason why it happened—academic matters.

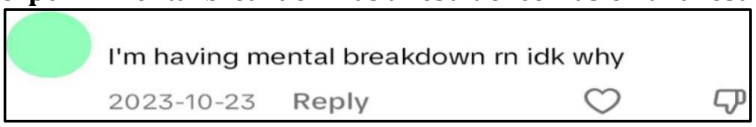
Excerpt 46. Mental breakdown as a hindrance to function accordingly



'Instead of rest, all I feel and do ares exhaustion, to cry,and experience breakdown before working.'

Additionally, the term *breakdown* in the shown comment is one of the other ways the commenter did it instead of resting before work time came. Further, workplace stress in the Philippines tops in Southeast Asia (Rayandoyan, 2022). For this reason, the researchers presuppose that the commenter experiences intense emotional or mental distress, which is the reason she had no time for reposing, especially due to exhaustion, as has been stated. Besides, the psychological benefits of crying help someone feel better, according to various research studies (Licsw, 2021). Therefore, considering the earnest expression and underlying mental crisis of the commenter in the same context as Excerpt 44, the usage of mental breakdown fits.

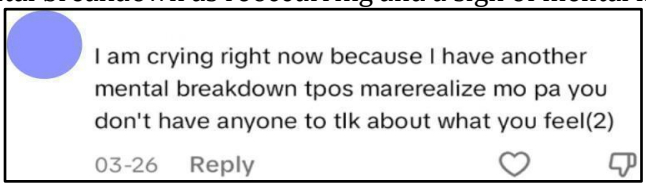
Excerpt 47. Mental breakdown as a result of confusion and lostness



'I'm having (a) mental breakdown rn (and) idk why'

In parallel with the preceding comment's state of affairs, the shown comment vented out his or her mental breakdown episode without knowing the core reason, as noticed with the phrase *'idk/I don't know why'.* In line with the APA Dictionary of Psychology, mental breakdown is a general term that anyone can use, but only in certain cases. There is also no diagnosis needed, as each individual could encounter such a circumstance because of various experiences in life that affect one's mental or emotional health. However, the APA indicated that mental breakdown may show signs of mental health disorders, presumably based on the frequency of mental breakdown as well as its underlying causes. Hence, the commenter used it according to the context, but it is alarming that he or she appears to be in need of professional help or guidance.

Excerpt 48. Mental breakdown as reoccurring and a sign of mental health conditions



'*I'm crying right now because I have another mental breakdown, plus you will realize that you don't have someone to talk about what you feel (2).'*

'I feel so down' serves as the reference for the presented text. In particular, the term *mental breakdown* in the comment is considered the reason why the commenter cried, as discerned in the conjunction. Mental breakdown, as interpreted by the commenter himself or

herself, refers to something that will make you cry. On the basis of this study, mental breakdown describes mental instability, i.e., triggered by mental distress. As a result, crying \is inevitable in times of this kind of mental breakdown interlude (Moore, 2023). Moreover, what is more concerning, as pointed out by the commenter, is that he or she does not have someone to talk to regarding his or her sentiments. In essence, provided the initial feelings of the commenter, the term *mental breakdown* seems to fit the situation.

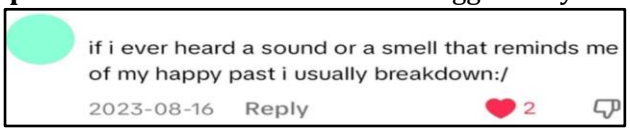
Excerpt 49. Mental breakdown as a hindrance to focus



'(Do) breakdown first and work again'

The term *mental breakdown* has been used in many ways, such as in the video narrating, *'Yung gusto mo magbreakdown sa dami ng schoolworks pero naalala mo na "this is for your future pala.'* Thus, *mental breakdown* is seen as something that you can resist anytime in the text. However, based on the APA's explanation, it is a sudden onset, i.e., usually a result of prolonged pressure that finally reaches its culmination. Consequently, people who experience mental breakdown lose their ability to cope with stress very well but rather lose their mental health crisis by means of pauses, uncontrollable crying, and other emotional episodes (McCall, 2023). That is why the shown comment is reasonable in responding, '(*Do) breakdown first and work again,'* as a contradicting statement, suggesting that one must cope first before doing tasks, as when mental breakdown comes about, it cannot be avoided and one cannot function well. To conclude, the usage of the term *mental breakdown* in the comment is proper.

Excerpt 50. Mental breakdown can be triggered by a trauma



If I ever hear a sound or smell that reminds me of my happy past, I usually breakdown:/

The commenter expresses himself/herself as a response to the context revealing, *'and the saddest and hardest part is you don't know why you're having a mental breakdown; you don't know where it's coming from; you'll just be surprised that out of nowhere, you're suddenly crying.'* Nonetheless, the response seemed to be a trauma response as observed with the included sense of tactility and olfactory in recollecting something from the past, i.e., specifically known as freeze response. Through such senses, trauma is recalled, resulting in the establishment of coping strategies (Cleveland Clinic, 2020). Besides, based on the definition of APA, a mental breakdown is triggered by a trauma. Therefore, the commenter has used the term *breakdown* appropriately in his or her experience.

The phrase *mental breakdown* has been shown to have multiple uses online, especially on TikTok. Different excerpts from different users have shown that the word has mostly been thrown around, being used in different situations that are thought to be both appropriate and inappropriate, though mostly the former. Uses of the phrase that are considered appropriate range from describing it as an unforeseen situation (Excerpt 45), a hindrance to proper cognitive function (Excerpt 46), a result of confusion and being lost (Excerpt 47), as a symptom of a mental health condition (Excerpt 48) and others. Some, however, relegated its meaning to something humorous (Excerpt 42), a controllable situation (Excerpt 41), or something unrelated like a synonym for multitasking (Excerpt 43). Despite some discrepancies in

how the phrase is used by various over TikTok, the overall takeaway is that *mental breakdown* is still mostly used correctly.

Psychologist's Perspective

Mental Health Awareness: Mental Health as a Serious Concern. For this theme, the researchers extracted the expert's ideology, which stated that mental health is a serious concern. As a psychologist, he stated that he advocates mental health. For him, it is an important topic, especially nowadays, that the younger generation has become more susceptible to mental health conditions like depression and anxiety, which may have risen during the pandemic. He also shared the heaviness of the situation by sharing how many younger individuals harm themselves and, at some point, become a complete suicide. This is supported by a recent study by AXA (2023), which has found that among all age groups, Asian Gen Zs have the highest proportion of individuals experiencing stress. In the Philippines, this has manifested in approximately 35% of Gen Z Filipinos undergoing depression and 16% undergoing anxiety—both higher compared to global numbers. Hence, it is a serious concern.

> '*It is a complete concern. Not only for each individual, but it's also a systemic concern as well. We ask ourselves if do we understand mental health, do we have the appropriate services?..*'

Gen Z and Mental Health Discourse: Catalyst for Change and the Risk of Self-Diagnosis. For this theme, the expert's ideology, which is *Gen Z being the catalyst for change and the risk of self-diagnosis,* was extracted. The expert believes it to be a controversial take as he identifies two things regarding Gen Z or (most) younger generation: [1] the positive, which is the generation catalyzing the awareness campaign due to their utilization of social media. He also stated how the more significant community witnessed how the younger generation pushed forward the importance of mental health, implicitly or explicitly becoming mental health advocates at some point. On one end, he also identifies the [2] negative, which is his controversial take regarding the generation's tendency to self-diagnose through conveniently using clinical terms and embracing too much of the information (symptoms and diagnosis) that they gather from search engines without asking the knowledge of professionals. According to Redshaw (2023), one (1) in four (4) people had diagnosed themselves with an illness or disease based on information found on social media. Shockingly, members of Gen Z were the most likely generation to self-diagnose based on content, with 30% having done so, supporting the expert's ideology regarding Gen Z and how they handle the mental health discourse.

> '*...on a positive note younger generation or Gen Z somehow catalyzed the awareness campaign about mental health because of their posting, because of their tweets and all...The bigger community witnessed how the younger generations pushed forward the importance of mental health. So at some point they became an implicit or explicit advocate of mental health... one end it is controversial because they tend to self- diagnose and so, it's not just the Gen Z but I guess it's most highlighted in their generation, like they tend to self-diagnose*...'

Social Media and Mental Health: Widespread Discourse Leading To Access and Exposing Stigma. Moreover, the expert's ideology, which is the widespread discourse leading to access and exposing stigma, was extracted. Due to social media, more people, especially the younger generation is aware of the social norms regarding mental health, leading to widespread discourse through postings. This is supported by a study by Latha et al. (2020) stating that the use of social media to conduct mental health campaigns is a practical initiative as one can reach out to several people over a short time period. There is an increasing trend in the awareness of mental health with the effective use of digital media as a platform for disseminating information. It paved the way for accessing information quickly, which is also the downside. The expert explained that we can easily search about mental health issues, topics, and diagnoses whenever we feel uneasy, and somehow, we embrace this information too much to the point that we feel that we really have issues without asking the opinion of professionals to

confirm the legitimacy. Less than half (43%) of those who diagnosed themselves online sought a second opinion from a medical professional (Redshaw, 2023). Reservation when it comes to seeking professional help for proper diagnosis and confirmation is still prevalent due to fear of being judged by people. Therefore, even though we are progressing in our way of promoting awareness, there are still stigmas surrounding mental health.

'...it*'s the easiest way, social media is the easiest way to help us understand really foreign feelings of others... and even though medyo meron na tayong way of promoting awareness programs, pero medyo meron paring stigma, ma feel padin sa status quo yung stigma sa mental health*...'

Understanding Mental Health Vocabulary: Trivialized Use of Clinical Terms out of Context Causing Misconception and Misuse. For this theme, the expert's ideology, which is the trivialized use of clinical terms out of context and causes misconception and misuse, was extracted. The psychologist stated that as we tend to use these terms for a day-to-day experience, e.g., if people have elevated emotions, then they likely use anxiety as a generic term. The expert clarifies that although anxiety is a natural emotion, it is somehow used in a very clinical sense. Utilizing clinical or psychological terms in everyday usage is not plausible. Using mental health terminology colloquially is highly harmful to those who experience mental illnesses. These sorts of remarks lead to misinformation that incorrectly defines illnesses, and consequently, people either misdiagnose themselves or entirely dismiss their own symptoms (Mount Holyoke News, 2021).

'*Sometimes they use psychological jargon without necessarily thinking about the construct or the context, yun. So, kumbaga nagiging trivial nalang siya na terms lately*.'

Impact of Mental Health Vocabulary Use Widespread Online: Further stigmatization due to Confusion Affecting Perceptions and Seriousness. For this theme, the expert's ideology, i.e., further stigmatization due to confusion, affecting perceptions and seriousness, was extracted. The expert considered that the widespread use of mental health vocabulary online helps destigmatize mental health. It was noted that the usage might affect the symptoms. The more that individuals use them instead of helping, the more confusion occurs. He gave examples such as people being confused about what bipolar is since it is carelessly used to label someone who may suddenly laugh even when it is not necessarily the case. This carelessness is concrete evidence that tells us that people would lose track of the terms, and their actual meanings, in the long run, would be stigmatized. He further clarifies what destigmatization means, which is to help promote complete access to and understanding of mental health. Therefore, using these terms trivially and out of context affects the perception and meanings that these terms entail, causing confusion. Issaka et al. (2024), in their recent study, stated that while discourses on social media were initially aimed at destigmatizing mental health, there has been a notable shift towards romanticizing mental illness, including the creation of memes and content glamorizing conditions such as anxiety. Teenagers and young adults have taken to social media to trivialize and romanticize mental illness to such a point that it is now viewed as something desirable and beautiful (Yu, 2019). Furthermore, the romanticism of mental health also leads to the diminishing of the importance of mental illness. Because mental illness is seen as pleasurable and a tool for aesthetics online, it becomes harder to drive home the severity of mental illness since it is now seen as being "hip and quirky" (Olaoye, 2022). This trivialization and romanticization of mental health affects the perceptions and seriousness of the subject, leading to more stigmas.

'*Although this is a very opinionated answer, it's not helping the community but rather creating confusion, and somehow mas na stigmatize sila, kasi nga hindi na contextualize.*'

Solutions for Misuse: Educational Initiatives and Professional Guidance. For this theme, the

experts' ideologies, which are educational initiatives and professional guidance, were found. Although he thinks that this is a systemic concern, the best option is to regulate the usage of mental health terms through social media platforms wherein mental health proliferates and can easily reach networks of users. This is supported by Olaoye (2022), noting that as psychologists, it is imperative to actively embark on online campaigns to replace fictitious beliefs with facts by embarking on social media campaigns aimed at spreading factual information about mental illnesses. Guidance from professionals such as the scientific community is also paramount in the movement and should address the concern by creating more relatable expert-oriented videos that can stimulate and pique the younger generation's interests. Furthermore, educational initiatives empowering mental health awareness campaigns by institutions, schools, and the community are crucial to combat the concern regarding mental health. Therefore, they must use their power and resources to integrate mental health-related activities inside the campus to promote mental health awareness and education among the younger generations.

> '*The best is to regulate this through the platform. I think the second one is that the scientific community should address it themselves by creating more expert-oriented videos that are relatable for the younger generation. I think that that's a be- tter way of addressing it now. The third is the institutions no, the school and the community by empowering the community with mental health awareness campaigns and integrating mental health related activities and promotions inside the campus.'*

TikTok Users' Ideologies

Mental Health Awareness: Mental Health as a Serious Concern. Mental health awareness evidently arose since the pre-pandemic era, resulting in the emergence of mental health discourse, especially on social media (Ruzlin et al., 2021). In the provided theme, an ideology was extracted, central to the thought of mental health as a serious concern. Such an ideology was derived from the interviewees' responses, citing that mental health is an alarming issue not only in the Philippines but also globally.

> *'For me, mental health is a very serious matter, not only in our country but also a problem worldwide.' P2Q1*

Remarkably, mental health is as important as physical health, considering it affects one's thinking, behavior, and overall well-being, or vice versa (CDC Gov, 2024). Hence, mental health should not be taken for granted, especially in these hard-pressed circumstances.

> *'Also, I recently learned that physical health is not so separate from mental health. So if you're tired mentally, you're going to be drained physically.' P1Q1*

Unfortunately, in the Philippine setting, mental health is overlooked by the majority, such as the public, influencers, and the government. The Mental Health Act, Republic Act No. 11036, may have been passed as a law in 2018. Still, only five percent of the healthcare expenditure is forwarded to the country's mental health services (Maravilla & Tan, 2021). Thus, more and more competent approaches should have been implemented to address the issue. However, the problem also lies with the power of social media itself, users' agency, and their combined power to influence or resist discursive dominance, inequality, and more.

> *'Yes, mental health is a serious matter, but usually it is just neglected. Most of the people, I guess, but for me, I think it's very serious.' P6Q1*

Consequently, mental health conditions, cases, and concerns related to social media emanated across different regions, especially among Gen Zs (Crosier, 2024). The subject matter is still weighed up as a cause for global attention, wherein constant efforts are being made to combat mental health. However, the researchers explored that there is more to the issue per se, such as exploring social media and mental health vocabulary use.

'The mentality that most people have

here is that they take mental health for granted, which is why a lot of people, a lot of young ones here in the Philippines, are facing lots of mental health issues, but it's not being addressed seriously, which is why it remains a big issue right now.' P3Q1

Gen Z and Mental Health Discourse: Gen Z as Open and Vocal in Mental Health Discourse. After years of generational stigma, Gen Zs claimed themselves as beyond open and supportive as regards mental health discourse, as compared to older generations who downplay mental health (Luttrell et al., 2024), such as traditionalists, baby boomers, and Gen X. Thus, if one expresses his or her feelings, Gen Zs are likely to understand one's emotions, sentiments, and experiences, rather than invalidation. This state of affairs may be rooted in the long-term stigma of the past, wherein everyone has to be strong enough to face adversity. In contrast, Gen Zs are considered to be catalysts of open communication and acceptance, especially about mental health.

'I noticed in Gen Z that they're more open-minded 'cause if you're going to say that you felt isolated or feeling unwell, they're more supportive towards you, like you're easily accepted— like you're more validated compared to (when you open up to) the elderly.' P4Q2-Q3

Furthermore, Gen Zs are seen as highly sensitive and willing to address problems in line with mental health, whether intrapersonally or collectively (Pacific Oaks College, 2024). This may be due to the importance of psychological health and its coping mechanisms, discovered by Gen Zs themselves either from the environment, available resources, or daily encounters. Gen Zs mostly come across as a cohort of very open and accepting individuals.

'Gen Zs nowadays easily see mental health and easily address problems regarding this. Gen Zs now have coping mechanisms for mental health.' P8Q2-Q3

Specifically, the researchers considered the hypothesis asserting that the reason why Gen Zs prioritize and make mental health discourse less taboo includes being sheltered for the time being. This may hold true or not, but it suggests that this happens owing to the evolving language concerned with how it deals with one's effect. This applies not only to discourses about mental health but also to gentle parenting, teacher-to-student discipline, and gender-based contexts that are new yet normalized nowadays (Burton & Doughty, 2024).

'Mental health is less taboo now, for us. Sometimes, yeah, it might just be that we're being too sensitive, or, uh, what is it called? Sheltered? Or Spoonfed? I noticed that kids these days are kids that are younger than me.' P1Q2-Q3

Overall, in this theme, an ideology referring to the advent of the new generation and the evolution of gentle language wherein openness and accepting values prevail, individuals and netizens pave the way for validating perspectives about holding mental health in high regard. Individuals are encouraged to express anything, be it themselves, their stories, or even their problems. This may be due to Gen Z's novel principles, namely self-care and active listening, or emotional intelligence in general (Bekker, 2023). Therefore, pioneering norms such as this and adopting mental health discourse may help others cope accordingly with their mental health challenges without judgment.

'For me, Gen Z has been instrumental in changing perceptions about mental health by being more open and vocal about their problems and struggles; they cope by using social media platforms to share their experiences and share their problems and to spread awareness with this, uh problem, and Gen Z also tends to prioritize self-care and seeks support from their friends using various social media platforms such as Messenger, Facebook, and Twitter.' P2Q2-Q3

Social Media and Mental Health: Social Media as a Platform for Expression and Awareness,

and Social Media as a Source of Unreliable Information. In this year and beyond, social media has been a platform for various purposes, such as entertainment, education, communication, and business. People cannot also leave the day without surfing their preferred social media applications or websites, namely TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. If not deliberately managed, social media has been engineered to control users' time and attention, coinciding with one's mental health (Pooley & Goodwin, 2022). In this theme, the ideologies of social media as a platform for expression and awareness and a source of unreliable information imply social media's advantages and disadvantages in terms of mental health discourse, in spite of its innovative and efficient features.

Firstly, social media is an excellent platform for its users to express their sentiments and narratives, particularly about their well-being (Graciyal & Viswam, 2021). While most individuals have someone to talk to, there are also minorities who need some ears and attention. Social media plays a part in exercising and conveying freedom of speech and identity expression (Orehek & Human, 2017).

> *'Gen Z has been using social media platforms such as TikTok regarding their expressions of their mental health problems and their well-being, and I think this kind of coping mechanism for those being affected by mental health problems is kind of very helpful for them to cope.' P2Q4*

Next, social media encompasses disseminating imperative information about mental health online in myriad ways: through reels, posts, online seminars, or comments. This is a pioneering initiative to make mental health discourse less stigmatized (Saha et al., 2022). Subsequently, mental health discussions reach a wider audience due to social media's innovative algorithms, especially TikTok's strategies. TikTok videos quickly become part of certain trending topics, containing mental health terms with specific uses. For this reason, netizens are quite familiar with such usage.

> *'So regarding the dissemination of mental health information, it's a nice thing that we're able to talk about it casually now.' P5Q4*

On account of that, TikTok users become more aware of mental health, notably regarding its status in the country, existing critical up to moderate mental health conditions, and challenges the said sector may face. Most importantly, mental health language use begins to be expected on a daily basis, resulting in more well-informed individuals, especially if such an issue hits oneself. Hence, ignorance will be averted through the influence of social media.

> *'Honestly, I see it as a good thing because, of course, a lot of People use social media nowadays, and if there are a lot of videos on social media like TikTok explaining what mental health is, what's it about, and what it entails, so, of course, a lot of people become more educated.' P3Q4*

Nevertheless, under this theme, an ideology directed at social media's disadvantages in the context of mental health discourse persists. Based on the interview, a participant has shared:

> *'I think, based on what I've seen on TikTok, um. There are some people who post about mental health who are not all prescribed to actually give any advice because they don't even study it in the first place. So, in that case, it is quite dangerous. I've been noticing, even with my cousins and with my friends. They believe even if it's fake news because they don't know any better; that's why they're looking for information online. They wouldn't know any better if the information isn't true. Gen Zs are more informed and know how to handle the issues, but the downside to it is there are also Gen Zs; that although they know the term, they only know the tip of the iceberg and (do) not know the real extent or what other mental health conditions really mean which is why there's a lot of misinformation happening.' P3Q4*

The presented information holds truth, especially on TikTok, wherein users randomly make a talk regarding mental health, perhaps for comedic, informational, or random post purposes. So, this may result in either the correct or incorrect usage of mental health terms. Also, the neologism of the term 'delulu' serves as a mystery to many linguists. It originated from a mental health disorder called delusions but is now, unfortunately, widely used on TikTok in different inappropriate ways.

Similarly, many mental health-related and psychological terms are affected, including gaslight, trauma, depression, and more. In short, the uncontrollable management of users and their agency to post, like, and share anything challenges the proper information dissemination of mental health discourse. Instead, new language trends appear, which is possible in engendering misinformation and misconceptions. Overall, TikTok is only partially a reliable platform, as nearly twenty percent of TikTok videos contain misinformation through its own search engine (Tucker, 2022). In fact, it depends on the speaker's credentials, content, and advocacy or intention. Also, information should be integrated with a proper and thorough education, as misinformation is pervasive.

> *'But at the same time, it's TikTok; you can really say that it's a reliable platform because you don't know if the people (you're watching) are just pretending to be doctors or if some of them are just advocates, and we can't even make sure if they are true advocates either.' P3Q4*

Understanding Mental Health Vocabulary and the Source: Misuse and Oversimplification and Social Media as a Source of Vocabulary Use Influence. In the provided theme, ideologies leaning on misusing and oversimplification of mental health vocabulary are dominant in the conducted interview. The findings are solely based on the criteria of the APA Dictionary of Psychology, in which technical definitions, components, and cases in points are included.

Misused terms are either incorrect or indeliberate, improper or inappropriate, or the wrong use (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d.) of a specialized or unspecialized term, i.e., based on or compared with the description of the actual definition. Misuse takes place due to misconceptions and misinterpretations of netizens online without doing proper research. Commonly, people follow what the majority of people are using, although it is employed in one's speech impertinently.

> *Misuse: 'Um, it's when you're in a negative situation that you gaslight yourself to turn it into something positive to motivate yourself or something.' P6Q5*

On the other hand, oversimplification refers to defining something without taking into account the facts, intensity, and capacity at hand before it qualifies as interconnected with the strict definition of APA (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, 2023). While comparable to misuse, oversimplification is way more generalized in the sense that the definitions lead to distortion.

> *'They often use it [delulu] in situations where someone messages you, and then you immediately think, 'Oh, this person likes me.' That's what they would call delusion. So yeah, that's what they jokingly call it— when they encounter a situation where they, well, let's say they assume something, they call it delulu.' P3Q5*

Additionally, behind such usage, most of the interviewees stated that they came up with their preconceived definitions of social media. Few also asserted that they do research on Google or the internet in general and learn from the experts. According to Statista (2024), most TikTok users are Filipinos. Besides, the average time Filipinos spend using social media is 3.34 percent, compared to the internet, which is 8.52 percent. Hence, the interview results and statistics suggest a subjective correlation as to where mental health terms and specific usage are rooted.

> *'It's really social media; these words are usually used, so partly you can encounter them more on social media. P6;"It's because of social media or what I usually see." P8; "Um, in social media seminars, I join those.' P5 Q7-Q8*

Impact of Mental Health Vocabulary Use Widespread Online: Destigmatization with a Risk of Trivialization. As exemplified in the given theme, the majority of the research participants agreed that normalizing the use of mental health-related terms destigmatizes mental health for various reasons. Accordingly, an ideology of destigmatization with a risk of trivialization has been drawn out in the study from the point of view of TikTok users. This insinuates that Gen Z can purport a positive outlook on the discussed language use and trend amid different types of usage.

A participant has mentioned that the idea of mental health discourse is being destigmatized in the new generation by Gen Zs themselves, except for the old generation, whose viewpoint is far different from what is acknowledged today (Kassymova et al., 2023). It indicates that frequent use and discussion of mental health language bridge the generational gap wherein stigma exists (Baral et al., 2022).

> *'If we're only talking about Gen Z, I can say that the idea of mental health is being destigmatized, but if we include the old generation, there are still many who say that we're just joking around or overreacting. That what they've gone through before was harder; there are those who will just invalidate someone's emotions, you know.' P5Q9*

Moreover, other participants laid down the notion of mental health term usage as a means of knowing how to empathize with those with mental health conditions and other possibilities, as supported by the study of Benster and Swerdlow (2020). Gen Zs might have been so done with contentious convictions concerning mental health. Thereupon, the emergence of mental health discourse on social media, especially the newly coined slang and terms, shed light on the angle of breaking the stigma of the past. Although there are limitations to such circumstances, Gen Zs take it as the beginning of a rebranded mindset and approach to mental health.

> *'I think the way of having a discourse on mental health terms using TikTok is very helpful because most of Gen Z are using TikTok, and I think it's kind of helpful for everyone, (especially) those who are having similar mental health problems. This way, they can really know the true meaning so that they don't have to be scared about their well-being.' (P2Q9)*

Nonetheless, along with destigmatization, the impact of mental health vocabulary use online also contains a risk of trivialization, especially at the expense of proper diagnosis, professional help, and mitigating strategies for mental health stigma. Most of the interview responses supported the statement. Trivialization pertains to the act of making something, i.e., lacking in value, substance, and importance (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d.). Based on the milieu of mental health vocabulary usage, trivialization is observed when the public no longer gets alarmed the moment they hear mental health terms.

> '*Let's say if a mental health term is misused (e.g., ADHD, trauma, etc.), the people who are diagnosed with those conditions, of course, will feel very misunderstood instead of having it destigmatized and understood by society. What happens instead is that they're going to become very mis- understood, and they'll feel very overlooked if that's the case.'*

Therefore, Gen Z's ideology is a combination of normalization of mental health vocabulary usage, which promotes openness and awareness, as well as a factor for self-diagnoses, marginalization of people with mental health conditions, and narrow information about professional help.

> '*It will definitely affect proper diagnosis because people have been wrongly self-diagnosing instead of asking advice from professionals. Because there's just a widespread normalization Of throwing out mental health terms, and then they're too keen on self-diagnosing instead of getting a legitimate health professional to treat them. Then, those who are actually experiencing these conditions are not taken seriously. Because*

they won't take the Person seriously anymore because they feel like "they just want attention; they're just fooling around.' (P4Q10)

Solutions for Misuse: Mental Health Awareness and Education as Solutions. As for the last theme, mental health awareness and education as solutions were extracted as ideologies. Quite a few research participants, during the interview process, avouched that misusage in terms of mental health terms is prevalent. Hence, they were asked to recommend strategies for combating mental health term misusage. Precisely, three (3) solutions are found, namely a fact-checking community of experts, additional links or references for mental health-related videos, and mental health seminars in schools and colleges.

With these, it will not only foster awareness, but the assimilation of complete knowledge is also part of the aim. Social media is a very challenging enemy, so it also needs a problematic yet fulfilling strategy. Therefore, mental health awareness and education ought to be implemented collectively. Lastly, change shall start with professionals, netizens, and citizens, as well as the efforts and support of the government.

'Similar to Twitter, they have a community that act-checks fake news. I hope that other social platforms, including TikTok, integrate a similar concept because there are a lot of people who are easily fooled. It would be very helpful if there were those who could fact-check content on TikTok. So that's that.' P4Q11)

'What I would suggest is, let's say, someone posts a video about mental health or teaching, or it's a video teaching viewers about mental health terms or anything like that. I would suggest that they, I don't know if it's possible, but if it's possible, they can attach a link for people to do more research, like an article, any source honestly for viewers to learn more.' P3Q11)

'And then mental health seminars are also not that widespread, "but especially in schools, they should have more seminars there. So that people can know what's right and what's wrong.' P5Q11

Conclusion

The researchers attempted to investigate the prevalent usage of mental health terms on TikTok by utilizing primarily Fairclough's three-dimensional framework by focusing on the analysis of the linguistic description of the chosen TikTok comments. This is to identify the preconceived definitions of mental health terms by Filipino TikTok users and how they use them based on their understanding. Processing analysis was also utilized to unravel a psychologist's perspective as the second phase of the analysis to extract an expert's implications and ideologies on the subject. Finally, social analysis was used to explore the TikTok users' perspectives regarding the mental health vocabulary usage on the app.

After an in-depth process of the analyses, it was concluded that Filipino TikTok users' preconceived definitions of mental health are varied. Based on the textual analysis, most terms were used incorrectly or out of context. Some of the participants admitted that their understanding of these terms were absorbed from the way these terms were used on social media without fact-checking their accuracy. While some terms still hold some of its essence, most are used in contexts that undermine the gravity and seriousness of these mental health terms. Mental health terms such as *breakdown* and *trauma* are conveniently used in situations to describe their emotions and experiences without considering if they truly qualify and are using these words accurately. There are also terms that have mostly lost their meaning and have been used to convey positivity such as *delulu* which is now used for motivation and encouragement mostly among Gen Z and *gaslight* which is mostly understood as manipulating one's self positively. This on-going trend of normalizing the usage of these mental health terms may be intended for good reasons such as normalizing the topic of mental health especially here in the Philippines, but this normalization also manifests further misconceptions and misuse of terms that are meant to be clinical or psychological in nature.

The results uncovered the varying ideologies between the expert and selected TikTok users participants. While there is an agreement and understanding that Gen Z or the younger generation became a catalyst and the most active in regards to addressing mental health awareness and normalizing the discourse regarding mental health, there are conflicting opinions whether they help in breaking the stigma surrounding the subject or continue to proliferate it. Most Gen Z participants agree that the normalization of usage helps in understanding and normalizing mental health discourse, but the interviewed expert has a different opinion. While the expert admits that we are making progress with the help of Gen Z, it is still unlikely that we're breaking the stigma because destigmatizing means fully understanding and promoting awareness, therefore the trivializing and the out of context usage of such terms cause more harm than good and does not align with what destigmatizing truly entails. The expert also added that people with real mental health conditions find it more difficult to speak up about their conditions due to the fear of being misinterpreted which does not help the professionals as well when it comes to proper diagnoses.

In conclusion, social media has been a gateway to spread information and reach people easily. This has been utilized by Gen Z as they fight and get involved in various social issues and change the narratives surrounding these by using their power and influence in social media platforms such as TikTok. The generation has been extremely focused and engaged particularly in changing the negative social norms about mental health constructed by society. Their ideology regarding mental health and its seriousness has dominated in reconstructing the way mental health is perceived by the public. However, the process that the Gen Z employ which is normalizing the usage of mental health terms in online discourses is also constructing a new narrative that trivializes mental health, leading to its seriousness being undermined. The way Gen Z constructs their discourse especially when it comes to the topic of mental health is quickly turning into an alarming concern of not only trivializing, but also the romanticization of mental health disorders and illnesses that proliferate through trends via social media platforms. As this trend continues among the current and younger generation, the stigmas surrounding mental health will not disappear but will only evolve and change, hindering and prolonging its long-running process of destigmatization.

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