Media Habits and Exposure to Modern Music: Their Relation to Suicide Potential of High School Students

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Abstract

This descriptive study focused on determining the relationship of media habits and exposure to modern music to suicide potential. Respondents of the study were 381 high school students from four different schools in Metro Manila. To determine the level of respondents’ media habits, they were given a questionnaire. Exposure to modern music questionnaire measured the respondents’ level of exposure to music. To measure suicide potential, Suicide Potential Inventory for Filipino (SPIF) was administered to the respondents. Using Pearson-R correlation coefficient analysis, results showed that a significant positive correlation existed between media habits and suicide potential. It means that the higher exposure to media habits and exposure to modern music, the higher was the potential for suicide specifically on hopelessness, hostility and helplessness. Moreover, the results showed that media habits were positively correlated to suicide potential of the respondents, which suggest that the lower their exposure to media habits was, the lower their suicidal potential becomes. The results also suggest that gender, amount of time playing video games, listening to heavy metal music, listening to popular music, and number of minutes exposed to modern music predict suicide potential. Thus, the lesser exposure to media habits and exposure to music was, the lesser is their potentiality to suicide. Therefore, the researcher recommended that in order to lessen the risk for suicide potential, media habits and exposure to modern music should be regulated ensuring time limit in their utilization.

Keywords: media habits, modern music, suicide potential, high school students
Suicidal behavior is a major problem worldwide and also a major, preventable public health problem. Suicide is a serious public health problem that appears to be pervasive in all societies. What makes suicide such a tragic and compelling problem is that it is an epidemic that affects all people regardless of political identity, cultural practices, religious beliefs, race, economic power, and geography (Manibusan, 2011).

According to World Health Organization (WHO, 2012), suicide is a significant public health issue, with the worldwide rates increasing by 60% in the last 45 years. Globally, suicide is currently among the three leading causes of death among individuals aged 15-44 years old with approximately one million people dying every year. Global annual teenage suicide statistics reported that fatalities could rise to 1.5 million by 2020. Furthermore, World Health (2009) found that one person commits suicide every 40 seconds. Worldwide, suicide is the second leading cause of death in the 10-24 age group and the tenth leading cause of death among all age groups.

As cited in the study of Balila, Cervantes, Malapit and Orbon (2011), in the United States, suicide is the second cause of death among 10-14 years old age group and the third in the 15-24 age groups. In a survey among American high school students, it was found that 14.5 percent considered attempting suicide and 6.9 percent attempted suicide one or more times during 12 months before the survey period (CDC, 2007). In the United Kingdom, 1,722 deaths by suicide among 10-19 years old age groups were recorded within a period of six years. In Hong Kong, among 511 study respondents, 137 (26.8%) considered suicide as a lifetime ideation, 23 (4.5%) admitted considering it, 12 (2.3%) planned for it, and 11 (2.2%) attempted it in the past 12 months (Chan, Law, Liu, Wong, Law, & Yip, 2009). Suicide is the second cause of death next to car accidents among adolescents in Korea and is a leading cause of death in Western countries as well. Among Seventh-day Adventist teenagers’ depression and suicide ideation, suicide increased to seven percent (Myers, 2009).

However, according to the Global School Based Student Health Survey (GSHS) by Chang (2007), suicide has become a major public health issue among adolescents. Asian countries such as Indonesia and Philippines share the same social norm which sees suicide as a taboo. The results and conclusions found that female students were more likely to have suicide ideation than male students (95%). Psychological factors, gender and school grade are important factors in students’ suicide behavior.

Furthermore, a study in a sectarian academy conducted by Balila, Cervantes, Malapit and Orbon (2011) among 171 Filipino respondents, suggests that the respondents’ suicide ideation (40.4%) and attempt (12.3%) were present among adolescents. The most considered method was ingesting poison (9.4%). Family problem (17.10%) was the highest in rank among the identified risk factors.

Stack and Kposowa (2008) mentioned that repeated reporting of the same suicide and reporting of suicide myths are associated with the increased suicide rates. Media strongly influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviors, and plays a vital role in opinion making and because of this strong influence on society the media can also play a vital role in the prevention of suicide.

Considering this plethora of evidences affirming the potential relationship of media habits and exposure to modern music with suicide potential, the researcher opted to pursue a study that would determine such relationship in the context of Filipino high school students.

Significance of the Study

School directors/principals. The result of this study may enlighten school leaders regarding the characteristics of
students with suicide potential. This may also help in planning for additional programs and activities to facilitate adjustments among their students.

**Teachers and homeroom advisers.** The inferred results from this study may help teachers and homeroom advisers by providing a baseline of the students' maladaptive behavior and signs of suicide potential. The immediate adults in contact with adolescent, thus, ample information and knowledge may enable them to be more sensitive to their students and help them identify those with immediate need of their attention and refer them to the guidance counselor for counseling.

**Guidance and counseling personnel.** The findings of this study may provide guidance counselors the baseline of the prevalence of suicide potential among adolescent students. They may help them identify those with immediate need of their attention for them to design programs and activities that would promote mental health and build effective suicide preventive strategies.

**Family members.** As the source of either support or discouragement, family members may benefit from the results of this study. Parents may gain understanding of the dynamics of their children, especially their susceptibility to suicide. Parents may also become more aware of their impact on the lives of their children in both positive and negative ways. Parents can play a major role in facilitating talk about psychological pain among their adolescent children. Children may also benefit by becoming aware of possible displays of suicide potentials from their siblings’ stream of thought and talk, patterns of behavior as well as emotions.

**High school students.** Through this research study, individuals particularly high school students may gain knowledge regarding the dynamics of suicidal behaviors and potential. As awareness and knowledge are gained, individuals may be enabled to identify the possibility of suicide risks among themselves and others may become more sensitive in paying attention to their risk.

**Future researchers.** The result of the study will add insights to the group of researchers who want to conduct a study regarding the dynamics of suicidal behaviors and potentials. This will serve as a reference for further studies.

### Scope and Limitations

The primary concern of this study was to measure the media habits and exposure to music and the level of suicide potential among high school students. The study focused on 381 high school students with age ranging from 13 to 17 years old. The sample was taken from four selected schools in Metro Manila. The respondents came from two private academies and two government schools in Pasay City, Caloocan and Quezon City. They were all Filipino citizens. This study was limited to adolescent enrolled in the high school level only.

The predictor variables were media habits and exposure to music. Media habits consisted of three subscales: Internet use, video viewing and television viewing. The criterion variable which is the suicide potential has the following subscales: hopelessness, negative self-evaluation, suicide ideation, helplessness and hostility.

### Method

**Research Design**

The researcher used a descriptive-correlational design to ascertain the relationship of media habits which include Internet use, video viewing and television viewing. The design also determined the exposure to music to suicide potential considering the moderator variables, age, gender and the economic status by the respondents. It is descriptive in nature since the study describes the respondent’s demographic profile, the respondents’ media habits, and extent of exposure to
music and the level of suicide potential. The study is correlational since it measured the degree of relationship between media habits and exposure to music and suicide potential.

**Population and Sampling Techniques**

Respondents in this study came from four different high schools in Metro Manila, enrolled in school year 2012-2013 and are Filipino citizens. In this study, the researcher used cluster sampling. Cluster sampling was used because the population of interest was infinite and the list of population did not exist. The distribution of respondents from the four schools are: School 1 (32%), School 2 (23%), School 3 (23%), and School 4 (22%).

Among the 381 respondents, there were 111 respondents coming from School 1 in Quezon City, 91 respondents from School 2 in Caloocan City, 90 respondents from School 3 in Caloocan City and 89 respondents from School 4 in Pasay City.

**Instrumentation**

A questionnaire was used to measure the variables indicated in the study which was comprised of four sections, namely: demographic, media habits scale, exposure to music scale and suicide potential scale. Demographic Section was used to obtain information on the respondents' demographic profile such as gender and socio-economic status. Media Habits Scale (MHS), a self-constructed questionnaire was used to measure the respondents' media habits in three sub-scales, namely, Internet use, video viewing and television viewing. Exposure to Modern Music Questionnaire was a self-constructed questionnaire to measure the respondents' exposure to modern music. Using a Multiple Response Item Format, it consisted of 52 song titles under five music genres, namely, rock music, rap hip-hop, heavy metal, blues, and popular music. Suicide Potential Inventory (SPIF) is a standardized test by Estanislao (2001) to measure the respondents' suicide potential. SPIF has five (5) subscales, namely, hopelessness, negative self-evaluation, suicide ideation, helplessness and hostility.

**Data Gathering Procedures**

The research instrument, i.e., the self-constructed questionnaire, was validated by 10 experts. A pilot study among 90 participants was conducted to check the reliability of the instrument. After the reliability testing was completed and proper revisions on the instrument were done, permissions were obtained from the authorities for the researcher to be allowed to administer the instrument to the target population. Then, the final data gathering followed.

Cluster sampling method was employed in which all the sections in the first year to fourth year levels were given the instrument to answer. Encoding of the data followed. All negative items were recorded after which the results were then statistically treated and analyzed and interpreted. The findings were discussed after which the conclusions and recommendations were drawn from the findings.

**Statistical Treatment of Data**

The data was treated using the Predictive Analytical Software (PASW). Frequency and percentage were used to obtain information on the respondents' gender and socio-economic status. Mean and standard deviation were used to identify the respondents' media habits, exposure to music and suicide potential. To determine the relationship between media habits, exposure to music and suicide potential, pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used. To determine whether the independent variables, namely, media habits and modern music exposure significantly predict suicide potential, multiple regression analysis was employed.
Results and Discussion

Relationship of Media Habits and Suicide Potential

Media habits in terms of Internet use. Table 1 presents the correlation between Internet use and suicide potential. It shows here that time is positively correlated to hopelessness ($r=.126$, $p<.05$) and hostility ($r=.142$, $p<.05$). This means that, as time spent surfing increases, so do hopelessness and hostility. This further implies that as time spent surfing increases, a person becomes more pessimistic, desperate, and on the merge of committing suicide, specifically more hostility whether towards themselves or towards other people. Hopeless is conceptualized as individual's negative expectancy regarding the future, and it is characterized by negative emotions, pessimistic expectations, and loss of pleasure in life (Heilemann, Coffey-Love & Frutos, 2004).

Table 1
Correlation of Media Habits and Suicide Potential in Terms of Internet Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet Use</th>
<th>Hopelessness</th>
<th>Negative Self-Evaluation</th>
<th>Suicide Ideation</th>
<th>Helplessness</th>
<th>Hostility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$r$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>$r$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time surfing</td>
<td>.126*</td>
<td>.014 Sig.*</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.202 NS</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time blogging</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.763 NS</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.996 NS</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of internet</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.674 NS</td>
<td>-.047</td>
<td>.364 NS</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Legend: $S$ - Significant at .005 level
NS - Not Significant

Media habits in terms of video gaming. Table 2 shows that time spent playing video games is positively correlated to hostility ($r=.123$, $p<.05$) and amount spent is negatively correlated to helplessness ($r=.115$, $p<.05$). It shows that time spent playing video games is positively correlated to hostility ($r=.123$, $p<.05$) and amount spent is negatively correlated to helplessness ($r=.115$, $p<.05$). From this, it can be inferred that as one spends more time playing video games, the more hostile he becomes. On the other hand, as one spends lesser amount for video game playing, the more he becomes helpless. This further implies that as time spent playing video games increases, so does a person become more hostile whether towards himself/herself or towards other people.

Table 2
Correlation of Media Habits and Suicide Potential in terms of Video Gaming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video Gaming</th>
<th>Hopelessness</th>
<th>Negative Self-Evaluation</th>
<th>Suicide Ideation</th>
<th>Helplessness</th>
<th>Hostility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$r$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>$r$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time playing</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.201 NS</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.955 NS</td>
<td>.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount spent</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.405 NS</td>
<td>-.078</td>
<td>.130 NS</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Legend: $S$ - Significant at .005 level
NS - Not Significant

Media habits in terms of television viewing
From Table 4, it can be inferred that as one spends more time listening to rap hip hop music, the higher the person’s level of suicide potential becomes. On the other hand, as one spends more time listening to heavy metal music, the higher the person’s level of suicide potential; also as one spends more time listening to blues and popular music, the higher the person’s level of suicide potential becomes. This further implies increases, that as time spent listening to rap hip hop and heavy metal music, blues and popular music the higher the level of individual’s tendency to commit suicide. Moreover, it can be inferred that exposure to music of adolescents can make them vulnerable to suicide potential specifically in terms of hopelessness and hostility. In addition, they can also experience helplessness.
Regression Analyses of Suicide Potential

Table 5
Predictors of Suicide Ideation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>(\beta)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>(B)</th>
<th>(t)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>(R)</th>
<th>(R^2) change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>32.49</td>
<td>.715</td>
<td>53.824</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.861</td>
<td>.866</td>
<td>-172</td>
<td>-2.149</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predictors for suicide ideation. Table 5 presents the predictors of suicide potential in terms of suicide ideation. The findings show that gender significantly predicts suicide ideation of the respondents in this study. Regression weights showed that gender negatively predicts suicide ideation with the standard coefficient of \(\beta = -1.72\), \(t\)-value = -2.149, \(p < .05\). This signifies that males have the higher tendency for suicide ideation compared with females. This implies that the higher the male's perception to suicide, the higher the males' suicide ideation which describes their lower efficacy and ability to cope with the situation. Instead of doing something about their problems, they tend to think of ending their lives.

Suicide is a sequence of process starting from death wishes, suicidal ideation, suicidal contemplation, suicide attempt and suicide completion (as cited by Gau, Chen, Tsai, Lee, Chiu, Soong & Hwu, 2008). Individuals who experience suicide ideation have common determinant factor which is depression (Kearney, 2010).

Table 6
Predictors for Helplessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>(B)</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>(B)</th>
<th>(t)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>(R^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount spent Video Games</td>
<td>-1.268</td>
<td>.554</td>
<td>-.183</td>
<td>-2.290</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Metal Music Exposure</td>
<td>.375</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>2.354</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Music Exposure</td>
<td>.558</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.176</td>
<td>2.210</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(F = 5.66\); \(p = .001\)

Predictors for helplessness. Table 6 shows that the amount spent playing video games negatively predicts helplessness with the standard coefficient of \(\beta = -.183\), \(t\)-value = -2.290, \(p < .05\). This signifies that the lower the amount spent in playing video games, is higher the level of helplessness the individual experiences. This implies that the higher exposure one has in heavy metal music and popular music, the higher level of helplessness transpires.

Table 7
Predictors for Hostility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>(\beta)</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>(B)</th>
<th>(T)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>(R^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.176</td>
<td>2.210</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predictors for hostility. Table 7 shows that numbers of minutes exposed to music positively predicts hostility with the standard coefficient of \(\beta = -1.76\), \(t\)-value = 2.210,
place where they experiment and learn. Thus, it should be kept in mind that teacher relationship to the students is critical as it may aid in character building. It is also crucial for the administrators to come up with activities and programs that would cater to the specific needs of the student for the benefit of enhancing the student’s capability to explore and interact with the stressor they are facing. The school administrator should impose strict policies regarding violation of school rules and regulation with regard to media habits and exposure to music help lower suicide potential among students.

**Guidance counselors.** Results of the study can be used as a basis for guiding and providing certain psychological services in enhancing their individuality as well as creating protective factors for suicide potential. Also, results reveal the need for the guidance counselor to assess the students’ needs and suicide potential, as well as generate more programs and activities such as strengthening their decision-making and self-efficacy so that students will be more equipped with knowledge on how to deal with life problems. Creating a small group for the students within their respective year level may also help them widen their interests and explore more on their individuality. Seminars and lectures regarding media habits and exposure to music addiction of high school students should be conducted so that students will be aware of their bad effects and may help prevent suicide.

**Future researchers.** Results of the study may serve as a useful reference for future research. It is encouraged and recommended to consider a bigger population for students in college. Also exploring other areas that may contribute to the suicide potential of individuals such as social economic status (SES), religious belief, spirituality, attitude, and their personality type and other factors may also be considered if they may contribute or possibly predict potentiality to suicide.


References


