Mediating Effects of Future Orientation on Self-Regulation and Suicide Behaviors Among Filipino Youth

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Abstract - *Suicide remains a leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults, calling for deeper understanding of internal protective mechanisms, where psychiatric nurses play a crucial role in community prevention. Grounded in Self-Regulation Theory and Time Perspective Theory, this descriptive-correlational study examined the relationship between self-regulation (SR), future orientation (FO), and suicidality (SUI) in a sample of 653 college students randomly selected from five state-funded universities in CALABARZON, Philippines. Participants reported high levels of self-regulation, particularly in goal attainment ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.56$) and proactiveness ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.49$), along with low levels of suicidality—hopelessness ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 0.50$) and suicide ideation ($M = 1.72$, $SD = 0.75$). Pearson correlations revealed that SR was significantly and inversely associated with SUI ($r = -.332$, $p < .001$), while positively correlated with FO ($r = .686$, $p < .001$). Regression analysis identified proactiveness, goal attainment, and adjustment as predictors of lower SUI, while mindfulness, goal setting, and goal attainment predicted stronger FO. Mediation analysis confirmed that FO significantly mediated the SR–SUI relationship, highlighting the protective value of future-focused thinking. ANOVA showed that mental health issues ($p < .001$) and gender ($p < .01$) significantly influenced SUI, whereas age and socioeconomic status did not. Findings support a theoretically grounded framework that underscores the importance of enhancing self-regulation and future orientation as person- centered strategies for suicide prevention among Filipino youth.*

Keywords: Psychiatric Nursing, Future Orientation, Self-Regulation, Suicide Behaviors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Psychiatric nurses are integral to suicide prevention in both community and inpatient mental health treatments. Their methodology entails recognizing and assisting suicidal individuals, especially adolescents, by engaging with them, noticing warning signals, and cultivating supportive relationships (Priyono, 2025; Omerov et al., 2020). To improve suicide prevention

activities, psychiatric nurses are urged to fully engage in the reformation of healthcare, taking up leadership positions in community projects and policy-making organizations (Priyono, 2025; Polacek & Delaney, 2020).

Suicidality, encompassing suicidal thoughts, behaviors, and potential, persists as a global public health concern, representing 1.5% of all fatalities globally. Annually, around 804,000 individuals succumb to suicide, with teenagers and young adults being especially vulnerable (Gill et al., 2023; Yip et al., 2021). Suicide ranks as the second greatest cause of death among young in the U.S. (Dobbertin et al., 2024), with analogous trends observed in Europe (Lantos & Nyári, 2024), Africa (Babajani et al., 2023), and Asia (Wu et al., 2024). In the Philippines, although official suicide rates are modest (2.5 per 100,000), recent research indicate a rise in suicidal ideation among Filipino teenagers (Bangalan et al., 2023; Casamorin et al., 2023).

Notwithstanding enhanced prevention initiatives, worldwide suicide rates have persisted at a generally constant level (Ali & Rehna, 2022; Ilic & Ilic, 2022). Research has predominantly focused on risk factors such as psychological distress and substance abuse (Silke et al., 2023), while protective factors like self-regulation (Brott & Veilleux, 2023; Rizk et al., 2021) and future orientation (Rydell & Brocki, 2024; Kirtley et al., 2022) remain insufficiently examined, especially in non-clinical populations (Ronningstam et al., 2018). In the Philippines, there is a paucity of local literature and research on suicidality among Filipino youth, despite the rising incidence of suicides. This matter requires significant focus for research and prevention (Advincula, 2019).

In response to these gaps, this study aims to determine the correlation between self-regulation, social-ecological influence, and suicidality, and to examine whether future orientation serves as a mediating variable in this relationship. More specifically, the study seeks to (1) assess the extent of self-regulation in terms of goal setting, attainment, proactiveness, mindfulness, adjustment; (2) suicidality among the respondents in terms of hopelessness, negative self-evaluation, suicide ideation, and hostility (3) evaluate their future orientation in terms of impact and distance; (4) determine significant correlations between key variables and (5) predictive relationships of self-regulation's dimensions predicting suicidality and future orientation; (6) test for mediation effects of future orientation. Finaly, (7) To determine whether there are significant differences in suicidality among Filipino youth when moderated by age, gender, socioeconomic status, and mental health issues.

By adopting an idiographic, person-specific approach, this study aims to uncover nuanced protective patterns that could inform person-specific suicide prevention strategies for Filipino youth. This comprehensive approach emphasizes the importance of nurses' contributions to suicide prevention through care, connection, and collaboration with individuals at risk.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspective on Self-regulation

Within the literature on self-regulation, there is a single theory that is explicitly referred to as self-regulation theory (Masaki, 2023): Baumeister's self-regulation theory. Self-regulation refers more to the capacity to observe, assess, and modify one's actions to attain desired results and prevent undesirable consequences (Buffie, 2022). Moreover, it is a systematic process of attaining a specific desired result, which involves establishing objectives, acting, and monitoring one's progress towards those objectives (Saks, 2024). Self-regulation is centrally important to researchers working on people's problems in life for in the present study it covers multiple important aspects of perspectives: goal setting, attainment, proactiveness, mindfulness, adjustment. Research indicates that self-regulation is learned and critical for behavioral change across contexts (Frazier et al., 2021).

Theoretical Perspective on Future Orientation

Although the future is inherently uncertain, humans have developed the capacity to anticipate and evaluate various potential outcomes, allowing for strategic adjustments in behavior to achieve desired goals (Coscioni et al., 2023). Hopefulness is a future-oriented cognitive state involving goal setting, identifying strategies, and maintaining motivation to pursue those goals (Laranjeira & Querido, 2022). Optimism, while related, refers to a more general belief in favorable future outcomes. Future orientation can be assessed through two key indicators: *impact*—the extent to which anticipated future events influence present decisions—and *distance*—how far into the future individuals project their goals and actions (Coscioni et al., 2023). Decision-making, closely tied to these indicators, is a dynamic process involving multiple options, resources, and factors, and is directed toward achieving a purposeful result (Savioni et al., 2022; Kozioł-Nadolna & Beyer, 2021). Short-term goals, due to their proximity and ease of visualization, require less cognitive effort and tend to produce immediate rewards, thus enhancing self-regulatory behavior and motivation (Pawlak & Moustafa, 2023).

Theoretical Perspective on Suicidality

Joiner's Interpersonal Theory of Suicide (2009) also mentioned in the study of Robison et al. (2024) posits that suicidal desire arises from feelings of perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness, with lethal attempts occurring when these feelings are combined with acquired capability. Perceived burdensomeness involves believing one's death would benefit others, while thwarted belongingness stems from social disconnection. The theory highlights the distinction between suicidal ideation and action, with capability for suicide developing through exposure to physical or psychological pain (Zullo et al., 2021; Calear et al., 2021). Having said, the evaluation of suicidality in this study includes 5 aspects: hopelessness, negative self-evaluation, suicide ideation, and hostility. These are distinguished from suicide behaviors. Furthermore, the presence of suicidality is a significant indicator of suicide action across all age groups (Bakken et al., 2024).

III.   MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. **Research Design**: This study utilized a quantitative research approach with a descriptive-correlational design, incorporating mediation analysis. It employed descriptive statistics to examine participant traits, correlation analysis to assess the relationships between variables, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SPSS for path analysis, and regression analysis for mediation analysis. Additionally, using Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) to analyze complex relationships among observed and latent variables. These methods facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the relationships between self-regulation, future orientation, and suicidality.

2. **Participants/Data Sources**: The study was conducted in state-funded institutions in CALABARZON (Region IV-A), covering the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon. It employed a random sampling technique to select participants from college students aged 18 to 24, ensuring equal probability for each individual. The study first identified the state universities in each province, then selected half of the universities from each region using the fishbowl or lottery method, where names or numbers of the universities were drawn randomly to ensure fairness in selection.

3. **Tools and Instruments**: This study used several adapted questionnaires. **(1)** The Short Self-Regulation Questionnaire (TSSRQ) by Chen and Lin (2018), adapted from Miller and Brown's (1991) Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) and based on Zimmerman's (1990) learning theory, assessed general self-regulation. The **(2)** Suicidal Potential Scale (SPS), modified according to Joiner's (2005) Interpersonal Theory of Suicide, assessed suicide risk. Finally, the **(3)** Future Time Orientation Scale (FTOS), adapted from Zimbardo's theory and refined by Coscioni et al. (2023), measured perceived future impact and distance.

4. **Procedures**: First, ethical permission for the research study was obtained from the University Ethics Review Committee of Adventist University of the Philippines. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits, and their signed consent was secured after confirming their willingness to participate. The data gathering process involved modifying and validating the adapted survey instrument through expert review, followed by revisions based on their feedback and a pilot test. Ethics approval was secured prior to implementation. Sampling was conducted across the CALABARZON region, selecting five state-funded universities with a total of fifteen groups. A total of 814 questionnaires were distributed, and 809 were returned; however, only 653 (80.71%) were deemed valid after careful verification, with incomplete or duplicated responses excluded to ensure data reliability.

5. **Analysis Techniques**: The research utilized SPSS and partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and multinomial logistic regression were applied to explore relationships and identify dominant sub-indicators. Pearson's correlation identified factors linked to suicidality. A moderated mediation approach

was used to examine the mechanisms behind the relationships between variables, with regression analysis, ANOVA, and T-tests comparing groups based on demographics. Mediation analysis (PLS-SEM) tested the role of future orientation in influencing suicidality, and mediation-moderation analysis (PLS-MGA) explored the moderating effects of personal profiles. The study also assessed the fit of the model using Cohen's standards for effect sizes.

IV.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Summary of Descriptive Analysis

This subsection explored the level of emotion regulation, self-regulation, social-ecological influence, suicidality and future orientation as an answer the question: What is the extent of the respondents' self-regulation, suicidality, and future orientation in terms of the following:

Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviation, Scaled Response, and Verbal Interpretation

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. **Self-regulation**	*Agree / Effective*	
Goal Attainment	4.0776	.55930
Mindfulness	3.1871	.60300
Adjustment	4.0893	.50077
Proactiveness	4.0398	.48755
Goal Setting	3.6864	.58319
2. **Suicidality**	*Disagree / Low Risk*	
Hopelessness	2.0235	.49887
Negative Self-evaluation	2.3493	.44987
Suicide Ideation	1.7171	.74948
Hostility	1.7583	.68300
3. **Future Orientation**	*Agree / Important*	
Impact	4.1636	.53594
Distance	3.8798	.57247

Table 1 indicates that the respondents generally report low levels of suicidality and exhibit strong self-regulation across key areas such as goal attainment, mindfulness, adjustment, proactiveness, and goal setting. They are able to set meaningful goals, stay focused, adapt to challenges, and take proactive steps toward success, with only minor areas for improvement noted in decision-making and follow-through. Moreover, they view future goals as attainable and remain

committed to achieving them, suggesting a strong sense of direction and purpose. This future-oriented mindset enhances their capacity to make intentional, goal-aligned decisions, supporting both mental well-being and long-term personal growth.

Recent studies emphasize the role of self-regulation and future orientation in promoting mental well-being and reducing suicidality among college students. Effective self-regulation—goal attainment, mindfulness, adjustment, proactiveness, and goal setting—helps students stay focused and pursue meaningful goals (Abbasi et al., 2024). This supports stress management and prevents negative emotions linked to suicidal ideation (Srivastava et al., 2025). Future orientation or seeing future goals as attainable and aligned with values, is also linked to lower suicidality risk (Coscioni et al., 2023). A clear sense of purpose increases hope, motivation, and life satisfaction, buffering against hopelessness and suicidal thoughts (Pharris et al., 2022). Together, self-regulation and future-focused thinking reduce suicidality and support long-term growth (Coscioni et al., 2023).

Summary of Correlational Analysis

This subsection explored the relationships between self-regulation, future orientation, and suicidality as an answer to the question: Is there a significant relationship between the following variables:
a. Self-regulation and suicidality
b. Self-regulation and future orientation
c. Future orientation and suicidality

Table 2
Relationship Between Variables

Variables	Suicidality	Future Orientation
1. **Self-regulation**	-.332**	.686**
Goal Attainment	-.249**	.607**
Mindfulness	-.514**	.321**
Adjustment	-.263**	.607**
Proactiveness	-.152**	.649**
Goal Setting	-.296**	.593**
2. **Future Orientation**	-.193**	
Impact	-.187**	
Distance	-.193**	

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

Table 2 reveals that higher levels of self-regulation—specifically in areas such as goal attainment, mindfulness, and adjustment—are significantly associated with lower suicidality and

greater future orientation among college students. Additionally, the dimensions of future orientation, namely impact and distance, show negative correlations with suicidality, suggesting that students who maintain a constructive and purposeful outlook on their future are less likely to experience suicidal thoughts. These findings highlight the critical role of self-regulation and future-oriented thinking in reducing suicidality and promoting psychological well-being.

Research consistently highlights the vital role of self-regulation in reducing suicidality and enhancing future orientation among youth. Strong self-regulation—manifested through goal attainment, mindfulness, and adaptive adjustment—has been shown to support self-discipline and reduce engagement in risky or harmful behaviors (Billore et al., 2023). This internal capacity enables individuals to remain focused on long-term goals, adapt to challenges, and take proactive steps toward meaningful achievements.

Similarly, future orientation plays a crucial protective role, as individuals who maintain a constructive view of their future—characterized by purpose, clarity, and perceived attainability—are less likely to develop suicidal thoughts (Konzhin, 2021; Ahmed, 2021). Dimensions of future orientation, such as the perceived impact of future outcomes and the psychological distance of goals, are linked to lower levels of suicidality by encouraging intentional decision-making and long-term planning (Rydell & Brocki, 2024). Ultimately, a strong future-focused mindset anchored in self-regulatory abilities serves as a buffer against suicidality and supports overall psychological well-being.

Dimensions of Self-Regulation as Predicting Suicidality and Future Orientation

This section of the study investigates the research questions related to the predictors of suicidality and future orientation, considering the dimensions of each key variable. The question seeks to be answered: Which of the following sub-dimensions of self-regulation significantly predict suicidality and future orientation.

Table 3
Predictors of Suicidality and Future Orientation Based on the Dimensions of Self-regulation

Predictors of Suicidality			Predictors of Future Orientation		
Variables	*t*	*p* (Sig. F Change)	**Variables**	*t*	*p* (Sig. F Change)
Self-regulation			**Self-regulation** Proactiveness	21.781	.000
Mindfulness	-15.309	.000	Goal Attainment	9.795	.000
Goal Attainment	2.063	.040	Adjustment	4.385	.000

Goal Setting	3.490	.001

**. F Change is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*. F Change is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 indicates that various dimensions of self-regulation significantly influence both suicidality and future orientation among college students. Proactiveness, goal attainment, and adjustment emerge as key predictors of lower suicidality, suggesting that students who plan ahead, achieve goals, and adapt to challenges are less likely to experience suicidal thoughts or behaviors. In relation to future orientation, mindfulness is a strong predictor, indicating that students who remain present and self-aware are more likely to maintain a positive outlook on the future. Additionally, goal attainment and goal setting contribute to a future-focused mindset, emphasizing the role of purposeful goal pursuit in shaping motivation and direction. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening self-regulatory skills to enhance mental health and foster positive future thinking.

Self-regulation is widely recognized as a key protective factor against suicidality, with higher levels of self-control linked to fewer suicidal thoughts and behaviors, particularly under stress (Billore et al., 2023). Core aspects such as proactiveness, goal attainment, adjustment, and goal setting play a vital role in helping individuals manage emotional challenges and avoid risk behaviors (Konzhin, 2021; Ahmed, 2021). Future orientation is also positively associated with self-regulation, facilitating long-term goal pursuit, planning, and decision-making (Zhang et al., 2023). Research shows that individuals with a strong sense of future impact and manageable distance toward goals are less likely to exhibit suicidal ideation, as they are more likely to maintain purpose, hope, and direction (Coscioni et al., 2023). These findings suggest that enhancing both self-regulatory skills and future-oriented thinking can significantly reduce suicidality risk and support the psychological well-being of youth.

Mediating Role of Future Orientation on Self-Regulation and Suicidality

This section of the study investigates the research inquiries concerning the mediating role of future orientation. Specifically, to answer the question: Does future orientation significantly mediate self-regulation and suicidality among non-clinical college students.

Table 4
Mediating Effect of Future Orientation (FO) on Self-Regulation (SR) and Suicidality (SUI)

Path Name	Total Effect			Direct Effect			Indirect Effect		
Variables	Coeff	*t*-val	*p*-val	Coeff	*t*-val	*p*-val	Coeff	*t*-val	*p*-val
SR>FO>SUI	-0.251	5.35	.000	-0.385	6.882	.000	0.134	4.391	.000

*. Mediation effect is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 4 shows that self-regulation significantly affects suicidality through its impact on future orientation. Self-regulation shows strong negative total and direct effects on suicidality, indicating that higher levels of self-regulation are associated with lower suicidality. Additionally, self-regulation has a significant positive indirect effect through future orientation, suggesting that enhancing self-regulation not only directly reduces suicidality but also does so by fostering a more constructive and goal-oriented view of the future.

In connection, self-regulation is the ability of humans to regulate their impulses in order to modify their behavior based on specific concepts or objectives (Masaki, 2023). The absence of self-regulation has resulted in a decline in self-discipline and has triggered a range of harmful actions (Billore et al., 2023). One instance is suicidality, which can later lead to attempts or completion of suicide (Brüdern et al., 2022). Furthermore, greater levels of self-regulation during childhood are positively correlated with greater life outcomes in the future (Robson et al., 2021). Put simply, Fennis (2022) regards self-regulation as a crucial process that motivates individuals to adopt healthier choices in pursuit of their long-term goals.

Degree of Differences Between Suicidality and the Moderating Variables

This subsection explored the predictors of suicidality as an answer to the question: Is there a significant difference on suicidality among the respondents considering the following moderating variables:

a. age
b. gender
c. socio-economic status
d. mental health issue

Table 5
Analysis of Variance Showing Comparisons Between Suicidality Dimensions

Variables	Age		Gender		Socioeconomic Status		Mental Health Issue	
	20 & below	21 & above	Male	Female	16,443 below	16,444 above	Yes	No
Hopelessness	$p > .838$		$p > .364$		$p > .300$		$p < .000$	
Negative Self-evaluation	$p > .121$		$p > .271$		$p > .442$		$p < .000$	
Suicide Ideation	$p > .121$		$p < .006$		$p > .692$		$p < .000$	
Hostility	$p > .786$		$p < .000$		$p > .406$		$p < .000$	
Suicidality	$p > .811$		$p < .002$		$p > .457$		$p < .000$	

. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 5 shows that students with mental health issues are more likely to experience higher levels of hopelessness, negative self-evaluation, suicide ideation, hostility, and suicidality, highlighting the strong influence of mental health on emotional and behavioral outcomes. Gender

also appears to play a role, with females showing greater vulnerability to suicide ideation and suicidality. In contrast, age and socioeconomic status do not show notable differences, indicating that mental health and gender are more critical factors in understanding these risks among college students.

Suicide risk is present across all age groups, though differences in risk factors, methods, and patterns exist depending on age (Owsiany et al., 2021). Gender also plays a critical role, with the well-documented paradox showing that while women attempt suicide more often, men are more likely to die by it (Honea et al., 2022). Socioeconomic status contributes to suicide vulnerability as well, with both low- and high-income individuals affected by different contextual triggers (Madigan & Daly, 2023; Park & Lee, 2022). Most significantly, self-perceived mental health issues are consistently linked to heightened suicidality, reinforcing the urgent need for mental health support and intervention (Dizon & Mendoza, 2022).

V. CONCLUSION

This study's findings robustly confirm the theoretical framework supporting the research, highlighting the significant impact of self-regulation on future orientation and suicidality in Filipino teenagers. Self-Regulation Theory is validated as proactive action, mindfulness, and goal achievement foster future-oriented thinking, emphasizing the significance of personal agency and adaptive functioning. These insights emphasize the imperative of including cognitive and behavioral aspects into mental health strategies. The study corroborates Time Perspective Theory by validating the mediation function of future orientation in the association between essential psychological factors and suicidality. An optimistic outlook diminishes the chance of suicide. This sophisticated comprehension necessitates a measured and personalized strategy. The moderating influence of mental health status highlights the necessity for customized therapies that account for differing degrees of psychological susceptibility. In this context, psychiatric nurses are essential in suicide prevention by identifying at-risk persons, cultivating therapeutic interactions, and detecting early warning signs, particularly in youth. Their participation is crucial in both clinical environments and community-oriented mental health programs. The study endorses a comprehensive, individualized strategy based on many theoretical frameworks and bolstered by nursing leadership, providing a more inclusive and successful approach to suicide prevention and mental health enhancement.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Integrate programs in schools and communities that strengthen self-regulatory abilities such as goal setting, mindfulness, proactiveness, and adaptive problem-solving to help reduce suicidality and promote future-oriented thinking.

2. Develop interventions that encourage positive and flexible future planning while addressing the risks of rigid or anxiety-driven expectations, ensuring that youth maintain a hopeful yet realistic outlook.

3. Support the active involvement of psychiatric nurses in mental health service redesign to assume leadership roles, community outreach, and policy-making to strengthen their role in suicide prevention, especially for youth.

4. Government support is essential through funding, school-based mental health education, and increased counseling access. Training for educators, healthcare workers, and LGUs builds capacity for early intervention. Policy alignment ensures sustainability and reach.

5. Future studies must include marginalized youth to understand their unique challenges and protective factors. Community-based research ensures cultural relevance and inclusivity. This approach supports the development of equitable, person-specific interventions.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1 provided overall supervision for the study. Author 2 was primarily responsible for writing the original draft and revising the manuscript. Authors 2 and 3 jointly handled data collection and secured funding for the research. All remaining tasks—including conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data analysis, and interpretation of results—were collaboratively undertaken by all three authors. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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