



Peer-Review Report Form

Manuscript Title:	From Distress to Disclosure: Navigating the Thresholds of Mental Health Help-Seeking among University Students in the Philippines
Type of Article:	Original Article

FIRST ROUND

Editor

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The reviewers acknowledge the significance of your manuscript and recommend several revisions to further improve its clarity, coherence, organization, and overall scholarly quality. In addition, you are advised to thoroughly review and validate all references included in the manuscript. Please ensure that all cited sources are accurate, accessible, and retrievable through Google Scholar to uphold the credibility and reliability of the study. Additionally, make sure to include the DOI or website link for every reference to facilitate verification and accessibility of sources. Furthermore, only sources that are cited within the manuscript should appear in the References section, and all entries listed in the References section must also be cited in the text. For example, if 20 unique sources are cited in the manuscript, then only those 20 sources should be included in the References section. Please note that repeated citations of the same source within the text are counted as a single reference entry; therefore, the total number of references may be lower than the total number of in-text citations.

Reviewer 1

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The manuscript provides valuable insights into the transitions students navigate prior to therapy. I observe immense potential in this work. My feedback aims to elevate the rigor of the text. Please consider these constructive recommendations to enhance the clarity and depth of the research.

<u>Specific Comments and Recommendations</u>
Title The title is informative and captures the essence of the research. However, it lacks a reference to the specific methodological approach. You might add A Qualitative Interpretive Study to provide immediate clarity to the readers.
Abstract The summary effectively outlines the sample size of ten students. It mentions asynchronous written email text. You should briefly state one limitation or unique challenge of this specific data collection method here. The five themes are distinct and logical.
Introduction



The context of the Philippines is established well. The paper notes that psychological distress intersects with academic involvement. To strengthen this section, specify exactly how the local culture diverges from broader Asian contexts. You state that the term Asian is too broad. Elaborate on the unique local family dynamics.

Literature Review

The synthesis of previous work is adequate and covers recent publications. You categorize the transitions as a negotiated movement. It would be beneficial to anchor this in established theories of behavioral change. The exploration of informal support as a potential endpoint is a strong conceptual point.

Methodology

The choice of asynchronous written emails captures attention. A critical detail is absent: how did the researchers address the lack of nonverbal cues? Written text strips away vocal tone. You must explain how you ensured accurate interpretations of the emotions of the participants. The participant profiles in Table 1 are detailed. Notice that P05 and P09 have nearly identical descriptions of academic pressure and parent expectations. Please verify if this is a duplication error.

Results

The excerpts provided are quite brief. For example, the phrase It felt too heavy is very short. Provide longer extracts to demonstrate the depth of the data. The transition between Theme 3 and Theme 4 requires smoother integration. Explain how trust in informal relationships directly contrasts with the required trust for professional care.

Discussion

Table 3 presents an excellent cross theme integration. The analysis reinterprets self reliance not merely as a barrier but as a constituent of need. This is a profound intellectual contribution. Ensure you loop back to the specific local cultural traits mentioned in the introduction.

Conclusion

The final section summarizes the main arguments effectively. Please add actionable recommendations for university administrators to implement.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
☐	Accept the manuscript for publication.
☐	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
☐	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

Reviewer 2

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The paper addresses an important and relevant issue, and there is clear value in examining how students make sense of psychological distress and help-seeking. However, I have a serious concern with the level of interpretation being made from the data. The manuscript appears to move beyond describing participants' experiences and begins to construct a process or pathway of how help-seeking develops.



Specific Comments and Recommendations

The strongest concern is the apparent mismatch between the data collected and the process-like conclusions drawn from them. The themes seem to represent a movement from managing distress independently, toward informal support, and eventually toward professional care, with the Discussion treating these patterns almost as a negotiated transition. Yet these are cross-sectional written accounts from different participants, not longitudinal evidence showing that the same individuals actually moved through these positions in this order. Thematic relationships alone cannot establish temporal sequence, progression, or transition. A participant expressing self-reliance and another expressing willingness to seek professional help does not demonstrate movement between those states. This distinction is fundamental because the paper's main conceptual contribution appears to depend on the existence of such a pathway. Without evidence establishing that progression, the interpretation risks being constructed by the researchers rather than demonstrated by the participants' accounts.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
	Accept the manuscript for publication.
/	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

SECOND ROUND

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Editor</u>	<u>Reviewer 1</u>	<u>Reviewer 2</u>
Accept the manuscript for publication.	/	/	/
Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.			
Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.			