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LITERARY MEMES AS BIBLIOTHERAPY FOR FILIPINO ESL PRESERVICE TEACHERS' EMERGENCY REMOTE LEARNING

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Abstract
The COVID-19 pandemic led to a swift transition to emergency remote teaching, impacting students and educators' well-being. To address these challenges, literary memes emerged, combining literary references with humour or poignant commentary, engaging students, and conveying meaningful insights or coping strategies. Despite their prevalence, their efficacy as bibliotherapy tools remains underexplored. This study investigated the potential of literary memes in promoting well-being and enhancing the learning experience during times of crisis. Focused on 64 English as a Second Language (ESL) Filipino preservice teachers, the study explored their preferences and perceived value of literary memes, ascertaining their exposure and assessment of this emerging literary genre as potential bibliotherapy. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis, while quantitative data underwent statistical analysis, including measures such as mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation coefficient (r), and t-tests. Findings indicated that ESL preservice teachers preferred memes creatively linked to literature, maintaining a moderate level of exposure, using them to forge emotional connections with peers and family. These memes, abundant in literary references, provided entertainment and moderately contributed to bibliotherapy, as confirmed by the values of Pearson r and t-tests, calling for their integration into ESL teacher education programs to foster engagement and well-being among preservice teachers.

Keywords: bibliotherapy, literary meme, preservice teacher, remote emergency learning

Introduction
The outbreak of COVID-19 has created a world health crisis that deeply affects and alters the lives of people. Southeast Asian countries greatly affected by the spread of coronavirus outbreaks have implemented lockdowns and other restrictions to repress the spread of the virus (Casale, 2020). In the Philippines, limited mobility of people and temporary closure of establishments affected the educational sector as the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the near-total closures of faculties, universities, and colleges. In response to this, educational institutions migrated to distance learning modality to limit the disruption of education (Rad et al., 2021).

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Due to this migration, students face a challenging phase as the temporary closure of schools requires them to attend online classes. The transition from face-to-face learning to online learning not only affects the delivery of instruction but also deepens the digital divide between students with access to the internet and devices, and those who only depend on school resources. This educational-related circumstance makes remote and online learning more stressful compared with regular classrooms and can trigger anxiety or depression in students. Golberstein et al. (2020) noted that this scenario can worsen students' existing mental state problems due to the unique combination of the public health crisis, social isolation, and economic recession. This alarming situation demands an immediate response to lessen the possible long-term effect of the current situation on students' well-being.

Amidst the current shift in instructional delivery methods, students find themselves confined to home-based activities, such as reading books and engaging with various social media platforms, to alleviate the stress induced by the pandemic. Seeking solutions to address students' emotional challenges during this time, bibliotherapy emerges as a promising approach. Bibliotherapy, often characterized as healing through reading, involves dynamic interactions between readers and texts within a psychological context, as described by Heath et al. (2005). This therapeutic reading practice, as highlighted by De Vries et al. (2017) and Eich (1999), utilizes written materials to address both physical and emotional ailments, offering avenues for personality assessment, adjustment, and growth. Through literature, readers are provided with alternative perspectives and behavioural options, thus serving as catalysts for emotional growth and healing.

The potential of bibliotherapy as an intervention to decrease students' aggressive behaviours in public schools was noted by Newman (2015), a notion supported by students, teachers, and therapists. When incorporated into educational settings, bibliotherapy can help decrease aggressive behaviours among students, relieve emotional pressure, develop self-concept, and communicate new values by encouraging individuals to interpret and relate literary texts to their own experiences (Hardiansyah et al., 2022; Tandon et al., 2023). This projective indirect tool employing literature for growth can be used to teach students life-related challenges by encouraging them to connect with book characters and providing them the opportunity to evaluate their individuality (Rozalski et al., 2010). The goal of bibliotherapy is to broaden and deepen understanding of the problem that requires attention. The written books can educate students about their problems and can be used to increase their acceptance of the available options to respond to their life challenges (Akinola, 2014).

Bibliotherapy serves as a tool to help secondary and tertiary school students deal with challenging situations by providing solutions to problems through books and discussions. Because of the advent of multimedia platforms, this tool has expanded its scope from utilizing books to technology-aided communication. Scrolling through their smartphones, students find an avenue to lessen their burdens and stress. As readers, students immerse themselves in the rich and complex experience of mobile applications. This mobile technology-driven experience has continuously caused innovations in literary forms and genres as people seek out new and improved modes of communication. Correspondingly, millennials have created an emerging expression through their creative literary memes (Kristina et

al., 2020). Literary memes show witty and honest observations that are used for humour, therapy, gratification, and protests. Memes serve the internet generation well for they are free, obvious, and loaded with cathartic qualities (Frigillano, 2023). According to Ejaz (2016), meme as a literary genre is similar to traditional forms of storytelling, like fable and parable. This similarity allows this genre to be used as bibliotherapy like any other form of literature. As students are engaged with the internet and various social media platforms, they are likely to be exposed to literary memes that can serve the same purpose as traditional bibliotherapy. As people experience growth through social media as an alternative modality of communication that can ease negative thoughts, bibliotherapy is a valuable tool that can be used in helping students to positively deal with their current situations as the prevailing pandemic affects their mental health and well-being.

Bibliotherapy has proven to be a valuable tool in aiding individuals, including students, in coping with various challenges affecting their mental health and well-being (Suprafti & Amio, 2023). The use of bibliotherapy techniques, such as reading relevant books, has shown benefits like providing understanding, relaxation, focus, positive self-concept formation, emotional ease, and increased empathy and self-awareness. Studies have demonstrated the efficacy of bibliotherapy in improving knowledge and addressing issues like obsessive-compulsive disorder, and depression (Dharmarajan & Umadevi, 2023; Mehdizadeh & Khosravi, 2018; Öztemiz & Tekindal, 2022). Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, bibliotherapy has been instrumental in helping students manage fear, anxiety, and isolation, providing them with insights and healthier coping mechanisms (Frigillano, 2023).

Considering bibliotherapy as a valuable resource in supporting students' mental health during challenging times, the researcher as a literature teacher, acknowledges the potential of literature as a tool in addressing students' problematic situations, which is particularly crucial in the Philippines, where students face numerous challenges that impact their mental health and well-being. Within this local context, students are exposed to stressors such as poverty, social inequality, and the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic; hence, the need for effective mental health support is evident. The acknowledgment of the potentiality of literature provides bibliotherapy, aside from its entertainment and education purposes, as a vital tool for fostering growth and healing among Filipino students.

Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, students in the Philippines have faced increased fear, anxiety, and isolation, exacerbating existing mental health issues. The introduction of bibliotherapy, through literary memes, has been instrumental in helping students manage these emotional challenges, providing them with insights and healthier coping mechanisms. Through bibliotherapy, students can find solace, understanding, and companionship, even in the midst of physical isolation.

Teachers must be aware of the emerging trends in helping their students feel at ease despite the difficult situation. As teachers aspire for their students to become well-adjusted and happy adults, schools can prioritize students' well-being secondary to academic success (Zakrzewski & Brunn, 2015). Recognizing students' emotional lives can validate and help learners work with all their emotions. This acknowledgment of the affective aspect promotes emotional health, which can, in

turn, motivate them to perform better in this challenging situation. Therefore, the integration of bibliotherapy into the education system in the Philippines can greatly contribute to students' well-being, supporting their growth, and healing amidst the unique challenges they face.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Filipino students experienced increased fear, anxiety, and isolation. The introduction of bibliotherapy, through literary memes, has been instrumental in helping them manage these emotional challenges. This study aimed to explore the potential benefits of using literary memes as a form of bibliotherapy in the context of emergency remote learning, specifically for English as a Second Language (ESL) Filipino pre-service teachers. The research sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the preferences and perceived value of literary memes for ESL Filipino pre-service teachers?
2. To what extent are ESL pre-service teachers exposed to literary memes?
3. How do ESL pre-service teachers assess literary memes as a beneficial bibliotherapeutic tool for emergency remote learning?
4. Is there a significant relationship between ESL pre-service teachers' exposure to literary memes and their assessment of these memes as a beneficial bibliotherapeutic tool for emergency remote learning?

This study significantly contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering insights into the potential benefits of utilizing literary memes as a form of bibliotherapy, especially within emergency remote learning contexts. By thoroughly examining the preferences, exposure, and assessment of literary memes among ESL pre-service teachers, this research elucidates the efficacy of using literary memes as a tool for enhancing well-being and coping mechanisms in challenging learning environments. The findings of this study provide invaluable guidance for educators and practitioners who aim to harness digital culture for positive educational outcomes during crises. Furthermore, this research fosters a deeper understanding of the relationship between exposure to literary memes and their perceived effectiveness as a bibliotherapeutic tool, thereby informing the development of more effective strategies for supporting students' mental health and well-being.

Method

Research design

This study was grounded in a mixed-methods approach utilizing exploratory sequential design, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to comprehensively investigate the potential of literary memes as a form of bibliotherapy in the context of emergency remote learning (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Qualitative data was used to elucidate the preferences and perceived value of literary memes among ESL pre-service teachers. Simultaneously, quantitative data was utilized to ascertain the participants' level of exposure to literary memes and their assessment of these memes as valuable bibliotherapeutic resources in the context of emergency remote learning.

Participants

The study utilized a sample of 64 ESL pre-service teachers, aged between 21 and 22 years old, from Batangas State University JPLPC-Malvar, Philippines, during the academic year 2020-2021. The sample consisted of 11 percent male and 89 percent female respondents, all of whom utilize English as a Second Language. These ESL pre-service teachers had provided their consent to participate in the study. They were selected as participants of the study as their specialization involves studying literary memes as an emerging genre of literature and trained in utilizing various literary forms as bibliotherapy. The memes covered in their selected specialization courses, such as *Children and Adolescent Literature, Contemporary, Popular, and Emergent Literature*, and *Teaching and Assessment of Literature Studies,* include those with allusions to well-known literary pieces as part of the literary canon, and those that incorporate humour about the Covid-19 pandemic. As future literature teachers, they provided a reliable assessment of the therapeutic value of any literary form such as literary memes. Hence, the researcher believes that these ESL preservice teachers are suitable and reliable respondents for this study.

Data collection

Interview

To gather insights into the preferences and perceived value of literary memes among ESL pre-service teachers, an interview approach using short response questions was employed. This qualitative data collection method aimed to capture the participants' subjective opinions and attitudes toward literary memes. The participants were asked to articulate their preferences in literary memes, such as their inclination towards memes featuring famous book quotes or those that humorously engage with literary tropes. They were also encouraged to share their previous experiences with literary memes, describing any standout examples. Additionally, the participants were prompted to consider the components that make a literary meme effective, including the role of text, imagery, and literary references. Lastly, they were invited to express their opinions on whether literary memes hold value in facilitating engagement with and comprehension of literature, providing reasons to support their viewpoints.

Survey

A researcher-made questionnaire utilizing a four-point scale was administered to the ESL preservice teachers to gather the needed quantitative data for the study. The four-point scale used to interpret the responses in each item of the questionnaire is based on the level of exposure to literary memes. The scale consists of the following categories: Highly Exposed (HE) with a score ranging from 3.50 to 4.00, Moderately Exposed (ME) with a score between 2.50 and 3.49, Slightly Exposed (SE) ranging from 1.50 to 2.49, and Least Exposed (LE) with a score between 1.00 and 1.49. Before its administration, the questionnaire was validated by four experts comprising one educational management doctorate degree holder, two master's degree holders in English Language Teaching, and one registered psychometrician. It was also pilot-tested on a group of 30 students who were not included as respondents of the study. The computed Cronbach alpha of 0.91 from the pilot testing of the questionnaire affirmed its reliability. After seeking

approval from the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and the College Dean, the questionnaire was administered to the target respondents by facilitating an online survey.

Data analyses

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to systematically analyse the qualitative data obtained from interviews with ESL pre-service teachers. Initial codes were generated, and recurrent patterns or themes were identified. Themes were reviewed, refined, defined, and named to accurately represent the data. The final set of themes was interpreted in the context of the research objectives, revealing the participants' preferences and perceived value of literary memes. To ensure the trustworthiness of the generated themes, the study incorporated a validation process by three experts in English language studies. The themes derived from the data were reviewed by the experts, and their feedback was considered in refining and finalizing the themes.

Statistical analysis

The data collected from respondents through the online survey form underwent analysis using pertinent exploratory and descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, Pearson r, and t-test (Scott Jones & Goldring, 2022). This analysis aimed to establish reliable results and interpretations with the objectives of assessing the extent of their exposure to literary memes, determining their evaluation of literary memes as a valuable bibliotherapeutic tool for emergency remote learning, and identifying potential correlations between their exposure to literary memes and their assessment of these memes' efficacy as bibliotherapy in the context of emergency remote learning.

Findings and Discussion

Preferences and value of literary memes

Preservice ESL teachers, like many others in the digital age, were increasingly exposed to various forms of memes on social media platforms. Memes, which were often humorous and relatable, became a popular means of communication and self-expression. However, the use of memes in the classroom was still a relatively unexplored area of research, especially for ESL teachers. This study aimed to investigate the preference of preservice ESL teachers for literary memes, i.e., memes that referenced literature or literary concepts. By understanding their preference for literary memes, educators could explore how these memes could be incorporated into ESL instruction to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Intertextuality played a pivotal role in engaging participants in literary memes. Primarily, these individuals were attracted to memes that incorporated humorous references to literary tropes and famous book quotes. These distinctive features of memes offered a means for individuals to derive enjoyment while simultaneously engaging in critical reflection on the absurdity inherent in literary conventions. Moreover, humour, as expressed within literature, served as a potent tool for challenging established literary norms and expectations. This subversion of norms could be profoundly empowering, particularly for readers who might otherwise feel disconnected from the world of literature. Likewise, memes that incorporated

quotes from renowned literary works provided a unique opportunity for learners to reencounter these quotes within a different, often more relatable context. This reexperiencing of lines and quotes derived from classical and canonical works contributed significantly to students' comprehension of the intertextual nature of literary texts, facilitating their ability to decipher the humour embedded in literary memes (Akdal & Şahin, 2014).

Table 1. Preference for literary memes

Categories	Subcategories	Text Exemplar
Intertextuality	Poke fun at literary tropes	I always enjoy literary memes that poke fun at literary tropes because it is very fun to see an image that can explain or express a part of a story. [P3]
	Quotes from famous books	The memes that I enjoy reading are those kinds of memes that use quotes from famous books especially if I already read that book. [P9]
Creativity	Mixture of creator's sense of humour and creativity	The things that I enjoy seeing in literary memes are the mixture of the creator's sense of humour and creativity because in that sense I am able to relate and love more the pieces of literature that I am reading. [P24]
	Edited pictures with captions based on literary works	What I enjoy about seeing literary memes are the edited pictures made by the creator and how they put a caption on them based on the literary works they have read. And it's really funny when the picture really suits the caption. [P13]
Relatability	Connection with the literary piece	In seeing literary memes, I enjoy the fact that it can make me laugh and help me to relate it to the literary pieces that I've encountered. [P45]
	Relatable in normal life	I'd like to read and see memes where I can actually relate myself like rantings, nonsense ideas in a form, and the like. [P28]
Understandability	Use of quotes from famous books	I prefer memes that use quotes from famous books because I can easily understand the meaning that is being expressed in the memes. [P58]
	Easier to comprehend through images and captions	I often see literary memes posted on many different social media platforms and I can say that it's trends as others used the lines in the book using some trending pictures circulation in the internet. [P23]

Legend: [P] followed by a number represents the participant number assigned to each individual in the study.

Participants also expressed a distinct preference for literary memes with content that showcased the creativity of their creators. Their enthusiasm was particularly evident when they encountered memes that featured skilfully edited images accompanied by captions inspired by literary works. These memes relied

heavily on the inventiveness and artistic abilities of their creators to produce content that was not only unique but also deeply engaging. The fusion of humour and creativity within these memes created an element of unpredictability that captured the attention of readers. This unpredictability, achieved through the skilful blending of humour and imaginative elements, was a cornerstone of successful meme creation. The careful manipulation and alteration of images, combined with thought-provoking captions inspired by literary works, served as a means to bridge the gap between literature and popular culture. This bridge, in turn, rendered literature more relevant and accessible to a broader audience (Zhang, 2017).

Participants consistently exhibited a strong inclination towards literary memes with content that forged a meaningful connection between literary pieces and daily life experiences. These memes, grounded in the relatability of everyday experiences, relied on the readers' familiarity with the referenced literary works and their capacity to draw connections between these works and their own lives. By establishing such a connection, these memes served as a conduit for readers to perceive the relevance of literature within their personal experiences. The concept of relatability assumed a pivotal role in the realm of successful meme creation, as it enabled memes to resonate with a broader and more diverse audience. Furthermore, the act of linking literature with readers' individual experiences fostered a deeper understanding and appreciation of literary works, enriching their literary journey (Govindarajoo et al., 2021).

The preference for literary memes among participants also centered around their inherent quality of understandability. This characteristic was primarily attributed to the utilization of images and captions, which significantly facilitated the comprehension of these memes. Literary memes were strategically crafted to aid readers in grasping and appreciating the essence of literary works, presenting them in a format that was both accessible and memorable. The incorporation of quotes from famous books within these memes served as a powerful tool for guiding readers toward a deeper recognition of the depth and intricacy inherent in literature. This approach effectively engaged readers by allowing them to explore literary themes and ideas within a familiar context. The enhanced understandability achieved through the inclusion of images and captions contributed to the visualization of textual meaning, thereby simplifying comprehension and enhancing retention (Li & Xie, 2020).

These results could be particularly useful for Filipino preservice teachers in their future teaching of Filipino young and basic education learners. By incorporating literary memes into their ESL instruction, preservice teachers could enhance student engagement and promote the development of literary analysis skills among young learners. Moreover, the study findings showcased the importance of intertextuality, creativity, relatability, and understandability in the creation and utilization of literary memes, providing preservice teachers with valuable insights into effective meme integration strategies. Through the integration of literary memes into ESL instruction, preservice teachers could make literature more relevant and accessible to their students, thereby enriching their learning experiences and fostering a deeper appreciation of literary works.

Literary memes were a popular form of online content that combined images and text to convey humorous or thought-provoking messages about books, authors, and literary culture. While literary memes had gained a substantial following among

book lovers and internet users, their potential value as a teaching tool had yet to be fully explored. This study also aimed to investigate the perceived value of literary memes among preservice teachers, examining how they viewed these memes as a means of engaging students and promoting literary analysis skills.

Table 2 provides an overview of four key themes that illuminate the value of literary memes. These themes encompass the role of literary memes in encouraging students to engage and understand literature, their function as a creative outlet, their relevance to younger generations, and the role of humour as a catalyst for their appeal.

Table 2. Value of literary memes

Themes	Text Exemplar
Encouraging Students to Engage and Understand Literature	Literary memes are a valuable way to engage and understand literature because poking fun at the literature it makes it much easier to remember especially its content because it is blended with humour. [P7]
	It's like a tool or an approach for literary teachers to use as it can pique the interest of the students in learning literature in a fun yet educational way. [P52]
Literary Memes as a Creative Tool	Yes, because through memes there is creativity shown that the one who created those memes can engage or encourage those readers to somehow be engaged in literature. [P12]
Relating to Younger Generations	Especially if you are teaching literature to teenagers. Using literary memes could catch the students' interest because they could relate to that and they are fascinated that the teacher could also relate to that matter. [P38]
Humour as a Stimulus	In my preference adding humour when engaging and understanding literature will stimulate the comprehension skill of an individual. [P42]

Legend: [P] followed by a number represents the participant number assigned to each individual in the study.

The integration of literary memes served as a valuable resource for effectively engaging students in understanding literature. Infusing humour into the discourse surrounding literature through memes enhanced the memorability of literary content. This integration of humour, an inherent feature of memes, was particularly adept at elucidating complex literary concepts, thereby rendering them more accessible and enjoyable. This, in turn, not only capitalized on the learning process but also bolstered knowledge retention. Importantly, humour had the potential to amplify cognitive processing and bolster memory recall, further emphasizing the constructive influence of literary memes on the understanding and preservation of literary content (Badli & Dzulkifli, 2013). Furthermore, literary memes served as an effective tool to develop students' interest in learning literature. They had the capacity to awaken students' curiosity in a manner that was both entertaining and educational. The integration of memes into literature lessons had the potential to establish a deeper connection between students and the subject matter, making it more relatable and enjoyable. This approach held promise for boosting students' motivation to engage with and learn from literature.

Participants also emphasized the role of memes as a creative instrument for captivating readers' interest in literature. Memes, by their very nature, exhibited a

flair for creativity that resonated with the creators' ability to engage and inspire readers to delve into the world of literature. Through memes, literary themes and concepts could be conveyed in a visually appealing and imaginative manner, effectively enriching the reader's experience and comprehension. The inherent creativity found in memes not only sparked readers' curiosity but also served as a conduit for fostering a deeper connection with literature (Evans & Jirout, 2023). This creative aspect allowed literature to be presented in a fresh and visually stimulating format, encouraging readers to explore its intricacies and meaning. Consequently, the use of memes as a creative tool enhanced the overall engagement and understanding of literary works.

The use of literary memes emerged as a particularly potent strategy for relating the younger generations to the world of literature. The incorporation of literary memes proved instrumental in capturing the interest of students, as they could readily relate to this contemporary form of communication. This connection was further deepened by the realization that their teachers also shared an appreciation for this medium. Memes, being a prevalent and popular mode of online expression among young people, provided a shared language and cultural reference point. By integrating memes into literature lessons, educators could effectively bridge the generational gap and render literature more relatable to younger audiences. This approach fostered a sense of connection between the literary classics and the younger generation, fostering an environment in which literature became more accessible and engaging to a demographic that may otherwise perceive it as distant or irrelevant (Dongqiang et al., 2020).

Participants in the study also highlighted the significant role of humour, as an integral element of literary memes, in stimulating comprehension and engagement. The inclusion of humour in the process of engaging with and understanding literature served as a powerful catalyst for enhancing an individual's comprehension skills. By infusing humour into the exploration of literary content, individuals were more likely to engage with the material on a deeper level. This heightened engagement stimulated critical thinking and aided in the assimilation of complex concepts. Moreover, humour's ability to evoke positive emotional responses could make the learning process more enjoyable and memorable. Thus, humour, when strategically integrated into literary memes, served as a potent tool for enhancing comprehension, engagement, and overall learning outcomes (Erdoğdu & Çakıroğlu, 2021).

The use of literary memes could have a positive impact on engagement, understanding, and appreciation of literature, especially among younger generations. Memes could be used as a creative and humorous tool to make literary concepts more accessible and enjoyable, thereby increasing motivation to learn and remember. By incorporating memes into literature lessons, teachers could create a fun and engaging learning environment that fostered a love for reading and learning.

The findings provided significant implications for Filipino ESL preservice teachers in enhancing their future teaching strategies. Integrating literary memes into pedagogical practices could effectively engage Filipino students and promote a deeper understanding of literature. By incorporating humour, preservice teachers could make intricate literary concepts more accessible and enjoyable, augmenting comprehension and retention. Additionally, the creative aspect of memes provided a tool to captivate Filipino students' interest and enrich their educational experience.

By bridging the generational gap, preservice teachers could render literature more relatable to younger audiences, creating a more engaging and accessible learning environment. The integration of literary memes presented these preservice teachers with an innovative and effective approach to teaching Filipino young and basic education learners by encouraging a love for reading and learning that extended far beyond the classroom.

ESL preservice teachers' extent of exposure to literary memes

Before the ESL preservice teachers assessed literary memes as beneficial bibliotherapy for emergency remote learning, their exposure to this emerging literary genre was surveyed. This is to ensure that they can provide a reliable assessment of the therapeutic value of memes for having established firsthand experience as indicated by their extent of exposure to this contemporary genre of literature. The result of this survey on ESL preservice teachers' extent of exposure to literary memes is illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. The extent of exposure to literary memes

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	SD	VI
1. Sending humorous literary memes to friends and family	3.41	0.74	HE
2. Receiving literary memes from friends and family	3.20	0.79	HE
3. Sharing literary memes through social media	3.19	0.92	HE
4. Saving funny and relatable literary memes on mobile phone	2.92	0.96	HE
5. Searching for literary memes from different social media platforms	2.84	0.81	ME
6. Utilizing literary memes as posts or replies on social media platforms to express feelings	2.83	0.91	ME
7. Providing comments on relatable literary memes	2.44	0.92	ME
8. Using literary memes as references or tools in online learning such as reporting	2.31	0.89	ME
9. Reinventing, adapting, and editing literary memes	1.92	0.82	ME
10. Creating and posting your literary memes on social media	1.75	0.73	ME
Overall	2.68	0.85	ME

Legend: Standard Deviation (SD); Verbal Interpretation (VI); 3.50-4.00 – Highly Exposed (HE); 2.50-3.49 – Moderately Exposed (ME); 1.50-2.49 – Slightly Exposed (SE); 1.00-1.49 – Least Exposed (LE)

Preservice ESL teachers were highly exposed to literary memes as this emerging literary genre served as an alternative mode of communication in remote learning. This alternative communication involving literary memes consisted of sending ($\bar{x}$=3.41), receiving ($\bar{x}$=3.20), sharing ($\bar{x}$=3.19), and saving ($\bar{x}$=2.94) humorous and relatable memes to establish a positive relationship and maintain social connectedness with their peers and family members amidst social and physical distancing as safety protocols during the pandemic. This exposure to electronically mediated relational communication during uncertainties showed the ESL preservice teachers' efforts to find alternative means of socially communicating with others. Paterson (2017) described this effort for alternative relational communication as people's attempt to fulfill linguistic and cognitive

needs despite the prevailing barriers due to the restrictions of the pandemic. Because of this attempt at alternative relational communication, memes became prominent on social media platforms as they mimicked interpersonal and collective communication among users (Kien, 2019; Sanchez, 2020; Williams, 2000).

On the other hand, ESL preservice teachers' minimal exposure to the aspect of literary memes requiring them to be content creators could be attributed to the complexity of designing ($\bar{x}$=1.92) and creating ($\bar{x}$=1.75) literary memes. Miller and Cupchick (2014) concluded that this complex literary meme-making is an act involving both creativity and talent in conveying a sarcastic and witty message using photo editing software. Moreover, this complexity of literary memes also included the integration of multimodal voicing and intertextuality in re-echoing a stance on any given issue (Castaño, 2013; Dynel, 2021). Thus, ESL preservice teachers with limited experience in advanced photo editing software and intertextually multimodal voicing might encounter difficulties in exposing themselves to these literary meme-making activities.

In general, the ESL preservice teachers were moderately exposed to literary memes as they found these activities centering on literary memes rewarding in maintaining relationships and communication with peers and family as social media users. Thus, this social interaction using literary memes had become an integral mode of communication for people in this age of social media (Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2015).

The exposure of preservice ESL teachers to literary memes during the pandemic showed potential for future teaching strategies. While ESL preservice teachers were moderately exposed to literary memes, they found these activities rewarding in maintaining relationships and communication. This social interaction using literary memes had become an integral mode of communication which could provide a significant opportunity for Filipino preservice teachers to enhance their future teaching of young and basic education learners. To fully harness the potential of literary memes for Filipino young and basic education learners, preservice teachers could be provided with opportunities and support to develop their skills effectively. By integrating literary memes into their pedagogical practices, preservice teachers could effectively engage students and promote a deeper understanding of literature.

ESL preservice teachers' assessment of literary memes as beneficial bibliotherapy

To determine the assessment of the ESL preservice teachers on literary memes as bibliotherapy, the respondents were asked to rate the possible benefits of reading and engaging with literary memes as a therapeutic activity using a four-point scale. ESL preservice teachers' responses to this survey are illustrated in Table 4.

As in Table 4, the ESL preservice teachers considered literary memes as moderately beneficial bibliotherapy. This moderately beneficial value of literary memes as bibliotherapy was observed by the respondents as this alternative modality for human connectivity ($\bar{x}$=3.55) enabled them to manifest positive moods ($\bar{x}$=3.58, 3.38) despite the uncertainties brought by emergency remote learning.

Table 4. Assessment of literary memes as beneficial bibliotherapy

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	SD	VI
1. Brings a sense of enjoyment and entertainment	3.58	0.55	HB
2. Enables individuals to connect and humorously communicate with friends	3.55	0.61	HB
3. Helps in enlightening problems by eliciting a positive mood	3.38	0.57	MB
4. Helps verbalize unsaid thoughts and feelings	3.25	0.66	MB
5. Relieves readers from stress brought by different uncertainties	3.25	0.71	MB
6. Helps in coping with stress and anxiety	3.23	0.72	MB
7. Provides an opportunity to develop self-awareness and the ability to face developmental crises through its inspirational content	3.11	0.69	MB
8. Improves self-esteem and motivation to do better in an online class through motivational content	2.94	0.73	MB
9. Enables students to cope-up with online learning	2.86	0.63	MB
10. Assists in acquiring skills that can be used in online learning	2.66	0.75	MB
Overall	3.18	0.66	MB

Legend: Standard Deviation (SD); Verbal Interpretation (VI); 3.50-4.00 – Highly Beneficial (HB); 2.50-3.49 – Moderately Beneficial (MB); 1.50-2.49 – Slightly Beneficial (SB); 1.00-1.49 – Least Beneficial (LB)

Moreover, the nature of literary memes as witty literary allusions provided a sense of enjoyment and entertainment ($\bar{x}$=3.25) that helped them overcome ($\bar{x}$=3.23) the challenges of remote learning. This value of bibliotherapy, such as reading literary memes, helped individuals in coping with their anxieties. This instance was regarded by Akinola (2014) and Xiao et al. (2020) as an effective technique in promoting intellectual health and mental soundness by alleviating depression through wit and humour (Taecharungroj & Nueangjamnong, 2015). Likewise, Dyches and Prater (2005) noted that the effect provided by reading literature, such as literary memes, in reducing depression could serve as a coping strategy in facing challenges. Thus, literary memes, as an emerging literary genre, had the potential to be used as bibliotherapy for emergency remote learning (Altunbay, 2018).

By utilizing literary memes, Filipino preservice teachers could contribute to the intellectual health and mental soundness of their students, promoting coping strategies and providing a valuable resource for engaging students and enhancing their understanding and appreciation of literature. Therefore, targeted training sessions and integration into teacher education programs were essential to equip preservice teachers with the skills to effectively utilize literary memes as a tool for promoting student well-being and academic success.

Relationship between ESL preservice teachers' exposure and assessment of literary memes as beneficial bibliotherapy

To distinguish if a significant relationship exists between the ESL preservice teachers' exposure and assessment of literary memes as beneficial bibliotherapy, the results of the survey covering both variables were correlated using Pearson r and t-test. The result on this matter is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. Relationship between ESL preservice teachers' exposure and assessment of literary memes as beneficial bibliotherapy

Variables	Computed Pearson r	Verbal Interpretation	Computed t-test	p-value
Exposure and Assessment of Literary Memes as Beneficial Bibliotherapy	0.53	Moderate Positive Relationship	4.077	0.000

The table revealed that a significant relationship existed between the ESL preservice teachers' extent of exposure and assessment of literary memes as beneficial bibliotherapy for emergency remote learning. This moderate positive relationship was affirmed by the computed p-value considering the Pearson r and t-test values. This further suggested that the ESL preservice teachers' extent of exposure to literary memes influenced their assessment of this emerging literary genre as beneficial bibliotherapy for emergency remote learning. Since ESL preservice teachers were moderately exposed to activities involving literary memes in communicating with other people, they recognized the potential value of these memes as beneficial bibliotherapy for emergency remote learning. Likewise, the notion that exposure could affect the traits of an individual had been observed by De Leon and Pariña (2013) in the context of language exposure and writing self-efficacy. Hence, preservice teachers' exposure to literary memes had an influence on their assessment of this literary genre as bibliotherapy. This result encouraged Filipino preservice teachers to integrate literary memes into their pedagogical practices. By incorporating literary memes, preservice teachers could create an engaging learning environment, helping young Filipino learners to overcome the challenges of remote learning.

Conclusion

In an emergency remote learning in which physical and social distancing remains a safety protocol, students tend to find alternative means of maintaining social interactions and establishing a positive mood amidst uncertainties due to the current pandemic. Carrying wit and humour, literary memes have been valuable to this attempt at social connectedness and positivity by students. English as a Second Language (ESL) preservice teachers as college students moderately exposed themselves to activities involving literary memes as they consider this emerging literary genre important in maintaining relational communication with their peers and family members. Through their relatable and humorous content, literary memes as a media to this alternative mode of communicating afforded them to maintain positivity despite the challenges of emergency remote learning. These notable characteristics of a literary meme enable this emerging literary genre to potential bibliotherapy for emergency remote learning. Reading literary memes can provide enjoyment that can help minimize anxieties and depression due to isolation as a safety protocol and to the challenges brought by emergency remote learning during the prevailing pandemic.

In line with the results of the study, educators may utilize literary memes as teaching tools in communicating important concepts and ideas in support of academic relaxation during emergency remote learning. Also, officers of various

student organizations may promote the use of literary memes in disseminating information and maintaining a positive outlook among students in response to the challenges of emergency remote learning. As exposure is found to be moderately related to the assessment of literary memes as bibliotherapy, a workshop on the therapeutic and aesthetic values of literary memes as an emerging literary form and communication aid may be initiated. Similar studies may also be conducted to capture other characteristics and practical applications of literary memes as emerging literary genres.

While this study offers valuable insights, it has limitations. The study focused only on ESL pre-service teachers, limiting generalizability to other student populations. Future research could explore in-service teachers and students across various educational levels. Further research could also investigate specific pedagogical strategies for incorporating literary memes into the curriculum to maximize their benefits. Moreover, the long-term effects of incorporating literary memes into educational settings need further exploration. Addressing these limitations and pursuing these avenues for future research will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of literary memes in education.

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