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Ria Bianca R. Caangay, PhD

rbrcaangay@addu.edu.ph

College Faculty, Ateneo de Davao University
Davao City, Philippines

Danilo G. Baradillo, PhD

Program Chair, University of the Immaculate Conception
Davao City, Philippines

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A SENTIMENT ANALYSIS ON THE MANDATORY ROTC IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Ria Bianca R. Caangay, PhD¹, Danilo G. Baradillo, PhD²

¹Ateneo de Davao University, Davao City, Philippines

²University of the Immaculate Conception, Davao City, Philippines



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ABSTRACT

This study uncovered the sentiments of Filipino parents on the mandatory Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) in senior high school. The study employed the qualitative approach using text mining. The data used in this study were the selected 100 Facebook comments of parents on the online news articles posted on Facebook, headlining the mandatory ROTC in senior high school. The orange software was used to determine the most frequently used words in parents' sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in old high school and to analyze the parents' sentiments. Meanwhile, thematic analysis was utilized to formulate the definitions of parents' sentiments on the issue. The study revealed that the most frequently used words found on the sentiments of parents on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school as generated by Word Cloud in Orange software are ROTC, train, discipline, yes, mandatory, military, good, student, youth, country, and need. The study further revealed that Filipino parents believed that ROTC inculcates values, trains students to prepare for war, and is suitable for the country. They also thought that the Filipino youth needs discipline nowadays, that a highly qualified official should handle ROTC, and that it should be mandatory for all, except for the physically incapable. It was concluded that most Filipino parents favored implementing the compulsory ROTC in senior high school as the benefits that students and the country would derive outweigh the issues or oppositions against the proposed program.

Keywords: sentiment analysis, mandatory ROTC, senior high school, text mining, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The mandatory Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) in senior high school has been questioned recently. The Armed Forces of the Philippines claim that compulsory military service will help the country build a foundation for strong armed forces, ultimately making it a powerful nation (Nepomuceno, 2022). However, making it mandatory is met with strong opposition. According to Atienza (2022), as cited in Mercado (2022), it burdens the youth and leads in the wrong direction. Additionally, mandatory ROTC violates students' constitutional rights and burdens parents with additional costs (Chua & Gato, 2022).

There are also other issues surrounding the mandatory military service in other countries. In South Korea, this service is engulfed with controversies, such as corruption, bullying, and more lenient service requirements for famous people. National security is also considered outdated and inefficient



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(Robertson, 2018). Meanwhile, a study in Israel reveals that the cost of compulsory military duty is higher, and a value-focused analysis shows that volunteer army service offers better value (Elran & Sheffer, 2017).

The Department of the National Defense supported the ROTC implementation in the Philippines because it instilled patriotism in Filipinos. Still, they also noted its numerous challenges, including the lack of funding and resources and the anticipated opposition from those who do not wish to serve in the military (Manahan, 2022). The program also places students at the whim of the program's ruthless, corrupt, and incompetent AFP officials (Recedes, 2018, as cited in Cabico, 2018).

The proposal imposing the ROTC program loomed with issues as mentioned in several articles and studies both in international and national contexts. Although the proposal aims to develop patriotism and improve the country's military system, many still believe in its disadvantages. Based on the issues that impact not only the students but also the parents, this topic needs to be urgently investigated. There may be literature stating the supporting and opposing views of the lawmakers and military institutions and surveys determining Filipinos' perceptions of mandatory ROTC. However, studies investigating the sentiments of Filipino parents whose children would be subjected to compulsory ROTC are limited and not widely available. Therefore, this study explores parents' sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school. The results of this study can aid lawmakers in devising a proposal relating to the compulsory ROTC catering to the parents' sentiments. The parents can also benefit from this study as they contemplate other parents' supporting and opposing views as manifested in the various sentiments. They may fortify or change their opinions on the matter. With the result of this study as a basis, researchers can also explore the feelings of other entities, such as educators and students, whom the mandatory ROTC can directly impact.

Research Questions

1. What are the frequently used words concerning parents' sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school?
2. How do these frequently used words define parents' sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school?
3. What are parents' sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher employed the qualitative approach using text mining, also known as text analysis. Text mining is the systematic procedure of converting unstructured textual data into a structured format to discern significant patterns and generate novel insights (IBM Cloud Foundation, 2020). It identifies facts, relationships, and assertions that would otherwise remain buried in textual big data (Linguamatics, 2020).

According to Imlakiyah (2016), qualitative research produces findings that cannot be achieved using statistical procedures or other means. The comprehensive approach frequently incorporates diverse data from multiple sources to comprehend individual participants better. The data collection process is oriented towards qualitative information, and the primary analysis approach is equally qualitative. Frequently, this process entails doing an inductive examination of the data to ascertain repeating



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themes, patterns, or concepts, followed by further delineation and interpretation of these categories (Nassaji, 2015).

Research Respondents

The data used in this study were the selected 100 Facebook comments of parents on the online news articles posted on Facebook, headlining the mandatory ROTC in senior high school, dated from January to June 2022. Comments unrelated to the mandatory ROTC and comments posted by nonparents were excluded. Only the comments made by parents regarding the issue were selected, considering that their children would be subjected to the mandatory ROTC in the Philippines.

Data Analysis

The researcher used the Word Cloud in Orange software to determine the most frequently used words in parents' sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school. The word cloud takes the most commonly used words and displays them in an appealing visual presentation that identifies keywords in different sizes and colors based on the frequencies (DePaolo & Wilkinson, 2014). Thematic analysis was used to define parents' sentiments on the issue. According to Caufield (2019), thematic analysis is a widely employed approach for examining and interpreting qualitative data. The researcher conducts a meticulous analysis of the data to find prevalent themes, which encompass recurring topics, concepts, and patterns of significance. Orange software used Sentence analysis to analyze parents' sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school. Sentiment analysis classifies textual data that pertains to subjective remarks. This field of study is commonly referred to as opinion mining, as it involves the analysis of opinions to get insights into public perception. The methodology utilizes natural language processing (NLP) techniques to gather and analyze words expressing opinions or sentiments (Khan et al., 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequently Used Words Found in the Sentiments of Parents on the Mandatory ROTC in Senior High School

Table 1 shows the frequently used words in parents' sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school. Using the Word Cloud feature in Orange, "ROTC" is the first and most frequently used word, which is mentioned 66 times across the 100 Facebook comments expressing the parents' sentiments on the issue. It is followed by the word "train," with 44 mentions, followed by "discipline," with 36 mentions. Meanwhile, "yes" and "mandatory" are mentioned 29 and 27 times, respectively. The word "military," with 26 mentions, is in rank 6, followed by the words "good" in rank 7 with 21 mentions, and "student" in rank 8 with 20 mentions. The words "youth" and "country," however, are both ranked nine as they are mentioned 19 times, while the word "need" is mentioned 16 times throughout the corpora.

Table 1. Frequently Used Words Found in the Sentiments of Parents on the Mandatory ROTC in Senior High School

Rank	Words	Frequency
1	ROTC	66
2	train	42
3	discipline	36
4	yes	29
5	mandatory	27



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6	military	26
7	good	21
8	student	20
9	youth	19
9	country	19
10	need	16

Figure 1 presents the Word Cloud of the frequently used words found in parents' sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school. The visual representation highlights the most commonly used words through more extensive texts. As seen on the word cloud below, the most frequently used words are *ROTC, train, discipline, yes, mandatory, military, good, student, youth, country, and need.*



Figure 1. Word Cloud

As generated by Word Cloud, the most frequently used words found in parents' sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school are *ROTC, train, discipline, yes, mandatory, military, good, student, youth, country, and need.* As this study deals with the ROTC program making mandatory in high school, the words "ROTC" and "mandatory" are highly expected to be the most frequently used. Moreover, since ROTC is a military-affiliated program that aims to prepare and train students to serve the country (Moody, 2020, as cited in Chua & Gato, 2022), the words "military," "train," "students," and "country" are also anticipated to be frequently used as well. Vice-President Duterte said that the country needs disciplined youth (Salanga, 2022), and so the words "youth," "need," and "discipline" are also evidently found in the corpora. Finally, as the news articles where the comments were found tend to gather readers' sentiments towards the mandatory ROTC, the words "yes" and "good" as signals of approval are also found to be frequently used.

The aspect of this study wherein it defines the sentiments based on the most frequently used words are anchored on the distributional semantics founded on the distributional hypothesis by Harris (1954) that posits that the presence of comparable linguistic distribution in similar settings is indicative of similarity in meaning (Boleda, 2020; Ferrone & Zanzotto, 2020; Piits, 2013). Since these frequently used words are distributed across large amounts of text containing the same context, the words derive similar meanings concerning the issue. Hence, based on how the words frequently appear in the corpora, definitions of the sentiments of parents on the issue are formulated.

Defining the Sentiments of Parents on the Mandatory ROTC in Senior High School Based on the Frequently Used Words

Table 2 presents the most frequently used words and how they define parents' sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school. The Facebook comments where the frequently used words appear are selected. The sentiments towards the issue are defined based on how the word is used in



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the selected comments. In addition, only the first five most frequently used words (*ROTC, train, discipline, yes, and mandatory*) are analyzed and used to present the results. This is because the last five most frequently used words (*military, good, student, country, and need*) can derive similar meanings or be integrated into the meanings of the sentiments provided by the first five most frequently used words.

ROTC. Since the issue is about the mandatory ROTC in senior high school, it is highly expected that the most frequently used word is “ROTC.” Analyzing the sentiments of parents where the word “ROTC” appears, it is revealed that parents believe that ROTC inculcates values among students and that a highly qualified official should handle ROTC.

ROTC inculcates values among students. Parents commented that ROTC can train students to be disciplined, respectful, responsible, loyal, and have self-control and wisdom. It can also make them upright and patriotic. Moreover, aside from making them disciplined and accountable, parents mentioned that ROTC can develop the student’s confidence, hard work, leadership, and community service skills.

According to Salanga (2019), the ROTC program will inculcate patriotism, nationalism, and discipline among the youth. Through military training, it is also possible for individuals to improve their morale, intellect, social skills, and involvement in public and civic activities. Senator Gatchalian also supported the revival of mandatory ROTC as it will strengthen leadership principles, camaraderie, and sacrifice for shared goals. Moreover, it will highlight respect for human rights and bolster ethical and spiritual values (Lopez, 2019).

A highly qualified official should handle ROTC. Parents acknowledged the presence of abuse and corruption in the previous ROTC program. They added that this time, a good ROTC officer should carry out ROTC’s vision and mission, be assisted by younger and qualified retirees, and be supervised by honest-to-goodness and updated military officers.

There have been hazing incidents among students in the past, and some school administrators have used ROTC as a corrupting opportunity for individuals who wish to take the course quickly (Reyes, 2019, as cited in De Asis, 2019). Given that prior instances of hazing, abuse, exploitation, discrimination, bribery, and corruption have plagued the program, Senator Gatchalian submitted a measure to address this issue. The proposed bill mandates that the ROTC program be administered in tandem with legal safeguards against these issues (Legaspi, 2019). Additionally, AFP Assistant Deputy Chief Orquia highlighted that the present administration’s activities include training ROTC commandants and professionalizing ROTC commandants in preparation for the potential adoption of the proposed mandatory military training for children (Gita-Carlos, 2019).

Train. The word “train” appears as the second most frequently used word across the parents’ sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school, as reflected in their Facebook comments. Since ROTC involves military training, the parents commented that they see this kind of training as a preparation in case of war.

ROTC trains students to prepare for war. Parents commented that ROTC involves military discipline and self-defense training. Parents believed that if there was war in the Pacific or a foreign invasion, the students, as a reserved force, were already prepared to defend themselves and the nation through such training in ROTC.

According to Senator de la Rosa, the Philippines faces an imminent threat from its neighbors, particularly China. Therefore, the nation must be ready to protect itself from aggression (Bordey, 2022). DepEd Secretary Briones added that we cannot trust other nations to defend us but must rely solely on



ourselves (Parrocha, 2019). Through active participation in ROTC, young individuals cultivate a sense of discipline, patriotism, and readiness to execute their paramount duty of safeguarding the Philippines from external aggression, as everyone is responsible for defending the motherland (Lina, 2017). It is also essential to have an army of reserved officers available to be called upon and mobilized to help with external and territorial defense (Gordon, 2019). However, Former Commissioner Cendaña expressed his opposition to the mandatory ROTC when he stated that while it is acknowledged that every citizen has the right to enlist in the military, this should be kept voluntary since there are so many other ways to protect our territory and sovereignty, such as modernizing the Philippine Navy and Coast Guard to create credible deterrents (Manahan, 2022).

Discipline. The word “discipline” ranks third in the most frequently used word in parents’ sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school. In the parents’ Facebook comments where the word “discipline” appears, parents expressed that the Filipino youth nowadays needs discipline.

The Filipino youth needs discipline nowadays. Parents commented that the youth nowadays are liberated and easily influenced. At the same time, they battle with words without knowing where their freedom comes from. They are also described as ill-mannered or rude. Because of what is observed among Filipino youth nowadays, parents express that they urgently need discipline. Moreover, this can be done through a mandatory ROTC.

Party-list Representative Villanueva stated that Filipino youth have grown increasingly stubborn and disrespectful to their parents and focused primarily on gaining material possessions (Catindig, 2022). Their sense of pride, nationalism, and patriotism has also changed (Dela Rosa, 2022), as cited in Espartinez (2022). So, through military training, the discipline and nobility that seem lacking among the youth in modern times are fostered (Lina, 2017). Vice-President Duterte supported this as she said that we need a new generation of youths right now who are disciplined and have love for the country (Marcelo, 2022). Nevertheless, Gelacio (2019) asserted that requiring children to participate in ROTC is not necessary to instill discipline in them. Values should be taught to children at home by their parents. The government must also control businesses that undermine social values. What must be fostered among the youth is the value of self-discipline.

Yes. The word “yes” is an affirmative response of the parents on implementing the mandatory ROTC in senior high school. The word “yes” ranks fourth throughout the corpora, indicating parents’ approval of the issue. They approved of it because they believe that ROTC benefits the country.

ROTC is affirmed to be good for the country. Parents said yes to the mandatory ROTC because they do not see any reason not to pursue it as it benefits the country. Parents claimed that the youth will be able to serve the nation through the ROTC training. It will also instill discipline, responsibility, and nationalism, which are suitable for the country’s future.

ROTC is a crucial, significant, and helpful component in nation-building (De La Salle University, 2022). PNP General Abayalde stated that the purpose of the ROTC program is to establish a robust framework for cultivating patriotism and nationalism among young individuals, aiming to enable their development into industrious contributors to society, possessing the requisite knowledge, skills, and ethical values necessary to safeguard and support the nation’s institutional integrity and sovereignty (Business Mirror, 2019).

Mandatory. The topic concerns ROTC making it compulsory in senior high school; hence, the word “mandatory” is highly anticipated to be frequently present in the corpora. Through analyzing the selected comments of parents expressing their sentiments on the issue, it is found that parents believe that ROTC should be mandatory for all. Still, there must be consideration for those who are not physically capable.



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ROTC should be mandatory for all, except for physically incapable. Parents commented that if ROTC becomes compulsory, it should be implemented for everybody, including the wealthy. Regardless of status, participating in such a program makes it fair and indicates democracy. However, there must be an exemption to the rule. It should not be mandatory for those students who are physically weak or disabled.

The exemptions to military duty have become a contentious topic in South Korea. High-achieving athletes, painters, classical musicians, and dancers in South Korea are granted exemptions, but controversially, high-achieving pop culture personalities, actors, and filmmakers are not (Robertson,2022). Additionally, several countries mandate a set amount of military service for all citizens, except for unique circumstances like physical or mental impairments or religious convictions. Few countries with conscription systems also draft women; most conscript only men (Tiwari, 2021). To avoid issues on exemptions in the Philippine ROTC program, House Bill 8961 mandates that only students who are determined to be physically or psychologically unfit for the ROTC program by the Armed Forces of the Philippines surgeon general or their medical officer will be exempt from the advice of the educational institutions where the concerned student is enrolled (Cepeda, 2019). Additionally, Vice President Duterte-Carpio stated that regardless of gender, she plans to make military duty mandatory for all Filipinos over 18 (Marcelo, 2022).

Table 2. Definition of the sentiments of parents on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school based on the frequently used words

Frequently Used Words	Selected Comments	Formulated Definitions
ROTC	<p><i>Yes, I favor ROTC to teach and train children to be disciplined, respectful, responsible, loyal, and to have self-control and wisdom.</i></p> <p><i>The intention of ROTC to build an upright and disciplined citizen is excellent.</i></p> <p><i>Yes. Like those olden times when there was PMT in junior and senior high school, it should be mandatory for men and women to take 2 to 4 ROTC courses. This is to inculcate the true meaning of love of country and patriotism and divert them from vices, drugs, and harmful elements.</i></p> <p><i>Let us wait and see, hoping for the mandatory ROTC AND PMT. It is a big help to nurture students to become responsible and not be influenced by what is being rallied on the streets.</i></p> <p><i>GO for ROTC. It will help develop millennials' leadership skills, self-confidence, discipline, hard work, and community service skills.</i></p>	ROTC inculcates values among students.
ROTC	<i>Some die in ROTC because of the abuse of the officials who teach them.</i>	A highly qualified official should handle ROTC.



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Kindly make ROTC optional and not mandatory since some abusive trainers and corruption are likely to occur again shortly.

It is recommended that instead of including in the college curriculum, a separate training program for basic military training be given for 45 days during semestral/vacation breaks to be conducted at training centers to ensure comprehensive and supervised training to avoid corruption and abuses as reported during the previous ROTC training program.

Yes, I believe so. It is in the hands of a good ROTC officer who knows the vision and mission of ROTC.

Only qualified personnel from the AFP should be assigned to handle the ROTC units assisted by younger and skilled AFP retirees.

ROTC must be reintroduced minus those ideas that lead to abuse and people who want to corrupt it with their selfish ends. There must be honest-to-goodness and up-to-date supervision by the military.

Train

We have to train these millennials in some military discipline in case a war breaks out in the Pacific, and they will know how to defend themselves and their country.

ROTC trains students in preparation for war.

It can give our youth proper discipline training and become a reserved force in case of war.

Make CAT mandatory at the high school level and ROTC at the college level. That way, the citizenry will be trained for battle.

Yes. Try to revive ROTC for teenage students so they will know how to use self-defense when there is danger, and everyone can help the armed forces if they have basic training in the war.

As citizens of our country, we must defend our nation from any foreign invasion or war that we are obligated to serve, men and women. It is in our constitution. That is why it is a preparatory training course for us.



Discipline	<p><i>It is one of the hundred ways to discipline our children, especially nowadays, where the youth is too liberated and easily influenced.</i></p> <p><i>We need 100% discipline and should start by training the youth in martial drills. Nowadays, the youth pretend they can do combats using their mouths.</i></p> <p><i>The need for discipline is urgent! The younger generation doesn't seem to understand where those freedoms came from.</i></p> <p><i>Yes, every Filipino youth must learn discipline, and I'm disappointed, for I've noticed what is happening nowadays. Young people have yet to learn manners.</i></p> <p><i>Yes, and yes, because look at what this has done to many successful people; without this, many students have been rude and had no discipline.</i></p>	<p>The Filipino youth needs discipline nowadays.</p>
Yes	<p><i>Yes, to Mandatory ROTC for the youth's better future. We do not have any reason not to pursue this project for the benefit of our country.</i></p> <p><i>However, training them to be the country's future is a good plan.</i></p> <p><i>Yes, and yes, for the good and discipline of youth and for them to be responsible citizens of the country.</i></p> <p><i>I am a mother of 4, and yes, it will be better if my children will undergo military training. Moreover, I will be a proud mother if they will serve our country!</i></p> <p><i>Yes, for boys and girls to instill discipline and nationalism, be prepared in this troubled time to defend our country, and not only rally and play with gadgets often.</i></p>	<p>ROTC is affirmed to be good for the country.</p>
Mandatory	<p><i>I support ROTC and mandatory military service for at least a year. It should be applied to all rich and poor except those with disabilities.</i></p> <p><i>Mandatory makes it an equalizer because you have to participate even if you are from a well-to-do family. Isn't that democracy?</i></p> <p><i>ROTC should be optional because there are students whose bodies cannot do the training.</i></p>	<p>ROTC should be mandatory for all, except for physically incapable.</p>



Sentiments of Parents on the Mandatory ROTC in Senior High School

Table 3 and Figure 2 present parents' sentiments on the mandatory ROTC in senior high school. Based on the analyzed results, most parents, or 52%, have a positive sentiment toward making ROTC a mandatory program in old high schools. On the other hand, 35% of parents expressed a negative sentiment on compulsory ROTC. Meanwhile, only 7% of parents are neutral with the issue.

Table 3: Sentiments of Parents on the Mandatory ROTC in Senior High School

Sentiment	Percentage
Positive	58%
Negative	35%
Neutral	7%
Total	100%

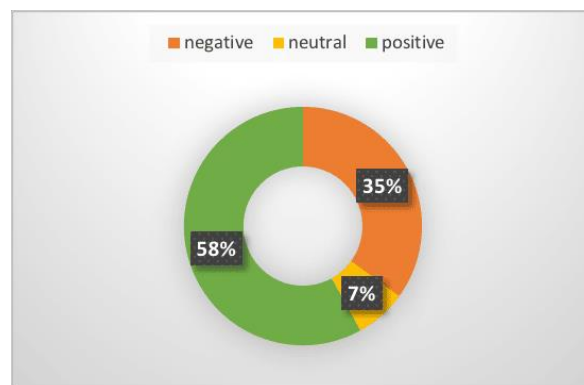


Figure 2. Sentiment Analysis Chart

This result can be supported by a Pulse Asia survey conducted in 2018. The survey result revealed that out of 1,800 respondents, 1,440 or 80 percent agree to the proposal to implement ROTC either in senior high school or in college, or both. Meanwhile, 270 respondents, or 15 percent, do not want the program revived, while the rest have no opinion (Roxas, 2019). The result clearly shows that more Filipinos favor restoring the mandatory ROTC program.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study results, the benefits students and the country would derive from implementing mandatory ROTC in senior high school outweigh the issues or the opposition against the proposed program. As parents expressed that the mandatory ROTC inculcates values, prepares students in case of war, and appears beneficial to the country, it is evident that most parents favor the program. Through this program, the parents also believe it can address the youth's lack of discipline. As reported in the past, there may be issues with exemptions and the officers in charge, but a carefully crafted law can address such concerns once the mandatory ROTC is revived. The law shall also safeguard students from abuse and corruption and provide consideration to those who are proven incapable of joining the ROTC program.



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