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#SKIP THE VAPE: COMBATING THE RISE OF YOUTH VAPING IN METRO MANILA

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ABSTRACT

The rapid rise of youth vaping in Metro Manila presents a growing public health concern, threatening the well-being of Filipino adolescents and undermining Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being. The #SkipTheVape campaign is a social mobilization and digital activism initiative designed to address this alarming trend through participatory communication, social marketing, and behavior change strategies. Anchored on formative researcg and guided by models such as the COMBI framework, the Socio-Ecological Model, and Paulo Freire's dialogic principles, the campaign seeks to reduce youth vaping rates by 20% within a year. The intervention prioritizes a digital-first strategy utilizing platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube to reach Gen Z audiences. Activities include art competitions, cycling events, peer-led ambassadors program, and collaborations with schools, barangays, and health agencies. Data from surveys reveal health concerns, curisosity, stress relief, and peer pressure as a major factors influencing vaping behavior among youth. Barriers to quitting include nicotine addiction, stress, easy access to vapes, and lack of information. The campaign integrates monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure leadership structures for long-term advocacy. Ultimately, #SkipTheVape aims to empower Filipino youth to be proactive changemakers in building vape-free communities.

KEYWORDS: *Youth Vaping, Social Mobilization, Digital Activism, Participatory Communication, Public Health*

I. INTRODUCTION

Good Health and Well-being, Sustainable Development Goal 3, tackles critical global challenges, aiming to "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages," a goal that includes robust prevention of tobacco and substance abuse.

With young people persistently targeted by tobacco and nicotine products like e-cigarettes and vapes, governments, organizations, and legislators face a crucial call to action: safeguarding youth health and well-being to achieve SDG 3.

Alarmingly, vaping has become prevalent among Filipino youth due to easy access, appealing flavors, social media influence, and misperceptions of safety. Despite being marketed as a "less harmful" alternative, vaping still delivers harmful chemicals, including highly addictive nicotine. This trend poses a significant threat to the well-being of young people, particularly in urban centers like Metro Manila, where vape products are increasingly commercially available.

Rationale for Choosing the Topic

According to the 2019 survey of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) Philippines, one in seven Filipino students aged 13-15 years old is using e-cigarettes. This recent study highlights the urgency of addressing youth vaping.

In 2019 and 2021, a survey conducted by the Institute for Global Tobacco Control reported that 70% of Filipino youth who participated thought e-cigarettes were less harmful than traditional cigarettes, and nearly 51% used e-cigarettes to either reduce or quit smoking. The Department of Health also reported an upward trend in vape use among adolescents, especially after the passage of the Vape Regulation Law (Republic Act No. 11900), which critics say lowers the age of access from 21 to 18.

In Metro Manila, vape shops near schools and public areas, and online accessibility have made it easier for young people to consume vapes, making regulation challenging. Alarmingly, informal conversations with barangay officials reveal concerns about students caught vaping during school hours.

In 2024, the Philippines recorded its first vape-related death case: a 22-year-old Filipino male died of a heart attack due to severe lung injury that was linked to his daily vape use for two years. In contrast to the belief that e-cigarettes or vapes are less harmful, e-cigarettes raise the risk of acute myocardial infarction and stroke. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), e-cigarette aerosols contain toxic substances linked to lung injuries, cardiovascular disease, and nicotine dependence. Young brains are also particularly vulnerable to nicotine addiction, which can impact concentration and increase susceptibility to future substance use.

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Table 1. SMART Objectives

Specific	**Reduce youth vaping (ages 13–20) in Metro Manila by 20% within one year.**
Measurable	Conduct baseline and endline surveys, aiming for a 20% decrease in reported usage.
Achievable	Collaborate with at least 5 public/private schools and 3 barangays.
Relevant	Aligns with DOH, DepEd, and community efforts to promote youth health.
Time-bound	Project implementation: April 2025 – June 2026. Quarterly monitoring checkpoints.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Vaping among youth has emerged as a pressing global public health concern, prompting a wide array of anti-vaping campaigns aimed at prevention, cessation, and education. These initiatives, both global and local, utilize strategic communication methods, legislative efforts, and education outreach to combat the rise of e-cigarette or vape use among youth and adolescents. This review synthesizes notable campaigns from various countries, highlighting best practices and lessons learned in youth-targeted vaping prevention.

Addressing the escalating concerns surrounding youth vaping necessitates a multifaceted approach, intertwining global strategies with localized interventions to effectively combat this pervasive issue. The convergence of international campaigns and community-driven initiatives holds the potential to foster a comprehensive framework, encompassing education, prevention, and cessation efforts tailored to diverse populations and contexts (Khambaya et al., 2023). Understanding the unique risks faced by vulnerable populations, coupled with psychometrically valid assessments, is crucial for informing regulatory strategies and prevention programming (Trucco et al., 2020).

Global Campaign Strategies

One of the most notable campaigns is *The Real Cost* by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which combines fear-based appeals, evidence-based facts, and interactive tools to discourage teen vaping. The campaign employs graphic videos, social media advertisements, and school outreach programs to highlight the severe health risks associated with vaping. Central to the campaign is a scientifically grounded approach that utilizes fear appeals and self-assessment quizzes designed to encourage reflection among nicotine-dependent users. The effectiveness of this campaign is significant–resulting in a 30% reduction in the intention to vape among teenagers (FDA, 2022).

Similarly, Australia's *#VapeFreeKids* campaign emphasizes legislative advocacy and community mobilization. This initiative involves parent-school partnerships, targeted social media campaigns, and policy-oriented actions such as the banning of flavored vapes and stricter control over online sales. The campaign underscores the importance of multi-sectoral engagement in creating a safe and supportive environment for youth (VapeFreeKids, n.d.). The *Truth Initiative's "This is Quitting"* campaign is another innovative global model. Launched in 2019, this campaign targets youth and young adults through peer-driven SMS support systems and digital storytelling. By using influence among those seeking to quit vaping (Truth Initiative, 2019). Its personalized, anonymous approach makes it appealing to digital natives, especially those in Gen Z.

Moreover, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched two initiatives: *"Know the Risks"* and *"Empower Vape-Free Youth".* These campaigns primarily target parents and K-12 educators, aiming to educate adults about the risks of nicotine addiction and equip them with tools to start conversations with young people. Through downloadable toolkits, and digital media content, the campaigns reinforce the importance of adult-youth dialogue in preventing vaping (CDC, 2023).

Local Campaign Efforts in the Philippines

In the Philippine context, the Department of Health's *Vape-Free Youth Campaign* mirrors international strategies by using public service announcements (PSA) and community seminars to raise awareness. Partnering with healthcare professionals, the campaign seeks to correct misinformation and provide scientifically accurate knowledge about vaping risks (Department of Health, n.d.).

The Department of Education (DepEd) also integrates anti-vaping education into its School Health Program. This includes specialized modules in health education and the observance of "No Smoking Month" every June, where various school-level activities are conducted to discourage tobacco and vape use. Recent statements from DepEd officials acknowledge the "silent pandemic" of vaping among youth and emphasize the need for systemic educational reforms. (DepEd, 2021; ABS-CBN News, 2024; PNA, 2024).

Another significant actor is *HealthJustice Philippines*, an NGO advocating for evidence-based policies and youth-focused education. The organization provides local government units with toolkits designed to promote tobacco and vape regulation while fostering active youth engagement (HealthJustice Philippines, n.d.).

III. METHODOLOGY

Our campaign incorporates insights from several key conceptual models and approaches, primarily the COMBI (Communication-for-Behavioural-Impact) planning framework for its structured steps, the Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) to understand the multiple levels influencing vaping behavior, and principles of Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC). It also draws on the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which highlights the role of opinion leaders and early adopters in spreading new behaviors through social networks—an approach

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reflected in our use of youth influencers and peer ambassadors to promote vape-free norms.

Phase I

The first phase covers planning and formative research. It includes the following key steps:

1. Identifying Preliminary Behavioral Objectives

We started by setting broad goals for the vaping prevention program, with a focus on changing vaping-related behaviors among Gen Z. The initial goals were to prevent youth from starting to vape, help current users quit, and promote a vape-free lifestyle.

2. Planning and Conducting Formative Research

An online survey was conducted among Metro Manila youth aged 13–20 to gain insights into their vaping behaviors, knowledge, attitudes, motivations, social influences, and perceived risks and benefits associated with vaping.

Purpose of the Survey:

- Measure awareness and perceptions of vaping
- Identify motivations for starting or continuing vaping
- Understand perceived barriers to quitting
- Gather input for message development and preferred communication channels

Sampling Method:

- Convenience sampling through school networks, youth organizations, and barangay youth councils
- Target sample size: 100 respondents

Distribution Channels:

- Google Forms shared via social media, student group chats, and barangay youth councils
- Duration: 2 weeks

We also analysed local and global anti-vaping campaigns to draw key insights and best practices.

3. Analyzing, Prioritizing, and Finalizing Behavioral Objectives

Using data from the survey and insights from similar campaigns, we identified specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) behavioral objectives. Our analysis focused on the key factors influencing vaping behavior, leading us to a primary goal: to reduce vaping among youth aged 13–20 in Metro Manila by 20% within one year.

4. Segmenting Target Groups

We categorized our primary target audience (Gen Z) into distinct groups based on relevant characteristics identified during formative research, such as vaping status (non-users, experimenters, regular users), motivations, online behaviors, and receptiveness to different messages.

For our secondary audience, we've identified key influencers of Gen Z behavior—youth leaders, parents, teachers, and barangay officials. They will be engaged as part of a digital village that reinforces and supports positive behavior change.

The framework implicitly incorporates the Diffusion of Innovations Theory by engaging youth influencers and peer ambassadors. This theory explains how new behaviors and ideas spread through social networks, often driven by opinion leaders and early adopters. By involving influential Gen Z figures, the program aims to accelerate the adoption of vape-free norms and behaviors.

Phase II

The second phase covers strategy development and implementation.

5. Developing the Strategy: The program's overall approach is intended to achieve the behavioral objectives among the segmented target groups. This digital-first strategy prioritizes reaching Gen Z on their preferred digital platforms (Instagram Reels, TikTok, Facebook Stories, YouTube Shorts, Telegram, Messenger).

Our key strategic considerations include:

- Communication Approaches: Guided by the Socio-Ecological Model (SEM), the program uses a mix of strategies: Behavior Change Communication (BCC) that leverages the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) to provide information and motivation, Social Mobilization to engage communities and build support, and Advocacy to influence policy and foster an environment that supports vape-free choices.
- Messaging: Create clear, concise, engaging, and evidence-based messages that resonate with each target segment.
- Channels: Use appropriate digital and physical channels to deliver messages and engage the audience, while enlisting youth influencers, peer ambassadors, and trusted community figures (parents, teachers).
- Positioning: Position a vape-free lifestyle as a healthier and desirable choice, emphasizing empowerment through informed digital citizenship and youth-led advocacy. Minimize the perceived cost of quitting by highlighting online support and community validation.

6. Pre-testing Behaviors, Messages, and Materials: Before launching the program fully, we will test draft messages, digital content, campaign tactics (such as the #BreatheFreeChallenge),and proposed behavior changes with members of the target audience. Their feedback will be used to improve the content's clarity, relevance, and appeal.

7. Structuring the Program: A team with members from different fields will be formed, each with clear roles to help run the vaping program. Support from government agencies, NGOs, and businesses will also be tapped to reach program goals.

Phase III

The third phase involves monitoring and evaluation.

8. Establishing a Monitoring System: A monitoring system will continuously track the progress and effectiveness of the vaping program. The key indicators are related to both process evaluation (reach, engagement with digital content, participation in events) and behavioral impact monitoring (changes in vaping initiation,

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cessation rates, attitudes, and norms).

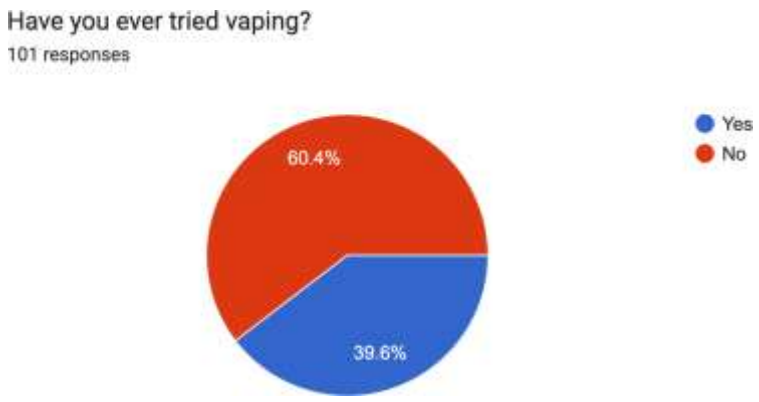
9. Managing and Sharing Information: For better information flow among program staff and partners, data and lessons learned from the formative research, pre-testing, monitoring, and implementation will be organized, stored, and shared in a central repository. This facilitates learning and adaptation throughout the program lifecycle and supports Knowledge Management.

10. Strengthening Staff Skills: Program staff and partners will undergo training in digital communication, social media engagement, youth outreach, SBCC principles, and data collection and analysis.

Survey Insights

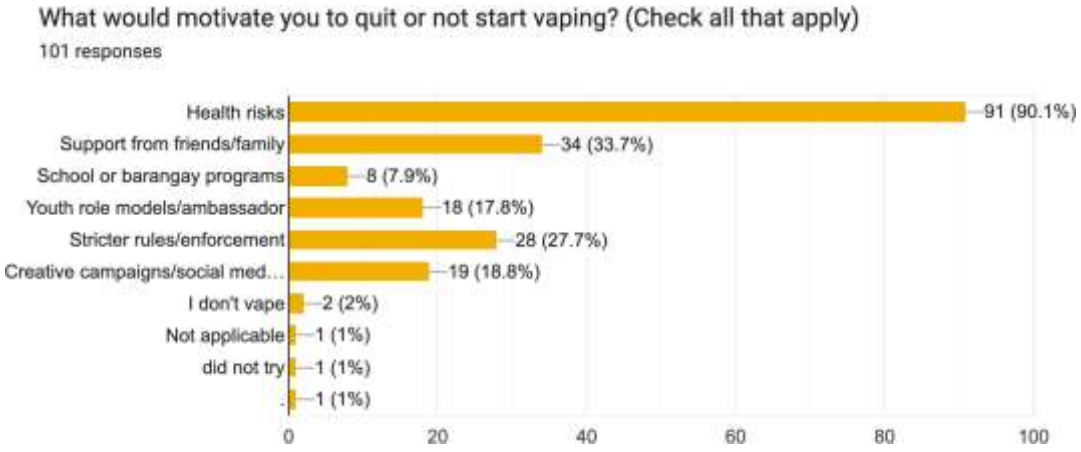
The results of the online survey provided valuable insights that helped shape the design of the vaping program. Below are the most relevant findings.

Figure 1. Vaping prevalence and initiation drivers



A significant 39.6% of respondents reported having tried vaping. The primary reasons cited were curiosity (47.5%), attractive flavors (23.8%), and stress relief (19.8%), with a smaller percentage noting peer pressure (11.9%) as a factor. These findings suggest that experimentation often stems from perceived harmlessness or novelty, rather than from nicotine dependence alone. The appeal of flavored e-liquids and the normalization of vaping among peer groups also appear to play a considerable role in trial behavior.

Figure 2. Motivations for quitting



The overwhelming majority (90.1%) of respondents cited health concerns as their primary reason for wanting to quit. This highlights an existing awareness of the dangers of vaping, particularly long-term health risks, which could be leveraged more effectively in campaigns. Other motivators included encouragement from friends and family (33.7%) and stricter regulations or enforcement (27.7%). These insights underscore the importance of supportive environments and social norms in facilitating cessation or prevention.

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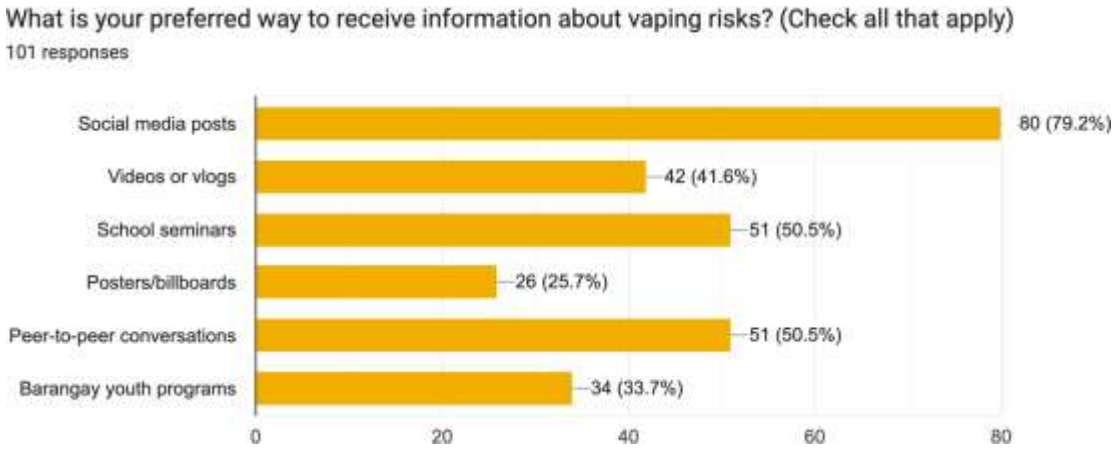
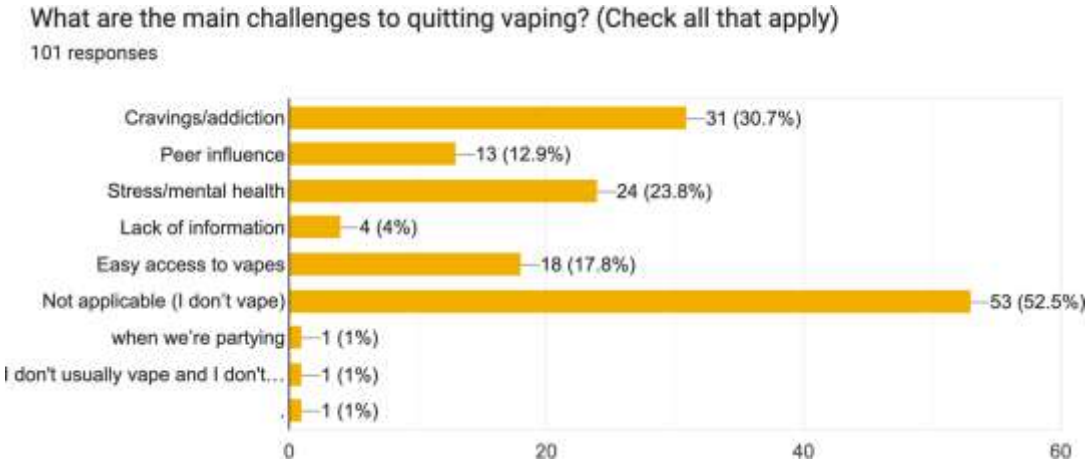
Figure 3. Preferred information channels



When asked where they would most likely engage with anti-vaping messages, 79.2% of respondents chose social media. This was followed by peer conversations (50.5%), school seminars (50.5%), and videos/blogs (41.6%). The prominence of digital platforms indicates that campaigns must have a strong online presence, while the popularity of peer and school-based messaging suggests that interventions must also be embedded in day-to-day social interactions.

Figure 4. Identified barriers to promoted behavior



While the majority of respondents express a willingness to quit vaping, several factors hinder their ability to do so. Survey responses revealed a combination of physiological, psychological, social, and structural barriers that make quitting challenging.

1. Cravings or Addiction (30.7%)
This was the most frequently cited barrier. Many users experience physical dependence on nicotine, which leads to strong urges to continue vaping despite being aware of the health risks. This addiction can be both chemical (due to nicotine) and psychological (due to habit or stress coping).

2. Stress and Mental Health (23.8%)
Vaping is often used as a coping mechanism for stress, anxiety, or emotional distress. For these respondents, vaping becomes associated with temporary relief, making it difficult to quit without addressing underlying mental health issues or providing healthier stress-relief alternatives.

3. Easy Access to Vapes (17.8%)
Respondents pointed out the convenient and widespread availability of vapes, both online and in physical stores, even in the presence of regulation. Accessibility reduces the barrier to initiation and increases the difficulty of quitting.

4. Peer Influence (12.9%)
Social circles and peer behaviors significantly affect individual choices. Being surrounded by peers who vape makes quitting more challenging due to social pressure, fear of exclusion, or normalization of the habit.

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5. Lack of Information (4%)
Some respondents identified a lack of accurate or accessible information about the dangers of vaping and how to quit. This includes the absence of clear messaging, targeted support, or trusted sources to guide their decision-making.

Sample Survey Questions

Section 1: Demographic Profile

1. Age:
   - 13–15
   - 16–18
   - 19–20

2. Gender:
   - Male
   - Female
   - Prefer not to say

3. Are you currently enrolled in school?
   - Yes
   - No

Section 2: Awareness and Perceptions

4. Have you heard about vaping/e-cigarettes?
   - Yes
   - No

5. Where did you first hear about vaping? (Check all that apply)
   - Social media
   - Friends
   - Family
   - School
   - Vape shop or online store
   - Not applicable (I am not aware)
   - Other: _____

6. How harmful do you think vaping is to your health?
   - Not harmful at all
   - Slightly harmful
   - Moderately harmful
   - Very harmful
   - I don't know

Section 3: Behavior

7. Have you ever tried vaping?
   - Yes
   - No

8. If yes, how often do you vape?
   - Rarely (once a month or less)
   - Occasionally (a few times a month)
   - Regularly (once a week or more)

9. What influenced you to try vaping? (Check all that apply)
   - Curiosity
   - Peer pressure

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- Stress relief
- Flavors/taste
- Social media influence
- Other: _____

Section 4: Barriers, Motivations to Quit

10. If you currently vape, have you ever tried quitting?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not applicable (I don't vape)

11. What are the main challenges to quitting vaping? (Check all that apply)
    - Cravings/addiction
    - Peer influence
    - Stress/mental health
    - Lack of information
    - Easy access to vapes
    - Not applicable (I don't vape)
    - Other: _____

12. What would motivate you to quit or not start vaping? (Check all that apply)
    - Health risks
    - Support from friends/family
    - School or barangay programs
    - Youth role models/ambassadors
    - Stricter rules/enforcement
    - Creative campaigns/social media influence
    - Other: _____

Section 5: Communication Preferences

13. What is your preferred way to receive information about vaping risks? (Check all that apply)
    - Social media posts
    - Videos or vlogs
    - School seminars
    - Posters/billboards
    - Peer-to-peer conversations
    - Barangay youth programs

14. What social media platform do you use most often?
    - Facebook
    - Instagram
    - TikTok
    - YouTube
    - X (Twitter)
    - Other: _____

15. Would you be interested in participating in anti-vaping activities?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Maybe

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Framework Used

For this social marketing plan, we intend to utilize the **Participatory Communication Model**, a well-established framework in development communication. This model emphasizes the active involvement of the community in all stages of the campaign — from identifying the problem to co-creating solutions and sustaining efforts over time. Rather than treating the target audience as passive recipients of information, the participatory approach recognizes them as active contributors and decision-makers.

Why Participatory Communication?

- Youth are not just message recipients — they become campaign co-creators through surveys, peer ambassador roles, and local school activities.
- The approach builds ownership and relevance, increasing the likelihood of behavior change.
- Community engagement ensures that solutions are culturally appropriate and context-specific (in this case, Metro Manila City youth culture).

Reflecting Paulo Freire's "Dialogic Communication" Principles

This campaign also draws inspiration from Paulo Freire's concept of dialogic communication, which emphasizes two-way, respectful, and empowering dialogues within communities. Freire advocates for genuine conversations where people critically reflect on their realities and collectively find solutions to their problems.

In our campaign design:

- Youth voices will be placed at the center. Through initial surveys and the formation of peer ambassador programs, we plan to collect and respond to the lived experiences of young people navigating vape culture.
- Messaging will be co-created with the community, moving away from top-down health communication and toward **youth-driven narratives**.
- We plan to initiate intergenerational and cross-sectoral dialogues — involving teachers, health workers, and parents — to promote shared learning and accountability.

By adopting Freire's dialogic principles, the campaign seeks to empower youth not only to resist peer pressure and marketing tactics but also to **become advocates for their own health and well-being**.

Projected Application in the Campaign Problem Identification:

- We have conducted a preliminary survey among youth in Metro Manila to understand perceptions and behaviors related to vaping.
- These data will inform the identification of key motivators for vaping and barriers to quitting, directly reflecting youth perspectives.

Co-creation of Solutions

- Youth will be engaged in message testing and development (e.g., hashtags, slogans, poster design).
- We intend to solicit feedback from students and community members to ensure that campaign materials remain relevant and resonant.

Community Mobilization

- Future plans include collaboration with barangay leaders, DepEd Metro Manila, and local schools to implement education sessions and campaign activations.
- Peer ambassadors and educator champions will help deliver campaign messages and facilitate youth-focused activities.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement:

- We plan to integrate ongoing feedback loops via social media engagement metrics and post-activity surveys.
- Youth suggestions will guide iterative improvements to both content and approach.

Sustainability and Ownership

- We envision schools and community organizations taking ownership of the campaign for long-term continuity.
- Partnerships with local health workers and stakeholders will be nurtured to maintain program relevance and reach.

In summary, the participatory communication model — enhanced by Paulo Freire's dialogic communication principles — is envisioned to guide our campaign development. This ensures that the program is **not only for the youth but also by the youth**, contributing to a community-rooted, transformative, and sustainable response to the rising issue of youth vaping in Metro Manila.

IV. SOCIAL MARKETING PLAN

The social marketing plan for this campaign is guided by the application of the 4Ps of social marketing—product, price, place, and promotion—tailored to address the rising prevalence of vaping among youth in Metro Manila. This section outlines how each element is strategically designed to facilitate behavior change through digital activism, peer-led engagement, and localized intervention.

Product

The campaign's **core product** is the adoption of a healthier, vape-free lifestyle among Filipino youth. This desired behavior is framed not only as a health imperative

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but as an empowering act of digital citizenship and youth-led advocacy.

The **actual product** encompasses access to evidence-based, youth-friendly content across social platforms, virtual peer support communities, and accessible digital learning modules designed to debunk myths and highlight the risks of vaping.

Finally, the **augmented product** includes non-monetary incentives such as digital certificates, e-badges, and social media recognition for "Vape-Free Youth Champions." These incentives increase the campaign's perceived value and support positive identity formation among its young participants.

Price

In social marketing, price refers not only to financial cost but also to the psychological and social barriers associated with adopting a new behavior. In this campaign, the **perceived costs** of quitting vaping include the fear of losing peer connection, difficulty managing academic or emotional stress without nicotine, and the social appeal of vape culture.

To mitigate these costs, the campaign offers a range of **digital interventions**, including free access to youth counseling services, peer support groups on platforms like Telegram and Discord, and social validation through public support from youth influencers. These initiatives reduce resistance and frame quitting vaping as a socially acceptable and supported choice.

Place

- **Digital Platforms**
  - The strategic dissemination of the campaign takes a **digital-first approach**, prioritizing accessibility and presence in the platforms most frequented by Gen Z. These include TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and Facebook Stories—platforms selected for their strong algorithmic reach and interactive potential. The campaign will also integrate **mobile messaging platforms** such as Telegram and Messenger to facilitate ongoing engagement and provide responsive support.
- **Physical Spaces**
  - Simultaneously, **physical spaces** such as schools, community centers, and barangay events will serve as complementary spaces for interaction. QR codes on printed materials will connect participants to the digital campaign hub, bridging the online and offline environments.

Promotion

Promotion activities are designed to be immersive, participatory, and aligned with the digital habits of the youth demographic. The campaign's branding hinges on the hashtags #SkipTheVAPE and #FactsNotFilters, which serve as unifying calls to action across platforms.

- **Hashtags & Slogans**
  - "#SkipTheVAPE"
  - "#FactsNotFilters"
  - New digital challenge: **#BreatheFreeChallenge** (a TikTok trend where users share 10-second reels showing what they do instead of vaping — skateboarding, singing, studying, dancing).
- **Campaign Tactics**
  - Collaborations with Gen Z TikTok influencers and student creators.
  - Short videos busting myths in "reaction format" (i.e., reacting to vape ads and debunking them).
  - Meme contests, digital art duels, and infographics co-created with schools and youth groups.
- **Participatory Digital Events**
  - Vape-free digital pledges signed online.
  - Youth-led live discussions via Facebook Live and YouTube.
  - Q&A sessions with doctors via Instagram Live or TikTok Live.

Target Audience

The **primary target audience** consists of **Gen Z youth aged 13–20** in Metro Manila, who are most vulnerable to peer pressure and digital misinformation surrounding vaping. They are digital natives and highly influenced by content shared by their peers and online personalities. The **secondary audience** includes **parents, teachers, barangay officials, and youth group leaders**, who serve as influencers and accountability figures in the community. These stakeholders form what the campaign identifies as the "digital village," providing reinforcement for positive behavior change.

Sample Messaging

Slogan and Visual Identity

The campaign is anchored in the hashtag **#SkipTheVAPE**, which functions as a compact, high-impact message tailored for virality across platforms. This slogan is reinforced through a strong visual identity using **bold, high-contrast color schemes**, particularly neon purple against highlighting the black background of the title campaign, to demand attention as youth scroll through their feeds. The **typography** is intentionally bold and edgy, matching the assertive tone of the campaign and appealing to a youthful, rebellious aesthetic. Together, these elements

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signal urgency, clarity, and empowerment.

Social Media Messaging Samples

- **Instagram Story Poll:**
  - *"Do you know what's really in a vape? 🦪🧐"* Poll Options: "Nicotine & Toxins" / "Just Flavors" Follow-up slide: Quick fact with #FactsNotFilters
  - "What would you do with ₱500 instead of spending it on vape pods?" Options: "New gear 🎮" / "Art supplies 🎨" / "Netflix 🍿" / "Food trip 🍔" Next slide: "Don't fund the vape industry. Fund your passion. #SkipTheVAPE #FactsNotFilters"

- **Twitter Post**
  - *"Vapes aren't harmless. They contain nicotine, toxic metals, and chemicals that can damage young lungs. 🫁 Protect your health. Protect your future. #SkipTheVAPE #FactsNotFilters"*
  - 🎥 *"Show us your 'Vape-Free Power Move' — dance, draw, code, rap, bake —whatever helps you stay away from vaping!"*
    Use sound: Upbeat OPM or K-pop mix. Hashtag: #BreatheFreeChallenge

- **Facebook Carousel Post:**
  - Slide 1: "Myth: Vapes are safe."
  - Slide 2: "Fact: Vapes contain harmful chemicals linked to lung damage."
  - Slide 3: "Make the clear choice. #SkipTheVAPE #FactsNotFilters"

Campaign Materials

- 🎨 **Creatives #SkipTheVape - High School Digital Art Inter-School Competition**
  - Categories: Still Images (Memes, Posters, Infographics) & Video (Reels, Skits)
  - Social Media Flow: Launch > Submission > Posting > Voting (❤️= votes) > Recognition
  - Incentives: Digital certificates, badges, reposting of entries on campaign platforms
- 🚴 **Ride to #SkipTheVAPE - Cycling in Metro Manila Campaign**
  - Challenge: Ride 5KM and share a before-vs-after video with #BreatheFreeChallenge
  - Recognition: Vape-Free Pedal Champions digital badges and QR-coded certificates
- 📢 **#DoTheVapeTalk - Educator & Parent Messaging:**
  - Parent Toolkits: Monthly social posts, home badges, and feature stories (e.g., "Vape-Free Homes")
  - Teacher Series: "Creative Classrooms Against Vape" — feature teachers in sports, arts, STEM using class tools to reinforce a healthy lifestyle

These sample messages, visuals, and digital formats are central to the campaign's digital activism direction and are designed to support behavior change, online engagement, and offline advocacy with creative expression.

V. SOCIAL MOBILIZATION PLAN

The social mobilization plan aims to mobilize the community of decision makers in phases and pillars according to the timeline of the campaign. The programs are tailored in a digital format (i.e social media campaigns and website) according to the participatory communication strategy survey results. Each program responds to the target audience's needs to encourage contributing actions towards the youth's positive behavior change of replacing the use of vapes with a healthier lifestyle.

PILLAR 1: Beneficiary Mobilization

- #SkipTheVape
- Target Audience: Gen Z Youth (ages 13–20), specifically students, student leaders, Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) members, and youth groups in Metro Manila
- Timeline: May to June 2025
- Objective: To actively engage the audience in understanding the health risks of vaping and to encourage positive behavior change by promoting a healthier lifestyle through creative expression, such as art and digital media projects, and active habits like skipping, running, and cycling.

1) Creatives #SkipTheVape

- High School Digital Art Inter-School Competition
- Target Audience: Students, Student Leaders, Teachers
- When: May 2025
- To creatively raise awareness about the dangers of vaping and the benefits of quitting to commemorate "World No Tobacco Day," high School art teachers and students in Metro Manila are invited to participate in a "Digital Art Inter-school Competition."
- Categories of Entries:
  - Still Image (Memes, Digital Posters, Infographics) and
  - Video (Animated Reels, edited clips, or skits (max of 5 minutes)
- Online Competition Flow:

Prelaunch - Schools will be contacted in

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advance to confirm interest and be featured in the campaign launch post. Teachers will be given the SkipTheVape Educators Kit as part of the collaboration proposal.

- *Social Media Launch* - Announcement of schools participating and tagging their social media profiles with the mention of the campaign taglines, Creatives #SkipTheVape and Teach to #SkipTheVape.
- Submission of entries - Schools will submit entries through the Creatives #SkipTheVape Form, ensuring that the school name, student name(s), category, and a short caption is included
- *Posting of Entries* - All submissions posted on SkipTheVape social media pages and tagged with the school's social media page, adding tags of #SkipTheVape #WorldNoTobaccoDayPh
- *Engagement and Voting Period* - Reactions (❤️only) counted as votes, schools are encouraged to share the official post and rally support from students, alumni, and families
- *Winner Announcement* - Winning Entries per category based on the highest number of heart reactions. Winners will be featured in a highlight post and tagged, provided a digital certificate and digital badges
  - Competition will be launched through SkipTheVape's social media pages (FB, IG, TikTok).

2) Ride to #SkipTheVape

- Cycling in Metro Manila Social Media Competition & Campaign
- Target Audience: Youth Influencers, Youth Groups, Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) members
- When: June 2025
- To engage youth in an empowering, healthy lifestyle alternative to vaping through a community-led bike event in partnership with the *Pasa-bike: Cycling Youth Group* to celebrate "World Bicycle Day" and in coordination with Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) to amplify the campaign's reach and impact.
- The event promotes cycling as a positive lifestyle choice instead of vaping, fosters community connection, and leverages social media.
  - Program Campaign Flow:
  - *Pre-Launch*
    - Presentation of the SkipTheVape Campaign to *Pasa-bike: Cycling Youth Group* and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) using our landing page and partnership proposal deck.
    - Upon confirmed collaboration, roles are to be clarified (who handles rider sign-ups, route planning), and logistics are to be finalised (route, meeting point, safety volunteers, secure permits).
    - Digital kits for the participants will be prepared, such as the "Facebook Temporary Profile Frame", and invite them to follow SkipTheVape's social media pages and use official campaign tags: Ride to #SkipTheVape and #BreatheFreeChallenge
  - *Social Media Launch*
    - Social media post tagging the partners and participating youth groups using the official campaign tags.
    - Share teasers and countdown posts until the date of the event.
  - *Event day activation*
    - Campaign stakeholder to kick-off event on confirmed participating locations. Challenge: ride a minimum of 5KM. Participants are encouraged to join the Tiktok series #BreatheFreeChallenge by taking a video of themselves before vs. after the cycling event: reference.
  - *Post-event* -
    - Participants will be awarded digital certifications of "Vape-Free Pedal Champions". QR code linked to personalized certificate will be sent to each participant. Highlight entries in Tiktok, reshare in Facebook/Instagram reels.

PILLAR 2: Resource Mobilization (Political, Government, Non-Governmental)

- Partners #SkipTheVape
- Target Partners: Metro Manila City Health Office, Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Health (DOH), socially-responsible businesses, and local government authorities
- Timeline: June 2025 - June 2026
- Objective: To seek and build meaningful partnerships with local authorities and agencies

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that align with SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, specifically in lowering mortality caused by lung cancer and other nicotine-related diseases through youth-empowered preventive campaigns.

- Action Plan:
  - Identify and target partners
  - Present proposal deck
    - Campaign Summary of Creatives #SkipTheVape: Digital Art Inter-School Competition and Ride to #SkipTheVape Cycling in Metro Manila Social Media Competition & Campaign
    - Link its contribution to SDG 3
    - Past success stories of quitting vapes from youth (Reference)
    - What we're asking for: sponsorship, in-kind support, co-branding
    - What we're offering: Recognition in all campaign materials and social media, logo placement in certificates & program collaborations, post-event report with real data, photos, testimonials, and content that they can reuse for their report
  - Quarter and Annual Report Submission

PILLAR 3: Change Influencer Mobilization (Families, Teachers, and Peer Ambassadors, and Health Workers)

- Target audience: Parents and Teachers
- Timeline: April 2025 to June 2026
- Objective: To activate trusted community influencers - parents, teachers, peer ambassadors, and health workers, to serve as front-liners in shaping youth attitudes and behavior around vaping through online storytelling, education, and support.
- Platform: Telegram / Discord / WhatsApp / Facebook Group Chats
- Action Plan:
  - For Parents - #SkipTheVape at Home - Receive family educational resources kit
    - Reference to "Not my kid" Ad - not all kids are honest with their parents about the use of vape
    - Reference to #DoTheVapeTalk - guide points on how parents can speak with their kids about vape
    - Provide a "#SkipTheVape at Home" Digital Badge / Facebook Profile Frame
    - Feature "Vape-Free Home" series with parents / families monthly social media posts, highlighting achievements, tips, and success stories
    - Partnership with Parents Against Vape
  - For Teachers - Teach to # SkipTheVape - Receive faculty educational resources kit
    - "Creative ways to manage stress" - guides on a cautious yet helpful approach with students by offering alternative ways to manage stress aside from vaping
    - "Healthy ways to replace using vape" - guide points on how their subject-focused teaching in school approach can help encourage youth to have a healthier lifestyle instead of using vape (ie. basketball coach)
    - Provide a digital certificate of recognition
    - Provide a "Teach to #SkipTheVape" Digital Badge / Facebook profile frame or frame that can be added to the email signature
    - Feature "Vape-Free Educator" series with monthly social media posts highlighting success stories of teacher champions.

The program's design of using hashtags and digital centralized resources fosters a "connective" digital movement (Estrella-Ramón et al., 2024), allowing internet users to access, engage, and contribute their voices, ultimately driving a scalable and sustainable impact.

VI.MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

A strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework is essential to track the progress and impact of the "#SkipTheVAPE / #FactsNotFilters" campaign. This part outlines how indicators will be measured, methods of data collection, and how the campaign's gains will be sustained beyond its timeline.

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Table 2. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Indicator Type	Indicators	Metric/Method	Key Concepts to Keep In Mind
Input (Process)	1. No. of school seminars conducted 2. No. of informational materials produced and distributed 3. No. of online posts, videos, and infographics published 4. No. of partnerships formed with schools and barangays schools and barangays 5. Quality checking of materials	1. Year-Round Work Programming Sheet (for the number of seminars, online posts, and partnerships) 2. The Seven Cs of Effective Communication (Pitrow, et al., 1997; Williams, 1992), for quality checking.	1. Product-MarketFit Identification in Commercial Marketing (for programming and planning of seminars and publication materials. 2. Facts-based and survey-based determination of the needs and wants of the target audience, youth and key stakeholders, and delivering the desired satisfactions effectively (Kotler and Roberto1989). 3. Strategic identification of appropriate channels. Stuart (1995)emphasizes that a communication strategy is a mix of interpersonal communication channels, community/group media, and mass media
Output	1. No. of students and community members reached 2. Social media engagement rate (likes, shares, comments) 3. No. of peer advocates trained 4. Survey results showing shifts in perceptions and intentions 5. No. of linkages and partnerships	1. Social Media Analytics (for the number of engagements) 2. Accomplishment reporting for every seminar conducted 3. Event Attendance Logs 4. Feedback Forms and Testimonials 5. Vape-Free Pledge Tracker 6. Resource management and mobilization programming	1. Midstream–Upstr eam Influence, influencing from individuals to policymakers. When we make people aware, we also invite them to rally behind the campaign—addin g numbers to the movement and influencing upstream factors to create long-term policies. As stated in Lee, Kotler, and Rothschild (2011), the true power of social marketing lies in creating downstream (individual behavior) and upstream (policy or community-level) change. We aim for both—educating youth and influencing local policy support.

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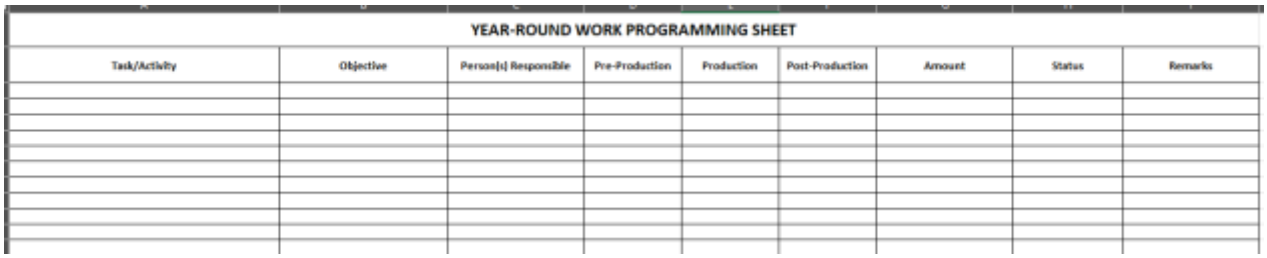
Outcome	1. 20% decrease in self-reported vaping cases among youth in Metro Manila 2. Improved understanding of health risks associated with vaping 3. Increased support for vape-free policies in Metro Manila 4. Increase in funding from partnerships and linkages	1. Research surveys and hypothesis testing. The data will be analyzed against the campaign's objective of achieving a 20% reduction in self-reported use within one year.	1. Updated Work Programming Sheet, track outcomes ensuring successful compliance to the programmed targets.

To effectively assess the progress and impact of the "#SkipTheVAPE / #FactsNotFilters" campaign, this plan utilizes a structured **Indicator Framework** divided into three key categories: input, output, and outcome. These indicators ensure that each phase of the campaign—from planning and execution to behavioral change and policy support—is monitored and evaluated strategically.

Under **Input** indicators, we track the resources and activities mobilized throughout the campaign. These include the number of school seminars conducted, informational materials produced and distributed, content uploaded online (such as videos, infographics, and educational posts), and the number of partnerships formed with schools and barangays. These are documented through seminar and publication work programming, which serves as the main reference for verifying that the necessary inputs are being delivered as planned. The quality of materials will be evaluated using Pitrow, et al., (1997) and Williams (1992) "The Seven Cs of Effective Communication," aimed at interrupting the vaping behavior cycle among age 13-20 youths in Metro Manila.

A year-round work programming sheet will be crafted as a planning and monitoring device to ensure that campaign activities are systematically scheduled, implemented, and tracked across the project's timeline. This tool will outline weekly/monthly targets, identify responsible persons or partner groups, allocate resources accordingly, and set clear timelines for each activity production. It will also serve as a reference for after-activity reporting and evaluation, allowing the campaign team to adjust strategies and assess progress against each activity objective, reinforcing accountability among stakeholders. Also, the programming sheet will support the operational backbone of the campaign, making sure that every initiative contribute directly to combating the rise of youth vaping in Metro Manila.

Figure 5. Year-Round Work Programming Sheet



YEAR-ROUND WORK PROGRAMMING SHEET

Task/Activity	Objective	Person(s) Responsible	Pre-Production	Production	Post-Production	Amount	Status	Remarks

The **Output** indicators reflect the immediate reach and engagement of the campaign. These include the number of students and community members reached, social media engagement metrics (likes, shares, and comments), the number of peer advocates trained, and survey results showing shifts in perception and intention regarding vaping. Metrics for this section are drawn from social media analytics, accomplishment reports per seminar, event attendance logs, feedback forms, testimonials, and a dedicated Vape-Free Pledge Tracker. These tools help measure not just exposure, but how the message is resonating with the target audience. Lastly, the **Outcome** indicators focus on long-term behavioral and social impact. These cover the percentage decrease in self-reported vaping cases among youth, improved understanding of the health risks associated with vaping, and the increased support for vape-free policies in communities. These outcomes will be evaluated through research surveys and hypothesis testing to determine whether the campaign has achieved its core goal of achieving a 20% reduction in self-reported use within one year.

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Sustainability Plan

To ensure the long-term relevance and continuity of the "#SkipTheVAPE" campaign beyond its one-year implementation, the plan will focus on two strategic pillars:

1. Election of Officers – SkipTheVAPE Movement

After one year of rolling out campaign initiatives, the movement will enter its consolidation phase by holding its first election of officers. This election is timed intentionally, after the awareness phase, when more youth participants have become familiar with the advocacy and are ready to take active leadership roles. The process includes a call for nominations, vetting of candidates, and a hybrid voting setup (online and in-person) to ensure accessibility. Elected officers will be tasked with sustaining Vape-Free activities, representing youth voices in policy dialogues, and organizing community engagement efforts under the movement. This formal leadership structure will transform the campaign into a youth-led platform for continuous advocacy.

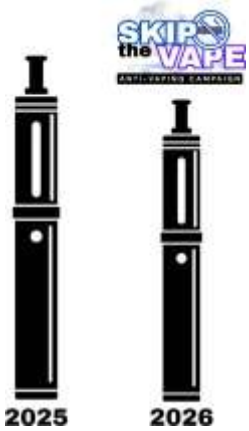
2. Partnerships with Local Stakeholders

Sustainability also depends on institutional collaboration. To this end, the campaign will actively partner with local government units, particularly through Local Youth Development Offices (LYDOs), Student Organizations, Sangguniang Kabataan councils, and barangay youth leaders. This is to embed anti-vaping messages into existing youth development programs. These partnerships will allow the campaign to be mainstreamed into local health advocacy, peer education training, and school-community events. Through these collaborations, the campaign ensures that its resources, messages, and trained youth advocates are integrated into official programs, receiving both technical and logistical support from LGUs, Schools, and Civic Organizations. These partnerships will also open doors for continued funding, policy support, and recognition at the community level.

VII CONCLUSION

Our calls to action — #SkipTheVAPE — encapsulate the essence of this campaign. It's more than just a digital movement; it's a collective stand against harmful misinformation and a rallying cry for youth to reclaim their right to good health and informed choices.

We envision a future where Filipino youth are empowered to say no to peer pressure, seek out real information, and support one another in making healthy decisions. Anchored in the campaign's objective of reducing youth vaping in Metro Manila by 20%, we apply key concepts from the principles of *dialogic communication* and digital activism. This campaign is designed to be responsive to the realities of the community and aligned with the goals of Sustainable Development Goal No. 3 — ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all. These frameworks guide our efforts to ensure that messages resonate, strategies are audience-centered, and policies are shaped by youth participation. We believe the influence of this campaign will strengthen awareness and inspire replication in other communities.



We call on students, educators, parents, barangay leaders, peer advocates, and health professionals to join us. Let's co-create a community where the youth are not just passive recipients of health information, but active changemakers in their own right.

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VIII.DECLARATION OF USE OF AI TOOLS

This study used the latest free version of ChatGPT by OpenAI was used as a supplementary tool to assist in identifying relevant academic references and exploring preliminary ideas and topics. Its use was limited to providing background context and helping refine the direction of literature searches. ChatGPT was not used to generate original content or to perform any critical analysis.

Additionally, basic grammar and spelling checks were carried out using the free versions of Grammarly and Google Docs' built-in editing tools. These tools were employed solely for copy-editing, while all substantive writing, analysis, and final editorial decisions were made independently by the authors.

The authors used these digital tools in adherence to academic integrity guidelines and were strictly limited to a supportive role in the research and writing process.

IX.ANNEXES

- *Survey Form: https://forms.gle/yy6xUdXvwBrxyUaaA*
- *Website: https://skipthevape.today/*