

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND CRIMINAL MOTIVES: A SEMANTIC STUDY OF A SUICIDE NOTE

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Abstract

This research analyzes how traumatic childhood experiences shaped François Vérove's criminal motives through a semantic study of his suicide note. This study fills the gap in the relationship between the impact of trauma and crime motive and legal framework through the assertions in suicide letters. Using a qualitative approach, the research analyzed a suicide note written by François Vérove, a former French gendarme. Linguistic analysis using Leech's theory of meaning; psychological theory using adverse childhood experience by V.J. Felitti, and assisted by French laws—Code Pénal and Code de Procédure Pénale. Three stages of analysis were applied: trauma identification, meaning interpretation, and meaning relationship mapping. The findings show that word choice serves as a means of justification, emotional representation, and symbolic explanation for violent acts, while also indicating statements that violate French law. This study concludes that the application of linguistic analysis supported by psychological and legal perspectives can broaden our understanding of the perpetrator's motives and determine the appropriate punishment for perpetrators who commit suicide.

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INTRODUCTION

News about crime is echoed at all times and around the world. In the report of the World Health Organization, cases of physical and sexual harassment have been experienced by approximately 736 million women (Mohan, 2021). Not only cases of violence, cases of murders claimed many lives as well. According to the United Nations News, there were 458,000 murder cases worldwide. Based on the sources above, women dominate as victims of rape (Von Diemar, 2023). However, people of all ages can be victims of murder.

This research arises a case of François Vérove, who is a suicidal perpetrator, admitting to his crime in his last letter that was published on French digital news portals. In that letter, the offender's emotions, internal motive, and attitude toward French law. Using forensic psycholinguistics as an approach, the suicide note becomes the object of study to reveal the link between language, childhood trauma, and lawlessness. François Vérove's storyline that supports the suicide note reveals complex problems, such as crimes rooted in childhood trauma. Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) by Vincent J. Felitti et al. (1998) is used to analyze François Vérove's psychological condition. This theory plays an important role in helping to understand the relationship between the crimes François Vérove committed and his childhood trauma.

Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), a study investigating the influence of childhood trauma on children's development. This study also represents the enduring correlation between childhood trauma exposure and subsequent physical illness and adult morality (Vincent J. Felitti et al., 1998). Childhood trauma is divided into five types: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect (Van Beeck et al., 2024). During François Vérove's growth and development, he experienced sexual harassment, emotional abuse, and neglect. The type of trauma may be broader, as exemplified by François Vérove, who faced the loss of his mother; it constitutes a form of childhood trauma (Wood et al., 2023). Prolonged exposure to various traumas impacts the anatomy of the human brain. Childhood trauma can lead to aggressive conduct (Nurhayati & Budi Setyani, 2021). Children tend to imitate the behavior of parents or caregivers as a coping strategy without knowing the impact of this behavior. Aggressive behavior, violence, and serious criminality in adulthood can be formed because in childhood, which is when immature cognitive abilities have been exposed to violence (Altintas & Bilici, 2018; Wilona & Rahayu, 2020). Childhood trauma can also increase the risk of suicide (Wu et al., 2022).

The suicide note written by François Vérove is analyzed with semantics—types of meaning by Geoffrey Leech. Leech (1981) conveys that semantics is the study of meaning and the human mind. Semantics is related to how we classify and convey our experiences through language. Leech (1981) proposed types of meaning as follows: (1) conceptual meaning, (2) connotative meaning, (3) social meaning, (4) affective meaning, (5) reflected meaning, (6) collocative meaning, and (7) thematic meaning. The linguistic theory applied can assist the author in elucidating the dual meaning of statements made by criminal offenders. Consequently, this study encompasses the forensic function. Forensic linguistics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on the law, crime investigation, court processes, and linguistic analyses (Laia, 2022). This study focuses on forensic linguistics to analyze Vérove's suicide note content and connect it to criminal law articles under French legislation—*Code Pénal* and *Code de Procédure Pénale*.

A previous study conducted by Perez et al. (2016) shows that the relationship between childhood adversity and suicide is associated with maladaptive personality development. Another research by (Van Duin et al., 2021) demonstrates the correlation between crime history and bad childhood experiences, indicating that both elements can predict the probability of recidivism and social functionality in adults dealing with a variety of difficulties. A case study in forensic psycholinguistics research, (Dhiba, Arry D. F. & Santoso, 2024) examined the interrogation transcripts of rape perpetrator and victim during the trial with a pragmatic approach to be linked to the legal context and supported by Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis to reveal the psychological conditions of rape perpetrator and victim. These researches are relevant, but have not touched two aspects: Linguistics analysis of private document, such as suicide note, and Combination between semantic analysis, trauma theories, and legal context.

The previous researchers focusing on interview transcript of the trial, or common narrative, while this research focusing on final text that written by the perpetrator before committing to suicide. In addition to ACE, the concept of death instinct or Thanatos in Freud's psychoanalysis can help to explain that a person's traumatic experiences might cause them to exhibit harmful behaviors that include violence against themselves and others. Trauma appears to unleash the desire to obliterate everything that is felt and experienced by oneself, as well as all that is seen (Kli, 2018; Prastyadi & Pandin, 2024). In the analysis of Vérove, the tendency to "destroy" both the victim and himself is in line with the dual destructive patterns associated with Thanatos.

This research is limited to semantic analysis of four assertions in a suicide note written by François Vérove. These linguistic features help us comprehend the reasons and feelings

underlying the tragic act (Herman et al., 2023). Then, the legal aspect discussed only related Vérove's statements to criminal consequences in the French justice system. Based on the background described above, this research formulated two main questions: How do the semantic meanings in François Vérove's suicide letter reflect criminal motives rooted in traumatic childhood experiences? And What are the laws violated in his statements written in his suicide note?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research utilizes a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study method. Descriptive research is used to describe the phenomenon systematically and factually (Hardani et al., 2020), while a qualitative approach is chosen because it focuses on a deep understanding of the meaning behind social phenomena (Fadli, 2021). In this context, the research does not aim to produce statistical measurements, but rather to interpret the linguistic and psychological meanings contained in a perpetrator's suicide note. This approach allows the authors to explore the relationship between psychology, linguistics, and forensic aspects contextually, so that the resulting analysis is more comprehensive and relevant to the research objective.

The case study method is used to study a phenomenon of a real case and explore aspects in it comprehensively and contextually, not only in the domain of linguistics, but also in psychological and forensic perspectives. Therefore, the case study method is particularly appropriate when the research subject is a real issue that will be explored and disclosed in various aspects (Cissey Usman et al., 2025).

Research Object

The case study in this research utilizes four sentences from the suicide note written by a perpetrator published on French news portals as the primary data. Since the suicide note contains a complex linguistic structure, it shows a psychological condition, and statements that lead to a legal context. The case of François Vérove is selected because it contains unique characteristics, such as the perpetrator was committed to suicide after confessed his criminal acts, traumatic history that can mapped to the ACE theory, and the existence of a documented criminal record. In addition, the suicide letter is the only tool that can reveal the perpetrator's crime, therefore linguistic analysis is the most relevant method to understand his motivation and moral conflict.

To analyse François Vérove's psychological side in depth, the authors also used his life story as supporting data obtained from French online media (Goyon, 2021; Le Journal de Saône et Loire, 2021; Planet.fr, 2021; Wikipedia, n.d.). Thus, this research analyses a suicide note with marked statements linguistically and supported by Vérove's background that indicate adverse childhood experiences and criminal acts.

Instruments

In qualitative research, human instruments or the authors serve as the instrument for collecting and analyzing data. The authors must obtain appropriate and valid information (Thalha et al., 2019). Therefore, the authors responsible for the observation, identification, and interpretation of assertions in suicide note and supporting data (Mubarok & Nurmuda, 2025). As the author is the instrument, it is crucial to acknowledge the potential influence of biases and personal perspective on the interpretation of the data (Stige et al., 2024). Besides the authors as the main instrument, assisted by the Larousse dictionary for semantic analysis and French law literatures (*Code Pénal* and *Code de Procédure Pénale*) for legal context.

Data Analysis

This study uses documentation and data reduction methods to collect data. Once the data search was completed and stored in digital format from French news portals and Wikipedia as

the supporting data, unnecessary data was selected and reduced so that the analysis remained focused on the objective. The authors use documentation method because the research object is a suicide note as primary data, and the life story of the perpetrator as supporting data are published on French digital news. The researchers are unable to make observations directly to the event or the perpetrator; therefore, the most relevant and possible technique is data documentation from various online sources. Using online news is also deemed valid because the original suicide note of the perpetrator and his life story are shown publicly. In the process of data documentation, a large amount of information is collected. Hence, reduction data is required to filter and focusing the important data for precise analysis of sentences with significant psycholinguistics content and related to legal aspects that are relevant to research purposes.

A sampling technique employed in this research is purposive sampling, in which the authors select what needs to be known about information based on certain considerations (Etikan, 2016). Data analysis methodologies grounded in adverse childhood experience (ACE) theory by Vincent Felitti, et al., as well as semantics theory, alongside forensic support in accordance with France laws (*Code Pénal* and *Code de Procédure Pénale*). Analyzing data was through in four steps as follows: Translate the suicide note from French into English; determine the sentences to be dissected; and analyse the selected sentences to identify the kind of semantics and capture the psychological sense of words and phrases choices. This technique is useful to uncover the underlying meanings and legal violation inside the suicide note by semantic analysis. In addition, the supporting data, which is François Vérove's life story, reveals that his psychological condition leads him to criminal acts.

The possibility of researcher bias in this study stems from the fact that, as the party responsible for interpreting meaning, it may develop particular biases in how it reads the perpetrators' words, particularly with respect to the relationship between trauma and criminal motives. To reduce bias, the psychological interpretation was based on empirical data from the literature on suicide and childhood trauma, and the analysis was carried out using Leech's categories of meaning.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

This findings section presents the results of the semantic analysis of two research questions: (1) the factors that shaped François Vérove's criminal motives and (2) the forms of statements in the suicide note that indicate a violation of the law. To provide objective context, the preliminary findings also profile the victims with their initials, age, and the treatment they experienced.

Table 1
Criminal Records of François Vérove

Victim's Initial	Victim's Age	Treatment(s)	Time
CB	11 years old	Kidnapped, raped, and murdered	May, 1986
SA	8 years old	Raped	April, 1986
IM and GP	21 and 38 years old	Murdered	April, 1987
IG	14 years old	Kidnapped and raped	May, 1994
KL	19 years old	Kidnapped and murdered	June, 1994

The criminal record above shows that François Vérove was regardless of age and gender in committing crimes; nevertheless, five out of six victims are female. The treatments to the victims by François Vérove also vary; two out of six were not murdered by him, and the victims of sexual harassment are mostly minors. Then, the crimes were committed within a month, a year, and seven years shows repetitive criminal acts. In accordance with the descriptions

presented in the previous criminal record of François Vérove, there may be patterns of behavior and psychological conditions. There is no justification the crimes committed by François Vérove to adults, but sexual harassment to the child, even more accompanied by other crime reflects an uncontrolled psychological drive. Furthermore, this section presents the analysis of four sentences in the suicide note written by François Vérove, focusing on the perpetrator's mental state and the confession of a criminal offense. The analysis of four sentences uses a semantic approach to identify linguistic elements that explain the emotion, motive, and striving of the perpetrator in a forensic psycholinguistics context.

Table 2
Psychological condition of François Vérove

Original Text	Translation Text	Type of Meaning
<i>En fait, je traînais une rage folle qui ont fait de moi un criminel.</i>	“Actually, I am in an insane rage that made me into a criminal.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rage: conceptual and affective meaning - Insane: connotative meaning - Criminal: conceptual, and social meaning

According to the data presented in Table 2, the authors identify several words that show emotions are "rage," "insane," and "criminal" as an action of response to the emotions. Semantically, these combinations show a confession and self-justification from a perpetrator of violence.

Table 3
Crime confession of François Vérove

Original Text	Translation Text	Type of Meaning
<i>“Par périodes, je n'en pouvais plus et il me fallait détruire, salir, tuer quelqu'un d'innocent.”</i>	“For periods, I can't stand it anymore, and I must destroy, defile, and kill innocent people.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Destroy: conceptual, and connotative meaning - Defile: conceptual, and connotative meaning - Kill: conceptual, and affective meaning

From the content in Table 3, François Vérove admitted that he was committed to criminal activity. Linguistically, the sentence contains strong verbs that have negative and destructive actions, such as “destroy”, “defile”, and “kill” directed at others as a way of venting stress he experiences. According to his assertion, François Vérove could be charged with multiple counts.

Table 4
François Vérove's Motive for Killing

Original Text	Translation Text	Type of Meaning
<i>“Cela a cassé cet instinct de mort, car en tuant des innocents, c'était mes propres souffrances d'enfant que je voulais détruire inconsciemment.”</i>	“That broke my death instinct, because by killing innocent people, it was my childhood suffering that I was unconsciously trying to destroy.”	Killing: conceptual, and reflective meaning

Table 4 shows that François Vérove re-admitted his crime, that is, "killing." The reflective meaning arises because the word "killing" has a double meaning: an actual act as well as a symbol of psychological trauma. The findings show how childhood experiences are reactivated in adult criminal acts. His action is violating French law, which has been regulated in Code Pénal, Article 221-1.

Table 5
François Vérove's Purpose in Committing Suicide

Original Text	Translation Text	Type of Meaning
<i>“Afin d'éviter un procès qui aura des conséquences sur vous, j'ai pris la décision de partir.”</i>	“To avoid a trial that will have consequences for you, I have decided to leave.”	Leave: connotative and thematic meaning

This assertion was purposely made for his family. According to the contents of Table 5, the word “partir” has connotative and thematic meaning. These meanings lead to the conclusion that the decision to commit suicide is also positioned as a way to protect the family from the impact of the judiciary. However, his statement can be said to be a form of planning to avoid the law, beyond for the purpose of protecting the family. The French law that regulated the statement of François Vérove in Table 5, the *Code Pénal*, as in Table 3 and Table 4, is no longer in use; rather, the *Code de Procédure Pénal* is now employed. Due to the death of François Vérove, who is the perpetrator, he is subjected to Article 6.

The explanation above concluded that the victims of François Vérove are varied, both adult and minor, female and male. Semantic analysis reveals how word choice functions as a means of justification, emotional representation, and symbolic explanation for violent acts, while also showing statements related to lawlessness and avoidance. For the crimes he committed, he should be charged with several articles of French law under the *Code Pénal* (penal code). However, due to the death of François Vérove, the applicable law is *Code de Procédure Pénal* (code of criminal procedure).

Discussion

In an apartment in *Grau-du-Roi*, France was found the body of François Vérove, a former gendarme who had been a fugitive for 35 years on suspicion of four murders and six rapes. His crime sequences come from severe traumatic experiences during his childhood. His father, a military officer, employed an authoritarian parenting style characterized by numerous restrictions and punitive measures, disregarding the child's thoughts or perspectives (Fadlillah & Fauziah, 2022; Taib, Bahran; Ummah, Dewi M.; Bun, 2020). In addition to being authoritarian, François Vérove was also often insulted by his father. However, most importantly, he revealed that his father abused him sexually several days after his mother passed away, when he was 10 years old, which damaged his moral development. Subsequently, due to his father's job obligations and the absence of a caregiver, he resided with his grandparents during the week, while his father collected him on weekends. Moreover, François Vérove was not told if his father remarried, and when he returned home, his stepsisters occupied his room without his consent, so he moved to a small room. It can make him feel emotionally neglected.

During his teenage years, François Vérove was intrigued by extreme horror movies released in 1980, such as *Cannibal Holocaust*. It has substance brutal rape, cannibalism and, slaughters. Such actions may evoke sinister imagination and moral deviations. In adulthood, he realized the fantasies stored in his memory through kidnapping, rape, and murder. In 1997, an argument with his father led François Vérove to contemplate suicide, but he considered and visited his neighbor. At first, he was calm, but suddenly became anxious, shouted, and even became aggressive, prompting his neighbor to call emergency services. After being taken to the hospital for special care, the doctor who treated him said that François Vérove suffered from severe panic attacks with violent outbursts and episodes of delusion, so he was required to undergo daily psychological counseling for several months. Due to the ups and downs of his condition, François Vérove was admitted to and discharged from the hospital several times to receive special treatment until he was prescribed powerful anti-anxiety medication. Then, as

his condition improved, his medication and psychological treatment were gradually reduced and finally stopped in December 1998 (Wikipedia, 1998).

Psychological condition of François Vérove

The first statement below can be considered as François Vérove's confession and explanation for his action. "*En fait, je traînais une rage folle qui ont fait de moi un criminel.*" "Actually, I am in an insane rage that made me into a criminal." The focus of the first statement is "rage," "insane," and "criminal" words. Semantically, rage contains conceptual meaning that, according to Larousse (Larousse, n.d.-c), indicates a condition that leads someone to excessive acts; an irrepressible need for something. Furthermore, rage also has affective meaning because it shows François Vérove's intense inner turmoil. Then, the second word, "insane", connotatively shows the abnormality or uncontrolled emotions felt by François Vérove. Meanwhile, the lexeme of "criminal", according to Larousse (Larousse, n.d.-a), constitutes a crime and the social meaning implies facing legal consequences and social sanctions. These three lexemes are key words that indicate François Vérove regrets and is aware of his criminal behavior. Moreover, the use of "criminal" shows that François Vérove is aware of the moral and legal consequences of society. The expression "*rage folle*" (insane rage) indicates inner conflict and emotional imbalance and is a common reaction of a person who experienced bad events during childhood (Almeida et al., 2024; Bauer et al., 2024).

In psychological studies, François Vérove is someone who commits aggressive acts as a result of mental problems related to his childhood trauma. Throughout his formative years, François Vérove encountered various adverse situations, including the death of his mother, sexual abuse by his father, and emotional neglect (Wikipedia, n.d.). These traumatizing bad experiences affect morality in adulthood (Van Beeck et al., 2024; Vincent J. Felitti et al., 1998).

In psychology, anger is one of the most emotions commonly felt by humans. However, if experienced continuously, anger become a serious problem. Problematic anger is associated with inadequate impulse control, typically occurring in domestic violence and criminal conduct (Williams, Emma & Scott, 2005). Problematic anger that stems from emotion dysregulation is a result of adverse childhood experiences (Meddeb et al., 2023). Deviant personality and behavior, even mental illness in the future, and the potential to become a psychopath, can stem from adverse experiences. Moreover, one common characteristic of a psychopath is emotional instability (Yao, 2023). An inability to control one's emotions is indicated by rage, which can lead to violent or aggressive actions (Nevid, Jeffrey S.; Rathus, Spencer A.; Greene, 2005). Agreeing with Nevid, Worthington (2020) explained that when a person is at the peak of rage, an uncontrollable emotional outburst occurs.

The explanation of linguistics and psychology answered the motive of François Vérove's crimes. The motive is in line with the previous research (Van Duin et al., 2021), which wrote that childhood traumas causing François Vérove have mental issues in adulthood. The mental illness he suffers from causes him to be unable to control his emotions, so that when he is at the peak of his rage, he commits excessive acts, such as violence to others and himself in the form of suicide.

Crime Confession of François Vérove

In the second statement below, François Vérove mentioned his aggressive actions. "*Par périodes, je n'en pouvais plus et il me fallait détruire, salir, tuer quelqu'un d'innocent.*" "For periods, I can't stand it anymore and I must destroy, defile, and kill innocent people." Linking to the previous assertion, François Vérove carried a psychological burden caused by his childhood trauma. However, when he can not control his feelings, he uses violence to express them, including rapes and murders. Two researchers show childhood trauma can lead to aggressive and violent tendencies (Cantürk et al., 2021; Nurhayati & Budi Setyani, 2021).

Worthington (2020) mentioned that emotions can be expressed in a variety of ways, such as purposeful activities, interpersonal, personal, venting, and aggressive actions.

By studying the second statement, François Vérove violently expresses his emotions against other people semantically—destroy, defile, and kill. Semantically, the word “destroy” has conceptual and connotative meaning. Conceptually, “destroy” means to damage something or cause it to disappear (Larousse, n.d.-b). While connotatively expressing hatred towards someone. The word “defile” also has conceptual and connotative meaning. According to Larousse (Larousse, n.d.-d), “defile” conceptually means to make something clean become dirty. While connotatively defiling someone is not only physical, but also moral. The last, “kill” conceptually causes someone’s death by violence (Larousse, n.d.-e) and affectively means an emotional outburst such as anger, and fear. He described his situation and the compulsion he had experienced. François Vérove had been holding back his hatred, which was his past trauma. However, when he could no longer hold it back, he vented his hatred on innocent people in aggressive ways.

Additionally, four murder instances and multiple rape cases have been identified according to information gathered from various online sources and assisted by Wikipedia to provide further details about the incidents. This indicates a repetition of the crime. Various research mentions that someone who has bad childhood experience tends to have a psychological disorder and recidivism (Astridge et al., 2023; Kahn et al., 2020; Yohros, 2022). Based on Vérove’s history, he experienced sexual harassment by his father. According to some research (DeLisi & Beauregard, 2018; Levenson et al., 2014), someone who has experienced sexual violence, potentially become a sexual offender. Because of that, François Vérove became a sexual perpetrator. In addition, he was attracted to a movie that contained sadistic murders and rapes. The childhood trauma and the movie he watched in his teenage years can be the triggers of moral deviation. François Vérove’s acts of serial sexual abuse, in which there are dead victims, it can be said that he pursued sadistic pleasure (Myers et al., 2006). For the crimes committed by François Vérove, he might face several penalties.

The first and second alleged cases occurred in the same year, 1986. In the first case, he suspected that he had kidnapped, raped, and killed an eleven-year-old girl. In the second case, François Vérove committed rape and attempted murder of an eight-year-old girl. Furthermore, in 1987, François Vérove was suspected of the murder of a thirty-eight-year-old man and a twenty-one-year-old woman. The next alleged case, in 1994, involved an eleven-year-old girl who was kidnapped and raped by François Vérove. Still in the same year, the last suspected case was the kidnapping and murder of a nineteen-year-old girl. According to the selected word—destroy, defile, kill and the list of victims, indicate violation of French law that has been regulated Code Pénal in Article 221-1, Article 222-23, Article 222-23-1, Article 222-23-3, Article 222-25, Article 224-1, and Article 224-5 (Loi, 2024). Except in the case provided for in Article 222-23, rape also includes any act of sexual penetration, of whatever nature, or any oral-genital act committed by an adult on the person of a minor under fifteen years of age or committed on the perpetrator by the minor, when the age difference between the adult and the minor is at least five years.

The condition of age difference provided for in the first paragraph of this article does not apply if the acts are committed in exchange for remuneration, a promise of remuneration, the provision of a benefit in kind or the promise of such a benefit.” “When the victim of one of the crimes provided for in [Articles 224-1 to 224-4](#) is a minor under the age of fifteen, the sentence is increased to life imprisonment if the offense is punishable by thirty years of criminal imprisonment and to thirty years of criminal imprisonment if the offence is punishable by twenty years of criminal imprisonment.” The explanation answers the second research question: which law was violated by François Vérove. The explanation is in line with the previous research that criminal history and adverse childhood experience (ACE) allow for the possibility

of recidivism (Van Duin et al., 2021). In Vérove's case, besides having childhood trauma, he committed the crimes in 1986. However, he did not stop that year. François Vérove committed repeat offenses in 1987 and 1994. In his crime, the acts of sexual harassment are also in line with the previous research that the perpetrator rationalizes his unlawful action (Dhiba, Arry D. F. & Santoso, 2024).

François Vérove's motive for killing

The condition of François Vérove is explained in the third statement. "*Cela a cassé cet instinct de mort, car en tuant des innocents, c'était mes propres souffrances d'enfant que je voulais détruire inconsciemment.*" "That broke my death instinct, because by killing innocent people, it was my own childhood suffering that I was unconsciously trying to destroy." In the field of psychology, Freud defined the death instinct as the desire to put a person back in the initial state. The term "death instinct" describes harming oneself in order to return a person to their pre-birth state, free from burdens. Violence against others or self-destruction are the results (Nevid, Jeffrey S.; Rathus, Spencer A.; Greene, 2005). According to the third statement, François Vérove harassed others and even killed innocent people in order to cope with his childhood scars.

The linguistic structure in this assertion reflects inner conflicts as the impact of adverse childhood experience (Surahman, 2022). Analyzed by French grammar, the original text of the third statement, "*tuant*", is a present participle verb conjugation of "*tuier*", which means "killing" in English. From the grammar structure, it can be said that the action is still in progress. "*Tuant*", in a reflective sense, can be said as a psychological symbol of trying to kill his childhood trauma inside him.

This finding is in line with research by (Van Wyk, 2023), who explained that strains lead to violence. Furthermore, the strains push a person to eliminate something they want. When the strains last for a long time, a person may resort to violence to resolve them. This is in line with Vérove's condition that he has been suppressed by trauma since his childhood. Since the childhood trauma is unresolved and became toxic stress, he tried to resolve it with repetitive violence that took the lives of others (Altintas & Bilici, 2018; Garbarino, 2017). Based on French legislation (Loi, 2024), François Vérove might face charges under Article 221-1, "The act of deliberately causing death to another person constitutes murder. It is punishable by thirty years of criminal imprisonment." The third statement reinforces the motive that François Vérove committed the crimes. Similar to the first statement, the main reason for his criminal acts is internal issues; he tried to release himself from his childhood traumas, which he vented on others.

François Vérove's purpose in committing suicide

The last statement below reveals the reason for François Vérove's committing suicide. "*Afin d'éviter un procès qui aura des conséquences sur vous, j'ai pris la décision de partir.*" "To avoid a trial that will have consequences for you, I have decided to leave." Connotatively, the statement above possibly has the meaning of suicide or self-inflicted death. The fact that François Vérove purposefully took large dosages of medication with alcohol helps to explain this (Le Journal de Saône et Loire, 2021). According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, mixing certain medicines with alcohol may risk fatal overdose; hence, the death of François Vérove was caused by overdose (White, 2022). Furthermore, thematically, the placement of "leave" at the sentence end gives emphasis to the finality of the decision. People who are mentally or physically stressed will act beyond the limits of common sense. According to Durkheim, suicide is a way for humans to refuse to face something that is considered unresolvable and escape from pain (Marpaung et al., 2025; Sitepu et al., 2023).

In social life, if one of the family members has committed a criminal act, the whole family often experiences the negative impacts of the trial proceedings, as well as those possibly

experienced by Vérove's family, such as being confronted with adverse treatment from society, self-blaming and the media's narrative worsening the condition of perpetrator's family members (Bravo et al., 2024; Evans et al., 2023). Grammatically, François Vérove chose to commit suicide in order to spare his family from public perceptions of his misdeeds and avoid the punishment he was allegedly sentenced to. Other research also shows that not a few offenders commit suicide after being summoned by the authorities, especially if the person is a sex offender or has committed other serious crimes. This can be a motivating factor for suicide as an escape from legal context (King et al., 2015; Van Wyk, 2023; Webb et al., 2011). The applicable statute in this matter is Article 6 of French law, (*Code de Procédure Pénale*, 1999).

Based on findings, the case of François Vérove cannot be continued since he has died and the demands he belonged to were remitted. The discussion of the second and third assertions regarding the violation of the law indicates that he was given multiple articles. However, the authors perceive it necessary to include the relevant article, which governs this particular issue. In line with the previous research, the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are carried into adulthood. Starting from the formation of deviant personalities, criminal behavior, to suicidal urges (Van Duin et al., 2021).

By analyzing semantic aspects in a suicide note, this research focuses on forensic linguistics and psychology. In forensic linguistics, meaning analysis can help identify the emotion of the perpetrator through the use of language in suicide note. In psychology, adverse childhood experiences can affect the way a person speaks in adulthood, including when explaining criminal acts. This study has limitations, such as the use of one suicide note that does not represent all language pattern. The absence of additional data such as interviews with people close to the perpetrator and qualitative method of the analysis may also lead to subjectivity. Future research could include analyzing other documents and different cases.

CONCLUSION

The forensic psycholinguistics approach to the perpetrator's suicide note reveals the connection between childhood trauma and crimes through linguistic expression. Adverse childhood experience theory explains that traumatic experiences of the perpetrator, such as the death of his mother, sexual harassment by his father, and mental neglect, have shaped a destructive mindset that drove him to commit kidnapping, rape, and murder. The analysis on the first and third assertions reveals the intense emotions that (menjadi motif kejahatannya); the second assertion indicates the articles he should be charged with for the crimes he has committed; while the analysis in the fourth assertion shows the perpetrator used the language to avoid legal process. In the justice system, the perpetrator's actions were classified as a serious crime even though accompanied by a psychological disorder; however the death of the perpetrator stopped the legal process.

This research contributes to the multidisciplinary field of linguistics, psychology, and law. In text-based forensic psycholinguistics research, this research extends the application of theories and analysis models retrieved from digital news. Semantic analysis can assist law enforcement by assessing consistency and potential manipulation in offender statements. It is useful in investigations, especially without witnesses. For psychologists and linguists, this research helps understand the psychological and emotional aspects of offenders through language use. Thus, this research is possible to be a reference for analytical discourse development in the future.

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INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. By agreeing to take part, the participants acknowledge that they have been informed about the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the study. Participants understand that their identity are kept confidential and that all information they provide are used solely for research purposes.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data utilized in this study cannot be made publicly available due to strict adherence to privacy concerns and ethical obligations that safeguard participant confidentiality. This ensures compliance with ethical research standards and data protection regulations.

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