

MENTAL HEALTH AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG LGBTQ COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE PROVINCE OF BOHOL

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ABSTRACT

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This study looks at how mental health relates to academic performance among LGBTQ college students in Bohol, Philippines. Researchers used both a self-made and a standardized questionnaire to gather data. The results show that LGBTQ college students in Bohol generally have good mental health. Of the three areas measured, emotional well-being scored the highest, followed by psychological well-being, while social well-being was rated lowest. This positive mental health suggests that LGBTQ students in Bohol have strengths and coping skills. Academically, these students performed very well, as shown by their General Weighted Average (GWA) for the first semester of the 2022-2023 school year. The study found a significant link between mental health and academic performance for these students. This means that even with possible social challenges, LGBTQ students in Bohol can do well in school. The findings show that LGBTQ college students in Bohol have good mental health and strong academic performance, but also point to the need



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for targeted support to improve their well-being and academic success further.

INTRODUCTION

Existing research indicates that LGBTQ individuals are more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to experience mental health issues (Blondeel et al., 2016; Mendoza-Perez & Ortiz-Hernandez, 2019; Meyer, 2003a; Mueller et al., 2017; Mueller & Hughes, 2016; Valentine & Shipherd, 2018; Bränström, 2024). Prejudice against LGBTQ individuals remains prevalent throughout Southeast Asia. Although the Philippines reports the lowest rejection rate in the region, significant challenges persist (Manalastas et al., 2017). Mental health, encompassing social, emotional, and psychological dimensions, is essential for overall well-being. Positive mental health enables individuals to manage stress, perform effectively, and engage in community life (WHO, 2021). A significant proportion of students experience mental health challenges, which can negatively affect academic performance and increase the risk of school dropout.

Historical and societal factors play a significant role in shaping sexual and gender identities (Russell et al., 2009). According to minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003), LGBTQ youth frequently encounter chronic stress resulting from marginalization and prejudice within educational environments. Experiences of intolerance and harassment can adversely impact both mental health and academic achievement (Goldberg et al., 2019).

Empirical studies demonstrate that LGBTQ children are disproportionately subjected to prejudice and bullying, which can detrimentally affect their mental health. Emphasizing social support highlights its vital role, fostering a sense of community responsibility and appreciation among the audience.

In the Philippines, the Human Rights Watch 2017 “Just Let Us Be” study identified persistent bullying, discrimination, and limited access to LGBT services. Despite a general perception of acceptance, Filipino LGBTQ adolescents continue to encounter prejudice in domestic, community, and educational settings (Tang & Poudel, 2018; Taragua, 2020; Manalastas et al., 2020). Addressing these challenges aligns with the objectives of the Philippine Mental Health Act (RA 11036, 2018), CHED Memorandum No. 1 on gender and development, and Sustainable Development Goal 3 on mental health and well-being. There is limited research on the emotional well-being and academic performance of LGBTQ college students in Bohol. Honculada and Pilingo (2022) found that LGBT individuals in Tagbilaran City are moderately accepted, indicating a relatively welcoming environment. Still, it is not clear how mental health and academic achievement are connected for LGBTQ students in the province. This study examines how mental health relates to academic performance among LGBTQ college students in Bohol and aims to identify factors that affect this relationship (Agnafors et al., 2021; Chu et al., 2023).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design. This study employed a correlational, quantitative design to examine the relationship between mental health and academic achievement among LGBTQ college students.

A questionnaire was distributed to gather academic, demographic, and mental health data from LGBTQ college students using a standardized tool within a descriptive-normative survey framework. Patterns and linkages were observed while preserving the participants' natural environments.

Environment. The study was conducted in Bohol, Philippines, selected for its active LGBTQ community and established higher education system. The research team's local knowledge facilitated data collection. The instrument had two components: a researcher-designed demographic questionnaire (age, sex, academic performance) and a standardized mental health questionnaire. Subject-matter experts reviewed content for accuracy.

Instruments. Three validated tools were used: the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), the Psychological Well-being Scale (Ryff, 1989), and the Emotional Intelligence Scale (Mehta, 2013), chosen for their relevance to LGBTQ college students in Bohol.

Academic Performance		
Rating	Remarks	Level of Performance
1.0-1.5	Strongly Agree	Very Good
1.6-2.0	Agree	Good
2.1-2.5	Disagree	Fair
2.6-3.0	Strongly Disagree	Poor

Mental health was assessed using three modified standardized tools: the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) for social well-being, the Psychological Well-being Scale by Carol D. Ryff (1989) for psychological health, and the Emotional Intelligence Scale (Mehta, 2013) for emotional competence. These instruments, validated by experts, ensure accurate measurement of mental health domains relevant to LGBTQ college students in Bohol.

Mental Health Status		
3.25-4.00	Strongly Agree	Very Good
2.50-3.24	Moderately Agree	Good
1.75-2.49	Slightly Agree	Fair
1.0-1.74	Slightly Disagree	Poor

The said questionnaires were subjected to pilot testing by the College students, who are not part of the actual respondents of the study. The data

gathered during the pilot test were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha to ensure reliability. The questionnaires were also subjected to a face validity test.

Data Gathering Procedure. Before the study began, formal permission was obtained from academic and institutional authorities. Approval was also secured from the relevant community organization to access participant lists. All ethical clearances were completed to ensure compliance with research ethics requirements, particularly the **no-harm** and **voluntary participation** guidelines.

Data collection began after consent was received. All data were kept confidential, and respondents' personal information was protected. Reports and publications did not include any personal information. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before data collection. Participants were told they could leave the study at any time without consequences. People filled out the questionnaires in person, which took about 10 to 15 minutes. Respondents had enough time to answer all questions. Completed questionnaires were counted, entered into tables, and analyzed statistically to test the study's hypotheses. All data collection followed current health and safety protocols to address public health concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of Respondents. The demographic profile indicated that most LGBTQ college student respondents in Bohol were between **20 and 24 years old** (70.5%), with 25.7% aged 18 to 19. A small proportion were in the **30–34 age group** (2.9%) and **25–29 age group** (1.0%). This distribution suggests a predominantly traditional college-aged population, with most respondents actively pursuing higher education in early adulthood.

Regarding gender identity, the most significant proportion identified as **gay** (37.1%), followed by **lesbian** (29.5%) and **bisexual** (23.8%) individuals. A smaller percentage identified as **transgender or queer** (4.8%). This composition demonstrates the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identities within the LGBTQ student community in Bohol's higher education institutions.

Mental Health Status of Respondents. The LGBTQ student respondents reported generally positive mental health, with a mean score of 2.98 across the emotional, social, and psychological well-being domains. Emotional well-being had the highest mean (3.07), followed by social (2.94) and psychological well-being (2.94). These results indicate that, despite challenges related to sexual orientation and gender identity, such as discrimination, social stigma, and limited institutional support, respondents exhibited **positive mental health outcomes**. This resilience and adaptability may inform the development of future support programs and policies for LGBTQ student populations.

Social Well-being. Social well-being was a strong domain, highlighting the importance of support systems in respondents' lives. High levels of

family support ($M = 2.85$) suggest a degree of familial acceptance, which is associated with reduced mental health risks among LGBTQ youth, including lower rates of depression and suicidal ideation (Ryan et al., 2010; Thoits, 2011). Respondents also reported **strong support from friends** ($M = 3.06$), emphasizing the central role of peer networks in fostering self-esteem, belonging, and emotional stability (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). Support from significant others was also high ($M = 2.91$), underscoring the value of intimate relationships in emotional buffering and stress reduction (Cutrona et al., 2016). Collectively, these findings indicate that social support, whether familial, peer-based, or romantic, serves as a protective factor for mental health among LGBTQ individuals (McConnell et al., 2015; Wilkerson, 2017).

Psychological Well-being. Participants consistently demonstrated elevated psychological well-being across multiple domains. Autonomy ($M = 2.87$) reflected confidence and self-guidance, aligning with Self-Determination Theory's focus on autonomy as a fundamental component of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Environmental mastery ($M = 2.88$) indicated that respondents perceived themselves as capable of effectively managing life's challenges, a characteristic associated with increased resilience (Ryff, 1989). High scores in personal growth ($M = 2.97$) indicated active participation in self-development and objective attainment, both of which are indicative of life satisfaction (Ryff & Singer, 2000).

Positive relationships with others ($M = 3.03$), a sense of purpose in life ($M = 3.03$), and self-acceptance ($M = 3.03$) suggest that LGBTQ students in Bohol typically demonstrate a healthy self-concept and significant social bonds. This pattern aligns with research indicating that LGBTQ individuals can attain robust psychological well-being when supported by community and affirmed in their identity, despite the presence of structural stigma (Schmitz & Tyler, 2019; Palangi, 2020; Woodford et al., 2018).

Emotional Well-being. Participants achieved the highest score in emotional well-being ($M = 3.07$), suggesting robust emotional regulation, strong social connections, and positive interpersonal relationships. They also demonstrated a significant level of self-awareness ($M = 3.15$), indicating their ability to recognize and understand their emotions, which facilitates emotional regulation and supports personal development (Brown & Ryan, 2003). The findings indicate that respondents demonstrate elevated levels of self-motivation ($M = 3.12$) and emotional regulation ($M = 3.05$), suggesting their capacity to manage stress and pursue their objectives effectively (Gross & John, 2003).

Relationship between LGBTQ College Students' Mental Health and Academic Performance. The results indicate a statistically significant positive correlation between mental health and academic performance among LGBTQ college students in Bohol ($r = 0.683$, $p < .001$). This moderate-to-strong relationship supports the study's hypothesis and rejects the null hypothesis, showing that better mental health is associated with higher

academic achievement.

This result aligns with other research highlighting the importance of mental health for academic success. Eisenberg, Golberstein, and Hunt (2009) found that mental health problems, especially depression and anxiety, are connected to lower academic performance and persistence in college students. Wyatt, Oswalt, and Ochoa (2017) also found that students with mental health challenges often have lower grades and find it harder to meet academic demands.

LGBTQ students often experience stress because of discrimination, stigma, and a lack of support at school. This can lead to more psychological distress and make it harder for them to stay involved in their studies. On the other hand, strong social support and good mental health help students stay focused, motivated, and resilient, leading to better academic outcomes.

These findings suggest that colleges and universities should provide more mental health support. Programs that promote well-being, offer counseling that respects diverse backgrounds, and create inclusive spaces can help reduce stress and improve academic success for LGBTQ students. The results also show the need for policies and mental health programs that address the connection between mental health and education for marginalized groups.

		Status of Mental Health Overall Mean	General Weighted Average (2022-2023) 1st
Status of Mental Health	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.683**
Overall Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	105	105
General Weighted Average (2022-2023) 1st	Correlation Coefficient	.683**	1.000
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	105	105

p = .000 Result: Significant **H₀**: Reject the null hypothesis

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that LGBTQ college students exhibit strong social support, aligning with social support theory, which posits that such support promotes well-being and resilience. They generally report high psychological and emotional well-being, indicating positive emotions and practical emotion management skills. Despite potential challenges, such as stigma, LGBTQ students perform well academically, with a significant link between mental health and academic success noted. These findings underscore the importance of addressing mental health needs to support LGBTQ students' overall well-

being and academic achievement, aligning with Resilience Theory principles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Dissemination through sending the findings and conclusions to the office of the Province of Bohol, LGBTQ Organization, Schools, and Universities through a prepared video presentation.
2. Presentation during the general assembly of the students in each local school/university.
3. The Province of Bohol should create and implement programs to raise awareness of LGBTQ mental health concerns, such as dealing with stress, coping, and self-care.
4. Colleges and universities in Bohol seek to make their campuses more welcoming and accepting of LGBTQ people and celebrate their identities. They should also ensure everyone feels they belong and are part of a community. This can help lessen the effects of discrimination and stigma that LGBTQ students may experience.
5. Since there is a strong link between mental health and school achievement, colleges and universities need to prioritize culturally appropriate and accessible mental health services. This could include therapy, support groups, and wellness programs.
6. Using Resilience Theory as a guide, schools need to develop programs that build on the strengths and coping skills of LGBTQ students. This could include helping students manage their emotions, encouraging involvement and goal achievement, and supporting them in developing a clear sense of identity and purpose.
7. Work with community groups, parents, and LGBTQ advocates to maintain support and advocacy for LGBTQ college students in Bohol.
8. Incorporating LGBTQ-inclusive curricula through Gender and Development training will promote awareness, challenge biases, and help make the school a better place for LGBTQ students to thrive.
9. Future researchers shall investigate the elements that foster resilience and positive mental health outcomes in LGBTQ college students, despite the considerable hurdles and inequities they face.
10. Future research should examine how the experiences of LGBTQ college students may vary according to the intersection of their sexual orientation, gender identity, race, socioeconomic position, and other social identities, and how these intersections influence mental health and academic outcomes.

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