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Research and Development Services

LGBTQIA+ Students and Behavioral Development of LSPU Santa Cruz Campus

Dr. Ma. Victoria A. Cabigan; Dr. Ray Samuel G. Grecalda

Abstract:- This study aimed to investigate how educational institutions like Laguna State Polytechnic University Santa Cruz Campus empower the gay student community and come up with a development plan intended for them. The researchers utilized the descriptive approach for this study, specifically a correlational research design to analyze and examine the relationship between LGBTQIA+ challenges at LSPU Santa Cruz Campus. Thirty (30) purposively chosen students belonging to LGBTQIA+ community across the colleges of the said campus were the respondents for the study. The findings of this study have shown that the (1) level of empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students is Highly Evident (WM=4.25); (2) level of challenges experienced by LGBTQIA+ students in terms of violence (WM=2.81), school-related discrimination (WM=2.73), and religious freedom (WM=2.89) are all Moderately Evident; and (3) the status of behavior of LGBTQIA+ students in terms of emotional (WM=4.26), physical (WM=3.96), and social (WM=4.06) are Very High, High, and High, respectively. Furthermore, the conclusions can be drawn that (1) the empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students significantly impact the challenges they experienced; and (2) the empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students significantly impact the status of their behavior. On the basis of the major findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are given: (1) Higher authorities must enact policies and provide funding to support school personnel training on addressing discriminatory bullying and implementing safe schools' strategies. (2) School officials must be a resource for LGBTQIA+ students. They must ensure that libraries have resources for LGBTQIA+ youth. They could also appeal to school administrators for LGBTQIA+-inclusive classroom curricula; and lastly (3) Parents and students can participate and advocate in gender and development seminars in their schools.

Keywords:- LGBTQIA+ Community, Empowerment, Challenges, Behavior, Violence, School-Related

Discrimination, Religious Freedom, Emotional, Physical, Social.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gay community has surfaced issues related to challenges that hindered the community empowerment. It has been related to issues to poor social acceptance and attitudes towards the gay community as perceived by the people around them (Kosciw, et.al, 2012). Because of this, the members of the gay community are becoming increasingly open, acknowledged and even visible part of the society but they are subjected to different abuses, such as: violence, housing and employment discrimination and also inferred with religious freedom.

According to Costantino (2012), the community's presence continues to increase in the Philippines, while more individuals become more visible throughout educational institutions. Many have tried to understand and explain how the gay community rights came to be accepted so rapidly, relative to other civil rights and some have credited it to mass media. An increasingly diverse LGBTQIA+ student community leave the organization struggling to leverage the knowledge and experience of lesbian and gay student leaders for deliberation to explore their scenario into their positions while managing the disclosure of their sexual orientation and student identity.

Social workers stated that working with teenagers who are dealing with coming out as a gay or lesbian and utilizing the empowerment theory, which primarily focuses on the oppressed teenager on a one-on-one form of micro level or focal system it does not exclude or count out the larger levels on a macro scale, which can be individuals within a large group of teen agers coming out as LGBTQIA+, their family members within their subsystem and or suprasystems environment.

Empowerment is the “process by which individuals and groups gain power, access to resources and control over their own lives. In doing so, they gain the ability to achieve their highest personal and collective aspirations and goals” (Cottle, 2023). Student empowerment means giving students the ability to not only have a voice and share their thoughts and ideas, but to believe that their voice can lead to positive change.

In line with this the study, the researchers aim to investigate how educational institutions like Laguna State Polytechnic University Santa Cruz Campus empower the gay student community and come up with a development plan intended for them.

II. METHODOLOGY

The researchers utilized the descriptive approach for this study, specifically a correlational research design to analyze and examine the relationship between LGBTQIA+ challenges at LSPU Santa Cruz Campus. According to Jotform (2023), the most common data collection methods for this type of research include surveys, observation, and secondary data (data from previous studies).

The respondents of the study belong to LGBTQIA+ community of Laguna State Polytechnic University Santa Cruz Campus. The respondents purposively chosen thirty

(30) students across the colleges of the said campus. Through purposive sampling technique, the researchers decided the aforementioned number of students. Alchemer (2021) defined purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling technique wherein the researchers “purposively” selected the respondents of the study as they fit the profile for the research to be conducted.

The researchers administered the self-made questionnaires, consisting of thirty-five (35) statements in determining the relationship of challenges that LGBTQIA+ students of LSPU Santa Cruz experience towards their behavior. Questionnaires upon approval of duly authorities the researchers distribute the research instrument to the selected respondents in different colleges. The responses were tabulated for the statistical treatment of data. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the levels of LGBTQ+ Challenges and student behaviors while linear regression analysis was used to test the impact of empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students toward the challenges they experienced and their behavior.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

➤ Level of Empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ Students

The table below shows the level of empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students.

Table 1. Level of Empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ Students

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Can perform school-based related skills	4.40	0.67	Highly Evident
Organized activities to share and showcase talents in the university	4.20	0.76	Evident
Given due respect and appreciation with gay student university related activities	4.13	0.90	Evident
The university proving programs, trainings, workshops and services intended for gay student community	4.20	0.81	Evident
Volunteer to take active participation in the university community activities and projects.	4.30	0.75	Highly Evident
Weighted Mean	4.25		Highly Evident

Legend:

Scale	Range	Description	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Evident
4	3.41 – 4.20	Agree	Evident
3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral	Moderately Evident
2	1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Less Evident
1	1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Not Evident

Table 1 have shown that the students were able to perform school-based related skills as evident on the highest mean of 4.40 with standard deviation of 0.67 and verbally interpreted as Highly Evident. On the other hand, it is Evident that other students were able to give due respect and appreciation towards gay student university related activities as indicated on the mean score of 4.13 with standard deviation of 0.90.

The overall mean of 4.25 indicated that the empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students is Highly Evident. This implies that the school provides plenty of attention to the needs of LGBTQIA+ students in order to give them a “normal” school life.

To further promote awareness towards LGBTQIA+ community and empower the students, LGBT Center Awareness Day has become an event celebrated each year every October 19. Center Link (2019) have suggested that

the use of social media will also allow and help the students to become creative on how they spread awareness of the LGBTQIA+ community by posting facts, sharing images, video, blog posts, and others about the LGBTQIA+ community. To further improve engagement, students were encouraged to retweet (using Twitter) and share the post (in Facebook or Instagram) on their respective school pages.

➤ *Level of Challenges Experienced by LGBTQIA+ Students*

The following tables show the level of challenges experienced by LGBTQIA+ students in terms of violence, school-related discrimination, and religious freedom.

Table 2. Level of Challenges Experienced by LGBTQIA+ Students in terms of Violence

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Experienced any violence when they notice that I belong to the gay student community.	2.67	1.37	Moderately Evident
Experience any obscenity since I become member of the gay student community.	2.73	1.46	Moderately Evident
Experience physical violence being a member of student gay community.	2.70	1.47	Moderately Evident
Experienced being rejected to enter university facilities being a member of gay student community.	2.57	1.36	Less Evident
Have experienced being criticized by other people.	3.40	1.38	Moderately Evident
Weighted Mean	2.81		Moderately Evident

Legend:

Scale	Range	Description	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Evident
4	3.41 – 4.20	Agree	Evident
3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral	Moderately Evident
2	1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Less Evident
1	1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Not Evident

Table 2 shows the level of challenges experienced by LGBTQIA+ students in terms of violence. Students have neutral experiences on being criticized by other people as indicated by the highest mean of 3.40 with standard deviation of 1.38, verbally interpreted as Moderately Evident. Meanwhile, being rejected to enter university facilities by being a member of gay student community is less of the worries of the students as it has the lowest mean of 2.57 with standard deviation of 1.36. This negative experience is shown to be Less Evident among the LGBTQIA+ students.

The overall mean of 2.81 indicated that the level of challenges experienced by LGBTQIA+ students in terms of violence is Moderately Evident.

As the results show neutral evidence of violence towards LGBTQIA+ community, some factors were observed on the study of Pina et. al (2021). They found out that violence towards the LGBTQIA+ community propagates among minority of students as it made them feel better about their selves. The behavior they are showing would indicate that they would like to feel socially attractive, strong, or superior to the peer group. Actions like rumor spreading and verbal violence to send a message of superiority were most likely the reasons for such behavior.

Table 3. Level of Challenges Experienced by LGBTQIA+ Students in terms of School-related Discrimination

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Experienced any form of discrimination in the university being a member of gay student community.	2.67	1.27	Moderately Evident
Experienced being insulted because of being a member of gay student community.	2.67	1.35	Moderately Evident
Experienced in the university being ridiculed as member of gay student community.	2.60	1.35	Less Evident
Experienced being compared to peers and classmates based on your abilities and talents.	3.17	1.26	Moderately Evident
Experienced being sent out of the classroom which is influenced by being a member of the gay student community.	2.57	1.33	Less Evident
Weighted Mean	2.73		Moderately Evident

Legend:

Scale	Range	Description	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Evident
4	3.41 – 4.20	Agree	Evident
3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral	Moderately Evident
2	1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Less Evident
1	1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Not Evident

Table 3 presents the level of challenges experienced by LGBTQIA+ students in terms of school-related discrimination. LGBTQIA+ students have shown to moderately experience being compared to their peers and classmates with regards to their abilities and talents as indicated by the highest mean of 3.17 with standard deviation of 1.26, verbally interpreted as Moderately Evident. Meanwhile, few have experienced being sent out of the classroom as being a member of the gay student community, as shown by the lowest mean of 2.57 with standard deviation of 1.33. This negative experience is shown to be Less Evident among the LGBTQIA+ students.

The overall mean of 2.73 denoted that the level of challenges experienced by LGBTQIA+ students in terms of school-related discrimination is Moderately Evident.

Since there are still evidence regarding the presence of discrimination against gay community inside the school, Russell et. al (2021) listed down four (4) strategies to promote safety inside the school for members of the LGBTQIA+ community. These are: 1) Explicit anti-bullying policies; 2) Teacher professional development; 3) Gender-Sexuality Alliances; and lastly, 4) Inclusive curricula and spaces. A study conducted by Stephen Russell, as cited by Blue and Renna (2015) have shown that LGBTQIA+ teens who “came out” at school have higher self-esteem and lower levels of depression as young adults, compared to LGBTQIA+ youth who don’t disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity at school. This finding is beneficial on the implementation of the aforementioned strategies.

Table 4. Level of Challenges Experienced by LGBTQIA+ Students in terms of Religious Freedom

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Reprimanded no to attend church services in the university	2.43	1.45	Less Evident
Freedom to attend religious activities and services in the university	3.97	1.22	Evident
Experienced being reprimanded by church leaders when noticed being a member of gay student community in the university	2.57	1.36	Less Evident
Dedication and commitment in the performance with sincerity of intentions in the practice of good faith in the university but it is not appreciated	3.10	1.42	Moderately Evident
Discrimination in the practice of good faith/religion in the university	2.40	1.45	Less Evident
Weighted Mean	2.89		Moderately Evident

Legend:

Scale	Range	Description	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Evident
4	3.41 – 4.20	Agree	Evident
3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral	Moderately Evident
2	1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Less Evident
1	1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Not Evident

Table 4 presents the level of challenges experienced by LGBTQIA+ students in terms of religious freedom. LGBTQIA+ students are evidently free to attend religious activities and services in the university they attend to, as shown by the highest mean of 3.97 with standard deviation of 1.22, verbally interpreted as Evident. On the other hand, few have experienced discrimination in the practice of good faith/religion in the university, as implied by the lowest mean of 2.40 with standard deviation of 1.45. It is shown to be Less Evident among the LGBTQIA+ students.

The overall mean of 2.89 denoted that the level of challenges experienced by LGBTQIA+ students in terms of religious freedom is Moderately Evident.

Violence and discrimination have been documented to be caused by faith-based leaders on the basis of personal characteristics among the members of LGBTQIA+ community (OHCHR.org, 2021). Such incitement comprises hate speech and is protected neither by freedom of expression nor by freedom of religion or belief.

➤ *Status of Behavior of LGBTQIA+ Students-*

The following tables show the status of behavior of LGBTQIA+ students in terms of emotional, physical, and social.

Table 5. Status of Behavior of LGBTQIA+ Students in terms of Emotional Behavior

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
When I want to feel more positive emotion (such as joy happiness), I change my mindset.	4.63	0.49	Very High
When I want to feel less negative emotion (such as sadness or anger), I change my perspective to positivity.	4.57	0.57	Very High
When I am feeling positive emotion, I am very careful not to express them.	3.50	1.33	High
When I am faced with a stressful situation, I make myself think about it in a way that help me stay calm.	4.40	0.56	Very High
I control my emotions by changing the way I think about the situation I am encountering.	4.20	0.55	High
Weighted Mean	4.26		Very High

Legend:

Scale	Range	Description	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
4	3.41 – 4.20	Agree	High
3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral	Neutral
2	1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Low
1	1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Table 5 demonstrates the status of behavior of LGBTQIA+ students in terms of emotional behavior. The respondents change their mindset when they want to feel more positive emotion (such as joy and happiness), as evident by the highest mean of 4.63 with standard deviation of 0.49, verbally interpreted as Very High. On the other hand, the respondents were very careful not to express their positive emotions as implied by the lowest mean of 3.50 with standard deviation of 1.33. It is shown to be High among the LGBTQIA+ students.

The overall mean of 4.26 conveyed that the status of behavior of LGBTQIA+ students in terms of emotional behavior is Very High.

Several reasons why LGBTQIA+ students do not express their emotions freely is because of negative past experiences with other people, such as counselors and health providers (Chollar, 2013). Many students prefer not to

disclose their orientations, sexual activity, or gender identity in initial counseling or health care sessions as they feel overwhelmed by the imbalance between the power of students and health authorities.

Table 6 displays the status of behavior of LGBTQIA+ students in terms of physical behavior. The respondents involved themselves in vigorous-intensity activities, such as running and swimming, as evident by the highest mean of 4.10 with standard deviation of 0.71, verbally interpreted as High. Likewise, the respondents seem to do physical activities before they realize they are already doing it, as implied by the lowest mean of 3.70 with standard deviation of 1.18. It is also shown to be High among the LGBTQIA+ students.

The overall mean of 3.96 indicated that the status of behavior of LGBTQIA+ students in terms of physical behavior is High.

Table 6. Status of Behavior of LGBTQIA+ Students in terms of Physical Behavior

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Can be involved in a vigorous-intensity activity	4.10	0.71	High
Possess the skills to do regular physical activity if I wanted	4.07	0.58	High
Have physical ability to do anything compared to others	4.00	0.87	High
Make regular plans concerning when, where, how and what kind of physical activity I would like to do	3.93	1.05	High
Start doing other physical activities before I realize that I am already doing it.	3.70	1.18	High
Weighted Mean	3.96		High

Legend:

Scale	Range	Description	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
4	3.41 – 4.20	Agree	High
3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral	Neutral
2	1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Low
1	1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Survey have shown that 55% of LGBT men were not active enough to maintain good health, compared to 33% of men in the general population while 56% of LGBT women were not active enough to maintain good health, compared to 45% of women in the general population (The National

LGB&T Partnership, 2016). These values show that it is important to develop awareness on physical health among LGBTQIA+ students as it helps elevate their mood and reduce their stress (AVMA, 2023).

Table 7. Status of Behavior of LGBTQIA+ Students in terms of Social Behavior

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Make an effort to express myself clearly in a more positive way	4.43	0.50	Very High
I try to project a more respectful reputation and image of myself	4.53	0.51	Very High
Project an acceptable image of peers	4.30	0.65	Very High
Hide my face because of my insecurity with others and my physical appearance may not be decent or presentable	3.47	1.41	High
Behavioral manifestation of myself which may not be acceptable to society	3.57	1.36	High
Weighted Mean	4.06		High

Legend:

Scale	Range	Description	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
4	3.41 – 4.20	Agree	High
3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral	Neutral
2	1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Low
1	1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Table 7 shows the status of behavior of LGBTQIA+ students in terms of social behavior. The LGBTQIA+ students strongly agree that they try to project a more respectful reputation and image of their selves, as evident by the highest mean of 4.53 with standard deviation of 0.51, verbally interpreted as Very High. In contrary, the respondents hide their face because of the insecurity they feel towards other people and towards their self, mainly because of their physical appearance thinking that it may not be decent or presentable, as implied by the lowest mean of 3.47 with standard deviation of 1.41. It is shown to be High among the LGBTQIA+ students suggesting they agree to this statement.

The overall mean of 4.06 indicated that the status of behavior of LGBTQIA+ students in terms of social behavior is High.

Findings from the study of Higa et. al (2014) have shown that family, peers, school, religious institutions, and community provide both positive and negative responses and views towards a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. Specifically, participants from their study have reported that strangers within the respondents’ community openly voiced out their antigay views either to the respondents’ themselves, or to their parents or friends. This is an example where LGBTQIA+ students have more negative experiences than positive ones.

➤ *Impact of Empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ Students towards the Challenges they Experienced-*

Table 8 shows the impact of empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students towards the challenges they experienced.

Table 8. Impact of Empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ Students towards the Challenges they Experienced

Predictor	Challenges	β-coefficient	t-stat	p-value	Analysis
Empowerment to LGBTQIA+ Students	Violence	0.926	2.886	0.007	Significant
	School-related Discrimination	0.523	1.652	0.110	Not Significant
	Religious Freedom	0.921	3.294	0.003	Significant

The computed p-values between the empowerment to LGBTQIA+ students and the challenges they experienced such as violence (p=0.007) and religious freedom (p=0.003) are both lower than the level of significance of 0.05. These results show that the empowerment to LGBTQIA+ students significantly impact the challenges they experienced, specially towards violence as evident with the highest coefficient of 0.926. On the other hand, the computed p-values between the empowerment to LGBTQIA+ students and the challenges they experienced such as school-related discrimination (p=0.110) is greater than the level of

significance of 0.05. The finding is marginally significant since the coefficient value is pretty decent at 0.523.

The results show that the null hypothesis is partially rejected. It is concluded that the empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students significantly impact the challenges they experienced. Violence and religious freedom are both impacted by the empowerment given to LGBTQIA+ students.

Effective strategies for assisting LGBT and gender nonconforming students need to be put into practice in order to promote empathy and support. These obstacles include individual beliefs, linguistic limitations, and the possibility that teachers lack sufficient training (Kolbe, 2020).

➤ *Impact of Empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ Students towards the Status of their Behavior-*

Table 9 shows the impact of empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students towards the status of their behavior.

The computed p-values between the empowerment to LGBTQIA+ students and the status of their behavior in

terms of emotional (p=0.000), physical (p=0.001), and social (p=0.000) are all lower than the level of significance of 0.05. These results show that the empowerment to LGBTQIA+ students significantly impact the status of their behavior, specially towards social behavior as evident with the highest coefficient of 0.721.

The results show that the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that the empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students significantly impact the status of their behavior.

Table 9. Impact of Empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ Students towards the Status of their Behavior

Predictor	Student Behavior	β-coefficient	t-stat	p-value	Analysis
Empowerment to LGBTQIA+ Students	Emotional Behavior	0.432	4.193	0.000	Significant
	Physical Behavior	0.651	3.677	0.001	Significant
	Social Behavior	0.721	5.396	0.000	Significant

Parents, schools, and communities can all play a role in preventing bullying and helping LGBTQIA+ youth feel physically and emotionally safe. StopBullying.gov (2021) cited some of the ways LGBTQIA+ youth feel accepted: (1) Encourage respect for all students; (2) Identify "safe spaces," such as counselors' offices or designated classrooms, where LGBTQI+ youth can receive support from administrators, teachers, or other school staff; (3) Use inclusive language and avoid making assumptions; (4) Use students' chosen names and pronouns; and (5) Facilitate access to community-based providers who have experience providing health services, including medical, counseling, social, and psychological services, and HIV/STI testing for LGBTQIA+ youth. All of these are points to be considered to promote awareness and build safe space for the LGBTQIA+ community.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study have shown that the (1) level of empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students is Highly Evident; (2) level of challenges experienced by LGBTQIA+ students in terms of violence, school-related discrimination, and religious freedom are all Moderately Evident; and (3) the status of behavior of LGBTQIA+ students in terms of emotional, physical, and social are Very High, High, and High, respectively. Furthermore, the conclusions can be drawn that (1) the empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students significantly impact the challenges they experienced; and (2) the empowerment delivered to LGBTQIA+ students significantly impact the status of their behavior.

On the basis of the major findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are given: (1) Higher authorities must enact policies and provide funding to support school personnel training on addressing discriminatory bullying and implementing safe schools' strategies; (2) School officials must be a resource for LGBTQIA+ students. They must ensure that libraries have resources for LGBTQIA+ youth. They could also appeal to

school administrators for LGBTQIA+-inclusive curricula; and lastly (3) Parents and students can participate and advocate in gender and development seminars in their schools.

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