

Schools' Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) Management Practices of Secondary Schools in Araceli and Dumarán Districts

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ABSTRACT

Protecting students inside the school is crucial in any society. As the school's primary role was supporting students' academic development while ensuring a secure learning environment, this study investigated management practices on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students in Secondary schools. Specifically, the study described the LGB students, teachers, and school heads' profile. It identified the schools' LGB management practices in terms of School Policies, Facilities, and Program Development. It ascertained the relationship between the socio-demographic profile of teachers and school heads and their challenges encountered in LGB management, and correlate the relationship between the schools' LGB management practices and the challenges encountered by LGB students. A descriptive-correlational design was employed in the study with 187 conveniently chosen participants in Northern Palawan, Philippines. A survey questionnaire was used for their profile, schools' management practices, and challenges encountered. Frequency counts, percentages, mean, and Pearson Product Moment Coefficient Correlation (r) were used to analyze the data gathered. Results revealed that no significant relationship was found between the socio-demographic profile of teachers and school heads and the challenges encountered in LGB management, specifically in terms of Learning Materials, Completion Rates, and Professional Development. It was affirmed that schools' LGB management practices were not rational factors in the challenges encountered by LGB students, specifically in terms of Bullying, Discrimination, and Mental and Physical Assault. Accordingly, this study has extensive effect that can point the department to design and implement specific plans and programs which centered to the protection of LGB students from bullying, discrimination, and violence in school.

Keywords: lesbian, gay, bisexual, school management practices

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the quest to enhance school climate, safety, and learning has been a lengthy endeavor. Access to a safe environment within the school not only encourages learning but also reassures parents. Schools have the power to foster a safe atmosphere for learning where actions of collaboration are essential to ensuring full school safety. Teachers and school administrators are the only partners of the Department of Education which ensure that all schools are secure, encouraging, and conducive to learning. Owing to this, schools are required to put in place school-wide practices in order to protect all types of students.

Creating a safe, disciplined, and inviting learning environment is critical to educating and giving the best possible preparation to all students to reach their full potential and contribute to society. The importance of shaping inclusive policies based on the best practices in school safety and climate is of utmost attention. The Department of Education expects educators to find ways to promote and uphold respect inside the school, handle issues in a safe space, and effect good change (Cowan et al., 2013).

The schools' practices present the departments' mandate to create a safe school free from bullying and

discrimination among students as it values each student's rights to access education where the primarily goal is to promote the right of every Filipino to high-quality, gender-sensitive, safe, and inspiring basic education as stipulated in DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 also known as "DepEd Child Protection Policy".

Schools' management practices are essential elements for providing a safe environment to Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students by fostering an inclusive environment. Over time, youths identifying as LGB are at higher risk for negative psychosocial health outcomes, such as violence victimization, bullying, and discrimination. If unavoids, the school environment may contribute to this process which is why schools should cultivate protective factors that reduce minority identity-related stressor and bolster the psychosocial health of LGB students. Implementing school practices supportive of LGB students may substantially protect them. Moreover, all students suffer less emotional distress, less aggression and harassment, and less suicidal thoughts and actions when schools adopt practices focusing on LGB students' protection. Furthermore, LGB youth in schools with more supportive environments have better mental health improved feelings of safety, and reduced peer victimization.

Additionally, schools' management practices are in line with the Gender-Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) Policy of the Department of Education adopted from the Gender and Development (GAD) mandate as stipulated in the 1987 Philippine Constitution to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women on the rights of a child among others (DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017). Thus, schools create practices and programs in line with GAD.

Supportive and inclusive school policies such as anti-bullying/harassment policies and gender nonconforming student policies, supportive school staff, and curricular resources that are inclusive of LGB related topics have positive impact to students (Greytak et al., 2014).

Though society is slowly changing its perception towards creating a friendly environment for the LGB community, there is still a long way to go. Still, LGB students face serious problems that threaten their safety, health and right to education. Cases connected to LGB victimization are also being encountered in Palawan, which puts students' safety in uncertainty. If there are established practices defined by schools, LGB students may feel protected and secure inside the school. Schools then are essential in imposing policies that protect LGB students.

Considering the causes and issues, it is significant that this research was conducted to infer teachers' and school heads' challenges in the management of LGB students and identify the schools' management practices to the said students in secondary schools located at Araceli and Dumarán Districts.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main endeavour of this research is to determine the schools' LGB management practices in Araceli and Dumarán Districts to manage the increasing number of LGB students in Secondary Schools in Araceli and Dumarán Districts, Araceli, Dumarán, Palawan. Specifically, it aimed:

1. To study the profile of the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students in terms of gender, age, grade level, and highest educational attainment of parents;
2. To determine the profile of the teachers and school heads in terms of sex, age, teacher position, length of service, and highest educational attainment;
3. To identify the schools' LGB management practices in terms of school policies, facilities, and program development;
4. To describe the challenges encountered by Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students in terms of bullying, discrimination, and mental and physical assault;
5. To describe the challenges encountered by teachers and school heads in terms of learning materials,

completion rates, and professional development;

6. To determine the significant relationship between the socio-demographic profile of teachers and school heads and their challenges encountered in LGB management; and
7. To determine if there is a significant relationship between the schools' LGB management practices and the challenges encountered by LGB students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. The study used a quantitative research approach and descriptive-correlational research methods; the researcher implemented a descriptive survey method to assess the perceptions of schools' practices in the management of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students and the challenges encountered by LGB students as well as the challenges encountered by teachers and school heads in the management of LGB students.

The correlational method was utilized to analyze the significant relationship between the research variables as stated in the research hypothesis. The design allowed the researcher to gather information, summarize, present, and interpret research problems.

Participants and Sampling Procedure. The respondents of this study were secondary LGB students, secondary school teachers, and secondary school administrators of Araceli District and Dumaran District. The population of this study had a total of one-hundred ten LGB students, seventy-one secondary school teachers, and six secondary school administrators with a total of 187 respondents. The LGB respondents were students in the said schools, and the teachers and school administrators held regular positions in their respective schools. The researchers used Convenience Sampling for simple availability sampling to get the number of respondents for the study categorizing them by schools within the Araceli District and Dumaran District. The total population of respondents relies on data collection population members who are conveniently available to participate in the study. This helped the researchers quickly identify the study population in each secondary school within the districts.

The researchers obtained permission from the School's Division Superintendent, District Supervisors, and School Heads to conduct the study. Through the help of the School Heads, the researcher conveniently selected the respondents to ensure that they would have specific characteristics relevant to the study and willingness to participate in the research.

Data Gathering Procedure and Analysis. Succeeding the approval of the study by the research committee, the researchers requested permission from the Schools' Division Superintendent, District Supervisor, and respective school administrators to conduct the study. After consent was granted, an initial request through the use of consent forms for the respondents followed.

The researchers visited the secondary schools in Araceli and Dumaran Districts and employed the actual data gathering using the modified questionnaire. All students were asked to answer the questionnaire voluntarily. Those who returned the questionnaire with marked as Lesbian or Gay or Bisexual on their gender were chosen as the respondents of the study. Moreover, respondents were appropriately informed of the study's research objectives and assured that their identity would be kept confidential and that the results will be utilized only for academic purposes. Additionally, respondents employed were assured that no harm or abuse, physically or psychologically will ensure during the conduct of the study.

After administering the survey questionnaire to the respondents, the researcher retrieved the questionnaires. The gathered data were collected, screened for validity, and tabulated for statistical analysis. The researchers

classified the study’s data, tallied, tabulated, and subjected it to statistical tools. *Ethical Considerations.* Maximum ethical considerations were sustained prior, during, and after the conduct of the study. Regardless of having authorized request letters from school authorities, and consent from instructors, parents, and participants, school and student participation is absolutely voluntary. The study and its intention were conferred with participants. All data collected were remained strictly confidential, and no particular school and personal information was obtained or described in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Profile of the Respondents

1.1 LGB students

Table 1 exhibits that majority are identified as bisexuals (53%). This indicates a diverse LGB population in the districts, with the majority being bisexuals. Rogers (2023) stated that over one in four high school kids in the US identifies as LGBTQ where bisexual constitute the highest percentage at 12.2.

In terms of age, most of the LGB respondents were 13 years old (37%). With the majority of LGB students falling between the ages of 13 to 15, schools need to ensure that their adolescent-focused programs are inclusive and sensitive to LGB issues.

On the other hand, most respondents were in Grade 8 (37%) suggesting that middle school years might be a critical period for many students in terms of identity development and realization. McIntosh (2021) declared that among all the grade levels, lower grade levels of the LGBTQ+ population struggle the most with mental health issues. Telling supportive peers about one’s mental illness can be uplifting, boosting self-esteem and providing a safe space for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Furthermore, the educational attainment data of parents where most fathers and mothers have secondary education (46%) and (53%) respectively, these results highlight potential challenges, given that higher education often exposes individuals to a broader range of perspectives. Johns et al. (2019) reported that when a child comes out, parents want to help, but they are not equipped to do so due to a lack of knowledge. Interventions must prioritize supporting, educating, and offering behavioral counsel to families of LGBTQ youngsters.

Table 1.1 Socio-demographic profile of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students

Profile Variables		Frequency (n=110)	Percentage (%)
Gender			
	Lesbian	27	24%
	Gay	25	23%
	Bisexual	58	53%
Age			
	12 years old	14	13%
	13 years old	41	37%
	14 years old	21	19%
	15 years old	29	26%

	16 years old	5	5%
Grade Level			
	Grade 7	18	16%
	Grade 8	41	37%
	Grade 9	19	17%
	Grade 10	32	29%
Father's Educational Attainment			
	Elementary	38	35%
	Secondary	51	46%
	Tertiary	21	19%
Mother's Educational Attainment			
	Elementary	25	22%
	Secondary	58	53%
	Tertiary	27	25%

1.2. Teachers

Table 1.2 shows that the respondents were dominated by females (73%). It is evident that the districts lean towards a female-dominated educational workforce. Eagly and Wood (2012) stated that there were around three times as many women as men working as teachers in 2006.

As to the age, most of teachers were in the age bracket of 20-25 years old (28%). This relatively younger age demographic suggests that the educational environment could be potentially more receptive to evolving educational paradigms, including inclusivity and diversity. Alufohai and Ibhafidon (2015) revealed that younger teachers between the ages of 21 and 34 were shown to be more effective and to produce higher accomplishment than older teachers.

Analyzing the job positions of the teacher-respondents, a staggering 75 percent held the title of Teacher 1. This substantial concentration could imply that most educators were at the early stages of their professional trajectory. Ladd (2013) unveiled that instructors with greater experience are more productive than those with less involvement.

Length of service provides a significant 49 percent had served between 0-5 years. It reiterates the notion of a young, possibly more malleable workforce, but with 11% having served for 21 years and up, underscores the mix of fresh perspectives with the wisdom of seasoned educators. Graham et al. (2020) declared that teachers who have been in the classroom for five years or more are considered experienced.

Lastly, the educational background data reveals that a majority (58%) were pursuing their Master's Degree suggesting an active pursuit of professional development. This could translate to a more comprehensive and adaptive teaching environment. Galiza et al. (2018) demonstrates how a teacher's educational background affects how they acquire and hone their abilities and competences.

Table 1.2 *Socio-demographic profile of teachers*

Profile Variables		Frequency (n=71)	Percentage (%)
Sex			
	Male	19	27%

Sex			
	Male	19	27%
	Female	52	73%
Age			
	20-25 years old	20	28%
	26-30 years old	14	20%
	31-35 years old	11	15%
	36-40 years old	10	14%
	41-45 years old	4	6%
	46-50 years old	5	7%
	51-55 years old	2	3%
	56-60 years old	5	7%
Job Position			
	Teacher 1	53	70%
	Teacher 2	5	6%
	Teacher 3	12	16%
	Master Teacher	1	1%
Length of Service			
	0-5 years	36	47%
	6-10 years	22	29%
	11-15 years	5	6%
	16-20 years	2	3%
	21 years and up	12	15%
Education			
	Bachelor's degree	23	30%
	Ongoing Master's Degree	45	58%
	Master's Degree	7	9%
	Ongoing Doctorate	2	3%

1.3. School heads

Table 1.3 shows that majority of school head respondents were females (67%). This indicates that the majority of school heads in Araceli and Dumaran Districts were females. Rangarajan (2014) emphasized that women have been gaining success as school administrators despite all the stresses they undergo in the workplace.

Concerning age, 50 percent were within the age bracket of 51-60 years old. Kotur and Anbazhagan (2014) stated that age has an influence on the leadership skills of the workers.

In terms of position, most of them held the position of Principal (66%). This suggests that administrators in these schools possess high-quality leadership skills with 66 percent of them have been in service for 21 years and above, and pursuing a master's degree (17%) and doctor's degree (17%). Cook (2012) mentioned that continuing education is crucial to the success of one's path.

Table 1.3 Socio-demographic profile of the school heads

Profile Variables		Frequency (n=6)	Percentage %
Gender			
	Male	2	33%
	Female	4	67%
Age			
	31-40 years old	1	17%
	41-50 years old	2	33%
	51-60 years old	3	50%
Job Position			
	Head Teacher	1	17%
	Assistant Principal	1	17%
	Principal	4	66%
Length of Service			
	0-5 years	1	17%
	16-20 years	1	17%
	21 years and up	4	66%
Education			
	Ongoing Master's Degree	4	66%
	Master's Degree	1	17%
	Ongoing Doctorate	1	17%

2. Schools' LGB Management Practices

As perceived by LGB students, teachers, and school heads

Table 2 presents the schools' LGB management practices using a Likert scale to represent ratings from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1), as summarized in the table.

The LGB participants have neutral outlook on School Policies, as manifested by their neutrality with the statements (Mean= 2.73). Specifically, table 2 reflects that students strongly agree for statement 5, indicating that the students believe that more LGB-supportive policies in school means that LGB students will have better outcomes in school. LGB students showed strong disagreement towards attending LGB Pride Month (statement 1). This shows that LGB students have adverse attitude about participating on the school programs related to LGB students. It was also observed the disagreement of students of their awareness on the 5% GAD budget being used in LGB programs (statement 3). In terms of teachers' responses, teachers showed neutrality in the entire statements (Mean= 3.34). The teachers strongly agreed that they knew the child protection policy of the school (statement 2), and showed neutrality on the 5% GAD fund (statement 3). For the school heads, agreement was given to all responses (Mean= 3.70), indicating that school heads strongly agree that they knew the child protection policy of the school (statement 2) and were aware of the 5% GAD budget being used in LGB programs (statement 3). However, school heads were also in dispute having experiences attending LGB Pride Month (statement 1). This implies that a substantial absence of initiatives and a concerning lack of engagement or participation in the school's calendar in marking and recognizing LGB rights. The results emphasized the need for awareness

campaigns and open dialogues to foster inclusivity. The schools could benefit from implementing more transparent communication channels and educational initiatives to ensure students are well-informed about existing protective measures. Palmer et al. (2017) stated that supporting tools such as school connectedness and LGBT-related initiatives that are available in schools could help reduce the bad experiences LGBTQ students have, which would enhance their health and wellness.

For the facilities as perceived by LGB students, the overall mean pegged at 3.12 which was in neutrality. LGB students revealed their agreement on their awareness of the school keeping record on the behaviour disciplinary actions (statement 4). However, it can be deduced that students did not enjoy the safe spaces being establish by the school for LGB students (statement 1). For teachers' responses, teachers showed agreement on the overall responses (Mean= 3.91). A strong agreement was found that they noticed the child protection laws of the school were being followed by all students and teachers. In the meantime, teachers have neutral outlook on school facility like safe space can give them peace of mind (statement 5). For school heads, the participants have a total agreement on facilities (Mean= 3.80). It was worth noted that almost all statements perceived their agreement. However, the participants disagreed that the school informs students about the child protection policy that is in place (statement 3). This implies that students lack ideas about the programs of school. The demands for information dissemination, where the initiative will come from the school, are also crucial. In this context, schools could benefit from actively communicating and educating students about the details of this policy to improve awareness. Finally, the positive perception in terms of the potential benefits of such spaces was valued, suggesting that students recognize the positive impact of such environments. Schools should build on this positive sentiment by consistently reinforcing the value of these spaces. Kristal (2021) expressed that LGBT students should be aware of who is supportive and safe on campus, as well as where they can feel protected. As a result, programs that raise awareness, enhanced the setting, sparked more discussions, and raised the comfort level of LGBT participants, would mean feeling more at ease with the surroundings. Establishing safe spaces in schools was a great way to support LGBTQ children and incorporate respect for LGBTQ identities.

For Program Development, LGB students' response in a neutral perception. (Mean= 2.99). The participants believe that orientations for LGB students are important for them to know their rights (statement 5) and have noticed the inclusion of gender, sexuality and human rights in the curriculum (statement 2). Nevertheless, disagreement was observed over LGB students not experiencing joining the Human Rights Month (statement 3). Teacher respondents, on the other hand, identified all statements to agree, suggesting that they were informed of the LGB students' rights and were well-oriented about them (Mean= 4.03). As for school heads, the respondents strongly agree on experiencing attending orientations on youth development at the school (statement 1), and the inclusion of gender, sexuality, and human rights in the school's curriculum (4.67). Conversely, a disagreement on informing the rights of LGB students (statement 3) were revealed. This suggests a lack of interest or awareness among students regarding the importance of these programs, schools' lack of active involvement and commitment to important events related to the welfare of LGB students, and students not generally aware of these rights demands crucial focus. Strategies for more engaging and informative sessions might be necessary to capture students' attention and interest. Helpenstell (2017) revealed that LGBT students may feel less certain of the support they will receive from their school communities when policies are implemented without adequate communication. In order to combat this, one of the most important tactics for enhancing school safety is to spread knowledge about school policies so that teachers and students are aware of the public policies that impact their everyday lives.

Table 2. Schools' LGB management practices as perceived by LGB students, teachers, and school heads

Statements	LGB Students		Teachers		School Heads	
	MS	VI	MS	VI	MS	VI
A. Bullying						

1.	I experienced attending Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) Pride Month.	1.35	SD	2.14	D	2.50	D
2.	I know the child protection policy of the school.	3.50	N	4.55	SA	5.00	SA
3.	I am aware of the 5% Gender and Development (GAD) budget being used in Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) programs.	1.94	D	3.23	N	4.00	A
4.	I am aware of the school programs related to Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students.	2.25	D	2.90	N	3.50	N
5.	I believe that if the school has more LGB-supportive policies, the LGB students will have better outcomes in school.	4.62	SA	3.87	A	3.50	N
	Overall Mean	2.73	N	3.34	N	3.70	A
B. Facilities							
1.	I enjoy the safe spaces being establish by the school for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students.	1.57	D	3.49	N	4.00	A
2.	I notice that the child protection laws of the school are being followed by all students and teachers.	2.50	D	4.56	SA	4.17	A
3.	My school informs me about the child protection policy that is in place.	2.84	N	3.94	A	2.17	D
4.	I am aware that the school has behaviour disciplinary actions and keep record of it.	4.41	A	4.41	A	4.83	SA
5.	I believe that a school facility like a safe space can give me peace of mind.	4.30	A	3.15	N	3.83	A
	Overall Mean	3.12	N	3.91	A	3.80	A
C. Program Development							
1.	I have experienced attending orientations on youth development at the school.	2.03	D	4.23	A	4.83	SA
2.	I notice the inclusion of gender, sexuality, and human rights in the school's curriculum.	4.38	A	4.13	A	4.67	SA
3.	I experience joining the Human Rights Month.	1.90	D	3.73	A	2.00	D
4.	I am informed of the rights of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students	2.18	A	3.9	A	1.83	D
5.	I believe that orientations for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students	4.45	A	4.0	A	4.50	A

	are important for them to know their rights.					
Overall Mean		2.99	N	4.03	A	3.57
						A

Legend: MS = Mean Score; VI = Verbal Interpretation

4.51-5.00 = Strongly Agree

3.51-4.50 = Agree

2.51-3.50 = Neutral

1.51-2.50 = Disagree

1.00-1.50 = Strongly Disagree

3. Challenges Encountered by LGB Students

Results in terms of bullying suggests that the LGB students were neutral (Mean=2.56). Majority (3.54) of the respondents experienced being bullied by name-calling (statement 1). This implies that a significant number of LGB students experience bullying. By fostering a more inclusive school climate and increasing awareness of the hurtful effects of homophobic remarks to LGB students, the school can play a critical role in the fight against bullying within the school. Fenaughty (2019) expressed that when teachers increase school safety and are more accepting of LGBTQ students, schools become more secure for every pupil and are more likely to succeed in school if they have a sense of belonging.

Regarding discrimination, the overall mean of 2.03 suggests disagreement. It was worth taking that all statements were perceived disagree to strongly disagree. This indicates that respondents have encountered discrimination in school, but a significant number have not. Initiatives promoting awareness, tolerance, and respectful communication are imperative to mitigate verbal harassment and create an environment where students feel safe expressing their identities. Slaatten et al. (2015) asserted that youth can also learn about diversity and constructive methods to engage with other youth to prevent discrimination inside the school. The curriculum at the school might contribute to a better learning environment and more discussions about sexual diversity.

In terms of mental and physical assault, LGB students' responses in all statements uncovered disagree to strongly disagree (Mean= 2.04) suggesting that a notable number of students have experienced violence, though occasionally done and not experienced by all, has an effect on the lives of LGB students. The schools should continue to emphasize the importance of non-violence and provide clear reporting mechanisms to address any incidents promptly. Saewyc and Homma (2017) affirmed that a number of promising approaches to enhancing the health and well-being of LGBT adolescents are highlighted by inclusive curricula, supportive teachers, anti-bullying measures, and school connectivity to reduce physical violence among LGBT students. Supporting tools like these in schools could help reduce the negative experiences LGB students have, enhancing their health and wellness.

Table 3. Challenges encountered by Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students

Statements		MS	VI
A. Bullying			
1.	I am bullied by name calling.	3.5	A
2.	Students make fun of me.	2.6	N
3.	Students write bad things about me.	2.3	D

4.	I am verbally tortured by other students.	2.4	D
5.	I have experienced being physically assaulted by another person.	2.0	D
Overall Mean		2.56	N
B. Discrimination			
1.	I have experienced being denied admittance in school events.	1.7	SD
2.	I do not have same opportunities to receive tasks compared to non-Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) individuals.	1.9	D
3.	I have experienced criticism because of the way I am.	2.5	D
4.	I believe that I am being treated as someone who is beneath who is beneath others who are not Lesbian, gay, and Bisexual (LGB).	2.2	D
5.	Peers Do not Support me.	1.8	SD
Overall Mean		2.03	D
C. Mental and Physical Assault			
1.	I have experienced physical violence from other students.	1.6	SD
2.	I have experienced harassment from my peers.	1.8	SD
3.	I have felt depressed because of the way treated.	2.4	D
4.	I lose confidence every time I am bullied.	2.5	D
5.	I feel isolated and deprived of my rights.	1.9	D
Overall Mean		2.04	D

Legend: MS = Mean Score; VI = Verbal Interpretation

4.51-5.00 = Strongly Agree

3.51-4.50 = Agree

2.51-3.50 = Neutral

1.51-2.50 = Disagree

1.00-1.50 = Strongly Disagree

4. Challenges Encountered by Teachers and School Heads

Table 4 presents the challenges encountered by teachers and school heads in terms of learning materials, completion rates, and professional development.

Results for teachers on learning materials revealed having a neutral view on all statements (Mean= 2.4). Particularly, teachers affirmed that they have experienced limitation of materials in school related to LGB students (statement 1). In contrast, the teachers show disagreement on the belief that contextualization of LMs incorporating the GAD primary message and essential principles is not important for the benefit of LGB students. This was in contrast with the school heads' neutral response (Mean=3.13) where they agree on the belief that contextualization of LMs incorporating the GAD primary message is not important. This suggests that teachers and school heads have different notions on the importance of LM contextualization. These nuanced responses indicate a need for more appropriate intervention and understanding of the potential of inclusive learning resources in addressing this issue. According to Fuller (n.d), student-facing materials must include LGBTQ+ identities, characters, and history to be inclusive of gender and sexual minorities. Educators should provide students with precise and unbiased information regarding queer

identities, explaining how they are defined, and how privilege and oppression are established. When educators incorporate LGBTQ+ resources into their curricula, students can recognize these adults as potential safe spaces to discuss delicate issues.

In terms of completion rates, teachers disagree on 4 out of 5 statements leading to disagree on the overall mean of 2.37, indicating that bullying and discrimination are significant reasons of the LGB students dropped out of school (statement 3). Regarding school heads and completion rates, the participants asserted that intervention program is necessary to not increase completion rates among LGB students (statement 5). Nonetheless, school heads attested that completion rates among LGB students are not lower than the average for other students (statement 1)). The overall mean for school heads was 2.57, with a descriptive rating of “Neutral.” This indicates a general recognition among educators the noticeable dropout rate. The belief in the necessity of an intervention program reflects an understanding of the need for targeted strategies to address these challenges and improve completion rates. This highlights the need for teachers and administrators to implement intensive intervention programs to support students at risk of dropping out. Given their crucial role in enhancing the feelings of safety among LGBTQ+ students, educators and school administrators should deliberately take actions to establish more inclusive learning environments, ultimately reducing the poor completion rates among LGBT students. Wernick et al. (2016) uncovered individuality as a strength and revealed a shift towards an accepting classroom climate through classroom interventions that focused on respecting individual differences. This was achieved through open discussions and the participation in emotional and sensitive issues.

In terms of Professional Development for teachers, the participants have a neutral perspective on the statements (Mean=2.90). Teachers declared agreement on having no experience attending training and professional development activities regarding the creation of safe and supportive environments for LGB students (statement 1). Similarly, the participants pronounced having not experiencing joining capacity-building activities for handling gender issues (statement 2). In contrast, school heads’ responses agreed on the statement that training and seminars related to GAD will not increase their knowledge in handling LGB students (statement 5). This signifies the lack of acknowledgment from school heads on the importance of trainings and seminars related to GAD. This suggests a room for improvement in educators’ awareness and alignment with policies promoting gender responsiveness. Such efforts can foster a more supportive and inclusive learning environment for LGB students. Payne and Smith (2016) stated that in-service training on LGBTQ is linked to increased knowledge, more positive teacher attitudes toward LGBTQ students, and an improved school climate. School administrators and teachers are better able to understand LGBTQ students’ needs and experiences as relevant to their daily decisions. Top of Form

Table 4. *Challenges Encountered by Teachers and School Heads*

S.no	Statements	Teachers		School Heads	
		MS	VI	MS	VI
A.	Learning Materials				
1	I have experienced limitation of materials in school related to Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students.	3.18	N	2.67	N
2	I have experienced difficulty in accessing materials online related to Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB).	3.1	N	3	N
3	I am not aware of any learning materials for GAD.	2.58	D	2.83	N
4	I notice that current textbooks do not show the inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual’s (LGBs) in their contents.	2.99	N	2.83	N

5	I believe that contextualization of LMs incorporating the GAD primary message and essential principles are not important for the benefit of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students.	2.35	D	4.33	A
Overall Mean		2.84	N	3.13	N
B.	Completion Rates				
1	I notice that the completion rates among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students is lower than the average for other students.	2.59	N	1.83	D
2	I notice that Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students drop out of school more than the average for other students.	1.96	D	2	D
3	I notice that bullying and discrimination are some of the reasons why the completion rate of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students is lower compared to other students.	2.38	D	2.83	N
4	I notice that poor grades are the reasons why Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students drop out from school.	2.42	D	2.17	D
5	I believe that an intervention program is necessary to not increase completion rates among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students.	2.48	D	4	A
Overall Mean		2.37	N	2.57	N
C.	Professional Development				
1	I have not experienced attending training and professional development activities regarding the creation of safe and supportive environments for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students.	3.85	A	3.83	A
2	I have not experienced joining capacity-building activities for handling gender issues.	3.54	A	2.67	N
3	I cannot see any integration of gender in all learning and development programs.	2.61	D	2.33	D
4	I am not well-oriented on Gender Responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBEP).	3.04	N	2.33	D
5	I don't believe that training and seminars related to GAD will increase my knowledge in handling Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students.	1.49	SD	4.5	A
Overall Mean		2.9	N	3.13	N

Legend: MS = Mean Score; VI = Verbal Interpretation

4.51-5.00 = Strongly Agree (SA)

3.51-4.50 = Agree (A)

2.51-3.50 = Neutral (N)

1.51-2.50 = Disagree (D)

1.00-1.50 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

5. Correlation between Socio-demographic Profile of Teachers and School Heads and their Challenges Encountered in LGB Management

Table 5 Relationship between the socio-demographic profile of teachers and school heads and their challenges encountered on LGB management

Challenges and Profiles	Teachers			School Heads		
		p	Decision		p	Decision
Learning Materials						
Sex	-0.197	.100	Accept H _o	-0.414	.414	Accept H _o
Age	-0.128	.286	Accept H _o	-0.309	.552	Accept H _o
Position	0.082	.498	Accept H _o	-0.507	.305	Accept H _o
Length of Service	-0.014	.910	Accept H _o	0.169	.749	Accept H _o
Education	-0.033	.785	Accept H _o	0.845	.034	Reject H _o
Completion Rate						
Sex	0.069	.570	Accept H _o	-0.840	.036	Reject H _o
Age	0.062	.608	Accept H _o	-0.376	.463	Accept H _o
Position	0.102	.397	Accept H _o	-0.789	.062	Accept H _o
Length of Service	0.069	.570	Accept H _o	-0.257	.623	Accept H _o
Education	0.111	.357	Accept H _o	-0.069	.897	Accept H _o
Professional Development						
Sex	0.093	.441	Accept H _o	-0.210	.690	Accept H _o
Age	0.120	.321	Accept H _o	0.845	.034	Reject H _o
Position	0.253	.033	Reject H _o	-0.069	.897	Accept H _o
Length of Service	0.151	.207	Accept H _o	0.857	.029	Reject H _o
Education	0.017	.887	Accept H _o	-0.189	.720	Accept H _o

Note:

Sex: 1 = Male, 2 = Female

No significant relationship was found between the socio-demographic profile of teachers and school heads and their challenges encountered in LGB management in terms of learning materials, completion rates, and professional development. It implies that the socio-demographic profile of teachers and school heads, such as sex, age, position, and length of service, except educational background, did not affect the challenges they encountered in the management of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students. It underscores the idea that the challenges may not be solely determined by these demographic characteristics but may be influenced by other unmeasured factors or inherent beliefs and attitudes. Llego (2022) stated that teachers could help Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students by ensuring that their lesson plans and instructional materials incorporate a variety of viewpoints and experiences to improve the inclusivity of the curriculum,

mirroring their capacity to do so. McDonald (2018) posited that the emphasis should be placed on providing more positive influences and resources for LGBTQ adolescents who are at risk. Barile (2022) stated that encouraging workshops and expert professional development can assist in guaranteeing that your school is welcoming, secure, and affirming of LGBTQ students.

6. Correlation between Schools’ LGB Management Practices and the Challenges Encountered by LGB Students

Table 6 Relationship between the schools’ Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) management practices and the challenges encountered by LGB students

School Practices Related to LGB		p-value	Decision
School Policies	0.031	.750	Accept H ₀
Facilities	0.016	.868	Accept H ₀
Program Development	0.061	.525	Accept H ₀

The result revealed that there is no statistically relationship between schools’ practices and the challenges LGB students’ experience. This implies that the challenges encountered by LGB students in terms of bullying, discrimination and mental and physical assault have no effect on the school programs in terms of school policies, facilities, and program development. Sutherland (2019) disclosed that less prejudice against LGBTQ students was observed in schools that reported implementing inclusive and anti-discriminatory policies more frequently, contributing to a safer learning environment. Youth who identify as LGBTQ were able to attend events in a safer atmosphere because of inclusive rules. As a result, inclusive policies are crucial to creating a secure atmosphere for students. Baron (2021) aired that as part of a larger struggle for equality, safe spaces for LGBT people are being created. To provide everyone—especially LGBT people—the confidence to be themselves without fear of discrimination, harassment, or condemnation, safe and welcoming environments are crucial. Consequently, higher authorities should evaluate the school environment to guide improvement plans. Lassiter (2015) unfolded that presenting individuality as a strength and fostering change towards an accepting classroom climate can give students the chance to raise awareness of LGBTQ problems in their schools.

CONCLUSION

This study assessed the LGB management practices of secondary schools. The findings of the study demonstrated that the level of schools’ LGB management practices as perceived by LGB student respondents was neutral, while teachers and school heads agree on it. This means that emphasizing the positive perceptions of teachers and school heads on schools’ practices is crucial for the well-being and inclusivity of LGB students.

The alarming disagreement regarding a 5% GAD budget for LGB programs should be highlighted by teachers and administrators. This suggests the demands for properly allocation of funds for the programs and activities intended for the overall wellbeing of LGB students. Although a majority disagreed on the existence of safe spaces in their schools, a facet requiring immediate attention on the part of teachers and school administrators has been identified.

The Challenges Encountered by LGB students in terms of bullying, discrimination, and mental and physical assault were perceived by the respondents as disagreeable. Name-calling emerged as the greatest challenge

in the daily interaction of LGB students in school, demanding urgent attention.

Teachers and school heads perceived the challenges encountered in terms of learning materials, completion rates, and professional development as “Neutral”. This insight offers a window into areas of concern, potential gaps, and proactive measures.

Teachers emphasized the importance of training and capability building to enhance interaction and support for LGB students, in contrast to the perception of school heads.

No significant relationship was found between the socio-demographic profile of teachers and school heads and the challenges they encountered with LGB students. It underscores the idea that the challenges may not be solely determined by these demographic characteristics but may be influenced by other unmeasured factors or inherent beliefs and attitudes.

There is no significant relationship between the schools’ practices and the challenges faced by LGB students. This could mean that while practices are essential, they may not directly address or alleviate the specific adversities LGB students confront.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Education may create and enforce concrete policies and program awareness which centered to the protection of LGB students to prevent bullying, discrimination, and violence among LGB students in school where safe spaces are seen as a positive outlet for inclusivity. Further, the department may hold seminars for both teachers and school heads about Child Protection Policy, Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy, Gender and Development, sexuality, inclusive education, safe spaces to ensure that standards are followed correctly and there is no misunderstanding regarding its implementation.

Likewise, Teachers and School Heads may create programs, policies and activities exclusively for the protection of LGB students for the awareness of all students about the rights of LGB students. Additionally, they may establish safe spaces in classrooms, in school events, and in all programs of the school allowing LGB people to participate in all school activities without fear of being made fun of for being gay and consistently promote safe spaces for all students regardless of preferred gender.

Considering the limited area of the study, this can be conducted in higher grade levels where other variables may be investigated.

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