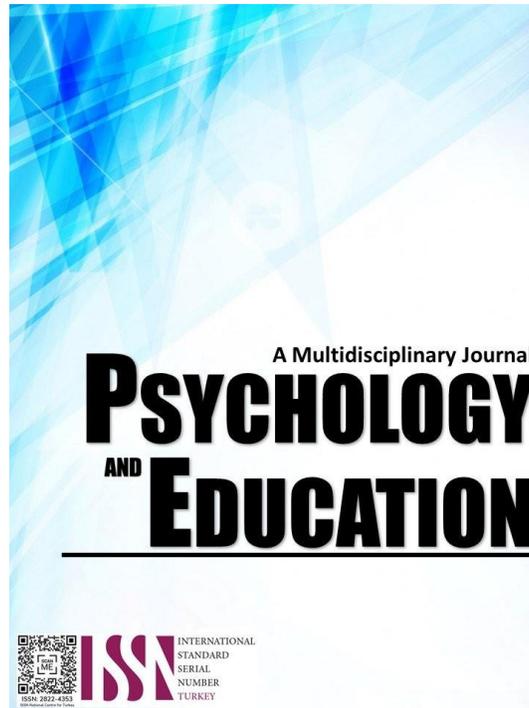


THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL LGBT YOUTH EXPERIENCE IN AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION



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The Phenomenological LGBT Youth Experience in an Educational Institution

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Abstract

This study focused on the experiences of LGBT youth. In order to determine the difficulties LGBT youth in private and public schools encounter, this study focused on the phenomenological LGBT youth experience in an educational institution. Semi-structured interviews and participant observations are methods used to gather the data in order to determine the diverse emotional, social, and intellectual factors that impact their daily lives. The sample consists of 4 lesbians, 4 gays, 4 bisexuals, and 4 transgenders, for a total of 16 participants. The study emphasizes the significance of inclusive educational practices by demonstrating the important effects that institutional policies, peer relationships, and social norms have on the academic achievement and overall well-being of young LGBT people. The findings of this study can be used as a starting point for creating a strategy for implementation that will support the experiences that educational institutions have with LGBT students. The ultimate goal of the study is to support LGBT youth's general growth and well-being by valuing and embracing their diverse experiences while providing a welcoming and supportive learning environment for everyone. A study has shown that the experiences of LGBT youth in educational institutions emphasize the life-changing potential of healthy connections. It is acknowledged that fostering the growth of LGBT supporters among students, instructors, and parents is essential for creating a welcoming and accepting school community.

Keywords: *LGBT youth, emotional, phenomenological, academic, peer relationship, social norms, experience, learning, institution.*

Introduction

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community refers to a group of individuals who identify as non-heterosexual and non-cisgender. The acronym has expanded over the years to include other identities like unconventional, questioning, intersex, asexual, and pansexual, among others. Historically, the LGBT community has experienced significant challenges regarding acceptance and equitable rights, including discrimination, violence and legal barriers. However, with the increasing awareness and advocacy for LGBT rights, many countries have implemented policies and laws to defend their rights and promote inclusivity. It is important to note that the experiences and challenges faced by individuals within the LGBT community can vary depending on factors like race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location (Moore et al., 2023).

For this study, the researcher focused on LGBT youth. Besides that, young people remain the most viable, so it is essential to discover what young individuals experience inside institutions. Through the years, people have slowly opened themselves up to knowing and acknowledging their experiences regarding their gender based on their identities. The population of the LGBT community is engaged and growing nowadays, and many students, both in private and public schools, are still encountering continuous positive and negative experiences, stereotypes, and not receiving equal treatment to other youth (Thoreson, 2016). The culture of this society is also associated with this and can be noticeable in the generation today. While the LGBT community is still striving for their rights, some students are gradually expanding their minds to gender and sexuality, and nowadays, the population of LGBT people is growing.

The Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC), UP Babaylan, and ProGay Philippines were only a few LGBT organizations founded throughout the decade. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) history dates back to the first recorded instances of same-sex love and sexuality in ancient civilizations, involving the history of LGBT peoples and cultures around the world (Morris, 2017). In the 20th century, LGBT individuals began to organize and advocate for their rights. In 1995, Ang Ladlad, a political party for LGBT Filipinos, was formed, but the commission denied its registration in elections on the grounds of immorality. LGBT Filipinos still face discrimination, violence, and harassment, and there is still a long way to go to achieve genuine equality and acceptance (Roland, 2012).

In the modern world, although discrimination among the LGBT youth has decreased, it cannot eradicate the fact that there is still existing discrimination, and many still receive adverse treatment, even inside educational institutions. In a report written by Pendharkar (2022), it was revealed that more than two-thirds of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) students have reported feeling intimidated at school. 76% reported verbal harassment, while 31% suffered physical harassment. Over a dozen percent of them were assaulted physically. Nearly fifty percent of students reported experiencing sexual harassment in the classroom.

Moreover, homophobic comments were a source of concern for LGBT students. Virtually all LGBT teens (97%) have heard the word "gay" used negatively in a school setting. They were nearly all (90%) exposed to more homophobic comments. 93% of respondents reported hearing unfavorable remarks about their gender expression, such as "masculine" or "feminine," while 83% reported hearing transphobic insults. Forty percent of LGBT adolescent students avoided school facilities such as locker rooms and exercise classes due to bullying and harassment. Nearly ninety percent of pupils reported that fear prevented them from participating in extracurricular activities or school events. 32% of LGBT youth who were surveyed had missed school in the previous month due to safety concerns.

The survey indicated that adult employees are responsible for this hostile environment. 58% of LGBT students questioned reported receiving homophobic comments from school officials, and 72% reported receiving negative comments concerning their gender expression. 10% of students reported that their teachers interfered when other students verbally harassed LGBT pupils.

The researchers set out to explore the lived experiences of LGBT students in formal learning environments in response to the escalating and pervasive bigotry and mistreatment LGBT youth face. Although there is a great deal of written information and research on LGBT individuals, prejudice, and their experiences, very little of it employs qualitative research methods. Hence, phenomenology will be employed to characterize the students' experiences in this study.

Research Questions

This study aimed to recognize LGBT youths' experiences in educational institutions. The findings of this study can be used as the foundation for building a strategy for implementation that will improve the experience of LGBT students in educational institutions. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following:

1. What is the profile of the participants in terms of:
 - 1.1 age;
 - 1.2 gender;
 - 1.3 year level;
 - 1.4 academic program; and
 - 1.5 type of educational institution?
2. What is the relationship of the participants in terms of:
 - 2.1 support of parents;
 - 2.2 classmates;
 - 2.3 close friends in schools; and
 - 2.4 teachers?
3. What are the experiences of the participants in terms of:
 - 3.1 school organization;
 - 3.2 school faculty/staff;
 - 3.3 school facilities; and
 - 3.4 policies of institution?
4. What kind of academic experience does the participant encounter?
5. What suggestions could be proposed in considering the treatment of LGBT youth in Educational Institution?

Methodology

In this section, the researchers will outline the research design, respondents, sampling technique, locale, instruments and data gathering procedures.

Research Design

This study used qualitative, explicitly using a phenomenological approach. A phenomenological study identifies the meaning of the lived experience of individuals related to a specific phenomenon and then develops a composite description of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). This method was used to collect information that applies to the present situation. This design is appropriate for this study as it seeks to explore and understand the lived experiences of LGBT youth in an educational institution and to gain insight into their unique perspectives and perceptions.

Participants

The research respondents are LGBT youth ages eighteen to twenty-five (18-25) who are currently enrolled in educational institutions. In this case, the target number of respondents required is sixteen (16), who could provide useful insights. The participants are from various educational institutions, including public and private schools in Metro Manila.

Instruments

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method that combines elements of both structured and unstructured interviews. In this type of interview, the researcher has a predefined set of questions or topics to cover, providing some structure to the conversation. The format allows for flexibility and open-ended exploration, allowing participants to elaborate on their responses and share their experiences in their own words (Creswell, 2017).

The questionnaire investigates the lives of LGBT youth, examining their relationships and experiences across various domains such as family, peers, close friends, and teachers. It delves into their encounters within the educational setting, including their perceptions of school facilities, interactions with staff, and the school's policies related to the LGBT community. It examines their academic difficulties and assesses whether they can avail themselves of ample resources and assistance. The questionnaire's concluding section

solicits input on strategies to cultivate a safe and inclusive environment, provide essential resources, and establish policies to protect the rights of LGBT youth in educational settings. Ultimately, the questionnaire aims to acquire a thorough grasp of the actual life experiences of LGBT youth and gather valuable insights to improve their educational and social surroundings.

Procedure

The study aims to explore the experiences of LGBT youth in a particular educational institution to gain insights into their challenges and strategies to cope with them. The researcher conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews with sixteen (16) LGBT youth students in private and public schools to gather qualitative data about their experiences. Before beginning the interview, the researcher obtained informed consent, asked the respondents' permission, and explained the purpose of the study. The interviews will be conducted in a safe and confidential space, and the participants will be assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. A questionnaire of interview questions validated by experts was used to ask about the relationship, academic experience, and recommendation of LGBT youth in institutions. The questionnaire will also include open-ended questions, allowing participants to express their emotions and perspectives in their own words. Overall, the administration of the said instrument will enable the researcher to gather authentic and reliable data necessary for further understanding of the topic under study, and the whole interview will be recorded as a reference. The data-gathering procedure will allow the researcher to comprehensively understand the phenomenological LGBT youth experience in the educational institution. It will help identify strategies for creating a more inclusive and supportive school environment. The researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the interview transcript to analyze all the data gathered from the interview. The data were initially composed of tables with the participants' responses and categorized with lines, codes, and themes.

Results and Discussion

This section provides the study's findings, after analyzing the data that researcher collected while compiling the research report.

Table 1. *Profile of the Respondents*

		<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Age	18-20 years old	4	25%
	21-23 years old	9	56.2%
	24-25 years old	3	18.8%
Gender	Lesbian	4	25%
	Gay	4	25%
	Bisexual	4	25%
	Transgender	4	25%
Year Level	First-Second Year	5	31.2%
	Third-Fourth Year	11	68.8%
Academic Program	Accounting	2	12.5%
	Dentistry	1	6.25%
	Engineering	2	12.5%
	Hospitality Management	3	18.75%
	Nursing	3	18.75%
	Psychology	3	18.75%
Type of Educational Institutions	Tourism	2	12.5%
	Private	7	43.7%
	Public	9	56.2%
<i>Total</i>		<i>16</i>	<i>100%</i>

This table illustrates the age distribution of respondents among LGBT youth, with the corresponding number of participants in each age category.

Most respondents were twenty-one to twenty-three (21–23) years old and showed an equal distribution, with four (4) participants in each defined category—lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. Most participants are studying in the third year of the 2023 academic year. Participants are in the Accounting, Dentistry, Engineering, Hospitality Management, Nursing, Psychology and Tourism programs. This deliberate parity ensures a fair and inclusive exploration of diverse gender identities within the interview population, with seven (7) enrolled in private institutions and nine (9) in public. Maintaining consistency in participant numbers across these categories allows for a nuanced examination of the participant experiences, challenges, and perspectives associated with each gender identity, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the experience of LGBT.

In the interview, students shared varied experiences related to their LGBT identities and relationships with their parents. The majority highlighted strong parental support and acceptance, positively impacting their well-being and academics. Some initially faced challenges but eventually gained acceptance, while others benefited from having LGBT relatives. Common themes included the importance of acceptance, freedom, and comfort in expressing their sexual orientation. Some experienced initial difficulties but eventually found understanding, and having LGBT relatives made the process easier for some. While some did not openly discuss their sexual orientation at home, they found relief in knowing they could express themselves freely, emphasizing the significance of being

able to express feelings and identity without hindrance.

Table 2. *Support of Parents*

		<i>The Relationship of the Participants in terms of Parents</i>	
<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Responses</i>	
		<p>"My relationship with my family is good. Every time there is an event about LGBT people, they support me. I also feel that they do not embarrass me in front of other people; they are so supportive of me and my gender. Since then, I've been young, and I seem to know that I'm not totally female. You get that I don't even know the majority of my friends were men."</p> <p>"We have a good relationship at home. They are okay, and they accept my gender because, even before, they have noticed it, and I have relatives who are also lesbian children, so this is not new to her, and they weren't even surprised. And, of course, it's legal too. My girlfriend and I are in my family."</p> <p>"My relationship with my parents actually my dad died in 2017 but my relationship with my mom is good my siblings always told me this that I am favorite daughter of my mom she is very supportive when it comes in the school works and also me as a part of LGBT community. Actually, I never told to her that I am part of the lgbt community I never verbally told to her that but I think she knows me well that's why she knows it without me confessing my identity."</p> <p>"Maybe when it comes to relationships with my parents, it's not that difficult, and they also support me when it comes to things that I am comfortable how I change wearing the clothes that I want because it might show off something that's inappropriate, look like you're not straight, but then, as they found out, they are no longer bother, and also that's also one who built a good relationship with my parents; they support me when it comes to my relationship with people, like to be a boyfriend."</p> <p>"For me, my relationship is with my parents. It's good because they support me when I want what I want in life; they are always there to support me."</p> <p>"The support I get from parents for me, it's enough, and they fill up whatever I need that."</p> <p>"I think I can say that my relationship with my parents is really good I mean my parents is very supportive regardless who I am my parents doing their best to support me in all aspect."</p> <p>"They support me mentally and emotionally, especially in my decisions and actions life."</p> <p>"My relationship with my parents they really support me and they are also open even I am a kid they know about my sexuality."</p> <p>"My parents support me and accept me even I am bisexual there is no problem about it since my relationship with my girlfriend is legal in my family."</p> <p>"It's very easy to live, especially when you know that. Your parents are very supportive to the point that even my celibacy likes makeup. I was given a gift."</p> <p>"I don't have any problems with my family or parents. Most of the time, if I need something or something related to my academics No matter what, I will also provide for myself and then, if you ask about my gender identity, my parents are neutral. They know, but actually they don't. They are also fully aware, but they accept me."</p> <p>"At first, it was a bit awkward, but when they already knew about my situation, afterwards they got comfortable with how I acted towards them and also with my surroundings."</p> <p>"So far, my relationships with my parents are okay, but I don't disclose my sexuality; I'm not open to it at home, but we are okay."</p> <p>"My relationship with my parents since we separated so it's not a big deal; they're still alive is just we are not together at home. They just know my situation, but they don't understand deeply. Just know but not fully aware of that."</p> <p>"It's okay, because dad also has a brother their youngest sibling is gay, so they are supportive of me."</p> <p>"Of course, there's the fear of opening up about sexuality to my parents and trauma because the first time I opened up, things didn't go well."</p> <p>"Actually, at first, it was very difficult because I'm still not out about my sexuality, but eventually, while that was out, that's when I felt like a love of my parents for their child. Overall, it's not traumatizing for me."</p> <p>"Maybe at first, I was still a little afraid to tell anyone. No matter who asks about my gender."</p> <p>"At first, yes, I felt a challenge. I don't know how to tell them I'm a lesbian because no one in our family is part of it of LGBT but that was only at first because it was okay now "</p> <p>"First, I had thoughts of something. What they will say or feel, but right now, I don't feel anything; I feel free mention it to them about my situation."</p> <p>"At first, I was scared of my mom's side because I think I am the first one who will tell my parents about my situation but on my dad's side, I had relief when it turned out to be 2022 when I confessed to my mom."</p> <p>"For me, it's challenging since it's been a long time since I've been dealing with my situation when I am open to them in a way that I need to myself that I must be brave once I open I'm with them, no matter the outcome. Only recently I open up, but I open up more with my sisters I limit myself to opening it to my parents since they are not at home only with me and my sisters."</p> <p>"It's not because I'm open to my family they know about my sexuality, so I know they will accept me without judgment even when I was young, I knew for myself that it was not I'm a straight woman."</p>	
	Sexuality		
Acceptance			
	Sociocultural Changes		
	Lifestyle		
Adaptability	Values		
	Culture		
	Behavior		
Adjustment			
	Environment		
Receptive	Love		



Trust	<p>“Yes, since she already knew it my mom support me and that is relief because for me my mom will not be worry for me to get pregnant because she knows I like girls more and for my mom it’s also a relief.”</p> <p>“No, like what I said my parents are very supportive and very accommodating and also considerate in my feelings as long I respect others its fine with them what my sexuality is.”</p> <p>“My parents trust me I can say I receive what I need; I get the same treatment from them; and I receive support. Well, and they really support me in what I want, even though I'm gay, so there's no trauma for me to say that I'm gay.”</p>
	<p>“No challenge at all since my parents very supportive and I am glad because they accept me.”</p> <p>“For me, I didn't have a hard time telling my parents. I'm gay because they've been aware of it since birth. I did, and they fully accepted that.”</p> <p>“It's not because my parents have many friends who is also part of the LGBT community, so she understands if what we feel.”</p>
Similar Circumstances	<p>“Challenge? For me, none, because even I'm young. They already accepted it, and I know it for myself even though I am a kid about being gay It’s okay with them because they also have members in the families that are in the same situation.”</p> <p>“My family is open, so I don't have any trauma or anything I don't have a hard time because I also have relatives that are part of the lgbt community, so really the environment or my family is a safe place for me, even when I was a child, they are very supportive.”</p>

Table 3. *Classmates*

		<i>The Relationship of the Participants in terms of Classmates</i>
<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Unity in Diversity	Openness	<p>"Yes, it's okay for them to hang out with me; we don't have a problem or something. I'm also good at getting along with them."</p> <p>"When it comes to classmates, they are okay and open; when I am in our classroom, they are open and friendly, with the same treatment."</p> <p>"Yes, my classmates accept me too."</p> <p>They already knew that I was gay from the beginning so when I come to the classroom, I don't need it anymore even say or explain to myself that I'm gay and they get that."</p> <p>"Yes, right now, my classmates and friends really accept me and the support is great, and I appreciate the treatment."</p> <p>"I think so, yes, but in my relationship with them, I am kind of introverted, but I am open about my sexuality."</p> <p>"Yes, I am very open, and I say how or I want to be addressed, like I want to be called that or her even when I ojt."</p> <p>"Of course, it's okay with them. Also, I have many Friends are LGBT people, so we're all the same of trips."</p> <p>"Since senior high school up to freshman in the same school, I have been very vocal to my friends regarding my identity, and I received respect, and my classmate accepted me most especially when I was in senior high school because the majority of my classmates were also part of the lgbt community. Now that I am a college student, the majority of my classmates are still part of the lgbt community, so there is no problem accepting one another in our classroom."</p>
	Less Judgment	<p>"Yes, actually, although it's not because I or we are members of the LGBT community, maybe one of the things I already believe is that we don't need to explain it to anyone. So as long as you feel yourself, just go, and that's it. When it comes to my classmates, they accept me."</p> <p>"Yes, almost all of them are also part of the LGBT community. So, this is not new for them, so I am fully accepted by them."</p> <p>"In UP, people in that place actually welcome the warm you can feel the respect you will experience from them regardless of who you are, you are free to express yourself unwavering support in the community is now something that I am really grateful."</p> <p>"Of course, they are all aware that I am bisexual is my gender."</p> <p>"Yes. All of my classmates know that I am bisexual, so there is no issue with them."</p> <p>"Yes. Maybe my classmates will know then. But of course, at first, especially when my hair wasn't long, I wasn't that open. But when they found out, they accepted."</p> <p>"My classmates accepted me; I never experienced bullying, even though I am part of the LGBT community."</p> <p>"It's okay; like I said, nothing bad happened with them, our relationship is really good, and our bonding in the classroom is really okay."</p>
Close Relationship	Accepted	<p>"In the classroom, they are more open and accepting, and they also know they are talking about my girlfriend because we are in the same class. Our classmates are open, so it's comfortable. Respect and friendliness are not gone. even though they found out about me and my girlfriend."</p> <p>"I'm comfortable because I don't have anything I care about what they say if I act like that."</p> <p>"I am very comfortable when it comes to my classmates because they are really open to people like me They accept and understand that you will not be judged because you're gay, that's why it's really happy."</p> <p>"I can rate it 10. My classmates are very open, especially to our school PUP itself will really respect you also, in our room, the majority is LGBT, so it's more We understand each other."</p> <p>"Very okay. Because I can show who I really am. I'm the type of person who doesn't fake it. Personality in the</p>



	<p>sense that we need to be close; let's just be close for who I am."</p> <p>"My classmates are supportive since they are open and they treat me normally, and they supported me even when I was a girlfriend, I appreciated that because they accepted it our situation with my girlfriend, and I truly appreciate the support."</p> <p>"They often help me, especially in schools works. That's how we treat each other, but, of course, only to those who want to help. I don't want to obligate anyone the one who doesn't want that really fine to me. "</p> <p>"Actually, they help me a lot, and I also have a lot of friends because they are lgbt members, so yes, they are open, especially now. They are more open and supportive, mostly of my classmates as well because it's part of the lgbt community."</p>
Support System	<p>"I feel that their help makes me more open and I'm free to act like that; I don't need to hide that I am part of lgbt."</p> <p>"They support me and let me enjoy and express myself freely."</p> <p>"I think when it comes to mental health, they support me the one that gives me relief because they are the ones who understand my situation, I don't have negative feelings; I ranted with them or I told them my struggle. As a psych student and being lgbt youth is actually my very advantage because they are My classmate was very open, so it was easy for me because we are studying human behavior, so that really has an edge compared to others."</p> <p>"They help me in a way that I don't need any more It's hard to express myself, so I can freely like you know that my actions are not limited every time I'm with them."</p>

Most students reported positive experiences in their relationships with classmates, particularly in the classroom and academic settings. They described a welcoming and comfortable environment where there is no trauma, bullying, or discrimination based on their sexual orientation. Many classmates are part of the LGBT community, fostering open-mindedness about gender identity. The students expressed a strong sense of acceptance, happiness, and stress-free interactions within social groups. They emphasized the importance of being genuine about their gender identities and sexual orientation without feeling obligated to explain themselves. The students value the acceptance and respect they receive from their peers, they highlighted their overall satisfaction with how they were treated.

Table 4. *Close Friends in Schools*

Themes	The Relationship of the Participants in terms of Close Friends	
	Subthemes	Responses
Communicating	Disclosed	"They accept it because of today's times. People's understanding about the LGBT is deeper than before. Their knowledge is also more open to this kind of issue, unlike before, when it was just insults, we receive."
		"Yes, I tell it only to my close friends, especially about my private matters in my life; they are the people with whom I can share my struggles and about my gender, sexuality, and that I have experienced as bisexual."
	Positive Acceptance	"Of course, since they are the closest to me, they are my first people that I share about my situation. So that's what they know me well."
		"Yes, actually, my first relationship only knew my best friend because I was not ready to go share that time."
Setting Limitations	"Yes, I'm open, but I will make sure if I need it to open because just out of curiosity, and there are no benefits, no more waste time."	
	"It's very comfortable because I can express more I have good perspectives on things."	
		"Grateful, of course, because there is someone who understands me and I will come close to understanding my struggle I am so grateful that I have that support system in my life."
		"Very grateful to have close friends to support you or they have them by your side. Well, of course, we are in 21st century, it's your obligation to adopt what changes will happen, and you will change and be part of the better change."
		"The best feeling is because someone is listening to you for things that you can't open up to others, grateful I'm with them because I feel better when I spend quality time with them I tell them what I feel."
		"I was super happy because they understood without saying anything they accepted and supported you no matter what or who you are."
		"About my situation, I don't tell you right away or disclose it unless we are really close friends I also look at who is asking the question, and I consider the level of closeness and whether the person will understand my situation.so I only really open up to close friends."
		"No, I don't just disclose it to my closest friend like I mentioned earlier, I am very vocal about myself gender identification, I'm always sharing that, even in my co-workers."
		"No, not even a friend or acquaintances know my sexuality. Others said it was obvious to me. Maybe in the way I act and speak so it is known right away."

The students express gratitude for the support and acceptance received from their LGBT classmates and peers. They highlight the value of close friends who fully understand and support their individual identities, providing a sense of independence and emotional support. While some students have become more open about their sexual orientation and gender identity, they remain cautious about sharing



this information. The importance of these friendships is emphasized, providing a safe space for self-expression and support during challenging times. The students feel secure and valued within these relationships, allowing them to openly discuss their thoughts and experiences without fear of judgment. Overall, these connections serve as a significant source of emotional support and understanding, contributing to a sense of belonging and happiness in their lives.

Table 5. *Teachers*

		<i>The Relationship of the Participants in terms of Teachers</i>	
<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Responses</i>	
Engagement towards the Professor	Keep Confidential	"No, because I don't have close teachers this college in high school, maybe, yes, there was."	
		"No. Even a professor has nothing to say to me. For me, it's my freedom; it's my choice, so I decided not to disclose it to them."	
		"It's not yet at the point that I talked to the teachers. They don't know about my identity, but I think they know what it is about my gender. Because of my actions in the class."	
		"I don't have a professor that I can talk about it my situation is very rare for me to talk to my professor about being transgender because in PUP you need to take care of your well-being because there are professors who are not open. That's why I don't have the experience to open yet."	
		"No, because my gender identity is not something I need to share with my professor. They will see from my actions how I react or communicate in the classroom, so for me, I don't need it to tell or talk to the professor about my case."	
	Participation	No, I never disclose my situation because not everyone will understand you there are really professors who are not in favor of those, and no support, so I don't want to open up to the teacher."	
		"No, because I don't have a teacher that super close to me. I don't like the idea of sharing with my teacher about my situation too much and I think this is so necessary."	
		"I have a teacher at this college who has been close to me, he is a volleyball coach. he accepts and He sees me as I am, and he helps me in other ways how to resolve my struggle and other my problem like about gender equality."	
		"I'm glad, because he respects the group that Where do I belong"	
		"Well, I'm thankful because they are careful like that not becoming homophobic, because that helps us then be confident."	
Treatment	"Professors in UP are good, and they help us to be a voice and learn to fight for what we know is right, so every time there is an issue like this, we know how to handle it. Indeed, we are valid, and we deserve to be recognized."		
	"Yes, I have prof know about my gender identity because I also have a prof who is also gay and that's why they pay attention to me but of course there are also profs you really felt not comfortable to open it but in my case I have 3 profs who really know the situation me."		
	"Yes, I know they are aware of this."		
	"So far, so good; I don't have teachers who are against LGBT. That's all I have encountered teachers; they don't make me feel students who were left out just because of my gender."		
	"I think there is no special treatment, but it is an advantage to my classmates, they are just living normally because they don't have the same situation as us, where we consider ourselves LGBT youth they don't need to explain how or in any way to respect them, this is only my opinion."		
"The treatment is the same, especially since they are teachers They should be the first to understand their students who belong to the LGBT community, especially if they are inside the school room."			
"I never experienced that because in our classroom The majority of my classmates are part of the LGBT community but even some of my classmates are not part of the community, the treatment is still the same, with no favoritism and everything."			

Students vary in their approach to disclosing their LGBT identities to teachers, with some choosing not to discuss it and others selectively sharing with those they have closer bonds with or who are part of the LGBT community. Concerns about potential negative reactions lead some students to avoid discussing their identities. In academics, approaches range from a passive focus on professionalism to a willingness to share thoughts if asked. Despite differing perspectives among professors, students generally believe that teachers treat all students fairly and equally, emphasizing inclusivity and acceptance within today's more understanding society. Overall, the students appreciate the inclusive and accepting attitudes of their teachers.

Table 6. *School Organization*

		<i>The Experiences in School Organization</i>	
<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Responses</i>	
Limited Participation	Time Constraints and Busy Schedule	"No, it's not because I'm somewhat busy since I work while studying. I also don't have time for such things."	



		<p>"Throughout my four years in my school, actually, for almost two years, we experienced a new setup like online classes, so I didn't join, and I wasn't active when it comes to joining any organization, even if it's related to the LGBT community since I'm also a working student, and I was not able to join due to my busy schedule."</p> <p>"There's a club in school, but I've never been a member because my focus is really on studying, and I can't handle having obligations but I do participate in activities."</p> <p>"Actually, I'm not that actively involved in organizations like LGBT. I'm not a member of any institution, and I don't interact much on social media since I'm not that open about my gender to others, especially in social interactions."</p> <p>"Right now, I'm not participating in any organization. I'm also not completely open about myself to everyone."</p> <p>"I don't really reach out to people like this."</p> <p>"No, apart from the fact that I don't know if there's anything like that in our area, we're the only ones who hang out together as friends."</p>
	Limited Engagement	<p>"For now, there is nothing. I'm not even sure if there is something like this in the school."</p> <p>"Sometimes I feel like they treat non-LGBT people differently, maybe that can't be avoided. But it doesn't affect me."</p>
	Uncertainty	<p>"Yes, I'm a member. I'm one of the officers in our school, and our program also covers accounting. We have programs for students, some related to academics, and some for fun activities."</p> <p>"We have some, but I have never been a member of the school since the pandemic. Our interactions are not that close, there is always something more, so I have never been a member of those, but when there is an activity, I participate."</p>
	Active Participation	<p>"We don't have an organization, and I don't join even if there is one. I can't join. We have a case that I can't join. I don't even know because I don't go with them because I don't know them, maybe it's because of the behavior of other gay people on the street."</p> <p>"No, I'm not a member. There is one at the school, but I'm not a part, and I haven't joined yet. Right now, the clothing is still being planned, but some gay individuals are allowed to have long hair."</p>
Active Membership and Involvement	Limited Participation	<p>"No, I didn't become a member, so I can't answer anything else because I wasn't part of it, but there is one at school, but I don't join."</p> <p>"We are in a safe environment, I can express myself, and they also listen to the students."</p>
	Lack of Involvement	<p>"Yes, we have BAHAGHARI. They are the ones who process things related to LGBT youth, such as our rights and policies. For example, regarding uniforms, in schools like PLM, they can already wear the uniform they prefer. I've been in senior high school, and we already have such an organization."</p>
	Safe Environment and Expression	

The students' responses reveal varied involvement with LGBT-related organizations and activities, influenced by multiple factors. Some attribute their limited participation to busy schedules due to work and school commitments, while others express uncertainty about the existence of such organizations. Additionally, some individuals are aware of LGBT-related activities but choose not to join due to personal reasons such as privacy concerns or unfamiliarity with other group members. These diverse experiences underscore the significance of workload, awareness, and personal preferences in shaping students' engagement with LGBT organizations and activities.

Table 7. School Faculty/Staff

		<i>The Experiences in School Faculty/Staff</i>	
<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Responses</i>	
Equality and Inclusion	Boundaries	<p>"As I mentioned, we treat everyone well, so there are no problems at all. It's just that you need to know your boundaries, what I am trying to say is that, of course, there are policies and regulations that we need to follow as students."</p> <p>"As I mentioned, we treat everyone equally. Sometimes they are strict, but I haven't had a bad experience with them. They are just following the school regulation, that's it."</p> <p>"Overall, it's okay because they respect us, but in the restroom, it's not very open for LGBT individuals."</p> <p>"It's equal because we also have professors who are part of the LGBT community."</p> <p>"They view everyone in our school equally."</p>	
		Respect	<p>"When it comes to school, I don't see any differences in how people are treated based on their orientation or gender. Our school is Olfu, so they are not very strict when it comes to expressing who you are or if you are part of the LGBT community."</p> <p>"I don't see anything wrong or unequal in how they treat us at our school, no matter who you are."</p> <p>"Yes, they treat us all equally. There are no issues; they respect the students, so I haven't had a bad experience with this."</p> <p>"In our school, yes, the treatment of students is equal."</p> <p>"There is equality in my school, so I don't feel excluded or anything."</p>



	"In my experience, it's okay at our school. They may not be very open at times, but I haven't experienced any bullying or discrimination from them."
	"It's equal, yes. They don't discriminate based on gender. They view everyone equally, especially in academics."
	"Yes, I feel that they treat us all equally."
	"The treatment is fine, and I haven't had a bad experience."
Programs	"In our school, there is no issue regarding clothing. We are very open when it comes to the uniform or dress code. Based on my observation and experience, I can say that we treat everyone equally. When it comes to programs, there are also special programs for LGBT students."
	"One time, we had a seminar about how they plan to address LGBT youth issues, like haircut regulations. So far, they have achieved that."

The interviewed students consistently praised their school for its inclusive treatment of the LGBT community, emphasizing equal and respectful treatment regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. They reported a welcoming and accommodating environment with no difficulties regarding attire, dress standards, or uniforms. Despite the school not explicitly addressing LGBT concerns, there was an observed absence of bullying or prejudice. The mention of a seminar on LGBT youth issues, including hairstyle regulations, suggests a proactive approach to inclusivity. The overall sentiment indicates that the school makes efforts to understand and accommodate diverse expressions of identity, allowing students to authentically express themselves, including through appearance, without facing discrimination or unnecessary restrictions.

Table 8. School Facilities

		<i>The Experiences in School Facilities</i>
<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Accepting School Environment	Non-Discrimination	"They make us feel that we are not different, giving us the right to voice our concerns and perspectives."
		"There's no difference; they treat us like normal people who are just studying. Even in a Catholic school, they don't judge us based on our gender."
		"In my own experience, we are treated equally. Every time I was in school, I observed it quietly. The facilities in our school are good, with no bias or special treatment. They are strict, of course, but I understand it because they also want to follow school regulations or policies."
		"There's no difference in how they treat different personalities in different schools."
		"They treat us like normal people. They don't show any different treatment to me."
	Observation and Appreciation	"It's normal, how they treat others is the same way they treat me."
		"There is no discrimination, and I haven't experienced any problems."
		"For me, in our school, they are open to the LGBT community. Now, gays can have long hair to better express themselves."
		"The restrooms are in good condition. There isn't a specific facility for us yet, but in terms of treatment, it's fair and equal."
		"The staffs are friendly and accommodating to the students. There is equality and no discrimination as long as you are a good student; there are no issues at all."
Resilience	Handling Discrimination	"I can say that they are also accommodating in terms of how they treat us students on campus. I am very grateful for this environment because we feel safe."
		"At home, there are no issues with my behavior. At school, it's okay because our school is accepting of LGBT individuals like me. They are open-minded."
		"You can't avoid judgmental people, but in school, they are really LGBT-friendly. They allow us to wear what we want."
		"In our school, you have freedom. In the restroom, you can use any one you want; it's up to us."
		"The school, as I mentioned, doesn't allow cross-dressing, and I still follow the school policy. Our school is more open about uniforms but not about hair color."
		"I haven't had a bad experience because I just ignore them. In the restroom, I don't care; it's my choice unless they really disrespect me, if there's discrimination, I know how to handle it."

The statements collectively indicate a generally welcoming and friendly environment for LGBT students at the institution. While some physical amenities may need renovation to fully meet the demands of the LGBT population, the overall attitude is positive. Students commend the open and tolerant attitudes of both peers and staff, highlighting the absence of prejudice or unfair treatment based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The school's proactive measures, such as inclusive activities and seminars, demonstrate a dedication to fostering an atmosphere of acceptance and equality. In summary, the testimonies portray a school environment that is safe, supportive, and welcoming to LGBT individuals, valuing each youth's unique identity.

The collection of student replies presents a diverse range of viewpoints on how LGBT people are treated in school contexts. Some students highlight active support for LGBT rights and school policies permitting gender expression through clothing and hair length. Others express satisfaction with the general tolerance and acceptance among their peers, even if there are no specialized initiatives. A few students mention the existence of a group dedicated to LGBT representation and rights. Overall, the responses indicate a variety



of experiences, ranging from active support for LGBT individuals to a generally welcoming attitude within their schools, though less actively engaged.

Table 9. *Policies of Institution*

		<i>The Experiences in Policies of Institution</i>	
<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Responses</i>	
	Program Status	<p>"Right now, they don't seem to have a specific program because they are just starting to recover from the pandemic."</p> <p>"I'm not sure yet since I just transferred here this school year."</p> <p>"Right now, we don't have it yet. The part about it being your choice for uniforms and what you want to wear hasn't been implemented."</p> <p>"So far, it has been smooth and inclusive, as I mentioned earlier. We treat everyone equally, and when it comes to programs, there are special programs for LGBT students. Our school is open to activities for all students."</p> <p>"I can say that my school, UDM, is great when it comes to programs involving LGBT policies or rights. Why? Because of Mayor Isko, he initiated programs for us, and we experience good treatment because of that. I have also attended programs conducted at our school, and I can share that we have specific policies that allow us to wear attire according to our gender identity. For example, if you're gay, you can wear what you want, but of course, you should still look presentable and not violate school policies."</p>	
	Support for Students	Initiatives and Policies	<p>"One thing I've noticed is that our school considers LGBT students. Some of my friends or classmates who are transgender are allowed to grow their hair longer. That's one way I see that the school appreciates and supports LGBT students by responding to their needs."</p> <p>"I've noticed that students, regardless of their gender, can grow their hair as long as they want, and no one really criticizes it."</p> <p>"Yes, as I mentioned earlier, they launched an organization called BAHAGHARI, where the members are gay, lesbian, or LGBT youth fighting for our rights."</p> <p>"Yes, for me, the school has created a safe environment for all of us, not only for those students who are known to be straight. We are treated equally, even as LGBT youth."</p> <p>"Yes, our school is open to LGBT students."</p> <p>"Yes, this program aims to provide knowledge and respect for all LGBT individuals."</p> <p>"As for the school policy, I still follow it, but in TUP, they have started to embrace people like us, especially when it comes to hair length. They allow it to be longer now, but of course, there are still some limits. But compared to before, it's more open and better now after the pandemic."</p> <p>"I don't think there is any, I'm not sure, but it seems like there isn't. Wherever you want to use the restroom, it's fine. I use the female restroom."</p> <p>"Yes, they provide programs like pageants for LGBT individuals, and as I mentioned earlier, we can wear whatever we want as long as it's not revealing."</p> <p>"I experienced that in senior high school when it came to hair length, but when I entered college, it was the same school, and now I can have longer hair. So, I think as of now, there are programs for us, especially in our field, where we feel more welcome and freer from judgment."</p>
Coping Strategies	Peace of Mind	<p>"As for me, as long as I don't hear anything directly or face confrontation, I'm okay, and I find my own way. If there's no issue, I prefer to keep things quiet for my peace of mind."</p>	

Table 10. *Academic Experience*

		<i>The Experiences in Academic Challenges</i>	
<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Responses</i>	
Hardships and Adjustment	Financial	<p>"None, if it's about challenges as part of the LGBT community. Currently, my challenge is financial. That's why I mentioned that I'm a working student. So, my academic challenges are related to that. But as an LGBT person, no issues. For me, it's my way to relieve stress from school, and also, at work, we're treated with respect and kindness."</p>	
	Pressure	<p>"An academic challenge for me is that we are often chosen to lead, which can be pressure since they expect good performance from you, so you have to excel because you are the one they rely on."</p> <p>"No problem. I can keep up somehow. Just need to pass the schoolwork."</p> <p>"None. It doesn't really have any connection to gender if there are conflicts in your studies."</p> <p>"For now, there's no issue because there's no favoritism in the program when it comes to academic matters. Discussions go smoothly, so I'm okay."</p>	
Equality and Acceptance	Safe and Affirming Space	<p>"For me, there aren't any challenges because, as I mentioned, it's all about being yourself and how you can survive in this phase. So, there are no academic challenges for me."</p> <p>"Actually, there aren't any challenges because in this day and age, as a student who is part of the LGBT community, it's not required that you have to be male or female for this job. What matters is that you execute your job well and learn it."</p> <p>"In my experience, none. In fact, it's more supportive than challenging. It's motivating because you're in a place where people understand you, and your sexuality or emotions aren't invalidated as an LGBT youth."</p> <p>No problem at all because my being bisexual doesn't really affect my academics, so I'm doing well."</p>	



"Because the school I attend is open, they treat us all equally. There are no gay, lesbian, female, or male distinctions. It's about fulfilling your studies."
 "I don't have a hard time when it comes to my studies."
 "There are no struggles for me because it's up to you how you'll succeed. It doesn't matter if you're gay, lesbian, or anything else; you just need to study hard."
 "I don't have any struggles because, for me, we are all equal, and it's up to you how you survive."

Based on student responses, they do not encounter significant academic challenges due to their gender or sexual orientation. The emphasis is on the value of self-motivation and dedication to academics. Many perceive their schools as warm and accepting environments where everyone is valued based on academic ability rather than gender or sexual orientation. Some find inspiration and support in these settings, asserting that their LGBT identity does not affect their academic success. In conclusion, these adolescents attribute their success in school to their own initiative and hard work, not to their gender or sexual orientation.

Table 11. Recommendations

		<i>The Recommendations for enhancing the Experiences of LGBT Youth</i>
<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>	<i>Responses</i>
		"Treat everyone equally, even though we belong in the LGBT community, I am still a human being. We deserve proper treatment at school." "That's simple: to be equal look at each other the same way, no discrimination." "Give knowledge to every student about the LGBT community to avoid bullying." "I wish everyone would be open-minded about our situation whatever gender you are. It's 2023; don't be blind; open yourself to what the changes are." "It's just don't be strict too much, because that's one of the reasons a members of the LGBT community may feel constrained that's the LGBT movement that allows them to express themselves and the support system that they can only give to LGBT people is the one not restricting it." "Maybe everyone should be open-minded at school. I hope this topic is also open for those who are not that knowledgeable to talk about this." "To have a program nurturing students about lgbt and add more organization to implement the safety and also the right for those students like me." "I think schools need to provide more programs that can support, of course, a lgbt person that is part of their institution is a safe environment for them because they deserve equal treatment, add more groups, or community that can empower lgbt and give more activity that the future generation can experience." "Promote anti-discrimination or bullying. Equality always means safety and fair treatment for all students." "For me, career talk focuses more on orientation or activity to empower the LGBT community." A lot can be done, just like more seminars and expand the organization more. Let the LGBT parts be open and not left behind." "Give more career talk and, yes, more programs Conduct more webinars for everyone that have topics for lgbt spread more awareness about equality for everybody and acceptance of this one will start if we educate people. that also school can help." "Promote antidiscrimination or bullying to become always equal for safety and fair treatment in all students." "Maybe it's just respect. That is all that is required for those who are against our gender All right we are still humans. It's free to be kind so, I hope we treat everyone equally, with no judgment." "Have a space-safe zone for everyone. There are It's because people are afraid to open up, so they need to guidance, so it's more okay or good in a school guidance counselor to ensure students don't feel left It's really hard for them to open up about their gender situation Sometimes the pressure is there because it takes a lot of time and trust to open up about your gender identity and you really need moral support."
Voices of Pride	Pride and Progress	
	Raise Awareness	
	Supportive Environment	

The students' statements emphasize the crucial need for an inclusive and fair learning environment, particularly for LGBT students. They highlight the importance of creating a welcoming atmosphere built on respect and tolerance. Students appreciate their schools' efforts and advocate for ongoing programs that promote understanding and freedom of expression within school regulations. To enhance awareness and acceptance of LGBT issues, they support educational initiatives such as seminars. Overall, the students stress the necessity for a discrimination-free environment where everyone is valued and accepted irrespective of gender or sexual orientation.

Conclusion

LGBT youth's phenomenological experiences in school settings can shed light on the difficulties they face and the benefits of inclusive environments. Implementing the suggested changes can improve LGBT students' experiences by promoting an environment of tolerance, acceptance, and empowerment on both a personal and academic level. It is everyone's duty, a supportive educational experience for every student, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. The study's findings emphasize the critical role that supportive partnerships have in fostering both personal and academic relationships, as well as the significance of acceptance, love, respect, and good communication in fostering LGBT youth's resilience and sense of self-worth in a learning environment. Students are better prepared to face and overcome societal stereotypes and discrimination as a result to this support system.

The study's revelation of the wide spectrum of student experiences shows how crucial it is to promote self-worth and resilience in

students. This acceptance and support can come from family, friends, and instructors, among other places. This support not only helps students deal with the difficulties of coming out but also equips them to face discrimination both inside and outside of their educational institutions also highlights how welcoming and generally good these schools are, where students feel equal and respected regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBT youth benefit from inclusive environments that foster a feeling of identity and fulfillment, and educators are crucial in fostering a secure environment. However, due to individual circumstances, students' participation in LGBT-related activities varies, and there are differing opinions about the degree of support and programming offered for the LGBT population in educational institutions.

In summary, LGBT youth's experiences in school settings highlight the value of acceptance, help, and inclusivity in fostering their resilience and emotional health. The overarching message is one of hope and progress, despite the current difficulties. The suggestions made by the students highlight the continual requirement to improve understanding, acceptance, and equality for the LGBT population in the school setting. Their experiences provide insightful information about how educational institutions may support and empower LGBT students more effectively, ultimately fostering an environment that is welcoming and caring for everyone.

Based on the findings and conclusion presented, the following recommendations are suggested. LGBT Youth, it is recommended that further studies be carried out on students' experiences from other schools or universities to see whether there are any similarities and differences in the findings. Besides, since this study was only done in Metro Manila, it is also recommended that further studies be conducted on students from different schools and universities, not only in Metro Manila.

To Teachers, conducting studies covering how to treat LGBT students in the classroom to create a safe and supportive learning environment that benefits both the students and the teacher will provide educators with training on how to create inclusive environments and comprehend the particular difficulties LGBT youth encounter in addressing mental health concerns. There must be easily accessible, LGBT-friendly counseling services, and it is urged to raise awareness of LGBT issues through events and open talks in the classroom. The relationship between the student and the teacher must maintain professionalism.

Educational institutions promote the development of an inclusive and welcoming educational environment. The code of conduct guidelines emphasizes the value of participating in ensuring that every student, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, receives a fulfilling educational experience. That work is to establish learning environments in schools where young LGBT people are valued, embraced, and given the resources they require to grow both personally and intellectually.

To Future Researcher, conduct research that promotes a supportive community; gather more reviews of relevant literature updated for beneficial results; and do thorough studies on the experiences of LGBT students, including academic achievement, mental health, and general well-being.

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