

**Subjective Wellbeing of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals And Transgenders (LGBTs) in a Higher Educational Institution in the Philippines**

Alma Trinidad Taragua, PhD, RN, RM\*  
Program Head, Institute of Nursing,  
Far Eastern University, Manila, Philippines  
Post Graduate Studies, Philippine Women's University  
Email: [ataragua@feu.edu.ph](mailto:ataragua@feu.edu.ph)

**Abstract.** *Background and objective:* Gender-based violence in schools is a prevailing issue of concern internationally and locally. The LGBT students do not only have concerns about the prevalence of gender violence in school but also on the easy integration within the campus. College students' successful school integration is a major concern that academic community has to address. *Methods:* This study used the quantitative design. The research setting was held in a non-sectarian institution in Manila, Philippines, aiming for academic excellence as well as to be the University of Choice in Asia and comprised a sample of 96 college students from the university which were identified by LGBT legitimate student organization president and officials and by refutable individuals who know the person well. The quantitative data gathered from the survey questionnaire were collated and analyzed using the SPSS. *Results:* The respondents agreed that they were satisfied with their academic experiences but slightly agreed with their academic achievements. They agreed they had academic self-efficacy as were motivated to study, became more diligent but felt less organized and effective as a student. *Conclusions:* The quantitative results of the study revealed that the LGBT respondents agreed that they have subjective wellbeing. They were highly in gratitude for the benevolence they had received in attaining their academic goals. They had felt the school connectedness as being accepted regardless of their gender identity and had academic self-efficacy to accomplish task related to their program/course. The high academic demands imposed as higher educational institution however, had affected students' satisfaction as to their academic achievements.

**Key Words:** LGBTs, academic satisfaction, academic self-efficacy, subjective wellbeing and school connectedness

**Introduction**

Gender-based violence in schools is a prevailing issue of concern internationally and locally. The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) biennial survey results in 2017, showed that 83.7% of transgender and 69.9 % of gender nonconforming students were bullied/harassed; 42.1% was prevented from using their preferred name or pronoun, 59.5% felt unsafe at school, 95.3% heard "gay" in a negative way, and 62.2% experienced LGBT related discriminatory policies and practices at school. Currently, there are an increasing number of LGBT populations all over the world. In the US, a record of 4.5 % identified themselves as LGBT which is estimated at more than 11 million (nbcnews.com, 25 May 2018), while in the Philippines, Project Pink" survey results are 5% of the population identified as gay and one (1) in twenty (20) Metro Manila residents openly identified themselves as gay (Paseulo, 2013; as cited in Costales and Arquelles, 2015). LGBT students become more visible on college campuses, as stated in the study of Woodford and Kulick (2015). This is an important issue for higher education administrators to focus on how to assist the LGBTs in becoming more secure in their identities.

The LGBT students do not only have concerns about the prevalence of gender violence in school but also on the easy integration within the campus. They aspire to be in a safe

environment in which they learn, grow and able to declare their gender identity. The entry to the academe is often marked by complex challenges in social, emotional/personal, and academic adjustment, which LGBT students have to overcome as well. According to Stoklosa (2015), incoming college students face several challenges such as greater academic demands, greater autonomy, and less academic structure as compared with their high school experiences. They need to adjust to the new learning environment, which often results in tardiness, absences, school dropout, and complaints of difficulty balancing school and personal life. This observation is also cited by Gustave (2016) based on his review of studies stating that students need to adjust to multiple contexts, like meeting the demands for academic requirements, adjusting to a new environment, and living away from home. Those students who were unable to adjust to college life positively suffer from both social and academic difficulties and many negative physical and psychological consequences such as those mentioned by Chen (2016) which are drug and alcohol abuse, lack of energy, loss of appetite, headaches, loss of sleep, ulcers, anxiety, depression, and much more.

A more stressful adjustment happens among LGBTs especially to those who had already experienced mental and psychological anguish before entering the academe. The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) survey (2017) has identified negative experiences of students which include hearing biased/homophobic remarks, feeling unsafe in schools, missing school because of safety reasons, experiencing harassment and assault, and experiencing discriminatory policies and practices at school. These are also confirmed by Evans (2014) that LGBT individual may have history of being bullied in schools and from a local report in the Philippines by Human Rights Watch (June 2017) that schooling experience of LGBT students is marred by bullying, discrimination, lack of access to LGBT-related information and physical and sexual assault. The mistreatment of LGBT students faced in schools according to the report was exacerbated by discriminatory policies and practices that excluded them from fully participating in the school environment. Among these policies and practices imposed were rigid gender norms on uniforms or dress codes, restrictions on hair length, gendered restrooms, classes and activities that differ for boys and girls, and close scrutiny of same-sex friendships and relationships.

The practices in the researcher's present workplace are now geared towards the formation of a gender-responsive and sensitive learning environment that will help create a safe space for LGBT students. The implementation of the CMO is still in its beginning stage. It has created a Gender and Development (GAD) Desk that recognizes the existence of an LGBT organization and supports its endeavors.

The LGBTs under study were therefore students who entered the academe to fulfill their career goals. Their subjective wellbeing depends on their success in fulfilling these goals. However, their school integration is more stressful as they have to adjust to the hassles of the academic environment being a student and having past experiences of mental and psychological anguish for being an LGBT. In this study, there were several activities already conducted within the research locale to ease their integration but which of these activities needs to be revitalized that will address their issues and concerns and further enhance their academic wellbeing.

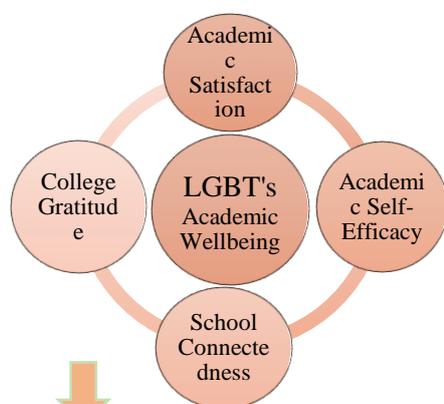
Thus, there were already gendered focus activities conducted by the Gender and Development Desk (GAD) and the existing LGBT organization of the university to help students prepare and assist them for their future professional identity, to make them feel at ease and happy within the campus and satisfy their academic needs.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theory of wellbeing of Seligman (2011) was used to explain the concepts included in this study. Wellbeing theory according to Dr. Martin Seligman is a construct, not happiness

but a topic of positive psychology. He hypothesized the Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement (PERMA) model with five core elements of well-being which includes positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and purpose, and accomplishment. He believes that these five elements contribute to help people reach a life of fulfillment, happiness, and meaning. To correlate the theory of wellbeing with this study, the PERMA elements were correlated to the four (4) constructs of the academic well-being of Renshaw (2018) namely: *academic efficacy*, *school connectedness*, *college gratitude* and *academic satisfaction*. The first element Positive emotion means the ability to be optimistic, having a positive perspective in life. This element best correlates to *academic efficacy*. A student who has a positive emotion/ positive outlook becomes more self-efficient, confident in their capacity to successfully accomplish academic-related tasks. He will be more persevering to face challenges that the course demands. The second element E for Engagement refers to giving full attention/direction to activities, which a person thinks are significant to learn, grow, and nurture for ones' personal happiness. This second element engagement best corresponds with *school connectedness* as well with the third element R for Relationships, which is building connections with other human beings either for love, intimacy or for personal/social interactions. When a student is given a task and feels that the given task is important and enjoyable, and then the student feels strongly connected to it thus increasing engagement to perform these learning activities. And when they feel being cared for, they can easily form bonds with co students, faculty and school officials thus encourage easy interactions/conversations facilitating learning to takes place. The fourth element meaning matches well with feelings of *gratitude*. M for Meaning as having a purpose to continue to live a life of happiness. The feelings of gratitude to others comes when a person is given chances and opportunities for meaningful and purposeful learning experiences, for the help extended to help him accomplish assigned tasks and achieve academic goals. The last and fifth element is Achievement, attaining ones' realistic goals thus giving sense of pride and satisfaction for ones' accomplishments which definitely best corresponds to *academic satisfaction*. *Academic satisfaction* occurs when a person feels satisfied of his/her academic performance, social and personal experiences, of the school facilities and services and above all on his overall academic life experiences. The goal of the wellbeing theory is to increase these five measures - positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning and achievement. The term used by Seligman is flourishing which means living in an optimal range of human functioning that brings goodness, generativity, resilience and growth. As with regard to LGBT students, the academe aims to provide a safe learning environment that allows optimal development of students' capabilities and potentialities boosting higher academic wellbeing.

### Conceptual Model



**Revitalized Co-Curricular Activities**

**Figure 1. The LGBT's Subjective Wellbeing Model**

This LGBT's subjective wellbeing model is the combination of the four core constructs of CSSWQ (Tyler Renshaw) and five (5) core elements of PERMA model (Dr. Martin Seligman). The four core elements were the academic self-efficacy, school connectedness, college gratitude and academic satisfaction. These four elements of wellbeing behavior were a result of a literature review identifying as a representative theme within a pre-existing measurement on youth perceptions of their healthy and successful functioning at school (Renshaw & Arslan, 2016). These core elements compliment each other similar to the theory of wellbeing of Seligman that "no element can define wellbeing but each component contributes to it" (Positive Psychology Studies, 2017).

The first component of the model is *academic self-efficacy*. Self-efficacy pertains to students' confidence to successfully accomplish school-related tasks... (as cited in Antaramian, 2017). Self-efficacy correlates with *positive emotion* of the PERMA model to be being optimistic which means having positive perspective in life. Having the confidence in accomplishing task is a driving force for students to perform well in the academe, giving their full attention or *engagement* (E- of the PERMA model) to significant activities that they think will help them attain their academic aspirations which lead to happiness. This motivation or drive will be more escalated if the LGBT student feels connected to members of the academic community. This refers now to the second component - *school connectedness* and If the student feels accepted, able to develop positive *relationships* (R- of the PERMA model) with others, then he/she can easily interact with others, *engage* well with the learning activities and successfully integrate within the academic community. The third component is college gratitude. *College gratitude* is defined as "feeling cared for by and relating well to others at school" (Renshaw et al., 2015, as cited in Renshaw & Arslan (2016). These feelings of gratitude towards the school and members of the academic community comes when the student feels thankful, have accomplished academic purpose and find finds *meaning* (M- of PERMA model) in academic experiences further enhancing his wellbeing. And the last, fourth component is academic *achievement* (A- of the PERMA model). This occurs when the LGBT students attain good academic performance because of his/her self-efficacy, for the motivation, help and assistance of the members of the academic community. This overall subjective feeling of self-efficacy, connectedness, gratitude and satisfaction comprises the academic well-being of the LGBT students. The academic well-being of these LGBT college students not only reflects the quality of student's life experiences but also the quality of education attained from the academic community. The final direction of the study is the revitalized co-curricular activities. The results of the study will be the basis for identifying and revitalizing existing co-curricular activities that will help in creating a safe space for LGBT students as well as enhancing their feelings of academic well being.

### Research Question

How may the respondents' subjective wellbeing be described in terms of the following?

- 1.1. Academic Satisfaction, 1.2. Academic Self-Efficacy, 1.3. School Connectedness,
- 1.4. College Gratitude, and 1.5. Overall Subjective Wellbeing?

### Research Methodology

### Research Design

This study used the quantitative method design to quantify and analyze the data with the help of descriptive statistics in order to confirm hypotheses. This study utilized a standard survey questionnaire to gather data from LGBT respondents from a selected university.

### **Respondents of the Study**

The respondents of this study were the 96 college students from a university, had accepted own gender identity as a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and from across five institutes and year level. They were identified by LGBT legitimate student organization president and officials and by reputable individuals who know the person well. As based on an initial interview with the president of an LGBT student organization, most of the members were ally and others were still in doubt of their own sexuality. The researcher contacted the students thru face to face or thru cell phone/email address inviting them to join the study maintaining the sense of anonymity.

### **Sampling Technique**

The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling, wherein respondents were selected by nonrandom methods specifically, purposive sampling. Purposive sampling meant that the respondents were selected based on the inclusion criteria. The selection was also based thru referral to avoid biases in identifying gender identities.

The 96 respondents were selected using the following inclusion criteria: (1) Students who were enrolled in the university during the semester academic year 2018-19, (2) were within the age of 18 to 22 – have taken the college course for the first time, (3) can be contacted thru email, cellular phones and other electronic access, (4) had consented to be included in the survey for this study. While the exclusion criteria were college students who (1) were enrolled this second semester for their 2nd degree courses, (2) had physical deformities that may affect their academic wellbeing, and (3) were currently employees of the university where the study was conducted.

### **Research Instrument**

The questionnaire used the adapted standardized questionnaire called College Student Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire (CSSWQ). The CSSWQ is a brief, multidimensional, domain-specific measure of college students' co vitality—operationalized by a measurement model comprised of four first-order latent constructs namely academic efficacy, college gratitude, school connectedness, and academic satisfaction) and one second-order latent construct of college student co vitality (Renshaw& Balognino, 2016). These four (4) core constructs serve as a representative sample of common indicators of subjective wellbeing. The academic life satisfaction assessed the student's general subjective appraisal of the quality of her/his academic life, college self-efficacy for the confidence in accomplishing specific learning task, college gratitude for feelings of gratefulness for the help and assistance received and school connectedness measures the feelings of being accepted unconditionally by the academic community.

### **Statistical Treatment of Data**

The following statistical treatments were used to analyze the data (1) Frequency and percentage were used to present the profile variables of the respondents according to age, gender variance, course/program, and year level (2) Mean and weighted mean were used to measure the college student academic wellbeing.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Ethical guidelines were followed for the whole research period. The researcher submitted the study for review and approval of the Ethics Review Board of the university. It followed the National Ethical Guidelines for Health and Health-Related Research 2017 prepared by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board.

## Results

Majority of the ninety six (96) respondents of this study were 19 years old (41%), first year students (42%) as a per of the K12 curriculum, bisexual students comprising of both male and female bisexuals (59%) and were from the Institute of Accounts, Business and Finance comprising of 32% present.

The implementation of the K12 curriculum in the Philippines had greatly affected the number of students who entered colleges and universities. The K12 formal implementation in 2016 to 2017 allowed an additional two years to stay in high school, so most of the students entered colleges and universities are already in their 19th to 20th years of age. As K12 was mandated through the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, no high school graduates entered colleges and universities, thus resulting to decrease in tertiary level population. The students enrolled during that time were either graduate before the implementation, second courser or were from schools that started K12 education early. These students are now on their 3rd year and 4th-year level, which are also ages 19 and 20.

The bisexuals as the highest number of student respondents which comprises 59 or 62%, followed by gay students with 22 respondents or 23% and the lowest were transgender which was only 5 students or 5% of the total respondents of the study. There are an increasing number of LGBT students here in the Philippines especially in higher educational institutions where academic individuals are more open to diverse type of students, so gender variance is not an issue. The new generation of students who were graduates of the K12 curriculum was observed to be more confident in themselves and was matured enough to acknowledge their own gender identity and sexual orientation. The results also correspond with the findings of Woodford & Kulick (2015), that LGBT students are more visible on college campuses which is an important issue for school administrators on how to make them feel more secure in their gender identities within the academic community. The early engagement in a sexual relationship and the emergence of social media acceptance of deviant sexual behaviors allowed adolescent students to experiment with relationships thus, the emergence of other genders from the commonly identified gay and lesbian to bisexual, transgender, queer, pansexual and other gender variances.

Bisexuals are the largest population of the LGBT community as they comprise both male and female bisexuals. In the US survey by CDC National Center for Health Statistics conducted by Casey A. Copen in 2011- 2013, there were an increasing number of bisexuals. There were 17.4% of both men and women who identified themselves as bisexual compared to 14.2 % in 2006-2010. The same result with the study of Klein and Dudley (2014) that bisexual college students were found to be large and distinct group, more than gay or lesbian.

Transgenders were the lowest among the population. A lot of courage confidence, money and time for a transgender to be transformed into her/his desired gender. It takes months to years for bodily changes to occur while undergoing hormonal therapy and to practice behaving according to the chosen gender. In the Philippines, wherein most of the citizens are Catholics, only two types of gender are accepted – being male or female. The church expects people to act according to their own inherent gender identity.

Based on the institute, thirty-two (32%) of the respondents were from the institute of business and finance, twenty-five (25%) were from the institute of nursing while only two percent (2%) were from the institute of education. As the study was conducted during summer, only those students who have a regular summer schedule in their curriculum and those who wish to lessen their load during a regular semester were included in the study. Based on the time period the study was conducted, most of the respondents were from the business group. The fast-paced transitions of innovations in technology had resulted in the emergence of novel jobs with high salary offerings from the business world. These had enticed lots of students to venture and enroll hoping to land on jobs immediately after graduation. With regards to the

nursing course, the 2nd highest number of respondents has a curriculum that includes four years and two summers. Aside from this, there was also an influx of students due to the K12 implementation and high demand for the profession due to retiring US nurses. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics regards nurses as one of the most in-demand professions for the year 2012 up to 2022 (nursingschoolhub.com, 2019).

The respondents in this study were mostly first-year students comprising 42% of the population, followed by 22% of the fourth-year level and the lowest was the fifth-year college students. Due to the implementation of the K12 in the country, there were fewer college entrants for the last two years. These students were now in their second and third-year levels. This school year of 2018-19 however, an influx of freshmen as the first batch of senior high graduates now entered the academe to take up their selected courses based on their chosen tracks. The lowest number of students was the fifth level as most of the college courses have only 4 years to complete their required units.

The lack of students during the transition of K12 education was mentioned in the book of Sarvi, Munger & Pillay in 2015, the implementation of Enhanced Education Act of 2013 in the Philippines has extended the basic education by 2 years which means that public and private HEIs will be missing 1 or 2 cohorts starting 2016 through 2020. The increasing number of enrollees in 2018 is attributed to the first batch of senior high graduates as DepEd has estimated more than 1.2 million students from public and private senior high schools nationwide graduated in April 2018 with more than 765,000 finished academic strand programs (Mateo, The Philippine Star, 2018).

### Subjective Wellbeing

The quantitative results of the study were presented in tables based on the four (4) constructs of subjective wellbeing, namely academic satisfaction, academic self-efficacy, school connectedness and college gratitude and summary table for academic wellbeing four constructs. Another table shows the overall subjective wellbeing using the overall scores of all constructs.

### Academic Satisfaction

**Table 1. Responses of the respondents in terms of academic satisfaction**

<b>Academic Satisfaction</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>
I have had a great academic experience at this college	5.58	Agree
I am happy with how I've done in my classes	5.74	Agree
I am satisfied with my academic achievements since coming to this college	5.40	Slightly Agree
I am pleased with how my college education is going so far.	5.74	Agree
<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>5.62</b>	<b>Agree</b>
Legend:		
6.50-7.00 Strongly Agree	2.50-3.49 Slightly Disagree	
5.50-6.49 Agree	1.50-2.49 Disagree	
4.50-5.49 Slightly Agree	1.00-1.49 Strongly Disagree	
3.50-4.49 Neither Agree or Disagree		

Majority of the respondents agreed that they were contented with their academic involvement with a weighted mean of 5.62. As to specific questions - three out of four questions, the respondents agreed that they had a great academic experience, happy of what they have done in classes and were pleased with how their college education is going, however,

they only slightly agreed with their academic achievements. The respondents were gratified of their academic participation as to what they had attained in terms of their learning experiences within their classes and in the campus.

Academic satisfaction is not usually measured on the attainment of high grades or rating but on also on the enjoyment of the students to engage in their learning activities inside and outside of their classroom. Students usually engage in learning activities when then can able to relate, can be useful and is important in their lives. The expected school satisfaction is based on the fulfilment of academic goals and aspirations (Balkis, 2013) and engaging in meaningful learning experiences is perceived by LGBT students as significant to them (Roseth, 2019). A component of wellbeing in the theory of Seligman (2011) is meaning and finding meaning in academic experiences can further enhance academic wellbeing. According to Roseth (2019), LGBT students pertain this meaning to the connection of their learning to societal problems and issues, to their own and others' views, from their changed perspective and bridging ideas on their coursework with previous knowledge and experiences.

From the above results, however, students were only slightly agreed they were satisfied with their academic achievements with mean score of 5.40. As a higher educational institution, varied teaching pedagogies were employed to allow students to explore and enjoy the learning process while maintaining the standard or quality of student graduates. There is a high level of expectations demanded from each student, not just in attaining the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitude for a profession but in creating/developing knowledge through research. This is one of the objectives of the higher educational institution as based on CHED manual of regulations for private higher education which states, "to advance the frontiers of knowledge through research work, and apply this gained technology in improving the quality of human life and in responding to the changing societal needs and conditions".

### Academic Self-Efficacy

**Table 2. Responses of the respondents' in terms of academic efficacy**

<b>Academic Self-Efficacy</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>
I am a hard worker in my classes.	5.70	Agree
I am a diligent student.	5.59	Agree
I am an organized and effective student.	5.51	Agree
I study well for my classes.	5.70	Agree
<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>5.63</b>	<b>Agree</b>
Legend: 6.50-7.00 Strongly Agree 5.50-6.49 Agree 4.50-5.49 Slightly Agree 3.50-4.49 Neither Agree or Disagree 2.50-3.49 Slightly Disagree 1.50-2.49 Disagree 1.00-1.49 Strongly Disagree		

The respondents agreed they had academic efficacy with a weighted mean of 5.63. This means students agreed they felt confident in their ability to accomplish specific tasks related to their courses/programs. This confidence occurs when the student is given chances to prove herself/himself that he/she can do it. As learning institutions, schools should find ways to develop student self-efficacy, so students will be motivated to learn.

As to the specific questions, all respondents agreed that they felt motivated by studying well, being a hard worker and diligent in their class activities, being organized and effective student. Students enrolled at the university level were expected to meet the high standards set per year level. The students felt they have to exert more effort to reach the criteria set by the university. Agreeing to have self-efficacy means students are optimistic they can perform and accomplish assigned tasks. This is a good driving force to give their full attention or engage in school activities that will help them attain their aspirations. These also correspond to the Seligman's wellbeing theory (2011) components of having positive emotion and engagement.

Academic self-efficacy as cited in Antaramian (2017) means students' confidence in their ability to successfully attain academic goals and accomplish school-related activities. Students with high level of self-efficacy are willing to perform challenging tasks, exerts greater effort, shows persistence and experiences only mild level of anxiety (Shen, et al, 2013, as cited in Basila, 2016) and self-efficacy plays an important role in maintaining challenge appraisals to attain pleasant emotion and better academic performance (Putwain, et al., 2013).

### School Connectedness

**Table 3. Responses of the respondents in terms of school connectedness**

School Connectedness	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
I feel like a real part of this school.	5.84	Agree
People at this school are friendly to me.	5.89	Agree
I can really be myself at this school.	5.82	Agree
Other students here like me the way I am.	5.86	Agree
<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>5.85</b>	<b>Agree</b>
Legend:		
6.50-7.00 Strongly Agree	2.50-3.49 Slightly Disagree	
5.50-6.49 Agree	1.50-2.49 Disagree	
4.50-5.49 Slightly Agree	1.00-1.49 Strongly Disagree	
3.50-4.49 Neither Agree or Disagree		

All of the respondents agreed with a weighted mean of 5.95, that were connected with the school community, being accepted as a member of the academic community and felt at ease of who they were, as people within the academe were very friendly. The respondents had academic school connectedness as they felt being a part of the academic community, being taken care of, developed good social relationships with their professors, classmates, schoolmates as well as school personnel and administrators.

School connectedness pertains to the relationships the students have with other individuals within the academic institution and students learn well when they form bonds with their faculty (Gardner, 2016). The higher the school connectedness, the higher the probability that students will continue studying in school as based on the study of Tomek et al (2016); has low perceived stress and high life satisfaction (Civitci, 2015) and; lowers the incidence of suicide to persons at risk or not at risk of depression (Langile et al., 2015).

Building positive relationships is the third component of the PERMA model of wellbeing, connecting ties with the academic community, having friends, support persons and groups can help facilitate school integration and promote feeling of safety with the learning environment. Students who feel belongingness in the academic community have a high sense of wellbeing. As cited in the study of Civitci (2015), the statement from Baumeister & Leary in 1995, "to be accepted, included, or welcome, leads to positive senses of happiness, pleasure

and satisfaction; and to be refused, excluded or ignored might results in negative feelings of anxiety depression and loneliness.

## College Gratitude

**Table 4. Responses of the respondents in terms of college gratitude**

College Gratitude	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
I am so Thankful that I'm getting a college education.	6.28	Agree
I am grateful to the professors and other students who have helped me in class.	5.99	Agree
I feel thankful for the opportunity to learn so many new things.	6.22	Agree
I am grateful for the people who have helped me succeed in college.	6.28	Agree
<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>6.19</b>	<b>Agree</b>
Legend:		
6.50-7.00 Strongly Agree	2.50-3.49 Slightly Disagree	
5.50-6.49 Agree	1.50-2.49 Disagree	
4.50-5.49 Slightly Agree	1.00-1.49 Strongly Disagree	
3.50-4.49 Neither Agree or Disagree		

The respondents' answers to four specific questions on college gratitude agreed that they were thankful to the school community for the assistance, for giving opportunities to learn, to develop their potentials/capabilities and help them attained their academic aspirations and goals. The respondents all agreed to feel in gratitude to the university. Comparing the statistics of core constructs of academic well being, college gratitude has the highest mean score of 6.10

A student who felt in gratitude with her/his academe means the student finds happiness within the campus. The feelings of gratefulness for the benevolence received by the students from the academic community occurs when they are accepted for who they are, regardless of gender identity, helps in the attainment of their educational goals, lessen their academic workloads or simply make their academic life easy, meaningful and memorable. As the last component of the PERMA model, achievements received due to the help and assistance of people within the learning community can enhance students state of wellbeing.

This is supported by Kausar (2018) study results which prove that gratitude is a significant predictor of happiness and Singh & Salve (2017) that practice of gratitude plays a significant role in enhancing the level of happiness in the life of the young people. Feelings of gratitude also are directly associated with academic achievement, absorption of activities and social integration and in contrast with materialism and envy (Froh, Emmons, Card, Bono, & Wilson, 2011; as cited in Singh & Salve 2017).

## Overall Academic Wellbeing

**Table 5. Respondents overall academic wellbeing**

Subjective Wellbeing Constructs	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation	Rank
Academic Satisfaction	5.62	Agree	4
Academic Self-Efficacy	5.63	Agree	3
School Connectedness	5.85	Agree	2

College Gratitude	6.19	Agree	1
<b>Subjective wellbeing</b>	<b>5.82</b>	<b>Agree</b>	
Legend: 6.50-7.00 Strongly Agree 2.50-3.49 Slightly Disagree 5.50-6.49 Agree 1.50-2.49 Disagree 4.50-5.49 Slightly Agree 1.00-1.49 Strongly Disagree 3.50-4.49 Neither Agree or Disagree			

Based on above summary, *college gratitude* rank number 1 with weighted mean of 6.19 which means the respondents agreed that they felt thankful to the academic community for sharpening their skills, providing opportunities and experiences and for their accomplishments. This is one of the commendable Filipino cultural traits which can easily be uttered even receiving simple help from others, much overwhelming feelings of gratefulness occur if they attained their goals for the benevolence received from the academic community that change their personal and professional lives as students.

Gratitude (utang the loob) is a form of showing appreciation and kind behaviors towards another person who have done good deed to oneself, a Filipino culture trait that should be valued as an integral process in enhancing and strengthening interpersonal relationship (Rungduin et al., 2015); these are feelings driven by four factors such helping behaviors, care, perceived effort and environment (Cowie, 2018); feelings that are positively associated with academic achievement, absorption of activities and social integration (Cited in Singh & Salve, 2017) and these feelings occur in higher magnitude during their final year of study (Cowie, 2018).

The second in the rank is *school connectedness*, the results of quantitative data reveals that respondents agreed with weighted mean of 5.95. The respondents felt the belongingness within the academic community, being a part of the academic community, being taken cared of, developed good relationships and felt at ease of who they were as people in the community were very friendly. Nevertheless, LGBTs are social beings who crave to have interpersonal relationship with others and intimate relationship with someone. This sense of acceptance is of highly importance to LGBTs who have feelings of being different from others because of their nonheterosexual sexual orientation. There are feelings of apprehension whether to acknowledge their gender identity to others for fear of humiliation and stigma. School connectedness is needed in school activities especially during group projects, during interactive discussions, university events and when needing assistance from faculty and school personnel. LGBTs aspire to belong in a safe academic environment where they can learn, develop their potentials and be comfortable of who they are as a person. The establishment of bonds with faculty can help break down barriers and encourage learning to takes place (as cited in Gardner, 2016); students who are open with their sexual identity are positively associated with campus acceptance, informal integration with faculty and friends promoted academic and social integration (Woodwork & Kulick, 2015); connectedness is needed between faculty and student, student to student during collaborative learning projects, in formal and informal classroom activities, student and school personnel pertaining to school matters (Gardner, 2016).

As to their *academic efficacy*, the respondents agreed that they had motivation, they studied hard, were diligent in their class activities as well as being organized and effective students. As a college student, living an independent life, making decisions with less guidance from their parents and guardians and preparing for professional lives, derives their efficacy from their own perceptions of their capabilities and potentialities. Their decision for career and school choice were being carefully considered before entering the academe and these were their driving force in order to attain their aspirations.

Self-efficacy is the students own judgments on their ability to accomplish task, have confidence in their own skill performance, students with high self-efficacy demonstrate greater academic performance (Basila, 2016); students to achieve high academic laurels needs to believe they can learn and what they learn is useful, relevant and meaningful to them and for the society (Abdallah, et al., 2014).

The last rank in the constructs is *academic satisfaction* with a weighted mean of 5.62. The respondents agreed that they were contented with their academic involvement having great academic experience, happy with what they had done in classes and how their college education is going, but were slightly satisfied with their academic achievements. College life is a very demanding situation, full of challenges and expectations. It demands students a lot of time, and effort to adjust to the requirements not only in classes but also from the academic environment. It is a challenge to their physical, psychological, mental as well as spiritual health as they had to engage in varied learning experiences, meeting people with different personality, upbringing, and mentality. And lastly, they have to meet their own expectations and those from others (parents, siblings, friends, special someone, teachers, etc). Being a college student, there are several important areas that need to be met for successful adjustments such as socializing, classroom comfort, and managing stress related to family obligations and conflict between school and family responsibilities (Stoklosa 2015); three areas that can influence their academic performance such as student-related, teacher-related and content-related factors (Basila, 2016).

### **Conclusion**

The quantitative results of the study revealed that the LGBT respondents agreed that they have subjective wellbeing. They were highly in gratitude for the benevolence they had received in attaining their academic goals. They had felt the school connectedness as being accepted regardless of their gender identity and had academic self-efficacy to accomplish task related to their program/course. The high academic demands imposed as higher educational institution however, had affected students' satisfaction as to their academic achievements.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended to implement the proposed revitalized co-curricular activities: that will enhance academic wellbeing of LGBT students. These recommendations also met the goal of the wellbeing theory of Seligman (2011) to flourish or increase positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning and achievements of LGBT students by conduct learning activities that will bring out their highest level of functioning promoting goodness, generativity, resilience and growth that will further increasing their academic wellbeing.

#### **To the Academic Administrators**

To fully implement gender equality, gender responsiveness, and sensitivity, thru Gender Development Desk (GAD) with office and personnel, a yearly budget to conduct orientations, seminars, workshops and co-curricular activities to all members of the academic community. To regularly evaluate and revitalize these activities to fit the needs of every student regardless of gender identity. To make the school agencies guidance and counseling, office of student affairs and academic managers available for LGBT students endeavors.

#### **To the Academic Community**

There is a need to create a student/faculty run LGBT support groups that initiate activities of an ally to the LGBT community. Their activities will support the LGBT's endeavors, help create a safer environment as a bystander, spokesperson, and advocate for those who are or will

be discriminated/harassed within the campus. The faculty members need to be trained to be able to implement gender sensitive learning activities.

### To the LGBTs/LGBT Organization

To continuously revise ways to attract new members to come out, be recognized and be given a chance to stand up for their rights as a person and as a student. To constantly assess activities that will be implemented to make every member feel the belongingness and acceptance, to be at ease of who they are, to build their confidence and self-esteem, to be prevented from suicidal attempts and depression and most of all to excel in academics and attain a high level of academic wellbeing.

There is a need to conduct researches to identify ways to promote LGBT students' academic wellbeing, enhance school integration and to evaluate activities implemented for them.

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