



The advocacy blueprint: A Delphi study on promoting and strengthening mental health programs and services in higher education

Evan P. Taja-on ^{1*} , Fremativo A. Vergara ² 

¹ College of Science and Technology Education, University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines, Cagayan de Oro City, Misamis Oriental, PHILIPPINES

² School of Arts and Sciences, San Isidro College, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon, PHILIPPINES

* Correspondence: etajaon@sic.edu.ph

CITATION: Taja-on, E. P., & Vergara, F. A. (2025). The advocacy blueprint: A Delphi study on promoting and strengthening mental health programs and services in higher education. *Educational Point*, 2(1), e112. <https://doi.org/10.71176/edup/15991>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 26 January 2025
Accepted: 5 February 2025

OPEN ACCESS

ABSTRACT

Academic institutions' mental health programs and services play a vital role in nurturing students' well-being and success. Despite progress, challenges in implementation and the need for sustainable strategies highlight the importance of collaborative efforts to optimize mental health programs and create supportive academic environments. This research is important as it bridges gaps in existing knowledge and lays a foundation for both future academic inquiry and practical application. The study engaged experienced mental health advocates and professionals through a two-round Delphi process to refine strategies for improving mental health programs in academic institutions. The exploratory stage identified twenty-one essential strategies for developing sustainable and inclusive mental health programs in academic settings, emphasizing the importance of policy integration, culturally responsive interventions, peer support networks, technology utilization, capacity building, and resource advocacy. The integration stage further synthesized these into nine strategies, highlighting the need for embedding mental health into institutional policies, strengthening leadership accountability, fostering community collaboration, enhancing program accessibility, and promoting awareness through education and innovation. The findings underscore the value of evidence-based practices, professional development, and regular evaluation mechanisms to ensure adaptability, inclusivity, and long-term program sustainability, offering critical implications for practice, policy, and future research.

Keywords: mental health advocacy, student development services, student welfare services, student support services, Delphi study

INTRODUCTION

Mental health advocacy has emerged as a crucial component in fostering holistic well-being, particularly within academic environments. In higher education, mental health refers to an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being, significantly influencing their capacity to learn, teach, and engage (Lally et al., 2019). Despite increasing awareness of mental health's importance, the complexity of academic stressors, ranging from academic pressure to social challenges, necessitates programs and services that are responsive and preventive (Hechanova, 2019; Maravilla & Tan, 2021). Mental health programs must be continuously developed and improved to address the unique needs of the academic community, fostering resilience, inclusivity, and supportive environments.

Research consistently highlights the prevalence of mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, stress, and burnout among students in higher education (Tus, 2021; Belza & Gatchalian, 2023). Studies reveal that as many as one in three college students report symptoms of anxiety or depression (Tan et al., 2023), while a significant number experience academic-related stress and feelings of overwhelm (Geronimo et al., 2023; Quinto, 2024). The academic environment is a key contributor to these challenges, with factors like intense pressure to perform (Endozo, 2019), competition for grades (Datu et al., 2023), excessive workload (Tan et al., 2021), and financial stress (Martinez et al., 2020) creating a culture of heightened stress and vulnerability (Bangalan & Agnes, 2024).

For many students, the transition to independent living and the demands of academic success exacerbates mental health difficulties, leaving them without adequate coping mechanisms or support (Cleofas, 2020; Alibudbud, 2021; Argao et al., 2021; Labrague, 2022). Academic institutions typically provide a range of mental health services designed to support the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. These include counseling centers offering individual and group therapy, peer support groups that foster a sense of community and shared understanding (Arnado & Bayod, 2020; Cleofas, 2020; Villamor & Dy, 2022; Satparam, 2023), and workshops focusing on stress management (Bautista & Manuel, 2020), time management (Sottile et al., 2021), and emotional resilience (Klainin-Yobas et al., 2021).

Research on the effectiveness of these services shows mixed results, with some studies highlighting their positive impact in reducing distress and improving overall well-being (Dagdag et al., 2019; Museus & Chang, 2021; Seifert et al., 2023). However, stigma, long waiting times, and a lack of resources often prevent these services from reaching their full potential (Catubig, 2020; Giray et al., 2024; Lacson et al., 2024). As the academic landscape evolves, the need for evidence-based, adaptable, and proactive mental health services becomes increasingly apparent (Kardefelt-Winther et al., 2020; Withers et al., 2022).

While strides have been made in implementing mental health initiatives, a significant gap remains in understanding how to optimize these efforts for sustainable impact. The literature's limited sample sizes and overlooked contextual variables undermine the broad applicability of their conclusions. These limitations collectively suggest a need for more comprehensive and methodologically rich studies that can better capture the complexity of mental health initiatives. Furthermore, there is limited consensus on effective strategies for promoting mental health programs, leaving institutions to navigate these complexities independently (Martinez et al., 2020; Kemp et al., 2022; Tuliao, 2024). This knowledge gap underscores the need to comprehensively explore practices and frameworks to enhance mental health programs' delivery and efficacy in higher education (Billingsley & Hurd, 2019; Aguiling & Racelis, 2021; Loyola, 2022).

This study draws its foundation from the mandates of Republic Act 11036, known as the Mental Health Act of the Philippines (Republic of the Philippines, 2018), which emphasizes the integration of mental health services across various sectors, including education. Furthermore, it aligns with the directives outlined by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) (CHED, 2006, 2013), which provides guidelines on student welfare

and development services in higher education institutions. These legislative and policy frameworks highlight the necessity of prioritizing mental health initiatives as part of student support systems (Estrada et al., 2020; World Health Organization (WHO), 2021).

Objective of the Study

The research seeks to explore key factors that contribute to successful mental health advocacy in educational settings by engaging mental health advocates and professionals. The study aims to achieve a shared understanding and consensus on strategies for advancing and improving mental health services, ensuring they are responsive, inclusive, and aligned with student welfare and development. Specifically, the study has the following objectives:

1. to explore the mental health services and programs in the academy offered by the student welfare and development services;
2. to identify key factors and strategies for promoting and strengthening mental health advocacy within the academic setting; and
3. to achieve consensus among mental health advocates and professionals on the advancement and improvement on the mental health programs and services offered by the student welfare and development services.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a two-round Delphi iterative consultation process, as outlined by McMillan et al. (2016), to gather comprehensive insights from key experts in mental health. This approach involved structured rounds of panel discussions where participants proposed and refined mental health programs and services specific to the academic setting. In the first round, experts provided their perspectives and recommendations, which were analyzed and synthesized to identify common themes and areas for improvement. During the second round, these synthesized findings were presented to the panel for further evaluation and consensus-building, ensuring that the outcomes reflected the group's collective expertise. This iterative process allowed for the refinement of ideas and facilitated the development of actionable strategies tailored to the unique mental health challenges in higher education.

Selection of Experts

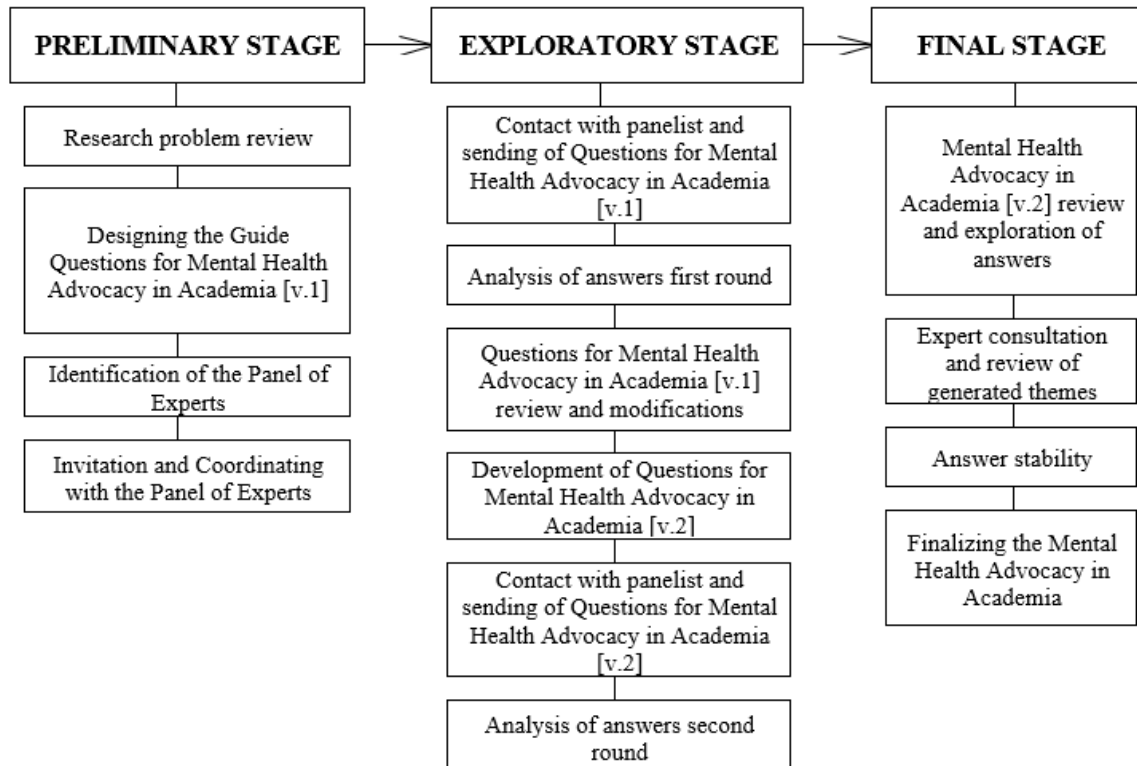
To ensure the reliability and depth of the insights gathered, the study employed criterion sampling when selecting its panel of experts (Brady et al., 2016). Participants were required to meet specific inclusion criteria, emphasizing their expertise and relevance to the study's objectives. Eligible participants were licensed or certified professionals with a background in mental health advocacy, particularly within academic environments. Their substantial experience in addressing the unique challenges faced by educational institutions was a critical selection factor. Furthermore, participants needed to demonstrate active involvement in student support services, ensuring their familiarity with the needs of the student population. A minimum of five (5) years of professional experience in mental health was also a prerequisite, ensuring participants possessed the knowledge and expertise necessary to contribute meaningfully.

Participants

The study targeted mental health advocates and professionals in Mindanao, Philippines, who are actively engaged in the mental health initiatives of colleges and universities. The demographic data of the panel

Table 1. Demographic profile of the panel members

Panel Member	Sex	Age	Years in the Field	Profession	Educational Attainment
MA-1	Male	28	5	Psychometrician	Master's Degree
MA-2	Female	41	16	Guidance Counselor	Doctorate Degree
MA-3	Female	37	9	Guidance Counselor	Master's Degree
MA-4	Male	29	5	Mental Health Advocate	Master's Degree
MA-5	Male	30	7	Psychometrician	Master's Degree
MA-6	Female	45	19	Psychologist	Doctorate Degree

**Figure 1.** Procedural stages in the Delphi technique implemented

members, as presented in **Table 1**, reflect the diversity in terms of age, gender, educational background, and professional experience. This variety not only enriches the depth of perspectives included in the study but also enhances the overall representativeness of the findings, ensuring that the insights drawn reflect a broad spectrum of experiences and viewpoints. Additionally, these experts were chosen for their direct involvement in student development and welfare programs, which positioned them to provide practical and context-specific insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with mental health programs in higher education.

The careful selection process enhanced the validity and applicability of the study's findings, contributing valuable insights to the mental health programs and services.

Procedure

The study adapted the procedural framework proposed by Mengual-Andrés et al. (2016), as illustrated in **Figure 1**, dividing the process into three distinct stages: the Preliminary Stage, the Exploratory Stage, and the Final Stage. Each stage corresponds to a systematic phase in the iterative consultation process aimed at gathering, refining, and validating expert-proposed mental health programs and services tailored to the academic context.

Preliminary Stage

The preliminary stage laid the foundation for the study by establishing its core objectives and organizing key elements. First, a comprehensive research problem review was conducted to ensure clarity and alignment with the study's goals. Based on this, the researchers developed an initial version of the guide questions for mental health advocacy in higher education to facilitate focused discussions. Simultaneously, the panel of experts was identified and guided by specific inclusion criteria to ensure the selection of knowledgeable and experienced participants. Once the panel was identified, invitations were extended, and coordination was initiated to confirm their participation and address logistical considerations for the consultation process.

Exploratory Stage

The exploratory stage comprised two iterative rounds of engagement and analysis. In the first round, the initial guide questions were given to the panelists, who were given one week to review them. Then, an online focus group discussion was scheduled with the experts to discuss and give their insight and recommendations on mental health advocacy in higher education. The analysis was conducted for one month, and based on this, modifications were made by the researchers to the guide questions, resulting in an updated version. The second round involved distributing the revised questions to the panelists, who were given another week to go over the guide questions. The researchers scheduled another online focus group discussion to consolidate and gather further input on mental health advocacy in higher education. The researchers conducted another round of analysis to deepen the understanding of expert perspectives and identify emerging consensus areas.

Final Stage

In the final stage, the refined version of the guide questions underwent a thorough review and exploration of the panelists' responses. This stage involved consulting with the experts to review the generated themes, ensuring the insights accurately captured their perspectives. Emphasis was placed on achieving stability in the answers, signifying consensus on the proposed strategies and programs. The process culminated in finalizing the mental health advocacy framework for higher education, consolidating the findings into a cohesive and actionable set of recommendations.

Data Analysis

The study employed a systematic qualitative approach (Bernard et al., 2016) to analyze the data, ensuring a thorough and methodical examination of expert responses. The researchers began with open coding, where significant statements, phrases, or ideas were carefully identified and assigned initial codes to capture their meaning. This initial step provided the foundation for deeper exploration by breaking complex data into manageable units. Following this, the researchers utilized focused coding to group similar codes into broader categories, enabling the identification of patterns, connections, and relationships within the data.

A thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017) was conducted by the researchers to synthesize the findings and develop overarching themes that encapsulated the core ideas from the experts' responses. These themes were further refined by the researchers with sub-themes that offered detailed insights into specific aspects of the data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the studied issues. An iterative review process (Neale, 2016) was employed by the researchers to continuously compare new data with existing codes and themes, ensuring consistency and refinement as new insights emerged. Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously over four months until data saturation was achieved—when no new themes or insights emerged.

To validate and ensure the reliability of the findings, member checking (Birt et al., 2016) was conducted by the researchers by sharing the results with the experts for feedback and confirmation of the interpretations. This

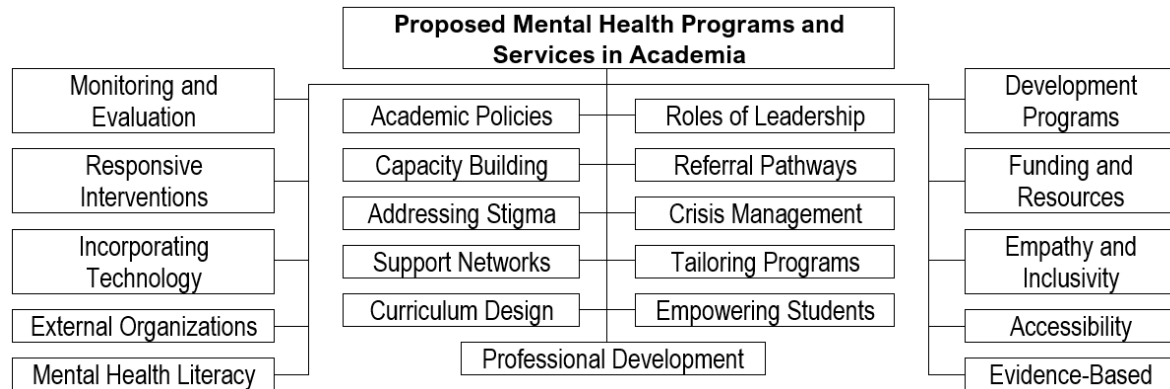


Figure 2. Thematic chart on the summary of the proposed mental health programs and services in higher education as deliberate by the mental health advocates and professionals

systematic approach ensured the analysis was detailed and aligned with the experts' perspectives, producing a comprehensive and credible result.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings are presented in alignment with the study's objectives, highlighting key themes and patterns identified through the qualitative analysis.

Exploratory Stage of the Proposed Mental Health Programs and Services

Figure 2 illustrated the thematic analysis chart connecting the proposed mental health programs and services in higher education as deliberate by the mental health advocates and professionals. The analysis generated twenty-one (21) initial themes during the exploratory stage of the panel discussion.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The first proposal is on *Regular Monitoring and Evaluation of Services*, which highlights establishing a structured and ongoing assessment framework to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of mental health programs and services in academic settings (Hechanova, 2019; Cleofas, 2020). Experts emphasized that consistent evaluation provides critical insights into the strengths and limitations of existing initiatives, allowing institutions to identify areas requiring improvement and adapt to the evolving needs of the academic community (Arnado & Bayod, 2020; Martinez et al., 2020; Datu et al., 2023). Monitoring tools, such as feedback mechanisms and key performance indicators, were identified as vital for capturing the experiences of students who utilize these services.

By incorporating data-driven approaches, institutions can make informed decisions to refine program delivery, allocate resources efficiently, and address gaps that hinder accessibility or inclusivity (Tan et al., 2021; Lacson et al., 2024). This emphasis on regular assessment underscores the importance of accountability and continuous improvement, facilitating a culture of responsiveness and innovation.

Academic Policies

The second proposal on *Integrating Mental Health into Academic Policies* underscores the critical need for institutionalizing mental health within the academic governance framework (Alibudbud, 2021). Experts highlighted that embedding mental health provisions into official policies ensures a systematic and sustained approach to addressing mental health challenges within educational institutions (Cleofas, 2020; Martinez et

al., 2020). Policies that mandate mental health training for faculty and staff incorporate mental well-being into curricula and outline protocols for crisis management, which can create a cohesive and proactive environment (Estrada et al., 2020).

Such measures emphasize prevention and early intervention, enabling institutions to foster a culture of mental health awareness and support that benefits students (Hechanova, 2019; Tuliao, 2024). By aligning mental health initiatives with institutional policies, schools can enhance their commitment to holistic education while ensuring the long-term sustainability of mental health advocacy efforts.

Role of Leadership

The third proposal is on the *Role of Leadership in Mental Health Promotion* and emphasizes the pivotal influence of institutional leaders in fostering a culture of mental health awareness and support within higher education (Aguiling & Racelis, 2021). Experts highlighted that leadership is the driving force in prioritizing mental health initiatives, allocating resources, and setting the tone for organizational commitment (Arnado & Bayod, 2020; Estrada et al., 2020; Datu et al., 2023). By embedding mental health considerations into strategic planning and decision-making processes, leaders ensure that these initiatives are not peripheral but integral to the institution's mission (Martinez et al., 2020).

Moreover, empowering leaders with the knowledge and tools to champion mental health allows for developing more inclusive policies and programs tailored to the specific needs of their academic communities (Alibudbud, 2021; Withers et al., 2022). Leadership's active engagement signals a top-down commitment, inspiring collaborative efforts and fostering an environment where mental health is valued and sustained as a core institutional priority.

Development Programs

The fourth proposal on *Holistic Student Development Programs* underscores the importance of creating comprehensive initiatives that address the multifaceted needs of students to support their mental well-being and overall growth (Datu et al., 2023). Experts emphasized that mental health programs must go beyond addressing crises and instead focus on proactive strategies that nurture emotional, social, and intellectual resilience (Klainin-Yobas et al., 2021).

This involves integrating mental health components into broader student development efforts, such as life skills training, peer mentoring, and extracurricular activities that promote balance and self-awareness (Cleofas, 2020; Withers et al., 2022; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024). By fostering an inclusive environment where students can access resources that support their mental health and personal growth, institutions can help cultivate well-rounded individuals equipped to navigate academic and life challenges effectively.

Responsive Interventions

The fifth proposal on the *Development of Culturally Responsive Interventions* highlights the critical need for mental health programs and services attuned to the academic community's diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences. Experts underscored the importance of recognizing cultural values, traditions, and stigmas influencing perceptions of mental health and help-seeking behaviors (Arnado & Bayod, 2020; Martinez et al., 2020).

Tailoring interventions to align with these cultural contexts ensures greater accessibility, relevance, and impact of mental health initiatives (Estrada et al., 2020; Alibudbud, 2021). By prioritizing culturally responsive approaches, institutions can create supportive environments where individuals from all backgrounds feel seen, respected, and empowered to engage with mental health services effectively.

Capacity Building

The sixth proposal is on *Capacity Building for Mental Health Advocates* and emphasizes the necessity of equipping individuals involved in mental health advocacy with the skills, knowledge, and resources required to address the complex needs of the academic community effectively (Estrada et al., 2020). Experts highlighted that targeted training programs are essential for enhancing advocates' competencies in mental health awareness, intervention techniques, and implementing evidence-based practices (Hechanova, 2019; Withers et al., 2022; Tuliao, 2024).

Providing ongoing professional development opportunities ensures advocates remain informed about emerging trends and strategies in mental health promotion (Lacson et al., 2024). By strengthening the capabilities of mental health advocates, institutions can ensure the sustainability of their programs and enhance the overall effectiveness of mental health services, ultimately creating a supportive academic environment conducive to well-being and success.

Referral Pathways

The seventh proposal is on *Establishing Clear Referral Pathways* underscores the importance of creating a structured and transparent system for connecting individuals to appropriate mental health support within and beyond the academic setting (Datu et al., 2023). Experts emphasized that well-defined referral pathways are critical for timely and practical assistance, particularly for cases requiring specialized intervention (Estrada et al., 2020). This involves developing clear protocols for identifying at-risk individuals, streamlining communication between support units, and fostering partnerships with external mental health providers (Hechanova, 2019).

A comprehensive referral system enhances the responsiveness of mental health services and strengthens the collaborative efforts between academic institutions and external mental health organizations (Cleofas, 2020; Martinez et al., 2020). By prioritizing clarity and accessibility, institutions can better address the mental health needs of their community while building a supportive care network.

Funding and Resources

The eighth proposal on the *Advocacy for Increased Funding and Resources* highlights the critical need for adequate financial and material support to strengthen mental health programs in academic institutions. Experts emphasized that insufficient funding often limits the scope and quality of mental health services, hindering the institution's ability to meet the growing demands of its community (Cleofas, 2020; Estrada et al., 2020). Increased investment is essential to expand counseling services, hire trained professionals, and provide regular training for staff and faculty (Lacson et al., 2024).

Additionally, enhanced funding enables the development of comprehensive mental health initiatives (Datu et al., 2023). By prioritizing financial and logistical support, higher education can ensure that its mental health programs are effective, accessible, and capable of addressing the diverse needs of its community.

Incorporating Technology

The ninth proposal is on *Incorporating Technology in Mental Health Advocacy*, which underscores the transformative potential of digital tools and platforms in expanding the reach and accessibility of mental health programs within academic institutions (Withers et al., 2022). Experts emphasized that technology, such as mobile applications, online counseling, and virtual support groups, can bridge gaps in traditional service delivery by providing flexible and immediate access to mental health resources (Kardefelt-Winther et al., 2020; Giray et al., 2024).

However, the effective use of technology requires adequate training for stakeholders, safeguarding privacy and confidentiality, and addressing the digital divide to ensure inclusivity (Estrada et al., 2020). By leveraging innovative technologies, academic institutions can enhance the scalability and efficiency of mental health advocacy, empowering students and staff with tools that promote well-being in both proactive and responsive ways.

Addressing Stigma

The tenth proposal is *Addressing Stigma within Academic Communities*, which highlights the pervasive challenge of negative attitudes and misconceptions surrounding mental health that hinder individuals from seeking help or engaging in mental health programs (Martinez et al., 2020). Experts emphasized the importance of fostering a culture of openness and acceptance through targeted awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, and role modeling by institutional leaders (Withers et al., 2022; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024).

Normalizing discussions about mental health and integrating them into the broader academic dialogue can create a supportive environment where students feel safe to access resources without fear of judgment (Ines, 2019; Labrague, 2022; Tuliao, 2024). Addressing stigma not only enhances participation in mental health programs but also reinforces the institution's commitment to a holistic and compassionate approach to well-being, paving the way for sustained improvements in mental health outcomes.

Crisis Management

The eleventh proposal is *Enhancing Crisis Management Protocols*, which underscores the critical need for academic institutions to develop comprehensive and responsive measures to address mental health emergencies effectively (Estrada et al., 2020). Experts highlighted the importance of establishing clear, well-communicated procedures that enable swift and appropriate action during crises, such as suicide risks or severe psychological distress (Hechanova, 2019; Argao et al., 2021).

These protocols should include readily accessible crisis hotlines, trained first responders, and coordinated partnerships with external mental health services (Arnado & Bayod, 2020; Martinez et al., 2020; Alibudbud, 2021). Additionally, embedding crisis management within institutional policies fosters a proactive approach, creating a structured and reliable framework for responding to urgent situations (Bautista & Manuel, 2020; Estrada et al., 2020; Tuliao, 2024). Strengthening these protocols minimizes risks and reflects the institution's commitment to safeguarding the mental well-being of its academic community.

Empathy and Inclusivity

The twelfth proposal is on *Fostering a Culture of Empathy and Inclusivity*, which emphasizes creating an academic environment that values understanding, respect, and acceptance for all community members (Datu et al., 2023). Experts noted that empathy-driven policies and practices, such as inclusive language, awareness campaigns, and diverse representation in leadership, can significantly impact mental health outcomes (Withers et al., 2022; Tuliao, 2024). By promoting a culture that actively reduces biases and supports vulnerable populations, institutions can make mental health services more approachable and equitable (Villamor & Dy, 2022).

Encouraging open dialogues and creating safe spaces for discussions about mental health further reinforces this inclusive environment, allowing individuals to share their experiences without fear of discrimination (Datu et al., 2023; Lacson et al., 2024). These efforts, when integrated into academic programs and community engagements, not only improve accessibility to mental health resources but also strengthen the collective resilience and well-being of the academic community.

External Organizations

The thirteenth proposal, *Collaboration with External Mental Health Organizations*, underscores the importance of establishing strategic partnerships to expand the mental health programs within academic institutions. Experts emphasized that such collaborations enable schools to access specialized resources, professional training, and avant interventions that may not be readily available within the institution (Tan et al., 2021; Satparam, 2023; Lacson et al., 2018). These partnerships also facilitate the exchange of best practices, ensuring that the mental health services provided align with current standards and are responsive to emerging challenges (Mental Health Act, 2018; Lally et al., 2019).

By working with external organizations, academic institutions can address service gaps while benefiting from shared networks that expand student support (Estrada et al., 2020; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024). This approach fosters a more integrated support system, leveraging external expertise to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of campus-based mental health programs.

Support Networks

The fourteenth proposal of *Strengthening Peer Support Networks* highlights the critical role of student-led initiatives in fostering a culture of care and inclusivity within academic communities (Loyola, 2022). Experts emphasized that peer support networks provide students with a safe and relatable space to share their mental health concerns, reducing stigma and promoting help-seeking behaviors (Martinez et al., 2020; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024; Tuliao, 2024). These networks build trust among peers and create a sense of belonging and community, vital for mental well-being (Cleofas, 2020; Datu et al., 2023).

Experts noted the importance of equipping peer supporters with basic mental health training, such as active listening and recognizing signs of distress, to ensure they can provide appropriate support and refer individuals to professional services when necessary (Estrada et al., 2020). Integrating these networks into broader institutional programs strengthens their impact, ensuring they complement existing mental health services while fostering a more accessible and student-centered support system.

Tailoring Programs

The fifteenth proposal of *Tailoring Programs for Marginalized Student Groups* underscores the need for mental health services that address the unique challenges faced by students from underrepresented and vulnerable communities (Billingsley & Hurd, 2019). Experts highlighted the significance of creating culturally sensitive and inclusive initiatives that acknowledge these students' diverse identities, backgrounds, and experiences (Martinez et al., 2020; Withers et al., 2022).

Programs designed specifically for marginalized groups, students with disabilities, and those from low-income backgrounds were identified as essential for reducing disparities in mental health support (Ines, 2019; Argao et al., 2021; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024). By integrating such tailored programs into the academic environment, institutions can foster equity and demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of all students, ultimately contributing to a more supportive and inclusive campus climate.

Accessibility

The sixteenth proposal for *Enhancing the Accessibility of Mental Health Services* emphasizes the importance of removing barriers that prevent students from seeking and receiving support. Experts pointed to the need for easily accessible services, both physically and virtually, to accommodate diverse student needs and circumstances (Bautista & Manuel, 2020; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024). Key recommendations included expanding digital platforms for mental health consultations, providing flexible scheduling options, and situating counseling centers in easily reachable locations within campuses (Cleofas, 2020; Withers et al., 2022; Giray et al., 2024).

The discussion also underscored the importance of clear communication and awareness campaigns to inform students about available services and how to access them (Tan et al., 2021). By addressing logistical barriers, institutions can create a more inclusive framework that encourages help-seeking behaviors, ensuring mental health support is available to all students when and where it is needed most.

Mental Health Literacy

The seventeenth proposal for *Promoting Mental Health Literacy Among Students and Staff* highlights the critical need for education and awareness to address misconceptions and foster a supportive environment (Ines, 2019). Experts emphasized integrating mental health education into existing curricula, conducting workshops, and facilitating open discussions to build understanding and reduce stigma (Bautista & Manuel, 2020; Cleofas, 2020; Satparam, 2023). These initiatives aim to equip students and staff with the knowledge to identify early signs of mental health challenges, understand available resources, and support peers effectively (Estrada et al., 2020; Argao et al., 2021).

Additionally, fostering a culture of mental health awareness contributes to normalizing conversations around mental well-being and encouraging proactive help-seeking behaviors (Villamor & Dy, 202; Tuliao, 2024). By empowering students and staff with the tools to recognize and respond to mental health concerns, institutions can establish a foundation for sustainable and inclusive support systems within academic communities.

Curriculum Design

The eighteenth proposal of *Integrating Mental Health into Curriculum Design* underscores the necessity of embedding mental health concepts within academic programs to foster a more supportive and informed educational environment (Argao et al., 2021). Experts highlighted the value of incorporating mental health topics into course content, including stress management, emotional intelligence, and self-care strategies, to equip students with practical skills for maintaining their well-being (Cleofas, 2020; Tan et al., 2021; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024).

Additionally, embedding these concepts into the curriculum ensures that mental health education is accessible to all students rather than limited to extracurricular initiatives (Billingsley & Hurd, 2019; Bautista & Manuel, 2020). By aligning mental health education with academic objectives, institutions can create a culture that prioritizes holistic development, enhances resilience, and prepares students to navigate challenges within and beyond academic settings.

Empowering Students

The nineteenth proposal of *Empowering Students as Mental Health Champions* emphasizes the critical role that students can play in fostering a supportive and inclusive mental health environment within academic institutions (Ines, 2019). Experts highlighted the importance of providing students with the training, resources, and opportunities necessary to become active advocates for mental health awareness and support (Cleofas, 2020; Estrada et al., 2020; Argao et al., 2021; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024).

This participatory approach enhances the reach and impact of mental health programs and fosters a peer-led culture that is approachable and relatable (Tan et al., 2021; Villamor & Dy, 2022; Withers et al., 2022). Empowering students as mental health advocates ensures that mental health advocacy becomes a shared responsibility, creating a dynamic and sustainable network of support that resonates with the unique experiences and perspectives of the academic community.

Evidence-Based

The twentieth proposal of *Evidence-Based Program Development* underscores the necessity of grounding mental health initiatives in empirical research and data-driven insights to ensure their efficacy and relevance

within academic settings. Experts emphasized the value of conducting thorough needs assessments and utilizing rich data collection methods to identify the academic community's mental health challenges (Bautista & Manuel, 2020; Tan et al., 2021; Satparam, 2023). This approach enables institutions to design targeted interventions that address the root causes of mental health concerns rather than relying on generic or anecdotal solutions (Hechanova, 2019; Argao et al., 2021; Lacson et al., 2024).

Furthermore, integrating evidence-based practices ensures that programs are aligned with proven methodologies, enhancing their credibility and impact. Regular evaluation of program outcomes and feedback mechanisms also plays a pivotal role in refining these initiatives, fostering continuous improvement and adaptability to the evolving needs of students and staff (Estrada et al., 2020; Withers et al., 2022). By prioritizing evidence-based development, institutions can establish effective and sustainable programs, contributing meaningfully to promoting and strengthening mental health services in higher education.

Professional Development

The twenty-first proposal of *Continuous Professional Development for Mental Health Providers* highlights the critical need for regular training and capacity-building initiatives to ensure professionals have the latest knowledge, skills, and strategies to address diverse and evolving mental health concerns (Estrada et al., 2020). Experts underscored that academic institutions must invest in workshops, certifications, and training programs focusing on evidence-based practices, emerging trends, and culturally responsive approaches to mental health care (Tan et al., 2021; Withers et al., 2022; Lacson et al., 2024).

Additionally, providing access to interdisciplinary collaboration and peer learning opportunities allows professionals to exchange insights and enhance their problem-solving capabilities (Argao et al., 2021; Labrague, 2022; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024). Ensuring that mental health providers have continuous access to development opportunities enhances the quality of care delivered and reinforces the credibility and sustainability of mental health programs in academic settings.

Finalization Stage of the Mental Health Programs and Services

Figure 3 illustrated the thematic analysis chart connecting the consolidated mental health programs and services in higher education as streamlined by the mental health advocates and professionals. The analysis generated nine (9) overarching themes, namely *policy and leadership*, *capacity building and professional development*, *community and collaboration*, *program development and accessibility*, *education and awareness*, *technology and innovation*, *evaluation and improvement*, *crisis and emergency preparedness*, *cultural and emotional support*. Within each thematic category, subthemes have been associated by the panel members referring to the twenty-one (21) initial themes during the exploratory stage of the discussion.

Policy and Leadership

The theme, *Policy and Leadership*, underscores the essential role of institutional policy and leadership in shaping sustainable and impactful mental health initiatives within academic settings (Aguiling & Racelis, 2021; Alibudbud, 2021). Establishing policies prioritizing mental health ensures that services and programs are systematically embedded into the institutional framework, promoting consistency and accountability (Cleofas, 2020; Estrada et al., 2020; Martinez et al., 2020). Leadership is pivotal in driving these efforts, as proactive and empathetic leaders can influence organizational culture, advocate for inclusive practices, and promote mental health initiatives at all levels (Arnado & Bayod, 2020; Withers et al., 2022).

Furthermore, securing adequate funding and resources is a cornerstone for these programs' effective implementation and continuity, as financial and logistical support directly impact their scalability and accessibility (Datu et al., 2023; Lacson et al., 2024). By aligning leadership vision with strategic policy frameworks and resource mobilization, academic institutions can create an environment where mental health

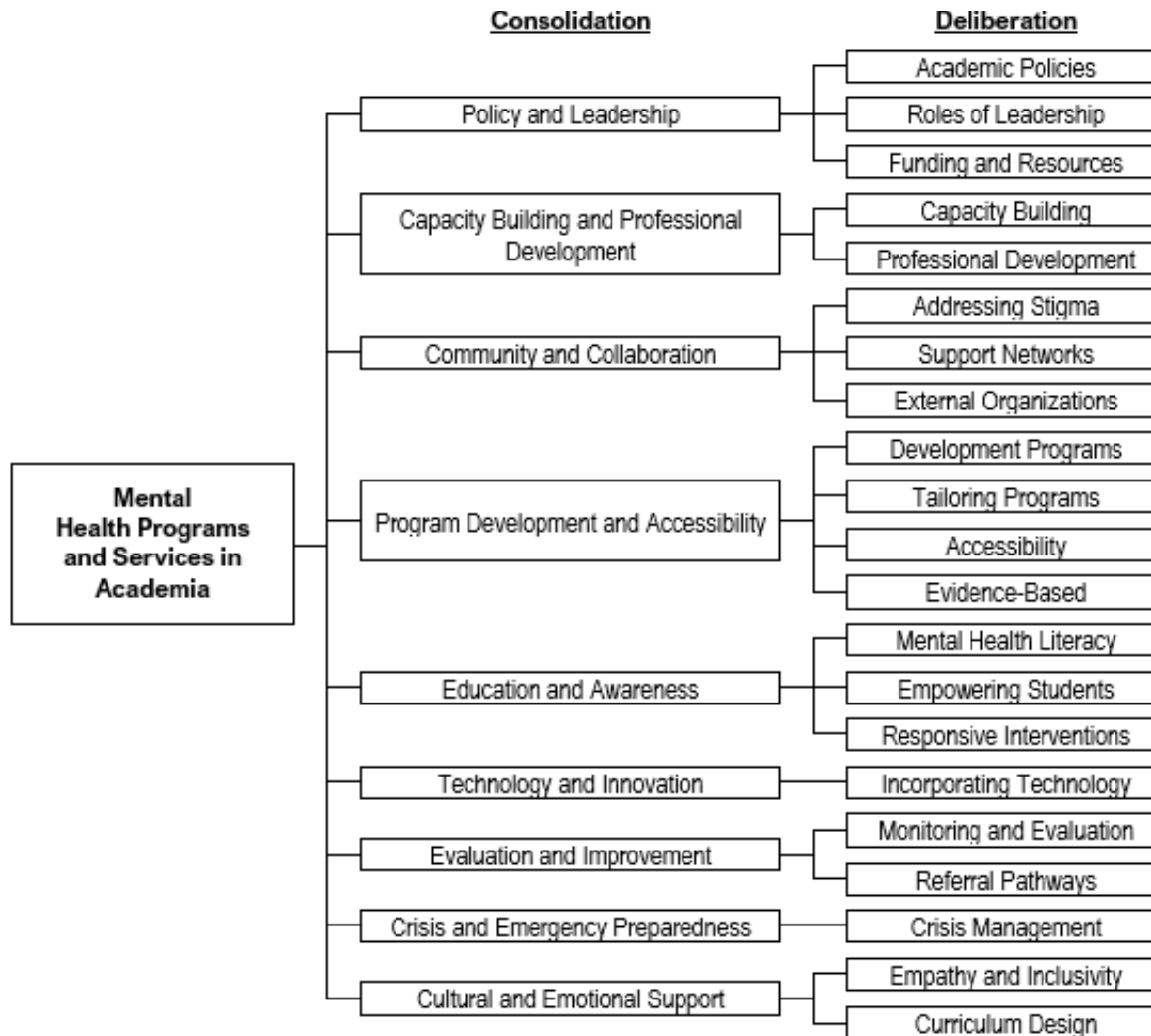


Figure 3. Thematic chart on the summary of the consolidated mental health programs and services in higher education as streamlined by the mental health advocates and professionals

is both a shared responsibility and a fundamental priority, fostering a culture of care and resilience among students and staff.

Capacity Building and Professional Development

The theme, *Capacity Building and Professional Development*, highlights the critical need for continuous investment in capacity building and professional development to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of mental health programs within academic institutions (Estrada et al., 2020). Equipping mental health advocates with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources enables them to address the evolving challenges in promoting mental well-being, fostering a proactive and informed approach to advocacy (Tan et al., 2021; Labrague, 2022; Withers et al., 2022; Tuliao, 2024).

At the same time, ongoing professional development for mental health providers ensures they remain adept at implementing evidence-based practices, navigating complex cases, and responding to diverse needs within the academic community (Argao et al., 2021; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024; Lacson et al., 2024). These efforts strengthen individual competencies and institutional capacity to deliver comprehensive and responsive mental health services (Hechanova, 2019). By prioritizing capacity building and professional growth,

institutions can create a dynamic and skilled network of professionals and advocates committed to fostering a culture of care, inclusivity, and resilience.

Community and Collaboration

The theme, *Community and Collaboration*, underscores the pivotal role of community engagement and collaborative efforts in cultivating a supportive environment for mental health within academic institutions (Estrada et al., 2020; Loyola, 2022). Fostering a culture of openness and inclusivity helps to dismantle stigma, encouraging students and staff to seek support without fear of judgment or discrimination (Withers et al., 2022; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024; Tuliao, 2024). Strengthening peer support networks further amplifies this culture by leveraging the power of shared experiences, empathy, and mutual understanding, enabling individuals to feel connected and validated in their mental health journeys (Ines, 2019; Labrague, 2022).

Collaboration with external mental health organizations complements these internal efforts, bridging the gap between institutional resources and specialized expertise and ensuring access to comprehensive care (Lally et al., 2019; Tan et al., 2021; Satparam, 2023; Lacson et al., 2018). Together, these aspects create a synergistic approach to mental health promotion, where the academic community works cohesively to address challenges, build resilience, and advocate for well-being at all levels.

Program Development and Accessibility

The theme, *Program Development and Accessibility*, highlights the necessity of developing and implementing mental health programs that are both comprehensive and inclusive, ensuring accessibility for all students (Martinez et al., 2020; Datu et al., 2023). Prioritizing holistic development allows programs to address the interconnected dimensions of students' well-being, including emotional, social, and academic aspects (Bautista & Manuel, 2020; Klainin-Yobas et al., 2021; Satparam, 2023).

Tailoring initiatives to meet the unique needs of marginalized groups further enhances inclusivity, acknowledging and addressing the systemic barriers these groups often face (Ines, 2019; Argao et al., 2021; Withers et al., 2022; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024). Grounding program development in evidence-based practices strengthens their effectiveness, ensuring interventions are rooted in research and continuously refined based on measurable outcomes (Hechanova, 2019; Argao et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2021; Lacson et al., 2024). Collectively, these aspects create a foundation for sustainable and impactful mental health programs that empower institutions to meet the diverse needs of their academic communities.

Education and Awareness

The theme, *Education and Awareness*, underscores the importance of fostering a culture of education and awareness to enhance mental health initiatives in academic settings (Ines, 2019). Promoting mental health literacy among students and staff serves as a foundational strategy, equipping individuals with the knowledge to identify mental health challenges, reduce stigma, and access appropriate support and empowering students as mental health promoters to build upon this literacy by creating peer-led networks that amplify advocacy and serve as relatable, frontline resources within the community (Bautista & Manuel, 2020; Estrada et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2021; Villamor & Dy, 2022).

Integrating culturally responsive interventions ensures that education and outreach efforts resonate with the diverse cultural backgrounds present in academic institutions, fostering inclusivity and relevance (Arnado & Bayod, 2020; Martinez et al., 2020; Alibudbud, 2021). Concurrently, these approaches strengthen the capacity of academic communities to address mental health challenges through informed, empathetic, and culturally attuned strategies, ultimately promoting a more supportive and proactive environment.

Technology and Innovation

The theme, *Technology and Innovation*, highlights the transformative potential of technology and innovation in advancing mental health programs within academic settings (Withers et al., 2022). Integrating digital platforms broadens access to mental health services, particularly for students facing barriers to in-person care. Additionally, leveraging technology enhances outreach efforts through targeted awareness campaigns and interactive educational tools, fostering engagement across diverse student populations (Estrada et al., 2020; Kardefelt-Winther et al., 2020; Giray et al., 2024).

Incorporating data-driven approaches allows for the continuous improvement of programs based on real-time needs and trends (Tan et al., 2021; Lacson et al., 2024). These innovations expand the reach and efficiency of mental health initiatives and create opportunities to personalize support, ensuring that services remain adaptable and relevant to the evolving demands of academic communities.

Evaluation and Improvement

The theme, *Evaluation and Improvement*, emphasizes the importance of structured evaluation mechanisms and referral systems to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of mental health programs in academic settings (Hechanova, 2019; Cleofas, 2020; Datu et al., 2023). Regular monitoring and evaluation provide critical insights into the impact of existing services, enabling institutions to identify areas of improvement and adapt their programs to evolving needs (Arnado & Bayod, 2020; Martinez et al., 2020). These processes promote accountability and ensure that resources are utilized effectively.

Simultaneously, establishing clear and accessible referral pathways enhances the continuity of care, guiding students and staff to appropriate services within and outside the academic environment (Estrada et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2021; Lacson et al., 2024). By addressing gaps in service delivery and fostering seamless collaboration between internal and external stakeholders, these efforts create a framework that prioritizes the well-being of the academic community while driving ongoing improvements in mental health support.

Crisis and Emergency Preparedness

The theme, *Crisis and Emergency Preparedness*, underscores the critical need for robust crisis and emergency preparedness within academic institutions to address mental health challenges effectively (Estrada et al., 2020). Enhancing crisis management protocols involves developing clear, actionable plans responsive to various mental health emergencies, ensuring timely and appropriate interventions (Arnado & Bayod, 2020; Martinez et al., 2020; Alibudbud, 2021). This includes establishing crisis response teams, comprehensive training for staff and students, and integrating preventive measures to mitigate potential crises (Hechanova, 2019; Bautista & Manuel, 2020; Estrada et al., 2020; Tuliao, 2024).

Additionally, institutions must prioritize communication strategies that ensure all stakeholders are informed and equipped to respond during emergencies (Argao et al., 2021). By promoting a proactive and coordinated approach, these measures strengthen the overall resilience of the academic community and create a safer, more supportive environment for addressing mental health crises comprehensively and empathetically.

Cultural and Emotional Support

The theme, *Cultural and Emotional Support*, highlights the importance of embedding cultural and emotional support into the fabric of academic institutions to foster a holistic approach to mental health (Argao et al., 2021; Datu et al., 2023). Cultivating an environment of empathy and inclusivity requires intentionally promoting understanding and acceptance of diverse perspectives, creating a sense of belonging for all academic community members (Withers et al., 2022; Villamor & Dy, 2022; Tuliao, 2024). This can be achieved by addressing biases, encouraging open dialogue, and developing programs prioritizing emotional well-being (Lacson et al., 2024).

Integrating mental health into curriculum design further strengthens this foundation by normalizing conversations around mental health, equipping students with coping mechanisms, and aligning educational content with learners' evolving emotional and psychological needs (Billingsley & Hurd, 2019; Bautista & Manuel, 2020; Tan et al., 2021; Bangalan & Agnes, 2024). Concurrently, these initiatives reinforce a culture that values mental health as a core component of academic success, paving the way for a more inclusive and emotionally resilient academic environment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The exploratory stage generated significant new insights into the strategic approaches necessary for enhancing mental health services and programs within academic environments. The result presented the critical role of developing comprehensive monitoring systems, integrating mental health considerations into institutional policies and curricula, and designing culturally responsive interventions tailored to the diverse needs of the academic community. These findings address a notable gap in existing research by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of various intervention strategies, offering an implicit understanding of how targeted programs can foster inclusivity and enhance student well-being.

Furthermore, the exploratory findings contributed to the body of knowledge by identifying the importance of peer support networks, community collaboration, and technology integration in overcoming barriers to mental health services. By emphasizing these strategies, the research fills existing gaps by outlining practical, evidence-based recommendations that academic institutions can adopt to build sustainable and adaptable mental health programs. This stage not only refined theoretical frameworks but also laid the groundwork for developing actionable models that directly respond to the evolving challenges within academic settings.

The integration stage advanced the study's contributions by synthesizing the diverse strategies identified earlier into a cohesive framework for mental health advancement in academic settings. This phase provided new knowledge on how institutional policies, leadership accountability, and strategic resource mobilization can be coordinated to create an environment that fully supports mental health initiatives. The stage further clarified the importance of embedding mental health literacy into curricula and enhancing program accessibility through technology and innovative practices, offering a comprehensive model for continuous improvement and evaluation.

Moreover, the integration stage addressed critical research gaps by exhibiting the effectiveness of an interdisciplinary approach that links policy, community collaboration, and evidence-based practice into a unified strategy. The insights gained underscore the value of a holistic, systemic framework in ensuring both the immediate and long-term sustainability of mental health programs. The stage not only enriches the existing literature with empirically supported models but also guides future practices and policy-making, ensuring that mental health services in academic settings are both inclusive and resilient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study results, academic institutions are encouraged to adopt a comprehensive and systemic approach to mental health programs by aligning institutional policies with mental health objectives and fostering leadership accountability. Capacity-building initiatives could be prioritized to empower mental health advocates and enhance the skills of service providers through continuous professional development. Collaborative partnerships with external mental health organizations and increased resource allocation are essential for ensuring sustainability and expanding the reach of services.

Institutions could integrate mental health literacy into curricula to promote awareness and inclusivity while leveraging technology to enhance program accessibility and efficiency. Regular evaluation mechanisms and robust crisis management protocols are critical for maintaining program relevance and effectiveness. Lastly, fostering culturally responsive interventions and cultivating a supportive community through peer networks and empathetic practices will ensure that mental health services address the diverse needs of the academic population.

In addition to the strategies discussed, the study underscores the need to integrate mental health support directly into teacher training and curriculum development processes. Embedding mental health awareness and intervention strategies within educator preparation programs can equip teachers with the skills to identify early signs of distress among students, fostering a proactive and supportive learning environment. Furthermore, the study suggests that a whole-school approach, where mental health is considered a vital component of academic success, can enhance overall student performance and staff well-being. By promoting interdisciplinary collaborations between educators, mental health professionals, and policy-makers, institutions could develop comprehensive support systems that not only improve academic outcomes but also contribute to the emotional resilience of the entire educational community.

Future research could explore the long-term impact of institutionalized mental health policies on the well-being and academic performance of students and staff. Studies focusing on the effectiveness of technology-driven mental health interventions in academic settings would provide valuable insights into innovative approaches. Further investigation into culturally specific challenges and how to tailor interventions for marginalized or underserved student groups is also recommended. Longitudinal studies examining the outcomes of continuous professional development for mental health providers and advocates within higher education could offer evidence of best capacity-building practices. Additionally, research into the role of leadership styles and institutional governance in fostering a mental health-friendly environment could deepen understanding and inform policy-making.

REFERENCES

- Aguiling, M. A., & Racelis, A. (2021). Virtuous leadership for the new normal: Identifying leadership virtues in a Philippine leadership program. *Philippine Academy of Management*, 4(1), 23–34.
- Alibudbud, R. (2021). Academic experiences as determinants of anxiety and depression of Filipino college students in Metro Manila. *Youth Voice Journal*, 11, 1–21.
- Argao, R. C. C., Reyes, M. E. S., & Delariarte, C. F. (2021). Mental health literacy and mental health of Filipino College students. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 23(3), 437–452.
- Arnado, J. A. S., & Bayod, R. P. (2020). Help seeking behavior of young Filipinos amidst pandemic: The case of Cor Jesu College students. *Eubios Journal of Asian & International Bioethics*, 30(8), 463–437. <https://www.eubios.info/EJAIB92009.pdf>
- Bangalan, S. G., & Agnes, M. C. A. (2024). A mixed-methods study on the assessment of the mental health concerns among university students in the Philippines. *Current Psychology*, 43, 19804–19819. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-05777-0>
- Bautista, A. G. M., & Manuel, E. S. (2020). Mental health of students in the Philippines during pandemic: An assessment. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 2(5), 316–323. <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.2.5.2>
- Belza, B. M. C., & Gatchalian, E. M. D. (2023). The mediating effect of stress mindset and self-connection on the relationship between perceived stress and burnout among college students. *Journal of Asian Societies*, 2(1), 1–27.
- Bernard, H. R., Wutich, A., & Ryan, G. W. (2016). *Analyzing qualitative data: Systematic approaches* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

- Billingsley, J. T., & Hurd, N. M. (2019). Discrimination, mental health and academic performance among underrepresented college students: The role of extracurricular activities at predominantly white institutions. *Social Psychology of Education, 22*, 421–446. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-019-09484-8>
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1802–1811. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870>
- Brady, S. R., Jason, L. A., & Glenwick, D. S. (2016). The Delphi method. In L. A. Jason and D. S. Glenwick (Eds.), *Handbook of methodological approaches to community-based research: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods* (pp. 61–67). Oxford University Press.
- Catubig, N. S. (2020). The status and future directions of student affairs and services of the university of eastern Philippines system. *Solid State Technology, 63*(2s), 5779–5788.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 12*(3), 297–298. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613>
- Cleofas, J. V. (2020). Student involvement, mental health and quality of life of college students in a selected university in Manila, Philippines. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 25*(1), 435–447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1670683>
- Commission of Higher Education. (2006). *CHED Memorandum Order No.21, Series of 2006*. <https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CMO-No.21-s2006.pdf>
- Commission of Higher Education. (2013). *CHED Memorandum Order No.09, Series of 2013*. <https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CMO-No.09-s2013.pdf>
- Dagdag, J. D., Cuizon, H. G., & Bete, A. O. (2019). College students' problems and their link to academic performance: Basis for needs-driven student programs. *Journal of Research, Policy & Practice of Teachers and Teacher Education, 9*(2), 54–65. <https://doi.org/10.37134/jrppte.vol9.no2.5.2019>
- Datu, J. A. D., Mateo, N. J., & Natale, S. (2023). The mental health benefits of kindness-oriented schools: School kindness is associated with increased belongingness and well-being in Filipino high school students. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development, 54*(4), 1075–1084. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-021-01299-z>
- Endozo, A. N. (2019). Structuring the quadratic effect of motivation towards mental tasks performance among university students. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology, 97*(13), 3757–3766.
- Estrada, C. A., Usami, M., Satake, N., Gregorio, E., Leynes, C., Balderrama, N., de Leon, J. F., Concepcion, R. A., Timbalopez, C. T., Tsuji, N., Harada, I., Masuuya, J., Kihara, H., Kawahara, K., Yoshimura, Y., Hakoshima, Y., & Kobayashi, J. (2020). Current situation and challenges for mental health focused on treatment and care in Japan and the Philippines-highlights of the training program by the National Center for Global Health and Medicine. *BMC Proceedings, 14*, Article 11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12919-020-00194-0>
- Geronimo, S. M., Hernandez, A. A., Abisado, M. B., Rodriguez, R. L., Nova, A. C., Caluya, S. S., & Blancaflor, E. B. (2023). Understanding perceived academic stress among Filipino students during COVID-19 using machine learning. In *Proceedings of the 24th Annual Conference on Information Technology Education* (pp. 54–59). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3585059.3611412>
- Giray, L., Nemeño, J., Braganaza, J., Lucero, S. M., & Bacarra, R. (2024). A survey on digital device engagement, digital stress, and coping strategies among college students in the Philippines. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 29*(1), Article 2371413. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2024.2371413>
- Hechanova, M. R. M. (2019). Development of community-based mental health interventions in the Philippines: An ecological perspective. *Psychological Research on Urban Society, 2*(1), 10–25. <https://doi.org/10.7454/proust.v2i1.41>
- Ines, J. V. (2019). Filipino college students' mental health literacy. In *12th DLSU Arts Congress* (Vol. 3, pp. 1–11).
- Kardefelt-Winther, D., Rees, G., & Livingstone, S. (2020). Contextualising the link between adolescents' use of digital technology and their mental health: A multi-country study of time spent online and life satisfaction. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 61*(8), 875–889. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13280>
- Kemp, C. G., Concepcion, T., Ahmed, H. U., Anwar, N., Baingana, F., Bennett, I. M., Bruni, A., Chisholm, D., Dawani, H., Erazo, M., Hossain, S. W., January, J., Ladyk-Bryzghalova, A., Momotaz, H., Munongo, E., e Souza, R. O., Sala, G., Schafer, A., Sukhovii, O., ... & Collins, P. Y. (2022). Baseline situational analysis in Bangladesh, Jordan, Paraguay, the

- Philippines, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe for the WHO special initiative for mental health: Universal health coverage for mental health. *PLoS ONE*, 17(3), Article e0265570. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0265570>
- Klainin-Yobas, P., Vongsirimas, N., Ramirez, D. Q., Sarmiento, J., & Fernandez, Z. (2021). Evaluating the relationships among stress, resilience and psychological well-being among young adults: a structural equation modelling approach. *BioMed Central Nursing*, 20, Article 119. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-021-00645-9>
- Labrague, L. J. (2022). Specific coping styles and its relationship with psychological distress, anxiety, mental health, and psychological well-being among student nurses during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*, 58(4), 2707–2714. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ppc.13111>
- Lacson, J., Kilag, O. K., Sasan, J. M., Groenewald, E., Vidal, E., & Ponte, R. (2024). The crisis: An in-depth analysis of the shortage of guidance counselors and its impact on student suicide rates in Philippine schools. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence*, 1(1), 129–135.
- Lally, J., Tully, J., & Samaniego, R. (2019). Mental health services in the Philippines. *British Journal of Psychiatry International*, 16(3), 62–64. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bji.2018.34>
- Loyola, L. (2022). Understanding holistic development and wellness: Experiences and perspectives of Filipino student leaders. *Journal of Research Initiatives*, 6(1), Article 6. <https://digitalcommons.uncfsu.edu/jri/vol6/iss1/6>
- Maravilla, N. M. A. T., & Tan, M. J. T. (2021). Philippine Mental Health Act: Just an act? A call to look into the bi-directionality of mental health and economy. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, Article 706483. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.706483>
- Martinez, A. B., Co, M., Lau, J., & Brown, J. S. (2020). Filipino help-seeking for mental health problems and associated barriers and facilitators: A systematic review. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 55, 1397–1413. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-020-01937-2>
- McMillan, S. S., King, M., & Tully, M. P. (2016). How to use the nominal group and Delphi techniques. *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, 38, 655–662. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11096-016-0257-x>
- Mengual-Andrés, S., Roig-Vila, R., & Mira, J. B. (2016). Delphi study for the design and validation of a questionnaire about digital competences in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 13, Article 12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-016-0009-y>
- Museum, S. D., & Chang, T. H. (2021). The impact of campus environments on sense of belonging for first-generation college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 62(3), 367–372. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2021.0039>
- Neale, J. (2016). Iterative categorization (IC): a systematic technique for analysing qualitative data. *Addiction*, 111(6), 1096–1106. <https://doi.org/10.1111/add.13314>
- Quinto, E. (2024). Does academic stress predict nursing students' healthy and unhealthy behaviour? *Divine Word International Journal of Management and Humanities*, 3(3), Article 584294. <https://doi.org/10.62025/dwijmh.v3i3.87>
- Republic of the Philippines. (2018). *Mental Health Act, RA 11036 § 28 et seq.* https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2018/ra_11036_2018.html
- Satparam, J. (2023). Examining the mental health literacy and challenges to supporting students among regional Philippine teacher education faculty. *Journal of Education, Management and Development Studies*, 3(3), 41–53. <https://doi.org/10.52631/jemds.v3i3.169>
- Seifert, T. A., Perozzi, B., & Li, W. (2023). Sense of accomplishment: A global experience in student affairs and services. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 60(2), 250–262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2022.2041426>
- Sottile, B. J., Cruz, L. E., Bursleson, Y. A. L., & McLain, K. (2021). It's about time: An analysis of student activities under remote learning. In *2021 ASEE Virtual Annual Conference Content Access*. <https://doi.org/10.18260/1-2--37412>
- Tan, G. X., Soh, X. C., Hartanto, A., Goh, A. Y., & Majeed, N. M. (2023). Prevalence of anxiety in college and university students: An umbrella review. *Journal of Affective Disorders Reports*, 14, Article 100658. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadr.2023.100658>
- Tan, J. S. T., Yatco, M. C. L., Carrera, P. C., Salvador, D. L. A., & Bautista, V. V. (2021). A needs assessment study on the experiences and adjustments of students in a Philippine university: Implications for university mental health. *Philippines Journal of Psychology*, 2021, 44–81. <https://doi.org/10.31710/pjp/0054.03>
- Tuliao, A. P. (2024). Public and private stigma, and help-seeking intent for mental health issues: A cross-country comparison between the US and Philippines. *Stigma and Health*, 9(1), 9–19. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/sah0000296>

- Tus, J. (2021). Amidst COVID-19 pandemic: Depression, anxiety, stress, and academic performance of the students in the new normal of education in the Philippines. In *Online International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Development 21*. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14775339.v1>
- Villamor, A. M. C., & Dy, M. F. R. (2022). Benefits of and barriers to mental health help-seeking of selected Filipino college students. *International Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences Studies*, 7(4), 78–90.
- Withers, M., Jahangir, T., Kubasova, K., & Ran, M. S. (2022). Reducing stigma associated with mental health problems among university students in the Asia-Pacific: A video content analysis of student-driven proposals. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 68(4), 827–835. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207640211007511>
- World Health Organization. (2021). *Peer support mental health services: Promoting person-centred and rights-based approaches*. World Health Organization. <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/341643>