

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

Emma Noelle D. Noel¹, Samboy G. Nabor²

^{1,2}University of Perpetual Help System Dalta – Las Piñas

ABSTRACT: The Research Was A Qualitative Project Aiming To Investigate The Lived Experiences Of Lgbtqia+ College Students In The Very Visible And Embodied Space Of Physical Education (Pe) In The Philippine System Of Higher Education. As Pe As A Commonly Heteronormative Space, The Study Sought To Learn The Ways In Which These Students Experienced Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Involvement. The Study Employed A Descriptive Phenomenological Research Design, Grounded In The Approach Proposed By Giorgi, And Collected Data Using In-Depth And Semi-Structured Interviews With Ten Purposive Lgbtqia+ Students. The Phenomenological Analysis Demonstrated That Pe Was A Stakes-Ridden Social Space Where Extreme Structural Standards (Binary Gender Groupings And Strict Uniform Policies) Were Intrinsically Biased Towards Conforming Bodies And Provoked Increased Bodily Self-Consciousness And Gender Dysphoria. Moreover, The Subjects Had To Negotiate An Insidious Cloud Of Mild Stereotyping, Which Required A Debilitating State Of Internalized Vigilance To Keep The Social Peace On An Even Footing. One Of The Key Findings Was That Student Engagement Was Not Only An Issue Of Academic Conformity, But An Adaptive Strategy That Was Entirely Contingent On The Existence Of Psychological Safety. In Order To Be A Part Of It, The Judgmental Eye Of The Surroundings Needed To Be Neutralized By The Enabling Peers And Elastic, Understanding Teachers. The Research Resulted In The Creation Of The Inclusive Physical Education (Ipe) Model, Which Illustrates The Importance Of Institutional Policy Changes, Gender-Sensitive Pedagogy, And Active Elimination Of Exclusionary Systems To Make Sure That All Learners Participate Equally And Decently.

KEYWORDS: Descriptive Phenomenology, Lgbtqia+ Students, Lived Experience, Physical Education, Psychological Safety

I. INTRODUCTION

This Chapter Presents the Background and Context of the Study, Outlining The Research Problem and Its Significance Within the Field of Physical Education and Gender Studies. It Introduces the Central Phenomenon—The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ Students—And Provides an Overview of the Intersectional Issues of Embodiment and Institutional Structures. The Chapter Further Details the Statement of the Problem, The Research Questions, The Purpose of the Study, And The Scope and Delimitations, Establishing The Foundation for The Succeeding Phenomenological Investigation.

Recent Literature Emphasized the Continuous Struggles Faced by Members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, And Other Identities Beyond These Categories (Lgbtqia+) Community Inside Educational Institutions. The Trevor Project Conducted a Study in 2024 Which Included 5,500 Young Lgbtqia+ Participants; It Was Found That 63% Of Them Feel as Though Their Identity Is a Burden, while 58% Say They Do Not Feel Included or Comfortable in Their Social Community. These Results Show the Immediate Need to Have an Inclusive Educational Environment That Acknowledges and Accepts Different Identities.

Physical Education (Pe) Must Then Be Given Focus Relevant to The Challenges Faced by The Lgbtqia+ Community as It Is One of the Disciplines in The Academe That Gives Primary Importance to The Body as The Learning Center. Pe Highlights the Physical Appearance, Athletic Talent, And Gender Performance Which Reinforces Strict Body Ideals, And Sets Societal Standards On Gender Performance and Physical Prowess.

Philosophically, This View Will Make Pe Classes Become a Powerful Space for Personal Experience. According to The Phenomenological Approach, The Body Is Not Only Considered Biology, But A Lived Body---The Primary Means How People Experience and Understand the World (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). In The Case Of Lgbtqia+, Students Whose Physical Appearance Or Expressions Do Not Meet The Cisnormative Ideals, Their Visibility May Be Prone To Discrimination And Social Stigma. Because of This, Physical Education Is Usually Conducted Inside A Heteronormative And Strict Gender-Separated Systems--- Systems That

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

Support The Traditional Concept Of Feminine And Masculine Archetypes Which Caused Reported Cases Of Bullying, Harassment, And Marginalization (Pereira-Garcia Et Al., 2021).

On A Larger Scale, The Existing Rules and Regulations of Institutions Put Lgbtqia+ Students Further in The Marginalized Sector in Pe. Many Still Implement Programs That Separate Activities Strictly for Two Genders Only. One of These Restrictions Is the Use of Sex-Based Uniforms and Facilities, And The Belief That Lgbtqia+ Students' Skills Are Not Suitable in Physical Activities (Peterson Et Al., 2025). As A Result, This Limits the Existence and Diversity of the Students, And Strengthens the System That Promotes Exclusion and Creates a Controlled Social Community (Boehlke Et Al., 2024).

The Culture That Sets Traditional Gender Norms and Heteronormative Values Have Worsened the Situation in The Philippines. This Nation-Wide Discourse Strengthened Traditional Ideals of Males and Females, Which Caused the High Level of Stigma Against People Who Are Outside of These Set Norms (Tarrayo, Et Al., 2021). In Higher Education, Lgbtqia+ College Students Have to Move Around Pe Spaces, In Which Physical Activities Are Done in Consideration of Conservative Social Structure That Benefit the Gender Dichotomy (Muller and Boehlke, 2023). Due to The Combined Conservative Culture and The Nature of Pe as A Subject That Is Focused On the Body, It Is Important to Understand How Students Manage and Live Their Identity in This Type of Society.

Research Question

The Study Aims to Understand the Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students, Who Are Visibly Gender Expressive, In The Context of Physical Education (Pe) In Philippine Higher Education. Despite The Increasing Numbers of International Research About Body Positivity and Stereotyping in The Pe Context, Qualitative Studies Analyzing This Issue Inside a Conservative Socio-Cultural Context in The Philippines Remain Limited. Moreover, Many of The Local Studies Focus On the Overall Discussion of Discrimination, But Only Few Used the Phenomenological Approach in Order to Understand the Real Qualities and Essence of These Experiences from The Perception of Those Who Actually Experience Them. This, Then, calls for The Need for A Systematic and Imperative Investigation to Understand How Lgbtqia+ College Students Experience and Perceive Their Own Body and Participation in An Educational System That Most Often Provides Privileges To Cis Normative Standard Gender Expression Than An Inclusive And Equal Participation Of All Students.

Central Research Question

What Is the Essence of the Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education Classes in Relation to Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation?

Specific Research Questions

To Fully Capture the Dimensions of This Phenomenon, The Study Addresses the Following:

1. How Do Lgbtqia+ College Students Describe Their Lived Experiences of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation in Physical Education Classes?
2. What Meanings Can Be Derived from The Significant Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students Regarding Their "Lived Bodies" In The Pe Environment?
3. What Essential Themes and Shared Experiential Structures Emerge from The Participants' Accounts of Navigating Heteronormative Pe Structures?
4. What Pedagogical Recommendations May Be Proposed, Based On the Findings, To Promote More Inclusive and Supportive Physical Education Environments?

II. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This Study Analyzes Lgbtqia+ Students' Lived Experiences in A Required Subject Physical Education. The Study Is Focused On the Students' Experiences Related to Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Class Participation in A Subject That Is Traditionally Heteronormative. The Study Involves Lgbtqia+ Students Currently Enrolled in Manila Tytana Colleges, Pasay City, Philippines, Academic Year 2025-2026. Through Their Personal Narratives, The Study Aims to Determine the Physical and Psychological Hindrances That Occur in A Traditional Pe Class. The Results Serve as A Reference for Creating an Inclusive Physical Education (Pe) Model.

In The Methodological Aspect, The Study Utilizes a Qualitative Descriptive Phenomenological Research Design. It Is Done by Gathering In-Depth Data Through Semi-Structured Interviews in Order to Give Priority to The Real and Direct Narrative of the Participants About Their Experiences.

The Study Is Limited to The Formal Subject, Physical Education Only. The Study Does Not Include Students' Participation In Extracurricular Activities And Organized Competitions, Or Other Physical Activities Done Outside The School.

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

As a study based on phenomenology, it is not the intention of the study to create statistical results that can be applied to all higher education institutions (heis) in the philippines. On the other hand, the study is focused on the actual experience of the students in order to fully understand the meaning and essence of their experiences.

Limitations of the study

This study acknowledges the following limitations:

First, because the qualitative data is based on personal narratives of the participants, recall bias or having biases in remembering their experiences cannot be completely avoided. When participants remember their experiences in pe classes, their narrative may be influenced by their current perceptions, feelings and personal experiences.

second, although the basis for choosing the participants is open to students who are part of the lgbtqia+ community, the small number of participants usually used in descriptive phenomenology may not be fair or enough to represent all the identities included in the lgbtqia+ acronym.

third, the responses of the students from manila tytana colleges only limits the scope of the results. Because the study is conducted in a private institution, the experiences noted may only be based on the distinct social, cultural, and administrative context of the school. Because of this, results may not be able to mirror or represent students from public universities, institutions in rural areas, or schools with different administrative rules and systems.

last, the study is also limited to required pe classes and intentionally did not include extracurricular sports, other physical activities outside the school, and other physical activities. Because of this, the students only describe their experiences in a distinct and formal context in education, and not their entire participation in different physical activities.

FRAMEWORK

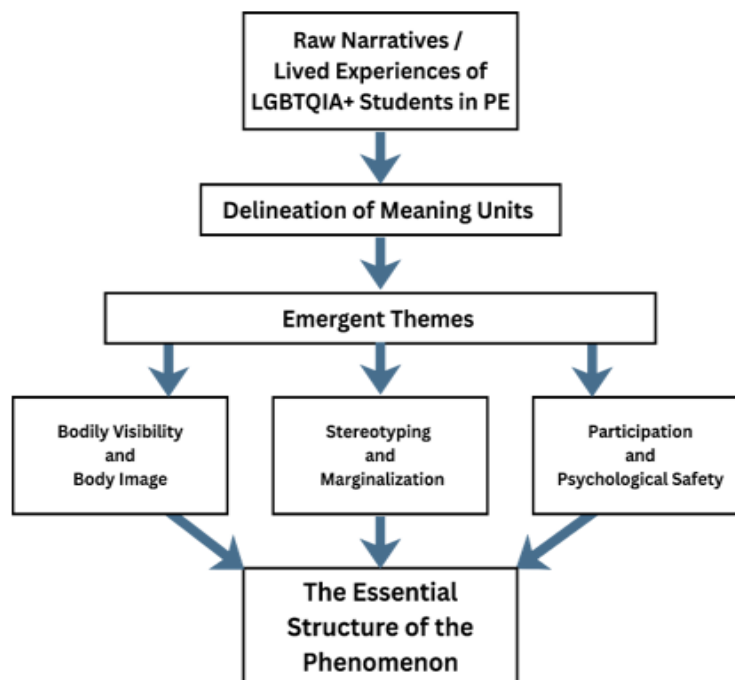


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework on the Lived Experiences of

The foundation of this conceptual framework is the lived experiences of college students who are members of the lgbtqia+ community inside the pe environment. This part serves as the foundation of the entire study because it encloses the real and bias-free narratives of the participants. It is not based on abstract concepts or theories, but on the actual experiences of the students' interaction with their teachers, classmates, and the regulations and institutional structure that shape their everyday experience in pe.

phenomenological reduction is done with their narratives, particularly in determining the meaning units. This is one of the most crucial steps in analysis because the important meaning of long and complicated descriptions of the participants is systematically derived from here. In this process, participants' narratives are translated into an initial statement that represents the essential psychological and structural aspects of their experience.

through this process, the analysis is ensured to be purely based on the actual voice and experience of the participants without being influenced by the personal assumptions or initial views of the researchers. In this way, the integrity of the study is maintained.

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

while the analysis deepens, the meaning units are gradually combined to build the emergent themes that will serve as the primary conceptual dimension of the phenomenological study. As outlined in the diagram, these themes capture three deeply interconnected dimensions of the student experience:

Bodily Visibility and Body Image

This Dimension Refers to How Students Face Their Own Feelings of Comfort and Being Exposed in an Environment Where Their Body Is Always Seen, Criticized, And Compared to. This Dimension Also Analyzes How the Participants Understand and Manage Their Experiences in A Space Where They Are Physically Exposed and Continuously Evaluated.

Stereotyping and Marginalization

This Dimension Describes the Emotional and Psychological Effort Made by The Lgbtqia+ Students to Contribute to Their Environment. This Involves Facing the Expectations Based On Their Identity, Microaggressions, And The Strict Standards Set On Gender That Are Continuously Enforced in an Institution.

Participation and Psychological Safety

This Dimension Illustrates the Effects of the Experiences of the Students for Participating in Pe. This Shows the Decisions of the Student—From Avoidance to Active Participation—Are Based On the Levels of the Emotional and Structural Safety They Feel Inside the Pe Environment.

These three dimensions are combined to show the essential structure of the phenomenon being studied—this is the main goal of the present study. With the systematic analysis that starts with the narratives of the participants, followed by determining the meaning units, and ends with creating emergent themes, the study can identify the exact essence of their experience. This way, structural and psychological meanings of being an lgbtqia+ student while participating in pe inside a higher education institution are described.

Research Design

To fully understand the complicated and in-depth experiences of the lgbtqia+ students in their participation in pe, the study utilized the descriptive phenomenological research design. This approach is based on the methodological tradition of giorgi who used the updated 5-step analysis introduced by applebaum (2023).

descriptive phenomenology does not aim to just determine the cause-and-effect relationship or describe the sequence of events; instead, it aims to determine and describe the essential structure of a phenomenon based exactly on how participants actually experienced and give meaning to them.

because pe is a subject centered on the body, movement, and constant interaction with other people, the students' experiences are naturally rooted to embodied experience (merleau-ponty, 2012; lambert et al., 2024). Because of this, phenomenology is considered to be the best methodological approach for this study. This gives the researcher the opportunity to understand and analyze the rich narrative of the participants from their perception, and systematically identify the meaning units of these experiences to translate them to psychological descriptions that remain honest to the experience and voice of the participants.

Data Collection Instruments

Interview Guide

To collect rich, in-depth data about the participants' experiences, the study utilized a semi structured interview guide composed of open-ended questions (see appendix a). Instead of strictly following a structured questionnaire, the guide served as an outline that gave the researcher the freedom to ask probing questions based on their responses. This allowed an in-depth and clear discussion on the respondents' personal experiences in pe.

the interview guide was designed to encourage the participants to reflect and describe their experiences inside the gymnasium, including the positive experiences that gave them the feeling of acceptance, and the negative ones that caused discrimination, stereotyping, or marginalization. With this open and free discussion, the researcher was able to gather rich narratives that became the basis for meaning units that are related to body positivity, stereotyping, and class participation. Because of this, the less obvious challenges faced by lgbtqia+ students whenever they participate in physical education activities became clear.

Stimulate Discussion:

The Interview Guide Encouraged Participants to Recall and Reflect On Their Positive and Negative Experiences in Sports and Pe. The Researcher Used Prompts or Guide Questions to Encourage an Open Discussion and Free Sharing of Different Perceptions and Experiences of the Participants.

Clarify Meaning Structures:

The Data Gathered from The Interview Were Used to Determine the Recurring Meaning of the Experiences and The Structurally Similar Lived Experiences of the Participants. The Researcher Identified the Meaning Units Related to Body Positivity, Stereotyping, Participation and Other Important Dimensions Through a Comprehensive Analysis of the Participants' Narratives.

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

These Structural Meanings Serve as A Basis to Understand the Opportunities and Challenges Lgbtqia+ Students Face Within the Pe Context

Data Gathering

Participant Recruitment:

The Researcher Recruited College Students Who Are Part of the Lgbtqia+ Community and Are Currently Enrolled in The Pe Subject in Manila Tytana Colleges. The Researcher Used Purposive Sampling to Identify the Participants of the Study. The Criteria for Participant Recruitment Considered Their Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, And Their Experience in Physical Activities to Ensure That the Participants Have First-Hand Experience of the Phenomenon Studied.

Data Collection:

The Researcher Conducted an In-Depth and Semi-Structured Interview to Investigate the Lived Experiences in Pe of the Participants. The Interview Was Held in A Safe, Comfortable, And Private Place to Ensure the Free Sharing of the Participants.

Before The Data Collection, The Researcher Asked for Informed Consent from Each of the Participants. With Their Consent, Each Narrative Was Recorded to Guarantee an Accurate Transcription and Data Analysis.

The Interview Guide Covers the Following Topics:

- The Participants' Perception and Experience with Regards to Body Positivity in Pe.
- Their Experiences of Stereotyping and Discrimination from Classmates and Teachers; And
- The Factors That Affect Their Level of Participation in Physical Education Activities.

Exploring Lived Experiences:

The use of semi-structured interviews gave the participants a chance to freely share their narratives and personal perceptions. Because of the open structure of the interview, the researcher was able to gather rich, detailed, and contextualized data that served as the primary basis of analysis.

throughout the research process, the researcher was able to keep the reflective notes. These notes serve as support in conducting the phenomenological reduction and help maintain the researchers' awareness of her initial assumptions while conducting data collection and analysis.

Data Analysis Procedure

To analyze the collected transcription of the interview, the study utilized a descriptive phenomenological methodology by giorgi. This methodology is rooted in the husserlian tradition and is focused on describing the lived experiences of the participants. This does not use statistical analysis for the usual thematic coding, but it gives emphasis on a true and systematical description of the actual experience of the participants (käufer & chemero, 2021; yau et al., 2022).

the primary reference of this methodology is the phenomenological reduction. To maintain the integrity of the data, the researcher intentionally used a phenomenological attitude that requires a strict bracketing or a temporary putting aside their own perception, prior knowledge, academic assumptions, and initial interpretations (applebaum, 2023; zahavi, 2021).

through this discipline process, the researcher remains open to the actual experience of the participants. Because of this, the phenomenon emerged based on the description and the actual experience of the students, instead of forcing their narratives to fit on the existing theory or interpretation (churchill, 2022; englander & morely, 2021; gumarang et al., 2021).

the data analysis was done through repetitive steps. First the researcher read the entire transcription to understand the full essence of the experience of the participants. Next, the narratives are systematically separated according to their meaning units. From here, the narratives of the participants are carefully translated to psychologically sensitive expressions to fully show the deep meaning of their experiences.

the primary goal of this process is to identify the essential structure of the experience of lgbtqia+ students in physical education, particularly about body positivity, stereotyping, and class participation.

although some similar patterns of experience emerged in the process, the analysis was not done as usual coding. The temporary grouping of similar meanings served only as a guide in organizing the data. The primary purpose of the analysis is combining the psychological expressions to form a comprehensive and concrete description of important phenomenon structure (yau et al., 2022).

III. RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study as derived from the data generated. The presentation is organized thematically, reflecting the patterns and categories that emerged from the analysis. Participants' accounts are described in detail and supported by verbatim excerpts to ensure that their voices are accurately represented. The chapter remains descriptive in nature, focusing on what the data reveal, while deeper analysis and interpretation are reserved for the succeeding chapter.

Overview of participants and context

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

To completely understand the essential structure of the phenomenon being studied, it is important to know first the people who became the center of this research. This study described the lived experiences of the lgbtqia+ college students while navigating through a required course in pe - a place where an individual is exposed to criticisms that causes a feeling of vulnerability.

before discussing their experiences about body positivity, stereotyping and class participation, it is important to describe the characteristics of the participants and the institutional context that shape their experience.

Participant Characteristics

The study is composed of ten (10) college students that were purposefully chosen because of their identity outside the heteronormative and cisnormative social standards. Instead of treating the lgbtqia+ as a similar group, the study strived to represent a wide scope of identity including the lesbians, bisexuals, pansexual, homosexuals, queer, transgender, non-binary, and gender fluid.

it is an important methodology to have this diversity in participants. For example, transgenders and non-binary participants can freely express the devastating gender dysphoria they experience every time they follow a strict division of physical activities based on their sex. While bisexuals, lesbians, and pansexual share their subtle yet ongoing effect of stereotyping because of their sexual orientation, especially inside the locker rooms, and during their interaction with their classmates.

the participants also came from different levels of participation in physical activities. Some are active participants of physical competitions while others experience anxiety every time they need to do activities that require a high level of physical exposure.

The Research Context and Locale

All of the participants came from one private higher education institution in metro manila, where physical education is a required part of the curriculum.

this environment contains a few structural characteristics that heavily influence the everyday experiences of the participants. The curriculum is focused on activities that require a great amount of physical performance and bodily exposure. The institution also implements a strict policy of wearing the set uniform and bathing suit in their pe classes which primarily cause anxiety to many of the participants because of their body.

aside from this, the actual physical facilities of the school, especially the use of changing rooms that are only divided based on two genders, cause continuous challenges the students with different gender identities experience.

in the social and pedagogical aspect, the gymnasium is usually a place where the traditional social standards are relevant to gender and physical capabilities. Despite that, not all the participants' experiences are negative. The narratives also show that there are a few teachers who tried to create a safer and inclusive environment. In some instances, teachers allowed the students to wear alternative uniforms or do other humane activities to lessen their anxiety and to create a space free from discrimination.

Emergent Themes and Categories

With the use of descriptive phenomenological methodology of giorgi, the researcher systematically divided and analyzed the narratives of the participants to determine the meaning units and then transcribe these to psychological expressions. From this process, the individual differences of the experiences are slowly removed, and the shared essence of the phenomenon emerges.

Through this key process, the researcher was able to identify three primary themes that shape the lived experiences of the lgbtqia+ students inside physical education:

1. Body positivity and body image
2. Stereotyping
3. Participation

Thematic Narratives with Verbatim Quotes

This Section Presents an In-Depth Elaboration of the Three Major Themes Grounded Directly in The Participants' Lived Experiences.

Theme 1: Body Positivity and Body Image

For the participants, physical education is a subject which is highly focused on the physical body and its exposure to others; due to this, students become highly self-conscious. Many of them experience extreme shyness and unease because of the uniforms they need to wear in different activities, especially in swimming classes.

changing from their everyday attire to revealing sports clothing usually strips them from the feeling of security and comfort. This is how respondent number seven shared her experience:

"i was really uncomfortable... magsusuot ng one piece then mag share ng bathroom."

this vulnerability is not an easy discussion. For transgenders and non-binary students, this type of body exposure usually causes psychological anxiety. Respondent 8, who identifies as homosexual and non-binary, shared how other activities intensified their internal conflicts:

"Nagkakaroon Ako Ng Gender Dysmorphia Minsan... Lalo Na Pag Merong Pe Activities Like Basketball."

Similarly, respondent 5 highlighted how existing as a queer person in a gendered space inherently amplifies physical self-scrutiny:

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

“as a queer person... i became more aware of my body because of gendered expectations.”

despite this challenge, the respondents described body positivity as a continuous and progressive process of acceptance and self-worth. They do not consider this as an abrupt situation, but as a journey through a deeper understanding and acceptance of their own body. Respondent 3 described this through stating:

“body positivity po sa akin is yung pag-accept mo po and pagrespeto mo po sa body mo.”

for many participants, continuously facing situations that expose the body inside the pe class serves as a way to create a stronger and more positive self-image. Through the years, they learn to accept their physical appearance beyond the standards and judgment of others. This is clearly presented in respondent 10's statement:

“before i used to be conscious... my belly is protruding. Now... i feel normal and that's what i love.”

Table 4.1.1. Illustration of the Analytic Transformation for Body Positivity and Body Image

Actual Answer of the Respondent (Verbatim Excerpt)	Code (Formulated Meaning)	Theme (Subdomain)	Emergent Theme (Major Domain)
“I got a stare... head to toe from a classmate.” (Respondent 7)	Being stared at created feelings of self-consciousness and insecurity.	Feeling watched or judged	Body Positivity and Body Image
“Kapag swimming po... feeling ko sobrang ganun ng clothes sa akin... anytime nakikita yung shape ko.” (Respondent 2)	Revealing PE attire increases body self-consciousness.	Clothing-related body awareness	Body Positivity and Body Image
“I was really uncomfortable... magsusuo ng one piece then mag share ng bathroom.” (Respondent 7)	PE uniforms and shared spaces can create body-related discomfort.	Uniform discomfort	Body Positivity and Body Image
“Nagkakaroon ako ng gender dysmorphia minsan... lalo na pag merong PE activities like basketball.” (Respondent 8)	Certain PE activities trigger gender dysphoria.	Gender dysphoria in PE	Body Positivity and Body Image
“Body positivity po sa akin is yung pag-accept mo po and pagrespeto mo po sa body mo.” (Respondent 3)	The participant understands body positivity as acceptance and respect for one's own body.	Meaning of Body Positivity	Body Positivity and Body Image

Table 4.1.1 showed the systematic process of transcribing the original statements of the participants to the structural phenomenological themes. The verbatim statements show the clear pattern that shows pe serves as an environment that exposes the body of the students. Coding their actual responses help create the formulated meanings that show how particular environmental factors—such as revealing uniforms, use of changing rooms, and the critical gaze of their classmates—cause intense vulnerability, like gender dysphoria and self-consciousness of their own body.

The progress of the analysis from the original data to the emergent themes prove that the absence of peace of mind about their body inside pe classes strengthens the existing educational structure. Because of this, students become more acutely aware of the incongruence between their gender identity and their physical appearance.

Theme 2: Stereotyping

The Physical Education Environment Is Usually Influenced By Greater Social Standards Regarding Gender And Sexuality. The Participants Repeatedly Experience The Widespread Belief That Physical Strength And Excellence In Sports Are Naturally Related To Traditional Masculinity. Respondent 4 Stated That:

“Parang Sa Boys Ito, Sa Girls Ito... Mas Less Yung Kayang Gawin Ng Girls.”

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

Such Assumptions Regarding Gender Often Extend to The Participants' Sexual Orientation as Well, Giving Rise to Stereotypes Based On Their Identity. For Lesbians and Participants with Masculine Gender Expression, It Is Commonly Assumed That They Are Naturally Gifted at Sports. Respondent 9 Shared:

"Nasistereotype po ako... Baka Marunong Ka Magbasketball."

On The Other Hand, Some Participants Experience Discriminating Comments That Pertain to Their Physical Appearance and Gender Expression. Respondent 4 Described These Microaggressions by Stating:

"People Would Make Jokes About My Appearance... 'Baka Lumindol.'"

These Stereotypes Did Not Merely Result in Withdrawal or Avoidance. For Some Participants, They Also Served as Motivation to Challenge and Refute Misconceptions About Their Capabilities. Instead of Shying Away from Physical Activities, They Strove to Prove Their Competence Through Active Participation in Sports. Respondent 4 Explained This:

"Natatapakan Yung Ego Namin... So I Prove Them Wrong. I Joined Basketball... To Prove Myself Sa Boys."

Table 4.1.2. Illustration of the Analytic Transformation for Stereotyping

Actual Answer of the Respondent (Verbatim Excerpt)	Code (Formulated Meaning)	Theme (Subdomain)	Emergent Theme (Major Domain)
"Parang sa boys ito, sa girls ito... mas less yung kayang gawin ng girls." (Respondent 4)	The participant observed gender-based stereotypes regarding physical abilities.	Gender-based sport stereotypes	Stereotyping
"Nasistereotype po ako... baka marunong ka magbasketball." (Respondent 9)	Sexual orientation can lead to assumptions about athletic ability.	Sexual orientation stereotyping	Stereotyping
"People would make jokes about my appearance... 'baka lumindol.'" (Respondent 5)	Body-shaming comments negatively impact self-image.	Body shaming	Stereotyping
"Natatapakan yung ego namin... so I prove them wrong." (Respondent 4)	The participant responds to stereotypes by demonstrating capability in sports.	Challenging stereotypes	Stereotyping

Table 4.1.2 Exhibits The Systematic Analytical Process of Transcribing the Experiences of the Participants About Facing and Adapting to Society's Biases Inside the Pe Environment. The Excerpts Show That This Subject Usually Functions Under Strict and Traditional Perceptions About Gender and Physical Capabilities. From The Formulated Meanings, It Was Shown That the Participants Experience Stereotyping Based On Their Identity, Where Their Athletic Capabilities Are Judged Based On Their Sexual Orientation or Gender Expression.

The Data Also Presents an Important Subtheme of Challenging and Overcoming Stereotypes. Instead of Accepting the Maligned Views, Some Participants Actively Challenge Others' Expectations to Prove Their Capabilities. These Changes Show That Stereotyping Inside Pe Is a Dynamic and Complex Phenomenon—Lgbtqia+ Do Not Just Passively Experience This, But They Actively Surpass and Refute These Through Their Performance and Success in Physical Activities.

Theme 3: Participation

The Level of Lgbtqia+ Students' Participation in Physical Activities Is Highly Affected by Their Social Environment and Their Assessment If It Is Safe to Participate. If They Consider the Environment as Judging or Threatening Their Personality, Avoidance Is Their Initial Mechanism to Protect Themselves. This Is Clearly Stated by Respondent 5, Who Directly Related Their Classmates' Unpleasant Behavior to Their Absence in Class:

"I Skipped Pe Classes Because of It."

Avoidance is not the only basis of their participation. If lgbtqia+ students experience a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment which is shaped by compassionate teachers and accepting classmates, their pe experience changes. Participation is not just an

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

academic obligation but a chance for students to be happy, interact, and give meaning to their experiences. Respondent 9 described this by stating:

“Super Saya Po Yung Experience Ko Sa Pe... Nakaka-Bond Po Kami.”

The Participants Often Mention Particular Sports That Serve as A Safe Space for Them—Activities That Are Focused Not Only On Their Identity, But On Cooperation and Active Participation. For Respondent 10, Volleyball Became This Safe Space:

“Volleyball... Gives Me Comfort and Safe Space. Volleyball Is Inclusive... They Want Everyone to Participate.”

Moreover, The Participants’ Narratives Show That Their Positive Experiences in Pe Have the Ability to Restore Their Interest and Love for Sports. For Some, This Serves as an Opportunity to Heal Their Devastating Experiences and Have a More Positive Self-Perception. In This Way, An Inclusive and Supportive Pe Environment Does Not Only Increase Their Participation, But Also Become an Important Factor in Their Personal Development and Self-Confidence Strengthening.

Table 4.1.3. Illustration of the Analytic Transformation for Participation

Actual Answer of the Respondent (Verbatim Excerpt)	Code (Formulated Meaning)	Theme (Subdomain)	Emergent Theme (Major Domain)
“I skipped PE classes because of it.” (Respondent 5)	Negative comments reduce participation and engagement.	Avoidance of participation	Participation
“Super saya po yung experience ko sa PE... nakaka-bond po kami.” (Respondent 9)	PE classes are perceived as enjoyable and fulfilling when social bonding occurs.	Social motivation	Participation
“Yung vibe din po nun sobrang comfy lang... pinapakita niyo po na welcoming po kayo.” (Respondent 2)	A welcoming teaching environment promotes comfort and engagement in PE.	Supportive class atmosphere	Participation
“Volleyball... gives me comfort and safe space.” (Respondent 10)	Certain sports provide emotional safety and comfort.	Safe sport environment	Participation

In terms of contact level, the majority of student table 4.1.3 presents the analytical process of transcribing the experiences of the participants regarding their readiness to participate in physical activities. The excerpts show that participation exists within a complex spectrum of motivations, rather than being merely a simple choice of whether or not to join. The formulated meanings explain that the particular conditions of the environment directly shape the students’ behavior. Having discriminatory comments and an unsafe environment push student to avoid their classes. On the other hand, having supportive teachers and an environment based on cooperation causes students’ participation to become a meaningful opportunity for them to collaborate, form companionship, and experience true happiness.

the research’s transcription from the original data to emergent themes proves the levels of participation of the lgbtqia+ students primarily shaped by the social structure of the classroom, and their psychological assessment if they feel safe, accepted, and a part of the pe environment.

Consolidation of Significant Experiences and Thematic Clusters

To Ensure Transparency and Methodological Rigor Throughout the Analytic Process, Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings of Each of the Ten (10) Participants Are Carefully Noted. To Maintain the Flow of Narration and to Keep the Presentation of This Chapter Short, The Individual Matrix of Each Participant Are Compiled and Carefully Arranged in Appendix E.

For The Purpose of Structural Synthesis, Table 4.2 Compiles The Specific Experiences of Each Participant into A Comprehensive Matrix Arranged Based On the Three Key Themes Determined in The Study. This Combined Presentation Gives a Clear Overall View of the Similar and Related Experiences of the Participants Which Served as The Reference to Create the Essential Structure Of The Phenomenon Studied.

Table 4.2. Consolidated Matrix of Formulated Meanings and Thematic Clusters

Major Experiential Domain	Subdomain (Formulated Meaning)	Representative Verbatim Excerpts
Body Positivity and Body Image	Understanding Body Positivity: Participants define body positivity as an active practice of self-acceptance and respect for physical limitations.	• "Being comfortable with what you look like... loving yourself for what you are." (Respondent 1) • "Body positivity po sa akin is yung pag-accept mo po and pagrespeto mo po sa body mo." (Respondent 3)
	Clothing & Uniform Vulnerability: Institutional requirements like prescribed uniforms and shared changing spaces create acute bodily self-consciousness and gender dysphoria.	• "I was really uncomfortable... magsusuot ng one piece then mag share ng bathroom." (Respondent 7) • "Nagkakaroon ako ng gender dysmorphia minsan... lalo na pag merong PE activities." (Respondent 8)
	Body Scrutiny & Insecurity: The evaluative gaze of peers and experiences of body-shaming negatively impact self-image.	• "I got a stare... head to toe from a classmate. It made me really uncomfortable." (Respondent 7) • "As a queer person... I became more aware of my body because of gendered expectations." (Respondent 5)
Stereotyping	Gender-Based Sport Stereotypes: Students frequently encounter rigid expectations that link physical strength and specific sports exclusively to traditional masculinity or femininity.	• "Parang sa boys ito, sa girls ito... mas less yung kayang gawin ng girls." (Respondent 4) • "Mas marami yung boys... expected po na manalo yung boys kasi mas malakas." (Respondent 3)
	Sexual Orientation Stereotyping: Peers and instructors make assumptions about students' athletic abilities based solely on their LGBTQIA+ identity.	• "Nasistereotype po ako... baka marunong ka magbasketball." (Respondent 9) • "May mga comments na 'hindi ito magagawa ng gay'." (Respondent 4)
	Challenging Stereotypes: Students actively respond to marginalization by demonstrating their capabilities and proving stereotypes wrong.	• "Natatapakan yung ego namin... so i prove them wrong. I joined basketball... to prove myself sa boys." (Respondent 4)
Participation	Environmental Avoidance: Anticipated judgment or negative peer behavior directly reduces motivation and leads to the avoidance of PE classes.	• "I skipped PE classes because of it. Sometimes I feel like I enter PE as an outsider." (Respondent 5) • "I was very scared to engage kasi parang they're going to look at me differently." (Respondent 6)
	Social Environment & Motivation: Empathy from instructors and shared peer identity serves as a crucial buffer against marginalization, promoting genuine enjoyment.	• "Super saya po yung experience ko sa PE... nakaka-bond po kami." (Respondent 9) • "Yung vibe din po nun sobrang comfy lang... pinapakita niyo po na welcoming po kayo." (Respondent 2)
	Inclusive Sport Sanctuaries: Certain cooperative or team-based sports are perceived as safer and more inclusive for LGBTQIA+ individuals.	• "Volleyball... gives me comfort and safe space. Volleyball is inclusive... they want everyone to participate." (Respondent 10)

Table 4.2 provides a synthesized and structural description of how lgbtqia+ students experience and navigate through their pe classes. The matrix shows this phenomenon is created by interconnected experiences. It appears that the physical elements of pe, such as the required use of the set uniform, serves as a direct factor that ignites an internal psychological reaction deep in the body positivity and body image theme.

the data also revealed that stereotyping is one of the main obstacles of an inclusive pe environment. However, the matrix also emphasizes the important role of the social environment under the theme, participation. When a teacher shows empathy through an appropriate and inclusive pedagogical strategy, and classmates who showed acceptance and validation, pe changes from a place of anxiety to a safe space.

Overall, The Combined Data Show That the Lgbtqia+ Students Continuously Face a Complex and Emotional Conflict. Along with Facing These with Fear and Apprehension, They Also Use the Pe Space as an Opportunity To Shape Their Strength, Rebuild Their Self-Confidence, And Have A Positive Experience In Physical Activity.

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

Synthesis of Meaning and Essences

The last part of giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method is creating a general psychological structure or the invariant essence of the phenomenon. This synthesis moves beyond the unique details of each participant to illustrate the fundamental characteristics of their lived experience. If all specific contexts—such as the particular sport played or the facility used—are stripped away, the remaining essence represents the core reality of their experience.

for lgbtqia+ students, the most basic essence of their experience in pe is one continuous and revealing negotiation between their vulnerabilities as human beings, and their quest for social security within an institution ruled by strict standards. In this context, physical education is not only a subject focused on improving one's physical skills, but also serves as an important space where the internal identity of the person is forcefully exposed and judged by others.

unlike the usual classrooms where one can keep their gender identity private, pe requires explicit use of the body. For students with different gender identities, this situation creates intense tension between their inner selves and the ways their bodies are perceived, categorized, and judged based on the heteronormative standards of the institution and their fellow students.

this initial experience is shaped by a clear conflict between threat and safety. The phenomenon exposed how the pe environment has two opposite abilities: it can be a space that causes discrimination and avoidance, or it can be a space that gives strength and hope. The experiences of the students rely on the existing climate inside the class.

when gender-based division and strict uniform policy are enforced, and athletic abilities stereotyping remains unchallenged, the experiences of the students are focused on being self-cautious. In this situation, participation is not just a simple part of learning but a strategy to hide their own identity, avoid judgmental situations, and manage gender dysphoria, anxiety, and fear.

however, when changes in structure and interaction in class happen, the essence of this experience changes as well. In the presence of compassionate teachers, and classmates who express acceptance and support, the need to be alert at all times lessen. The pe environment is not only a place that causes the fear of judgment; it becomes a space that gives opportunity to students to redeem their autonomy of their own body, rebuild their trust on their athletic capabilities, and participate in physical activities as part of the community.

overall, the combined essence of this phenomenon is the active desire for normalcy, dignity, and acceptance. The lgbtqia+ students' lived experiences are not just stories about discrimination or being a victim; instead, these experiences show their perseverance and ability to proceed despite living in a system bound to systematic and strict gender-based division. While they are balancing their natural need to participate and their need to protect their psychological well-being, they continuously change the meaning of pe from a space of vulnerability to a place where they can experience real, free, and inclusive participation.

This chapter presents a synthesis of the study's findings, the conclusions drawn from the analysis, and the corresponding recommendations. It integrates insights from the preceding chapters to articulate the overall contribution of the research to theory, practice, and policy. The chapter also presents the practical outputs derived from the findings and discusses their implications for professional practice, policy development, and future research.

This phenomenological study analyzed the lived experiences of ten (10) lgbtqia+ college students of their participation in pe classes in a private institution of higher education in metro manila. The study examined how these students face the challenges related to body positivity, gender-based stereotypes, and class participation in activities bound to strict heteronormative environment. Using the descriptive phenomenological method by giorgi, the essence of the students' experiences was determined through interview and analysis. The study revealed three primary themes: (1) body positivity and body image, (2) stereotyping, and (3) participation.

Bodily Visibility and Body Image

The findings show that pe is an environment where students are highly exposed and evaluated. The subject's requirements like, gender-based uniforms, activities done in front of the class, and gender-based groupings, usually cause insecurity of their own body. It was found that body positivity is not only based on their own perception, but is also affected by their environment and interaction with others. When strict traditional gender roles are enforced, students are more susceptible to vulnerability. On the other hand, when policies become open and appropriate, they experience acceptance and self-confidence.

Navigating Stereotyping and Marginalization

The study showed that marginalization in pe is not always blatant or explicit discrimination; instead, it is usually shown in the form of microaggression and assumptions that the students' athletic capabilities are based on their gender expression. The most significant pattern discovered is the "invisible labor," where a student is always cautious of their own language, actions, and behaviors to avoid criticisms and discrimination. This shows that even if the institution claims to be inclusive, usually marginalized students are still expected to adjust to keep the peace.

Participation and Psychological Safety

This Research Showed That Students' Participation Is Not Only Based On Their Adherence To Policies, But Is Mostly Affected By Their Psychological Sense Of Safety. When The Environment Is Considered Judging And Is Strictly Based On Traditional Concept Of Gender, Their Needs For Autonomy, Abilities, And Interaction Are Not Addressed. Consequently, Behaviors Typically Viewed As

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

A Lack Of Motivation Or Class Absenteeism Emerged As Rational And Adaptive Forms Of Self-Protection. It Became Clear That Genuine and Meaningful Participation Occurs Only When the Environment Provides Emotional Security and Minimizes the Fear of Judgment and Discrimination.

The Mitigating Role of Supportive Environments

The Findings Strengthened That the Positive Experiences of the Students in Pe Are Not Naturally Formed, But A Result of Intentional Pedagogical Decisions and Supportive Interaction with Friends. Teachers Who Use Gender-Sensitive Strategies and Can Adapt to The Different Needs of the Students Serve as Important Foundations of Psychological Safety. By Relaxing Uniform Policies and Participation Requirements, The Fear of Judgment Is Reduced, And The Classroom Becomes a Safe and Inclusive Space Where Students Feel Accepted and A Sense of Belonging.

Conclusions On the Essence of the Phenomenon

Based on the phenomenological analysis conducted, the decision to include lgbtqia+ college students' participation in pe is a continuous process of negotiating their identity, autonomy, and belongingness. More than a subject focus on physical health, pe serves as a social space where students are continuously challenged by the existing heteronormative standards.

First, the study showed that the traditional pe structure remains heteronormative. The usual tasks like, gender-based division of activities and strict uniform policies, highly favor traditional gender standards. Because of this, the loss of self-confidence is not just a simple personal conflict, but a result of a system which disregards the diverse gender expressions.

Second, marginalization in pe was found to be seen through gentle stereotype and microaggressions. As a response, lgbtqia+ students remain self-cautious of their language, movements, and self-expression to avoid discrimination. This shows that tolerance is not enough because students still carry the responsibility to adapt.

Third, according to self-determination theory (sdt), students' participation is dependent on their sense of safety. When their primary needs of autonomy, competence, and belongingness is not met because of the strict policies and judging environment, their motivation weakens. Because of this, nonparticipation and absence in class should not be treated as laziness or disinterest, but a reasonable and adaptive way to protect themselves.

Last, the study showed that a safe and inclusive environment in pe is intentional and is a result of theory-based strategies. Teachers play an important role in shaping an inclusive environment. By being gender-sensitive and providing options for uniforms and participation, discrimination is lessened, and lgbtqia+ students' sense of belongingness strengthens. The responsibility of inclusion should not be placed upon the marginalized students but on the teachers and institutions' duty to create a safer, just, and inclusive environment.

Overall, this study contributes to the development of the discourse on inclusive education by showing that the physical capabilities cannot be separated from emotional excellence. To implement a reasonable and inclusive pe, it is important to go beyond symbolic acceptance institutions front. They should actively create an environment where people's dignity and psychological safety serve as the foundation of learning and participation in physical activities.

Interpretation of Essential Themes

The study presents how the experiences of the lgbtqia+ students in their pe subject are complex and are affected by their body, identity, and social environment. From the descriptive phenomenological analysis, the three primary themes emerged: (1) body positivity and body image, (2) stereotyping, and (3) participation. These are not considered individual themes, but are interrelatedly shape the everyday experiences of the participants.

The Embodied Lifeworld: Navigating Visibility and Body Image

Inside the pe class, the body is not only an instrument to move but is a center of attraction and judgment of others. The participants showed that policies like gender-based uniforms, and conducting the activities in front of the class cause intense self-consciousness of their own bodies.

It can also be seen that body positivity is not only based on self-trust, but is dependent on how they are accepted in their environment. When traditional gender norms are strictly enforced, students experience apprehension and vulnerability. On the other hand, when students have the freedom to choose appropriate attire and their identities are respected, their experience and self-acceptance become positive.

The Invisible Labor: Managing Stereotyping and Marginalization

Based on the participants' narratives, the discrimination in pe is usually open. This usually emerges in the form of stereotypes and expectations on their physical capabilities. Because of this, lgbtqia+ students are forced to be cautious of their movements, language, and expressions to avoid judgment and misunderstanding.

The continuous self-adaptation causes emotional exhaustion. This shows that even though an institution is considered inclusive, it is still possible for lgbtqia+ students to experience the silent forms of marginalization when they are the ones needed to adjust in order to be accepted in their environment.

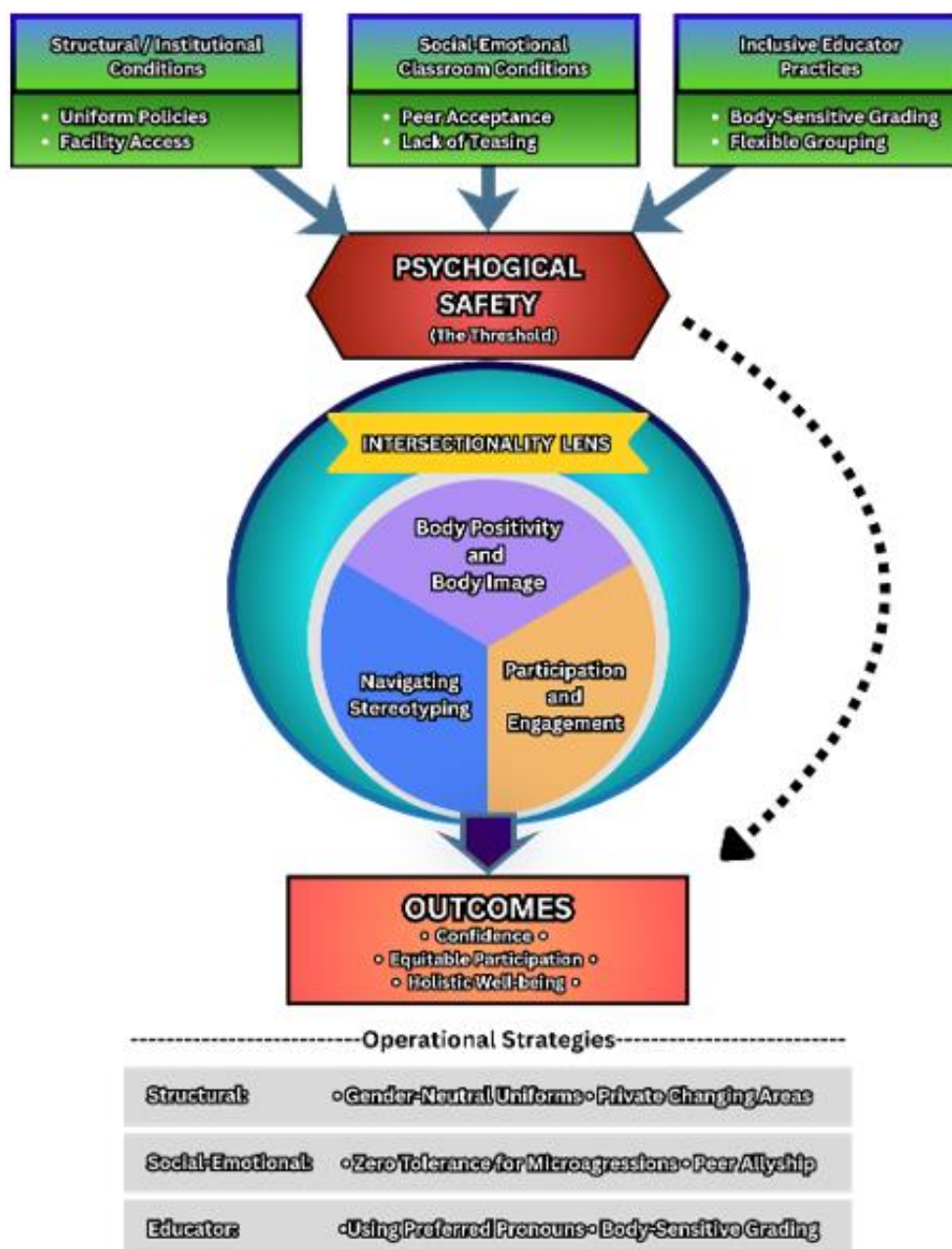
Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

The Meaning of Action: Participation as A Response to Environment

The findings show that the participation of the lgbtqia+ students in pe is not only based on their preference or following tasks; it is mostly dependent on whether they feel safe and accepted inside the class. When the environment is governed by judgment, actions like: absenteeism, maintaining silence, and staying at the back-most part of the gym, should not be treated as disinterest. Instead, these are ways to protect themselves from possible discrimination or negative experience.

The study also clarified that student participation becomes meaningful when fear of criticisms and judgment evaporates. Because of this, an inclusive environment is not easily built; it requires intentional effort from the institution and the teachers. The use of sensitive and innovative strategies in teaching help make students feel safe and comfortable. In this way, the pe class is not only a place of learning physical skills, but a place which gives students the feelings of acceptance and belongingness.

Practical Output: The Inclusive Physical Education (IPE) Model



Appraisal and rationale of the ipe model

The inclusive physical education (ipe) model (figure 6.1) serves as the practical output of the phenomenon discovered in the study. More than the descriptions of the relationships of the theories, this functions as an intervention outline that relates to the revealed conceptual and actual situation in teaching physical education.

The fundamental basis of the ipe model is the redistribution of responsibility for fostering inclusion. For a long time, students from marginalized sectors have relied on their own resilience and constant self-preservation to cope with challenging

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

classroom situations. The ipe model shifts this perspective by emphasizing that equitable participation is the institution's responsibility. Consequently, teachers and the administration bear the primary duty of creating a safe and supportive environment for all students.

As a practical guide, the ipe can be used to analyze and improve the existing policies in pe. It can serve as a guide to determine the activities based on the heteronormative perspectives such as the policies on uniforms and the gender-based division of the class, which can inadvertently cause exclusion. The model also shows that psychological safety is not automatically built, but an outcome of the pedagogical policies and strategies that gives way to meaningful participation.

Above all, the ipe model serves as a guide for policy development and instructional reform. It demonstrates that when barriers to inclusion are systematically removed, lgbtqia+ students gain the opportunity to move beyond merely facing discrimination and instead participate with confidence and engage in meaningful learning. To facilitate the implementation of this model, the ipe operational matrix is provided in appendix g, offering concrete guidelines for daily instruction.

Recommendations for Practice, Policy, And Future Research

Recommendations for Professional Practice

It is recommended for pe teachers to avoid teaching strategies that separates students based on their gender. Instead, teachers should use ways to separate students based on their abilities, interest, or learning goals. It is also recommended to use body sensitive assessments which give more importance to an individual who puts in an effort and improves than athletic standards or physical appearance. This lessens the psychological danger lgbtqia+ students experience.

Recommendations for Institutional Policy

At the institutional level, it is recommended to comprehensively revise the policies on uniforms in pe. Institutions should provide options for sports clothing that is not based on their gender like rash guard or track pants, to address the different levels of comfort and gender expressions of the students. It is also important to include the ipe model in teachers' training programs to ensure that all teachers have the ability to address the microaggression, and create a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study has provided valuable insight into the experiences of lgbtqia+ college students in the philippine context, there are still areas that require further investigation:

Expansion of Demographic and Institutional Scope

It is recommended to conduct the study in different public and private higher education institutions to analyze how different organizational culture and climate affect students' experience in pe. The comparative phenomenological design may also be used to determine the influence of religious and conservative environments in implementing inclusive teaching strategies. It is also important to include more participants from different economic backgrounds to see how socioeconomic backgrounds and ability to afford appropriate sports equipment affect their experience.

Focus On Specific Gender Subgroups

Studies focusing specifically on transgender and non-binary students are also recommended. Current research indicates that they experience heightened anxiety regarding body exposure and strict uniform policies. Future studies could examine the strategies they employ to manage gender dysphoria during activities involving significant body exposure, such as swimming and team sports. The findings could help develop more appropriate policies, facilities, and pedagogical strategies that address their unique needs in physical education.

Multi-Perspectival and Longitudinal Designs

To have a wider understanding of the educational environment, it is recommended for future researchers to use designs that gather perceptions from different participants including pe teachers, department heads, and cisgender and heterosexual students to fully understand the institutional challenges and pedagogical problems that may obstruct implementing the ipe model. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to analyze if the positive experiences in pe is related to the continuous participation in physical activities, healthy mental health, and the long-term well-being of lgbtqia+ individuals as they age.

Data and Methodological Triangulation

The use of a mixed-methods design is also recommended to strengthen data and methodological triangulation. Themes identified during the qualitative phase of the study could serve as the basis for developing a psychological safety scale in physical education. This instrument could be administered to a larger population of college students to measure levels of psychological safety across various institutions. Integrating in-depth qualitative data with extensive quantitative evidence would provide a more robust foundation for advocates and policymakers in driving systemic reforms, including the establishment of national standards for an inclusive physical education curriculum.

Final Reflections of the Study

The findings show that responding to the needs of the students—especially on the topics of body autonomy, psychological safety, and teaching flexibility—is important to improve their participation, free expression of identity, and sense of belonging. Although needing additional studies, the researcher believes that this study can contribute to the progress of inclusive pe and gender-sensitive pedagogy.

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

The study emphasizes on the transition from traditional to a more humane and inclusive perspective in pe. As a teacher with 15 years of experience, the researcher realized that the gymnasium is not only a place to improve the physical capabilities, but also a meaningful space where students develop and express their identities, all while facing the discussions of acceptance and psychological safety.

This research proves that simple tolerance is not enough as a basis of inclusion. Instead, a more inclusive education needs intentional and theory-based teaching strategies. Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological design showed that a meaningful participation in physical activities cannot be separated from psychological safety of the students. If a discriminating environment persists, education cannot fully achieve its goal to establish the holistic development of a person. Consequently, developing physical capabilities loses its true significance if the dignity of each student is not also upheld.

The most important contribution of this study is the development of the inclusive physical education (ipe) model, which serves as a bridge between the phenomenological findings, and the actual and practical teaching. The model also emphasizes the teachers' role as the primary creator of a safe and inclusive environment, not just teaching the physical skills. Above all, the study encourages higher education institutions to understand inclusion as a primary basis of a reasonable and quality education. In this way, pe can be a safe space where each student can freely move, learn, and express themselves with dignity and worry-free.

REFERENCES

- 1) **Agarao, K. A., Suarez, C., Sosa, K. E., Kubo, M., Applebaum, M. (2023).** Phenomenological Psychological Research: The Descriptive Method of Amedeo Giorgi. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 54(1), 1–28.
- 2) **Bancroft, K., & Greenspan, S. (2022).** Facilitators and Barriers of Inclusion: A Critical Incident Technique Analysis of One Non-Binary Physical Education Teacher's Workplace Experiences. *Sport, Education and Society*, 28(8), 1034–1046. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2022.2034143>
- 3) **Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., ... & Walker, K. (2020).** Purposive Sampling: Complex or Simple? Research Case Examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661.
- 4) **Churchill, S. D. (2022).** Essentials of Descriptive-Interpretive Qualitative Research: A Generic Approach. American Psychological Association.
- 5) **Cypress, B. S. (2021a).** Qualitative Research Methods: A Phenomenological Focus. *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing*, 40(4), 241–250. <https://doi.org/10.1097/Dcc.0000000000000480>
- 6) **Cypress, B. S. (2021b).** Rigor or Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Strategies, Reconceptualization, And Recommendations. *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing*, 40(4), 226–235.
- 7) **Day, K., & Brömdal, A. (2024).** Transgender and Gender Diverse Students' Experiences in Physical Education. *Journal of Physical Education and Sport*.
- 8) **Devis-Devis, J., Fuentes-Miguel, J., Sparkes, A. C., & Pérez-Samaniego, V. (2021).** Trans Youth and Physical Education: A Qualitative Synthesis of the Literature. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 26(4), 365–378.
- 9) **Englander, M., & Morley, J. (2021).** Phenomenological Psychology and Qualitative Research. *Phenomenology and The Cognitive Sciences*, 20(1), 17–37. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S11097-020-09681-4>
- 10) **Giorgi, A. (2024).** Phenomenological Psychology and Qualitative Research. Pmc - National Institutes of Health.
- 11) **Guerrero, M. A., & Guerrero Puerta, L. (2023).** Advancing Gender Equality in Schools Through Inclusive Physical Education and Teaching Training: A Systematic Review. *Societies*, 13(3), 64. <https://doi.org/10.3390/Soc13030064>
- 12) **Gumarang, B. K., Gumarang, B. K., & Laggui, N. R. (2021).** Colaizzi's Methods In Descriptive Phenomenology: Basis Of A Filipino Novice Researcher. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*, 2(10), 933–939. <https://doi.org/10.11594/Ijmaber.02.10.08>
- 13) **Gumarang, B. K., Gumarang, B. K., & Litao, R. (2021).** Lived Experiences of Physical Education Teachers in Modular Distance Learning. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Publications*, 4(3), 1–6.
- 14) **Hennink, M., & Kaiser, B. N. (2022).** Sample Sizes for Saturation in Qualitative Research: A Systematic Review of Empirical Tests. *Social Science & Medicine*. (They Definitively Proved That 9-12 Interviews Are Sufficient to Reach Robust Saturation and Information Power).
- 15) **Hortigüela-Alcalá, D., Et Al. (2022).** The Experience of Lgb Students in Physical Education: Exploring The Spanish Context. *Apunts Educación Física Y Deportes*, 148, 33–41.
- 16) **Husserl, E. (1970).** The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy (D. Carr, Trans.). Northwestern University Press.

Understanding The Lived Experiences of Lgbtqia+ College Students in Physical Education: An Exploration of Body Positivity, Stereotyping, And Participation

- 17) **Karamani, M., Makopoulou, K., Mansfield, S., & Herold, F. (2024).** The Complex Journey Towards the Enactment of Inclusion in Physical Education: A Scoping Review of the Literature On Teachers' Perceptions and Practices. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2024.2374263>
- 18) **Käufner, S., & Chemero, A. (2021).** *Phenomenology: An Introduction* (2nd Ed.). Polity Press.
- 19) **Kettley-Linsell, J., Et Al. (2024).** Physical Education Through the Lens of a Transgender Individual. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*.
- 20) **Kjosavik, F., Beyer, C., & Fricke, C. (Eds.). (2022).** *Husserl's Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity: Historical Interpretations and Contemporary Applications*. Routledge.
- 21) **Lambert, K., Et Al. (2024).** This Is a Recent, High-Level Review of How Embodiment Is Conceptualized Within Modern Physical Education Literature, Perfectly Complementing Merleau-Ponty's Foundational Philosophy.
- 22) **Landi, D., Flory, S. B., Safron, C., & Marttinen, R. (2020).** Lgbtq Research in Physical Education: A Rising Tide? *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 25(3), 259–273.
- 23) **Landi, D., Et Al. (2023).** Lgbtq+ Pre-Service Teachers' Physical Education Experiences. *Journal of Queer and Trans Studies In Education*, 2(2), 3.
- 24) **Macaso, C. M. (2023).** Project Gilas (Gender-Inclusive Learning Activity Sheets) For Lgbtq Students. *Ijariie*, 9(4).
- 25) **Mahaguay, J. M., & Ojas, R. (2025).** Fostering Inclusivity: Understanding Lgbtq+ Experiences for Policy Recommendation. *Lukad – An Online Journal of Pedagogy*.
- 26) **Mangaya, J., Et Al. (2024).** Barriers to and Levels of Physical Activity Among Lgbtq+. *International Journal of Arts, Sciences and Education*, 4(1).
- 27) **Möhwald, A. (2025).** 'Physical Education Demands a Lot of Your Gender Identity Because You Show Yourself In Motion'—The Construction of (Gendered) Body In Physical Education From The Perspective of Trans* Students. *International Journal of Physical Education*, 61(1).
- 28) **Neary, J., & McBride, C. (2024).** Non-Binary and Transgender Youth Experiences in Physical Education. *Sport, Education and Society*.
- 29) **Patton, M. Q. (2022).** *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (5th Ed.). Sage Publications. (The Gold Standard Citation for Justifying Depth Over Breadth).
- 30) **Peterson, M., Frederick, J., & Bopp, M. (2025).** Experiences of Recreation Centers' Accessibility and Inclusion Among Individuals Identifying as Lgbtqia+: A Qualitative Study. *Leisure Sciences*. Advance Online Publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2026.2628663>
- 31) **Preece, S., & Bullingham, R. (2022).** Gender Stereotypes in Physical Education. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*.
- 32) **Sáenz-Macana, M., Et Al. (2023).** Transgender Students' Experiences in Physical Education. *European Physical Education Review*.
- 33) **Stahl, N. A., & King, J. R. (2020).** Expanding Approaches for Research: Understanding and Using Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 44(1), 26–28.
- 34) **Storr, R., Et Al. (2022).** Lgbtq+ Topics in Sport, Human Movement and Education. *Sport, Education and Society*.
- 35) **Thorburn, M., & Stolz, S. A. (2025).** Intersubjectivity, Embodiment and Enquiry: A Merleau-Ponty and Husserlian Informed Perspective for Contemporary Educational Contexts. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2025.2486675>
- 36) **Toner, J., & Montero, B. G. (2021).** Experiencing The Body In Sports: A Phenomenological Exploration. *Journal of The Philosophy of Sport*, 48(1), 77–92.
- 37) **Vagle, M. D. (2024).** *Crafting Phenomenological Research*. Routledge.
- 38) **Van Manen, M. (2023).** *Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing* (2nd Ed.). Routledge.
- 39) **Yau, C. W. L., Lopez, V., Klainin-Yobas, P., & Cheng, H. L. (2022).** Examining Characteristics of Descriptive Phenomenological Nursing Studies: A Scoping Review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 78(10), 3120–3135. <https://doi.org/10.1111/Jan.15340>
- 40) **Yau, S. Y., Wong, K. F., & Chung, J. Y. (2022).** Descriptive Phenomenology: A Step-By-Step Approach. *Nurse Researcher*, 30(2), 24–32.
- 41) **Zahavi, D. (2021a).** Applied Phenomenology: Why It Is Safe to Ignore the Epoché. *Continental Philosophy Review*, 54(2), 259–273. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S11007-019-09463-Y>
- 42) **Zahavi, D. (2021b).** *Husserl's Phenomenology*. Stanford University Press.