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Microaggressions on Students of Color (LGBTQ+): A Phenomenology

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ABSTRACT : This study assessed the severity of microaggression on students of color or LGBTQ+ students and determined its implication in their daily lives. This study also sheds light on four major topics: to determine the common types of microaggression students of color communicate with their peers, families, classmates, and teachers; to assess the effects of microaggressions in the learning experience of students of color; to identify the coping mechanism the students of colors employ to continue and adopt in the school;and to identify solutions to help students of colors experiencing microaggressions. The study suggested that microaggression has affected students of color in multiple circumstances. Moreover, it significantly affected their outlook on themselves and the people around them. Nevertheless, various types of coping mechanisms and possible solutions were also discovered in the discussions. Finally, to aid learners who are experiencing microaggression, learning institutions are encouraged to be more informed and adaptable to these issues concerning gender-based microaggressions and other forms of discrimination to create a safe space for all. Furthermore, intervention programs and other activities are highly recommended to control gender-based microaggressions and other forms of discrimination in educational institutions.

KEYWORDS :*Coping Mechanism,Intervention, LGBTQ+, Microaggression, Students of Colors,*

I.   INTRODUCTION

In the everyday encounters of the LGBTQ+ youth, subtle discrimination is experienced throughout their lives from people of various marginalized groups and entities. Some subtle discriminations are unconscious (i.e., the perpetrator does not even know they did something). At the same time, some may be unintentional (i.e., the perpetrator may be aware of their actions but may not realize their negative impact on people). Although LGBQ+ students experience blatant forms of heterosexism on college campuses, subtle manifestations such as sexual orientation microaggressions are more common. Similar to overt heterosexism, sexual orientation microaggressions may threaten LGBQ students' academic development and psychological well-being (Sue, 2010).

"Microaggression" originated from Critical Race Theory developed by Bell in 1970s, was an African-American civil rights lawyer who gained popularity through the work of Sue et al. (2010). Initially, it was used to describe subtle acts of racism among African Americans encompassing everyday verbal, behavioral, and environmental humiliation due to racial differences. Accordingly, there are three (3) types of microaggressions: "microcapsule" or the discriminatory verbal or non-verbal behavior, "microassult" or the rejection due to their racial origin, and "microinvalidation" or the invalidating of experiences and emotions (Swan et al., 2023).

Although the collected works attribute the origin of "microaggression" to Critical Race Theory, the idea has been adopted within this paradigm to elaborate and understand the realities of gender variations and sexual minorities. However, most of its original characterizations were applied to sexual orientation microaggressions. For example, the use of the term "that's so gay" can be classified as microassault. At the same time, the lack of focus on gender minority issues in mainstream media can be considered as microinsult. Additionally, prejudice and stereotyping regarding the diversity in capabilities of the different gender variants can be seen as microinvalidation (Nadal et al., 2010).

In a study by Johnson et al. (2018) they defined bullying behavior is described as violent, aggressive, and intimidating. It occurs when there is an imbalance of power between two people or groups. These are deliberate actions to harm another person or group socially, physically, and psychologically through physical, verbal, and even social assaults. In contrast, microaggressions are short-lived and everyday verbal, behavioral, or environmental humiliations, whether intentional or unintentional, that lead to adverse, offensive, or harmful slights and insults.

Nitkin (2020), a Senior Communications Specialist at Johns Hopkins Medicine, also differentiated between bullying and microaggressions. She defined bullying as undesirable antagonism that repeatedly imposes inequity and control over situations in favor of the bullies against the targets. This is achieved through aggressive physical, social, and verbal assaults. On the other hand, microaggressions are usual conversations, actions, or trends that create humiliating, unpleasant, offensive, and detrimental experiences or feelings for a person or a minority group, either intentionally or unintentionally.

In the latest study by Nadal (2014), he stated that it has been challenging for the youth to fully understand and accept themselves due to the microaggressions they encounter. That is why it is critical to study macroaggressions concerning young lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender, and queers, as this type of discrimination exists and significantly affects the lives of LGBTQ+ people, predominantly on their mental health and identity development. He expanded the manners of microaggressions into six (6) types, including the use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology; endorsement of heteronormative culture and behaviors; assumption of universal LGBTQ experience; discomfort or disapproval of LGBTQ experience; assumption of sexual pathology or abnormality; and denial of bodily privacy.

Finally, he explained that several studies stated that as microaggressions become more frequent, victims experience and exhibit more severe symptoms of psychological distress, depression, or even physical health issues. In youth, frequent experiences of microaggressions resulted in pessimism, depression, anxiety, trauma, substance abuse, homelessness, and suicide.

In the study of Muyargas et al. (2016), as school campuses promote a "safe space" for students of color, positive interactions are commonly experienced. Nevertheless, it is also a reality on these campuses to encounter negative interactions among students of color. Some of these encounters require responses from school authorities. Even though various forms of microaggressions and subtle stigma can be observed, campuses still have more positive reactions toward students of color. It is noticeable that nonverbal and verbal responses were more specific during interactions with schoolmates, friends, and even strangers who were lesbian or gay. Finally, the most negative interactions and feedback were received during private interactions with family members. These negative interactions were exhibited through arguments, frustrations, and condemnation.

Even with these facts, limited research exists in this area, in part due to the lack of a psychometrically sound instrument measuring the prevalence of LGBTQ+ microaggressions on college campuses. This study will inform college institutions of microaggression within their jurisdiction. Thus, schools can craft interventions, policies, and other services to help students affected by microaggression. Also, by conducting this study, potential perpetrators will be oriented to their conscious or unconscious behaviors that significantly affect the well-being of their peers.

This study examines the participants' interactions with their families, peers, classmates, and instructors to learn the sources of microaggressions and categorize which classification occurs most frequently. Moreover, the study sought to understand the different effects of these occurrences on the participants' learning experiences and how they cope with their situations. Through this, the researcher and the participants can draw ideas for intervention programs and policies for the school administration to improve the learning environment for students of color or LGBTQ+ students.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the classification of microaggressions proposed by Nadal (2014), which identifies six (6) major categories, namely; use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology: Endorsement of heteronormative culture and behaviors; assumption of universal LGBTQ experience; discomfort or disapproval of LGBTQ experience; assumption of sexual pathology or abnormality; and denial of bodily privacy. The research matches the categories with interactions involving family, peers, classmates, and instructors to determine which type of microaggressions is more prevalent during these interactions. By examining these experiences, the research shall look into the effects of microaggression on the participants' learning experiences and coping mechanisms. The ultimate goal is to generate suggestions and courses of action that are adequate to alleviate the situation of students of color or LGBTQ+ students.
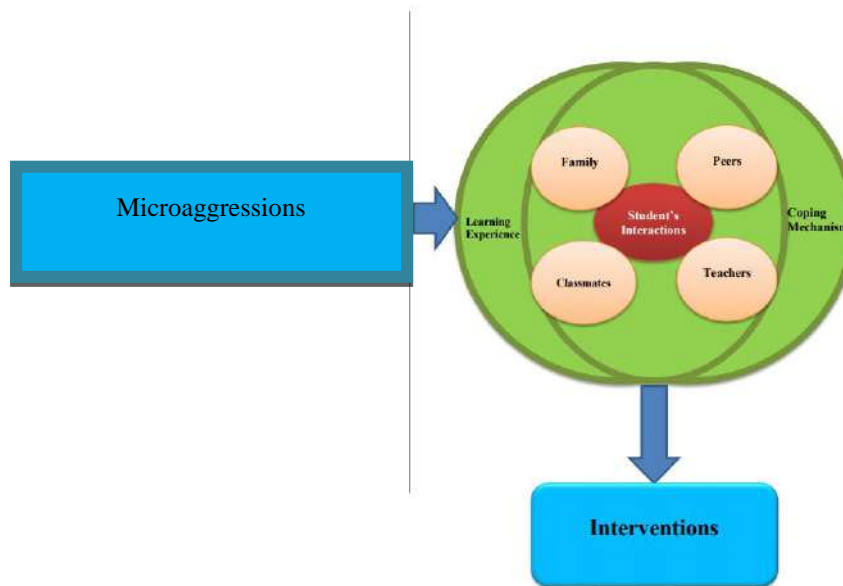
Fig 1. The conceptual framework of the study

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to examine and describe the microaggression experiences of the Students of Color (LGBTQ) at Agusan del Sure State College of Agriculture and Technology. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most common types of microaggression experiences as the participants interact with:
    1.1. peers;
    1.2. family;
    1.3. classmates; and
    1.4. instructors?
2. How do the microaggression experiences affect the participant's learning experience?
3. What are the coping mechanisms that the students of color have used to deal with microaggression?
4. What are the suggestions from the participants that can help the college administration make interventions?

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research method. Crossman (2020) states that qualitative studies are widely used in social science research. It collects non-numerical data to understand social phenomena in a targeted sample population. However, San Jose and Mortos (2017) said the qualitative approach was suitable because this study was not the end. It means that the data gathered from this study may be used to conduct another study.

The study employed a phenomenological approach. A phenomenological approach seeks to understand people's experiences of a phenomenon to understand and describe it in terms of its actual occurrence and possible reasons for its occurrence (Neubauer et al., 2019). Since microaggression has persisted unaddressed for the longest time, the study seeks to understand the origin of these matters from the perspective of the LGBTQ+ community to promote and protect their well-being.

The data gathering method is through semi-structured interviews. It involves "conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of participants to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation. In the interviews, the interviewer prepares a set of questions to be answered by all participants to extract the needed information for the study. Since details about microaggression are relatively unfamiliar to most of the population, guide questions must be created to extract the desired data. Additionally, additional questions might be asked during interviews to clarify and further expand on specific issues that may be ambiguous to the interviewer or the participants.

The role of the researcher in this qualitative inquiry encompasses excellent responsibility, as the researcher is the instrument through which the data were collected. Firstly, the researcher established a relationship with the participants to facilitate genuine interaction and to minimize false roles that might influence the generated data. Building a relationship with the participants will create an atmosphere of trust and confidence. Secondly, the researcher provided enough explanation of the purpose of the study and how it should

be taken from the participants. Thirdly, the researcher facilitated and analyzed the research procedures of this study and ensured the confidentiality of the documents.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted at Agusan del Sur State College of Agriculture and Technology. ASSCAT is a Chartered State College located in Bunawan, Agusan del Sur. It was comprised of different colleges and programs with a population of more than 7,000 students from which the 5 participants of the study came.

2.3 Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were five (5) students of Agusan del Sur State College of Agriculture and Technology (ASSCAT) of the second (2nd) semester of academic year two thousand twenty-one (2021) to two thousand twenty-two (2022) who identified themselves as a student of color or part of the LGBTQ+ community.

2.4 Sampling Design

The sampling method was snowball sampling. According to Valeria et al. (2016), snowball sampling is a recruitment technique in which research participants are asked to assist researchers in identifying other potential subjects. The use of currently enrolled research participants to recruit additional research participants (sometimes called "snowball sampling") may be approved under some circumstances. In the study, gender-related issues are susceptible and controversial; thus, this sampling method is highly applicable.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

This study utilized information from published journals, articles, and research as sources of information and pointed out nuances about microaggression. The researcher asked the participants to state their experiences through interview questions to understand the topic further. Finally, a summary and conclusion were drawn from the information gathered from the literature and interviews to create suggestions for intervention programs and craft new policies.

The selection of the participants started from the researcher's knowledge of which student identified themself as a student of color. After the identification, the researcher messaged/approached the prospective participant to ask if they would like to participate in the study. The interview schedule was set as the participants confirmed and chose which modality of the interview they preferred. During the interview, the participants were first oriented to microaggression and the study's rationale. After the orientation, the participants were asked follow-up questions to extract the desired data. Finally, the participants were asked about other prospective participants, as the sampling method used in this study suggests.

III.   DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

3.1 Common types of microaggression experiences of participants

Interactions are essential elements that influence one's personality and values. Creating a safe space, establishing connections within society, and building bonds through relationships are some purposes of social interactions. As people participate in these interactions, they create new knowledge, communicate their uniqueness and reasons, and broaden their understanding of the systems around their society. In addition, these interactions may also create innovations that significantly impact society through resolving interposing beliefs and coming up with a shared understanding of different societal movements (Njoroge, 2023).

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage results of the interview to determine the most common types of microaggression experiences with peers.

Table 1. Microaggression Experiences with Peers			
Microaggression	Participants(5)	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology	2	2	40
Endorsement of heteronormative culture and behavior	0	0	0
Assumption of universal LGBTQ experience	0	0	0
Discomfort or disapproval of the LGBTQ experience	2	2	40
Assumption of sexual pathology or abnormality	1	1	20
Denial of bodily privacy	0	0	0

Table 2 shows the major themes and core ideas gathered in the interview to determine the most common microaggression experiences with peers.

Table 2.Microaggression Experiences with Peers	
Major Themes	Core Ideas
Use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology	Slurs, Name-calling
Discomfort or disapproval of the LGBTQ experience	Ignoring, Condemnation
Assumption of sexual pathology or abnormality	Deviation

Tables 1 and 2 show that both the use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology and discomfort or disapproval of LGBTQ+ experience have the highest number of most common microaggression experiences, each with two instances. Assumption of sexual pathology or abnormality has one instance. Participants further elaborated that there were underlying reasons and manifestations of these findings. These results were obtained from the interviews conducted with the 5 participants.

Engagement with peers is considered an integral part of personal development. The study of Shan and Zolits (2022) suggested that exposure to peers can impact a person's growth and performance. Peers serve as either role models or pressure that stimulates or stifles a person. As individuals consistently engage with one another, they become more similar. Given the importance of peers in personal development, this section presents the data on microaggression experiences that the participants had with their peers.

3.2 Use of Heterosexist or Transphobic Terminology
In the study of Nadal (2014), the use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology is characterized by using derogatory terms and names. Examples of this include purposely calling a person who is categorized as a student of color a derogatory slur, telling a trans person that they cannot use a men's restroom, or rejecting their entry into a men's restroom when they attempt to use one. In the case of our participants, their gender identities were consistently used against them, with several unsavory terms employed to poke fun at them.

Both participants, Dancing Future Teacher and Dancing Future Engineer, have almost the same experiences. Most of the time, their gender identity was weaponized to slur them. Although they are aware of their identities as part of the LGBTQ+ community, the use of their gender identity in name-calling still affects them.

> *"Pirmenakoma encounter nag ingnon ko nga "Bayot! Bayota ka!" mgaingonanangud sir. Usahaypudkanangingnonnga "Kabayot ana oi!". Kanangdaghankaayugmga term-term nila. Kabalo man ko saakokaugalingon sir ngabayot ko, perousahay man gud mag sobra nag ani. Kananggamitonimong gender identity as binuang.* (I often faced and being called "Gay!" or "You, Gay!" and similar terms. There are also times that I was told "That was too gay!". All of these and more made-up terms were used against me. I know in myself that I'm gay but sometimes I got fed-up. I cannot stand using my gender identity to mock me at times.)" - Dancing Future Teacher

In addition, there were times when the mere display of their talents became an opportunity for name-calling. Experiences of cursing and jokingly wishing ill events upon the participants have become casual.

> *"Kanangkailanasilasaakoperoilahagihaponkongginaulit sir like kanang "Bayot! Bayout! Bayot!". Even saakomgasilinganpagmagsayaw ko ngabinayot day ang sayaw-sayaw. Kabalo man ug ugdawat man nakongabayot ko pero lain lang ngagamitonna para pakaulawan ko. Parehaananangmuingonsilanga "Bayotilansangsakrus!" mga ana-ana gud sir.* (Even though they already knew that I'm gay, they still teased me using my gender identity. When I'm dancing, some of my neighbors would say that dancing is too gay. That they wish that I was crucified. Despite knowing my own identity, using it to humiliate me still irritates me.)"- Dancing Future Engineer

3.3 Discomfort or disapproval of LGBTQ experience
Occasionally, students of color are dealt with a lack of respect or condemnation. For instance, an upfront articulation and indirect forms of disapproval regarding someone's sexual or gender identity, such as confrontations and verbal and nonverbal insinuations. These microaggressions convey to students of color that they should not disclose their identities and that it is unsafe to do so (Francis & Reygan, 2016).

In their experiences as Fighting Future Teachers and Graduating Miss Sergeants, they mostly encountered discomfort or disapproval. One of them felt invisible or left out by their peers when joined by other

LGBTQ+ individuals. It seemed that they were being ignored because their peers were uncomfortable approaching them or recognizing them when they were with their other LGBTQ+ friends.

> *"Sometimes they are kananglahi ka sailangpananawgani. like for example sir, kanangma feel nakousahayna if makaubankogmga gay, ma separate gani ko saila, kanangmuragdili ko nilapansinon.* (Sometimes they are indifferent to me. For example, if I'm with my gay friends, they would ignore me as if I was unknown to them.)" -Fighting Future Teacher

Similarly, another participant also experienced direct disapproval of her gender identity. Her peer bluntly expressed that being a lesbian is not suitable for her. Additionally, they told her that being a lesbian is no good at all.

> *"Kaningano sir, saakona experience ko ug kanangpangutan'on ko nga "Tomboy ka? Ayaw pagsigiingonana kay di ka angayan!" kanangmgaingonanaba sir. Usahaykanangakopungmgakaila, muingionsilanga "ayawpagingonana kay malaatiyan!".* (My experience was I was asked if I was a lesbian and followed by comments that it doesn't suit me. Sometimes, they would tell me that being lesbian is not good.)"- Graduating Miss Sergeant

3.4 Assumptions of Sexual Pathology or Abnormality

Dayal (2022) articulated that the assumption of sexual pathology/abnormality' depicts students of color as gender freaks of the society. These people believe that heterosexism is the only standard way of living. Deviation of expected behaviors and sexual norms based on their sex art is considered unnatural and offensive. Usually, offenders of this type of microaggression fail to recognize their prejudice through their commentaries and articulations.

Sergeant Shiftee's microaggression experience with his peers was an assumption of sexual pathology or abnormality. According to him, his peers tended to consider acting gay to be somewhat odd. For them, it is unnatural to act like this, so the participant tended to conceal his identity among his peers.

> *"Ang akongpagkataoakongginalikaysailaha. Akongginatagongaingon ana diay ko kay dili man silaganahanmakakitasaakongaingon ana akomgabinuhatan. Muingonsilangadilidawni normal.* (I just hideaway my identity to them because they don't want to see me that way. They often expressed that it's not considered normal.)" - Sergeant Shiftee

Based on the students' responses, microaggression among their peers was prevalent at home and school. These experiences undoubtedly created discomfort for them and potentially affected their well-being.

Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage results of the interview to determine the most common types of microaggression experiences with family.

Table 3. Microaggression Experiences with Family			
Microaggression	Participants (5)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology	0	0	0
Endorsement of heteronormative culture and behaviors	2	2	40
Assumption of universal LGBTQ experience	0	0	0
Discomfort or disapproval of the LGBTQ experience	3	3	60
Assumption of sexual pathology or abnormality	0	0	0
Denial of bodily privacy	0	0	0

Table 4 shows the major themes and core ideas gathered in the interview to determine the most common microaggression experiences with family.

Table 4.Microaggression Experiences with Family	
Major Themes	Core Ideas
Discomfort or disapproval of the LGBTQ experience	Religious Belief
Endorsement of heteronormative culture and behaviors	Presumptions, Prohibitions

According to Ogirala (2020), shaping a person's physical and mental health, morals, and individualities are only a few of the significant roles that family plays in our lives. Families also provide financial, physical, and emotional support to every individual and can significantly affect one's success or failure in life. Given the

importance of family, this section presents the data on microaggression experiences that the participants had with their families.

Tables 3 and 4 show that the most common type of microaggression that the participants mostly experienced among their family members was discomfort or disapproval of LGBTQ experiences, which was 3 out of 5 instances/participants. Only 2 of them stated that endorsement of heteronormative culture and behaviors was the most frequently experienced microaggression among their family members.

3.5 Discomfort or Disapproval of LGBTQ Experience

Family members employed a variety of religious arguments and practices to convey disapproval toward those who are part of the LGBTQ+ community. For instance, some blamed a lack of spirituality for causing homosexuality. Additionally, biblical scriptures and doctrines were used as weapons to disown LGBTQ+ family members, such as the importance of marriage, procreation, and family (Daiute&Etengoff, 2013). The majority of microaggression with family members revolved around these ideas.

One of the participants was prohibited from being gay because his father was a church servant. According to the participant, his father demanded that he act straight and righteous. Additionally, he was prohibited from exhibiting gay behavior since he was the only male child in the family.

> *"Akoang papa is naaykatungdanansasimbahanmaonang gusto siyangatarongdaw ko or magtinarong then dili mag binayot. Dili dawsiyaganahannga mag bayot-bayot ko kay tungodakoradaw isa ka lakisaamoa.* (My father was a church leader which is why he wants me act straight. He also disapproves of me being gay, especially I'm the only boy among my siblings.)"- Sergeant Shiftee

Another participant's family believed that being lesbian was a bad omen. According to her family's belief, being a part of the LGBTQ+ community was considered sinful. For them, individuals must act according to their assigned sex and not based on what they feel or identify with.

> *"Ang ilahangginaingon sir nga "dili ka mag pa tomboy-tomboy kay babae ka hah! Dili kang sigiginginana kay makabushit" mga ana sir.* (They were telling me that I shouldn't act like a boy because I'm a girl. Also, they considered being a lesbian is sinful.)" - Graduating Miss Sergeant

In addition, another participant experienced conditional/limited acceptance by his family due to their religious conviction. His gender expression was restrained, and he faced multiple prohibitions, including the ban on homosexual relationships, cross-dressing, etc.

> *"Religious man gudkaayuako family. Taposmuragkanangnaagyuymga time nga mu disapprove gyudsilasaako. Kanangmuingonsilanga "ok ra man ngabayot ka, ayaw lang mag sinina ug pambabae" or kanangdilipuddaw mag uyab-uyab, mga ana gud sir. Dili kaayo ko maka express saako self kay limited ra man ang ila approval saako.* (I'm from a religious family. Because of that, my family accepts me but on certain conditions such as prohibition of homosexual relationships and crossdressing. Because of these prohibitions, I'm unable to fully express myself".)" - Dancing Future Teacher

3.6 Endorsement of Heteronormative Culture and Behaviors

Imposing gender roles to a person based on their sex is also a type of microaggression. For example, prohibiting a boy from acting flamboyantly and mandating him to act more masculine by playing or liking basketball, soccer, or boxing is a microaggression. Similarly, directing a girl to play dolls, wear skirts, and learn house chores is equivalent to the former (Nadal, 2014).

The microaggression experiences of some participants were identified as an endorsement of heteronormative culture and behaviors. According to one participant, he was expected to conform to certain behaviors because he is biologically male. Simultaneously, he was assumed incapable of performing specific tasks for the same reasons.

> *"Kanang example sir nay ngabuhatunonunyagina judge nadayun ka ngadilinimo kaya kay bayot ka. Kanangpungmgabuhatunonngaingnon ko nga "laki man ka, dapatkabalo ka ana". Mga ana sir.* (Taking for instance, they expect me to fail on some tasks because I'm gay. Also, they expect me to be proficient on some take because I'm biologically male.)" - Fighting Future Teacher

Furthermore, a participant stated that he was forced to play sports that were not of interest because his family believed it was the appropriate activity for him as a young male. Conversely, he was prohibited from engaging in preferred activities, such as being feminine, playing with dolls, and using pink-colored toys or objects.

> *"Since I was a child, gusto gyudnakodulaon is like mga barbie, mga pink color. Pero ilahangginapush gihapon sir is magdulakog basketball tasmakiguban ko samgalalaki para dilidaw ko mahimogbayot. Mas gina push pudnilangakanang mag lihokgyuddaw ko*

as lalake, diligyuddaw mag binabae. (Since I was a child, I really liked playing dolls and pink-colored objects. However, I was forced to play basketball with other boys so that I would not act so feminine. They were really pushing me to be masculine rather than feminine.)" - Dancing Future Engineer

Based on the responses, microaggression was also prevalent and deeply rooted in family members' religious beliefs. Additionally, labeling activities and objects suitable for males or females further exacerbated the prevalence of microaggressions among families. As a result, self-expression and support among the family members were limited.

Table 5 shows the frequency and percentage results of the interview to determine the most common types of microaggression experiences with classmates.

Table 5. Microaggression Experiences with Classmates			
Microaggression	Participants(5)	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology	3	3	60
Endorsement of heteronormative culture and behaviors	0	0	0
Assumption of universal LGBTQ experience	0	0	0
Discomfort or disapproval of the LGBTQ experience	2	2	40
Assumption of sexual pathology or abnormality	0	0	0
Denial of bodily privacy	0	0	0

Table 6 shows the major themes and core ideas gathered in the interview to determine the most common microaggression experiences with classmates.

Table 6.Microaggression Experiences with Classmates	
Major Themes	Core Ideas
Use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology	Slurs, Name-calling, Disappointment
Discomfort or disapproval of the LGBTQ experience	Avoidance, Underestimation

Classmates play a significant role in an individual's stress management and academic achievement. Mutual support among class members greatly affects a positive classroom climate that nurtures an individual. Cooperation and mutual support help aid individual anxiety and achieve positive academic outcomes (Hoferichter et al., 2022). Given the established importance of classmates in personal development in learning, this section presents the data on microaggression experiences that the participants had with their classmates.

Tables 5 and 6 show that the most common type of microaggression the participants experienced with their classmates was the use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology, which was reported by 3 out of 5 participants. The other 2 participants stated that discomfort or disapproval of LGBTQ+ experiences was their most common microaggression experience while in the presence of their classmates.

3.7 Use of Heterosexist or Transphobic Terminology

In the study of Dayal (2020), some men failed to show the standard masculine behavior imposed by society. These effeminate men were out of place and were constantly poking fun at their fellows. It is common among them, and members of society have started to believe it is normal. However, it shows condemnation of effeminate men in their culture, like what is happening to our students of color today, as the participants voice out their microaggression experiences.

Participant Fighting Future Teacher used to encounter instances of slurring and name-calling instances based on his gender identity as gay. However, due to the frequency of these instances, he could accept and ignore them. For him, it became a natural occurrence among them, and he did not let it upset him.

"Usahaytawagon ko nila ug bayotpero ok ra man kay bayot man gyud ko. (Sometimes, they are calling me gay but its fine with me since I am indeed a gay person.)"- Fighting Future Teacher

Another participant stated that she was constantly told that it was a loss and that she was masculine. Her classmates believed that her beauty had lost its value since she acted masculine and was very lesbian. Though

she could still adjust and relate to their topics as a heterosexual individual, there were still instances where she was confronted with such microaggressive and unnecessary comments about her gender identity.

> *"Usahaypud, ingnan ko ngasayangdaw kay tomboy ko. Kanangingnannga "kasayangnimo oi! Ka gwapara baya nimounyaingonana ka!". Kanangmuingonsilanga "tomboy man ka oi! Tomboy kaayu ka!", mga ana sir.* (Sometimes they are telling me that it's such a shame that I'm a lesbian. Some would say it's a waste of my beauty since I'm so masculine.)"- Graduating Miss Sergeant

Furthermore, participant Dancing Future Engineer usually encountered name-calling related to his gender identity. People around him think these are only harmless jokes since it is familiar, and most people consider them normal. However, there were times that he felt humiliated.

> *"Kanangmadunggannakonga "bayot! Bayot!". Ana sir unyamaulawan ka sir kay tungodsaimo gender.* (There are times when they called me gay. I felt embarrassed.)" - Dancing Future Engineer

3.8 Discomfort or Disapproval of LGBTQ+ Experience

As Nadal (2014) explained, microaggressions happen in straightforward ways. Prompt disapproval, such as slurs and name-calling, or mere insinuation of uneasiness, such as snubbing and eye-rolling, are all manifestations of microaggression if such acts are caused by expressing behaviors deviating from common male and female norms. In the school setting, these incidents were commonly encountered by students of color.

Sergeant Shiftee felt that discomfort or disapproval of LGBTQ experiences was the most common type of microaggression that he encountered with his classmates. He experienced avoidance and underestimation among his classmates if he showed feminine behaviors and expressed gay interests. This mainly occurs from his male heterosexual classmates.

> *"Dili nanakoginapakitasailanga mag binayot ko kay kasagarannilalikayan man gud ka. Kanangmuragubosilapagtanawsaimotaslikayanna ka. Sama anangmgabarkadanimongalaki, dilinasilamoubansaakongaingonani ko.* (I'm afraid to show them my gay side because mostly, they would avoid me. Sometimes they underestimated me and stayed away from me. For example, my male friends would not approach me if I act feminine.)"- Sergeant Shiftee

Also, Dancing Future Teacher felt discomfort or disapproval of LGBTQ+ experience was the most common type of microaggression that he encountered with his classmates. According to him, his classmates, especially the males, were afraid of making friends with him. This is because they feared being romantically linked to him and being labeled with other unpleasant circumstances associated with being with a gay person.

> *"Hadlokingnonngamamayutay, ana gud sir. Ang huna-hunasataogyudngaingonana ang ginalikayannilamaonangmulikaynalangpudsilasaakoa. Dili silamakig friend saakoakauyhadloksilanganaaymgaingonana.* (They were afraid to be labeled as someone flirting for the purpose of money. This kind of mindset caused them to be cautious and get away from me.)" - Dancing Future Teacher

As presented in this section, microaggression with classmates is prevalent mainly in verbal components rooted in their ignorance of caution and sensitivity. Also, their classmates believed that it was just average and not potentially harmful to our participant's perspective of themselves.

Table 7 shows the frequency and percentage results of the interviews conducted to determine the most common types of microaggression experiences with instructors.

Table 7. Microaggression Experiences with Instructors			
Microaggression	Participants(5)	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology	1	1	20
Endorsement of heteronormative culture and behaviors	4	0	80
Assumption of universal LGBTQ experience	0	0	0
Discomfort or disapproval of the LGBTQ experience	0	0	0
Assumption of sexual pathology or abnormality	0	0	0
Denial of bodily privacy	0	0	0

Table 8 shows the major themes and core ideas gathered in the interview to determine the most common types of microaggression experiences with instructors.

Table 8. Microaggression Experiences with Instructors	
Major Themes	Core Ideas
Endorsement of heteronormative culture and behaviors	Prohibitions
Use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology	Denial

      Educators evaluate their students' strengths and weaknesses and guide them to follow best practices. They bring out the best in the students and teach them valuable life skills, like the exchange of ideas, empathy, composition, and presentation. How students see themselves as learners is greatly influenced by how educators convey themselves (Smalley, 2022). As crucial as educators are in the upbringing and learning of the students, this section presents the data on microaggression experiences that the participants had with their instructors.

      Tables 7 and 8 show that 4 out of 5 LGBTQ+ student participants, which was 80%, have commonly experienced endorsement of heteronormative culture and behaviors with their instructors. Only one participant selected the use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology.

3.9 Endorsement of Heteronormative Culture and Behaviors

      Schools have previously harbored the culture of culture of heteronormativity in their practices and teaching. With that same notion, they also have the potential to mitigate this detrimental ideology to students of color through policies and teachers' interventions. Nonetheless, if teachers possess cultivates the same heteronormative ideas, helping students of color are in vain. As research has documented teachers committing microaggressions such as prohibiting sexually deviant behaviors, as they call it, and overcompensating heteronormative behaviors, students of color have become more closeted and isolated in schools (Pearson, 2016).

      According to the participants, microaggressions mainly occur during presentations and other activities. Some of them were disallowed from exhibiting or assuming gay behaviors or roles during these activities.

      "Usually sir paglalaki ka, pang lalakiragyudimongi-portray. Dili ka pwedimaka portray ug lain gender bisan gusto nimo or kaya nimo. Ana basilanga kung bayotdaw ka, dapatabtikdaw ka musayawkuntahay. Dapatkayahonnimoba. Most of the time gyud ana ako experience sir pag mag sayaw. (Usually, sir, they only allowed you to portray roles that are according to your sex. Even if you want to and capable of pulling it off, they won't allow especially if you are gay, you are supposed to be good in dancing. That was my common experience.)" -Dancing Future Teacher*

      There were also instances where the participant was told that acting or speaking like the opposite sex was inappropriate for the presentation. This experience embarrassed them and kept them from fully performing during these activities.

      "Like kanangtawagongani ka or ingnon ka sa teacher ngababaekaayukagtingog, mga ana. Kanangmuragma feel nakongaginahuna-hunanilangadili bagay akotingogsaako. (Like when I was called out during my report because my voice was too feminine. I felt uncomfortable thinking that my voice is not suitable to me.)"- Fighting Future Teacher*

      "Sa akong report sir, naga focus man gyud ko saakoconten. Kaso lang the way nga mag isturya ko, mura ganingginakuannilangatarunga mag isturyadiha, dili mag binayotsatunga. Something ingonana sir. (I really concentrate on my topics during my reports. Its just that, they dislike the way I discussed the topics. They think I'm not serous sine I act very gay.)"- Dancing Future Engineer*

      "Kanangingnan ko nilangadili mag tinomboyusahay sir parehasanang mag report ko saakomgateachers sir. (There were times that my instructor would tell me to act masculine during my reports.)" - Graduating Miss Sergeant*

3.10 Use of Heterosexist or Transphobic Terminology

      In the study of Goodhand (2014), microaggression established numerous impediments to students of color in schools and universities. Additionally, teachers were not emphasized as critical players in facilitating solutions and interventions to alleviate microaggressions in school. They have become part of these problems since they were uninformed. Moreover, since poking fun and name-calling have become part of seeking attention and class entertainment of some teachers, microaggression was normalized, and students of color have

become more secretive about their identity. They limit their interactions and refrain from other extracurricular activities to avoid such humiliations.

Another participant was once asked about his gender identity. He did not tell the truth to avoid being teased or slurred. According to his experiences, revealing his real gender identity will just put him in jeopardy.

> *"Kanangmuingonsilanga or mangutanasilangabayotba ka? Unyaakoasiyagina deny then*
> *mao to. Akongginapakitanalangngalakigyudtaraw ko. Kay usahaysungugon man ko.*
> (There are times that they would ask me regarding my gender identity. In order to avoid
> teasing and further questions, I just lie and act as if I am straight.)"- Sergeant Shiftee

As this section shows, microaggression between instructors is also common during presentations and activities that involve language and bodily movements. Even if these instructors seemed to see this as harmless, students thought otherwise or just learned to ignore it and get along with it.

Table 9Effects of Microaggression in Learning Experience	
Major Themes	Core Ideas
Anxiety	Limited Self-Expression, Unsatisfactory Performance, Self-Doubt, Limited Extracurricular Activities
Microaggression Based Motivations	Challenging Limitations, Satisfactory Performance

3.11 Microaggression experiences affect the participant's learning experience

Reflected in Table 9 are the participants' experiences and effects of a learning environment with prevalent cases of microaggression in their learning experience. One of the most essential elements that influence a student's learning experience is the learning environment. A helpful and nurturing learning environment is an ideal environment for every learner. This was built through collaborative efforts from classmates, friends, teachers, and parents. They must possess love, compassion, and support for one another that every learner shall look forward to each day. In this environment, differences are respected and celebrated to stir up personal and collective development (Verma, 2019).

3.11.1 Anxiety

In an article published last 2020 by Brad Brenner, Ph.D., a counseling psychologist, he pointed out that members of the LGBTQ+ community are more susceptible to anxiety and depression compared to straight gender-conforming persons by 1.5 to 2.5 percent. As considered members of the gender minority, they are significantly exposed to microaggressions, discrimination, and prejudices, which can dramatically affect their lives. Additionally, gender-based microaggressions and other forms of decimations in schools were normalized and accepted because of their frequency in the perspective of most gender-complaisant students. On the other hand, students of color were significantly impacted, resulting in lower self-esteem, stress, and anxiety (Seelman et al., 2016).

Due to microaggression in the learning environment, Fighting Future Teacher had become extra conscious during presentations. He also added that these incidents made him excessively think of situations and sometimes become distracted. Self-expression was limited, causing him to perform unsatisfactory at times in performances and reports.

> *"Syempre ma down gyud ko. Kanangusahay naga over think naunya ma distract na ko.*
> *Dilina ko maka focus saako task especially kung performance gud sir.* (Obviously, there
> are times that I'm feeling down. Sometimes I overthink and get distracted and can't focus
> on tasks to perform.)" - Fighting Future Teacher

In his experience, Sargent Shiftee limited his extracurricular activities because he was afraid of being judged by the people around him. There were instances when he wished he could join activities for the LGBTQ+ community but was afraid that it may present him as too feminine or flamboyant. Similar to Fighting Future Teacher, Sargent Shiftee's ability to fully express himself was hampered by his fear of encountering even more microaggression in the future as a result of joining these events or activities.

> *"Sa akongpagiskwela is maapektuhanakong extra-curricular nga mu apil ug mga events*
> *ngasa school. Naa baya gyuymga events sa school ngakanang pang LGBTQ+*
> *perokanang gusto ko mu apilperodilinako gusto ngamapakitasailaha.* (In terms of
> education, my extra-curricular suffers more because even if I have the eagerness to join
> LGBTQ+ activities, my fear of showing them who I am is greater than my enthusiasm.)"-
> Sargent Shiftee

Graduating Miss Sergeant caused her self-doubt in her identity and abilities. At some point, she was stuck in a dilemma of choosing between being herself or being what people wanted her to be. Pressured and

disordered, she had a hard time accomplishing her tasks at school or reviewing for examinations. Unable to fully express herself, she was in a difficult situation with her studies.

> "*Makaapektogyudsiya kay murag mag duha-duha ko saakongkaugalingonba. Usahaymakingon ko nga, "unsa man gyud ko?" maglibog ko kung sundonbanakosila or dili. Ma pressure lang gyud ko, dilina ko maka focus usahaysaakomga project or assigments. Usahay pod mag lisodkog study pagnaaymga quiz or exam.* (It really affects me because I started to doubt myself. I got confuse of who I really am and if I'll just be what they want me to be. I felt too much pressure that's why I'm unable to focus with my projects and assignment or review for upcoming quizzes or examinations.)"- Graduating Miss Sergeant

3.11.2 Microaggression Based Motivations

According to Lin (2023), it is a common reaction to negative provocations, such as microaggressions and underestimation, to prove them wrong. Instead of being disheartened, students of color have become successful and motivated in their academics and extracurricular activities. Because of this way of thinking, they were able to challenge stereotypes and break through their limitations.

On the other hand, Dancing Future Teacher and Dancing Future Engineer have a reverse effect on microaggression in their learning experience. According to them, having these instances made them even more motivated to perusing and express themselves. They pushed further their boundaries and strived to achieve excellence to diminish the adverse effects of microaggression. Though there were instances that they felt discouraged, their passion to pursue further is greater than that of those above.

> "*Naa gyuy part ngamaapektuhangyud ang akongpagiskwela kay instead of doing my best gyud tana, sometimes dilinalang ko mu push kay muragnaay discomfort gyud. Kana ganinghadlokna ka ma judge. Hinuon, naa man puy part nga ok siya kay murag ma push gyud ka kay naagussilaygina expect gikansaimoba. Kay usahay man gud kung ako ma pressure ko, makabuhatgyudkog mas maayu. So bisan ma pressure pud ko usahay, at least ma test nako kung asaragyud ko kutob.* (There are times that it affected my learning since I try to avoid conflict. I tended to hold back. I was afraid to be judged. However, there were also times that it benefited me because I tried to push myself further. I turned the pressure as motivation to test my limits and create better results.)"- Dancing Future Teacher

> "*Kadtosiyangamga experience nako kay na boost akoangkuannuonngaipadayun ang akuangginabuhat.Taposmuraggina push pa nakoakoang self ngakanangipadayungyud kung unsaakonggginabuhat. Muragnahimonuonsiyanga motivation nako sir.* (Those experiences actually boosted my confidence to continue. I pushed further and tested my limits. I turned those experiences as motivation.)"- Dancing Future Engineer

This section presents the different effects of microaggression on the learning experiences of our participants. Most of the impact on the participants was negative. They became dictated, indecisive, and felt caged inside as they hid their identities from others. On the other hand, some participants took these experiences as motivation to improve further and push for self-expression. The diversity of reactions to microaggressions is manifested in the discussion above.

Table 10. Effects of Microaggression in Learning Experience	
Major Themes	Core Ideas
Self-Acceptance	Maintaining Composure, Understanding
Avoidance	Going Away, Contacting Few People
Ignoring	Carefree, Hopes for Understanding
Dancing	Contemporary Dance, Release of Emotions
Support System	Talking to Parents, Praying

3.12 Coping mechanisms that the students of color have used to deal with microaggression

Table 10 presents the information gathered from the participants concerning their coping mechanisms with microaggression experiences. In the study of Cornejo (2022), it was stated that it is incredibly essential to recognize the importance of coping mechanisms in managing pressure and anxiety as students undergo their academic endeavors. Students encountered stressors daily from their academics, families, friends, and other people around them. Coping mechanisms relieve these and contribute to the learner's well-being in pursuing their dreams.

3.12.1 Self-Acceptance

Lacbayin et al. (2022) have pointed out that self-acceptance as a coping mechanism is about finding the meaning of life and pursuing goals beyond difficult situations that one cannot control. It clinically reduces unnecessary suffering and boosts one's ability to cope with negative and uncontrollable situations. Thus, self-acceptance can be comprehended as psychologically adept behavior in confronting situations lacking controllability.

For Fighting Future Teacher, he used acceptance and understanding. He believed that self-acceptance could help maintain composure and stay on track. In addition, understand that they are not trying to hurt him and are just uninformed of such an issue. Trying to put himself in other shoes and understanding them keeps Fighting Future Teacher coping with the negativity that microaggression experiences brought upon him.

"Acceptance gyud. Like for example kanang ana. Hunahunaonnalangnako ng abasi namlirasila. Kanagakonalangginabutangakokaugalingonsaila ng abasi wala lang silana inform or wala man nanilagituyo. (It's just acceptance. In such situations, I just assumed that it was unintentional. Maybe their just uninformed and did not really mean to hurt me.)"- Fighting Future Teacher

3.12.2 Avoidance

As stressors like microaggression lurk around students of color constantly, some of them adopt passive coping mechanisms that help them avoid these instances without confronting them. In the study, Scott (2022) pointed out the positive and negative effects of avoidance as a coping mechanism. She stated that avoidance relieves a person momentarily from stress by not approaching the problem directly. However, since this coping mechanism does not deal with the problem promptly, the consequences might be more significant since this lack of attention may further aggravate the situation.

In the case of Sargent Shiftee, he coped through avoidance and escape. Going away from people who know him and might spread rumors and judge him was the safest way for him. There, he can fully express himself without prejudice. It could also be with few people who can understand him. By that, the minimized number of people knowing his identity is more reassuring.

"Ma cope up nakosiyakanang through kanangsamgadilinanamo area. Kanangdilinanamolugarngawala nay halos nakailasaakoa. Another place kung asanakomapagawas or another ngamgabarkada LGBTQ+ pud. (I cope through escaping on a place far from my hometown. Places where only few people knew me. Also, I went there with few of my fellow LGBTQ+ friends.)"- Sargent Shiftee

3.12.3 Ignoring

Another popular type of coping behavior is ignoring. Similar to avoidance, ignoring is also a type of passive coping mechanism for stressors such as microaggression. As Berger et al. (2022) explain, ignoring distracts oneself from the situation through shifting concentration. It is also said that it could positively regulate emotional distress over unexpected and uncontrollable situations. It could buy some time to ponder on possible solutions to a problem. However, like avoidance, the longer it takes, the greater the risks of agitation correspondingly.

In the idea of Graduating Miss Sergeant, ignoring microaggression works better. She thought that if she constantly reacted to it, it would just be a continuous cycle of explaining and defending herself. For her, continually ignoring these microaggression experiences with the people she engages will help die out these behaviors. Eventually, they would accept her as she is and not what they want her to be.

"Gina ignore nako ang kaninggapadayun lang ko sir ba ug unsaakong gusto, unsaakongangaybuhaton. Kay para pudsaakoamuragpuhonmadawatra ko nila ug musaligrasilasaako. (I just ignore them and proceed with what I want. For me, I believe and hope that someday they would accept me and trust me.)"- Graduating Miss Sergeant

3.12.4 Dancing

Another coping mechanism for microaggression is physical activities such as dancing.Although dancing as a coping mechanism does not employ direct resolutions to stress caused by microaggression, it relieves the person from negative emotions, improving their mental health. In Salo's (2019) study, dancing is a form of communication. One's feelings are expressed through graceful bodily movements in the synchrony of a beat. It increases self-confidence and focus. It also exhausts the body from being reminded of the situation, causing negative emotions.

For Dancing Future Teacher, dancing is an avenue to express his emotions and personality fully. As he felt constrained and constantly watched, his passion for dancing stirred his imagination and released all the enveloped emotions within.

"As a contemporary dancer, pag feel nakongamuraglisodnagyud ang life, musayaw lang jud ko kay kang sa contemporary maka express man gyud ka ana saimomga feelings

through dance. (As a contemporary dancer, I dance if I feel that life is becoming more challenging. Because in modern dance, you can pour your emotions.)."- Dancing Future Teacher

3.12.5 Support System

According to Aisyawati and Akbar (2021), social support is the most critical psychosocial defense. Support systems will help build your general health by reducing stress- and anxiety-causing situations like microaggressions. Being able to have people supporting you through rough situations can ease one's anxiousness. Social support helps rewire an individual to the outside world while simultaneously providing someone the chance to concentrate on other people of the most value to you.

For Dancing Future Engineer, family comfort was the best aid to an agonizing heart. Family was the best fortress to heal from all the microaggressions and negativity he received. Along with it were prayers of healing and understanding for those he believed were uneducated enough to be sensitive to others.

> *"Gi handle nako sir kanangnakigisturya lang ko saakong mama ngaingonanailangginabuhat. Like kanangsaakoa man gung self sir kay mas gina prioritize nakongamagtuganasaakong parent kay sila may mas nakabalo kung unsa ko.* (I handle it sir through sharing my experiences to my parents. For me, I do prioritize my family since they know me better than anyone else.)"- Dancing Future Engineer

This section presented the diversity of coping mechanisms to diminish the adverse effects of microaggression among our participants. They all uniquely create an avenue to fully express themselves as they prepare to move forward in life. Acceptance, escaping, ignoring, dancing, and finding a support system are numerous coping mechanisms that help our participants continue pursuing their education amidst microaggression.

Table 11. Participant's Suggestions	
Major Themes	Core Ideas
Information Drives	Forums. Lectures
Promotional Activities	Games, Sports, Pageants
Counselling	Reconciliation Invitations, Stress Debriefing

3.13 Suggestions from the participants that can help the college administration make interventions

This section discusses our participants' suggested interventions, policies, and activities in mitigating the adverse effects of microaggression. Schools need to create interventions because it allows them to discern methods to cater to students in need. The school system's approach to behavior is to supply something supplemental for those students for whom more is needed or sufficient. It involves a commitment to undergo alterations and adaptations and a willingness to reflect on evidence-based decision-making for a specific purpose so that recipients of intervention programs will be provided with suitable actions. As a result, each learner can establish self-worth and a better understanding of their subject matter. It ultimately produces positive development in the learner's well-being (Hawthorne, 2023).

3.13.1 Information Drives

Proper education and information concerning the LGBTQ+ community have been posing serious challenges for school administrations. However, in the study of Moolman (2019), he emphasized that information through education is a vital key to creating inclusive education and a safe learning environment for students of color. Inadequacy of knowledge about the LGBTQ+ community produces more significant impediments to achieving inclusive education for all, such as microaggression, bullying, and other forms of gender-based discrimination. Thus, for these reasons, schools must have strategic information disbursement mechanisms to leverage this gap.

For Fighting Future Teachers, educational discussions are essential to minimizing microaggression. He believed that a thorough discussion about the topic could significantly impact the perspective of the people around him. Additionally, members of the LGBTQ+ community will be empowered regarding the issue at hand.

> *"Para saako sir, maayu ang symposiums about LGBTQ+ . More on awareness kay makatabangnisiya kung tarungon lang gyud ug discuss.* (For me, having symposiums discussing issues about LGBTQ+ is plausible. A thorough discussion will be helpful to us.)"- Fighting Future Teacher

According to the Graduating Miss Sergeant, information about microaggression was deemed the most valuable. She suggested dialogues where members of the LGBTQ+ community will be given a chance to be heard and fully express what they feel. Furthermore, information as initiatives aim to enlighten the minds of the people around them and minimize or hopefully eliminate microaggression and other hostilities against students of color.

> *"Information drive about aning microaggression ug about sa LGBTQ+. Tana tagaan ug time ngamakaisturuya ka para makitaunsapudilangmganabatingaingonanadiaysila, ingonani ko. Ang pinakakinahanglangyud kay information gyud sir.* (I suggest having an information drive about microaggression about LGBTQ+. I hope students of color will be given time to express their feelings. Information about microaggression is very significant in combating these issues.)"- Graduating Miss Sergeant

Similarly, Dancing Future Teacher believed that information drives helped minimize and ultimately mitigate microaggression. He believed that information drives about microaggression benefit not only students of color but also non-community members. Accordingly, these information drives will help people understand the LGBTQ+ community and eventually foster harmonious coexistence.

> *"Symposium siguro sir about aning microaggression. Dili man mangudni para saamoapero para man gyudnisatanan. Kanangipasabotgyud tana sailahangamakabalosila ug makasabotsilasaamoa through information drives.* (I prefer symposiums tackling microaggression. This is not only for our benefit but for all. It is a way for them to be informed and to understand us.)"- Dancing Future Teacher

3.13.2 Promotional Activities

School activities such as sports and conventions commonly emphasize gender-specific movements and behaviors between gender-conformant students and gender-deviant ones or students of color. This may result in further radicalization, microaggression, and other gender-based discrimination (Block, 2014). However, meticulously planned activities can also help create a safe space for students of color. Inclusive activities such as icebreakers, games, competitions, or joining school clubs that omit gender-based biases and clustering successfully promote safe spaces for students of color (Kissam, 2021).

On this note, Sargent Shiftee believes that constant activities for the LGBTQ+ community will help promote their well-being. These activities will allow members of the LGBTQ+ community to express themselves. As they express themselves further, people around them will gain a better understanding, potentially reducing microaggressions and other gender-based hostilities and prejudices.

> *"Sa atuang school is tana naatay constant nga program promoting LGBTQ+. Parehasanangmga pageant, games, sports ug mga seminars. Para samgakatongmaglisodpagawassailanggibati, mapagawasgyudnila para dilinasila mag duha-duha.* (I hope that our school will constantly conduct activities that promote the LGBTQ+ community such as, pageants, games and seminars. By these, those who are hesitant to come out may be able to fully express themselves.)"- Sargent Shiftee

3.13.3 Counseling

Students' social, moral, emotional, intellectual, mental, and physical development can be significantly supported by guidance and counseling. With that, conducting these services can help a student cope in school and guide those lost in their tracks. In the case of microaggression, counseling intervention helps the victims redeem themselves and helps the aggressors realize their mistakes. Additionally, effective counseling guides students to make wise life decisions and succeed later in life by providing them with appropriate information about their academics, personal life, and professional life in the future (Iqbal et al., 2023).

Dancing Future Engineer suggested that the school should implement a counseling program. He emphasized the importance of having a counselor or a designated focal person exceptionally dedicated to addressing the concerns of students of color. This counseling program, according to him, will serve as a support system for victims of microaggression and other gender-related struggles. A support system would involve actively listening to their concern, providing comfort during difficult times, and proposing effective countermeasures to enhance the overall well-being of students of color.

> *"Kanangdapat every LGBTQ+ member diria is naaganisilamaisturyahansailangmgaproblema. Taposkailangannila nag isa ka tao or isa ka personnel ngailangmaisturyahansailangmgahinanakit.* (I suggest that LGBTQ+ should have someone to share their problems with, and that person should also listen to their resentments.)" - Dancing Future Engineer

This section provided various perspectives on how schools can support students of color. The participants emphasized the importance of educational discussions, information drives, and counseling programs

to address and mitigate microaggressive behaviors. Knowledge on the matter was also highlighted as a crucial factor in resolving the issue, and the participants suggested that enrichment and continuous exposure to LGBTQ+ ideas and behaviors could contribute to fostering acceptance in society.

IV. CONCLUSION

As the researcher observed on the statements of the participants, microaggression was very evident and rampant everywhere. It has even come to a point where people think these are normal and harmless. Microaggressions are present in conversations and communication with different groups of people. They tend to be undermined since they are not deliberate or intentional. From the perspective of other people, it may be viewed as harmless joke or a friendly advice without realizing the potential damage it can cause to another person's self-perception. As these incidents constantly occur, the person targeted by microaggression feels alienated. Over time, these types of interactions can greatly damage a person, mental health leading to issues such as trauma, anxiety and, depression.

The study also confirms that microaggression has greatly affected learning experience of students of colors at school. Even though theses students of colors try their best to perform and carry out their task, they felt inadequate, resulting to more difficulties in learning. Microaggression not only hampers with their academics but also affects their involvement in extra-curricular activities. The participants become hesitant or even refrain from performing such tasks and activities out of fear that showing their true selves will lead to more unpleasant situations. Students of colors who frequently hear hears homophonic terms and slurs feel distressed and are unable to focus. Additionally, students experiencing microaggression exhibit poor mental health and academic performance, self-esteem and discomfort with their own sexual orientation, feelings of security and belongingness, and tend to avoid interactions with peers and teachers.

As these microaggressions disturb the well-being and learning of the participants, they have also devised coping mechanisms to deal with its effects. Most of these coping mechanisms involved concealment and non-confrontational approaches to the problem. Some participants also turned to vices and other negative coping mechanisms. If not controlled, such coping mechanisms may create greater harm to students of colors. There were also coping mechanisms that involves music and companionships. The variety of coping mechanisms depicts the diversity of possible outcomes of microaggression. Since microaggression has various forms, each victim has a different experience and different reactions. Thus, a one-size-fits-all social approach is not advisable. Regardless of the difference of each experience and reaction, social support provides momentary comfort to the victim.

Lastly, the study acknowledges the ideas of the participants to alleviate the microaggression situation in the school. Majority of the participants believe that proper knowledge is significant contributor to resolve this predicament. Some students of colors are unaware of microaggression and its effects on them. By educating themselves, they will understand further this problem and may be able to device more efficient solution to this phenomenon. Simultaneously, educating the rest of the population may greatly contribute to the mitigation of microaggression. In addition, policies and programs such as counselling and introduction of gender-sensitive curriculum amendments will strengthen the fight against microaggression. After the information was established, heavier actions such as these will push further the cause. Thirdly, as one of the participants have mentioned, constant activities that showcases the talents and abilities of the LGBTQ+ community will be instrumental in fostering understanding and acceptance. Moreover, boost their morals and introduce to the world who they are and what are they capable of.

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