

Construction and Validation of a Proposed Sexual Orientation Competency Assessment Tool for Guidance Workers

Marty Ian Gideon T. Flores
School of Advanced Studies, Pangasinan State University
martyflores.phdstudies@gmail.com

Date Submitted:
April 13, 2026

Date Accepted:
May 21, 2026

Date Published:
June 07, 2026

DOI:
10.5281/zenodo.20581860

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop and validate a Sexual Orientation Competency Assessment Tool for guidance workers. Utilizing a descriptive-developmental research design, the study involved graduate students in guidance and counseling programs as respondents. The instrument was constructed based on existing literature and theoretical frameworks, covering four domains: knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and ethical considerations. Content validation was conducted by expert evaluators using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR), while reliability was assessed through the Kuder–Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20). Findings revealed that the instrument demonstrated very high validity ($M = 4.86$) and moderate reliability ($KR-20 = 0.522$). Results further indicated that guidance workers exhibited an overall average level of competency, with strengths in ethical considerations and skills, but gaps in

knowledge and attitudes and values. Significant relationships were found between educational attainment and competency levels, while nature of employment also influenced selected domains. The findings highlight the need for enhanced training, curriculum development, and institutional support to improve competency in addressing sexual orientation concerns. The validated tool provides a useful framework for assessing and informing professional development among guidance workers.

Keywords: *Test Construction, Validation, Sexual Orientation, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Guidance Workers, Competency Assessment*

INTRODUCTION

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” - Article 1 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (LGB) and other sexual minority individuals, all over the world, faces violence and discrimination of whatever form and degree. A recent published report of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation in the United States of America, 2016 LGBT Youth Report, revealed that each year, since 2012, there has been an increase in anti-LGBT state legislation targeting directly the LGBT youth. These legislations particularly banning or regulating the ability of the LGBT youth to live openly and freely as their true selves everywhere from school bathrooms and athletics, to accessing gender-affirming care. The scenario in the Philippines is not far from the other progressive countries. A report by Human Rights Watch revealed that students in the Philippines face bullying and discrimination in school because of their LGBT status.

Schools, being the beacon of hope of the society, should be inclusive, impartial, and a safe space for everyone. However, schools are not free from violence and discrimination, especially for students who identified

as LGBT. In the Philippines alone, students across the country experience bullying and discrimination in school because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. According to a 68-page report on Human Rights Watch (2017), “Just Let Us Be:” schools impose rigid gender norms on students and promotes heteronormativity in a variety of ways—for example dress codes, restrictions on hair length, gendered restrooms, and dichotomous groupings based on sex. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 34% of LGBT teens reported having been bullied in school, and 18% said they had been forced to have sex. In its 2016 nationwide survey of high school students, LGB young people are far more likely to experience violence and bullying, and attempt suicide, than their heterosexual peers. In a recent survey of more than 17,000 youths aged 13 to 24 conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Europe found that 54% of LGBT people said that they had been bullied at least once in school, based on their sexuality.

In creating a safe and inclusive environment for LGBT students, school administrators and teachers are expected to promote positive changes where they address health disparities and help LGBT youth thrive in schools and institute supportive policies and practices throughout the school community (Center for Disease Control and Prevention 2021), prevent discrimination through education and awareness (Shuler and White, 2022), and become role models and provide supportive intervention (Lynch, 2016).

One of the support services for students’ development and wellbeing is the guidance counseling office. Guidance counselors, specifically in the Philippines, play a crucial role in schools. According to Harrison, King, and Hocson (2023), guidance counselors often carry out dual roles and experience a lack of clarity in their role. Often times, guidance counselor’s role combines elements of being an educator, educational leader, and mental health professional. With these diverse roles, guidance counselors are in the position to be an agent of change in the school community. As such, the Republic Act No. 9258 or Philippine Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004 recognized the indispensable role of the guidance counselors. The Act professionalizes the practice of guidance and counseling and created the Professional Regulatory Board (PRB) of Guidance and Counseling.

Guidance and Counseling is defined in Republic Act No. 9258 as a profession that involves the use of integrated approach to the development of a well-functioning individual primarily by helping him or her to utilize his or her potentials to the fullest and plan his or her future in accordance with his or her abilities, interests and needs. The practice of guidance and counseling in the Philippines includes counseling, psychological testing, research, placement, group process, teaching, and other human development services. A guidance counselor, on the other hand, is a natural person who has been registered and issued a valid Certificate of Registration and a valid Professional Identification Card by the PRB of Guidance and Counseling and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC). The minimum requirement before taking the state licensure examination for the guidance and counseling is a master’s degree.

The strict requirements of RA 9258 to become a guidance counseling professional are not commensurate with the low salary grade in schools lead to the scarcity of guidance counselors in the Philippines (Valdez, 2018). As of May 2020, the Department of Education (DepEd) has only 1,096 active counselors. There are a total of 5,398 “authorized” positions for the position but only 20% have been filled. With 20 million public school students, it is next to impossible to meet the recommended ratio of one guidance counselor for every 500 students as mandated by the agency (Magsambol and Chi, 2020). This shortage of guidance counselors hampers the DepEd’s efforts to protect students’ mental health fearing a surge on numbers of student suicides (Chi, 2023). To alleviate the shortage, in schools without any registered guidance counselor, teachers are assigned to become “guidance teachers” to provide psychosocial support to students despite not having the license to do so.

The scarcity of guidance counselors has a significant impact on the well-being of LGBT students. Research shows that LGBT youth are disproportionately bullied, verbally and physically harassed and assaulted in schools by peers and staff (Abreu, McEachern, Hall, and Kenny, 2018). Such hostility has been correlated to lower school performance and psychological and emotional distress, including suicidal ideation and attempt, depression, and anxiety. According to Abreu, McEachern, Hall and Kenny (2018), many LGBT students identify guidance counselors as the one staff member to whom they are most likely to disclose concerns related to their sexual and gender identity. Given this reality, guidance counselors are uniquely positioned to address myths about LGBT

youth, to advocate for these students, and to effect change. However, the scarcity of competent guidance counselors can lead to a lack of support for these students, exacerbating their challenges.

The scarce number of guidance counselors coupled with challenges and specific competency requirements in working with LGBT students add up to the problem. According to Alibudbud (2023), negative societal attitudes towards LGBT individuals can lead to higher rates of mental disorders. These negative attitudes have also been reported among mental health professionals. The Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) have affirmed its commitment to gender-affirming mental healthcare through its policy statement calling on psychologists “to ensure the advancement of LGBT rights and welfare (Manalastas and Torre, 2016).” Further, Alibudbud (2023) emphasized that other Philippine professional organizations, such as the Philippine Psychiatric Association (PPA) and the Philippine Guidance and Counseling Association (PGCA), should call on their members to uphold the commitment to advance LGBT inclusion, affirmation, and rights in their professional practice. The lack of policy of these professional organizations, especially in the guidance and counseling profession, led to a “limited number of trained counselors who can address the mental health issues of LGBT individuals (Alibudbud, 2023).” The lack of queer competence among many practitioners may be due to the small number of available LGBT courses and training opportunities for counseling graduate students and professionals (Friedman and Brophy, 2021) and their counterpart (guidance teachers) in schools.

The above cited studies led the researcher to conduct a study related to the competencies of guidance workers in working with LGBT students. The researcher aimed to bridge a gap in literature on the topic of mental health and sexuality, and to construct and validate a tool to assess the competency of guidance workers in lieu with students’ sexual orientation.

This study aimed to construct and validate a proposed sexual orientation competency assessment tool for guidance workers. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: (1) to describe the profile of the guidance workers; (2) to determine the level of content validity and reliability of the proposed sexual orientation competency assessment; (3) to determine the level of competency of guidance workers based on the proposed tool; and (4) to determine the significant relationship between the sexual orientation competency and profile of the guidance workers.

The hypothesis was tested using 5% level significance. There is a significant relationship between the sexual orientation competency and profile of the guidance workers.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-developmental design. Descriptive research was used to characterize the current competency levels of guidance workers without manipulating variables (Manjunatha, 2019). Concurrently, a developmental approach guided the construction and validation of a sexual orientation competency assessment tool. Design and Development Research (DDR) was adopted to systematically design, develop, and evaluate the instrument.

Locale And Respondents

The study was conducted at the School of Advanced Studies, Pangasinan State University–Urdaneta Campus. Respondents included master’s and doctoral students in guidance and counseling programs, regardless of licensure or current professional practice.

Instrumentation

A researcher-developed questionnaire was utilized due to the lack of culturally appropriate tools for the Philippine context. The instrument was informed by literature on LGBTQ experiences, counseling competencies, and relevant theoretical frameworks.

The tool comprised two parts:

1. Profile variables (e.g., age, sex, education, employment), used for descriptive analysis.
2. Competency assessment, measuring knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and ethical considerations through multiple-choice items.

Initially, 20 items per domain were constructed. The instrument underwent expert validation by five specialists.

Data Gathering Procedure

Design and Construction

The researcher defined the tool's purpose, target users (guidance workers), domains, scoring system, and validation procedures. Items were developed based on the literature and organized by domain using a multiple-choice format.

Validation and Reliability

Content validity was established using expert evaluation and the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) (Lawshe, 1975; Gilbert & Prion, 2016). Items meeting the critical CVR value for five experts (≥ 0.99) were retained, while others were revised or discarded. The instrument was pilot-tested, and reliability was assessed using the Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20) coefficient.

Scoring

Items were scored dichotomously (1 = correct, 0 = incorrect). Domain scores were averaged and converted into percentage scores, interpreted using standard descriptive levels (Very Low to Very High).

Data Collection

Informed consent was obtained prior to administration. Data were collected and treated with strict confidentiality.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and non-discrimination. Participants were assured of minimal risk, and cultural sensitivity was maintained throughout the research process.

Statistical Treatment

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) summarized respondent profiles and scores.

1. Content validity: CVR (Lawshe, 1975)
2. Reliability: KR-20
3. Relationships: Pearson correlation coefficient (r)

Scores were interpreted using the following scale:

81–100 (Very High), 61–80 (High), 41–60 (Average), 21–40 (Low), 1–20 (Very Low)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the guidance workers. The majority of respondents were female (82.6%), consistent with trends in the counseling profession where women comprise a dominant proportion (Hammond, 2017; Harrison et al., 2023).

Most respondents were single (60.9%). Counseling is recognized as emotionally demanding, which may influence personal relationships, while single individuals have been associated with greater autonomy and personal growth (DePaulo, 2016).

In terms of religion, 56.5% identified as Protestant/Christian, reflecting the historical emphasis of Protestant traditions on counseling and mental health services (Tuininga, 2017).

Regarding professional characteristics, the majority held a bachelor's degree (73.9%), were licensed practitioners (82.6%), and had permanent employment status (69.6%). Most were employed in the public sector (65.2%) and had five years or less of professional experience (68.6%). Common designations included Associate Guidance Counselor (17.3%) and Faculty (17.3%).

Table 1. *Profile of the Guidance Workers n=23*

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	4	17.4
	Female	19	82.6
Civil Status	Single	14	60.9
	Married	9	39.1
Religion	Roman Catholic	10	43.5
	Protestant/Christian	13	56.5
Highest Educational Attainment	Undergraduate	17	73.9
	Master's Degree	6	26.1
Eligibility	PRC	19	82.6
	Civil Service	2	8.7
	No Eligibility	2	8.7
Employment Status	Permanent	16	69.6
	Contractual/Probationary	6	26.1
	Self-Employed	1	4.3
Nature of Employment	Public	15	65.2
	Private	7	30.4
	Others	1	4.3
Years of Service	5 Years and Below	16	69.6
	6-10	5	21.7
	More than 10 years	2	8.7
Designation	Associate Guidance Counselor	4	17.3
	Faculty	4	17.3
	Guidance Advocate	3	13.0
	Guidance Associate	2	8.7
	Guidance Counselor	1	4.3
	Guidance Designate	1	4.3
	Medical Services Head	1	4.3
	Self-employed	1	4.3
	Social Welfare Officer	1	4.3
	Teacher	1	4.3
	Vice Principal/Guidance Coordinator	1	4.3
	Not Specified	3	13.0

Validation of the Instrument

The initial design allocated an equal number of items ($n = 20$) across four domains—knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and ethical considerations—to ensure balanced representation. However, following expert validation using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR), item retention varied: 7 items each for knowledge and attitudes and values, 14 for skills, and 17 for ethical considerations.

This variation reflects differences in conceptual clarity and relevance across domains. Ethical considerations, being more clearly defined, yielded higher agreement among experts, whereas knowledge and attitudes involved more nuanced constructs, resulting in lower retention. This outcome supports the prioritization of content validity over numerical balance, ensuring that retained items are conceptually aligned and meaningful.

Despite the uneven distribution, all domains remain adequately represented for measurement purposes. Future studies may expand item pools and employ cognitive interviews to improve item clarity and domain coverage.

Table 2 summarizes the retained and eliminated items based on content validity results.

Table 2. *Summary of Number of Items Retained and Eliminated for the Proposed Sexual Orientation Competency Assessment Tool for Guidance Workers*

Domain	Retained	Eliminated
Knowledge	7	13
Skills	14	6
Values and Attitudes	7	13
Ethical Consideration	17	3
TOTAL	45	35

Level of Content Validation of the Proposed Tool

As shown in Table 3, nine out of ten indicators were rated Very Highly Valid, while Item 4 (visual appeal and layout) received a High Average rating, the lowest among the indicators. Overall, the proposed instrument achieved a Very Highly Valid (VHV) rating, with a mean score of 4.86, indicating that it is well-constructed, clear, comprehensive, and aligned with its intended purpose (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2017).

The relatively lower rating for visual appeal and layout ($M = 4.00$) suggests minor issues in typographic and spatial presentation. Although generally acceptable, aspects such as spacing and formatting may affect respondent comprehension and engagement. Prior research emphasizes that poor layout and dense formatting can lead to confusion and respondent fatigue (Dillman et al., 2014), while effective use of whitespace and visual hierarchy enhances readability and usability (Tullis & Albert, 2013).

Table 3. *Level of Content Validity of the Proposed Sexual Orientation Competency Assessment Tool for Guidance Workers $n=5$*

Indicator	Mean	Description
1. The directions given are clear in all subsections of the instrument.	5.00	VHV
2. Each of the items is clearly stated.	4.80	VHV
3. Each of the items is readable.	5.00	VHV
4. Each of the items is attractive to read; enough space is provided to avoid crowding among items.	4.00	HV
5. The instrument is comprehensive; it covers all areas of the study.	5.00	VHV
6. Each item is focused on one particular thought or idea.	5.00	VHV
7. The items are objective; the responses to be elicited are neither biased/subjective.	5.00	VHV
8. The items are formulated in accordance to the explicit/implicit objectives of the study.	5.00	VHV
9. The items are systematically arranged to the desirable sequence.	5.00	VHV

10. The items do not overlap with each other; no duplication is observed.		4.80	VHV	
Overall Mean		4.86	VHV	
Legend:	4.21 – 5.00	Very Highly Valid	1.81 – 2.60	Fairly Valid
	3.41 – 3.40	Highly Valid	1.00 – 1.80	Not Valid
	2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Valid		

Reliability

To assess the consistency of the instrument, reliability was evaluated using the Kuder–Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20) within a test–retest framework. KR-20 is a widely used measure of internal consistency for dichotomous items, estimating the extent to which items measure a common construct.

The instrument was administered to the same group at two time points, and KR-20 coefficients were computed. The overall reliability was moderate (KR-20 = 0.522), indicating acceptable internal consistency. Among the domains, Attitudes and Values demonstrated the highest reliability (KR-20 = 0.399), followed by Ethical Considerations (KR-20 = 0.340) and Knowledge (KR-20 = 0.270), all reflecting low internal consistency. Notably, the Skills domain yielded a negative coefficient (KR-20 = -0.194), suggesting issues with item homogeneity, potentially due to poor item construction, high response variability, or unclear domain structure.

These findings indicate the need for further refinement, particularly in the Skills domain, to improve the overall reliability of the instrument.

Table 4. *Proposed Sexual Orientation Competency Assessment Tool for Guidance Workers in Terms of Test-Retest*

Section	Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR20)
Knowledge	0.270
Skills	-0.194
Attitude and Values	0.399
Ethical Consideration	0.340
Overall	0.522

Level of Competency of the Guidance Workers Based on the Proposed Sexual Orientation Competency Assessment Tool

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics of guidance workers' competency in sexual orientation across domains, including minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis.

Results indicate that Ethical Considerations (M = 10.39) and Skills (M = 6.43) are the strongest domains, suggesting higher perceived competence in ethical application and practical skills. In contrast, Knowledge (M = 2.78) and Attitudes and Values (M = 2.91) are comparatively lower, highlighting gaps in foundational understanding and internalized affirming perspectives. Moderate variability was observed across domains, with Ethical Considerations showing the greatest dispersion (SD = 2.17), indicating uneven competency levels.

Table 5. *Descriptive Statistic on the Competency Performance on the Proposed Sexual Orientation Competency Assessment Tool Among Guidance Workers*

Statistic	Knowledge 7	Skills 14	Attitude and Values 7	Ethical Consideration 17	Overall 45
Minimum	0.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	12.00
Maximum	5.00	9.00	5.00	14.00	30.00
Mean	2.78	6.43	2.91	10.39	22.52
Standard Deviation	1.44	1.56	1.50	2.17	4.33

Skewness	0.02	-0.10	-0.01	-1.17	-0.51
Kurtosis	-1.00	-0.83	-0.95	2.35	0.21

Ethical Considerations exhibited negative skewness (-1.17) and high kurtosis (2.35), suggesting clustering of high scores with a few low outliers. Other domains showed near-symmetric distributions with negative kurtosis, indicating more dispersed scores.

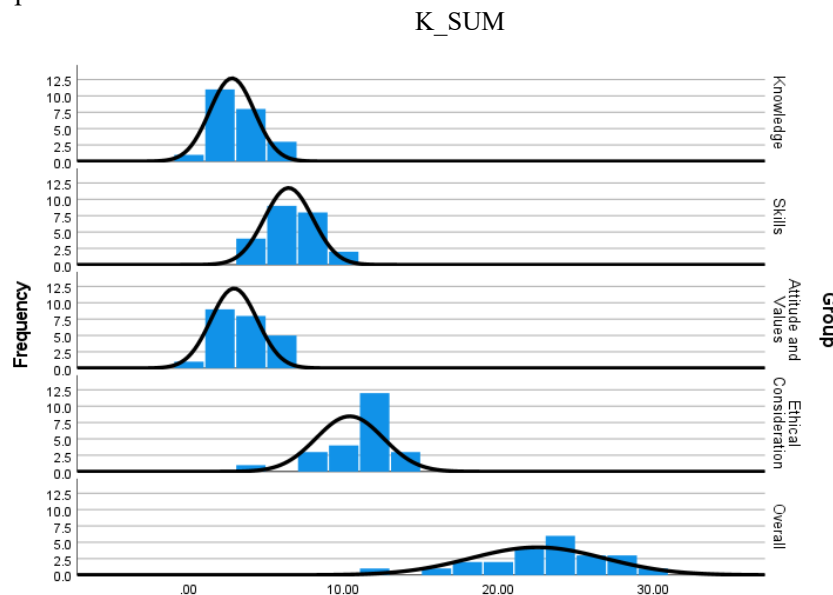


Figure 1. *Histogram of Performance on the Proposed Sexual Orientation Competency Assessment Tool Among Guidance Workers*

As illustrated in Figure 1, distribution patterns varied across domains. Knowledge showed slight skewness, indicating variability in conceptual understanding, while Skills demonstrated wider dispersion, reflecting differences in practical competence. Attitudes and Values displayed a more concentrated distribution, suggesting consistency in responses, although potential social desirability bias cannot be ruled out. Ethical Considerations showed moderate spread, and overall scores followed a near-normal distribution, indicating balanced aggregate performance despite domain-specific disparities.

Level of Sexual Orientation Competency of the Guidance Workers

Table 6 presents the competency levels of guidance workers across domains. In the Knowledge domain, the absence of Very High ratings and the predominance of Average and Low scores indicate insufficient conceptual understanding of sexual orientation issues. This suggests gaps in pre-service education and continuing professional development. Prior studies emphasize that knowledge is foundational to counselor competency, and its absence may lead to reinforcement of heteronormative assumptions (Bidell, 2005; Moog et al., 2020).

In the Skills domain, most respondents demonstrated moderate competence, indicating the ability to perform basic tasks but limited mastery of advanced, affirming practices. The lack of High and Very High ratings points to insufficient experiential training. Advanced competencies—such as challenging heteronormativity and adapting interventions to LGB clients—remain underdeveloped (Aliason, 2009; Alibudbud, 2024). Low skill levels are particularly concerning in school settings, where counselors play a critical role in supporting LGB youth (Graham, 2009).

For Attitudes and Values, a substantial proportion of respondents fell within Low to Very Low categories, suggesting ambivalence or non-affirming perspectives. Such attitudes may undermine therapeutic relationships and

compromise client safety (Graham, 2009). Affirming values have been linked not only to training but also to multicultural competence and personal exposure (Kanamori & Jeffrey, 2017).

In contrast, Ethical Considerations yielded predominantly High ratings, indicating awareness and application of professional ethical standards. This aligns with findings that ethical competence is often the most developed domain due to explicit professional guidelines (Bidell, 2005; Alibudbud, 2023). However, high ethical awareness does not necessarily translate to nuanced decision-making in complex contexts, particularly in environments with limited institutional support (Ali et al., 2017; Manalastas & Torre, 2016).

Overall, the predominance of Average ratings, coupled with the absence of Very High scores and the presence of Low ratings, suggests general adequacy but insufficient mastery. These findings underscore the need for sustained training, curriculum enhancement, and institutional support to strengthen guidance workers' competency in addressing sexual orientation concerns (Manalastas & Torre, 2016).

Table 6. Level of Sexual Orientation Competency Among Guidance Workers on the Proposed Assessment Tool n=23

Level of Competency	Knowledge 7		Skills 14		Attitude and Values 7		Ethical Consideration 17		Overall 45	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
	Very high	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.3	0
High	3	13.0	2	8.7	5	21.7	14	60.9	3	13.0
Average	8	34.8	16	69.6	8	34.8	7	30.4	16	69.6
Low	8	34.8	5	21.7	6	26.1	1	4.3	4	17.4
Very Low	4	17.4	0	0.0	4	17.4	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 7. Relationship Between Sexual Orientation Competency and Profile of Guidance Workers

Profile		Knowledge	Skills	Attitude and Values	Ethical Consideration	Overall
Age	r	-0.185	0.068	-0.094	-0.006	-0.073
	Sig.	0.399	0.759	0.671	0.980	0.742
Sex	r _{pb}	0.011	0.281	0.129	0.085	0.192
	Sig.	0.962	0.194	0.558	0.701	0.380
Civil status	r _{pb}	-0.255	-0.053	-0.013	0.398	0.091
	Sig.	0.240	0.809	0.952	0.060	0.681
Religion	r _{pb}	-0.135	-0.382	-0.052	-0.086	-0.244
	Sig.	0.539	0.072	0.814	0.695	0.261
Highest educational attainment	r _{pb}	0.161	.414*	.506*	0.404	.582**
	Sig.	0.462	0.049	0.014	0.056	0.004
Employment status	r _{pb}	-0.170	0.018	-0.349	0.048	-0.142
	Sig.	0.450	0.937	0.111	0.830	0.530
Nature of employment	r _{pb}	-0.006	-0.011	-.458*	-.440*	-0.372
	Sig.	0.978	0.960	0.032	0.040	0.088
Number of years as guidance worker and	r	-0.085	-0.010	0.006	0.005	-0.028
	Sig.	0.701	0.963	0.979	0.982	0.901

*Significant at 5% level. Variables Eligibility and Designation were excluded due to small number of cases on some categories. Some categories were merged to meet test requirement.

Table 7 presents the relationships between sexual orientation competency and respondents' profile variables across the domains of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and ethical considerations. Overall, correlations were weak to moderate and largely non-significant. Variables such as age, sex, civil status, religion, and employment status showed no meaningful associations with competency outcomes.

Notably, the highest educational attainment demonstrated significant positive correlations with skills ($r = 0.414$, $p = 0.049$), attitudes and values ($r = 0.506$, $p = 0.014$), and overall competency ($r = 0.582$, $p = 0.004$). This indicates that respondents with higher academic qualifications tend to exhibit greater competency, particularly in applied skills and affirming perspectives. This finding is consistent with prior research showing that advanced education enhances counselors' readiness to address sexual orientation concerns (Moog et al., 2020).

Conversely, nature of employment showed significant negative correlations with attitudes and values ($r = -0.458$, $p = 0.032$) and ethical considerations ($r = -0.440$, $p = 0.040$), suggesting that respondents in public institutions demonstrate higher competency in these domains compared to those in private settings. This may be attributed to stronger institutional frameworks in the public sector, including structured diversity training and accountability mechanisms (Ensslin et al., 2021; Acharyya & Agarwala, 2020). In the Philippine context, public sector systems such as competency-based performance management may further support the development of inclusive and ethical practices.

Other variables, including years of service, showed negligible relationships with competency outcomes.

Overall, the findings highlight the significant role of education and institutional context in shaping sexual orientation competency among guidance workers.

Summary Of Findings

The study revealed that most respondents were female (82.6%), single (60.9%), Protestant/Christian (56.5%), bachelor's degree holders (73.9%), PRC-licensed (82.6%), permanently employed (69.6%), working in the public sector (65.2%), and with five years or less of service (69.6%).

The proposed instrument demonstrated very high content validity ($M = 4.86$) and moderate reliability ($KR-20 = 0.522$), indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Guidance workers exhibited an overall average level of competency (69.6%), suggesting general adequacy but limited mastery.

Significant relationships were found between educational attainment and competency—particularly in skills ($r = 0.414$, $p = 0.049$), attitudes and values ($r = 0.506$, $p = 0.014$), and overall scores ($r = 0.582$, $p = 0.004$). In contrast, nature of employment showed significant negative correlations with attitudes and values ($r = -0.458$, $p = 0.032$) and ethical considerations ($r = -0.440$, $p = 0.040$).

CONCLUSIONS

The findings indicate that guidance workers generally possess adequate but not advanced competency in addressing sexual orientation concerns. While the instrument demonstrated strong validity and acceptable reliability, further refinement is warranted to improve internal consistency.

The absence of high-level competency scores and the presence of lower ratings suggest gaps in preparedness to effectively support LGB clients. Educational attainment emerged as a key factor associated with higher competency, whereas employment context also influenced outcomes.

Recommendations

Future research should:

1. Further evaluate and refine the instrument to improve reliability, item difficulty, and domain coverage.
2. Re-examine and revise items excluded during validation for potential inclusion.
3. Administer the tool to larger and more diverse samples to strengthen its psychometric properties.

References

- Abreu, R. L., McEachern, A. G., Hall, J. G., and Kenny, M. C. (2018, October 1). Promoting LGBTQ students' well-being in schools. *Counseling Today*. Retrieved from <https://ct.counseling.org/2018/10/promoting-lgbtq-students-well-being-in-schools/>
- Acharyya, M., and Agarwala, T. (2020). Relationship between CSR motivations and corporate social performance: A study in the power industry in India. *Employee Relations*, ahead-of-print. <https://www.sciencegate.app/document/10.1108/er-01-2019-0091>
- Ali, S. R., Stone, D., and Van Horn Kerne, V. (2017). Exploratory factor analysis of the SOCCS. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 11(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15538605.2017.1273800>
- Aliaison, M. (2009). Affirming attitudes and communication in LGBT counseling. In Burnes, T. R., and Singh, A. A. (Eds.), *ALGBTIC Competency Guidelines*. American Counseling Association.
- Alibudbud R (2023) Gender in mental health: toward an LGBTQ+ inclusive and affirming psychiatry and mental healthcare in the Philippines. *Front. Psychiatry* 14:1189231. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2023.1189231
- Alibudbud, R. (2024). Incorporating LGBTQ+ mental health into psychiatric training in the Philippines. *BJPsych International*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bji.2024.15>
- Bidell, M. P. (2005). The Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale: Assessing cultural competence in counseling lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients. *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Counseling*, 44(2), 184–195. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.184>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, November 15). Core competencies for professional development: Supporting LGBTQ+ youth in schools. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/safe-supportive-environments/pd-lgbtq.htm>
- Chi, Christina. "Lack of Guidance Counselors Hampers Prevention of Student Suicides." *Philstar*, 1 February 2023, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/02/01/2241784/lack-guidance-counselors-hampers-prevention-student-suicides>. Accessed 10 November 2023.
- Cohen, R. J., and Swerdlik, M. E. (2017). *Psychological testing and assessment: An introduction to tests and measurement* (9th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- DePaulo, B. (2016, August 5). What no one ever told you about people who are single. Plenary Address presented at the American Psychological Association Annual Convention, Denver, CO.
- Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., and Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method* (4th ed.). Wiley.
- Ensslin, S. R., Welter, L. M., and Pedersini, D. R. (2021). Performance evaluation: A comparative study between public and private sectors. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349724944>
- Friedman, J., and Brophy, M. (2021, June 1). Pride in practice: The journey toward LGBTQ+ counseling competence. *Counseling Today*. Retrieved from <https://ct.counseling.org/2021/06/pride-in-practice-the-journey-towards-lgbtq-counseling-competence/>
- Gilbert, G. E., and Prion, S. (2016). Making sense of methods and measurement: Lawshe's content validity index. *Applied Nursing Research*, 34, 175-176.
- Graham, S. (2009). Impact of training on counselor competency with LGB clients. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*.
- Hammond, C. (2017, March). Is counselling women's work? *Therapy Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.bacp.co.uk/bacp-journals/therapy-today/2017/march/is-counselling-womens-work/>
- Harrison, E. J. (2022). Cross-Culture Perceptions of Justice: A Comparative Study of Ethical Principles. *International Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Art*, 4(2), 1195–1211. <https://culturajournal.com/submissions/index.php/ijpca/article/download/1195/1011>
- Harrison, M., King, R., and Hocson, S. (2023). The Roles of School Counselors in the Philippines: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Psychologists and Counselors in Schools*, 33(2), 161-174. doi:10.1017/jgc.2023.4
- Human Rights Campaign. (2016, August 11). Alarming CDC data show LGBTQ youth face high rates of violence and bullying. Retrieved from <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/alarming-cdc-data-show-lgbtq-youth-face-high-rates-of-violence-and-bullying>
- Human Rights Watch. (2017). Philippines: LGBT Students Face Bullying, Abuse. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/21/philippines-lgbt-students-face-bullying-abuse>

- Kanamori, Y., and Jeffrey, J. (2017). Multicultural competence and counselor attitudes toward LGBT clients. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 4(2), 123–131. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000213>
- Lawshe, C. H. (1975). A quantitative approach to content validity. *Personnel Psychology*, 28(4), 563–575.
- Lynch, M. (2016, January 18). 3 Things Every Educator Should Know about Supporting LGBT Students. *The Advocate*. Retrieved from <https://www.theedadvocate.org/3-things-every-educator-should-know-about-supporting-lgbt-students/>
- Magsambol, B. and Chi, C. (2020, September 3). Shortage of guidance counselors: How will students cope in a pandemic? *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/shortage-guidance-counselors-how-students-cope-pandemic/>
- Manalastas EJ, Torre BA. LGBT psychology in the Philippines. *Psychol Sexual Rev.* (2016) 7:60–72. doi: 10.53841/bpssex.2016.7.1.60
- Manjunatha.N. (2019). Descriptive Research. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 6(6). Retrieved from <https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR1908597.pdf>
- Moog, R., Hang, N., and Que-Legaspi, E. X. (2020). Counselors' perceptions and competencies in handling LGB clients. *De La Salle University Research Congress Proceedings*. Retrieved from <https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/pdf/conferences/research-congress-proceedings/2020/LCC-08.pdf>
- Shuler, A., and White, C. (January 7, 2022). Supportive Schools: School Administrators and School Board Members – Know Your Rights and How to Fight for Them. Campaign for Southern Equality. Retrieved from <https://southernequality.org/supportive-schools-school-administrators-and-school-board-members-know-your-rights-and-how-to-fight-for-them/>
- Tullis, T., and Albert, B. (2013). *Measuring the user experience: Collecting, analyzing, and presenting usability metrics* (2nd ed.). Morgan Kaufmann.
- Tuininga, M. J. (2017, October 11). Christian ethics, Protestant and Catholic: 500 years after the Reformation. Calvin Theological Seminary. <https://calvinseminary.edu/article/christian-ethics-protestant-and-catholic-500-years-after-the-reformation/>
- Valdez, Denise. “Lack of Registered Guidance Counselors Forces Schools to Keep Unlicensed Ones: Part 1.” *ABS-CBN News*, 14 January 2018, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/01/14/18/lack-of-registered-guidance-counselors-forces-schools-to-keep-unlicensed-ones-part-1>. Accessed 10 November 2023.