

Mental Health Intervention Plan (MHIP) for Graduate Students of Mariano Marcos State University

Alyna Hasmine L. Basilio¹, Geraldeen B. Pascual²

^{1,2}Guidance Counselor, Mariano Marcos State University

Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the psychological well-being and challenges of graduate students, as basis for designing a mental health intervention plan to address their specific needs. A total of 250 Mariano Marcos State University Graduate School students from all degree programs and levels, who were enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2022-2023, were randomly selected to participate in the study. The data collection process involved gathering information on the sociodemographic profiles and administering the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Survey. This survey was used to assess the respondents' levels of psychological well-being across various subscales, including autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, purpose in life, personal growth, and self-acceptance. To validate the students' responses, an open-ended question survey format was utilized. The collected data were then analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, and the median split method.

The overall results of the psychological well-being survey reveal that a majority of the students exhibited high levels of autonomy and low levels in several subscales, including environmental mastery, positive relations with others, purpose in life, personal growth, and self-acceptance. Based on these findings, the Mental Health Intervention Plan (MHIP) was developed. The MHIP consists of eight components encompassing areas of concern, objectives, strategies, individuals involved, time frame, expected outcomes, budget, and evaluation techniques.

The content validation conducted by experts confirmed the soundness and relevance of the plan, establishing its content validity. As a result, the implementation of this plan is highly recommended.

Keywords: Graduate Students, Mental Health Intervention Plan, Psychological Well-Being

Introduction

Psychological health has been called the cornerstone of mental health. The World Health Organization (WHO) identified mental health as an area of public health that receives considerably less attention than other health issues (WHO, 2019). The Philippine Mental Health Act of 2017, also known as Senate Bill No. 1354, was enacted on June 21, 2018, signifying a significant milestone in psychiatry. This pioneering legislation mandates rights-based mental health care and the availability of psychiatric, psychosocial, and neurological services in all hospitals and community settings. However, it only permits compulsory treatment in hospital settings, and there are no provisions for compulsory community treatment under this Act. The Act draws inspiration from the United Nations' Principles for the Protection of Persons with

Mental Illness. The improvement of Mental Health Care serves as a guiding influence of this law. Its central aim is to rectify the nation's limited resources and focus on mental healthcare. The Act outlines essential principles to enhance mental health services and safeguard patients' rights. Despite enacting the Mental Health Act and Universal Health Care Law in the Philippines, these remain under-prioritized and receive only about 5% of the total healthcare expenditure. The current study explores the concept of well-being within the field of psychology. It acknowledges a connection between psychological well-being and mental health.

The current study explores the concept of well-being within the field of psychology. It acknowledges a connection between psychological well-being and mental health. Ryff (1989) provided an operational definition of psychological well-being as the assessment of one's life quality, considering both emotional and cognitive aspects. This notion was adapted from Aristotle's view that true well-being comes from engaging in virtuous activities that allow individuals to reach their fullest potential and become their best version rather than seeking fleeting happiness or immediate gratification (Ross, 1925).

Nowadays, psychological well-being issues or problems are becoming increasingly common among university students, particularly at the postgraduate level, especially since most of them are also employed or are professionals (Roslan et al., 2017). As the global labor markets are getting increasingly competitive, today's graduate students are expected to address the future with greater vigor. They must first comprehend the changes in professional alternatives with a positive sense of increased opportunities and must recognize the intensifying rivalry for jobs and resources (Marginson & Wende, 2007).

The global situation has caught the interest of the researcher who was a graduate student of Mariano Marcos State University. It was observed that there was a prevailing trend and concern among her fellow graduate students regarding mental health. In fact, it was observed that some students do not pursue their master's degree yearly due to personal and emotional concerns.

By understanding the situation, the researcher can provide helpful hints to help graduate students survive and thrive while caring for themselves, their occupation, and their families. Research usually targets undergraduates' mental well-being; thus, tools to evaluate and assist graduate students are rare.

As mental health crisis are increasing concerns in graduate education, recent research results should encourage the academic community and policymakers to seek intervention strategies. Indeed, it is imperative to study the issue of vulnerability among graduate students, as they are one of the most at-risk populations (World Health Organization).

The study's findings will help recognize the challenges to the psychological well-being of graduate students. Moreover, this will inform the development of strategies to help maintain and increase the psychological well-being among graduate students at Mariano Marcos States University.

Review of Literature and Studies

The Need for Mental Health

The World Health Organization (2018) defines mental health as a state of overall well-being where individuals can achieve their full potential, effectively handle everyday stresses, be productive in their work, and actively contribute to their community.

Recently, there has been a growing recognition of mental health's significant role in achieving global development objectives, as evident by its inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the relatively low cost and effectiveness of treating mental health conditions, there is still a considerable gap between those needing care and those who can access it, with coverage of effective treatment remaining

inadequate. To address these challenges, increased investment is necessary on multiple fronts. This includes raising mental health awareness to reduce stigma and enhance understanding, implementing initiatives to expand access to quality mental health care and effective treatments, and conducting research to identify novel treatments and improve existing ones for all mental disorders (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] Annual Report, 2021).

According to research findings, strong mental health is associated with numerous positive outcomes, including improved learning, creativity, productivity, pro-social behavior, and positive social relationships. It also contributes to better physical health and a longer life expectancy. Positive mental health emphasizes creating environments that nurture personal growth and help individuals achieve their full potential in various aspects of life, such as work and study. However, the commitment required for academic success can be stressful and impact mental well-being. Thus, having coping strategies during high-stress periods is crucial for safeguarding mental health (Charles Darwin University, 2023).

Students experience excessive melancholy, worry, and anxiety when they anticipate academic assessments, assignments, project deadlines, and examinations, as well as the accompanying failures or comparisons with classmates. Students are ill-equipped, uneducated, if not ignorant of these mental diseases or disorders. They seldom seek professional care, resulting in a lack of knowledge of oneself and/or others. Poor nutrition and physical fitness, including lack of sleep, the likelihood of drug misuse to cope with these illnesses, are widespread. Under these conditions, depression and anxiety can rise from 1% among the population under the age of 12 to 25% by the end of adolescence. Research by Schmidt and Hansson (2018) underscores the prevalence of these issues, revealing that surveys consistently highlight the impact of factors such as worry, stress, exhaustion, and loss of interest on students' mental well-being. Additionally, a study conducted in 2018 revealed that graduate students enrolled in various fields of study, including science, engineering, social science, and others, were six times more prone to depression and anxiety compared to individuals of the same age who were not pursuing graduate studies (Evans et al., 2018).

Psychological Well-being (PWB)

Psychological well-being necessitates a precise conceptualization, as it has often been linked to and integrated with concepts like quality of life and mental health throughout history (Loera et al., 2017). In essence, while quality of life encompasses tangible and intangible facets, mental health and psychological well-being primarily pertain to the intangible elements of everyday life.

Ryff (1989) introduced a comprehensive model of well-being that draws upon the philosophical foundations of eudaimonia and incorporates conceptual connections to existential, humanistic, developmental, and clinical psychology, all of which emphasize positive functioning. Ryff and Keyes (1995) criticized some initial researches on psychological well-being for their inability to address the fundamental question of being psychologically healthy. Ryff (1989) argued that these theories of psychological well-being had minimal impact due to three factors: the lack of valid assessment methods, the diverse criteria utilized to measure well-being, and the perception that these criteria are excessively influenced by personal values. With this, Ryff developed a new psychological well-being model by integrating various existing theories, such as Maslow's self-actualization, Rogers' fully functioning person, Jung's individuality, Allport's maturity, Erikson's psychosocial stage model, Buhler's basic life tendencies, Neugarten's executive processes of personality, and Jahoda's mental health concept.

The new model of well-being has its philosophical roots deeply embedded in Aristotle's concept of eudai-

monia from his work, Nichomachean Ethics. Eudaimonia is not merely about momentary happiness or fulfilling desires. Instead, it centers on the activities of the soul that align with virtue, emphasizing the pursuit of excellence within oneself. This idea captures the essence of two fundamental Greek principles: self-awareness and self-actualization. These two talk about the imperative to know oneself and strive to become one's best self (Ross, 1925).

Moreover, Eudaimonia was in response to the limited impact of previous psychological well-being theories, which needed more valid evaluation methods and used criteria that were criticized for being value-laden. Ryff, in her new theory, aimed to answer the fundamental question of what it means to be psychologically healthy.

As mentioned earlier, the new theory interconnected with happiness and the perception of contentment with one's life, encompassing both professional accomplishments and personal aspirations (De Juanas Oliva et al., 2020). According to several research studies by Ryff and Keyes (1995), and Ryff and Singer (1996), Ryff's theory of psychological well-being comprises six main elements: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, a sense of purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

Factors Affecting the Psychological Well-being

The Psychological Well-being model developed by Ryff (1989) delineates six key aspects that influence an individual's psychological well-being. These subscales encompass attributes such as autonomy, effectively managing one's environment, experiencing personal development, nurturing positive relationships, discovering meaning in life, and accepting oneself.

Autonomy. As delineated by Ryff (1989b) and Ryff and Keyes (1995), the concept of autonomy is fundamentally essential for individuals who are seeking a successful transition to adulthood. It encompasses actions, thoughts, and emotions, constituting an individual's ability to act independently, possess self-efficacy, and maintain robust self-esteem and self-acceptance. Autonomy involves self-evaluation based on personal standards and accomplishments. This means prioritizing one's beliefs and values over external standards. This inner locus of control empowers individuals to be less swayed by external opinions, emphasizing the importance of their own convictions.

Arnett's research (2014) on emerging adulthood extends the transition from adolescence to adulthood, offering young people ages 18-25 additional time for personal growth, skill development, and exploration. This phase encourages independent exploration of education and relationships, fostering diverse learning experiences. Interestingly, young women often demonstrate a higher degree of independence and assertiveness, which can be attributed to their self-assured self-evaluation, as observed in the research by Didonato and Krueger (2010).

A high level of autonomy (AU) signifies self-determination and independence. In contrast, a low level indicates self-consciousness and a reliance on external opinions and societal norms (Ryan & Deci, 2008). Swatevachukul and Boonma (2020) underscore the role of nurturing practices in Southeast Asian educational systems in shaping autonomous learning behaviors. This was supported by the study conducted by Limniou et al. (2021) who forwarded that nurturing practices are pivotal in cultivating students' ability to engage in self-regulated learning and self-motivation.

Graduate students report that their involvement with academic materials and the cultivation of self-reliance, which can serve as indicators of self-management, have grown due to their higher education at the university (Hockings et al., 2017). Furthermore, student self-efficacy, a component of autonomy,

exhibits positive reactions when students engage in experiences that affirm their capacity to operate autonomously, like engaging in work or research internships (Willison et al., 2016; Qenani et al. 2014) Mindfulness, as explored in Deci et al.'s review (2015), is widely recognized as a significant factor in promoting autonomous behavior. Numerous research studies, including those by Arch and Craske (2006) and Brown et al. (2016), demonstrate that mindfulness interventions enhance attention to present experiences and intrinsic enjoyment in various activities. By practicing mindfulness, individuals become more attuned to their moment-to-moment decisions and can respond based on their intrinsic motivations rather than external influences. This heightened self-awareness enables individuals to assess their competence accurately (Goodman et al., 2021)

Environmental mastery. The concept of environmental mastery, as defined by Ryff (1989b) and Ryff and Keyes (1995), pertains to an individual's ability to exert control over their actual and perceived environments through physical and mental actions. This capacity to choose and manipulate one's surroundings reflects instrumental competence, which emphasizes the ability to shape the environment to achieve specific goals (Ryff, 1989). In essence, environmental mastery signifies one's proficiency in managing his or her world, whether by making choices, adapting to opportunities, or aligning settings with his or her needs and values. High scores in environmental mastery (EM) suggest that a person feels in control of their surroundings and excels in managing various external activities. Conversely, lower EM scores indicate challenges in daily tasks, difficulties in altering or enhancing the environment, limited awareness of nearby opportunities, and a sense of powerlessness in the outside world.

As graduate students embark on their academic journeys, they often find themselves in a demanding situation requiring adept time management skills. This is because they must skillfully balance academic commitments, personal matters, and a multitude of other responsibilities (Blanchard & Haccoun, 2020; Lorusso et al., 2020). This delicate juggling act is a substantial challenge that graduate students commonly encounter.

Furthermore, research by Maroof and Khan (2016) highlighted a gender difference in environmental mastery, showing that men tend to score notably higher in this dimension than women. This underscores the importance of understanding how different individuals may experience and navigate their environment based on their gender-specific perspectives.

Yuan et al. (2022) proposed that individuals who struggle with environmental control can enhance their confidence in managing the demands of everyday life by acquiring skills related to emotion regulation and stress management. This boost in self-assurance may lead to an overall improvement in their mastery over their environment.

Positive relations with others. Positive relationships with others, characterized by pleasant and trustworthy connections, along with feelings of empathy and closeness, as described by Ryff and Keyes (1995) and Ryff and Singer (2005), play a crucial role in an individual's well-being. High scores in Positive Relations with Others (PR) signify the presence of warm, fulfilling, and reliable connections, as well as a caring attitude toward the well-being of others. Individuals with high scores on PR can express affection, intimacy, and a grasp of the give-and-take nature of interpersonal interactions. In contrast, low PR scores often indicate difficulties in forming close and supportive relationships. Individuals with low PR scores are perceived as closed off, unresponsive, and unyielding. This can make it challenging for them to build warm, open, and caring relationships, potentially leading to feelings of isolation and frustration in their interpersonal connections.

Several research studies consistently reveal that women typically score higher than men in measures of

positive relations with others, indicating a heightened sense of social connectedness (Matud et al., 2019). Moreover, it is noteworthy that positive relationships tend to improve as people age, as research from Maroof et al. (2016) indicates.

The significance of positive social interactions is underscored by their substantial contribution to well-being, which, in turn, positively impacts employee engagement. Gallup (2017) documented that companies with higher levels of employee engagement have reported various benefits, including reduced operational expenses, improved performance results, decreased employee turnover and absenteeism, and fewer safety incidents.

Furthermore, single young individuals are often perceived as self-reliant and proactive when initiating projects (Castilla et al., 2020). Their self-sufficiency stems from an individualized perspective and reduced dependence on forming emotional connections with others, a trait particularly noticeable in the workplace (Castilla et al., 2020b). This inclination may help explain why Generation Z, often called the technology generation, tends to resist conforming to societal norms and exhibit distinct and unique personas (Salvosa & Hechanova, 2020). These aspects of personal development also influence the quality of social and personal interactions, including establishing romantic relationships (Melo & Mota, 2013) and maintaining couple relationships (Hausler et al., 2017).

To further underline the importance of these aspects of personal development, research has shown that social and emotional learning yields numerous interconnected benefits (Durlak et al., 2010). These advantages encompass the cultivation of prosocial behavior, contributing to a more joyful classroom environment and heightened student engagement. How social and emotional learning is facilitated and its alignment within the context play pivotal roles in achieving lasting and meaningful change, as emphasized by Roffey (2017). Implementing social and emotional learning interventions through collaborative techniques, such as teamwork, group work, the think-pair-share method, and project-based learning, can foster a collaborative learning environment, promoting active participation and engagement among individuals (Kudva & Kudva, 2020)

Purpose in life. One's sense of purpose in life is fundamentally connected to how one perceives his or her existence's importance. It involves establishing and accomplishing goals that contribute to a greater appreciation of life (Ryff, 1989b; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Further, Ryff (1989) emphasized that having a strong sense of meaning or purpose in life is a significant component of good mental health. It provides direction which dispels feelings of hopelessness. Miller (1997) pointed out that goals are essential to success. Maturity is often associated with possessing a strong sense of purpose. A high score in Purpose in Life (PL) signifies that an individual possesses a clear sense of direction and goals, believes that their past and current experiences hold meaning, and maintains objectives and purposes for their existence. Conversely, a low PL score suggests a lack of purpose, a dearth of objectives or aspirations, an inability to discern the significance of past experiences, and a shortage of beliefs or perspectives that could confer meaning upon one's existence.

According to Shin and Steger (2014), developing a sense of purpose entails individuals recognizing, committing to, and actively pursuing personally meaningful goals. This sense of purpose plays a pivotal role by providing continuous engagement and meaning, guiding the organization of goals, shaping behavior, and facilitating decision-making while considering the limitations of personal resources.

Differential treatment of individuals, especially during their formative years, is a practice aimed at upholding and perpetuating established societal gender roles. In particular, more conservative cultures tend to favor boys through these practices (Maroof & Khan, 2016). Thus, men tend to achieve notably

higher scores in the aspect of purpose in life to perpetuate traditional gender roles. On the contrary, partnered individuals often demonstrate higher scores across various dimensions, indicating a stronger inclination to formulate and actively pursue plans compared to their single counterparts. Moreover, they also tend to understand their life objectives better (Castilla et al., 2020b).

In various professions, especially in education, individuals frequently voice their dissatisfaction with the educational system, irrespective of their employment status. This discontent often stems from relatively low salaries, insufficient administrative support, the undervaluation of their profession, the burden of demanding accountability measures, and other related concerns that can significantly impact their sense of life purpose (Kumar, 2016)

Research suggests that life narratives emphasizing personal growth contribute to forming a growth-oriented identity, which precedes the development of meaning-making and adaptation (Bauer & McAdams, 2010). Interventions that assist individuals in crafting growth-oriented narratives can promote meaning development. For instance, participants may be encouraged to reflect on their past life experiences, identify instances of personal growth, provide specific examples, and construct vignettes representing future growth.

Personal growth. Personal growth is a crucial component within developmental and psychological approaches to well-being (Ryff, 1989). It involves the perception of growth, which is intricately linked to an individual's overall well-being. Having a growth mindset entails being open to new and diverse experiences. High scores in the Personal Growth (PG) dimension signify that a person continually evolves, expands, and embraces new experiences. They believe they are reaching their full potential, notice gradual improvements in themselves and their behavior, and are changing in ways that reflect increased self-awareness and effectiveness. Conversely, low PG scores are associated with personal stagnation, a lack of growth or change over time, finding life unexciting and uninteresting, and experiencing difficulty in adopting new attitudes or habits.

A study conducted by Karasawa et al. in 2011 illuminated the trends observed in Japanese adults' personal growth scores as they age. It revealed that, over time, Japanese adults tend to achieve higher scores in the personal growth domain, aligning with the lower scores observed in this specific aspect among younger participants in the present study. This suggests that personal growth increases with age in the Japanese adult population.

Furthermore, the research of García-Castilla et al. in 2020 highlighted gender-related differences in personal growth dimensions. Their study found that females score higher in the personal growth dimension than their male counterparts. This indicates that women often report experiencing more personal growth in various aspects of their lives.

In another research by Bowman et al. in 2011, findings indicated that students tend to undergo increased personal growth during their early academic years. This increase in personal growth is closely linked to their ability to adapt and cope effectively when confronted with challenging life situations or crises.

Yeager and Dweck's researches in 2020 provided a comprehensive overview of current research on growth mindsets in education and aimed to address associated challenges and inquiries. They underscored the transformative effects of embracing a growth mindset across various life domains, including education, business, and relationships (Dweck, 2017). Their findings indicated that a growth mindset significantly predicts academic outcomes, supported by consistent evidence showing a strong and practical correlation between mindsets and achievement. Utilizing mindset interventions effectively changes students' mindsets to adopt a growth-oriented perspective, resulting in improved academic performance. These interventions

may involve various activities such as writing reflective responses to explore how growth mindsets manifest in their lives, engaging in group discussions, or participating in individual mentoring sessions to implement new study strategies or develop a growth mindset when interpreting feedback.

Self-acceptance. Self-acceptance (SA) plays a pivotal role in psychological well-being (PWB) and serves as a fundamental cornerstone of one's emotional and mental health. It is the ability to unconditionally accept oneself, even with flaws and imperfections, and acknowledge that making mistakes is normal. Unconditional self-acceptance goes beyond conditions or external factors, allowing individuals to love and accept themselves wholeheartedly, irrespective of their actions or the opinions of others (Bingöl & Batik, 2018). High SA scores signify a positive self-perception, an acknowledgment and acceptance of strengths and weaknesses, and a positive perspective on past experiences. Conversely, lower SA scores indicate self-dissatisfaction, distress related to past life events, torment over certain aspects of the self, and a desire to be someone else (Ryff, 1989).

The research conducted by Aloysius et al. in 2019 provided valuable insights into students' self-esteem levels as they progress toward postgraduate education. The findings of this study revealed that these students tend to maintain only moderate levels of self-esteem, indicating that their self-perception and self-acceptance may be influenced by the challenges and demands they encounter during their academic journey.

Furthermore, research findings offer profound insights into the developmental trajectory of self-acceptance concerning age and gender, transcending cultural boundaries. The consistent pattern that emerged from the research was individuals tend to achieve higher scores in self-acceptance as they advance in age. This trend holds regardless of the cultural context in which individuals live. Moreover, when focusing specifically on self-acceptance, older adults consistently exhibit significantly higher scores than their younger counterparts. This observed age-related difference underscores the maturation of self-acceptance with time.

Additionally, there are notable gender differences in self-acceptance, with men consistently scoring higher in self-acceptance compared to women (Karasawa et al., 2011). However, the context of younger graduate students presents a unique challenge. This specific group tends to exhibit lower levels of self-acceptance, which can be attributed to their developmental stage. They find themselves in a phase of life where they are still navigating the journey of self-discovery, grappling with the acceptance of their strengths and weaknesses.

Moreover, an intriguing observation from the research conducted by Rode et al. in 2005 reveals that employed graduate students frequently experience reduced levels of life satisfaction. This phenomenon is linked to their overlapping demands, stemming from the simultaneous pursuit of full-time work and full-time study. Balancing these two intensive aspects of their lives requires intricate juggling and time management skills, which can decrease overall life satisfaction. This situation underscores the multifaceted challenges employed by the graduate students as they strive for higher education while managing concurrent professional commitments.

Self-acceptance encompasses embracing one's body, protecting against self-criticism, and fostering self-esteem and confidence (Pillai & Williams, 2004). The research by Mantelou and Karakasidou (2017) indicates that self-compassion significantly enhances resilience, particularly in how individuals respond to stressful and unpleasant events. This finding aligns with a series of studies conducted by Leary et al. (2007), where participants were prompted to recall and reflect upon negative and distressing situations. Evidences from those studies revealed that individuals with higher levels of self-compassion reported

experiencing fewer negative emotions, displayed greater acceptance of their thoughts, and took more personal responsibility for what had transpired compared to those with lower levels of self-compassion. This suggests that self-compassion can significantly impact one's ability to cope with challenging life events and contribute to overall psychological well-being.

The Need for Mental Health Intervention Plan

The term intervention essentially signifies any blend of methods crafted to achieve positive behavioral or health results, whether for an individual, a group, or an entire population. When creating and assessing complex interventions, there is a strong focus on incorporating theory. Research by Heath et al. (2015) indicates that interventions informed by theory tend to yield more favorable results. Theories assist in comprehending intricate phenomena by offering provisional explanations for when and why certain behaviors occur. Consequently, interventions can be directed toward addressing these factors. Additionally, employing behavior change theory in intervention development offers a means of gauging an intervention's effectiveness, or ineffectiveness.

When a student has problems with his or her emotional or mental health and then goes on to graduate school, this will make it harder for them to deal and adapt to the challenges they will face. However, if graduate students are checked out and diagnosed early on, even before starting their schooling, they can get the help and care they need for any pre-existing mental health concerns that might make it hard for them to do well in school and move forward. Considering that high levels of depression and anxiety can hurt not only the individual but society as a whole, depression, and anxiety levels need to be checked regularly around the world. Mental health specialists carry out the majority of these assessments. This need is now not being met in many areas of the world due to a lack of adequate funding and resources in the mental health field (Pelletier et al., 2017).

According to the Student Experience in the Research University Consortium's study conducted between May and July 2020, significant depressive episodes among graduate and professional students in 2020 were twice as high as the previous year (2019) and 1.5 times higher than in 2018 (Wallace, 2019)..

Furthermore, the fear of facing the social stigma associated with seeking mental health therapy results in fewer students, particularly students of color, seeking the help they need. According to a study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health, Asian and Asian-American teenagers, in particular, are less likely to seek and receive therapy (Corrigan et al., 2014).

Administrators should take action at the institutional level to address these challenges. Through implementing Mental Health Interventions, graduate students and their instructors can be equipped with the necessary skills to support each other and refer possible clients to professional treatment. By increasing awareness and education among adults on how to assist, more individuals can access the essential help they require (Corrigan et al., 2014).

Therefore, an effective and user-friendly tool is urgently required to assist individuals in regularly self-monitoring their psychological well-being. This is necessary to raise awareness of an individual's mental health status and prevent the progression of such disorders.

The first step in addressing students' mental health difficulties is admitting that they exist and demonstrating that educational institutions are willing to assist in any manner they can. Following that, schools can adopt various proactive approaches to address the issue. An example to this is the Mental Health Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, a document approved by Vanderbilt University's Graduate Education Department (Wallace, 2019).

Nature Research summarizes that each student who seeks mental health therapy through the university will be allocated a care coordinator who may assist them navigate the system and connect with services. Mark Wallace, dean of the Vanderbilt University Graduate School, has stated that the paper is the outcome of conversations between students and university authorities, culminating in a collaborative effort in which everyone has a role to play in combating mental health stigma. In fact, some schools have taken matters into their own hands with success. In 2018, Johns Hopkins University in the United States established a university-wide task committee and produced an internal report documenting student mental health data, policies, and preventive efforts. According to Margaret Daniele Fallin, co-chair of the task team, the report has already produced visible results. There has been an increase in interdepartmental discussions concerning students' mental well-being, greater sharing of effective approaches, more support for student-led initiatives, and improved coordination among disability services, health services, and academic services (Wallace, 2019).

Methodology

This study was conducted at Mariano Marcos State University-Graduate School (GS), Laoag Campus 1, which has an estimated 766 students for the second semester in the school year 2022–2023. The researchers utilized a descriptive design and research and development (R&D) methodology to assess the psychological well-being of graduate students. The results of the study were analyzed through frequency count and percentage, mean, and, median split. Frequency count and percentage were used in the socioeconomic profile of the respondents. The weighted mean was used to measure the validity of the proposed mental health intervention plan and the psychological well-being subscales. A Median Split was used in identifying the median value of each psychological well-being subscale.

Random sampling procedure was employed, with graduate students from all programs being the primary focus of the research. A total of 250 graduate students enrolled during the second semester of the school year 2022–2023 at MMSU Laoag Campus were included as respondents. This encompassed 32 percent of the total population of graduate students.

The main research instrument used in the study was the Ryff's Psychological Well-Being which is a 42-item Scale. This is based on her six-factor model of well-being. Ryff's (2014) model is based on the following six core dimensions: autonomy (living according to one's beliefs), environmental mastery (managing life situations), personal growth (using one's talents and potentials), positive relations with others (good relationships with important others), purpose in life (participants identifying meaning, purpose, and directions), and self-acceptance (acceptance and awareness of limitations).

To ensure the content validity of the mental health intervention plan (MHIP), the researcher invited validators in the field of guidance and counseling to participate as evaluators for the proposed intervention plan. These five (5) validators were chosen based on their extensive knowledge and direct experience working with students and clients who would benefit from the mental health intervention plan.

Results and Discussions

Autonomy (AU)

Autonomy entails preserving individuality and beliefs and empowering individuals to make independent choices, even in the face of opposing views from others. It involves resisting societal influences and maintaining personal independence in decision-making. To obtain a descriptive measurement of its mean scores, based on the results, the Autonomy subscale scores ($M= 32.55$, $SD= 5.98$) of the respondents were

higher than the higher than the median score (Mdn= 32). The findings are presented in Table 1. Table 1 illustrates the high level of readiness for independence and unwavering beliefs among graduate students. Graduate students recognize the importance of personal decision-making and expressing their opinions, even in opposition. Moreover, they prioritize evaluating information based on their values and remain uninfluenced by solid and assertive opinions.

Swatevacharkul and Boonma (2020) stressed the role of nurturing in Southeast Asian education, which shapes autonomous learning behaviors. The significance of autonomy has been amplified during the pandemic, as distance learning promotes self-regulated learning, increasing student focus and engagement (Limniou et al., 2021).

The notable degree of autonomy can be linked to multiple factors. These factors encompass a rising population of younger and recently enrolled individuals and a greater proportion of single students, particularly women, who are full-time employees, MAED students, and have teaching careers.

Table 1. Autonomy using median split.

| Statements | |
|------------|--|
| Q1 | I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people. |
| Q13 | My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing. |
| Q24 | I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions |
| Q35 | I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus. |
| Q41 | It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters. |
| Q10 | I tend to worry about what other people think of me. |
| Q21 | I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important. |

Overall Mean = 32.55

Standard Deviation = 5.98

Median Split = 32.00

Descriptive Interpretation = High

Arnett (2014) in his research highlighted how young individuals prioritize personal growth sometimes at the expense of considering broader consequences. Young females, in particular, are known for asserting their rights and expressing their opinions, single or in a relationship, and often with less dependent on partners in decision-making, as their self-evaluation contributes to building and enhancing self-esteem (Didonato & Krueger, 2010).

Autonomy holds considerable significance not only for employees in the MAED program who are also full-time professional teachers and students. It is crucial for effective communication with colleagues and parents. The absence of autonomy poses a risk to exchanging knowledge and potentially harming students' achievements (Ertürk, 2023). Additionally, graduate students' self-efficacy, a vital aspect of autonomy, garnered positive responses especially in the area when students engage in experiences that can validate their ability to work independently, such as work or research internships (Willison et al., 2016; Qenani et al., 2014). These insights highlight the shared importance of autonomy in both the professional and student contexts.

Below are statements from the respondents taken from their answers to the open-ended questions that further validate the findings discussed above:

Sometimes they don't matter to me if those others are not my family, it is my life and I live the way I want it.

- **Respondent 21**

Right now I take it with a grain of salt and take in lots of opinions as I can collect before creating a conclusion.

- **Respondent 47**

I am not interested on the opinion of other people to me. What's important to me is I do what I know is right for me.

- **Respondent 52**

I don't think too much about other people's opinions of me because I know that They have something to say and they will say it to me. Just remember that you're not perfect so you won't be too affected by whatever they say.

- **Respondent 56**

I don't mind what other people say. I am focused on improving myself and becoming a better version of it.

- **Respondent 68**

Based on their answers, the respondents value their own life and decisions, prioritizing their family's opinions while not overly concerned about others' judgments. They gather various opinions before drawing conclusions, but ultimately focus on doing what they believe is right for themselves. They remain unfazed by others' opinions and strive to improve themselves continually.

Environmental Mastery (EM)

This subscale involves handling the opportunities and challenges the environment presents in a way that aligns with one's abilities and requirements. It entails feeling competent in navigating and addressing emerging circumstances and demands. Results show that, most of the participants in the study obtained a score ($M=34.69$, $SD=6.79$) ($Mdn=35$) indicating a low descriptive interpretation as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 reveals that students exhibit a low sense of competence in managing their surroundings, which limits their ability to shape their environments and engage in external activities that promote personal growth and well-being.

Consequently, they may feel overwhelmed and burdened by their numerous obligations and responsibilities, adversely affecting their overall well-being and hindering personal development.

The journey of graduate students often presents a significant challenge in effective time management, as they must juggle their academic commitments, personal lives, and various responsibilities (Blanchard & Haccoun, 2020; Lorusso et al., 2020).

This finding aligns with Ryff et al.'s (1995) study, which suggests that older adults have greater environmental mastery than younger adults. Given that most participants in this study were students aged 25 and under, it is understandable that their level of environmental mastery remains relatively low. Additionally, single and young have low life skills linked to high environment mastery such as being willing to take on challenges and risks in their personal growth and social relationships (García-Castilla et al., 2020). Maroof and Khan's (2016) study also noted that men usually scored notably higher in the expected dimensions of environmental mastery than women.

Table 2. Environmental mastery using median split.

| Statements | |
|-----------------|--|
| Q ₃ | In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live. |
| Q ₁₅ | The demands of everyday life often get me down. |
| Q ₂₆ | I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me. |
| Q ₃₆ | I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life. |
| Q ₄₂ | I often feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities. |
| Q ₁₂ | I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me. |
| Q ₂₃ | I have been able to build a living environment and a lifestyle for myself that is much to my liking. |
| | |

Overall Mean = 34.69

Standard Deviation = 6.79

Median Split = 35.00

Descriptive Interpretation = Low

Students who are pursuing a teaching profession make up a significant portion of the participants in the MAEd program in this study. Research conducted by Corcoran and O'Flaherty (2022) revealed that pre-service teachers significantly declined their environmental mastery throughout their four-year teacher preparation program. This decline in environmental mastery can profoundly impact them, particularly those already managing full-time employment. It is a challenge for them to maintain order in their lives and take advantage of new opportunities, given their already heavy workloads.

Below are statements from the respondents taken from their answers to the open-ended questions that further validate the findings discussed above:

It's hard. I've come to a point where I dread weekends. I feel like a zombie every time I go to a class.

- **Respondent 3**

It seems harder now that they are requiring us researches in every subject.

- **Respondent 33**

Barely meeting ends.

- **Respondent 50**

I give time to finish the academic demands of graduate school but if lots of activities are to be done in my workplace, I often forgot to do my graduate school demands.

- **Respondent 77**

I barely comply nowadays.

- **Respondent 105**

The statements express feeling overwhelmed and fatigued, dreading weekends and classes, and difficulty on increased research requirements in every subject. Additionally, they struggle to balance academic demands with work responsibilities, often forgetting to complete their graduate school requirements, leading to a sense of barely meeting their obligations. The respondents feel they are struggling to keep up with their academic responsibilities.

Positive Relations with others (PR)

The third dimension focuses on interactions with others. It emphasizes the significance of establishing ful-

filling relationships characterized by trust, closeness, and quality. This dimension involves experiencing affection, intimacy, and empathy towards others while caring about their well-being. Moreover, it recognizes the importance of mutual exchange and support in building strong interpersonal connections. The dimension of Positive Relations with others received a low descriptive analysis PR ($M=39.07$, $SD=6.80$) ($Mdn=40.50$). The findings are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 provides insights into the respondents' unfavorable perceptions of their relationships with others. The results reveal that graduate students have low positive relations with others, which means that they encounter challenges navigating warm and loving interpersonal relationships, making establishing trust with friends and family and cultivating close and meaningful connections difficult. The deficiency in meaningful interpersonal connections and a robust support network hinders their ability to foster trustworthy and enduring relationships.

Behlau's (2010) study unveiled that graduate students receive less social support from family and friends than undergraduates. This distinction could be attributed to the structured nature of undergraduate programs, which typically involve younger students with more extensive social networks. In contrast, graduate studies are more specialized and independent, possibly leading to reduced social support.

In several studies, a consistent trend has emerged, with women often scoring higher than men in positive relations with others, indicating a greater sense of social connectedness (Matud et al., 2019). This trend was similarly observed among young individuals who were not in relationships (Castilla et al., 2020). However, the findings of this study deviated from these typical patterns. Interestingly, their positive relationships tend to improve as people age, especially for new graduate school entrants (Maroof et al., 2016). These results align with previous research (Berman et al., 2008). The connection between a teacher's personality and their educational qualities holds significant importance in education (Yazdanipour & Fakharzadeh, 2020). Additionally, single young individuals are often perceived as self-reliant and proactive when initiating projects, with their self-sufficiency stemming from an individualized perspective and reduced reliance on forming emotional connections with others, particularly noticeable in the workplace (Castilla et al., 2020b). This inclination might help explain why Generation Z, often called the technology generation, tends to resist conformity to societal norms and exhibits distinctive personas (Salvosa & Hechanova, 2020).

Table 3. Positive relations with others using median split.

| Statements | |
|------------|--|
| Q7 | Most people see me as loving and affectionate. |
| Q18 | Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me. |
| Q30 | I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns. |
| Q38 | I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members and friends. |
| Q4 | People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others. |
| Q16 | I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others. |
| Q27 | I know that I can trust my friends, and they know they can trust me. |

Overall Mean = 39.07

Standard Deviation = 6.80

Median Split = 40.50

Descriptive Interpretation = Low

Below are statements from the respondents taken from their answers to the open-ended questions that further validate the findings discussed above:

I don't really maintain [relationships]. I give back the treatment they give me. If they want to cut me off, it's okay than to please them.

- **Respondent 8**

I have difficulties in maintaining relationships as I become introverted with people I am not comfortable with...

- **Respondent 26**

I don't maintain [relationship] them cause it's hard.

- **Respondent 30**

I am not a people-person. My very few circle of friends understands when I don't keep in touch then suddenly appear out of nowhere but I see to it that I'm there when my friends need me.

- **Respondent 93**

The respondents find it challenging to maintain relationships and tend to reciprocate the treatment they receive. They feel introverted and uncomfortable with certain people, making it challenging to sustain connections.

Purpose in Life (PIL)

This subscale involves a sense of life having purpose and meaning in the past, present, and future. It includes holding beliefs that provide a sense of significance to one's life—having dreams and goals to pursue and a clear direction for contributing to this feeling of meaning and purpose. Most respondents in this study demonstrated a low level of purpose in life, as evidenced by their scores ($M=37.17$, $SD=6.50$) ($Mdn=38$), with a low quantitative description. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 reveals that graduate students have a low purpose in life and underscores the need for students to develop a stronger sense of direction and purpose. Many struggle with unclear goals, aspirations, and a sense of purpose that impacts their decision-making. They may require a deeper understanding of the significance of their lives and a greater desire to make a meaningful impact. The results suggest that students need a more specific sense of direction and purpose to guide their actions and decisions effectively. Their daily activities may be perceived as lacking meaning, and they might need to recognize their importance in shaping their lives. Encouraging them to create plans and actively work towards realizing them could provide the excitement and motivation they need.

This study features a significant number of first-year students and newcomers as participants, which may contribute to a lower sense of direction. In line with this, Hill et al.'s 2018 study revealed that older adults possess a stronger sense of purpose and lower reactivity to daily stressors. This finding sheds light on the lower scores in other subscales, suggesting that younger graduate students may have a diminished sense of purpose in life.

Conversely, young individuals who have partners (spouse) score higher in these areas, demonstrating a greater inclination to formulate and actively pursue plans than their single counterparts, and they possess more precise insights into their life objectives (Castilla et al., 2020b). This result is noteworthy since the study includes many single participants.

This study also highlighted that men tend to achieve significantly higher scores in these dimensions, which can be attributed to distinct socialization processes perpetuating societal gender roles. In some cultures, especially conservative ones, these practices tend to favor boys (Maroof et al., 2016). However, it is worth noting that in this study, women constituted the majority of the participants.

Table 4. Purpose in life using median split.

| Statements | |
|-----------------|---|
| Q ₉ | I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future. |
| Q ₂₀ | I have a sense of direction and purpose in life. |
| Q ₃₂ | I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life. |
| Q ₃₉ | My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me. |
| Q ₆ | I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality. |
| Q ₂₉ | Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them. |
| Q ₃₃ | I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life. |
| | |

Overall Mean = 37.17

Standard Deviation = 6.50

Median Split = 38.00

Descriptive Interpretation = Low

Finally, the participants profile show that there are many MAED students in the teaching profession. This means that regardless of their employment status, participants express dissatisfaction with the educational system. This discontent primarily arises from relatively low salaries, insufficient administrative support, undervaluation in their profession, demanding accountability measures, and other related concerns affecting their life purpose (Kumar, 2016).

Below are statements from the respondents taken from their answers to the open-ended questions that further validate the findings discussed above:

When the researcher asked about their personal philosophy, their answers were:

Don't expect too much from others.

- **Respondent 6**

Life is just like a game you gonna play with it or it will play you. So, choose what battle are you dealing with.

- **Respondent 51**

Que sera, sera

- **Respondent 60, 68, and 109**

Just go with the flow of the universe.

- **Respondent 46**

Go with the flow.

- **Respondent 203**

When asked about who or what are they willing to struggle for:

None/Nothing

- **Respondent 10, 11, 59, 81, 84, 96, and 230**

The respondents' statements emphasize the importance of managing expectations from others and taking control of one's life as if playing a game. They encourage embracing the uncertainty of life and adopting

a que sera, sera, or go-with-the-flow attitude. Despite the struggles of life, some respondents are unwilling to invest in any specific cause or person.

Personal Growth (PG)

This involves an ongoing process of self-improvement and development. It encompasses a quest for knowledge, seeking new experiences, and striving to reach one's full potential. This journey includes enhancing self-awareness, addressing weaknesses, improving behaviors, developing emotional intelligence, and enhancing productivity. Meanwhile, the results indicate that Personal Growth obtained a low quantitative interpretation PG (M=40.07, SD=6.25) (Mdn=41). The findings is presented in Table 5. Table 5 reveals that graduate students have low personal growth. They face challenges in achieving high psychological functioning, impeding their personal development and advancement. They struggle with effective self-expression and realizing their full potential. They need to gain more enthusiasm for engaging in activities that expand their horizons and find ways to enjoy their academic workload and school experiences.

How graduate students perceive their capacity to balance academic and non-academic commitments can significantly impact their self-efficacy (Yusuf et al., 2020) and adaptability (Reed & Kennett, 2017). Furthermore, positive interpersonal relationships, characterized by fulfilling and trustworthy connections with others, play a crucial role in personal growth (Ryff, 2014; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). These social bonds fulfill fundamental psychological needs for overall well-being (Ryan et al., 2008). Interestingly, this study's findings also highlight a low score in environmental mastery concerning psychological well-being, emphasizing the significance of these relationships for personal growth.

Table 5. Personal Growth using median split.

| Statements | |
|------------|--|
| Q5 | I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons. |
| Q17 | I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world. |
| Q28 | When I think about it, I haven't really improved much as a person over the years. |
| Q37 | I have the sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time. |
| Q2 | For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth. |
| Q14 | I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago. |
| Q25 | I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things. |

Overall Mean = 40.07

Standard Deviation = 6.25

Median Split = 41.00

Descriptive Interpretation = Low

A study by Karasawa et al. (2011) observed that Japanese adults tend to achieve higher scores in personal growth as they age, aligning with the lower scores in this subscale for younger participants in this study. In contrast, García-Castilla et al., (2020) found that females scored higher in the personal growth dimension. They also reported that young individuals had elevated average scores in these areas, contradicting the current study's findings.

Bowman et al., research (2011) indicates that students experience increased personal growth during their early academic years, linked to their ability to adapt when facing crises. This contrasts with the present study's results, where students, particularly those balancing full-time or part-time work alongside their graduate studies, may have limited time for personal growth.

Below are statements from the respondents taken from their answers to the open-ended questions that further validate the findings discussed above:

I don't really know. Sometimes that bugs me too. I was a goal-oriented person, but now, shit happened.

- **Respondent 3**

Activities in DepEd which forced me to absent myself in MaEd classes. We have no choice but to prioritize DepEd activities such as seminars and Card days/meetings. Overlapping activities.

- **Respondent 15**

Just be aware of change.

- **Respondent 50**

Managing time because I am not just a student, but an employee, daughter, wife, and a mother at the same time.

- **Respondent 90**

The respondents acknowledge that change is challenging and express uncertainty about certain aspects of their lives. One respondent admitted to being goal-oriented, but unforeseen events have caused disruptions. Other respondents stated that graduate classes are mainly disrupted due to other important activities, such as work responsibilities, seminars, and meetings. Managing time becomes challenging as they simultaneously juggle multiple roles as a student, employee, daughter, wife, and mother.

Self-acceptance (SA)

This subscale is the most fundamental part of mental health and an essential component of optimum functioning as stated by Ryff and Keyes (1995). It refers to the capacity of students to positively evaluate themselves, encompassing the recognition and acceptance of their strengths and weaknesses. The descriptive analysis of the results revealed a low rating, SA ($M=34.20$, $SD=6.82$) ($Mdn=35$). The findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 highlights the respondents' low and unfavorable perception of self-acceptance, suggesting a negative evaluation of themselves and a sense of discontent with their life's direction and self-image. These results indicate that students struggle to achieve self-acceptance and find acknowledging and embracing their individual qualities challenging.

A study by Aloysius A. et al. (2019) revealed that students maintain only moderate self-esteem as they progress toward postgraduate education. Additionally, their self-acceptance declines when they encounter stressful events or experiences. The study also noted a significant proportion of single participants. This observation can be attributed to these individuals' tendencies to engage in extensive self-reflection and contemplation, often dwelling on their perceived shortcomings and imperfections. Furthermore, it is worth noting that employed graduate students exhibit lower levels of life satisfaction due to the overlapping demands between full-time work and full-time study (Rode et al., 2005).

Table 6. Self-Acceptance using median split.

| Statements | |
|-----------------|--|
| Q ₁₁ | When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out |
| Q ₂₂ | In general, I feel confident and positive about myself. |
| Q ₃₄ | I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have. |
| Q ₄₀ | I like most parts of my personality. |
| Q ₈ | In many ways I feel disappointed about my achievements in life. |
| Q ₁₉ | My attitude about myself is probably not as positive as most people feel about themselves. |
| Q ₃₁ | When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes me feel good about who I am. |
| | |

Overall Mean = 34.20

Standard Deviation = 6.82

Median Split = 35.00

Descriptive Interpretation = Low

Following are the statements from the respondents taken from their answers to the open-ended questions supporting the findings presented above:

I feel bad. I always contemplate on decision makings and when I make mistakes, I always have a hard time sleeping.

- **Respondent 26**

I feel miserable. It makes me feel incompetent.

- **Respondent 30**

Self-sabotaging. I always worry about a lot of things in the past about my life to the point of self-sabotaging and being too harsh to myself.

- **Respondent 40**

I feel like im accoutanble and even if i say sorry already the thought keeps haunting me

- **Respondent 41**

I ponder and overthink a lot. It does not only happen after it but it is recurring and playing in my mind. This is something i dont like about myself because it takes me so much time to get over something whether it be a mistake or a bad decision.

- **Respondent 93**

I tend to feel guilt over my mistakes. I sometimes ruminate about my wrong decisions.

- **Respondent 200**

The respondents express distress, misery, and self-doubt related to decision-making and past actions. They struggle with overthinking, self-sabotage, and being too harsh on themselves, leading to difficulties on moving on from past mistakes or bad decisions. These recurring thoughts and emotions significantly impact their well-being and ability to find closure or forgiveness for their actions. AU scores (M= 32.55, SD= 5.98) of the respondents were higher than the median score (Mdn= 32). Most of the subscale scores of PWB were lower than its median score: EM (M=34.69, SD=6.79) (Mdn=35), PG (M=40.07, SD=6.25)

(Mdn=41), PR (M=39.07, SD=6.80) (Mdn=40.50), PL (M= 37.17, SD=6.50) (Mdn=38), and SA (M=34.20, SD=6.82) (Mdn=35).

Table 7. Summary of the psychological well-being of respondents using median split. (n=250)

| Subscale | Mean | SD | Median | Descriptive Interpretation |
|-------------------------------------|-------|------|--------|----------------------------|
| Autonomy (AU) | 32.55 | 5.98 | 32.00 | High |
| Environmental Mastery (EM) | 34.69 | 6.79 | 35.00 | Low |
| Personal Growth (PG) | 40.07 | 6.25 | 41.00 | Low |
| Positive Relations with Others (PR) | 39.07 | 6.80 | 40.50 | Low |
| Purpose in Life (PL) | 37.17 | 6.50 | 38.00 | Low |
| Self-Acceptance (SA) | 34.20 | 6.82 | 35.00 | Low |

Based on the answers of the graduate students, they place a high value on their own life and decisions, prioritizing their family's opinions and remaining unaffected by others' judgments. They seek various opinions but ultimately make decisions based on what they believe is best for themselves. Despite their determination to improve, they feel overwhelmed and fatigued, struggling to balance academic responsibilities with work commitments, leaving them feeling like they barely meet their obligations. Maintaining relationships is difficult for them, as they tend to reciprocate treatment and feel introverted around specific individuals. They emphasize the importance of managing others' expectations and taking control of their lives, adopting a go-with-the-flow mindset. However, they find investing deeply in any particular cause or person challenging. They acknowledge the difficulties of change and express uncertainty about some aspects of their lives. Moreover, they reveal distress, misery, and self-doubt related to decision-making and past actions, often burdened by overthinking and self-criticism, making it difficult to find closure or forgiveness for their mistakes.

The graduate students' holistic psychological well-being appears low, as indicated by low scores on five of Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Survey subscales. There is a robust connection between the regulation of emotions and an individual's overall life satisfaction, as pointed out by Mitrofan and Ciuluvică in 2012. Emotion regulation involves the assessment and modification of emotions through cognitive methods, with its effectiveness hinging on a person's mental state, empowering them to manage emotions and alleviate anxiety and depression effectively. The students' psychological well-being may be a concern, which is further confirmed by the scores and responses gathered across the six dimensions of psychological well-being.

Conclusions And Recommendations

This study's analyses shed light on the state of psychological well-being of graduate students of Mariano Marcos State University, providing a comprehensive understanding of their strengths and challenges. Notably, graduate students exhibited a high level of autonomy, indicating their strong inner locus of control and resistance to external influences. They prioritize their beliefs and values over societal pressures, affirming their individuality.

However, several areas of psychological well-being, including Environmental Mastery, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, Personal Growth, and Self-acceptance, displayed lower scores. These results

highlight potential areas that require attention and intervention. Graduate students face challenges in controlling their environment, maintaining positive social connections, finding a clear sense of life direction, nurturing personal growth, and embracing self-acceptance.

Practical and effective strategies for enhancing psychological well-being include mindfulness techniques, stress thinking differentiation, growth mindset adoption, engaging in group activities, employing narrative therapy techniques, and shifting the focus from self-worth evaluation to behavior evaluation to address the challenges and issues of graduate students.

This emphasizes the importance of the proposed Mental Health Intervention Plan in addressing the psychological well-being challenges and issues identified among graduate students. This research underscores the significance of understanding and addressing the diverse aspects of psychological well-being in higher education and highlights the importance of implementing tailored interventions to promote graduate students' mental and emotional well-being.

By promoting and enhancing psychological well-being, particularly among graduate students who represent an active and influential segment of society, can significantly benefit the broader community. From the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered.

The Mental Health Intervention Plan (MHIP) is suggested to be integrated into the university's student welfare program, tailored explicitly for graduate school. This integration promotes positive mental well-being among graduate students, thereby enhancing their overall functioning and performance. Moreover, the GS Supreme Student Council (GSSSC) can also be a supportive resource to facilitate the program's implementation.

The utilization of the post-assessment of The Ryff Psychological Well-Being Survey is advisable to enhance the Mental Health Intervention Plan (MHIP).

Additionally, it is recommended to replicate the study with a more extensive population. This expanded approach will enhance the study's generalizability and allow a more comprehensive understanding of graduate students' psychological well-being.

The generalizability of the study's findings to other student populations, such as international students, may also be extended since the data collection process solely involved Filipino students.

Lastly, it is suggested that the online survey be made accessible to all university graduate students and encompassed sociodemographic information for future reference. However, it is recommended to establish correlations between the sociodemographic data and the factors related to psychological well-being.

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