

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted at the College of Education, Capiz State University Buriás Campus, during the academic year 2023-2024. The objective was to explore the lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and aspirations of non-binary students in the College of Education. Specifically, the study aimed to understand their experiences, how they make sense of these, and their aspirations as non-binary individuals.

Sixteen non-binary students participated in the study, meeting the inclusion criteria of self-identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and being bona fide students of the College of Education. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews, transcribed verbatim, coded, and analyzed using deductive thematic analysis.

Results revealed recurring themes in their experiences across different environments. At home, the students encountered acceptance, anxiety, discrimination, and threats. At school, themes included discrimination, acceptance, and open-mindedness. In the community, discrimination, anxiety, acceptance, and mental health challenges were highlighted.

In terms of coping mechanisms, students at home utilized strategies like proving themselves, planning to come out, denial, sublimation, avoidance, understanding, and maintaining connections with family and friends. In school, they relied on ignoring negative opinions, support from friends, self-acceptance, and fostering strong social networks. In the community, coping strategies included self-acceptance, ignoring negativity, sublimation, and belief-oriented approaches.

The study also found that the students aspired to equal rights and acceptance across school, home, and community settings. Key aspirations included equality, acceptance, recognition, freedom, happiness, and, for some, overcoming self-denial due to family religious standards.

This research highlights the challenges faced by non-binary students and their resilience in navigating these experiences, underscoring the need for inclusive and supportive environments.