



A Correlational Study on Teachers Readiness in Mental Health Capacity Building and Senior High School Students Mental Health Literacy

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between teachers' readiness in mental health capacity building and the mental health literacy of senior high school students. Utilizing a quantitative research design, the study involved 83 senior high school teachers and 342 student-respondents from selected institutions. Teachers' readiness was assessed across four domains: mental health awareness, early identification, intervention strategies, and self-care practices. Meanwhile, students' mental health literacy was evaluated in terms of beliefs, knowledge of mental health problems, first aid skills and help-seeking behaviors, and self-help strategies. Findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a generally very high level of readiness in all domains of mental health capacity building, with grand means ranging from 4.28 to 4.59, interpreted as "Very Much Ready." Among the domains, self-care practices obtained the highest mean, indicating strong recognition among teachers of the importance of maintaining their own mental well-being. Teachers also showed strong readiness in fostering supportive environments, collaborating with mental health professionals, and referring students to appropriate services, although slightly lower ratings were observed in areas related to communication and application of specific intervention strategies. Correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships between teachers' readiness and students' mental health literacy. Specifically, all four domains of teachers' readiness were significantly correlated with students' beliefs about mental health, knowledge of mental health problems, and use of self-help strategies. These findings suggest that higher levels of teacher preparedness contribute to more positive mental health perceptions, improved knowledge, and increased use of coping strategies among students. Overall, the study highlights the critical role of teachers as frontliners in promoting mental health within schools. Enhancing teachers' competencies in mental health capacity building can significantly influence students' mental health literacy and well-being. The results underscore the need for continuous professional development programs to further strengthen teachers' skills in communication, early identification, and intervention practices.

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A Correlational Study on Teachers Readiness in Mental Health Capacity Building and Senior High School Students Mental Health Literacy

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between teachers' readiness in mental health capacity building and the mental health literacy of senior high school students. Utilizing a quantitative research design, the study involved 83 senior high school teachers and 342 student-respondents from selected institutions. Teachers' readiness was assessed across four domains: mental health awareness, early identification, intervention strategies, and self-care practices. Meanwhile, students' mental health literacy was evaluated in terms of beliefs, knowledge of mental health problems, first aid skills and help-seeking behaviors, and self-help strategies. Findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a generally very high level of readiness in all domains of mental health capacity building, with grand means ranging from 4.28 to 4.59, interpreted as "Very Much Ready." Among the domains, self-care practices obtained the highest mean, indicating strong recognition among teachers of the importance of maintaining their own mental well-being. Teachers also showed strong readiness in fostering supportive environments, collaborating with mental health professionals, and referring students to appropriate services, although slightly lower ratings were observed in areas related to communication and application of specific intervention strategies. Correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships between teachers' readiness and students' mental health literacy. Specifically, all four domains of teachers' readiness were significantly correlated with students' beliefs about mental health, knowledge of mental health problems, and use of self-help strategies. These findings suggest that higher levels of teacher preparedness contribute to more positive mental health perceptions, improved knowledge, and increased use of coping strategies among students. Overall, the study highlights the critical role of teachers as frontliners in promoting mental health within schools. Enhancing teachers' competencies in mental health capacity building can significantly influence students' mental health literacy and well-being. The results underscore the need for continuous professional development programs to further strengthen teachers' skills in communication, early identification, and intervention practices.

Keywords: *mental health literacy, readiness of teachers, mental health capacity building*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mental health awareness has gained global attention, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, with increased recognition of its crucial role in overall wellbeing, impacting behavior, learning, relationships, and quality of life.

Adolescence is a critical period for mental health, as many mental health issues emerge during this time, making it essential to assess adolescents' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs—collectively known as mental health literacy.

Building on this understanding, mental health literacy has garnered growing attention worldwide as a key strategy for promoting psychological well-being and addressing mental health challenges across diverse populations. Coined by Jorm, mental health literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills necessary to understand, manage and promote mental health. It involves recognizing symptoms, seeking appropriate support, reducing

stigma, and fostering proactive help-seeking behaviors. Enhancing mental health literacy empowers individuals to take an active role in maintaining their mental health and supporting others.

The urgency of improving mental health literacy is underscored by global data. The World Health Organization (2023) reports that one in seven individuals aged 10- 19 experiences a mental disorder, contributing to 15% of the global disease burden for this age group. Depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders are among the leading causes of illness and disability among adolescents. Alarming, suicide ranks as the third leading cause of death among individuals aged 1529.

In the local context of Northern Samar, particularly in the pacific region, recent reports indicate a troubling prevalence of mental health concerns among senior high school students. These concerns are compounded by limited awareness of available mental health services and entrenched cultural beliefs that inhibit helpseeking behavior. These dynamics suggest a significant gap in

mental health literacy among students and highlight the critical need to assess and enhance teachers' readiness to promote mental well-being in this unique socio-cultural setting.

Over time, growing concerns has been directed toward students' mental health as more young people report experiencing emotional distress. Adolescence, a period of heightened vulnerability, is marked by academic pressures, shifting social expectations, environmental changes, and hormonal fluctuations—all of which can elevate the risk for anxiety, depression, and other psychological difficulties (Patel et al., 2018).

In response to these challenges, mental health has become a key concern across government sectors. Efforts to promote well-being and work-life balance include initiatives such as mental health breaks and wellness programs in schools. Notably, the recent passage of Republic Act No. 12080, known as the Basic Education Mental Health and Well-Being Act, reflects the Philippines' national commitment to advancing mental health promotion in educational settings.

Despite national efforts, Northern Samar's Pacific Region faces distinct barriers—geographic, resource-related, and cultural—that hinder mental health support, highlighting the importance of evaluating both students' mental health literacy and teachers' readiness.

The current study seeks to explore students' mental health literacy and teacher readiness within this region, motivated by observed gaps in mental health resources and the impact of cultural beliefs, aiming to empower both groups through education and support.

Cultural narratives and superstitions uniquely shape mental health perceptions in Northern Samar, and addressing these is essential for reducing stigma and promoting healthier behaviors among students.

There is a clear and urgent need to assess students' mental health literacy and teachers' readiness to support mental well-being in the region. The study aims to guide context-specific interventions and provide insights for stakeholders seeking to improve youth mental health in underserved communities.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to examine the relationship between teachers' readiness in mental health capacity building and the mental health literacy of senior high school students. Specifically, it sought to assess the level of teachers' readiness in mental health capacity building across four key domains: mental health awareness, early identification of mental health concerns, intervention strategies, and self-care practices. Furthermore, the study aimed to determine the level of mental health literacy among senior high school students in terms of their beliefs about mental health, knowledge of mental health problems, first aid skills and help-seeking behaviors, and self-help strategies. Finally, the study intended to analyze the significant relationship between teachers' readiness in mental health capacity building and the various dimensions of students' mental health literacy.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted during the Academic Year 20242025 in selected senior high schools situated in the Pacific Area of the Second District, Division of Northern Samar. The participating institutions included Laoang National Technical High School in Laoang, Sumoroy Agro-Industrial School in Palapag, Mapanas Agro-Industrial School in Mapanas, Gamay National High School

in Gamay, and Lorenzo S. Menzon Agro-Industrial School in Lapinig. These schools were purposefully selected based on their high senior high school enrollment, representing the largest student populations in their respective municipalities within the Pacific Area.

A descriptive-correlational research design was employed to comprehensively examine the phenomena under investigation. The descriptive component aimed to determine the levels of teacher readiness in mental health capacity building, as well as the mental health literacy of students. Meanwhile, the correlational aspect sought to explore the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent variables—teacher-related factors, specifically readiness in mental health capacity building (encompassing mental health awareness, early identification of mental health concerns, intervention strategies, and self-care practices)—and the dependent variable, which was the level of mental health literacy among students. Student mental health literacy was measured across four domains: beliefs about mental health, knowledge of mental health problems, first aid skills and help-seeking behaviors, and self-help strategies.

The respondents consisted of 342 senior high school students (173 from Grade 11 and 169 from Grade 12) and 83 senior high school teachers drawn from the five participating schools. Data were gathered using structured questionnaires designed to quantitatively capture both teacher readiness and student mental health literacy. The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, particularly means, were utilized to summarize the levels of teacher readiness and student literacy. To determine the relationship between teacher readiness and student mental health literacy, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was applied.

This methodological framework enabled the study to yield comprehensive insights into the extent to which teacher preparedness in mental health capacity building may influence or be associated with students' awareness, attitudes, and mental health management strategies in the Pacific Area of Northern Samar.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Level of Readiness of Teachers in Mental Health Capacity Building

Mental Health Awareness. Table 1.1. demonstrates that teachers exhibited a generally high level of readiness in terms of mental health awareness as a key dimension of their capacity to promote mental health in schools. The calculated grand mean of 4.29, interpreted as "Very Much Ready," reflects a strong overall awareness of mental health issues, their impact on student well-being, and the importance of addressing these issues within the educational environment.

Among the specific indicators, teachers reported the highest readiness regarding understanding the importance of mental health for overall student wellbeing ($M = 4.67$), suggesting that the vast majority of teachers fully recognize mental health as a critical component of students' holistic development. This finding is encouraging, as teachers' foundational beliefs about the importance of mental health can drive their willingness to engage in mental health promotion and early intervention efforts.

Teachers also reported being very much ready in terms of identifying common mental health disorders ($M = 4.24$) and being knowledgeable about available mental health resources and support services ($M = 4.23$). These results indicate that teachers are not only aware of the significance of mental health

Table 1. Level of Readiness of Teachers in Mental Health Capacity Building in terms of Mental Health Awareness

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I understand the importance of mental health for overall student well-being.	4.67	Very Much Ready
I have a knowledge on identifying common mental health disorders in students.	4.24	Very Much Ready
I am knowledgeable about mental health resources and support services.	4.23	Very Much Ready
I can effectively communicate mental health information to students and colleagues.	4.17	Much Ready
I am aware of the symptoms associated with different mental health issues.	4.13	Much Ready
Grand Mean	4.29	Very Much Ready

but also possess practical knowledge regarding the identification of concerns and referral pathways. This level of awareness is crucial for effective collaboration with mental health professionals and timely support for students.

Slightly lower, but still strong, levels of readiness were observed in teachers' ability to communicate mental health information to students and colleagues ($M = 4.17$) and in their awareness of symptoms associated with different mental health issues ($M = 4.13$), both rated as "Much Ready." These findings suggest that while teachers feel generally well-informed, there is room for further improvement in their capacity to translate knowledge into effective communication and in developing deeper symptom-specific understanding. These areas represent potential focal points for ongoing professional development to ensure that teachers are fully equipped to engage in informed mental health discussions and to contribute actively to school-wide mental health initiatives.

Early Identification. The results presented in Table 1.2 reveal that teachers exhibited a generally high level of readiness in supporting the early identification of students' mental health needs. The computed grand mean of 4.28, interpreted as "Very Much Ready," indicates a strong overall sense of preparedness among teachers to engage in activities and practices that foster early identification and intervention.

Looking at the individual indicators, teachers reported the highest level of readiness in knowing how to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all students ($M = 4.43$), followed closely by their comfort in collaborating with mental health professionals ($M = 4.41$) and their ability to provide a safe space for students with mental health needs ($M = 4.25$), all of which fall under the "Very Much Ready" category. These results suggest that teachers are highly aware of the importance of fostering an environment of trust, safety, and inclusion as a foundation for identifying students who may require mental health support.

Meanwhile, readiness levels related to familiarity with effective and appropriate strategies ($M = 4.19$) and feeling equipped to implement interventions in the classroom ($M = 4.13$) were slightly lower but still rated as "Much Ready." This pattern may indicate that while teachers are confident in providing an overall supportive environment and collaborating with professionals, there is a slightly lower—but still strong—level of confidence in their own ability to apply specific strategies or interventions within the classroom context. This finding highlights a potential area where additional training or professional development could further enhance teachers' readiness, particularly in terms of concrete intervention skills and strategy application.

Intervention Strategies. The results presented in Table 1.3 indicate that teachers exhibited a high level of readiness in implementing intervention strategies to support student mental health, with a grand mean of 4.28, interpreted as "Very Much Ready." This suggests that teachers are not only aware of the importance of intervention but are also prepared to take proactive and appropriate actions when addressing students' mental health needs.

Among the specific indicators, the highest ratings were given to "I can effectively refer students to appropriate mental health resources when needed" ($Mean = 4.41$) and "I am aware of the risk factors that may contribute to mental health issues" ($Mean = 4.40$). These findings reflect that teachers are well-prepared to connect students with appropriate professional resources and possess a strong understanding of factors that may increase vulnerability to mental health problems, such as family dynamics, academic stress, or trauma.

Additionally, teachers reported feeling very much ready to discuss students and their parents ($Mean = 4.30$), which is an essential skill for building trust and open communication between the school and home environment. This readiness can help ensure that students receive consistent support both within the classroom and at home.

Slightly lower, though still strong, readiness was observed in early signs of mental health issues in students ($Mean = 4.19$) and knowing the steps to take when a mental health problem is suspected ($Mean = 4.10$), both interpreted as "Much Ready." These results suggest that while teachers are generally confident in identifying and responding to student mental health concerns, there may still be opportunities for further training to enhance their skills in early identification and intervention protocols.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that teachers are well-positioned to serve as front-line responders in the mental health support system within schools. Their readiness to engage in intervention strategies is crucial, as teachers often serve as first points of contact for students experiencing mental health difficulties. By being able to identify warning signs, initiate supportive conversations, and facilitate referrals, teachers can help ensure that students receive the help they need in a timely and effective manner.

Self-care Practices. Table 1.4 presents the respondents' level of readiness in mental health capacity building as it relates to their self-care practices. The data reflect a very high level of readiness, with a grand mean of 4.59, interpreted as "Very Much Ready." This result indicates that teachers generally possess strong awareness and commitment to maintaining their own mental health and

Table 2. Level of Readiness of Teachers in Mental Health Capacity Building in terms of Early Identification

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I know how to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all students.	4.43	Very Much Ready
I am comfortable collaborating with mental health professionals to support students.	4.41	Very Much Ready
I can provide a safe space for students with mental health needs.	4.25	Very Much Ready
I am familiar with effective and appropriate strategies for supporting students with mental health issues.	4.19	Much Ready
I feel equipped to implement mental health interventions in my classroom.	4.13	Much Ready
Grand Mean	4.28	Very Much Ready

Table 3. Level of Readiness of Teachers in Mental Health Capacity Building in terms of Intervention Strategies

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I can effectively refer students to appropriate mental health resources when needed.	4.41	Very Much Ready
I am aware of the risk factors that may contribute to mental health issues.	4.40	Very Much Ready
I feel confident in my ability to discuss mental health concerns with students and their parents.	4.30	Very Much Ready
I can recognize early signs of mental health issues in students.	4.19	Much Ready
I know the steps to take when a student is experiencing a mental health problem.	4.10	Much Ready
Grand Mean	4.28	Very Much Ready

well-being, which is a crucial foundation for effective mental health promotion within the school setting.

The highest-rated statement, “I believe that maintaining my mental health makes me a more effective teacher” (Mean = 4.84), highlights that teachers strongly recognize the direct link between their personal well-being and their professional performance. This belief underscores a growing understanding that teachers cannot effectively support students if they themselves are not mentally and emotionally well. This self-awareness is a key aspect of mental health capacity building, as it fosters an internal motivation to engage in self-care.

Closely following is the statement “I prioritize my own mental health and wellbeing” (Mean = 4.72) and “I engage in regular self-care activities to manage stress and prevent burnout” (Mean = 4.58). These ratings suggest that teachers are not only aware of the importance of mental health but are actively taking steps to incorporate self-care practices into their daily routines. Such practices may include relaxation techniques, mindfulness, physical activity, and maintaining work-life balance — all of which contribute to greater emotional resilience and reduce the risk of professional burnout.

Furthermore, teachers reported a strong readiness in recognizing when to seek help for their own mental health (Mean = 4.52), indicating a healthy level of selfmonitoring and willingness to engage with professional support when needed. This ability is critical, as it prevents small issues from escalating into more severe mental health concerns and models positive help-seeking behavior for students.

Finally, while slightly lower, the statement “I feel supported by my school in taking care of my mental health” (Mean = 4.29) still received a “Very Much Ready” rating. This suggests that although

individual teachers are highly committed to selfcare, there may still be room for schools to enhance institutional support structures such as providing wellness programs, reducing workload stressors, and fostering a culture that normalizes discussions about mental health.

Table 4. Level of Readiness of Teachers in Mental Health Capacity Building in terms of Self-care Practices

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I believe that maintaining my mental health makes me a more effective teacher.	4.84	Very Much Ready
I prioritize my own mental health and well-being.	4.72	Very Much Ready
I engage in regular self-care activities to manage stress and prevent burnout.	4.58	Very Much Ready
I can recognize when I need to seek help for my own mental health.	4.52	Very Much Ready
I feel supported by my school in taking care of my mental health.	4.29	Very Much Ready
Grand Mean	4.59	Very Much Ready

5. Mental Health Literacy

Beliefs. Table 2.1 presents data on respondents' level of mental health literacy in terms of beliefs. The grand mean of 3.97, interpreted as "Much literate," indicates that, overall, students possess a good understanding of mental health concepts and hold generally positive and accurate beliefs about mental health.

The highest mean scores were recorded for the statements "Only adults have mental disorders" (Mean = 4.31), "If a friend of mine developed a mental disorder, I would listen to her/him without judging or criticizing" (Mean = 4.29), and "Mental disorders do not affect people's behaviors" (Mean = 4.23), all interpreted as "Very much literate." These findings suggest that respondents are well aware that mental disorders can affect individuals of all ages, are capable of demonstrating empathy and non-judgmental support toward friends with mental health conditions, and understand that mental health issues may impact behaviors and feelings.

Statements such as "Depression is not a true mental disorder" (Mean = 4.14) and "If a friend of mine developed a mental disorder, I would not be able to help her/him" (Mean = 4.11) received a rating of "Much literate," indicating that while some misconceptions may still persist, most respondents correctly identify depression as a legitimate mental disorder and recognize their own potential to support peers.

However, lower mean scores were observed for the statements "If I had a mental disorder, I would seek my friends' help" (Mean = 3.59), "The sooner mental disorders are identified and treated, the better" (Mean = 3.50), and "People with mental disorders come from families with little money" (Mean = 3.39), the latter of which was only interpreted as "Moderately literate." This finding suggests that some students still hold residual misconceptions about the socioeconomic causes of mental illness and that help-seeking behavior could be further encouraged through education.

Knowledge on Mental Health Problems. The results presented in Table 2.2 indicate that respondents possess a high level of mental health literacy in terms of their knowledge of mental health problems, as reflected by a grand mean of 3.85, interpreted as "Much Literate." This suggests that students demonstrate a strong understanding of key mental health concepts, symptoms, and risk factors, which is crucial in fostering early recognition, prevention, and appropriate help-seeking behaviors.

Across the indicators, the highest-rated statements include "Mental disorders affect people's thoughts" (Mean = 4.11) and "Drug addiction may cause mental disorders" (Mean = 4.10), both of which reflect a clear understanding that mental health conditions can influence cognitive processes and that substance use is a significant risk factor for the development of mental health disorders. Similarly, students demonstrated a solid grasp

of common symptoms of anxiety and depression, as seen in high mean scores for statements such as "A person with fears" (Mean = 4.09) and "A person with depression feels very miserable" (Mean = 3.97).

Furthermore, the findings suggest that respondents recognize the role of stress and biological factors in the development of mental disorders, as reflected in statements like "Highly stressful situations may cause mental disorders" (Mean = 4.06) and "Brain malfunctioning may cause the development of mental disorders" (Mean = 3.84). This indicates an encouraging understanding of the multifactorial nature of mental health issues.

Respondents also exhibited awareness of specific diagnostic considerations and symptoms, as shown by their responses to statements regarding the duration of symptoms (Mean = 3.64) and symptoms of eating disorders such as bulimia nervosa (Mean = 3.62) and anorexia nervosa (Mean = 3.56). While these indicators received slightly lower mean scores compared to other items, they still fall within the "Much Literate" range, suggesting that while students are knowledgeable, these more nuanced areas of mental health may benefit from further reinforcement through targeted education.

First Aid Skills and Help-Seeking Behavior. Table 2.3 presents data on the respondents' mental health literacy specifically in the area of first aid skills and helpseeking behavior, with a grand mean of 3.89, interpreted as "Much Literate." The results suggest that respondents generally demonstrate a high level of competence and readiness in offering initial support to peers with mental health issues and in knowing how and where to seek appropriate help, both for others and for themselves.

The highest-rated item, "If a friend of mine developed a mental disorder, I would encourage her/him to look for a psychologist" (Mean = 4.06), indicates that respondents are aware of the importance of professional mental health services and are prepared to guide their peers toward appropriate care. Similarly, offering emotional support to peers is highly valued, as shown by the nearly equivalent rating for "I would offer her/his support" (Mean = 4.04). These results reflect a compassionate and proactive attitude toward helping friends cope with mental health challenges.

Importantly, respondents also demonstrated an understanding of the need for personal help-seeking, as evidenced by their readiness to seek help from family (Mean = 4.00) and mental health professionals (Mean = 3.97) if they themselves experienced a mental disorder. These findings highlight a growing willingness to reach out and access support networks, both informal (family) and formal (mental health professionals), which is a critical aspect of positive help-seeking behavior.

Table 5. Level of Mental Health Literacy in terms of Beliefs

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Only adults have mental disorders.	4.31	Very Much Literate
If a friend of mine developed a mental disorder, I would listen to her/him without judging or criticizing.	4.29	Very Much Literate
Mental disorders do not affect people's behaviors.	4.23	Very Much Literate
Mental disorders do not affect people's feelings.	4.21	Very Much Literate
Depression is not a true mental disorder.	4.14	Much Literate
If a friend of mine developed a mental disorder, I would not be able to help her/him.	4.11	Much Literate
If I had a mental disorder, I would seek my friends' help.	3.59	Much Literate
The sooner mental disorders are identified and treated, the better.	3.50	Much Literate
People with mental disorders come from families with little money.	3.39	Moderately Literate
Grand Mean	3.97	Much Literate

Table 6. Level of Mental Health Literacy in terms of Knowledge and Understanding of Mental Disorders

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Mental disorders affect people's thoughts.	4.11	Much Literate
Drug addiction may cause mental disorders.	4.10	Much Literate
A person with an anxiety disorder may panic in situations that she/he fears.	4.09	Much Literate
Highly stressful situations may cause mental disorders.	4.06	Much Literate
A person with depression feels very miserable.	3.97	Much Literate
One of the symptoms of depression is the loss of interest or pleasure in most things.	3.92	Much Literate
Brain malfunctioning may cause the development of mental disorders.	3.84	Much Literate
A person with anxiety disorder avoids situations that may cause her/his distress.	3.74	Much Literate
The symptoms' length is one of the important aspects to determine whether a person has, or has not a mental disorder.	3.64	Much Literate
In bulimia nervosa, to compensate for overeating and to prevent weight gain, the person is forced to vomit or exercise vigorously, or use laxatives inappropriately.	3.62	Much Literate
Anorexia nervosa is a type of eating disorder that can lead to death.	3.56	Much Literate
Alcohol use may cause mental disorders.	3.52	Much Literate
Grand Mean	3.89	Much Literate

Similarly, respondents recognized the role of medical professionals, with encouraging a friend to see a doctor also scoring 3.97, reinforcing their understanding that mental health issues require professional attention. However, involving other adults, such as a friend's parents (Mean = 3.74) or teachers (Mean = 3.47), received relatively lower mean scores, though still within the "Much Literate" range. This suggests that while students value peer support and professional help, they may feel somewhat less comfortable or less certain about engaging other adults in the process of supporting a friend.

Self-help Strategies. The results presented in Table 2.4 show that respondents demonstrate a very high level of mental health literacy regarding selfhelp strategies, as indicated by a grand mean of 4.36, interpreted as "Very Much Literate." This suggests that students possess a strong understanding of how personal lifestyle choices

and self-care behaviors contribute to mental well-being, which is an essential component of fostering resilience and promoting positive mental health.

The highest-rated statement was "Good sleep helps to improve mental health" (Mean = 4.53), highlighting that respondents are highly aware of the critical role that sleep plays in maintaining emotional balance and cognitive functioning. Given that sleep disturbances are common contributors to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, this knowledge is particularly valuable in encouraging preventive self-care.

Similarly, respondents recognized the importance of engaging in enjoyable activities (Mean = 4.42) and physical exercise (Mean = 4.39) as effective self-help strategies. These findings reflect an understanding that positive experiences and regular physical activity can boost mood, reduce stress, and promote

Table 7. Level of Mental Health Literacy in terms of First Aid Skills and Help-Seeking Behavior

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
If a friend of mine developed a mental disorder, I would encourage her/him to look for a psychologist.	4.06	Much Literate
If a friend of mine developed a mental disorder, I would offer her/his support.	4.04	Much Literate
If I had a mental disorder, I would seek my family's help.	4.00	Much Literate
If I had a mental disorder, I would seek mental health professionals.	3.97	Much Literate
If a friend of mine developed a mental disorder, I would encourage her/him to go to a doctor.	3.97	Much Literate
If a friend of mine developed a mental disorder, I would talk to her/his parents.	3.74	Much Literate
If a friend of mine developed a mental disorder, I would talk to the former teacher or another teacher.	3.47	Much Literate
Grand Mean	3.89	Much Literate

Table 8. Level of Mental Health Literacy in terms of Self-help Strategies

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Good sleep helps to improve mental health.	4.53	Very Much Literate
Doing something enjoyable helps to improve mental health.	4.42	Very Much Literate
Physical exercise helps to improve mental health.	4.39	Very Much Literate
Having a balanced diet helps to improve mental health.	4.25	Very Much Literate
Talking over problems with someone helps to improve mental health.	4.23	Very Much Literate
Grand Mean	4.36	Very Much Literate

overall wellbeing. Encouragingly, respondents also acknowledged the role of balanced nutrition (Mean = 4.25) in supporting mental health, showing a holistic appreciation for the mind-body connection.

Additionally, respondents rated talking over problems with someone (Mean = 4.23) as a helpful self-help strategy, demonstrating a recognition of the value of social support and open communication in managing mental health challenges. This is a particularly important insight, as fostering a culture where students feel comfortable discussing their problems can lead to early intervention and reduced stigma.

6. Significant Relationship between the Teacher's Readiness and the Respondents' Mental Health Literacy Level

Table 3 shows the Pearson correlations between the teachers' readiness in terms of mental health capacity building (Mental Health Awareness, Early Identification, Intervention Strategies, and Self-Care Practices) and four aspects of the respondents' mental health literacy (Beliefs, Knowledge of Mental Health Problems, First Aid Skills and Help-Seeking Behavior, and Self-help Strategies).

Among the dimensions mental health capacity building, teachers' mental health awareness demonstrated significant positive correlations with respondents' beliefs about mental health [$r(340) = .187, p < .001$], knowledge of mental health problems [$r(340) = .184, p = .001$], and use of self-help strategies [$r(340) = .175, p =$

$.001$]. This suggests that when teachers had greater mental health awareness, the respondents tended to have more positive beliefs, greater knowledge, and reported using self-help strategies more often.

In addition, teachers' readiness in early identification was significantly and positively correlated with respondents' beliefs about mental health [$r(340) = .240, p < .001$], knowledge of mental health problems [$r(340) = .216, p < .001$], and use of self-help strategies [$r(340) = .178, p = .001$]. This indicates that teachers who felt more prepared in early identification appeared to cultivate more positive mental health beliefs, enhance knowledge of mental health problems, and encourage the use of self-help strategies among their respondents. Cavioni, et al. emphasized that the proactive approach equipping teachers with the knowledge and tools to identify and address mental health challenges enables them to create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment and contributes to the prevention of behavioral problems, making teachers central to the success of school-based mental health initiatives.

Teachers' knowledge of intervention strategies showed significant positive correlations with respondents' beliefs about mental health [$r(340) = .243, p < .001$], knowledge of mental health problems [$r(340) = .174, p = .001$], and use of self-help strategies [$r(340) = .139, p = .010$]. This suggests that higher teacher knowledge in this area corresponded with more positive beliefs, greater knowledge, and more frequent self-help practices among respondents. Nikolaou and Markogiannakis stressed that teachers

Table 9. Significant Relationship between the Teacher's Readiness and the Respondents' Mental Health Literacy Level

Teacher's Readiness	Beliefs	Knowledge	First Aid	Self-help
Mental Health Awareness	.187**	.184**	.036	.175**
Early Identification	.240**	.216**	.052	.178**
Intervention Strategies	.243**	.174**	.055	.139*
Self-Care Practices	.197**	.155**	.043	.149**

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

are instrumental in the early detection of children at risk for mental health issues, enabling timely interventions.

Likewise, the teachers' self-care practices were significantly and positively correlated with respondents' beliefs about mental health [$r(340) = .197, p < .001$], knowledge of mental health problems [$r(340) = .155, p = .004$], and use of self-help strategies [$r(340) = .149, p = .006$]. Teachers who reported prioritizing self-care appeared to foster more positive mental health beliefs, enhance knowledge of mental health problems, and encourage the use of self-help strategies among their respondents. Jimenez underscored that teachers who are mentally and emotionally well are more capable of supporting students, implementing interventions, and sustaining their role as frontliners in mental health promotion.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This study established that senior high school teachers in the Pacific Area of Northern Samar exhibit a very high level of readiness in mental health capacity building across all domains like mental health awareness, early identification, intervention strategies, and self-care practices. Notably, self-care practices emerged as the strongest domain, underscoring teachers' recognition of the importance of safeguarding their own well-being as a prerequisite for effectively supporting students.

Meanwhile, senior high school students demonstrated a generally high level of mental health literacy, particularly in self-help strategies, followed by beliefs, helpseeking behavior, and knowledge of mental health problems. Despite this encouraging outcome, persistent misconceptions and hesitations in help-seeking especially when involving adults or authority figures, highlight areas requiring targeted interventions.

Crucially, the findings revealed significant positive relationships between teachers' readiness and students' mental health literacy in the domains of beliefs, knowledge of mental health problems, and self-help strategies. This suggests that as teachers become more competent in mental health capacity building, students are more likely to develop accurate beliefs, deeper understanding, and healthier coping mechanisms. However, no significant relationship was observed between teacher readiness and students' first aid skills or help-seeking behaviors, indicating that teacher preparedness alone may not sufficiently influence students' willingness to seek help. This points to the influence of other factors such as stigma, cultural norms, or accessibility of services, which must be addressed in parallel.

Overall, the study underscores the critical role of teachers as frontliners in promoting mental health within school settings. Their readiness significantly contributes to enhancing students' mental health literacy, making teacher capacity building a strategic lever for improving student well-being. Strengthening teacher competencies, coupled with efforts to reduce stigma and improve access to mental health services, can therefore serve as a comprehensive approach to fostering resilient, mentally healthy school communities.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are advanced to strengthen mental health promotion in school settings. First, professional development programs for teachers should be continuously enhanced through targeted training on advanced intervention strategies, effective communication of mental health concepts, and early detection and referral systems.

Parallel to this, schools must establish structured and sustainable mental health programs that promote awareness, reduce stigma, encourage open dialogue, and integrate mental health topics into the curriculum.

Given the non-significant relationship between teacher readiness and students' help-seeking behavior, it is imperative to improve support systems by creating clear and accessible referral pathways, strengthening guidance counseling services, and providing safe spaces where students feel comfortable approaching teachers and other adults.

Student engagement should also be prioritized through seminars, workshops, and peer-support initiatives that address misconceptions, foster proactive helpseeking, and build confidence in peer support.

Recognizing that teachers' self-care emerged as a strong domain, schools should institutionalize wellness programs that reduce workload-related stress, provide mental health resources, and cultivate a supportive organizational culture.

Moreover, interventions must be contextualized to local cultural realities by developing culturally sensitive educational materials and involving parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders in awareness campaigns.

Finally, future research should explore additional factors influencing helpseeking behavior, such as stigma and family support, employ qualitative approaches to gain deeper insights into student experiences, and expand the scope to other regions to enhance generalizability. Collectively, these recommendations underscore the importance of a holistic, culturally responsive, and multi-level approach to advancing mental health literacy and well-being in schools.

9. Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

This research utilized ChatGPT, a language model developed by OpenAI, for paraphrasing paragraphs and checking grammatical errors. The Free ChatGPT App was employed as a tool to enhance the clarity and readability of the text, ensuring that ideas were effectively communicated while maintaining the original meaning. The use of ChatGPT contributed to refining the language and structure of the manuscript.

Details of the AI usage are given below:

1. Used the ChatGPTA for paraphrasing the paragraphs for clarity and readability of text.
2. Used the ChatGPT for checking the language/grammar.

10. LITERATURE CITED

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