

# Thriving in the Margins: Barriers, Resilience and Innovative Practices of LGBTQIA+ Business Owners in Davao Oriental

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## Abstract

This study highlights the importance of investigating the entrepreneurial experiences of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental, particularly in the locality of Lupon and in the City of Mati, a group whose contributions to local economic development remain largely invisible in mainstream research. While global scholarship has examined minority entrepreneurship, there is a notable research gap in contextualizing the barriers, resilience, and innovative practices of LGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs within rural Philippine settings. The purpose of this research is to explore the challenges faced by these LGBTQIA+ business owners, the resilience strategies they employ, and the innovative practices that enable them to thrive despite systemic adversity, for them to fit into the fabric of society.

A quantitative research methods design was adopted to measure numerical data to identify patterns, test hypotheses, or establish cause-and-effect relationships among the different variables of these respondents. Using a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design, the study aimed to determine the demographic profile of the respondents, assess the level of barriers encountered, evaluate their resilience, and identify the innovative practices they adopted in sustaining their businesses. Data were collected using a validated, researcher-developed questionnaire administered to selected LGBTQIA+ business owners via quota sampling. Statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and the t-test were utilized in analyzing the data.

The results are significant in demonstrating that resilience and innovation are not merely survival mechanisms but active drivers of inclusive entrepreneurship. This study contributes to theory by extending resilience discourse into marginalized business contexts and to practice by offering policy insights for local government and development agencies. The key takeaway is that LGBTQIA+ business owners of Lupon and in the City of Mati, despite thriving in the margins, hold transformative potential for fostering inclusive growth in Davao Oriental.

## 1. CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Business plays a crucial role in a country's growth and development by providing employment opportunities that enable society to thrive. In an era where economies are driven by a transformative aspect of digitalization encompassing digitalization in business operations, which has become a force of efficiency, innovation, and new forms of sustainable economic growth (Shestakovska et al., 2025), the

question lies in whether the Rainbow Community (RC) or the LGBTQIA+ community demonstrates resilience and innovation through their business operation practices amidst the margins that fall within the line of survival. Although the participation of the RC in business enterprises has been recognized globally, they continue to be marginalized and discriminated against (Smith et al, 2024).

Many of these negative pressures and barriers create negative outcomes. Amongst these pressures are the demographic profile and systematic barriers faced by RC in business, such as social, economic, cultural, and institutional discrimination, limited access to capital, and a lack of policy support. Kashner (2022) revealed a history of systematic inequality in the United States that, to this day, has impacted the marginalized and overlooked communities. It was reported that venture capital funding raised by companies for women has further decreased, such that only 2.2% of the total capital invested in venture-backed startups in the U.S. was received compared to 2.6% of the prior year. This only shows that access to capital continues to be unequally distributed towards white cisgender men, and LGBTQ+ founders experience clear barriers and discrimination in the process of seeking capital to grow their enterprises.

It is perceived that human rights are the natural rights by birth that are inherent for all human beings, including LGBTQIA+, however, the LGBTQIA+ being the integral part of human civilizations are being deprived and denied from the natural life, liberty, and security in today's world of globalization under the Rule of Law in democratic times (Kumar et al., 2024). Presto (2025) strengthens the fact that, to date, the RC/LGBTQIA+ communities remain thriving on the margins of life. The painful truth of the untold stories of how these communities try to fit into the fabric of society. The RC/LGBTQIA+ business owners often navigate a paradoxical workplace space that promotes equality and inclusion on the surface, yet still carries subtle biases or social stigma.

In a progressive country like the Philippines, where the existence of the RC/LGBTQIA+ Community has been celebrated, but the acceptance and tolerance towards this marginalized group differ and hide under the mask of the ongoing gender discrimination, as it is closely associated with social, cultural, and economic stigma (Krendel, 2022). Nares et al. (2025) stressed that queer people in the Philippines often face distinctive challenges in building their careers in the business world. Employed members of this community face difficulties or negative consequences when they refuse to conform to gender and sexuality stereotypes in their workplace

The battle for equality within this community has been ongoing in the Philippines for a long time, and it continues to this day (Esmabe et al., 2024). Moreover, as of June 2025, despite the various bills having been passed about anti-discrimination, but as for the SOGIE Bill (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression, and Sexual Characteristics) the battle of passing this law is far from the line, and there is still no existence of comprehensive national-level protection for the RC (Rainbow Community) (Presto, A. C. (2025). With this systematic discrimination and government policy shortcomings, this community finds it harder to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance in a country where they pay taxes and offer their lives just to be recognized as part of the society. Known as the Sunrise Capital of the Southern Philippines, Davao Oriental is no exception to this stigma.

Empowering the RC/LGBTQIA+ communities, LGUs (Local Government Units) like Davao City launched a program called "Rainbow Magnegosyo Ta Day" initiated by the former Davao City Mayor "Inday" Sara Zimmerman Carpio Duterte, that aims to support this community, especially those who wish to help themselves (Wong, 2020). Initiatives like this ultimately contribute to the region's economic growth.

However, the barriers, resilience, and innovative practices of RC/LGBTQIA+ business owners remain uncertain, particularly for LGBTQIA+ business owners in the Municipality of Lupon and in the City of Mati, regarding how they build resilience and adopt innovative practices within constrained sociocultural environments. The lack of empirical studies concerning these barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental, the resilience and innovative practices they apply to sustain their enterprises, and the significance of their resilience within their localities has created a notable research gap. The absence of this study prompted the author to delve further into the matter, recognizing the importance of documenting and analyzing these experiences to highlight both the challenges and the adaptive strategies that shape the entrepreneurial landscape of LGBTQIA+ communities in the region. Furthermore, the author aimed to bridge the gap between how RC/LGBTQIA+ business owners responded to micro and macro perspectives and to the demand for geographic and demographic needs, government policies, and economic systems, particularly within the unique sociocultural context of Davao Oriental, as these LGBTQIA+ business owners progress economically.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This research focused on the resiliency and innovative practices of RC/LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental, particularly in the Municipality of Lupon and in the City of Mati, despite barriers.

**Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:**

1. What is the demographic profile of LGBTQIA+ business owners, in terms of:
  - A. Age;
  - B. Gender identity;
  - C. Type of business; and
  - D. Years in business
2. What is the level of the barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ business owners, in terms of:
  - A. Social;
  - B. Economic;
  - C. Cultural; and
  - D. Institutional barriers
3. What is the level of resilience of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental amidst:
  - A. Social;
  - B. Economic;
  - C. Cultural; and
  - D. Institutional resilience
1. What is the level of innovative practices adopted by LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental to develop and sustain their enterprises?
2. Is there a significant difference in the resilience of LGBTQIA+ business owners when grouped according to localities?
3. Is there a significant difference in the innovative practices adopted by LGBTQIA+ business owners when grouped according to localities?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study was to determine the barriers, resiliency, and innovative practices of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental, specifically in the Municipality of Lupon and in the City of Mati. It specifically addressed the following:

1. Determine the demographic profile of LGBTQIA+ business owners, in terms of:

- A. Age;
- B. Gender identity;
- C. Type of business; and
- D. Years in business;
2. Determine the level of barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ business owners, in terms of:
  - A. Social;
  - B. Economic;
  - C. Cultural; and
  - D. Institutional barriers;
3. Determine the level of resilience of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental amidst:
  - A. Social;
  - B. Economic;
  - C. Cultural; and
  - D. Institutional resilience;
4. Determine the level of innovative practices adopted by LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental to develop and sustain their enterprises;
5. Determine the significant difference in the resilience of LGBTQIA+ business owners when grouped according to localities; and
6. Determine whether there is a significant difference in the innovative practices adopted by LGBTQIA+ business owners when grouped according to localities.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study aimed to determine the barriers, resiliency, and innovative practices of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental, particularly in the Municipality of Lupon and in the City of Mati. Hence, this study is relevant to multiple sectors, particularly the Rainbow Community (RC), local policymakers, government units, researchers, and educators, by shedding light on the lived realities of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental.

**RC (Rainbow Community)/LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental.** The study helps build visibility and representation for the said community as it provides a clearer picture of who they are and how they contribute to the local economy by identifying the demographic and business characteristics of RC (Rainbow Community) business owners. In doing so, a deeper understanding of social, cultural, and institutional challenges they encounter allows the community to articulate shared institutional challenges and advocate for more inclusive support systems. Furthermore, it affirms their strength and resourcefulness in navigating discrimination and economic instability. As a result, these practices can be shared, replicated, and celebrated within the community to foster growth and solidarity.

**Policymakers.** The findings of this study can inform inclusive policymaking and program development regarding the contribution of the RC (Rainbow Community) to building our economy. In addition, this study provides valuable insights that can guide policymakers in crafting inclusive and responsive economic programs for marginalized sectors. By examining the demographic profile, barriers, resilience, and innovative practices of these LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental, the research highlights the unique challenges and contributions of the RC (Rainbow Community) in local entrepreneurship. Understanding the social, cultural, and institutional barriers faced by RC business owners allows policymakers to identify gaps in existing support systems. Furthermore, the findings can inform the

development of targeted interventions such as livelihood grants, anti-discrimination ordinances, and inclusive training programs that promote equal access to economic opportunities.

Moreover, documenting the innovative practices adopted by RC business owners offers a blueprint for sustainable microenterprise development. Policymakers can use these insights to replicate successful practices, encourage diversity in local markets, and foster a more inclusive business environment across the province. Ultimately, this study supports evidence-based policymaking that recognizes the economic potential of LGBTQIA+ individuals, promotes social equity, and strengthens community resilience in Davao Oriental.

**Local Government Unit (LGUs).** This study provides LGUs in Davao Oriental with a deeper understanding of the RC's entrepreneurial landscape, particularly in municipalities such as Lupon and Mati. Consequently, by identifying the demographic profile of LGBTQIA+ business owners, LGUs gain access to data that can guide inclusive planning and program development. Furthermore, understanding the specific needs and strengths of RC business owners, LGUs can design targeted livelihood programs, anti-discrimination ordinances, and support mechanisms that promote economic equity and social inclusion. Finally, this research encourages LGUs to adopt a more inclusive governance approach, one that values diversity, promotes equal opportunity, and supports marginalized sectors in building sustainable livelihoods.

**Researchers and Academicians.** This study contributes to the growing body of literature on inclusive entrepreneurship and gender diversity in business. In addition, it offers a localized perspective from Davao Oriental, which is often underrepresented in global, international, and national research. Furthermore, future scholars may build on this work to explore deeper themes or expand to other regions. In conclusion, the essence of this research does more than document; it empowers. It gives voice to those thriving in the margins and invites stakeholders to recognize, support, and learn from their resilience and innovative practices.

### **Scope and Limitation**

This study focuses on LGBTQIA+ business owners residing and operating in selected areas of Davao Oriental, particularly in the localities of Lupon and the City of Mati. It aims to determine their demographic profile in terms of age, gender identity, civil status, their type of business, and the number of years in business operation. The research also examines the social, economic, cultural, and institutional barriers they face, their level of resilience in the face of challenges, and the innovative practices they adopt to sustain their enterprises.

This study is limited to LGBTQIA+ individuals who are actively engaged in business and considered LGBTQIA+ business freelancers, within both localities. Consequently, this study excluded RC members who are employed in non-business sectors or reside outside the specified localities.

### **Definition of Terms**

In this study, the following terms are used:

**RC (Rainbow Community)/LGBTQIA+ Community** refers to individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and other gender-diverse identities. In this study, the term "Rainbow Community" is used interchangeably to emphasize inclusivity and local relevance.

**Business Owner** refers to an individual who manages and operates a business, regardless of its size, registration status, or legal form. This includes microentrepreneurs, sole proprietors, and freelancers.

## 2. CHAPTER

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In today's rapidly changing society, there has been an increasing interest in understanding the resilience and innovative practices of marginalized communities, particularly LGBTQIA+ business owners. While several studies have explored issues related to identity, discrimination, and entrepreneurship, limited research has focused on how LGBTQIA+ business owners in rural areas like Davao Oriental overcome socio-economic challenges. Thus, this review of related literature examines the barriers, resilience, and innovative practices of RC (Rainbow Community)/LGBTQIA+ business owners in the localities of Lupon and the City of Mati, and how these factors influence their level of resilience within their respective communities.

#### Demographic Profile

Human rights frameworks and social inclusion programs, such as the SMILE scheme in India and the SOGIE Equality Bill in the Philippines, emphasize equality for LGBTQIA+ individuals; these measures have shaped the demographic profile of LGBTQIA+ business owners (Xue et al., 2025). By reducing barriers to employment and livelihood opportunities, such initiatives enable a diverse range of entrepreneurs across age groups, gender identities, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in business. Understanding this demographic profile is crucial for highlighting both the challenges and contributions of LGBTQIA+ business owners in building a more inclusive economy.

#### Barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ business owners

In the micro and small enterprise type of business, like hair salons, spas, fashion boutiques, where the RC/LGBTQIA+ is commonly engaged with, the planned resilience positively influenced adoptive resilience, where this intersectionality of resilience results in a positive link, especially if a unified effort and gender tailored program is supported (Guliman-Qudsi et al., 2024).

Queer people in business often experience core social barriers such as workplace discrimination, unfair treatment, and gender stereotyping (Nares et al., 2024). Being outnumbered by the majority is one of the highlights of the dominant heteronormative and traditional cultural norms in the workplace, when LGBTQIA+ business owners often face similar marginalization, especially when they try to establish credibility in a business network (Garcia et al., 2023). These are cultural remnants in Philippine society that reinforce hierarchy and conformity. For LGBTQIA+ business owners, this can mean restricted opportunities to scale their ventures or gain equal footing in industries dominated by traditional norms.

On the other hand, Abesamis and Hrynick (2024) emphasized that institutional barriers faced by the LGBTQIA+ business owners in the Philippines relate to humanitarian crises, where institutions neglect or exclude marginalized groups from planning. These systemic inequalities in humanitarian action create institutional disadvantages for LGBTQIA+ individuals. The same barriers affect entrepreneurs by limiting their access to relief, capital, and long-term support during times of crisis.

#### Resilience of LGBTQIA+ business owners

In navigating inclusivity and discrimination, Fabella (2025) highlighted that the resiliency of LGBTQIA+ business owners in the Philippines requires them to cope with a mixed level of acceptance and employ coping strategies that are highly transferable to entrepreneurship. Moreover, LGBTQIA+ business owners must build resilience by adapting to diverse social attitudes across customers, employees, and investors. In addition, the cultural resilience of business owners can be understood by their ability to adapt to environmental change, sustain livelihoods, promote visibility, and overcome identity stigma. This stigma relates to the study conducted by Molde and Embornas (2024) with Maranao LGBT individuals in the

Philippines who experience discrimination in cultural and social settings. Though it indirectly states a strong relationship to the cultural resilience of LGBTQIA+ business owners in the Philippines, by documenting stigma and acceptance patterns, it highlights the cultural environment that entrepreneurs must navigate.

In developing long-term economic resilience, it is worth noting that humanitarian action often fails to connect immediate relief with institutional transformation. This is particularly relevant when considering the need to integrate LGBTQIA+ individuals systematically for long-term economic growth, which has a direct impact on business sustainability (Abesamis & Hrynicky, 2024). Furthermore, financing, regulatory hurdles, and market access are just a few examples of specific business institutional challenges. For the LGBTQIA+ business owners, having institutional resiliency means overcoming limited access to capital, mentorship, and a supportive supplier network. Additionally, institutional resilience involves adapting to discriminatory norms, leveraging protective legislation, and building inclusive networks to sustain their ventures despite systemic barriers. Cambal et al. (2025) emphasized the need for legal frameworks, such as the Magna Carta for Women and the Safe Spaces Act, to ensure equal opportunities and minimize, if not eradicate, the effects of these institutional barriers.

The above literature review presents innovative strategies and practices that LGBTQIA+ business owners can adopt to develop and sustain their enterprises. Adopting a wide range of innovative strategies for them to develop and sustain their enterprises despite the demographic barriers and other challenges. LGBTQIA+ business owners' core practices must focus on product innovation, engaging in provincial, regional, and even expanding to global trade expos, and fostering government–private partnerships that enhance the quality and marketability. By embedding their enterprises within community-based entrepreneurship models, these business owners create inclusive spaces that challenge stereotypes and foster customer loyalty, thereby strengthening resilience against discrimination. Participation in incubation programs that provide mentorship, fundraising support, and legal counsel enables LGBTQIA+ business owners to overcome barriers to entry and sustain growth.

Moreover, their involvement in industry allows them to benefit from collective visibility, shared resources, and expanded trade networks. Public–private collaborations further equip these entrepreneurs with the critical skills necessary for digital marketing, intellectual property management, and product design, ensuring competitiveness in both local and international markets. Collectively, these strategies not only mitigate institutional barriers related to financing, regulatory hurdles, and market access but also highlight the capacity of LGBTQIA+ business owners to leverage innovation and inclusivity as mechanisms for long-term sustainability and resilience.

In summary, Table 1 provides the matrix of factors contributing to the resiliency and innovation of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental.

**Table 1. Resiliency and Innovation Among LGBTQIA+ Business Owners**

Author	Title	Year	Factors
Abesamis et al	LGBTQIA+-Inclusive Humanitarian Action in the Philippines	2024	Institutional barriers faced by the LGBTQIA+ business owners related to humanitarian crises.
Cambal et al	Workplace Challenges Based on Sexual Orientation Among LGBTQIA+ in the Restaurants of Calamba City	2025	Institutional barriers in workplace discrimination

Fabella et al	Perceptions of LGBTQIA+ Inclusion and Discrimination in the Philippines: Insights on Workplace Comfort and Social Attitudes	2025	Building resiliency by adapting to diverse social attitudes across customers, employees, and investors.
Garcia et al	Equal Work for All: The Lived Experiences of the Marginalized Workers on the Diversity and Inclusion Approach of Business Establishments	2023	Barriers of Traditional and Cultural Norms
Guliman-Qudsi et al	The role of adaptive resilience on the financial performance of Philippine hospitality and tourism enterprises: amid a disrupted business environment	2024	LGBTQIA+ resiliency in the intersectionality of resilience results in a positive link
Molde et al	Addressing Stigma: Exploring The Experiences of Mëranao LGBT.	2024	Social and cultural discrimination by the Maranao LGBT
Nares et al	Queer People in Business: An Exploration of their Lived Experiences in their Workplace.	2024	Social barriers faced by queer people in their workplace or business in Davao City

### Theory Base

The core basis of this study rests on the resilience theory that anchors to the study of Sarasvathy (2001). This article has a strong relationship with this study through the core values of effectuation. The Pilot-in-the-plane worldview, where entrepreneurs shape their future with their own actions. This approach describes how entrepreneurs process decision-making, perform actions that ultimately determine their step-by-step assessment using their available resources, while maintaining the equilibrium of actions in achieving their goal.

Sarasvathy Theory added four principles of Effectuations, the Bird-in-Hand Principle, where you have to create solutions with the resources available and start here and now. The Lemonade Principle: This principle helps you to understand that mistakes and surprises are inevitable, and every setback may turn into an opportunity. The Crazy Quilt Principle: This principle practices the art of building partnerships, which helps to expand resources and new opportunities. The Affordable Loss Principle: This principle discusses the importance of investment limit, where you practice investing into what only you can afford to lose.

The theory of Causation and Effectuations by Sarasvathy resonates with this study through the following lenses; uncertainty and risk, where LGBTQIA+ business owners often operate in environments of systemic discrimination, limited access to capital, and social stigma. Effectuation emphasizes navigating uncertainty in one's lived reality. Resource-based adaptation, where marginalized entrepreneurs such as LGBTQIA+ business owners frequently rely on personal networks, community support, and creative use of limited resources to build businesses. Resilience through setbacks, where the LGBTQIA+ business owners often receive discrimination or exclusion, can be reframed as opportunities to innovate niche products, services, or inclusive spaces.

Community partnerships, particularly among LGBTQIA+ businesses, often thrive by forming alliances within their community and with allies, mirroring the principle of building strength through diverse partnerships. Lastly, risk management is a key consideration, where many LGBTQIA+ business owners

adopt cautious investment strategies to protect themselves from systemic barriers while still pursuing growth.

These strong connection makes a powerful lens in balancing as well as analyzing how resilience and innovation emerge in marginalized entrepreneurial contexts. And how this theory provides a framework for decision-making. How LGBTQIA+ business owners create opportunities rather than wait for ideal conditions, transform adversity into innovation, and leverage networks and partnerships to overcome institutional barriers.

**Conceptual Framework**

Figure 1 illustrates how LGBTQIA+ business owners in two localities of Davao Oriental transform challenges into resilience and innovation, which leads to sustainable business, an empowered community supported by the external factors of economic development. It stresses how barriers, resilience, and innovative practices serve as facilitating mechanisms that enable them to adapt and thrive despite marginalization.

**Figure 1. Conceptual**

Input	Process	Output
<p>Challenges Encountered by LGBTQIA+ business owners Social Economic Cultural Institutional Barriers</p> <p>Resilience of LGBTQIA+ business owners Social Economic; Cultural; and Institutional challenges.</p> <p>Barriers of LGBTQIA+ business owners Social Economic; Cultural; and Institutional challenges.</p>	<p>Implementation of Barriers, Resilience and Innovative Practices Among LGBTQIA+ Business Owners in two localities in Davao Oriental</p>	<p>Business Sustainability</p> <p>Economic Growth Social Impact Community Empowerment</p> <p>Sustainable LGBTQIA+ businesses despite adversity</p> <p>Increased visibility and empowerment of marginalized entrepreneurs</p> <p>Contribution to local economic development in Davao Oriental</p> <p>Role-model effect for future LGBTQIA+ business owners</p>

**Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the dynamic interaction between challenges, adaptive strategies, and outcomes within a marginalized entrepreneurial setting. LGBTQIA+ business owners often

undergo social stigma, economic barriers, and cultural constraints that place them at the periphery of mainstream business environments. These challenges, however, serve as catalysts for resilience and innovation, pushing business owners to develop creative practices and adaptive mechanisms that allow them not only to survive but also to thrive.

For instance, in micro and small enterprises like hair salons, spas, and fashion boutiques, where the majority of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental are commonly engaged with, the importance of planned resilience, a planning that promotes a positive link towards adaptive resiliency. When these two positively intersect, it creates a unified effort that tailors a gender bias free program.

Facing social barriers and workplace discrimination might be one of the highlights of Queer entrepreneurs in Davao City, but the resiliency of business owners to understand and with their ability to adapt to environmental change, sustain livelihoods, promote visibility, and overcome identity stigma.

In the Philippines, the LGBTQIA+ business owners are often outnumbered and marginalized by the majority due to heteronormative and cultural norms. These norms often project hierarchy and conformity, restricting opportunities to scale ventures or gain equal footing in the economic and business industry. Documenting this stigma and acceptance patterns highlights the cultural environment entrepreneurs must navigate. With the support of the government, these types of cultural barriers can be prevented.

Institutional neglect among LGBTQIA+ business owners and members, exclusion from planning and limited access to relief, capital, and support are a few of the institutional barriers that these groups are crying for. These systemic inequalities create institutional disadvantage and project long-term crises if not taken care of.

Despite these constraints, LGBTQIA+ business owners demonstrate remarkable resilience. Their resilience is expressed across different dimensions, in social aspects by building network support and affirming identities; through economic, innovating in resource management and creating niche markets; and in cultural aspects, by negotiating acceptance and integrating inclusive practices; and lastly in its institutional structure, navigating policies and leveraging advocacy to gain recognition. This adaptive positive trait allows the LGBTQIA+ business owners not only to withstand adversity but also to transform marginalization into opportunities for growth and empowerment.

### 3. Chapter

#### METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the study's research design, sample, data presentation, and analytics to achieve its objectives. This chapter discusses the statistical methods used to assess the relationship between the independent and dependent variables under investigation.

#### Research Design

This study employed descriptive and correlational quantitative designs. These research tools aimed to accurately describe the population, situation, and characteristics of concern in this study. The researcher aimed to describe and summarize the relationships among variables, making the quantitative research design a central statistical tool for this study (Temizhan, E. et al., 2022). Over time, different correlation coefficients have been developed to suit various research contexts. Correlation coefficients were compared under different conditions. Before researching why something happens, there is a need to understand how, when, and where it happens (Ghanad, 2023).

Using descriptive design, it uncovered the demographic profile of the respondents, particularly their age, gender identity, their type of business, and the number of years in business operation. This also revealed

the social, economic, cultural, and institutional barriers they face, their level of resilience in the face of challenges, and the innovative strategies they adopt to sustain their enterprises.

### Research Sampling

In conducting this study, the quota sampling or a non-probability sampling method was used. The researcher classifies the respondents into subgroups such as age, gender identity, locality, type of business, and the number of years in business, then selects participants until a predetermined quota of 150 respondents is met. Quota sampling is a method of non-probability sampling when the samples are selected based on the probability proportionate to the distribution of a variable in the population (Rukmana, D., 2024). The initial proposal of this study was to distribute 75 questionnaires for both Lupon and the City of Mati. However, due to the significant engagement and interest in the result, some respondents forwarded the link to other LGBTQAI+ members. Table 2 presents the actual distribution of respondents according to locality.

**Table 2. Distribution of Respondents**

Locality	Frequency	Percentage
City of Mati	81	52.35%
Municipality of Lupon	89	47.65%
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Further, the data reveal that a majority of respondents (52.35%) were from the Municipality of Lupon, while (47.65%) are from the City of Mati. As Ninja Van Philippines (2023) notes, any Filipino can start a business. Entrepreneurs often establish enterprises that are deeply connected to their communities. This distribution suggests that LGBTQIA+ entrepreneurial activities are present in both localities, with Lupon showing a slightly higher concentration.

### Research Data

Primary data were used to address the study's objectives. The primary data for this study were gathered directly from LGBTQIA+ business owners in two localities of Davao Oriental, the municipality of Lupon and the City of Mati, through a survey questionnaire. These methods allowed all respondents to rate their perceptions of barriers, resilience, and innovative practices.

In addition, secondary data were drawn from existing literature, government reports, and policy documents related to entrepreneurship and LGBTQIA+ inclusion in the Philippines. Publications from non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups, as well as previous studies on marginalized communities, further contextualized the findings. These secondary sources complemented the primary data by offering background information, statistical support, and theoretical grounding for the analysis.

### Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire of this study underwent validation by a panel of experts, including a statistician. After validating the questionnaire for content alignment with the objectives, revisions were incorporated and uploaded to the KoboCollect Toolbox for data collection. Alongside is a formal letter requesting authorization to conduct a survey. This communication explicitly outlined the objectives of the study, including the intention to obtain a list of members, subject to approval.

A pilot test was conducted among 40 respondents in the Municipalities of Banay-banay and San Isidro, Davao Oriental. This established the reliability of the institution's items. Table 3 shows the reliability statistics.

**Table 3. Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.969	55

With a high Cronbach’s alpha, the survey questionnaire was carried out. There were at least four (4) enumerators who were recruited to provide a thorough orientation about the objective of the study, data collection protocols, and the use of the KoboCollect Toolbox for gathering responses. The collection tool automatically consolidated all collected data, which was subsequently downloaded and screened before analysis.

**Data Presentation**

The results of the collected data are presented in tables and figures, each displaying the evaluated items along with their corresponding results. Figures illustrate frequency counts for demographic data of the LGBTQIA+ business owners in the selected localities. On the other hand, tables present results on the barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ business owners, the level of resilience among LGBTQIA+, innovative strategies and practices, and the significant differences in these aspects across localities.

Another research design tool that helps achieve the objective of this study is the Inferential design. It is a branch of statistics that aims to test hypotheses by estimating the probability that a hypothesized effect, relationship, or difference is likely true (Krotonoulas et al., 2023). Using inferential statistics, this analysis examined whether the level of resilience among LGBTQIA+ business owners differs by locality and whether there are significant differences in the innovative strategies and practices adopted by LGBTQIA+ business owners across localities.

**Data Analysis**

Frequency count, mean, and t-tests were used for data analysis.

**Frequency Count.** The demographic profile of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental was analyzed using frequency counts, particularly for age, gender identity, types of business, and years in business. This analysis provided an insight into the composition of this community.

**Mean.** The level of implementation of the barriers and resilience of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental was assessed using the mean of the applicable provisions. This aimed to gauge the extent of social, economic, cultural, and institutional barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ business owners and, in the same context, to measure their resilience. By examining the implemented provisions, this study sought to understand the legal framework applied and implemented by this community. Additionally, the level of innovation adopted by this community was measured using the respective indicator averages. Furthermore, the descriptive interpretations of the mean results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Descriptive Interpretation of the Mean**

Range of Means	Descriptive Level	Interpretations
4.20-5.00	Very High	The item statement is always manifested.
3.40-4.19	High	The item statement is frequently manifested.
2.60-3.19	Moderate	The item statement is sometimes manifested.
1.80-2.59	Low	The item statement is rarely manifested.

**t-test.** A t-test is a statistical test used to determine whether the means of two groups differ significantly. This is often used to test hypotheses and determine whether the process or treatment affects the population of interest, or whether the two groups differ. Additionally, this statistical technique, known as a parametric approach, involves specifying the probability distribution of random variables and estimating their parameters (Adhikari et al., 2023).

The t-test plays a crucial role in this study as it facilitates a comprehensive analysis and thorough examination of the significant differences in the level of resilience among LGBTQIA+ business owners, as well as their innovative strategies and the practices adopted, as they are grouped according to their localities.

### **Ethical Consideration**

The researcher religiously adhered to the ethical standards set forth throughout the conduct of this study. The three basic principles described in the Belmont Report (1979) were respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.

### **Respect for Persons**

Respect for persons deals with the wholehearted commitment of the researcher to not exploit respondents under any circumstances. This concept was applied considering study participants as autonomous beings capable of forming their views and making their own decisions. Individuals were treated with respect by ensuring they received enough information to make informed decisions, their views were respected, and they were given the right to act on those decisions. The security of those who are vulnerable and have restricted autonomy because of age, sickness, or disability is at the core of this concept (Farrugia, 2019). Hence, the researcher ensured that the respondents received the utmost protection, particularly in terms of their rights to their opinions and choices regarding participation in this study. These forms comprehensively discussed their rights, particularly regarding voluntary participation. The forms provided all the necessary information to protect respondents from harm. These were presented and signed by the respondents before any data collection occurred. Participation had been entirely voluntary, and respondents might withdraw from the study at any time.

### **Beneficence**

The philosophy of beneficence emphasizes a researcher's responsibility to ensure that study participants' well-being is always protected. This principle was often translated into two maxims: do no harm and maximize benefits while minimizing risks (Farrugia, 2019). This necessitated that the researcher collect scientifically relevant data with practical applications while mitigating risks within the study procedure and safeguarding participants during the trial (Bitter et al., 2020).

**Direct and Indirect Benefits of Participation.** Participation in this study provided direct benefits to respondents' personal growth and empowerment, and recognized their existence by sharing their experiences. Their voices are validated, giving them visibility as LGBTQIA+ business owners in these two localities in Davao Oriental. This fosters self-reflection and pride in their barriers, resilience, and innovative practices.

Indirect benefits of the participation of these respondents contribute to broader social and policy impact. Their insights can inform inclusive programs, raise community awareness, and inspire future LGBTQIA+ business owners that the long run will help them to reduce stigma and strengthen support for marginalized LGBTQIA+ business owners in two localities of Davao Oriental.

To avoid the social and psychological risks of respondents divulging information, the researcher ensured strict anonymity. If respondents felt uncomfortable with any questionnaire items, the researcher did not

compel them to answer to prevent mental distress.

### **Justice**

Justice demands that the study's costs and benefits be distributed equitably across the population. However, there were no widely agreed-upon fairness criteria (Schäfer et al., 2015). The theory of justice holds that all people should be treated equally. In the context of research, this means that everyone had an equal opportunity to share in the research's benefits and burdens, without discrimination based on age, gender, ethnicity, religion, or socioeconomic status (Farrugia, 2019).

**Exclusion Criteria:** This study was conducted exclusively among LGBTQIA+ business owners in two localities of Davao Oriental, the municipality of Lupon and the City of Mati. Members of the RC Community who are freelancers are included in this study. However, this study excluded members who were employed in non-business sectors or reside outside the specified localities. The exclusion of their participation ensured the relevance to the educational context of this study.

The random selection of respondents allowed the researcher to adhere to the principles of this ethical measure. It ensured that all members of the target population had an equal chance of being included. A random sampling technique was employed to probabilistically provide a chance to be part of the study. Further, adopted survey questionnaires and other works from published studies were properly cited in the references section of the manuscript.

**Data Collection Site and Safety Measures:** Data collection was conducted within a designated location respondents' privacy and safety. These were secured to prevent unauthorized access and to create a comfortable environment, particularly for participants of this study.

**Declaration of Conflict of Interest:** The researcher declared no conflict of interest that might affect the integrity of the study. No financial, professional, or personal interests influenced the study's conduct, analysis, or reporting. The research was conducted solely for academic and educational improvement purposes.

### **Data Privacy and Confidentiality**

In adherence to RA 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, the researcher did not collect any personal information from the respondents. All respondents were treated with utmost privacy and confidentiality. This method ensured the proper handling of the respondents' data and information. Only the researcher had access to the data. Paper documents were stored as electronic files with a password protection. This ensured that access is restricted solely to the researcher. In addition, data was anonymized before sharing with the statistical analyst. Hard and soft copies of the data were properly disposed of three (3) years after the study's completion.

**Feedback of Study Results to Stakeholders:** Upon completing the study, the researcher ensured the results were disseminated to relevant stakeholders. A summary of the findings was presented to participating LGBTQIA+ business owners in two localities in the municipality of Lupon and the City of Mati. The research results are shared in academic conferences or published in peer-reviewed journals to contribute to the broader academic and educational community. The dissemination ensured that participants, including LGBTQIA+ who are freelancers and policymakers, could use the findings to inform educational improvements.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion**

**Inclusion.** This study included only LGBTQIA+ business owners residing and operating in the localities of Lupon and the City of Mati, Davao Oriental. In addition, freelancers or on-call LGBTQIA+ members offering fee-based services are considered participants. The participant profile included only age, gender

identity, sexual orientation, marital status, educational attainment, type of business, and years in business. Furthermore, the core variables encompassed the social, economic, cultural, and institutional barriers they face, their resilience in the face of these challenges, and the innovative strategies they adopt to sustain their enterprises.

Exclusion. Consequently, this study excluded RC members who were employed in business or non-business sectors and who reside outside the specified localities

#### 4. Chapter

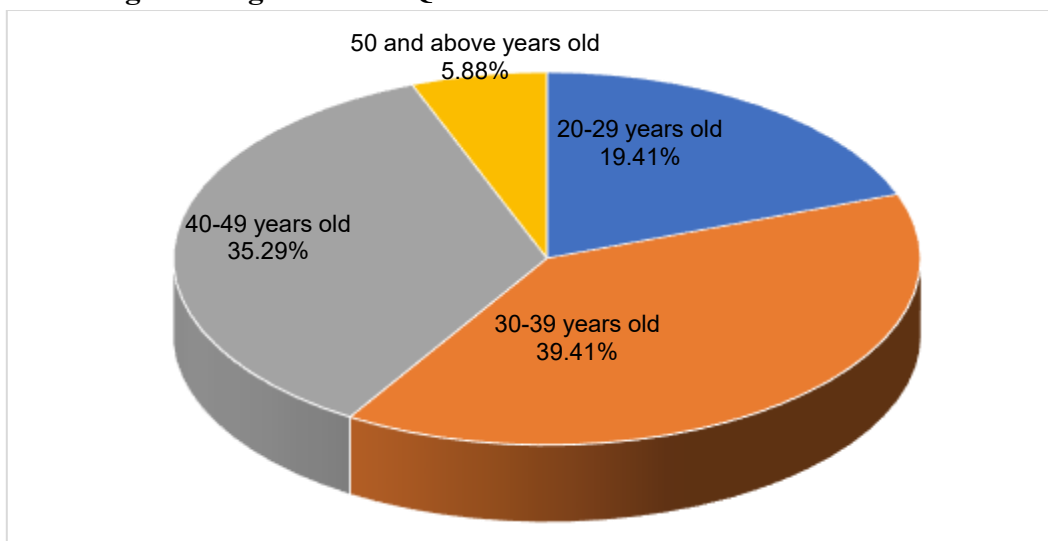
### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the survey conducted and is systematically organized to address the specific problems of the study.

#### Demographic profile of LGBTQIA+ business owners

Age. In Figure 2 presented below, the largest proportion of LGBTQIA+ business owners is in the 30–39 age group (39.41%), followed closely by those aged 40–49 (35.29%). This indicates that entrepreneurial activity is most concentrated in the prime working years (30–49 years old). On the other hand, this data shows that an early presentation of LGBTQIA+ business owners aged 20–29 comprise 19.41%, while the least represented group is those aged 50 and above (5.88%).

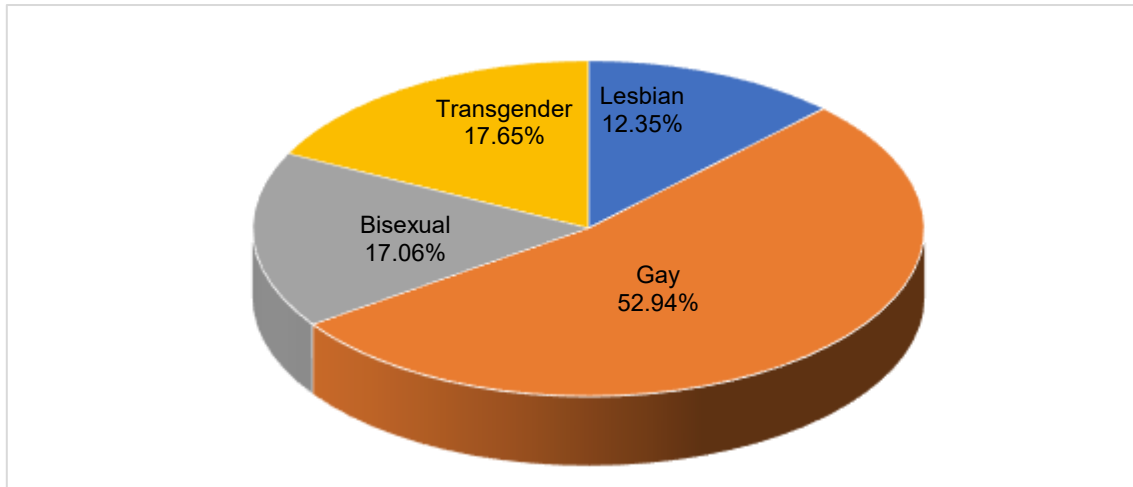
**Figure 2. Age of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental**



This finding is consistent with the study of (Esmabe, S. et al., 2024), demographic variables such as age significantly influence human behavior, which often reflects the stage of life where individuals possess varying levels of experience, resources, acceptance, and risk tolerance in engaging in entrepreneurship.

Gender. Figure 3 shows that the majority of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental are identified as gay (52.94%), followed by transgender (17.65%), bisexual (17.06%), and lesbian (12.35%). This predominance of gay business owners reflects broader patterns of visibility within the LGBTQIA+ community.

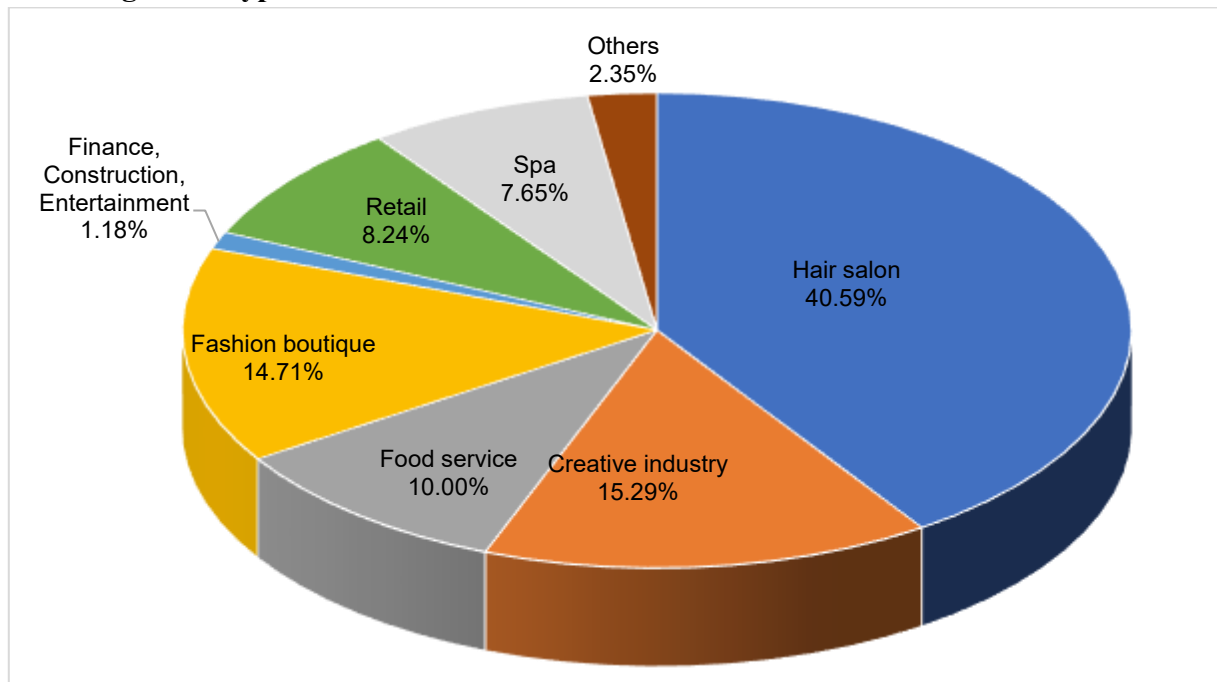
**Figure 3. Gender of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental**



This data result showed similar trends in Batangas City, as reported in a study by Castillo et al. (2025). The data indicated that both municipalities provide spaces where gay individuals can more confidently engage in business ventures. In contrast, a smaller proportion of other individuals who belong to the LGBTQIA+ business owners still contribute to the diversity of the entrepreneurial sector in these two municipalities.

Type of Business. Figure 4 indicates that LGBTQIA+ businesses in Lupon and Mati were more inclined in service-oriented industries, with hair salons accounting for the largest share (40.59%). This dominance reflects both the accessibility of beauty and grooming services and their cultural significance as spaces of identity expression and livelihood.

**Figure 4. Type of Business of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental**



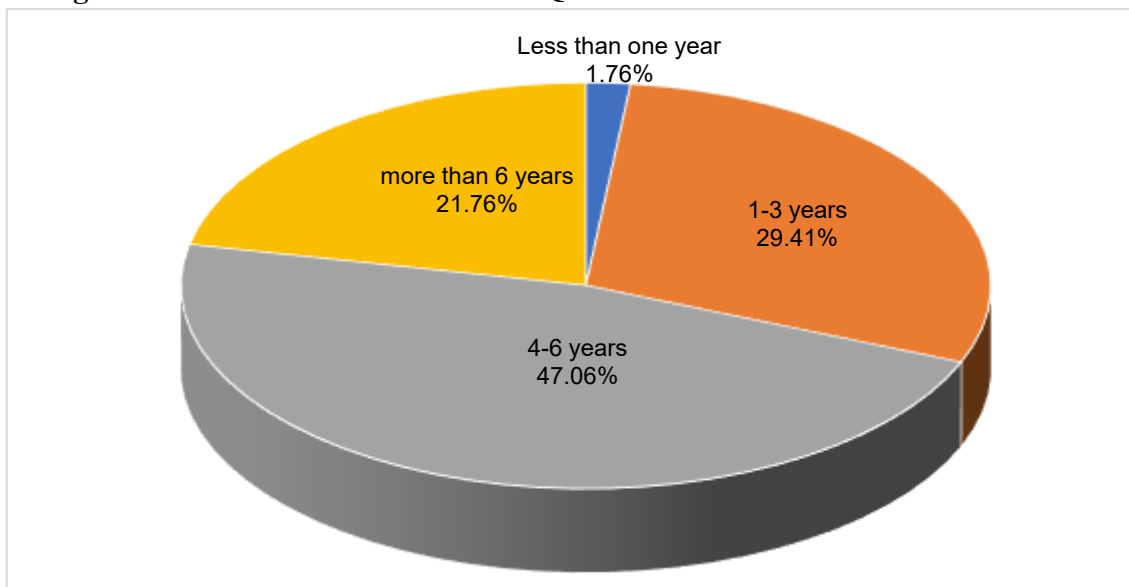
In addition, creative industries (15.29%) and fashion boutiques (14.71%) also show strong participation, underscoring the role of artistry and design in LGBTQIA+ economic activity. Food service (10.00%),

retail (8.24%), and spa businesses (7.65%) represent moderate diversification, while finance, construction, and entertainment (1.18%).

The predominance of LGBTQIA+ hair salon business owners is consistent with findings by Sibal (2024), who documented how queer makeup artists and hairstylists are leading the Philippine beauty industry, carving spaces for visibility and self-expression.

**Years in Business.** Figure 5 illustrates that nearly half of the LGBTQIA+ business owners surveyed have been operating their businesses for 4–6 years (47.06%), indicating a strong level of stability and sustained participation in entrepreneurial activity. A significant portion (29.41%) has been in business for 1–3 years. Meanwhile, 21.76% have surpassed six years in operation, reflecting long-term resilience and adaptability. Only 1.76% of respondents reported businesses less than one year old, showing limited entry of very new ventures at the time of the survey.

**Figure 4. Years in Business of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental**



The predominance of businesses operating for 4–6 years aligns with findings of Malaluan (2019), who reported that micro and small enterprises in the Philippines, particularly in Lipa City, often stabilize after their third year, with cash conversion cycles becoming more effective in sustaining operations. This supports the idea that LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and Mati are reaching a stage of maturity where financial management and market adaptation meet to contribute to business longevity.

**Barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ business owners in terms of:**

**Social Barriers.** Table 5 shows that LGBTQIA+ business owners in the two localities faced significant social discrimination, particularly in business transactions ( $\bar{x}$ =3.6175), and in the level of respect within professional environments ( $\bar{x}$ =3.6353). The findings also show that all indicators obtained a high descriptive interpretation, which means that these social discrimination barriers were frequently manifested among the respondents.

Discrimination in business transactions, in particular ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.6176, High), is frequently manifested, indicating that unequal treatment during business dealings is a common experience among the respondents. Being differently treated by customers ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.5941, High) and receiving negative comments ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.6059, High) are also frequently manifested, suggesting that disrespectful and biased interactions

happen on a regular basis in their business transactions. Perceived affection from others ( $\bar{x} = 3.5824$ , High) likewise indicates a frequent experience of differential social treatment, while less respect in business environments ( $\bar{x} = 3.6353$ , High) is the most frequently manifested barrier. Overall, the social discrimination barrier ( $\bar{x} = 3.6071$ , High) is frequently manifested, reflecting a high level of social barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ business owners.

**Table 5. Level of Social Discrimination Barriers**

Social Discrimination Barriers	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
Discrimination in business transactions	3.6176	.78502	High
Differently treated by customers	3.5941	.81041	High
Negative comments	3.6059	.83061	High
Perceived affection from others	3.5824	.84737	High
Less respect in business environments	3.6353	.78215	High
<b>Social Discrimination Barrier</b>	<b>3.6071</b>	<b>.79194</b>	<b>High</b>

This aligns with the findings of Bilon et al. (2024), which indicate that LGBTQIA+ professionals in the Philippines continue to encounter systemic bias despite inclusion initiatives. Appleby et al. (2023) further reinforce that such discrimination negatively affects entrepreneurial innovation and economic contribution. Thus, the persistence of these barriers underscores the need for stronger anti-discrimination policies and inclusive practices to foster equitable participation of LGBTQIA+ business owners in the business sector.

In localities like Lupon and in the City Mati, these barriers limit the full participation of LGBTQIA+ business owners as social beings. These barriers may influence their sense of belonging, social participation, and professional confidence. These can weaken their trust and sense of belonging in community networks, heighten stress, and reduce opportunities and increase unequal competition. Customer discrimination and different treatment weaken everyday social ties and can make LGBTQIA+ business owners feel less accepted as full members of the community, Ahmed, A., et al. (2021). Ultimately, these barriers show that they not only hinder individual business growth but also limit the inclusivity and diversity of local economic development in both municipalities.

**Economic Barriers.** Table 6 suggests that LGBTQIA+ business owners generally faced low barriers to accessing financial resources ( $\bar{x}=2.5847$ ), with moderate challenges in accessing financial assistance programs ( $\bar{x}=2.6118$ ), and securing funding opportunities for the business ( $\bar{x}=2.6235$ ). Specifically, respondents reported that it is sometimes difficult to obtain financial capital for the business ( $\bar{x} = 2.5882$ , Low) and that access to loans from financial institutions is sometimes challenging ( $\bar{x} = 2.5294$ , Low). They also indicated that a lack of financial resources sometimes limits business expansion ( $\bar{x} = 2.5706$ , Low). In contrast, limited access to financial assistance programs ( $\bar{x} = 2.6118$ ) and difficulty in securing funding for the business ( $\bar{x} = 2.6235$ ) are likewise sometimes manifested but are already at a moderate level of barrier.

The result aligns with the study of Guliman-Qudsi et al. (2024), which emphasized that LGBTQIA+ business owners are commonly engaged in micro and small enterprises. Their study highlighted that resilience and business sustainability among LGBTQIA+ business owners are strengthened when gender-tailored support systems and unified community efforts are present.

Taken together, these findings suggest that, while economic constraints are present, LGBTQIA+ business owners generally face few barriers to accessing financial resources, with certain aspects, particularly financial assistance programs and funding opportunities, approaching a moderate level of concern.

**Table 6. Economic Barriers Faced by LGBTQIA+ Business Owners**

<b>Access to Financial Resources Barriers</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>
Difficult to obtain financial capital for the business	2.5882	1.37427	Low
Challenging access to loans from financial institutions	2.5294	1.36818	Low
Limited access to financial assistance programs	2.6118	1.37685	Moderate
Lack of financial resources limits business expansion	2.5706	1.36233	Low
Difficulty in securing funding for the business	2.6235	1.36288	Moderate
<b>Access to Financial Resources Barrier</b>	<b>2.5847</b>	<b>1.34543</b>	<b>Low</b>

Similar findings that were supported by the literature are the study conducted by Appleby et al. (2023), which argues that inclusive financial systems are gradually improving entrepreneurial access to capital in the Philippines. Furthermore, by noting this, financial institutions are slowly adopting inclusive frameworks, though several gaps may remain in program accessibility. Thus, while financial discrimination is less severe compared to social barriers, targeted interventions are still necessary to ensure equitable access to funding and expansion opportunities for these LGBTQIA+ business owners.

These low-level barriers suggest that, in general, LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and the City of Mati can access basic financial resources and maintain their businesses. The occasional challenges reflect procedural or situational constraints rather than systemic exclusion. These low but recurring frictions may require LGBTQIA+ business owners to rely more on personal savings, informal networks, or community support, affecting liquidity and long-term investment capacity Patil, S. (2024).

The moderate barriers further suggest that while financial systems may already demonstrate gradual inclusivity, certain institutional limitations remain present among the LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and the City of Mati. LGBTQIA+ business owners may still encounter challenges in qualifying for assistance programs, accessing government support, or securing formal funding opportunities due to limited awareness, insufficient collateral, procedural requirements, or perceived discrimination within financial systems. These conditions may reduce their capacity to maximize business potential and economic mobility. Furthermore, these moderate barriers may influence the psychological and professional experiences of LGBTQIA+ business owners.

Taken together, in economic terms, low barriers indicate that the LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and in the City of Mati have day-to-day access to basic finance that is generally possible but not frictionless, while moderate barriers in assistance programs and funding opportunities point to more critical gaps in higher-level, developmental support that are likely to constrain long-term growth and resilience of these LGBTQIA+ business owners.

**Cultural Barriers.** Table 7 suggests that cultural stigma and traditional beliefs remain powerful barriers, undermining the sustainability and growth of LGBTQIA+ business owners in these localities. The

composite mean of 3.6529 indicates a high level of cultural acceptance barriers, suggesting that these item statements are frequently manifested in the respondents' experiences. Specifically, respondents reported that community cultural beliefs affect their business ( $\bar{x} = 3.6294$ , High), indicating that such beliefs are frequently manifested as a barrier to their enterprise. They likewise agreed that uncomfortable support to LGBTQIA+ businesses ( $\bar{x} = 3.6529$ , High) is frequently manifested, reflecting persistent unease or reluctance from the community toward their enterprises.

Moreover, community attitudes influence the growth of their business ( $\bar{x} = 3.6647$ , High) and the cultural expectations affect the response of others ( $\bar{x} = 3.6412$ , High), both of which are rated high, suggesting that restrictive or prejudicial norms are frequently manifested and shape how customers, partners, and other stakeholders engage with LGBTQIA+ business owners particularly in Lupon and in the City of Mati. Further, community acceptance affects the success of a business ( $\bar{x} = 3.6765$ , High), which also obtained a high mean score, indicating that limited acceptance is frequently manifested as a critical barrier to business performance.

**Table 7. Cultural Acceptance Barriers Faced by LGBTQIA+ Business Owners**

Cultural Acceptance Barriers	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
Community cultural beliefs affect the business	3.6294	.76015	High
Uncomfortable support to LGBTQIA+ businesses	3.6529	.69027	High
Community attitudes influence the growth of the business	3.6647	.67888	High
Cultural expectations affect the response of others	3.6412	.72615	High
Community acceptance affects the success of a business	3.6765	.66709	High
<b>Cultural Acceptance Barrier</b>	<b>3.6529</b>	<b>.66191</b>	<b>High</b>

Esmabe et al. (2022), who found that Filipino cultural norms and demographic factors significantly shape acceptance of LGBTQIA+ individuals. Thus, cultural stigma remains a critical challenge, limiting the growth and success of these LGBTQIA+ business owners.

Community acceptance is a cultural cornerstone of entrepreneurial success, Patil, S. (2024). Cultural barriers are not occasional but frequently felt realities for LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and the City of Mati. International and regional research, Kidney, E., et al. (2024) confirms that such heteronormative and homonegative environments shape LGBTQIA+ opportunities, forcing them to adjust their identities, strategies, and even ambitions to fit community expectations. This result suggests the need for gender-tailored programs, inclusive community dialogues, and cultural education to dismantle stereotypes and foster genuine acceptance among the RC/ Rainbow community, particularly the LGBTQIA+ business owners of Lupon and in the City of Mati.

**Institutional barriers.** Table 8 presents the perception of LGBTQIA+ business owners regarding low institutional support and moderate challenges in accessing government programs. The findings show an overall mean of 2.5647 (Low), indicating that institutional barriers are rarely manifested among the respondents. This data suggests that, in general, institutional systems such as government programs, LGU

support, and business development initiatives are moderately accessible to LGBTQIA+ business owners, although inconsistencies still exist across specific areas.

Specifically, government programs for the LGBTQIA+ business owners are accessible, with a mean of 2.6118 (SD = 1.37255), interpreted as Moderate, which means that this barrier is sometimes manifested among the respondents. This implies that while government programs are present, accessibility may not be fully consistent or equally experienced by all LGBTQIA+ business owners.

In contrast, adequate support has been received from LGUs, with a mean of 2.5471 (SD = 1.35900), interpreted as Low, indicating that this concern is rarely manifested. Similarly, business development programs are available ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.5235, SD = 1.36396), which is also low, suggesting that the limited availability of such programs is rarely experienced. Policies support the growth of businesses ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.5882, SD = 1.34819) and access to training programs from institutions ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.5529, SD = 1.35005) were both interpreted as low, meaning these institutional limitations are also rarely manifested among the respondents.

Overall, the institutional barrier obtained a composite mean of 2.5647 (SD = 1.32618), with a descriptive interpretation of Low, indicating that institutional barriers are rarely manifested among LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and the City of Mati.

**Table 8. Institutional Barriers Faced by LGBTQIA+ Business Owners**

<b>Institutional Barriers</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>
Government programs for entrepreneurs are accessible	2.6118	1.37255	Moderate
Adequate support has been received from LGUs	2.5471	1.35900	Low
Business development programs are available	2.5235	1.36396	Low
Policies support the growth of businesses	2.5882	1.34819	Low
Access to training programs from institutions	2.5529	1.35005	Low
<b>Institutional Barrier</b>	<b>2.5647</b>	<b>1.32618</b>	<b>Low</b>

This resonates with Lu (2025), who noted that while progressive LGUs like Quezon City have implemented inclusive policies, institutional support remains inconsistent nationwide. Thus, while frameworks exist, their inclusivity and accessibility are uneven, underscoring the need for stronger LGU engagement and national-level policies to ensure equitable support for LGBTQIA+ business owners.

Applied to respondents from Lupon and in the City of Mati, these results imply an important institutional gap in LGBTQIA+ business owners who rarely feel adequate support from the LGUs, in terms of policies, development programs, and training, and only sometimes perceive government programs that are truly accessible. This underlines the need for LGUs and national agencies to move beyond symbolic or generic programs toward explicitly inclusive, well-communicated, and locally grounded support that recognizes LGBTQIA+ business owners as a distinct constituency, similar to these is how Quezon City and some European localities have begun to link legal frameworks, funding, and concrete services to the lived realities of LGBTQ+ communities Gregorio, V. et al., (2025). Strengthening this alignment could transform the sometimes manifested in data into consistently experienced institutional support, narrowing the gap between progressive policy language and everyday entrepreneurial life.

**LGBTQ+ Business Barriers.** Table 9 presents the overall barriers encountered by LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and the City of Mati. The findings show that social discrimination registered a high mean score ( $\bar{x} = 3.6071$ ,  $SD = 0.79194$ ), indicating that this barrier is frequently manifested, as LGBTQIA+ business owners consistently experience unequal treatment in business transactions, customer relations, and professional environments. In contrast, access to financial resources obtained a low mean score ( $\bar{x} = 2.5847$ ,  $SD = 1.34543$ ), suggesting that this barrier is rarely manifested; while some challenges remain in securing loans or funding, financial access is not the most pressing issue compared with other barriers. Cultural acceptance showed the greatest concern ( $\bar{x} = 3.6529$ ,  $SD = 0.66191$ , High), meaning this barrier is frequently manifested and reflects strong cultural biases and community attitudes that hinder the growth and acceptance of LGBTQ+ businesses. Finally, institutional support was rated low ( $\bar{x} = 2.5647$ ,  $SD = 1.32618$ ), implying that this barrier is rarely manifested and that challenges in obtaining government or organizational support are present but not severe

**Table 9. LGBTQIA+ Business Barriers**

<b>LGBTQ+ Business Barriers</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>
Social Discrimination	3.6071	0.79194	High
Access to Financial Resources	2.5847	1.34543	Low
Cultural Acceptance	3.6529	0.66191	High
Institutional Support	2.5647	1.32618	Low
<b>LGBTQIA+ Business Barriers</b>	<b>3.1024</b>	<b>0.37487</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

This data presented aligns with research documenting persistent heterosexism and homophobia toward lesbian and gay entrepreneurs from clients, suppliers, and customers, which creates ongoing prejudice and minority stress in business life Kidney, E., et al. (2024). Further, access to financial resources, indicating a low level of barrier, suggests that financial difficulties are sometimes manifested. This data result is consistent with studies where direct financial exclusion is not always reported as systematic, even though stigma and identity can still create frictions in accessing mainstream finance for LGBTQIA+ and especially trans communities, Murad, M. et al. (2024). Moreover, cultural acceptance with the highest mean indicates that community beliefs and norms frequently hinder LGBTQ+ business owners' growth and legitimacy. Studies show that, even in relatively progressive contexts, LGBTQIA+ members still encounter strong cultural and religious norms that restrict acceptance and require them to perform or play with stereotypes to fit heteronormative expectations Essers, C., et al. (2022). In addition, the low barriers in institutional support imply that formal policies and programs are only sometimes a problem for these respondents. Where explicit LGBT-inclusive laws or corporate policies exist, they tend to reduce perceived discrimination and improve outcomes, but their presence and enforcement are uneven Conti, R. et al. (2021).

From a broader perspective, the findings suggest that the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and the City of Mati are not primarily rooted in the lack of entrepreneurial ability or economic participation. Instead, the greater challenge appears to lie in the social and cultural environment in which they operate. These LGBTQIA+ business owners rely not only on capital and products but also on trust, reputation, community support, and interpersonal connections that are deeply rooted in the environment in which these LGBTQIA+ business owners operate.

**Level of Resilience of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental. Social resilience.** In Table 10, the findings below suggest that LGBTQIA+ business owners used social networks as a moderate resilience mechanism to balance personal adaptability with community-based support.

The social discrimination (mean  $\bar{x}$  = 3.6071, SD = 0.79194) is rated high, which means this barrier is frequently manifested, indicating that LGBTQIA+ business owners consistently experience unequal treatment in business transactions, customer relations, and professional environments.

**Table 10. Social Resilience of LGBTQIA+ business owners**

Utilization of Social Networks Resilience	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
Seek advice from another entrepreneur	2.8765	1.31087	Moderate
Maintain relationships with people who support the business	2.9176	1.32085	Moderate
Connect with organizations that support entrepreneurs	2.8529	1.32192	Moderate
Participate in business-related networks	2.8529	1.31744	Moderate
Rely on my social connections when facing business challenges	2.8647	1.31871	Moderate
<b>Utilization of Social Networks</b>	<b>2.8729</b>	<b>1.29883</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

The overall mean score of 2.8729 (Moderate) indicates that LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental demonstrate a moderate level of resilience through social network utilization. Maintaining relationships with supportive people (M=2.9176) scored highest, showing that the LGBTQIA+ business owners of the two localities of Davao Oriental rely on trusted networks to sustain their businesses. Furthermore, seeking advice from other business owners (M=2.8765) and relying on social connections during challenges (M=2.8647) highlight the importance of peer-to-peer support in navigating difficulties, while connecting with organizations (M=2.8529) and participating in business-related networks (M=2.8529) scored moderately, thus suggesting that although these LGBTQIA+ business owners engaged with formal networks, participation is not yet maximized.

This resonates with Cruz et al (2022), who found that community connectedness enhances resilience and well-being among LGBTQIA+ Filipinos. Thus, while entrepreneurs benefit from social networks, expanding participation in formal organizations and business-related networks could strengthen both individual and collective resilience.

**Economic resilience.** The high level of economic resilience demonstrates that LGBTQIA+ business owners in the City of Mati and in Lupon possess strong capability in sustaining business operations despite difficulties and uncertainties. Table 11 below indicates a high degree of commitment, perseverance, and motivation among respondents in maintaining business continuity, reflecting their capacity to economically withstand operational challenges.

**Table 11. Economic Resilience**

Persistence in Business Operations Resilience	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
Continue operating the business despite difficulties	3.7176	.63641	High

Remain committed to the business goals	3.7353	.62059	High
Stay motivated to keep the business running	3.7176	.65474	High
Work hard to sustain the business	3.7176	.63641	High
Maintain business operations even during challenging times	3.7176	.63641	High
<b>Persistence in Business Operations</b>	<b>3.7212</b>	<b>.62881</b>	<b>High</b>

The survey results reveal that LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental demonstrate high persistence in business operations resilience, particularly in remaining committed to goals, staying motivated, and sustaining operations during challenges. The overall mean score of 3.7212 (High) indicates that LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental demonstrate a high level of persistence in business operations resilience. This resonates with Meyer et al. (2021), who argue that persistence is a critical resilience mechanism for LGBTQ+ individuals navigating systemic barriers. Thus, persistence not only sustains individual businesses but also strengthens the broader resilience of marginalized entrepreneurial communities.

**Cultural resilience.** The moderate scores on personal adaptability resilience suggest that LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental can respond to challenges with flexibility and innovation, though not consistently at a high level. These findings, shown in Table 12 presented below, suggest the importance of strengthening resilience through training, mentorship, and inclusive support systems to ensure that adaptability translates into long-term business sustainability.

**Table 12. Cultural Resilience**

<b>Personal Adaptability Resilience</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>
Adjust business strategies when challenges arise	2.7765	1.34452	Moderate
Adapt to changes in market conditions	2.7765	1.34452	Moderate
Flexible when facing business difficulties	2.7765	1.34891	Moderate
Find ways to adjust when unexpected problems occur	2.7765	1.34452	Moderate
Change approach when a strategy does not work	2.7882	1.34643	Moderate
<b>Personal Adaptability</b>	<b>2.7788</b>	<b>1.34068</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

The overall mean score of 2.7788 (Moderate) indicates that LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental demonstrate a moderate level of personal adaptability resilience. Respondents show their ability to adjust strategies, adapt to market changes, and remain flexible when facing difficulties, but this adaptability is not consistently strong. The slightly higher score on changing approaches when strategies do not work (M=2.7882) suggests that these LGBTQI+ business owners are willing to innovate and experiment when confronted with setbacks. The Manila Workplace Pride Report (2025) supports this by showing that adaptability and innovation among LGBTQIA+ professionals strengthen community resilience through shared practices and advocacy. Thus, resilience at the personal level becomes a driver of social resilience, enabling marginalized entrepreneurs to withstand cultural and institutional barriers.

**Institutional resilience.** Table 13 below demonstrates that a moderate level of institutional resilience is found amongst the LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental. They moderately apply strategic planning and decision-making practices in managing their businesses. The findings also suggest that respondents demonstrate awareness of risk management and long-term planning; however, further

enhancement in strategic business institutions and decision-making processes may strengthen overall business resilience.

**Table 13. Institutional Resilience**

<b>Strategic Decision-Making Resilience</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>
Careful evaluation of business opportunities before making decisions	2.7588	1.34805	Moderate
Plan strategies to manage risks	2.7588	1.34365	Moderate
Analyze problems before making business decisions	2.7294	1.34901	Moderate
Consider long-term outcomes when making business decisions	2.7529	1.35355	Moderate
Make informed decisions to improve business performance.	2.7588	1.35680	Moderate
<b>Strategic Decision Making</b>	<b>2.7518</b>	<b>1.34288</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

The overall mean score of 2.7518 (Moderate) indicates that LGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs in Davao Oriental demonstrate a moderate level of resilience in strategic decision-making. This resonates with Bilon, X. J. et al. (2024), who argue that LGBTQ+ professionals in the Philippines face institutional and cultural barriers that constrain their decision-making processes. Thus, while resilience is evident, strengthening analytical skills, risk management, and inclusive institutional support is essential to enhance strategic decision-making among these LGBTQIA+ business owners.

**LGBTQIA+ Business Resilience.** Table 14 below presents the results of the respondents describing the level of LGBTQIA+ business resilience among the respondents in terms of personal adaptability, persistence in business operations, utilization of social networks, and strategic decision making. With the overall mean score of ( $\bar{x} = 3.0312$ ,  $SD = .95943$ ), these findings show that the overall business resilience is sometimes manifested among these LGBTQIA+ business owners. Among the dimensions, persistence in business operations obtained the highest mean ( $\bar{x} = 3.7212$ ,  $SD = 0.62881$ ), interpreted as high, which means that respondents frequently persist in continuing their business despite challenges. In contrast, personal adaptability ( $\bar{x} = 2.7788$ ,  $SD = 1.34068$ ), utilization of social networks ( $\bar{x} = 2.8729$ ,  $SD = 1.29883$ ), and strategic decision making ( $\bar{x} = 2.7518$ ,  $SD = 1.34288$ ) all registered moderate levels on the table presented below, suggesting these behaviors are sometimes manifested. This pattern implies that while LGBTQIA+ business owners often show strong persistence, other aspects of resilience, such as adapting to change, leveraging social connections, and making strategic choices, are present but not consistently demonstrated.

**Table 14. LGBTQ+ Business Resilience**

LGBTQ+ Business Resilience	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
Personal Adaptability	2.7788	1.34068	Moderate
Persistence in Business Operations	3.7212	.62881	High
Utilization of Social Networks	2.8729	1.29883	Moderate
Strategic Decision Making	2.7518	1.34288	Moderate
<b>LGBTQ+ Business Resilience</b>	<b>3.0312</b>	<b>.95943</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

This result particularly supports the discussion of Fabella (2025), who emphasized that LGBTQIA+ business owners in the Philippines navigate a mixed level of inclusivity and discrimination. The moderate level of personal adaptability ( $\bar{x} = 2.7788$ ,  $SD = 1.34068$ ) reflects how these LGBTQIA+ business owners continuously adjust to the changing social attitudes, customer perceptions, and workplace environments. Furthermore, the high level of persistence in business operations ( $\bar{x} = 3.7212$ ,  $SD = 0.62881$ ) demonstrates that LGBTQ+ business owners frequently manifested determination and commitment in maintaining their enterprises despite adversities. This finding reinforces Fabella’s (2025) argument that resilience among LGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs is developed through continuous exposure to discrimination, social pressure, and the need to prove legitimacy in business spaces. The moderate result in utilization of social networks ( $\bar{x} = 2.8729$ ,  $SD = 1.29883$ ) also reveals the importance of community support and social connections among LGBTQIA+ business owners. Moreover, the moderate level of strategic decision-making ( $\bar{x} = 2.7518$ ,  $SD = 1.34288$ ) may imply that external pressures, discrimination, or limited resources affect the confidence and capacity of LGBTQ+ business owners to make long-term strategic plans consistently. This aligns with the study of Molde and Embornas (2024), which discussed the discrimination experienced by Maranao LGBT individuals in cultural and social settings in the Philippines.

Therefore, the findings imply that resiliency among the LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and in the City of Mati is not solely an individual characteristic but is also shaped by social acceptance, cultural conditions, and the inclusivity of the business environment. Their ability to adapt, persist, and sustain livelihoods despite discrimination reflects cultural resilience and the continuous effort to overcome identity-related stigma.

**Level of Innovative Practices Adopted by LGBTQIA+ Business Owners**

**Product Innovation.** Table 15 presents the level of product innovation adopted by LGBTQIA+ business owners in terms of introducing, improving, developing, modifying, and updating products or services. The overall mean score of ( $\bar{x} = 3.6306$ ,  $SD = .77567$ ), which was interpreted as high, indicates that product innovation practices were frequently manifested among the respondents.

Among the indicators, regularly updating product or service offerings obtained the highest mean score ( $\bar{x} = 3.6471$ ,  $SD = 0.77239$ ), which is interpreted as high, meaning that the respondents frequently manifested the practice of continuously updating their products or services. Similarly, modifying products or services based on customer needs garnered a mean score of ( $\bar{x} = 3.6412$ ,  $SD = 0.77349$ ), also described as high or frequently manifested. Moreover, improving existing products or services offered and developing new ideas for products or services both obtained a mean score of ( $\bar{x} = 3.6235$ ,  $SD = 0.79162$ ), with a descriptive interpretation of high. In addition, introducing new products or services of the business recorded a mean score of ( $\bar{x} = 3.6176$ ,  $SD = 0.79252$ ), likewise interpreted as high, indicating that the respondents frequently introduced innovative offerings as part of their business strategies.

**Table 15. Product Innovation Adopted by LGBTQIA+ Business Owners**

Product Innovation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
Introduce new products or services of the business.	3.6176	.79252	High
Improve existing products or services offered	3.6235	.79162	High
Develop new ideas for products or services.	3.6235	.79162	High
Modify products or services based on customer needs	3.6412	.77349	High
Regularly update product or service offerings	3.6471	.77239	High
<b>Product Innovation</b>	<b>3.6306</b>	<b>.77567</b>	<b>High</b>

These consistently high ratings across all indicators suggest that innovation has become an important strategy for LGBTQIA+ business owners in sustaining competitiveness in responding to changing market demands. Fabella, M. (2025) documented that product innovation is one such coping strategy by LGBTQIA+ business owners to continuously update and modify product or service offerings to navigate social discrimination, and must cope with mixed levels of acceptance that could employ coping strategies transferable to entrepreneurship. These examples show how product innovation is not only about competitiveness but also about cultural expression and identity affirmation. Tatler Asia (2024) highlighted that LGBTQIA-owned Filipino businesses thrive through innovation, creating unique products and services that assert visibility and legitimacy in spaces where identity is marginalized.

As to the data result, LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and in the City of Mati, product innovation is present and always manifested. They not only generate new ideas but also refine, modify, and regularly update their offerings, suggesting dynamic, market-responsive, and resilient business behavior.

**Marketing Innovation.** Table 16 presents the level of marketing innovation adopted by LGBTQIA+ business owners in terms of various indicators such as promotional strategies, customer attraction, market reach, and creative marketing practices. With an overall mean of ( $\bar{x} = 3.7718$ ,  $SD = .51086$ ), this indicates that marketing innovation is present and always manifested among the respondents of this study, suggesting a consistently high level of engagement in innovative marketing practices.

All indicators obtained high mean scores ranging from ( $\bar{x} = 3.7588$ ) to ( $\bar{x} = 3.7882$ ), which interpretation falls into always manifested. The highest-rated indicator is developing creative marketing ideas for the business that scores ( $\bar{x} = 3.7882$ ,  $SD = 0.50075$ ), implying that respondents consistently prioritize creativity in designing marketing strategies. This is closely followed by Use new strategies to promote the business, with the mean score of ( $\bar{x} = 3.7765$ ,  $SD = 0.53019$ ), indicating strong adaptability in promotional practices. Moreover, introducing new ways to attract customers ( $\bar{x} = 3.7706$ ,  $SD = 0.52202$ ) and exploring new promotional channels ( $\bar{x} = 3.7647$ ,  $SD = 0.51365$ ) both reflect a sustained effort to expand customer engagement through diverse marketing platforms. Meanwhile, changing promotional approaches to increase market reach ( $\bar{x} = .7588$ ,  $SD = 0.53908$ ) obtained the lowest mean, yet still indicates a consistent practice of adjusting marketing strategies to broaden market visibility.

**Table 16. Marketing Innovation Adopted by LGBTQIA+ Business Owners**

Marketing Innovation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
Use new strategies to promote the business	3.7765	.53019	High

Introduce new ways to attract customers	3.7706	.52202	High
Change promotional approaches to increase market reach	3.7588	.53908	High
Develop creative marketing ideas for the business	3.7882	.50075	High
Explore new promotional channels	3.7647	.51365	High
<b>Marketing Innovation</b>	<b>3.7718</b>	<b>.51086</b>	<b>High</b>

The findings above show that marketing innovation is a strong and consistent trait among LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and in the City of Mati. Adopting creativity and marketing practices is frequently manifested among these business owners. Ninja Van Philippines (2023) documented notable LGBTQIA+ business owners who leverage digital marketing and social media platforms, most likely to overcome discrimination and low visibility. This only resonates with the business concept of The Beat Asia (2023), adopting creative strategies, exploring digital platforms, and integrating identity into branding. In addition, being adaptive to this innovation, LGBTQIA+ business owners from Lupon and from the City of Mati will surely gain and strengthen visibility, overcome stigma, and build inclusive customer relationships that contribute significantly to business sustainability and market expansion.

**Technology Adoption.** Table 17 presents the level of technology adoption among LGBTQIA+ business owners in developing and sustaining their enterprises. The overall mean score of ( $\bar{x} = 3.7682$ ,  $SD = .51549$ ) indicates that a high level of technology adoption is frequently manifested in their business operations. Among the indicators, the use of technology to communicate with customers and adopting new technologies that support business activities both obtained the highest mean score of ( $\bar{x} = 3.7765$ ,  $SD = 0.50738$ ), interpreted as the item statement is always manifested. Similarly, using digital tools to manage business operations garnered a mean score of ( $\bar{x} = 3.7706$ ,  $SD = 0.52202$ ), which is also interpreted as the item statement is always manifested. Meanwhile, the indicators use online platforms to promote the business ( $\bar{x} = 3.7588$ ,  $SD = 0.54994$ ) and use technology to improve the efficiency of the business ( $\bar{x} = 3.7588$ ,  $SD = 0.53908$ ), which obtained the lowest mean scores among the indicators. Nevertheless, both are still interpreted as the item statement is always manifested. The relatively low standard deviation values ranging from  $SD=.50738$  to  $SD=.54994$  indicate consistency in the responses of the participants, suggesting that most respondents share similar perceptions regarding the importance and regular use of technology in their businesses.

**Table 17. Marketing Innovation Adopted by LGBTQIA+ Business Owners**

Technology Adoption	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
Use digital tools to manage business operations	3.7706	.52202	High
Use online platforms to promote the business	3.7588	.54994	High
Use technology to communicate with customers	3.7765	.50738	High
Adopt new technologies that support business activities	3.7765	.50738	High
Use technology to improve the efficiency of the business	3.7588	.53908	High
<b>Technology Adoption</b>	<b>3.7682</b>	<b>.51549</b>	<b>High</b>

These findings reveal that LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and in the City of Mati actively embrace technology adoption as a key strategy for improving efficiency, strengthening communication, and enhancing competitiveness in modern business environments. This aligns with the study conducted by Vrontis, D. et al. (2022), that digital transformation significantly enhances business sustainability and competitiveness, especially among small and medium enterprises (SMEs), by improving efficiency and enabling access to wider markets through online platforms and ICT tools, of which this findings shows that the LGBTQIA+ business owners of these two localities consistently use technology to manage and promote their businesses according to the result provided.

In today’s rapidly evolving digital economy, technology has become a central driver of business growth and innovation, and there is no doubt that the LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and in the City of Mati are highly consistent in their technology adaptation. This reflects more than just embracing the modernization of business practice, but it represents resilience and strategic practice to survive in a highly competitive and sometimes socially challenging entrepreneurial environment.

**Innovation Strategies.** Table 18 results show that the adaptation of innovative strategies is present in LGBTQIA+ business operations among the respondents in Lupon and in the City of Mati, with the overall mean score of ( $\bar{x} = 3.7718$ ,  $SD = .51086$ ). Product innovation, marketing innovation, and technology adaptation are consistently applied and are frequently manifested among LGBTQIA+ business owners in the study context. Among the indicators, marketing innovation, with the mean score of ( $\bar{x} = 3.7718$ ,  $SD = 0.51086$ ), obtained the highest mean, which indicates strong adaptability in business innovation, followed closely by technology adoption ( $\bar{x} = 3.7682$ ,  $SD = 0.51549$ ). This suggests that respondents are highly engaged in modern promotional strategies and actively utilize digital tools and platforms to reach and communicate with customers. Further, product innovation ( $\bar{x} = 3.6306$ ,  $SD = 0.77567$ ) also remains high, though relatively lower compared to the other indicators, implying that while improvements and new product development are practiced, they may be less frequent or more resource-dependent.

Moreover, using the provided overall result of ( $\bar{x} = 3.7235$ ) indicates that innovative strategies are frequently manifested among LGBTQIA+ business owners. This means that innovation-related practices are consistently observed in their business operations, particularly in marketing and digital engagement, while product-level innovation is practiced but with slightly less intensity.

**Table 18. Innovation Strategies Adopted by LGBTQIA+ Business Owners**

Innovative Strategies	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
Product Innovation	3.6306	.77567	High
Marketing Innovation	3.7718	.51086	High
Technology Adoption	3.7682	.51549	High
<b>Innovative Strategies</b>	<b>3.7235</b>	<b>.53253</b>	<b>High</b>

The findings imply that LGBTQIA+ business owners demonstrate strong adaptability in employing innovative strategies, particularly in marketing innovation and technology adoption. This reflects a shift in entrepreneurial practices where digital engagement and online visibility play a crucial role in sustaining business competitiveness. A recent study conducted by Romero, I. et al. (2024) found that digital transformation significantly enhances SMEs’ innovation capacity by improving operational efficiency and customer engagement. This result supports the idea that small and marginalized entrepreneurs, such as

LGBTQIA+ business owners in Lupon and in the City of Mati, increasingly rely on digital marketing innovation and technology integration to strengthen business performance

The high manifestation of innovative strategies among LGBTQIA+ business owners demonstrates that these respondents consistently integrate creativity and adaptability into their entrepreneurship ventures. Their unique introduction of product lines, leveraging digital tools for customer engagement, and crafting inclusive marketing approach mirror the survey’s interpretation that innovation is always manifested. This resilience highlights how LGBTQIA+ business owners transform challenges into opportunities, proving that innovation is both a survival mechanism and a growth strategy. Ultimately, the results affirm that innovation is deeply embedded in their entrepreneurial journey, enabling them to thrive in competitive markets while also fostering inclusivity and representation in the local business landscape.

**Significant Difference in the Resilience of LGBTQIA+ business owners when grouped by locality.**

Table 19 presents the results on the significant difference in the resilience of LGBTQ+ business owners when grouped according to locality. The findings show that all computed F-values range from (F = .047 to F + 2.622), with corresponding significance values ranging from (p = 0.107 to p = 0.829), all of which are greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

Across all dimensions of resilience, adaptive, operational, social, and decision-making, all indicators yielded non-significant results. This includes adjusting business strategies (F = 0.047, p = 0.829), continuing operations despite difficulties (F = 2.019, p = 0.157), seeking social support (F = 0.343, p = 0.559), and making informed decisions (F = 0.381, p = 0.538).

The overall results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the resilience of LGBTQ+ business owners when grouped according to locality, suggesting that resilience is consistently demonstrated regardless of geographic location.

**Table 19. Significant Difference in the Resilience of LGBTQIA+ when grouped according to Locality (All Statements)**

	F	Sig.
Adjust business strategies when challenges arise	.047	.829
Adapt to changes in market conditions	.047	.829
Flexible when facing business difficulties	.108	.743
Find ways to adjust when unexpected problems occur	.109	.742
Change approach when a strategy does not work	.105	.746
Continue operating the business despite difficulties	2.019	.157
Remain committed to the business goals	1.209	.273
Stay motivated to keep the business running	2.622	.107
Work hard to sustain the business	1.384	.241
Maintain business operations even during challenging times	2.019	.157
Seek advice from other entrepreneurs	.343	.559
Maintain relationships with people who support the business	.294	.589
Connect with organizations that support entrepreneurs	.470	.494
Participate in business-related networks	.207	.650
Rely on my social connections when facing business challenges	.212	.646
Careful evaluation of business opportunities before making decisions	.258	.612

Plan strategies to manage risks	.544	.462
Analyze problems before making business decisions	.478	.490
Consider long-term outcomes when making business decisions	.204	.652
Make informed decisions to improve business performance.	.381	.538

This finding is supported by several studies emphasizing that entrepreneurial resilience is more strongly influenced by personal and psychosocial factors rather than geographic location. Hartmann et al. (2022) emphasize that entrepreneurial resilience is a psychological capability developed through repeated exposure to adversity, allowing entrepreneurs to adapt consistently across different contexts. Similarly, Anwar et al. (2021) found that resilience is driven more by internal competencies than by spatial or regional differences, highlighting that entrepreneurs exhibit similar coping behaviors even under varying environmental conditions.

Based on the collective findings, the result shows that locality does not significantly influence the resilience of LGBTQ+ business owners in Lupon and in the City of Mati. Their adaptive, operational, social, and decision-making resilience remains consistent regardless of geographic location. This implies that the entrepreneurial resilience among LGBTQ+ business owners in these localities is largely shaped by internal capacities and shared experiences of navigating business challenges, rather than by differences in place of residence or business environment

**LGBTQIA+ Resilience.** Table 20 presents the results examining whether there is a significant difference in LGBTQIA+ resilience across different localities in Lupon and in the City of Mati in terms of personal adaptability, persistence in business operations, utilization of social networks, and strategic decision-making.

As reflected in the results, all computed significance values (p-values) are greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Specifically, personal adaptability ( $F = 0.081, p = 0.777$ ), persistence in business operations ( $F = 1.870, p = 0.173$ ), utilization of social networks ( $F = 0.306, p = 0.581$ ), and strategic decision-making ( $F = 0.365, p = 0.547$ ) all indicate no statistically significant differences when respondents are grouped according to locality.

This implies that the level of resilience among LGBTQ+ business owners is relatively consistent regardless of their geographic location. The absence of significant differences suggests that locality does not play a determining role in shaping resilience-related behaviors such as adaptability, persistence, networking, and decision-making. Instead, these resilience dimensions may be influenced more by internal factors such as personal experience, entrepreneurial mindset, and coping strategies rather than external geographic conditions.

The overall findings suggest that homogeneity in resilience across localities in Lupon and in the City of Mati indicates that LGBTQIA+ business owners demonstrate comparable adaptive and strategic capacities in managing their businesses regardless of where they are situated.

**Table 20. LGBTQIA+ Resilience - Significant Difference when grouped according to Locality**

	F	Sig.
Personal Adaptability	.081	.777
Persistence in Business Operations	1.870	.173

Utilization of Social Networks	.306	.581
Strategic Decision Making	.365	.547

The result is supported by the study of Essers et al. (2022), which emphasized that LGBTQIA+ business owners often develop resilience through identity-based experiences, adaptability, and continuous negotiation of social barriers in business environments. LGBTQIA+ business owners tend to build strong internal resilience regardless of their geographical setting because their experiences are rooted in shared social realities and identity-related challenges. A similar study of Hartmann et al. (2022) noted that entrepreneurial resilience is primarily influenced by psychological strength, social support systems, and adaptive capabilities rather than external demographic factors such as location. Their review highlighted that resilient entrepreneurs often possess strong emotional regulation, persistence, and proactive decision-making skills that allow them to sustain business operations despite adversities.

This result reflects the reality that LGBTQIA+ business owners often experience similar struggles and strengths no matter where they are situated. Whether living in urban or rural communities, many of these LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly the business owners, continuously learn how to adapt to discrimination, social expectations, and financial pressures. Because of these, resilience becomes deeply personal and internalized for them to prove their worth in society.

**Significant Difference in the Innovative Strategies Adopted by LGBTQIA+ Business Owners when grouped by locality**

Table 21 presents the significant differences in LGBTQIA+ innovative strategies when grouped by locality. These findings revealed that not all innovative strategies were significantly affected by locality. Specifically, the indicators under product innovation such as introducing new products or services ( $F = .035$ ,  $Sig. = .851$ ), improving existing products or services ( $F = .084$ ,  $Sig. = .773$ ), developing new ideas for products or services ( $F = .084$ ,  $Sig. = .773$ ), modifying products based on customer needs ( $F = .044$ ,  $Sig. = .833$ ), and regularly updating offerings ( $F = .014$ ,  $Sig. = .907$ ) showed no significant difference since all significance values were greater than the 0.05 level.

However, the findings revealed significant differences in several indicators related to marketing innovation and technology adoption when grouped according to locality. In terms of marketing innovation, the indicators use new strategies to promote the business ( $F = 7.212$ ,  $Sig. = .008$ ), introduce new ways to attract customers ( $F = 5.096$ ,  $Sig. = .025$ ), change promotional approaches to increase market reach ( $F = 4.709$ ,  $Sig. = .031$ ), develop creative marketing ideas for the business ( $F = 4.923$ ,  $Sig. = .028$ ), and “explore new promotional channels” ( $F = 4.547$ ,  $Sig. = .034$ ) all obtained significance values lower than the 0.05 level, indicating statistically significant differences across localities.

Similarly, significant differences were also observed in technology adoption indicators. These include using digital tools to manage business operations ( $F = 5.096$ ,  $Sig. = .025$ ), using online platforms to promote the business ( $F = 7.356$ ,  $Sig. = .007$ ), using technology to communicate with customers ( $F = 4.727$ ,  $Sig. = .031$ ), and using technology to improve business efficiency ( $F = 4.709$ ,  $Sig. = .031$ ). The results suggest that locality plays an important role in influencing the extent to which LGBTQIA+ business owners utilize innovative marketing strategies and technological tools in their business operations

The result suggests that creativity and product development are common entrepreneurial practices among LGBTQIA+ business owners, whether they operate in urban or rural areas. Their ability to introduce and improve products may stem from personal initiative, customer interaction, and entrepreneurial passion

rather than geographical location. This indicates that LGBTQIA+ business owners possess adaptive and innovative mindsets that transcend environmental boundaries.

**Table 21. - Significant Difference on LGBTQ+ Innovative Strategies when grouped according to Locality (All Statements)**

	F	Sig.
Introduce new products or services of the business.	.035	.851
Improve existing products or services offered	.084	.773
Develop new ideas for products or services.	.084	.773
Modify products or services based on customer needs	.044	.833
Regularly update product or service offerings	.014	.907
Use new strategies to promote the business	7.212	.008
Introduce new ways to attract customers	5.096	.025
Change promotional approaches to increase market reach	4.709	.031
Develop creative marketing ideas for the business	4.923	.028
Explore new promotional channels	4.547	.034
Use digital tools to manage business operations	5.096	.025
Use online platforms to promote the business	7.356	.007
Use technology to communicate with customers	4.727	.031
Adopt new technologies that support business activities	3.465	.064
Use technology to improve the efficiency of the business	4.709	.031

As Dizon (2023) emphasizes, LGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs in the Philippines often innovate by creating inclusive spaces and leveraging identity-driven branding, yet their access to resources and networks is shaped by locality. Similarly, Guiral (2024) observes that LGBTQIA-owned businesses thrive differently depending on urban versus rural contexts, with urban centers such as Mati fostering more creative industries, while municipalities like Lupon emphasize grassroots enterprises. These insights highlight that resilience and innovation among LGBTQIA+ business owners are both shared and context-dependent, reflecting the interplay between identity, creativity, and local conditions.

These results highlight the contextual nature of innovation, meaning LGBTQIA+ business owners coming from a highly urbanized city such as the City of Mati might consider innovative practices by integrating advanced digital tools, such as AI or e-commerce platforms improve products remains consistent to the demand of economic growth. These results also suggest that LGBTQIA+ business owners coming from rural areas, such as the municipality of Lupon, have their innovation contextualized to their environment. This entrepreneurial drive to improve products remains consistent across localities. Thus, the evidence points to the need for localized support systems that bridge technological gaps and empower LGBTQIA+ business owners to maximize their innovative potential regardless of their geographic setting.

**Significant Difference in LGBTQ+ Innovative Strategies when grouped according to Locality**

Table 22 presents the significant differences in LGBTQIA+ innovative strategies when grouped according to locality. The results indicate that product innovation does not significantly differ across localities, as reflected in an F-value of .049 with a significance value of .825, which is higher than the 0.05 level of significance. This suggests that LGBTQIA+ business owners demonstrate relatively similar levels of product innovation regardless of their geographic location. In other words, their capacity to introduce new

products or services, improve existing offerings, and generate innovative ideas appears to be consistent across different localities, implying that product-related creativity is largely driven by internal entrepreneurial capabilities rather than external environmental factors.

In contrast, significant differences were found in both marketing innovation and technology adoption. Marketing innovation yielded an F-value of 5.481 with a significance value of .020, while technology adoption obtained an F-value of 5.216 with a significance value of .024. Since both p-values are below the 0.05 threshold, the results indicate that locality has a significant influence on these two dimensions of innovation.

**Table 22. Significant Difference in LGBTQ+ Innovative Strategies when grouped according to Locality**

	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Product Innovation	.049	.825
Marketing Innovation	5.481	.020
Technology Adoption	5.216	.024

The result implies that LGBTQIA+ business owners differ in how they apply marketing strategies and adopt technological tools depending on their location. The findings also suggest that while product innovation remains relatively uniform across localities, both marketing innovation and technology adoption are context-sensitive and shaped by environmental conditions. This highlights the role of locality as a determining factor in the external aspects of innovation, particularly in areas that require technological access and market connectivity.

This indicates that locality influences how LGBTQIA+ business owners promote their enterprises through digital tools. Recent studies, The Beat Asia (2023), confirm that LGBTQIA+ businesses adopt diverse marketing and technology strategies shaped by local contexts, reinforcing the role of environment in entrepreneurial resilience and innovation. Similar recent study of Cueto et al. (2022), which confirm that while product creativity is a common trait, marketing and technology adoption are context-dependent, shaped by local resources and community environments.

Taken together, the results emphasize that while product innovation remains a consistent entrepreneurial practice across localities, significant differences emerge in marketing innovation and technology adoption. This transition from uniformity in product-related strategies to variability in promotional and technological approaches illustrates how locality shapes the capacity of LGBTQIA+ business owners to innovate. Thus, the discussion points to a broader implication that such innovation is both universal and contextual. It is universal in the sense that all entrepreneurs strive to improve their products, yet contextual because the ability to embrace advanced marketing and technological strategies depends on the opportunities and limitations of the locality.

By doing so, LGBTQIA+ business owners across different settings can be empowered to fully realize their innovative potential, ensuring that entrepreneurial creativity is not constrained by geography but enriched by inclusivity and adaptability.

## 5. Chapter

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This study investigated the barriers, resiliency, and innovative practices of LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental, specifically in the Municipality of Lupon and the City of Mati. Guided by a quantitative research design, the research sought to determine the demographic profile of these LGBTQIA+ business owners, the levels of barriers they encounter, their resilience amidst challenges, and the innovative practices they adopt to sustain their enterprises.

The findings revealed that LGBTQIA+ business owners are engaged primarily in micro and small enterprises such as salons, spas, and fashion boutiques. Their demographic profile varied in terms of age, gender identity, type of business, and years in operation, reflecting diversity within the Rainbow Community.

Barriers were evident across social, economic, cultural, and institutional dimensions. Social stigma, workplace discrimination, and stereotyping remained prevalent. Economic challenges included limited access to capital and unstable market opportunities. Cultural barriers were rooted in heteronormative norms and traditional expectations, while institutional barriers stemmed from inadequate policy support and exclusion from relief or livelihood programs.

Despite these constraints, LGBTQIA+ business owners demonstrated remarkable resilience. Social resilience was expressed through building supportive networks and affirming identities. Economic resilience emerged through resource management and niche market creation. Cultural resilience was evident in negotiating acceptance and integrating inclusive practices, while institutional resilience involved navigating policies and leveraging advocacy.

Innovative practices included product innovation, participation in trade expos, digital marketing, and community-based entrepreneurship models. These strategies not only sustained their enterprises but also enhanced visibility, customer loyalty, and inclusivity.

Finally, the study examined whether resilience and innovative practices differed significantly between localities. Results suggested that while contextual differences existed, resilience and innovation were consistently shaped by shared experiences of marginalization and adaptive strategies.

#### Conclusion

The study concludes that LGBTQIA+ business owners in Davao Oriental embody resilience and innovation as mechanisms for sustainability and inclusivity. The data confirm that product innovation is a shared trait across localities, reflecting a common baseline of creativity among LGBTQIA+ business owners. However, significant differences in marketing innovation and technology adoption highlight the influence of locality, with urban contexts providing greater access to digital infrastructure and promotional networks compared to rural settings.

Resilience among LGBTQIA+ business owners is expressed across multiple dimensions: socially, through networks and identity affirmation; economically, through resource management and niche markets; culturally, through negotiating acceptance and visibility; and institutionally, through navigating policies and advocacy. Despite systemic barriers such as discrimination and limited access to capital, LGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs in Davao Oriental continue to thrive, transforming marginalization into opportunities for growth, visibility, and empowerment.

## Recommendations

**For LGBTQIA+ business owners:** LGBTQIA+ business owners are encouraged to strengthen identity-driven branding and inclusive marketing to build customer loyalty. They should expand their use of digital tools and online platforms to reach broader markets and form cooperative networks within the Rainbow Community to share resources, mentorship, and collective visibility.

**For Policymakers and Local Government Units:** Local governments should design inclusive livelihood programs tailored to LGBTQIA+ business owners and enforce anti-discrimination ordinances at the municipal and provincial levels. Capacity-building workshops on digital marketing, financial literacy, and technology adoption should be prioritized. Establishing incubation hubs, grant schemes, and mentorship programs will further support marginalized entrepreneurs in sustaining their enterprises.

**For Researchers and Educators:** Future research should examine regional differences in LGBTQIA+ entrepreneurship to inform national policy. Findings should be integrated into inclusive business education curricula, and participatory research should be encouraged to amplify the voices of LGBTQIA+ business owners.

**For Community and Advocacy Groups:** Advocacy campaigns for the passage of the SOGIE Equality Bill should be intensified to ensure national-level protection. Visibility initiatives showcasing successful LGBTQIA+ business owners should be promoted to inspire future business owners. Partnerships with private institutions should be pursued to create inclusive supply chains and market opportunities that strengthen the economic participation of LGBTQIA+ communities.

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## Appendix A

### Letter to the Respondents

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Respondent,

Greetings of peace!

I am JOSEPH V. TONGCOS, an MBA student at Davao Oriental State University. I am currently conducting a research study entitled “**Thriving in Margins: Barriers, Resilience, and Innovative Practices of LGBTQIA+ Business Owners in Davao Oriental**” as part of the requirements for my thesis. The purpose of this study is to explore the social, economic, cultural, and structural challenges encountered by LGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs and to provide insights that may guide inclusive policies and programs for local business development.

You have been identified as one of the respondents of this study. Your participation is highly valuable as it will contribute to a deeper understanding of the realities faced by LGBTQIA+ business owners in our communities. Rest assured that:

- Your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.
- The data collected will be used solely for academic purposes.
- No personal identifiers will be disclosed in the final manuscript.

Your honest and thoughtful answers will greatly help in ensuring the accuracy and relevance of this research. Should you feel uncomfortable with any question, you may choose not to answer. Participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without consequence.

Thank you very much for your time, cooperation, and support. Your contribution is essential in promoting inclusivity and resilience among entrepreneurs in Lupon and Mati.

Respectfully yours,

**JOSEPH V. TONGCOS**

Researcher

Endorsed by:

**JANESSA G. PILAR, DBA**

Thesis Adviser

## Appendix B

### 1. Part Socio-demographic Profile

#### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Direction: Kindly put a check (✓) on the underline provided that fits your socio-demographic profile.

Locality: \_\_\_\_\_ City of Mati \_\_\_\_\_ Municipality of Lupon

Age: \_\_\_ 20–29 \_\_\_ 30–39 \_\_\_ 40–49 \_\_\_ 50+

Gender identity: \_\_\_ Lesbian \_\_\_ Gay \_\_\_ Bisexual

\_\_\_ Transgender \_\_\_ Queer/non-binary \_\_\_ Intersex



I cope with challenges by ...				
Building supportive networks (friends, LGBTQIA+ community, local groups).				
Adapting products/services to meet customer needs.				
Seeking legal protection or using protective legislation.				
Relying on community support during crises.				
Leveraging cultural visibility to strengthen customer loyalty.				

1. To what extent has community support (Rainbow Community, local organizations) helped sustain your business?
2. \_\_\_ Very High \_\_\_ High \_\_\_ Moderate \_\_\_ Low
3. How resilient do you consider your business in overcoming socio-economic challenges?
4. \_\_\_ Very Resilient \_\_\_ Resilient \_\_\_ Less Resilient \_\_\_ Not Resilient

#### 4. Part Innovative Practices

To what extent do you agree that innovation and inclusivity strengthen your business resilience?

Response	Descriptive Equivalent
(4)	(SA)
(3)	(A)
(2)	(DA)
(1)	(SDA)

Directions: Please indicate which you agree with or disagree with the following statements.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a member of the LGBTQIA+ business owner in two localities, I adopt and practice business innovation by...				
Regularly engaged in product or service innovation.				
Using digital marketing and social media to promote my business.				
Actively participating in trade expos (provincial, regional, or global)				

Collaborating with government or private partners to enhance my business.				
) Adopting community-based entrepreneurship models to create inclusive spaces.				
) Practicing innovation and inclusivity that strengthens my business resilience.				
) Joining incubation programs (mentorship, fundraising, legal support)				

**Thank you for your participation.**