



## THE ROLE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN ACADEMIC AND INDUSTRY PREPAREDNESS OF TOURISM STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of mental health in the academic and industry preparedness of tourism students in Dumaguete City. It focused on the influence of stress, anxiety, and depression on students' readiness to perform in both academic and professional settings. Guided by the Cognitive Appraisal Theory, the study employed a descriptive-correlational research design involving 39 fourth-year Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management students from selected higher education institutions. Data were gathered using a validated survey questionnaire and were analyzed using statistical tools such as weighted means and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The findings revealed that students demonstrated high levels of academic and industry preparedness, particularly in managing academic tasks, applying knowledge, and demonstrating confidence in communication and interpersonal skills. Stress and anxiety were found to have a significant relationship with academic preparedness. However, no significant relationship was found between mental health and industry preparedness, indicating that students' readiness for professional work was more strongly influenced by their skills, training, and educational experiences. In general, the findings highlighted that while mental health influenced academic experiences, it did not compromise students' industry readiness.

**Keywords:** *mental health, academic preparedness, industry readiness, stress, anxiety, low mood/depression, student well-being.*

## INTRODUCTION

The increasing prevalence of mental health concerns among college students has become a significant global issue, influencing not only academic achievement but also students' overall personal and professional development. Across higher education institutions worldwide, students are confronted with mounting academic demands, social pressures, financial difficulties, and uncertainties about future careers, all of which contribute to heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Studies by Auerbach et al. (2018) revealed that emotional strain had become a persistent challenge among university students, negatively affecting their engagement, concentration, and academic performance. Similarly, Barbayannis et al. (2022) emphasized that psychological well-being is closely associated with students' capacity to succeed academically, highlighting that intellectual ability alone is insufficient without emotional stability. Within tourism and hospitality education, the issue becomes even more critical because students are expected to develop not only technical competencies but also interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and resilience necessary for service-oriented professions. According to Huang and Rust (2021), the dynamic and demanding nature of the tourism industry requires students to effectively manage emotional stress while maintaining professional performance. Consequently, mental health challenges have emerged as major barriers that influence students' learning experiences, motivation, confidence, and readiness for future careers.

In the Philippines, mental health concerns among college students have likewise intensified, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to flexible and virtual learning environments. Tourism students experienced significant emotional and academic difficulties as they struggled to adapt to online instruction, limited practical training opportunities, and uncertainties within the tourism and hospitality industry. Local studies revealed that students commonly experienced anxiety, stress, lack of motivation, and difficulty concentrating, all of which adversely affected their academic performance and preparedness for employment. Tangonan et al. (2023) reported that the abrupt shift to virtual learning created psychological strain among students, leading to reduced academic engagement and learning efficiency. Likewise, Asiones (2023) emphasized the urgent need for institutional support systems that prioritize students' emotional wellness, particularly among first-year college students adjusting to higher education. In tourism education specifically, the need for emotional resilience became increasingly evident as students faced concerns regarding career stability, employability, and professional competence in a rapidly changing industry environment. These realities underscored the growing importance of addressing mental health as a fundamental component of both academic success and career preparation within Philippine higher education institutions.

Despite the increasing body of literature on student mental health, significant gaps remain in understanding how psychological well-being directly influences both academic preparedness and industry readiness among tourism students, particularly within the Philippine context. Existing studies have primarily focused on the relationship between stress and academic performance, while giving limited attention to how mental health

conditions affect students' transition into professional environments. Research conducted by Auerbach et al. (2018) and Barbayannis et al. (2022) concentrated mainly on educational outcomes and psychological distress without comprehensively examining their implications for professional readiness. Similarly, tourism-related studies highlighted the importance of emotional resilience, confidence, and soft skills, with Sufi et al. (2025) identifying career adaptability and employability as essential competencies in the hospitality industry; however, these studies provided insufficient exploration of how stress, anxiety, and depression collectively influence these competencies. Furthermore, Philippine-based research has largely centered on pandemic-related mental health experiences rather than offering a holistic perspective that integrates mental wellness, academic preparedness, and industry readiness. This lack of comprehensive investigation creates a critical research gap that necessitates further study.

Given these circumstances, the present study is highly significant because it provides a deeper and more integrated understanding of how mental health conditions influence tourism students' preparedness for both academic and professional responsibilities. By examining the combined effects of stress, anxiety, and depression on students' academic engagement, emotional resilience, and industry readiness, this study contributes valuable insights that may guide educational institutions in developing responsive mental health programs and student support systems. Moreover, the findings may help tourism educators and administrators design strategies that strengthen not only students' academic competence but also their psychological resilience and professional confidence. In a service-oriented industry where interpersonal interaction, adaptability, and emotional stability are essential, understanding the role of mental health becomes crucial in preparing future tourism professionals. Ultimately, this study intended to bridge the existing gap in the literature and support the development of more holistic educational practices that promote both student well-being and career preparedness.

## Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the role of mental health in the academic and industry preparedness of tourism students. Specifically, it focused on examining how stress, anxiety, and depression influenced the students' readiness to perform effectively in both academic and professional settings and aimed to answer the following research problems:

1. What is the mental health level of tourism students in terms of:
  - 1.1 Stress;
  - 1.2 Anxiety; and
  - 1.3 Depression?
2. What is the level of academic and industry preparedness of tourism students?
3. Is there is a significant relationship between the mental health level and students' level of academic and industry preparedness?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research design

This study utilized the descriptive-correlational method. It was descriptive because it described the level of mental health of tourism students in terms of stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as their level of academic and industry preparedness. The study also identified the respondents' perceptions regarding their psychological well-being and readiness in both academic and professional contexts.

Furthermore, the study was correlational because it examined the relationship between the mental health of tourism students and their level of academic and industry preparedness. Specifically, it determined whether stress, anxiety, and depression significantly influenced students' readiness to perform academic responsibilities and adapt to tourism industry demands.

### Research respondents

The respondents of this study were fourth-year Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management students enrolled during the Academic Year 2025–2026 in selected higher education institutions in Dumaguete City. The total population of the study consisted of 43 tourism students, from which a sample size of 39 respondents was selected.

The respondents were proportionally allocated between Saint Paul University Dumaguete and Foundation University based on the size of their respective student populations. This proportional sampling technique ensured fair and unbiased representation of the respondents from each institution.

The researchers considered fourth-year tourism students as appropriate respondents because they had already acquired sufficient academic knowledge, practical experiences, and industry exposure relevant to the Tourism Management program. As graduating students, they were in a suitable position to assess their level of mental health and preparedness for both academic responsibilities and future professional demands in the tourism industry.

The distribution of the respondents according to institution is presented in the table below:

School	Population	Sample
SPUD	17	15
FU	26	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>39</b>

## Research Instruments

This study utilized a validated survey questionnaire as the research instrument for gathering data. The questionnaire was designed to collect information relevant to the objectives of the study, particularly on the mental health of tourism students in terms of stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as their level of academic and industry preparedness.

The data were gathered through an online and face to face surveys. The respondents were provided with a survey link containing the questionnaire items to ensure accessibility and convenience in answering the instrument. Prior to the actual data gathering, the questionnaire was validated by a panel of experts to establish its content validity and ensure that the items were appropriate, clear, and relevant to the study.

Furthermore, the research instrument underwent pilot testing to determine its reliability. The results of the reliability test revealed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient from 0.70 to 0.88, which indicated that the items included in the questionnaire were reliable and internally consistent. This implied that the instrument was acceptable for use in gathering data for the study. On the next page is the results of the pilot test:

Indicators	Cronbach's Alpha value
<b>Mental health level on</b>	
Stress	$\alpha = 0.75$
Anxiety	$\alpha = 0.85$
Depression	$\alpha = 0.88$
<b>Level of preparedness on</b>	
Academic	$\alpha = 0.71$
Industry	$\alpha = 0.88$

## RESULTS

Table 1.1 presents the mental health level of Tourism students in terms of stress. The results presented in Table 1.1 reveal that tourism students experience a moderate level of stress, as indicated by the composite mean score of 3.09. This means that stress is not a constant condition for students but occurs intermittently, depending on academic and personal demands. While not extreme, the presence of stress remains a notable concern that can influence students' overall well-being and academic experience.

Table 1.2 presents the mental health level of Tourism students in terms of anxiety. The results in Table 1.2 show that tourism students experience a moderate level of anxiety, as indicated by the composite mean score of 3.03. This suggests that anxiety is not that high, but it remains a recurring experience that can influence students' academic and personal lives.

Table 1.3 presents the mental health level of Tourism students in terms of depression. The results presented in Table 1.3 indicate that tourism students experience a moderate level of depression or low mood, as reflected by the composite mean score of 2.81. This suggests that symptoms associated with low mood are present among students, but they are not persistent or severe enough to significantly impair their overall functioning.

**Table 1.1**  
**Mental Health Level of Tourism Students in terms of Stress**

Stress	$\bar{w}x$	Verbal Description	Verbal Equivalent
1. I feel overwhelmed with academic and personal responsibilities.	3.48	Agree	Often
2. I find it difficult to manage my schedule due to school and other commitments.	2.90	Moderately Agree	Sometimes
3. I experience stress during a regular academic semester.	2.98	Moderately Agree	Sometimes
4. I find it difficult to relax when academic results or grades are released.	3.03	Moderately Agree	Sometimes
<b>Composite</b>	<b>3.09</b>		<b>Sometimes</b>

**Legend:**

Scale	Verbal Description	Verbal Equivalent
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Always
3.41 – 4.20	Agree	Often
2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Agree	Sometimes (moderate)
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Rarely
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Never

**Table 1.2**  
**Mental Health Level of Tourism Students in terms of Anxiety**

Anxiety	$\bar{w}x$	Verbal Description	Verbal Description
1. I feel nervous or uneasy about my academic performance.	3.23	Moderately Agree	Sometimes
2. I worry about my future career in the tourism industry.	3.53	Agree	Often
3. My anxious thoughts make it difficult for me to concentrate.	2.90	Moderately Agree	Sometimes

4. I avoid academic tasks because I am not afraid of not performing well.	2.45	Disagree	Rarely
<b>Composite</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>

**Legend:**

Scale	Verbal Description	Verbal Equivalent
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Always
3.41 – 4.20	Agree	Often
2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Agree	Sometimes (moderate)
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Rarely
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Never

**Table 1.3**  
***Mental Health Level of Tourism Students in terms of Depression/Low Mood***

Depression/Low Mood	$\bar{w}_x$	Verbal Description	
1. I lose motivation to complete schoolwork.	2.80	Moderately Agree	Sometimes
2. I feel discouraged or hopeless about my academic progress.	2.33	Disagree	Rarely
3. I experience changes in my sleeping or eating patterns due to emotional stress or low mood.	3.10	Moderately Agree	Sometimes
4. I find it difficult to enjoy activities that I used to enjoy.	3.00	Moderately Agree	Sometimes
<b>Composite</b>	<b>2.81</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>

**Legend:**

Scale	Verbal Description	Verbal Equivalent
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Always
3.41 – 4.20	Agree	Often
2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Agree	Sometimes (moderate)
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Rarely
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Never

Table 2.1 presents the level of preparedness of tourism students in terms of academic. The results presented in Table 2.1 reflect a strong level of academic preparedness among tourism students, as evidenced by the composite mean score of 3.69. This points to a student group that is well-equipped to handle academic demands and capable of meeting the expectations of their program with confidence and consistency.

**Table 2.1**  
**Level of Preparedness of Tourism Students in terms of Academic**

Academic Preparedness	$\bar{w}_x$	Verbal Description	Verbal Equivalent
1. I manage my study habits and academic responsibilities.	3.70	Often	High
2. I have critical thinking and problem-solving skills in practical situations.	3.45	Often	High
3. I apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations.	3.58	Often	High
4. I always complete my academic requirements independently.	4.03	Often	High
<b>Composite</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>High</b>

**Legend:**

Scale	Verbal Description	Verbal Equivalent
4.21 – 5.00	always	Very High
3.41 – 4.20	Often	High
2.61 – 3.40	Moderately	Moderate
1.81 – 2.60	sometimes	Low
1.00 – 1.80	Never	Very Low

Table 2.2 presents the level of preparedness of tourism students in terms of industry. The results presented in Table 2.2 highlight a strong sense of industry preparedness among tourism students, reflected in the composite mean score of 3.73. This indicates that students generally carry a level of confidence in facing the realities of the tourism sector, supported by the knowledge and skills they have developed through their academic journey.

**Table 2.2**  
**Level of Preparedness of Tourism Students in terms of Industry Preparedness**

Industry Preparedness	$\bar{w}_x$	Verbal Description	Verbal Equivalent
1. I feel confident to demonstrate communication skills that are required in the tourism industry.	3.58	Often	High
2. I feel ready to perform effectively when working under pressure in actual industry settings.	3.68	Often	High

3. I feel ready to demonstrate appropriate interpersonal skills when interacting with clients or customers.	3.58	Often	High
4. I believe that my academic training has adequately prepared me for work in the tourism industry.	4.08	Often	High
<b>Composite</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>High</b>

**Legend:**

Scale	Verbal Description	Verbal Equivalent
4.21 – 5.00	always	Very High
3.41 – 4.20	Often	High
2.61 – 3.40	Moderately	Moderate
1.81 – 2.60	sometimes	Low
1.00 – 1.80	Never	Very Low

The results presented in Table 3.1 shows the connection between the mental health levels of tourism students and their academic preparedness. The data reveal that both stress ( $r = 0.325$ ,  $p = 0.041$ ) and anxiety ( $r = 0.346$ ,  $p = 0.029$ ) have statistically significant relationships with academic preparedness, as their p-values fall below the 0.05 threshold. This outcome leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and suggests that shifts in stress and anxiety levels are linked to how students perceive their readiness in academics.

**Table 3.1**  
**Significant Relationship between the Mental Health Level and their Level of Preparedness in terms of Academic Preparedness**

Variables Correlated	Pearson r	p-value	Decision	Remark
<b>Academic Preparedness</b>				
Stress	0.325	0.041	Reject $H_{01}$	Significant
Anxiety	0.346	0.029	Reject $H_{01}$	Significant
Depression/Low Mood	0.068	0.676	Failed to Reject $H_{01}$	Not Significant

Table 3.2 presents the relationship between the mental health levels of tourism students and their industry preparedness. The findings show that stress ( $r = 0.171$ ,  $p = 0.293$ ), anxiety ( $r = 0.108$ ,  $p = 0.505$ ), and depression or low mood ( $r = 0.130$ ,  $p = 0.423$ ) do not exhibit statistically significant relationships, as all p-values exceed the 0.05 level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted across all variables.

**Table 3.2**  
**Significant Relationship between the Mental Health Level and their Level of Preparedness in terms of Industry Preparedness**

Variables Correlated	Pearson r	p-value	Decision	Remark
<b>Industry Preparedness</b>				
Stress	0.171	0.293	Failed to Reject $H_{01}$	Not Significant
Anxiety	0.108	0.505	Failed to Reject $H_{01}$	Not Significant
Depression/Low Mood	0.130	0.423	Failed to Reject $H_{01}$	Not Significant

## DISCUSSION

### Mental Health Level of Tourism Students in terms of Stress

The data presented in Table 1.1 shows that tourism students experience stress at a moderate level, with a composite mean score of 3.09, verbally interpreted as “Sometimes.” This indicates that stress is experienced occasionally among students and is influenced by academic and personal demands. Although the stress level is not severe, it remains a concern because it may affect students’ well-being and academic functioning.

Among the indicators, the statement “I feel overwhelmed with academic and personal responsibilities” obtained the highest mean score of 3.48, verbally described as “Agree” or “Often.” This suggests that students commonly struggle in balancing academic requirements and personal obligations. The demanding nature of tourism education, which often involves projects, deadlines, and practical activities, may contribute to students feeling overwhelmed. This finding supports the study of Pascoe et al. (2020), who emphasized that academic workload and competing responsibilities are among the major contributors to student stress and feelings of pressure.

Meanwhile, the indicators related to difficulty in managing schedules (2.90), stress during the semester (2.98), and difficulty relaxing after grades are released (3.03) all fall under the “Moderately Agree” category. These results imply that stress among tourism students is situational and tends to occur during academically demanding periods such as examinations, deadlines, and grading periods. The findings are consistent with Gouda (2025), who found that students commonly experience moderate stress levels related to time management and academic pressure. Similarly, Benítez-Agudelo et al. (2025) highlighted that stress among students fluctuates throughout the academic term, particularly during examinations and evaluation periods.

The findings indicate that tourism students are vulnerable to stress, particularly when balancing academic and personal responsibilities. However, the moderate level of stress also suggests that students may possess coping mechanisms that help them manage academic pressures and prevent stress from becoming persistent or severe.

### **Mental Health Level of Tourism Students in terms of Anxiety**

The data in Table 1.2 presents the mental health level of tourism students in terms of anxiety. The findings reveal that tourism students experience anxiety at a moderate level, with a composite mean score of 3.03, verbally interpreted as “Sometimes.” This suggests that anxiety is present among students, although it is not constantly experienced.

Among the indicators, the statement “I worry about my future career in the tourism industry” received the highest mean score of 3.53, verbally described as “Agree” or “Often.” This indicates that students frequently experience anxiety regarding their future employment and career opportunities in the tourism industry. Such concerns may be associated with uncertainties in the labor market and future professional stability. This finding is supported by Besser et al. (2022), who noted that uncertainty regarding academic and career paths significantly contributes to anxiety among university students.

Other indicators, such as feeling nervous about academic performance (3.23) and difficulty concentrating because of anxious thoughts (2.90), also reflect moderate anxiety levels. These findings imply that anxiety affects students emotionally and cognitively, particularly in terms of focus and academic performance. However, the indicator “I avoid academic tasks because I am afraid of not performing well” received the lowest mean score of 2.45, verbally interpreted as “Disagree” or “Rarely.” This suggests that despite feelings of anxiety, students continue to fulfill their academic responsibilities rather than withdrawing from them.

These findings are consistent with Aristovnik et al. (2021), who found that students commonly experience moderate anxiety due to academic pressures and future employment concerns. Likewise, Chan et al. (2023) emphasized that although anxiety may affect concentration and academic functioning, many students remain academically engaged because of self-efficacy, institutional support, and professional motivation.

The results indicate that tourism students are particularly affected by career-related concerns and academic expectations. However, despite these challenges, students continue to demonstrate resilience and commitment toward their academic responsibilities.

### **Mental Health Level of Tourism Students in terms of Depression/Low Mood**

The data presented in Table 1.3 shows the mental health level of tourism students in terms of depression or low mood. The results indicate that students experience depression or low mood at a moderate level, with a composite mean score of 2.81, verbally interpreted as “Sometimes.” This suggests that symptoms related to low mood are present among students but are not severe or persistent.

Among the indicators, the statement “I experience changes in my sleeping or eating patterns due to emotional stress or low mood” obtained the highest mean score of 3.10. This implies that emotional stress influences students’ daily routines and physical behaviors, particularly their sleeping and eating habits. Similarly, the statement “I find it difficult to enjoy activities that I used to enjoy” received a mean score of 3.00, indicating mild loss of interest or enjoyment among students. These findings support Ibrahim et al. (2022), who reported that students commonly experience moderate depressive symptoms such as sleep disturbances and reduced motivation due to academic stress.

The indicator “I lose motivation to complete schoolwork” obtained a mean score of 2.80, reflecting the influence of low mood on students’ academic engagement and motivation. However, the statement “I feel discouraged or hopeless about my academic progress” received the lowest mean score of 2.33, verbally interpreted as “Disagree” or “Rarely.” This indicates that students do not frequently experience severe depressive thoughts such as hopelessness, suggesting that depressive symptoms remain manageable.

These findings are supported by Liu et al. (2023), who found that changes in sleeping and eating patterns are among the most common manifestations of low mood among students. Furthermore, Ibrahim et al. (2022) and Pascoe et al. (2020) emphasized that while students commonly report symptoms such as fatigue, low mood, and reduced interest in activities, severe manifestations such as persistent hopelessness are less common among university students.

The results indicate that although tourism students experience occasional symptoms of low mood, these symptoms generally remain mild to moderate and do not appear to severely affect their overall functioning.

### **Level of Preparedness of Tourism Students in terms of Academic Preparedness**

The data in Table 2.1 presents the level of preparedness of tourism students in terms of academic preparedness. The results reveal that tourism students demonstrate a high level of academic preparedness, with a composite mean score of 3.69, verbally interpreted as “Often” or “High.” This suggests that students are generally capable of meeting the academic demands of their program.

Among the indicators, the statement “I always complete my academic requirements independently” received the highest mean score of 4.03. This finding indicates that students possess a strong sense of responsibility, independence, and accountability in accomplishing academic tasks. Such qualities are essential indicators of preparedness and academic discipline. This finding aligns with Artino et al. (2022), who emphasized that self-discipline and accountability are central to academic success and preparedness.

The ability to manage study habits and academic responsibilities also received a high mean score of 3.70, indicating that students are capable of organizing their time and tasks effectively. Likewise, the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations (3.58) and the presence of critical thinking and problem-solving skills (3.45) further

demonstrate students' capacity to actively engage with academic concepts and apply them in practical contexts.

These findings support the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2023), which identified critical thinking and problem-solving as essential indicators of student readiness, particularly in applied disciplines. Similarly, Quaye et al. (2025) emphasized that experiential and practical learning significantly enhance students' preparedness for real-world tourism and hospitality work environments.

Overall, the findings suggest that tourism students are academically prepared and possess the skills, discipline, and adaptability necessary to succeed both in their studies and future professional careers.

### **Level of Preparedness of Tourism Students in terms of Industry Preparedness**

The data in Table 2.2 presents the level of preparedness of tourism students in terms of industry preparedness. The findings reveal that students demonstrate a high level of industry preparedness, with a composite mean score of 3.73, verbally interpreted as "Often" or "High." This indicates that students generally feel confident in their readiness to enter the tourism industry.

Among the indicators, the statement "I believe that my academic training has adequately prepared me for work in the tourism industry" obtained the highest mean score of 4.08. This finding reflects students' confidence in the effectiveness of their academic training and its relevance to industry demands. It also highlights the important role of educational institutions in developing industry-ready graduates. Jackson and Dean (2023) emphasized that higher education plays a significant role in developing employability skills such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability.

The ability to perform effectively under pressure received a mean score of 3.68, suggesting that students are prepared to handle the fast-paced and demanding nature of tourism-related work environments. In addition, confidence in communication skills and interpersonal abilities both received mean scores of 3.58, indicating that students recognize the importance of effective interaction and customer service within the tourism industry.

These findings are consistent with Succi and Canovi (2020), who found that students with strong academic preparation tend to exhibit greater confidence when transitioning into professional work environments. Likewise, Handayani et al. (2025) emphasized that practical and industry-based experiences enhance students' readiness to perform effectively in real-world settings.

The results suggest that tourism students are not only academically equipped but also possess the practical and interpersonal competencies necessary for future careers in the tourism industry.

## **Significant Relationship between the Mental Health Level and Academic Preparedness of Tourism Students**

The data presented in Table 3.1 shows the relationship between the mental health level of tourism students and their academic preparedness. The findings reveal that stress ( $r = 0.325$ ,  $p = 0.041$ ) and anxiety ( $r = 0.346$ ,  $p = 0.029$ ) have statistically significant relationships with academic preparedness, as both p-values are below the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected for these variables.

Among the variables, anxiety demonstrates the strongest relationship with academic preparedness, followed by stress. These moderate positive relationships suggest that changes in students' stress and anxiety levels are associated with changes in how they perceive their academic readiness. This may indicate that manageable levels of stress and anxiety encourage students to remain focused, responsible, and engaged in their academic tasks.

On the other hand, depression or low mood ( $r = 0.068$ ,  $p = 0.676$ ) does not show a statistically significant relationship with academic preparedness since the p-value exceeds 0.05. This suggests that depressive symptoms do not significantly influence students' perceptions of their academic readiness in this study.

These findings are supported by Pascoe et al. (2020), who emphasized that stress and anxiety are closely associated with academic performance and preparedness, especially in demanding educational environments. Similarly, Gouda (2025) highlighted the role of anxiety in influencing students' concentration, organization, and academic functioning. Benítez-Agudelo et al. (2025) further explained that moderate levels of stress may function as a motivating factor that helps students stay alert and academically prepared.

The findings imply that while stress and anxiety may create academic pressure, they may also encourage students to remain academically engaged and prepared. However, depression or low mood does not appear to directly influence academic preparedness in this context.

## **Conclusions**

This study concludes that tourism students experience moderate levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, with stress and anxiety being more prominent due to academic demands and career-related concerns. Although these challenges are present, they are not severe, indicating that students are generally able to cope with their responsibilities. Despite these mental health concerns, students demonstrate high levels of academic and industry preparedness. They show strong abilities in managing academic tasks, applying knowledge, thinking critically, and working independently. They also express confidence in their communication skills, adaptability, and ability to handle workplace pressure, suggesting that their education and training effectively prepare them for the tourism industry. The findings further reveal that stress and anxiety significantly influence academic preparedness, while depression does not show a notable effect. Additionally, no significant relationship was found between mental health and industry preparedness, indicating that students' readiness for professional work is more influenced by their skills

and training than by their mental health condition. In summary, while mental health affects students' academic experiences, it does not hinder their readiness for the tourism industry. This highlights the importance of supporting students' well-being while continuously strengthening academic programs and practical training to produce competent and industry-ready graduates.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

- A. Tourism Students.** May practice healthy coping strategies such as proper time management, stress management, and self-care activities to help reduce stress and anxiety while maintaining their academic and industry preparedness.
- B. Academic Heads.** May strengthen mental health support programs, seminars, and student wellness activities that can help students manage academic stress and anxiety while preparing them for future careers in the tourism industry.
- C. Teachers.** May create a supportive and positive learning environment by being approachable, understanding students' challenges, and using teaching strategies that lessen unnecessary academic pressure.
- D. Parents.** May provide emotional support, encouragement, and open communication to help students cope with academic demands and maintain positive mental well-being.
- E. Guidance Counselors.** May conduct regular counseling sessions, mental health awareness programs, and stress management activities to assist tourism students in handling emotional and academic concerns effectively.
- F. Future Researchers.** May conduct similar studies using a larger number of respondents and include other factors that may influence students' preparedness, such as family background, academic performance, and institutional support.

## Compliance with Ethical Standards

The researchers observed and applied all necessary ethical considerations throughout the conduct of the study. The research was conducted responsibly and in accordance with the ethical protocols and standards stipulated by the Ethics Committee of Metro Dumaguete College. The rights, dignity, safety, and well-being of the respondents were prioritized at all stages of the research process.

Before the conduct of the study, the researchers secured the necessary permissions and ensured that the research procedures complied with institutional ethical

standards. The respondents were fully informed about the nature, objectives, and purpose of the study through an informed consent form. Participation in the study was strictly voluntary, and the respondents were informed that they had the right to decline participation without penalty or consequences. The respondents were also assured that all information gathered would remain confidential and anonymous. No names or personally identifiable information were required in the questionnaire to protect the identity and privacy of the participants. A disclosure statement was included in the survey questionnaire indicating that the data collected would only be used for academic and research purposes.

During the data gathering process, the researchers treated all respondents with respect, fairness, and dignity. The respondents were not subjected to any form of pressure or intimidation while answering the survey questionnaire. They were informed that they could skip any question they felt uncomfortable answering and could withdraw their participation at any point in the study. The questionnaire avoided intrusive and unnecessary personal questions that could violate the respondents' personal boundaries or emotional well-being. The online survey format also provided respondents with a convenient and secure means of participation while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity.

In addition, Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools were utilized solely for sentence structure enhancement, grammar checking, and parallelism improvement in the preparation of the research manuscript. However, all interpretations, analyses, conclusions, and major contents of the study remained the original work and intellectual responsibility of the researchers. After the completion of the data gathering process, the researchers ensured that all collected data were handled securely and responsibly. The responses gathered through the online survey were used exclusively for the purposes of the study and were not shared with unauthorized individuals or organizations.

To further protect the confidentiality and privacy of the respondents, all survey responses, digital files, and related research data were permanently deleted and destroyed after the completion of the study and the necessary analysis. This measure ensured that no personal information or responses could be retrieved, accessed, or misused in the future. Through these ethical practices, the researchers ensured that the study upheld the principles of confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, integrity, and respect for all respondents involved in the research process.

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