

A Nationally Validated Mental Health Self-Efficacy Scale for Filipino College Students: Psychometric Evaluation

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Mental health self-efficacy refers to individuals' perceived capability to understand mental health concerns, communicate psychological needs, access appropriate support, and engage in adaptive mental health-related actions. Despite increasing attention to student mental health in the Philippines, culturally responsive measures of mental health self-efficacy remain limited. This study evaluated the psychometric properties of the 66-item Mental Health Self-Efficacy Scale for Filipino College Students (MHSES-FCS) using data from 6,610 college students enrolled in State Universities and Colleges representing all 17 Philippine regions. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the hypothesized multidimensional structure, while reliability and construct validity were assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), heterotrait-monotrait ratios (HTMT), and correlations with measures of anxiety, depression, and psychological symptoms. Five indicators with factor loadings below .40 were removed, resulting in a revised 61-item measure. The Mental Health Literacy Self-Efficacy model demonstrated favorable fit, $\chi^2(265) = 697.14$, CFI = .977, TLI = .973, RMSEA = .016, and SRMR = .016, while the Mental Health Help-Seeking Self-Efficacy model also demonstrated favorable fit, $\chi^2(290) = 2,623.57$, CFI = .990, TLI = .976, RMSEA = .035, and SRMR = .057. Across dimensions, Cronbach's alpha ranged from .600 to .777, composite reliability from .601 to .780, and AVE from .500 to .599 for Mental Health Literacy Self-Efficacy and .535 to .587 for Mental Health Help-Seeking Self-Efficacy. Most HTMT values were below .90, although substantial overlap was observed between Beliefs on Social Communication and

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Interpersonal Skills on Mental Health and Education and Advocacy (HTMT = .961). Correlations with anxiety, depression, and psychological symptoms were small and negative ($r = -.064$ to $-.172$, $ps < .001$), supporting the distinction of mental health self-efficacy from symptom severity. Overall, the findings provide initial evidence supporting the factorial validity, reliability, convergent validity, and divergent validity of the revised MHSES-FCS. The instrument shows promise as a multidimensional measure of mental health self-efficacy among Filipino college students, although independent cross-validation, measurement invariance testing, and further examination of construct overlap are warranted.

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