

## University dropout intention and mental health: A comparative analysis of LGB and heterosexual students

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**ENG Abstract: Introduction.** University dropout is a multifaceted phenomenon, exhibiting varied patterns that are contingent on the socio-demographic characteristics of the student community. This research focuses on sexual orientation, a factor that has received limited attention in the field of dropout. Utilising the Sexual Minority Stress Theory as a theoretical framework, this study explores the influence of mental health on university dropout rates. The objective is to analyse whether the intention to drop out is higher among LGB (Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual) students than among their heterosexual peers and whether this is due to the poorer mental health experienced by this group. **Method.** To this end, a sample of 510 university students (79.8% heterosexual and 20.2% LGB) aged between 17 and 27 years were interviewed, with the intention of dropping out (through a dichotomous item) and their perception of mental health (through the DASS-21 questionnaire). Data were analysed using descriptive and regression statistics with the SPSS v.25 statistical package. **Results.** LGB students exhibited a higher intention to drop out in comparison to their heterosexual peers, with 41.7% and 29.5%, respectively, and demonstrated higher levels of stress, anxiety and depression. Depression accounted for 18.9% of the intention to drop out among LGB students and 15.6% among heterosexual students. **Discussion.** The findings suggest that LGB students may constitute a vulnerable group within the educational system, with mental health being a salient factor that may influence the decision-making process that culminates in university dropout.

**Keywords:** university dropout, stress, anxiety, depression, sexuality.

## **ES** Intención de abandono universitario y salud mental: Un análisis comparativo entre alumnado LGB y heterosexual

**Resumen: Introducción.** El abandono universitario no es un fenómeno homogéneo, sino que presenta patrones diferenciados según las características sociodemográficas del alumnado. La presente investigación aborda la orientación sexual, un factor poco explorado en el campo de estudio del abandono y, tomando como referencia la Teoría del Estrés de las Minorías Sexuales, explora la influencia de la salud mental. El objetivo se centra en analizar si la intención de abandono es mayor en el alumnado LGB (Lesbianas, Gays y Bisexuales) que en sus pares heterosexuales y si esto se debe a la salud mental percibida por este colectivo. **Método.** Se cuenta con una muestra de 510 estudiantes universitarios (79.8% heterosexuales y 20.2% LGB) de entre 17 y 27 años, los cuales indican su intención de abandono (a través de un ítem dicotómico) y su percepción de salud mental (a través del cuestionario DASS-21). Los datos se analizaron empleando estadística descriptiva y de regresión con el paquete estadístico SPSS v.25. **Resultados.** El alumnado LGB refleja una mayor intención de abandono que sus pares heterosexuales, con un 41.7% y 29.5% respectivamente, y manifiesta mayores síntomas de estrés, ansiedad y depresión. La depresión es capaz de explicar el 18.9% de la intención de abandono del alumnado LGB y el 15.6% del alumnado heterosexual. **Discusión.** Los datos reflejan que el alumnado LGB puede conformar un grupo vulnerable dentro del sistema educativo, siendo la salud mental un elemento importante que puede incluir en la decisión de abandonar los estudios universitarios.

**Palabras clave:** abandono universitario, estrés, ansiedad, depresión, sexualidad.

**Sumario:** 1. Introduction. 1.1. University experience of LGB students. 1.2. Mental health in LGB population. 1.3. Objectives and hypotheses. 2. Method. 2.1. Participants. 2.2. Instruments. 2.3. Procedure. 2.4. Data analysis. 3. Results. 4. Discussion. 4.1. Limitations and future research. 4.2. Conclusions. Referencias.

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## 1. Introduction

The study of university dropout has increased significantly in recent decades (Chiarino et al., 2024) due to the high rates observed in higher education institutions worldwide (OECD, 2022). In Spain, data provided by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (2024) indicate that 20% of students leave the Spanish University System before completing their degree programmes (permanent dropout), while 12% change degree programmes (dropout by transfer). Thus, more than 30% of students enrolled in Spanish universities abandon their original programme, either to pursue another degree or to disengage completely from the university system.

These figures represent a waste of resources for students, their families, educational institutions, and society (Améstica-Rivas et al., 2021). Consequently, reducing dropout rates has become one of the main objectives of academic authorities (Roski et al., 2023). However, to reduce dropout, it is essential to identify explanatory variables as well as potential risk and protective factors.

Numerous studies have shown that the causes of university dropout are multiple and diverse (Cruz-Campos et al., 2023; Lorenzo-Quiles et al., 2023), making it necessary to rely on interactionist models, such as those proposed by Bean and Eaton (2001) or Tinto (1975). These models emphasise the interaction between academic variables (e.g., academic performance and student satisfaction), psychological variables (e.g., emotional intelligence and motivation), social variables (e.g., social integration and relationships with faculty), family variables (e.g., family support and socioeconomic status), and institutional variables (e.g., institutional support), among others (Barbosa et al., 2021; Chalela-Naffah et al., 2020; Esteban et al., 2024; Hadjar et al., 2023; Parra-Sánchez et al., 2023; Thomas et al., 2024; Tuero et al., 2020, 2024).

In addition, the scientific literature has shown that university dropout is not a homogeneous phenomenon but rather presents differentiated patterns according to students' sociodemographic characteristics (Kocsis & Molnár, 2024). In this regard, studies by Casanova et al. (2024) and Guerrero and Espejo (2024) have examined the influence of gender, finding that men are more likely to drop out of university than women, as women tend to display higher levels of academic engagement, study strategies, and classroom participation. Likewise, research by Constante-Amores et al. (2021) identified age and type of enrolment (part-time vs. full-time) as relevant sociodemographic variables, with older students and part-time students being more likely to drop out of university.

From this perspective, the present study focuses on another less explored personal factor—sexual orientation—to address the following research question: Is sexual orientation among LGB students a triggering factor for university dropout intention?

### 1.1. University experience of LGB students

Sexual orientation is defined as the emotional and/or physical attraction a person feels towards others, including heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality, among others (Grajales et al., 2015).

This study focuses on the experience of LGB (Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual) students. Although the visibility of this group has increased considerably in recent years, a gap between social perceptions and lived reality persists. Spain is often regarded as a benchmark country in terms of LGTBIAQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Bisexual, Intersex, Asexual, and Queer) rights; however, data from the Ministry of the Interior reveal that 26% of hate crimes are motivated by sexual orientation and gender identity (FELGTBI+, 2022). This situation is also present in educational contexts. While some studies suggest greater acceptance of sexual diversity among young people (Chávez et al., 2018), others show the persistence of stereotypes and prejudices among university students (Lara-Garrido et al., 2023). Specifically, these authors found that university students tend to invisibilise certain sexual identities (such as lesbian women) and to associate homosexuality with promiscuity.

As a result, LGB students may constitute a vulnerable group within educational settings, facing greater challenges than their heterosexual peers. Contemporary research has shown that these students may experience greater difficulties integrating into academic environments due to a lack of role models and inclusive educational spaces, which leads to lower levels of well-being (Evangelista et al., 2022; Larrain et al., 2020). This vulnerability is exacerbated by a higher likelihood of experiencing bullying and cyberbullying (Cepa-Rodríguez & Martxueta, 2025; Donovan & Roberts, 2022; Ríos et al., 2022), contributing to a hostile and exclusionary university climate. Moreover, vulnerability may be further intensified when LGB students transgress hegemonic norms of femininity and masculinity (Abril et al., 2022).

All these factors may negatively affect the academic performance of LGB students (Rivera-Orsorio & Arias-Gómez, 2020). Research by Simone et al. (2021) shows that the discrimination disproportionately experienced by LGTBIAQ+ students is associated with academic impairment. Furthermore, the pioneering study by Martín-Arbós et al. (2024) revealed a significant relationship between sexual orientation and university dropout intention, highlighting the need for more in-depth research to better understand the mechanisms underlying this relationship. For this reason, considering these integration and well-being challenges, the present study focuses on another key factor—mental health—to address the following research question: Is perceived mental health one of the factors influencing university dropout intention among LGB students?

## 1.2. Mental health in LGB population

Mental health is a dynamic state influenced by a complex interaction of biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors that can promote or hinder well-being (Alarcón, 2020). Given the breadth of this construct, research often focuses on specific variables, particularly perceived stress, anxiety, and depression. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines stress as a state of concern arising in response to challenging situations, anxiety as a set of feelings of fear and excessive worry accompanied by psychophysiological symptoms (such as sweating or increased heart rate), and depression as a mood state characterised by a loss of pleasure or interest in daily activities (WHO, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c).

It is currently estimated that at least 30% of university students experience mental health problems, such as symptoms of stress, anxiety, and/or depression (Caro et al., 2020; González et al., 2019; Trunce et al., 2020). This situation may be exacerbated among LGB students. A meta-analysis by Ross et al. (2018) showed that bisexual and homosexual individuals report higher levels of anxiety and depression than their heterosexual peers. These findings have also been replicated in studies conducted with university populations (Borgogna et al., 2019; Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2020), highlighting the importance of examining the academic consequences of these mental health disparities.

One of the earliest theories explaining poorer mental health among LGTBIAQ+ populations is Meyer's (2003) *Sexual Minority Stress Theory*. According to this framework, homosexual and bisexual individuals experience chronic stress due to exposure to hostile environments characterised by prejudice, stigmatisation, and discrimination. Over time, this chronic stress can lead to mental health problems. Building on this perspective, Hatzenbuehler (2009) proposed the *Psychological Mediation Framework*, which suggests that minority stress not only requires constant adaptation but also disrupts psychological processes such as rumination, avoidance, or dissociation, ultimately leading to psychopathological symptoms (e.g., anxiety and depression). More recently, Feinstein's (2020) *Rejection Sensitivity Model* emphasises anticipatory rejection, whereby past experiences of discrimination generate concerns about future rejection, negatively affecting well-being. Collectively, these models converge in identifying adversity—from chronic stress to rejection sensitivity—as a key determinant of mental health among LGTBIAQ+ individuals.

## 1.3. Objectives and hypotheses

Although these models have been widely studied, important gaps remain in understanding the academic consequences of sexual orientation-related experiences in higher education. Accordingly, the present study aims to analyse whether sexual orientation influences mental health and university dropout intention, addressing the two research questions posed above. The following hypotheses were formulated:

- *Hypothesis 1:* LGB students will report higher dropout intention than heterosexual students.
- *Hypothesis 2:* LGB students will report higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression than heterosexual students.
- *Hypothesis 3:* Stress, anxiety, and depression will explain dropout intention to a greater extent among LGB students than among heterosexual students.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

The sample comprised 510 students from a university in northern Spain. All participants were enrolled in either the first (49.6%) or second year (50.4%) of the following degree programmes: Psychology (28.8%), Early Childhood Education (23.7%), Primary Education (12.5%), Law (11.2%), Speech Therapy (8.8%), Physiotherapy (8.0%), and Nursing (6.9%).

Participants' ages ranged from 17 to 27 years ( $M = 19.04$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ). Regarding gender, 73.1% identified as women, 25.9% as men, and 1% preferred not to disclose their gender.

In terms of sexual orientation, 407 students (79.8%) identified as heterosexual and 103 (20.2%) as LGB (17.8% bisexual and 2.5% homosexual). Although bisexual and homosexual students may have distinct experiences, they were analysed together under the category "LGB students" due to the small sample size.

### 2.2. Instruments

An ad hoc questionnaire was developed to collect sociodemographic data (degree programme, age, gender, and sexual orientation), university dropout intention, and perceived mental health (stress, anxiety, and depression).

Sexual orientation was assessed using a single-choice item: "Please indicate the sexual orientation with which you identify:" ("Heterosexual", "Homosexual", "Bisexual", "None of these, I identify more as:", and "I prefer not to answer").

Dropout intention was measured using a dichotomous item: "Have you ever thought about dropping out of the degree you are currently studying?" (Yes/No). Dichotomous items have been successfully used in previous research (Campos-Muñoz et al., 2024; Peña-Vázquez et al., 2023) to identify students who have considered dropping out, regardless of the severity of this intention.

Perceived mental health was assessed using the Spanish adaptation of the *Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale* (DASS-21; Fonseca-Pedrero et al., 2010). The scale consists of 21 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale (0 = Did not apply to me; 3 = Applied to me very much or most of the time). Items are organised into three subscales—stress, anxiety, and depression—allowing participants to be classified according to severity levels (Table 1). In the present sample, internal consistency was satisfactory ( $\alpha_{\text{estrés}} = .871$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{ansiedad}} = .867$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{depresión}} = .903$ ).

Table 1. Cut-off scores used in the DASS-21 scale

	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Very severe
Stress	8 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 16	> 17
Anxiety	4	5 - 7	8 - 9	> 10
Depression	5 - 6	7 - 10	11- 13	> 14

Note. From Ruiz & García (s.f.).

### 2.3. Procedure

A non-experimental, cross-sectional design with a correlational–predictive scope was employed. Non-probabilistic sampling was conducted with the aim of recruiting between 500 and 600 first- and second-year students, representing approximately 10% of the target population. Faculty members were contacted via institutional email to request access to students during class time. When permission was granted, data collection sessions were scheduled.

During data collection, students were informed of the study's purpose and assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed that they could withdraw at any time. Access to the informed consent form and the online questionnaire was then provided. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Oviedo (reference: 41-RRI-2023).

### 2.4. Data analysis

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS v.25. Only students who identified as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual were included in the analyses; those who preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation were excluded.

Descriptive analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between sexual orientation, dropout intention, and mental health variables (stress, anxiety, and depression). Contingency tables and chi-square tests were used to assess the independence of categorical variables, with a significance level of  $p < .05$ . Cramer's V was calculated as a measure of effect size ( $< .10$  = no association;  $.10$ – $.30$  = weak association;  $.30$ – $.60$  = moderate association;  $> .60$  = strong association).

Additionally, two binary logistic regression models were estimated to assess the impact of stress, anxiety, and depression on dropout intention—one for LGB students and one for heterosexual students. The Wald test was used to assess the statistical significance of regression coefficients, with  $p < .05$  as the significance threshold.

## 3. Results

First, the relationship between sexual orientation and university dropout intention was examined. As shown in Table 2, the proportion of LGB students reporting dropout intention was higher than that of heterosexual students (41.7% vs. 29.5%).

Table 2. Frequencies of intention to dropout based on sexual orientation

	University dropout intention	
	Yes	No
Heterosexual	120 (29.5%)	287 (70.5%)
LGB	43 (41.7%)	60 (58.3%)
Total	163 (32%)	347 (68%)

Note. The percentage is calculated within each 'sexual orientation' group.

The Chi-square test was used to evaluate the association between sexual orientation and intention to drop out of university. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables ( $X^2 = 5.685$ ,  $gI = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ). To quantify the magnitude of this association, Cramer's V coefficient was calculated, yielding a value of  $.116$  ( $p < .05$ ), which indicates a low association.

Second, the relationship between sexual orientation and perceived mental health was analysed. LGB students reported higher levels of perceived stress (Figure 1), anxiety (Figure 2), and depression (Figure 3) than heterosexual students. Chi-square analyses revealed statistically significant associations between sexual orientation and stress ( $X^2 = 13.701, g/l = 4, p < .01, V = .164$ ), anxiety ( $X^2 = 21.219, g/l = 4, p < .001, V = .204$ ), and depression ( $X^2 = 24.647, g/l = 4, p < .001, V = .220$ ), with small effect sizes.

Figure 1. Perception of perceived stress based on sexual orientation (percentage)

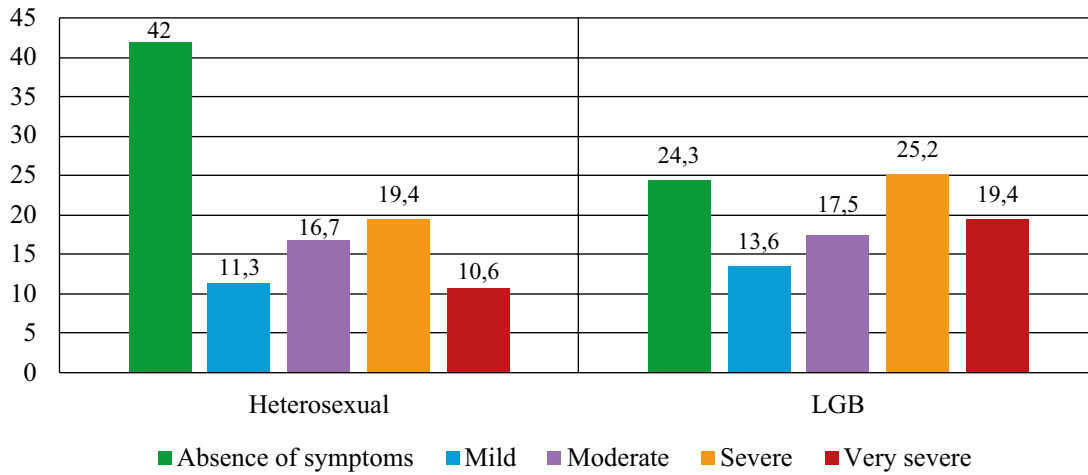


Figure 2. Perception of perceived anxiety based on sexual orientation (percentage)

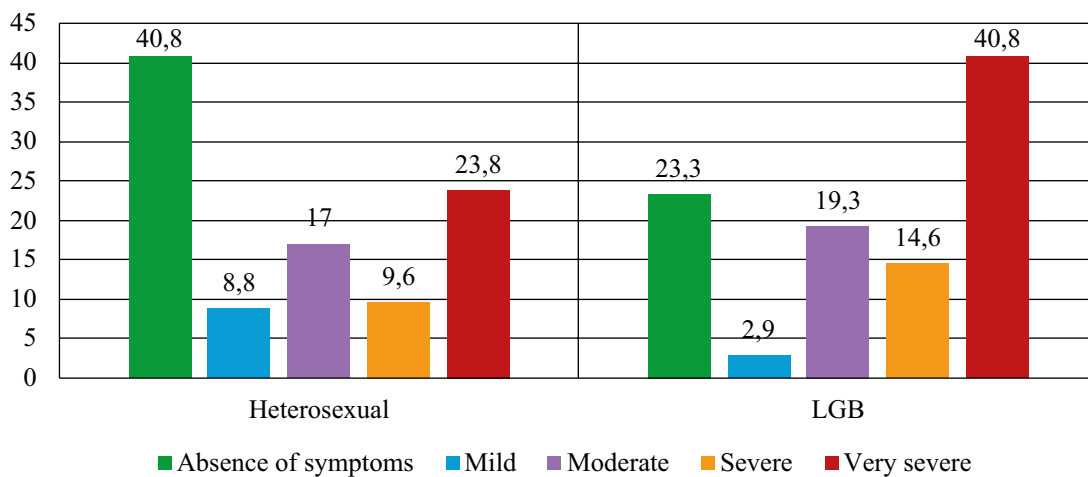
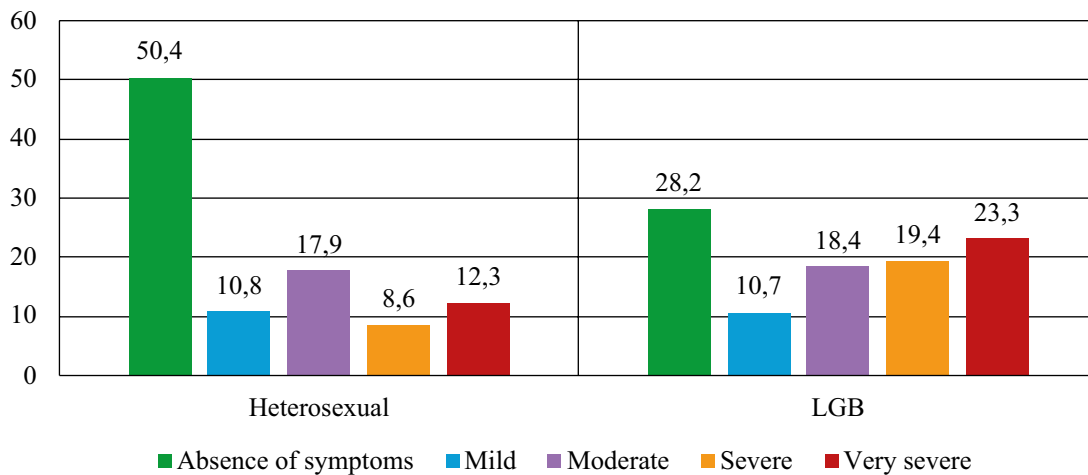


Figure 3. Perception of perceived depression based on sexual orientation (percentage)



Finally, two binary logistic regression models were estimated to examine whether stress, anxiety, and depression predicted dropout intention among LGB and heterosexual students.

For LGB students (Table 3), the model was statistically significant (Omnibus test:  $X^2 = 15.620$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and explained 18.9% of the variance in dropout intention (Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .189$ ). Depression was the only significant predictor, with a one-point increase associated with a 1.154-fold increase in the likelihood of dropout. Stress and anxiety did not significantly improve the model.

Table 3. Logistic regression model for LGB students

Included variables	<i>B</i>	SE	Wald	Sig.	OR
Depression	.143	.039	13.245	< .001	1.154
Excluded variables	<i>B</i>	SE	Wald	Sig.	OR
Stress	-.077	.067	1.305	.253	0.926
Anxiety	-.033	.061	0.282	.595	0.968

Similarly, for heterosexual students (Table 4), the regression model was statistically significant (Omnibus test:  $X^2 = 47.319$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and explained 15.6% of the variance in dropout intention (Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .156$ ). Again, depression was the only significant predictor, with a one-point increase associated with a 1.150-fold increase in dropout likelihood.

Table 4. Logistic regression model for heterosexual students

Included variables	<i>B</i>	SE	Wald	Sig.	OR
Depression	.140	.021	42.671	< .001	1.150
Excluded variables	<i>B</i>	SE	Wald	Sig.	OR
Stress	-.004	.039	0.012	.298	0.996
Anxiety	-.057	.033	2.960	.085	0.945

#### 4. Discussion

LGB individuals may experience higher levels of stress, which can disrupt psychological processes and lead to psychopathological symptoms (Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Meyer, 2003), often because of experiences of rejection and discrimination (Feinstein, 2020). However, the academic consequences of these experiences within higher education contexts remain underexplored. The present study therefore examined whether sexual orientation influences mental health and university dropout intention.

The first hypothesis established that LGB students would show a greater intention to drop out than heterosexual students. The data supports this hypothesis, as 41.7% of the LGB sample had considered dropping out of their studies, while this figure drops to 29.5% in the case of their heterosexual peers. Thus, there is a much higher tendency to drop out among LGB students than among heterosexual students. Furthermore, as previously described, in Spain, the university dropout rate, including both dropouts and transfers, is around 30% (Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades, 2024), meaning that the rate for heterosexual students is in line with the national trend, while that of LGB students significantly exceeds it, highlighting a worrying gap.

These results follow the pioneering findings of Martín-Arbós et al. (2024), who demonstrate a significant relationship between sexual orientation and university dropout rates. One possible explanation is that the educational experience of LGB students may be marked by rejection and discrimination (Lara-Garrido et al., 2023; Ríos et al., 2022), with bullying being an explanatory variable for university dropout (Bernardo et al., 2020; Cervero et al., 2024). The studies by the latter authors show that peer bullying (whether traditional or via digital media) can occur in the university environment and that being a victim of such attacks increases the likelihood that students will consider dropping out of their studies. Thus, the higher prevalence of bullying among homosexual and bisexual students (Cepa-Rodríguez & Martxueta, 2025; Donovan & Roberts, 2022), together with its possible consequences in terms of dropout, highlights the importance of continuing to research the experiences of this group in the university context and of developing interventions aimed at improving their experience and retention in their studies.

After learning about the higher dropout rate, the second hypothesis established that LGB students would show higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression than heterosexual students. Once again, the results support this hypothesis, finding that approximately half of heterosexual students do not report symptoms of stress (42%), anxiety (49.8%), and depression (50.4%), while the proportion in the LGB group drops to a quarter (stress: 24.3%, anxiety: 23.3%, depression: 28.2%). When looking at the percentage of students who report severe or very severe symptoms in any of these variables, the figures are worrying, but, again, they are

higher among LGB students (stress: 34.6%, anxiety: 55.4%, depression: 42.7%) than among their heterosexual peers (stress: 30%, anxiety: 33.4%, depression: 29.9%).

The results obtained are consistent with previous research that has warned of the high prevalence of mental health problems among university students (Ballester et al., 2020; Navarra-Ventura et al., 2024). Furthermore, they corroborate that this population group experiences an even greater burden when it comes to homosexual or bisexual students, thus reinforcing existing evidence on mental health inequalities in the context of higher education (Borgogna et al., 2019; Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2020).

Finally, after independently analysing dropout intention and mental health based on sexual orientation, the third hypothesis established that stress, anxiety and depression would explain LGB students' dropout intention to a greater extent than that of heterosexual students. However, the data described do not allow this hypothesis to be accepted. Although it is true that two significant binary logistic regression models have been constructed, one for the LGB group and one for the heterosexual group, both include only depression as a predictor variable. In contrast to previous studies that have described stress (Sinval et al., 2025; van Hoek et al., 2019) and anxiety (Abbas et al., 2023; Caballero-Domínguez et al., 2020) as explanatory factors for university dropout, as they are related to a lower ability to manage and plan coping strategies and poorer academic performance (Jehi et al., 2024; Vega et al., 2022), in the present study, they do not significantly improve the models, with depression emerging as the most decisive variable. This may be due to the multifactorial nature of university dropout, which shows a complex interaction between the explanatory variables (Bäulke et al., 2022; Véliz-Palomino & Ortega, 2023). Thus, although depression emerges as the most significant predictor, it would be necessary to develop more complex models that take into account the interaction between variables related to mental health in order to obtain a more complete model.

Nevertheless, depression, as pointed out in the research by González et al. (2019), is an indicator of risk for university dropout for both heterosexual and LGB students. This may be because experiencing depressive states, characterised by a loss of pleasure or interest in daily activities (WHO, 2023a), is associated with poorer personal care in terms of diet and rest (Ramón et al., 2019), as well as lower academic commitment (Sinval et al., 2025) and poor adaptation to university life (Castillo-Díaz et al., 2022). All of this can lead to poor academic performance and a reduced intention to persist in university studies (Abbas et al., 2023).

It should be noted that this variable explains a high percentage of the variance in university dropout rates, a phenomenon with multiple causes, with 18.9% in the LGB group and 15.6% in the heterosexual group. One might expect greater explanatory power when analysing LGB students, as they reflect higher levels of depression than their heterosexual peers. However, it is known that homosexual and bisexual students are often more likely to seek psychological support when going through difficult times (Ebert et al., 2019), which may mitigate the negative consequences of these depressive symptoms.

#### 4.1. Limitations and future research

While the results of this study suggest a relationship between intention to dropout and mental health based on sexual orientation, it is essential to recognise the limitations inherent in the research.

Firstly, this is an exploratory study, so it is necessary to consider its limitations to continue delving deeper into future research that may yield more generalisable results.

Secondly, although the sample includes heterosexual, bisexual and homosexual students, it could benefit from being larger and more evenly distributed among the groups. It would therefore be essential to carry out analyses with a sample that more homogeneously reflects different sexual identities and orientations, to fully address the experiences of each of the groups within the LGTBIAQ+ community. Furthermore, considering that students who transgress the norms of hegemonic femininity and masculinity may experience greater vulnerability, studies could be conducted to assess this aspect, considering both sexual orientation and gender expression.

Thirdly, the intention to dropout was measured using a single dichotomous item, which constitutes a methodological limitation. Although this type of measure has been used successfully in previous research (Campos-Muñoz et al., 2024; Peña-Vázquez et al., 2023), it may have hindered the capture of the complexity inherent in the decision to drop out of university. To overcome this limitation, future studies could benefit from the use of more sophisticated scales.

Finally, the design is cross-sectional and, given that the instrument used to measure mental health (DASS-21) collects symptoms experienced in the last 15 days, it would be necessary to carry out longitudinal research capable of reflecting possible changes throughout the academic year. Conducting studies with more robust designs and more representative samples would allow these findings to be verified and provide a more detailed view of the mechanisms underlying the intention to drop out among LGB students.

#### 4.2. Conclusions

This exploratory research has found that LGB students show a greater intention to drop out than their heterosexual peers. It has also delved into mental health, specifically symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression, observing that, once again, LGB students tend to experience these symptoms to a greater extent than their heterosexual peers. Finally, it has constructed two binary logistic regression models capable of explaining the intention to drop out among LGB students (with 18.9% of variance explained) and heterosexual students (with 15.6% of variance explained), including only depression as a predictor variable, since stress and anxiety do not improve the predictive capacity of the models.

Although these results are only a preliminary empirical approach, they have important practical implications in the university setting, as they show that LGB students may constitute a vulnerable group within the education system. Furthermore, given that the study by García et al. (2024) highlights the need expressed by LGTBIAQ+ students to feel represented, included and respected, it is necessary to carry out interventions with the aim of promoting an inclusive and diverse environment.

In this regard, initiatives by the *Red de Universidades por la Diversidad*, such as conducting high-quality research and implementing awareness and intervention campaigns on LGBTIphobia (Unex. 2023), are essential for identifying the specific needs of this group and designing appropriate interventions. Likewise, the *Plan Estratégico para el Fomento del Respeto e Igualdad LGTB+* (Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual) People at the University of Zaragoza (Unizar, 2021) is an example of how educational institutions can take concrete measures to promote the inclusion and mental health of LGB students. Finally, another example of theoretical importance can be found in the book *Pedagogías Queer* by Mercedes Sánchez Sáinz, who explains that these pedagogies, by questioning traditional norms and hierarchies, can contribute to creating more inclusive educational spaces that are respectful of sexual and gender diversity, where all students feel less isolated and stigmatised (Sánchez 2019).

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