

The Relationship between Psychological Well-Being and Academic Performance of BECEd Students of Goa Community College, Camarines Sur, Philippines

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between psychological well-being and academic performance among Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECEd) students in Goa Community College, Camarines Sur, during the first semester of SY 2023–2024. Anchored on the Six-factor Model of Psychological Well-being by Carol Ryff¹⁰, the PERMA Model by Martin Seligman¹¹, the Humanistic theory by Carl Rogers¹², and “Kaginhawahan: A Well-Being Model Theory.” (RESEARCHER’S THEORY, 2024), the research used a quantitative descriptive correlational¹¹ design. A total of 144 BECEd students (ages 18–37) participated, and data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire and Ryff’s Psychological Well-Being scale (42 items)², while academic performance was measured using General Weighted Average (GWA) from official records. Overall psychological well-being was high (mean = 3.97), with personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life rated high, while autonomy, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery were identified as areas needing improvement. Academic performance was “Satisfactory” (overall mean GWA = 88.01), with most students (70.84%) in the 85–89 range and 29.16% in the 90–95 range. Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between psychological well-being and academic performance ($r = 0.303$, $p = 0.001$), supporting the importance of student mental wellness in academic success (Mustafa et al. (2020)²³). The study concludes that institutions should strengthen well-being-centered student support systems and guidance services and consider implementing the proposed “Kaginhawahan” Toolkit to enhance psychological well-being and academic outcomes. This work aligns with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by reinforcing mental health protection, holistic student development, and institutionally grounded counseling support. Its sustainability impact lies in promoting enduring educational and public health support mechanisms that help sustain student functioning, persistence, and academic performance within higher education.

Keywords: Academic performance; Autonomy; Environmental mastery; Goa Community College; Kaginhawahan Toolkit; Psychological well-being; Purpose in life; Ryff’s psychological well-being scale; Self-acceptance; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1. Introduction

In today’s fast-paced and competitive academic environments, students face academic workload, exams, social pressures, cultural adjustments, and financial demands that can affect both psychological well-being and academic success. The present study is anchored on the need to understand how psychological well-being—conceptualized through key dimensions such as autonomy, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life—relates to academic performance among Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECEd) students in Goa Community College, with the end goal of informing evidence-based support systems, student services, and a proposed program responsive to student needs.

College life can be chaotic and full of psychological stress due to cognitive challenges, social adjustments, and financial demands, including experiences of moving from rural communities to new cultural environments and engaging in part-time work while coping with peer pressure and academic requirements. Carol Ryff, (1989)¹ defined Psychological Well-being as optimal human functioning that produces more positive emotions and satisfaction, and within this perspective, Ryff’s model and measure of psychological well-being² is emphasized as a widely used instrument defined through six dimensions. The national policy and governance context reinforces the institutional responsibility to support student well-being: The 1987 Philippine Constitution³ recognizes other forms of education beyond formal education, while Article XIV, Section 2, Paragraph (1)⁴ underscores the State’s role in maintaining an integrated system of education responsive to societal needs, and Section 9, Paragraph (3) affirms students’ right to school guidance and counseling services. The RA 9258...Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004⁵ professionalizes guidance and counseling practice, Republic Act No. 11036...Philippine Mental Health Law⁶ underscores mental health protection and promotion, and CHED Memorandum

Order No. 09, series of 20137 directs student affairs and services toward holistic development and timely psycho-social support through proactive interventions.

Related literature consistently frames psychological well-being as a multidimensional construct with direct relevance to academic functioning. According to the World Health Organization (2021),¹³ health is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being,” and psychological well-being is described as “a state of mind” enabling individuals to develop potential, work productively, and cope with normal stresses—highlighting psychological functioning and purpose/meaning as core features. Empirical studies further indicate that higher psychological well-being is associated with stronger academic performance and adaptive academic-related outcomes. Bondarenko et al. (2021)¹⁴ reported that students with high psychological well-being (PWB) tend to have significantly higher academic performance than peers with low PWB and also show better engagement, self-efficacy, social adaptation, and lower test anxiety. Studies also broaden the construct’s framing and implications, including Morosanova et al. (2018)¹⁵ and M. Dhanabhakya Ph.D., and Sarath. M (2023)¹⁶ on psychological well-being components and overall functioning, Tang et al. (2019)¹⁷ on hedonic/eudaimonic well-being and resilience, and other contemporary perspectives tying well-being to structural and contextual factors such as family and health satisfaction. Evidence across contexts also supports the PWB–achievement relationship using comparable measures and academic indicators. Mustafa et al. (2020)²³ found a significant positive relationship between psychological well-being (measured via Psychological Well-Being Instrument (Ryff, 1989)) and academic achievement (CGPA), including significant positive correlations between multiple PWB dimensions and academic outcomes. Lo and Ip (2021)²⁵ likewise reported that changes in Personal Growth, Self-Acceptance, and Purpose in Life predicted first-year CGPA (with Purpose in Life showing greatest relative importance), emphasizing the need for institutional attention and resources supporting students’ mental health and purpose formation.

At the institutional level, the need for well-being-centered student services is reinforced by education contexts where psychological well-being shapes academic outcomes (Datu & Lizada, 2018), and where institutions are expected to provide evidence-based interventions and appropriate student services. Local indicators of student concerns are reflected in reported disciplinary cases (e.g., tardiness, absenteeism), dropout/withdrawal drivers (financial, health, family problems), and counseling concerns (health-related and family issues), highlighting the practical relevance of psychological well-being monitoring and support within higher education settings. In the Philippine setting, the policy landscape—The 1987 Philippine Constitution³, RA 9258...20045, Republic Act No. 11036...6, and CHED Memorandum Order No. 09, series of 20137—grounds guidance, counseling, and mental health support as institutional duties tied to holistic student development and timely intervention. Globally, related studies across different student populations (e.g., Hong Kong community college freshmen, university undergraduates, and other education contexts) support the premise that psychological well-being is educationally consequential and can justify targeted programs addressing well-being as a lever for academic success.

The study is anchored on multiple complementary frameworks: the Six-factor Model of Psychological Well-being by Carol Ryff¹⁰, the PERMA Model by Martin Seligman¹¹, and the Humanistic theory by Carl Rogers¹². The Ryff framework emphasizes six core dimensions of psychological well-being that structure the study’s independent variable. The PERMA model frames well-being through Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment, and is linked in the text to understanding academic success and guiding educator-supported strategies that cultivate student flourishing. Rogers¹² emphasizes growth-supportive environments characterized by genuineness, acceptance, and empathy, positioning psychological environment as central to functioning, confidence, and realization of worth. Building from these theories, the text introduces “Kaginhawahan: A Well-Being Model Theory.” and explicitly positions “KAGINHAWAHAN” (RESEARCHER’S THEORY, 2024) as an integrative view asserting that intervention activities related to psychological being can contribute on the students’ academic performance, drawing on Ryff’s model, Seligman’s PERMA theory, and Rogers’ humanistic emphasis on supportive environments. Conceptually, the study treats psychological well-being (with its six dimensions) as the independent variable and academic performance as the dependent variable, while explicitly orienting the investigation toward the relationship between these variables and toward developing a proposed program based on findings.

Although existing studies support the relevance of psychological well-being to academic performance across various student populations and contexts (e.g., community college freshmen, medical students, and other undergraduate cohorts), the present study is positioned to address a setting- and program-specific need: the relationship between psychological well-being and academic performance among BECED students in Goa Community College. The rationale is strengthened by observed student disclosures of personal problems and family-related traumas and by the recognition that these future early childhood educators’ well-being matters not only for their own academic success and growth but also for the children they will teach. The study scope further clarifies this targeted contribution: it focuses on BECED students in Goa Community College, Camarines Sur (n=144), using data from the first semester of the school year 2023-2024, and recognizes that findings do not extend to long-term relationships beyond the specified timeframe.

This study aligns most directly with SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being by focusing on psychological well-being as a mental health dimension linked to students' functioning, coping, and overall health framing (World Health Organization (2021),¹³) and by situating student support within the broader national mental health policy direction (Republic Act No. 11036...⁶). It also aligns with SDG 4 – Quality Education by addressing how well-being relates to academic performance and by supporting the role of higher education institutions in providing student affairs and services, guidance/counseling, and proactive intervention strategies to enable holistic student development and academic success (CHED Memorandum Order No. 09, series of 20137; The 1987 Philippine Constitution³; Article XIV, Section 2, Paragraph (1)⁴). A contextual alignment is also evident with SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions insofar as the study is grounded in institutional mandates and governance instruments that define student rights to counseling services and professionalize guidance and counseling practice (The 1987 Philippine Constitution³; RA 9258...²⁰⁰⁴⁵; CHED Memorandum Order No. 09, series of 20137).

The study contributes to public health sustainability by framing psychological well-being as integral to comprehensive health and by reinforcing the need for sustained mental health support mechanisms within educational institutions and policy environments. It advances educational sustainability by informing evidence-based student services and interventions that can stabilize academic participation, improve performance, and support holistic development among teacher-education students—particularly relevant given evidence that well-being is linked to academic outcomes and that institutions should develop ongoing programs for students with low psychological well-being (Mustafa et al. (2020)²³; Paras, et al. (2021)⁴³). It also supports community and institutional sustainability by clarifying value to multiple stakeholders (students, teachers, college leadership, guidance counselors, Local Government Unit, parents/community, and future researchers), strengthening the continuity of support ecosystems around learners and enabling coordinated responses to well-being and academic concerns.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive correlational¹ design to examine the relationship between psychological well-being and academic performance without making causal claims. Data were collected at one point in time during the first semester of school year 2023–2024 through survey administration, allowing simultaneous measurement of variables and efficient collection of information from a large group. Academic performance was operationalized through first-semester general weighted averages (GWAs) obtained from official school records, while a self-administered questionnaire gathered demographic data and indicators needed to analyze associations between profile variables and psychological well-being.

2.2 Research Setting

The study was conducted at Goa Community College, focusing on students enrolled in the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECED) program during the first semester of the school year 2023–2024.

2.3 Respondents

The respondents were 144 BECED students enrolled during the first semester of the school year 2023–2024, with ages ranging from 18 to 37, representing both first-year and second-year levels and including all sexes, regardless of gender preferences. In describing respondent characteristics, the study considered age, gender, civil status, family size, and family income; most respondents were aged 18–22 (86.11%), female (77.78%), and single (93.05%), with many reporting a family size of 6–10 (53.47%) and family income below 5,000 (56.94%). All 144 enrolled BECED students who participated during the specified semester were included as respondents, reflecting coverage of the target group within the program and timeframe. For survey distribution across sections, a fish bowl method was used to support fair allocation of questionnaires to respondents.

2.4 Research Instruments

Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire for respondent profiling and a standardized measure of psychological well-being. The Psychological Well-being scale instrument was developed by Carol Ryff (1989)² to measure positive functioning across Self-acceptance, Positive Relations with Others, Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Purpose in Life, and Personal Growth, with these dimensions derived from theoretical formulations (Ryff, 1989). The study used Ryff's psychological well-being scale consisting of 42 items to assess respondents' psychological well-being across the six dimensions. Instrument quality was described using published evidence. According to Ryff's (1989a)² initial study, the six scales showed internal consistency (α) ranging from .93 to .86, and six-week test–retest reliability ranging from .88 to .81. Validity was supported by comparisons with established measures of positive and negative functioning (e.g., Life Satisfaction Index, Zung Depression Scale, Self-Esteem Scale), with correlations reported as substantial and in the anticipated direction as evidence of convergent validity. Scoring followed the test manual: 21 items were positively worded and 21 were negatively worded, with negatively scored items reversed so that higher values consistently reflected higher well-being. Reverse scoring used the formula (Number of scale points + 1) – (Respondent's answer). Subscale scores were

computed as averages for each dimension, and an overall psychological well-being score was derived by combining scale scores. Interpretation relied on quartile-based classification, where high well-being corresponded to the top 25% (quartile) of scores and low well-being to the bottom 25% (quartile), with dimension-specific descriptions of high and low scorers used to guide interpretation.

2.5 Data Collection

Printed survey questionnaires were administered to collect respondent profile data and psychological well-being responses, with distribution facilitated through the fish bowl method per section. Survey completion took approximately 10 minutes, and respondents were assured that answers would be kept strictly confidential and used only for academic and research purposes. After completion, responses were recorded and organized for computation. Academic performance data were obtained through the general weighted average (GWA) from official school records..

2.6 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic characteristics, describe the state of psychological well-being, and support interpretation of academic performance patterns. Weighted mean was applied to determine the level of responses, using $WM = (\sum FW)/N$. Frequency count and simple percentage were used to analyze demographic profile distributions. To examine the relationship between psychological well-being and academic performance, Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) was employed. The analysis aimed to describe distributions and variability and to generate insights that could inform interventions and support mechanisms for students.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical guidelines and regulations, securing approvals from relevant authorities (e.g., program director and college President) prior to data collection and adhering to standards set by professional organizations such as the American Psychological Association (APA)³. Permission was obtained from Carol Ryff for use of the standardized instrument, and a permit to conduct the study was secured from the President of Goa Community College, Camarines Sur. Risks were minimized through non-invasive procedures and by avoiding coercion, with participant well-being prioritized and support mechanisms indicated for potential concerns. The conduct, scoring, and interpretation processes were guided and reviewed by a registered psychometrician to ensure alignment with the standardized test manual, and confidentiality and anonymity were emphasized throughout.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. State of Psychological Well-being of the BECEd Students

3.1.1 Autonomy

Table 1 shows that most respondents are 20–21 years old (65.93%), predominantly female (80.22%), and largely in their second year (41.76%). This profile reflects the typical composition of nursing cohorts, where students are of traditional college age, women form the majority due to the feminization of nursing education, and early-year students are most represented as they transition into clinical practice. According to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED, 2025), nursing programs in the Philippines continue to be dominated by female enrollees and traditional-aged learners, reinforcing the relevance of these demographics in evaluating teaching effectiveness, satisfaction, and self-confidence in clinical learning. These results indicate that while students can maintain personal convictions, they still experience difficulty expressing views in socially sensitive contexts, suggesting uneven self-determination and social assertiveness. This pattern aligns with discussions emphasizing how autonomy is strengthened through self-regulation and independent decision-making but may be constrained by perceived social pressures and fear of judgment (Van der Veer et al. 2018), Indolfi et al. (2018), Rodriguez et al. (2018), Bakhsh et al. (2017), Cheng & Cheung (2018), Carvalho et al. (2018).

3.1.2 Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance was interpreted as “Low” (overall mean = 3.78). The highest-rated indicator was “When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.” (mean = 4.85, High), whereas the lowest-rated indicator was “In general, I feel confident and positive about myself.” (mean = 2.33, Low). This suggests that students may be able to appreciate life trajectories or outcomes while still struggling with present self-confidence and positive self-evaluation. The discussion links self-acceptance to emotional balance and self-esteem development and highlights how self-confidence can be influenced by internal and external factors, including negative self-perception and self-criticism (Li (2018), Thompson et al. (2018), Schwartz and Waterman (2019), Chu et al. (2018).

3.1.3 Environmental Mastery

Environmental mastery was interpreted as “Low” (overall mean = 3.67). Higher ratings were observed for competence in managing responsibilities and building a preferred lifestyle (e.g., “I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life.” mean = 4.35, High; “I have been able to build a home and a lifestyle for myself that is much to my liking.” mean = 4.35, High), while the lowest rating was “I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.” (mean = 3.00, Low). These findings indicate that students can manage routine demands but may struggle to organize life choices into a personally satisfying and balanced structure, especially amid competing academic, social, and personal pressures. The discussion situates environmental mastery as central to psychological well-being and emphasizes that

perceived control over one's environment supports well-being and satisfaction (Carol Ryff, et al (1989), Cheng & Cheung (2018), while also recognizing the complexity of balancing responsibilities in higher education contexts (Alves and Marques (2019).

3.1.4 Personal Growth

Personal growth was interpreted as "High" (overall mean = 4.38). The highest-rated indicator was "For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth." (mean = 5.40, High), while the lowest-rated indicator was "I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago." (mean = 3.44, Low). This pattern indicates strong openness to development and learning, alongside a smaller but notable tendency for some students to feel blocked from pursuing major improvements due to perceived barriers. The discussion connects high personal growth to a growth mindset orientation and resilience, consistent with work emphasizing learning and development as continuous processes (Yeager & Dweck (2018).

3.1.5 Positive Relations with Others

Positive relations with others was interpreted as "High" (overall mean = 4.17). The highest-rated indicator was "I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or friends." (mean = 5.11, High), while the lowest-rated indicator was "I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns." (mean = 3.32, Low). These results suggest that many students experience meaningful interpersonal engagement, yet loneliness remains present for some, indicating uneven access to close peer support. The discussion emphasizes the protective role of supportive social ties for student well-being and highlights interventions that promote belonging and social participation to reduce loneliness (Wang and colleagues (2022), Smith and Jones (2018), Russell et al. (2018).

3.1.6 Purpose in Life

Purpose in life was interpreted as "High" (overall mean = 4.22). Students rated highly their sense of direction (e.g., "I have a sense of direction and purpose in life." mean = 5.03, High), while the lowest-rated indicator was "I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life." (mean = 3.00, Low). This indicates that students generally perceive their lives as goal-directed, though occasional feelings of stagnation still emerge, implying a continued need for meaning-making and future-oriented guidance. The discussion links purpose to goal-setting, perseverance, motivation, and academic success, supporting the importance of helping students clarify values, directions, and long-term aspirations (Wicker's (2018), Biggins (2018).

3.1.7 Overall State of Psychological Well-being of the BECEd Students

Overall psychological well-being was interpreted as "High" (mean = 3.97). The results indicate that personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life were in the "High" range, while autonomy, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery were in the "Low" range. This profile suggests generally healthy self-improvement orientation, social connectedness, and meaning in life, alongside specific areas where students experience difficulty: independent functioning, stable positive self-view, and organizing life demands in a satisfying way.

3.2. Academic Performance of the BECEd Students

The BECEd students' academic performance, as reflected by their General Weighted Average (GWA), was interpreted as "Satisfactory" with an overall mean GWA of 88.01. Performance clustering was evident: 70.84% of students fell within the 85–89 bracket ("Satisfactory"), while 29.16% were within the 90–95 bracket ("Very Satisfactory"), indicating that the cohort generally attained acceptable-to-strong academic standing, with fewer students reaching the higher-performance tier. This distribution suggests a relatively compressed achievement range, where most students are performing within a narrow band rather than exhibiting wide dispersion across categories. In an outcomes-based teacher education context, such a pattern may reflect consistent minimum competency attainment across the cohort, but it also invites deeper interpretation: concentration in the "Satisfactory" band can imply that many students are meeting course expectations but may face constraints (e.g., workload, time demands, stress exposure, or adjustment pressures) that limit movement into the "Very Satisfactory" bracket. Importantly, academic achievement is not solely the product of cognitive ability; it also reflects non-cognitive contributors such as effort regulation, persistence, classroom engagement, learning strategies, and the capacity to maintain academic functioning under pressure—factors repeatedly emphasized in the literature on performance and persistence (Muhammad et al. (2016), Chan and Bauer (2022).

3.3. Relationship Between Psychological Well-being and Academic Performance

Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant relationship between psychological well-being and academic performance (r -value = 0.303, p -value = 0.001; decision: Reject H_0). The coefficient indicates a positive association, meaning that students with higher psychological well-being tended to have higher academic performance. From an effect-size perspective, an $r = 0.303$ corresponds to approximately 9.18% shared variance ($r^2 \approx 0.0918$) between psychological well-being and academic performance. In education and behavioral research, this magnitude is often considered small-to-moderate but practically meaningful, particularly because academic outcomes are typically influenced by multiple interacting factors. Interpreting this result conservatively, psychological well-being appears to function as a relevant correlate of academic success in this cohort, even though it is not the sole determinant of grades. The discussion is strengthened when the result is interpreted through academically defensible mechanisms, without implying causality. A plausible explanation is that better psychological well-being supports academic functioning through improved self-

regulation, sustained motivation, goal clarity, healthier coping with stress, and stronger engagement—pathways consistent with the idea that academic achievement reflects both cognitive and non-cognitive factors shaping persistence and outcomes (Muhammad et al. (2016), Chan and Bauer (2022). This interpretation is also aligned with prior evidence that psychological well-being dimensions relate positively to academic performance (Mustafa et al. (2020). At the same time, the correlational design requires acknowledging that the relationship may also operate in the reverse direction (higher academic performance contributing to better well-being), or both may be influenced by shared contextual factors (e.g., financial stressors, family conditions, academic workload).

3.4. Proposed “Kaginhawahan” Toolkit for College Students

Based on the study findings, the proposed “Kaginhawahan” Toolkit for College Students can be positioned more strongly as an evidence-informed intervention framework that responds directly to the cohort’s psychological well-being profile and the documented positive association between well-being and academic performance. Rather than presenting the toolkit as a general set of activities, it becomes more research-worthy if it is articulated as a structured package with clear targets, theoretical grounding, delivery approach, and an evaluation plan. A stronger scholarly framing is to define the toolkit as a multi-component student support program designed to: (a) sustain domains already showing strength (e.g., personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life), and (b) address domains that were relatively weaker (e.g., autonomy, self-acceptance, environmental mastery), because these domains are central to students’ functional coping, decision-making, self-regard, and life-management capacity. When written this way, the toolkit is clearly derived from results and logically connected to academic outcomes—without claiming causality.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study determined the state of psychological well-being of BECED students and its relationship with academic performance among 144 first- and second-year respondents, using Ryff’s psychological well-being dimensions and GWA as academic performance measure. Overall psychological well-being was high, with personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life emerging as strengths, while autonomy, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery indicated areas needing improvement; academically, most students were in the “Satisfactory” range with a sizable segment in “Very Satisfactory,” alongside a small number needing additional support. A statistically significant, moderate positive relationship existed between psychological well-being and academic performance, and a program/toolkit was proposed based on the findings.

Educational institutions are encouraged to foster student self-kindness, understanding, and empathy to reduce self-criticism and strengthen a healthier relationship with self and environment; they should also provide added academic support and resources to help students improve performance and expand access to success. Schools may prioritize interventions that improve student well-being through support systems, counseling services, and a positive learning environment—emphasizing the indispensable role of the guidance office—and may implement the proposed program to support mental health initiatives, integrate psychological well-being into the curriculum, extend targeted support for at-risk students, promote openness and destigmatization, invest in faculty/staff training, collaborate with community partners, and pursue ongoing research and evaluation.

The study was delimited to BECED students of Goa Community College, Camarines Sur (n = 144) during the first semester of SY 2023–2024, which frames the scope of interpretation; accordingly, the manuscript forwards further work through similar studies in other schools/districts/divisions and inquiry into factors affecting psychological well-being, as well as challenges and coping strategies of college students.

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors declare no conflict of interest. This study complied with recognized ethical standards for human-participant research by ensuring voluntary participation with informed consent, the right to withdraw without penalty, and strict confidentiality through anonymous, secure, and aggregated data handling. Given the focus on psychological well-being, procedures were non-invasive, and safeguards were observed to minimize discomfort, with guidance to appropriate support services when needed, and required institutional permissions were secured for instrument use and access to academic records.

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