Self–Esteem and Psychological Well–Being of Select Gay and Lesbian Students of St. Paul University Philippines

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ABSTRACT: *People experience their daily doses of struggles and problems that seem too difficult to resolve, especially those who belong to the gay and lesbian orientation. Some have the ability to deal with these stressors while others are unable to manage these problems by themselves. This study looked into the self-esteem and psychological well-being of some selected gay and lesbian students of St. Paul University Philippines, specifically the relationship between the two. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale were used to measure the self-esteem and psychological well-being of the participants who are obtained through purposive and snowball sampling. Results showed that both the gay and lesbian participants have positive self-esteem and psychological well-being as they obtained average levels on both variables. Likewise, it was revealed that relationship with significant people predicts one's self-esteem. Moreover, higher self-esteem would lead to higher psychological well-being and vice versa. These findings implied that gay and lesbian students were able to make themselves live a healthy and positive life.*

Keywords: *gay, lesbian, psychological well-being, self-esteem, St. Paul University Philippines*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Some people often say things that are manifestations of giving up or expressions of hopelessness in their lives. Challenges they experience everyday make them feel down and have difficulty resolving them. Responsibilities, expectations, disappointments, and failures brought about by job, family, peers, school, and community are some of the sources of stressors in one's lives. Some people have the ability to handle these events properly and correctly, while others cannot. Some have trained themselves to tolerate stressful events in order not to get overwhelmed and suffer. On the other hand, some are weak and easily affected by these stressors and think of themselves as useless individuals. Adolescents, for example, are one of those groups who experience the most stressful and chaotic events in life. It is at this stage that they search for life's meaning and purpose. It is also at this period when they encounter identity crisis. Oftentimes, adolescents experience being negatively disliked, criticized, and rejected by others. Such can be experienced in different forms. And as these young individuals struggle for success in their everyday tasks, they are faced with situations where people try to bring them down, and to disrupt and hinder their way of reaching their goals. Meanwhile, the youth mingles with other people, from their own families to a bigger social unit composed of diverse individuals with different personalities, different interests and different perspectives in life. These people are crucial in developing their sense of competence, sense of self-worth and sense of well-being. They are influential in creating and providing a good and positive life meaning for the youth. As future professionals committed to get into field of observing, studying and interpreting people's behavior including adolescents, this study embarked on measuring the self-esteem and psychological well-being of the participants. It is of great importance to know how the students perceive their sense of self-worth and well-being. It would be beneficial to understand and assess these constructs to know the ways on how parents, friends and other significant people would help their children and peers in handling challenging situations in their lives.

II.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Burke, P. and Stets, J. (2002), there is no overall theory that would explain the concept of self-esteem. However, theorists have attempted to explain self-esteem in different perspectives. The concept of self-esteem was first introduced by William James (1890). He stated that self-esteem is the ratio of an individual's actual behavior in contrast to their pretensions. This means that self-esteem is a measure of how one

will view their self-image depending on the successes and failures they have experienced in areas of life that are important. Moreover similar to James' concept of self-esteem, Albert Bandura in his theory of social learning developed the concept of self-efficacy, which describes the person's self-competence or ability to accomplish tasks. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, esteem needs (fourth stage) is one of the necessary goals to attain for an individual to reach the highest goal which is self-actualization. The esteem needs involve the need for respect, acceptance, self-confidence, and self-esteem. For Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, the development of self-esteem happens in two of the stages – autonomy vs. shame and doubt and industry vs. inferiority. In autonomy vs. shame and doubt, the child experiences independence and discoveries of his or her own skills and abilities. It is at this stage where the child learns to tolerate failure and overcome the feeling of shame and doubt, thus helping the child to increase self-confidence. In industry vs. inferiority, significant persons in the child's life play an important role in building one's self-esteem. Enhancing self-competence of the child through the support and trust given by his or her parents, caregiver, teacher, and peers contribute to the overall self-worth of the child. According to Carl Roger's components of self-concept, self-worth or self-esteem refers to what we think about ourselves. He believed that feelings of self-worth emerged in our early childhood and interactions with the mother and father played a great contribution. On the other hand, the concept of psychological well-being was rooted on the positive psychology by Seligman. Positive psychology deals with the study of happiness, flourishing and what makes life worth living. It is "the scientific study of optimal human functioning that aims to discover and promote the factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive." According to Seligman, there are five key elements that contribute to the well-being of a person. These are positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and purpose in life, and accomplishment.

III.   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study aimed to assess the self-esteem and psychological well-being of some selected students of St. Paul University Philippines.
Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:
1. What is the profile of the participants when grouped according to:
    1.1 gender orientation
    1.2 age
    1.3 relationship with significant people?
2. What is the self-esteem level of the participants when grouped according to profile variables?
3. What is the psychological well-being level of the participants when grouped according to profile variables?
4. Is there a significant difference in the self-esteem level of the participants when grouped according to profile variables?
5. Is there a significant difference in the psychological well-being level of the participants when grouped according to profile variables?
6. Is there a significant relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being of the participants?

IV.   METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was utilized in this study. Specifically, the survey method was employed to determine the self-esteem and psychological well-being of the lesbians and gay students. There were fifty-seven (57) participants composed of gay and lesbian senior high school and college students of St. Paul University Philippines. The participants were selected through purposive sampling and snowball technique. In gathering the data needed, the researchers made use of the following:

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The scale was developed by Morris Rosenberg. The questionnaire consists of 10 statements that measure global and unidimensional self-esteem. All items are answered using 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Participants were asked to encircle the number that corresponds to their degree of agreement to each item.

Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale. This questionnaire is made by Carol Ryff. The inventory consists of 42 items. The series of statements reflect the six areas of psychological well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The participants were asked to rate each statement by encircling their answer on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 6 indicating strong agreement.

V.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. *Frequency and percentage distribution of participants when grouped according to gender orientation*

Gender Orientation	Frequency	Percentage
Gay	47	82.46
Lesbian	10	17.54
TOTAL	57	100.00

Table 1 shows the profile of the participants when grouped according to gender orientation. As illustrated in the figure, a frequency of forty-seven (47) or 82.46% of the total participants are gay, and ten (10) or 17.54% are lesbian. Majority of the participants belong to the gay orientation.

Table 2. *Frequency and percentage distribution of participants when grouped according to age*

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16	6	10.53
17	15	26.32
18	10	17.54
19	16	28.07
20	7	12.28
21	3	5.26
TOTAL	57	100.00

Table 2 shows the profile of the participants when grouped according to age. Based on the table, it can be observed that the highest frequency and percentage of participants come from the 19-year-old age group with 16 participants representing 28.07% of the total participants, followed by the 17-year-old age group with a frequency of 15 or 26.32%, and the 18-year-old age group with a frequency of 10 or 17.54%. The least number comes from the21-year-old age group with a frequency of 3 or 5.56%, respectively.

Table 3. *Frequency and percentage distribution of participants when grouped according to relationship with significant people*

Relationship with Significant People	Frequency	Percentage
Mother	38	66.67
Father	5	8.77
Both Parents	7	12.28
Others	4	7.02
Either Mother & Others or Both Parents & Others	3	5.26
TOTAL	57	100.00

Table 3 shows the profile of the participants when grouped according to relationship with significant people. It is shown that majority of the participants have a closer relationship with their mother with a frequency of 38 or 66.67%.

The least number comes from those who have relationships with either mother and others or both parents and others with a frequency of 3 or 5.26%, respectively.

Table 4. *Frequency and percentage distribution of participants' self-esteem level when grouped according to gender orientation*

Gender Orientation	Low		Self-Esteem Average		High		Total	%
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Gay	3	5.26	39	68.43	5	8.77	47	82.46
Lesbian	2	3.51	6	10.52	2	3.51	10	17.54
TOTAL	5	8.77	45	78.95	7	12.28	57	100.00

Table 4 shows the participants' self-esteem level when grouped according to gender orientation. It is shown that majority of the participants have an average self-esteem. A percentage of 8.77% of the gay group and 3.51% of the lesbians are found to have high self-esteem. On the other hand, 5.26% of the gay participants and 3.51% of the lesbian participants have low self-esteem.

Taking the participants as a whole, it can be observed that regardless of gender orientation, both the gay and lesbian participants have average self-esteem level.

Table 5. *Frequency and percentage distribution of participants' self-esteem level when grouped according to age*

Age	Low		Self-Esteem Average		High		Total	%
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
16	0	0.00	6	10.53	0	0.00	6	10.53
17	2	3.51	13	22.81	0	0.00	15	26.32
18	0	0.00	6	10.52	4	7.02	10	17.54
19	3	5.26	11	19.30	2	3.51	16	28.07
20	0	0.00	6	10.53	1	1.75	7	12.28
21	0	0.00	3	5.26	0	0.00	3	5.26
TOTAL	5	8.77	45	78.95	7	12.28	57	100.00

The table shows the participants' self-esteem level when grouped according to age. It can be observed that majority of the participants from each age have an average level of self-esteem. Age 17 years has the highest frequency and percentage of 13 or 22.81% and age 21 years has the lowest frequency and percentage of 3 or 5.26%. Age 19 years acquired a frequency and percentage of 11 or 19.30%, while ages 16, 18 and 20 bore the same frequency and percentage of 6 or 10.53%.

It is also shown that 5 of the participants have low self-esteem level. Participants who are 19-year-old obtained the highest frequency of 3 or 5.26%. Participants who are age 17 years obtained a frequency and percentage of 2 or 3.51%.

For the high self-esteem level, there were 7 of the participants who obtained this level. Age 18 years have the highest frequency and percentage of 4 or 7.02%. Age 19 years obtained a frequency and percentage of 2 or 3.51%, while age 20 years have 1 or 1.75%.

Generally, the participants regardless of their age have average self-esteem. Low self-esteem is observed to ages 17 and 19 while high self-esteem are obtained by ages 18 and 19. This implies that as individuals increase with age, their self-esteem also increases.

Table 6. *Frequency and percentage distribution of participants' self-esteem level when grouped according to relationship with significant people*

Relationship with Significant People	Self-Esteem						Total	%
	Low		Average		High			
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Mother	2	3.51	32	56.14	4	7.02	38	66.67
Father	0	0.00	4	7.02	1	1.75	5	8.77
Both Parents	1	1.75	6	10.53	0	0.00	7	12.28
Others	2	3.51	2	3.51	0	0.00	4	7.02
Either Mother & Others or Both Parents & Others	0	0.00	1	1.75	2	3.51	3	5.26
TOTAL	5	8.77	45	78.95	7	12.28	57	100.00

This table shows the self-esteem of the participants when grouped according to relationship with significant people. It can be seen that majority of the participants have an average level of self-esteem, with the highest frequency and percentage (32 or 56.14%) coming from those closer to their mother and the least frequency and percentage (1 or 1.76) coming from participants who are closer to either mother & others or both parents & others.

On the high self-esteem level, participants who are closer to their mother got the highest frequency and percentage (4 or 7.02%). Participants who are closer to either mother and others or both parents and others obtained a frequency and percentage of 2 or 3.51 while those closer to their father acquired a frequency and percentage of 1 or 1.75%.

On the low self-esteem level, participants who are closer to their mother and other significant people got the same highest frequency and percentage (2 or 3.51%) while participants who are closer to their father and either mother and others or both parents and others obtained the least frequency and percentage (0 or 0.00%). Participants who reported to have closer relationship with their both parents have a frequency and percentage of 1 or 1.75%.

Overall, the self-esteem of the participants when grouped according to relationship with significant people is on the average level.

It can be observed in the previous tables that the self-esteem level of the participants when grouped according to gender orientation, age and relationship with significant people lie on the average. This means that they tend to not worry too much about what they are doing, but learn to make improvements of their actions little by little. Moreover, they have the confidence to decide according to what they think is the best option, even when others disagree.

Table 7. *Frequency and percentage distribution of participants' psychological well-being level when grouped according to gender orientation*

Gender Orientation	Psychological Well-Being						Total	%
	Low		Average		High			
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Gay	0	0.00	35	61.40	12	21.06	47	82.46
Lesbian	0	0.00	7	12.28	3	5.26	10	17.54
TOTAL	0	0.00	42	73.68	15	26.32	57	100.00

Table 7 shows the participants' psychological well-being level when grouped according to gender orientation. It is seen that majority of them have an average level of psychological well-being, with the highest percentage (61.40%) from gay participants. Lesbian participants obtained a percentage of 12.28% for this level.

Likewise, a percentage of 26.32% of them are found to have a high level of psychological well-being, with most (21.06%) coming from the gay group. A percentage of 5.26% was obtained by the lesbians who also got a high level of psychological well-being.

The results show that whether they are gay or lesbian, the participants exhibit an average level of psychological well-being.

Table 8. *Frequency and percentage distribution of participants' psychological well-being level when grouped according to age*

| Age | Psychological Well-Being | | | | | | Total | % |
| | Low | | Average | | High | | | |
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
16	0	0.00	6	10.53	0	0.00	6	10.53
17	0	0.00	8	14.04	7	12.28	15	26.32
18	0	0.00	7	12.28	3	5.26	10	17.54
19	0	0.00	13	22.81	3	5.26	16	28.07
20	0	0.00	5	8.77	2	3.51	7	12.28
21	0	0.00	3	5.26	0	0.00	3	5.26
TOTAL	0	0.00	42	73.68	15	26.32	57	100.00

This table displays the participants' psychological well-being level when grouped according to age. It can be observed that the psychological well-being of the participants when grouped according to age is on the average level with a total percentage of 73.68. Age 19 obtained the highest percentage (22.81%) and the least coming from the 21 age group (5.26%).

For the high level of psychological well-being, 26.32% of the participants obtained this level. Twelve point twenty-eight percent (12.28%) belong to the age group of 17, followed by ages 18, 19 with 5.26% and age 20 for 3.51%, respectively.

Overall, the age group of 19 has the biggest percentage of 28.07, followed by 17 (26.32%), 18 (17.54%), 20 (12.28%), 16 (10.53%), and 21 (5.26%), respectively.

This means that most (73.68%) of the participants, regardless of their relationship with significant people, are able to adjust and adapt themselves with life circumstances, confident in making own decisions, have clear goals in mind, and are capable of building warm relationships with other people.

Table 9. *Frequency and percentage distribution of participants' psychological well-being level when grouped according to relationship with significant people*

| Relationship with Significant People | Psychological Well-Being | | | | | | Total | % |
| | Low | | Average | | High | | | |
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Mother	0	0.00	28	49.13	10	17.54	38	66.67
Father	0	0.00	4	7.01	1	1.76	5	8.77
Both Parents	0	0.00	5	8.77	2	3.51	7	12.28
Others	0	0.00	3	5.26	1	1.76	4	7.02
Either Mother & Others or Both Parents & Others	0	0.00	2	3.50	1	1.76	3	5.26
TOTAL	0	0.00	42	73.68	15	26.32	57	100.00

Table 9 shows the participants' psychological well-being level when grouped according to relationship with significant people. It can be observed that the psychological well-being of the participants when grouped according to relationship with significant people is on the average level with a total percentage of 73.68. Participants who reported to be closer with the mother obtained the highest percentage (48.13%), followed by

those who are close with both parents (8.77%), with father (7.01%) respectively. The least come from those who are close to either mother and others or both parents and others (3.50%).

For the high psychological well-being, 26.32% obtained the level. A percentage of 17.54 reported being closer with the mother, followed by those closer with the father, others, and either mother and others or both parents and others for 1.76%, respectively.

Overall, participants who are close with the mother has the biggest percentage of 66.67, followed by those closer with both parents (12.28%), father (8.77%), others (7.02%) and either mother and others or both parents and others (5.26%), respectively.

Generally, the participants have an average self-esteem level regardless of their relationship with significant people.

Table 10. *Chi-square results on the significant difference in the participants' self-esteem level when grouped according to profile variables*

Profile Variable	df	x^2	Prob. value	Decision
Gender Orientation	2	2.883	0.237	Accept Ho
Age	10	15.005	0.132	Accept Ho
Relationship with Significant People	8	19.533	0.012	Reject Ho

Table 10 shows that there is no significant difference in participants' self-esteem level when grouped according to gender orientation and age. However, it has been found that there exists a significant difference in the self-esteem levels of the participants when grouped according to relationship with significant people.

The chi-square results show that its probability value is 0.237 and the df is 2, which results in accepting the hypothesis, signifying that there is no significant difference in the self-esteem level when grouped according to gender orientation. It is also made evident that participants' self-esteem level when grouped according to age has no significant difference, bearing a probability value of 0.132 and a df of 10. On the other hand, the results indicate that the self-esteem level of the participants, when grouped according to relationship with significant people, has a significant difference, with a probability value of 0.012 and a df of 8.

Generally, the gender orientation and age of the participants do not significantly predict one's level of self-esteem. However, participants' relationship with significant people does play a role in determining their level of self-esteem. This implies that an individual's social and emotional attachment with the people around him/her predicts his/her self-esteem.

This finding is supported by Erol and Orth (2011). They found that women and men did not differ in their self-esteem. When grouped in terms of gender orientation, it was found to have no significant difference. Moreover, Young and Mroczek (2003) reported that self-esteem did not change significantly across age.
On the other hand, there exists a significant difference between relationships with significant people and self-esteem. The researchers found that parental relationships, especially the maternal bond, greatly influenced the self-esteem of the participants. Likewise, greater maternal responsiveness and support affected the development of positive individual self-esteem (Quatman & Watson, 2001).

Table 11. *Chi-square results on the significant difference in the participants' psychological well-being level when grouped according to profile variables*

Profile Variables	df	x^2	Probab. value	Decision
Gender Orientation	1	0.085	0.771	Accept Ho
Age	5	6.979	0.222	Accept Ho
Relationship with Significant People	4	0.201	0.995	Accept Ho

Table 11 shows that there is no significant difference in the psychological well-being levels of the participants when grouped according to gender orientation, age, and relationship with significant people.

The chi-square results show that psychological well-being level of the participants when grouped according to gender orientation, age and relationship with significant people have no significant difference, with a probability value of 0.771, 0.22 and 0.995, and a df of 1, 5, and 4, respectively.

Taken as a whole, the participants' gender orientation, age and relationship with significant people do not indicate their level of psychological well-being.

This result is supported by the studies conducted by Hasan (2016) and Visani et al. (2011). Gender orientation does not influence psychological well-being. Furthermore, Roothman et al. (2003) and Perez (2012) found no significant gender differences on some aspects of psychological well-being. Both male and female are displaying relative psychological well-being.

The results are consistent with the findings of Pravitha and Sembiyan (n.d) which showed that age does not significantly influence psychological well-being. The same is true with the results found by Creed et al. (2003) who indicated that psychological well-being is observed to be consistent as the individual's age increases.

Thanakwang et al. (2012) found that family and friendship networks do not have a significant direct effect on psychological well-being, but rather an indirect effect via social support. Likewise, Hussey et al. (2013) found out that peers have no significant effect on the adolescent psychological well-being. This means that relationship with significant people, either with parents and/or friends, do not have a significant influence on the psychological well-being of an individual.

Table 12. *Chi-square results on the significant relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being*

Self-Esteem	Psychological Well-Being				Total	df	x^2	Probab. value	Decision
	Average		High						
	F	%	F	%					
Low	5	100.00	0	0.00	5				
Average	36	80.00	9	20.00	45	2	15.448	0.00	Reject Ho
High	1	14.29	6	85.71	7				
Total	42	73.68	15	26.32	57				

This table shows that there exists a significant relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being of the participants, with a probability value of 0.00 and a df of 2. This implies that there is a positive correlation between them. The higher the self-esteem, the higher psychological well-being and vice versa.

According to Paradise and Kernis (2002), it was found that high self-esteem was associated with greater well-being. Stable self-esteem indicated higher score on aspects of well-being. Similar results were found by Nwankwo et al. (2015), stating that perceived self-esteem and psychological well-being were related. Their participants with high self-esteem were found to have high psychological well-being while those with low self-esteem have low psychological well-being. Furthermore, Dogan et al. (2013) have found that psychological well-being has positive effects on self-esteem and happiness. High scores on either self-esteem or psychological well-being positively influence the other.

VII.   CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that lesbians and gay participants have positive self-esteem and psychological well-being. Positive self-evaluations would lead to one's better psychological well-being such that they are able to find life meaningful, create decisions independently, and have satisfying relationships with people around them. Likewise, healthy relationship is a great predictor of one's higher self-esteem and psychological well-being.

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