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Tales of Homosexual Daughters: Insights and Lessons

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the experiences of homosexual daughters from the lens of criminology students. It specifically determined their coping mechanisms and insights as homosexual daughters which they can share to the community in general. The study used qualitative-case study using interview guide. Through snowball technique, a total of five (5) students who were identified as homosexual daughters were requested for an interview. Thematic analysis utilizing the Miles and Huberman Framework with three main components: data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions was used for data analysis. Results revealed that the homosexual daughters had both positive and negative experiences which are the peer support and verbal discrimination. It was also revealed that they develop a sense of motivation, and seeking advice and support to cope with the challenges they experienced. The general insights of the homosexual daughters include gender mainstreaming at the workplace, gender equality at church, gender sensitivity at school, and self-acceptance.

Keywords: Experiences, phenomenology, homosexual daughters, thematic analysis, Philippines

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INTRODUCTION

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth do not always feel that they will be able to know how others and their parents will respond to their disclosures (Savin-Williams, 2011). In the same manner, complete estrangement from the family happened more rather than the rule, accepting and supporting their child (Beeler & DiProva, 2009; Potoczniak, Crosbie-Burnett & Saltzburg, 2009; Robinson, Walters, & Skeen, 2009). Alternatively, lack of people knowledge of acceptance even parental acceptance after the time of disclosure, has been found to be connected with the travails homosexual are facing like maladjustment, risky sexual behavior, increased substance use, violence and victimization, and suicide (Bouris et al., 2010).

In the country of Malaysia, being a homosexual is considered to be an illegal behavior. In a survey made, it was revealed that a total of 86% of Malaysian society rejected homosexuality. Besides, the politicians were also against homosexuality (Fridae Website, 2012). Because of this negative attitudes shown towards homosexuals in Malaysia, they are currently facing a high chance of suffering from mental health problems (Drabble, Midanik, & Trocki, 2015; Hegna & Wichstorm, 2007; King et al., 2008; Russell, 2013) such as conduct disorder, major depression disorder neurotic disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder and phobic disorder and anxiety disorder (Chakraborty, McManus, Brugha, Bebbington & King, 2011; King et al., 2008; Mustanski, Garofalo & Emerson, 2010; Wang, Hausermann & Weiss, 2014),

In the Philippines, students also face bullying and discrimination over their gender identity and sexual orientation, and a lot of schools are not equipped to provide and support them on what they need. Being a member of LGBT community students in the Philippines are often the center of ridicule and violence and even after school they are still the target of verbal abused. Some school policies like wearing uniform and even the styles of hair made

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LGBT students to feel uncomfortable, lessened their confidence, impaired their concentration which made them unhappy in a manner inconsistent with their gender identity (De Santos, 2017).

In the municipality of Bansalan, province of Davao del Sur, disclosing their identity to their parents and to others are like swallowing stone. We've seen a lot of LGBT members in this locality but there is still a lot who are still hiding in their closet, afraid of discrimination and unacceptance from others specifically from their loved ones. Even in this modernizing world a lot are still doubting, afraid and undecided to continue and pursue their feelings, scared of rejection, scared of estrangement and be avoided by others. Acceptance and support of others tend to be a great contribution to proceed in the next chapter of their life because a homosexual also deserve to love, to be loved and to be accepted by everyone.

Usually, when people meet homosexual persons, judging without even knowing their character comes first, specifically from those heterosexuals. We choose to conduct this study to give learning and broaden the knowledge of every reader about the lived experiences of homosexual women Criminology students. This study was also conducted to give ideas as the way of supporting and accepting homosexuals for them to be true to their selves because they are not alone from the challenges they will meet in the future. Essentially, the purpose of this study was to investigate qualitatively the experiences of homosexuals particularly the lesbian criminology students. Furthermore, it also sought to find out the participants' challenges and coping mechanisms in facing discriminations and criticisms.

METHODS

This study used qualitative-case study as research design. A qualitative approach was best suited to the research as it sought to study and gain a deep

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understanding in determining the experiences of homosexual daughters. The qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This design is appropriate to allow the researchers to create a snapshot about the travails of the homosexual daughters, their coping mechanism and insights.

The subjects for this study were the homosexual daughters taking Criminology course. The researchers interviewed five (5) students who were identified as homosexual daughters using snowball technique, a type of sampling in identifying the participants of the study. Snowball sampling (or referral sampling) is a nonprobability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances (Goodman, 1961). Further, snowball sampling uses a small pool of initial informants to nominate, through their social networks, other participants who meet the eligibility criteria and could potentially contribute to a specific study (Morgan, 2008).

This study made use of In-Depth-Interview Questionnaire. In-Depth-Interview is a face-to-face conversation with the use of semi-structured interview guide with the purpose of exploring issues or topics in detail. Semi-structured interviews are interviews where the researchers has prepared some guiding open-ended questions to add some organization to the interview, but has left room for improvising and going down paths that naturally come along with conversations. Interviews were recorded using an audio program as a back-up recording device. Researchers also jot down notes during the interviews (Myers & Newman, 2007).

In analyzing the data of the study, the researchers used the thematic analysis using the Miles and Huberman framework for qualitative data analysis. This type of data

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analysis was considered appropriate for the present study. Data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions are the three main components of the said framework. These components involved coding (or categorizing data, and describing details and implications leading to themes), memoing (or writing and gathering written notes of thoughts and ideas and links about concepts and drawing a sketch or graphs), and developing propositions (Punch, 2005).

Further, obtaining approval from the participants and getting informed consent were the ethical considerations of the research study. The informed consent was a written description of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of the study, the time commitment involved, the intended use of results, the right of participants to withdraw from the study at any time, and the confidentiality of all information gathered through the collection of methods (Creswell, 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Stories of Homosexual Daughters

One important objective of this study was to determine the stories of criminology students as homosexual daughters. The experiences of these participants were captured through an in-depth interview. Based on the interview conducted, these homosexual daughters have both positive and negative experiences. As revealed by the participants, the following are the positive experiences they encountered as homosexuals: (a) *family acceptance and support*, and (b) *peer support*. On the other hand, there was one pronounced negative experience of these homosexuals which was the *verbal discrimination*.

Family Acceptance and Support. Based on the responses of the key informants during in-depth interviews, they felt the acceptance and support of their family. Though there are some verbal discrimination they received

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from other people, their parents' support had develop their self-esteem and sense of encouragement to undergo life like what it should be despite their gender preference. According to Ryan, Huebner, Diaz & Sanchez (2010), family acceptance and support is important to an LGBT member because being valued by their parents and family helps them learn to value and care about themselves.

Peer Support. The second positive experience of homosexual daughters is the peer support. The lesbian students received emotional support from their friends and classmates especially when dealing with gender-related problems. The key informants responded that they usually open or share their problems to their friends considering their openness and understanding to the context of their situation. This affirmed the findings of the study of Williams, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig (2005) which found that peer or social support was related to the increased level of morale of homosexuals, thus reducing their depression.

Verbal Discrimination. The key informants also faced negative experience such as verbal discrimination. Verbal discrimination is done by someone who utters something bad and painful words about another individual to cause humiliation. Lewd words and hateful commentaries coming out from the mouth of few individuals were the things received by the participants. This alone gives a negative experience to them and allowing this would result to bad habits that will demotivate them and lessen their self-esteem. A wide array of negative experiences plague individuals of LGBTQ orientation such as discrimination, bullying, and prejudice, and as a consequence, they are at a higher risk for suicide, physical abuse, alcohol, and drug abuse (Chesir-Teran & Hughes, 2009; Savage & Harley, 2009; Morgan, Mancl, Kaffar, & Ferreira, 2011).

Coping Mechanisms of Homosexual Daughters

The second objective of this study was to determine the coping mechanisms of homosexual

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daughters. Based on the conducted interview, two themes emerged which are the (a) *sense of motivation* and (b) *seeking advice and support*.

Sense of Motivation. The sense of motivation helps the respondents strive and slowly achieve their goal. No matter what they go through, this helps them to cope from the stigma of being discriminated as homosexual women. Further, the stigma of being homosexual helped the key informants as it served as their motivation to pursue their dreams and desires. The negative words thrown at them motivate them to do well and be good. It pushes the key informants to personally achieve their goals. Those hurtful words were turned into a sense of motivation to continue life positively. In support, Bouris et al. (2010) stated that LBTQ members can take steps to lessen the effects of stigma and protect their mental health. One way to handle the stress from stigma is by establishing higher personal self-esteem or motivation which are drawn from having strong social support.

Seeking Advice and Support. In addition from the sense of motivation, the participants are also seeking for advice and support to cope from the struggles they are experiencing. Advices and social support give additional esteem for homosexual daughters to pursue and achieve the goal set for them. It also gives them additional leverage to maintain self-esteem. And of course when they are feeling down, an advice from the person including partner they've trusted can be a big help to them. It can make them feel that they are not alone from what they are fighting for. According to the study of Fingerhut (2018), homosexuals who seek for social support experienced little negative emotions and stress days. By seeking advice and support from others such as from friends and family, the higher tendency they will augment their mental health.

Insights of Homosexual Daughters

The third objective of this study was to determine the insights of homosexual daughters particularly on the

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issues and concerns related to homosexuality. Based on the conducted interview, four themes emerged, to wit: a) *gender mainstreaming at workplace*, b) *gender equality at church*, c) *gender sensitivity at school*, and d) *self-acceptance*.

Gender Mainstreaming at Workplace. One important insight shared by the key informants is the gender mainstreaming at workplace. They professed that job-employment issues is one of the factors why homosexuals have less self-confidence in applying job. For some companies and institutions, gender identity is more important than the skills of a person. However, in today's modern world where inclusivity is promoted, persons with any gender should receive equal rights and privileges at workplace. It tries to denounce the idea that only straight people can be employed for jobs. Homosexuality can be seen in every profession and it is safe to say that the government should also focus on inclusivity amongst the LGBT community. According to the International Labor Organization (2018), to combat stereotypes and prejudices against LGBT workers, many forward-thinking workplaces are implementing diversity policies, usually as part of an overarching framework to promote equality and diversity on all grounds.

Gender Equality at Church. Homosexuals are struggling also in this factor for church believes that God only made a man and a woman not a man with a woman's heart nor a woman with a man's heart. They consider it as sinful and immoral. However, support from them is also important because homosexuals also believe in God and they are also active in church program. In fact, despite heterosexist messages they received, many participants continued to attend church, while remaining closeted in that particular environment. One participant said that she still values her relationship with God and would like everyone to accept other homosexuals as a form of respect for their gender preference. In support, Masci (2014) presented that a survey of American religious congregations conducted by researchers from Duke

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University and the University of Chicago finds that, in recent years, more churches have become welcoming to openly gay and lesbian individuals. These findings parallel broader trends showing greater acceptance among the general public of both homosexuality.

Gender Sensitivity at School. As perceived by the participants, gender sensitivity should be strengthened among school institutions. They expressed that gender sensitivity is important at school. However, schools sometimes tend to be not upholding with this principle as reflected in their school policies. For instance, when homosexuals wear an outfit in which they are comfortable at, there could have a lot of negative reactions from the school. The participants stated the importance of addressing problems on discrimination and bullying towards LGBT students in the school. Further, research studies (Chesir-Teran & Hughes, 2009; Savage & Harley, 2009; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012) pointed out the need to create interventions for the increasing number of LGBTQ students who experience discrimination, bullying, and prejudice in schools and institutions of higher education.

Self-Acceptance. Based on the responses of the participants, it can be perceived that the acceptance and disclosure of one's sexuality is a difficult decision to make. Even more difficult is the fact that it is made during the most delicate, formative years of adolescence. But in the face of these circumstances, there is evidence that many LGBTQ individuals are still able to move on and succeed in life and in academics because of fully accepting themselves. In the study of Mohr and Fassinger (2003), they stated the importance of self-acceptance and openness regarding one's sexual orientation. The coming out process is highly interpersonal in nature because it involves managing the challenges associated with self-disclosure in family, religious, and other social contexts, however, self-acceptance would develop their morale and motivation to show their efficacies and talents.

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Conclusion

Based on the results, concluding remarks have been drawn by the researchers concerning the experiences of the homosexual daughters.

Homosexuals after revelation experienced different reactions from the people around them. They were hugged by the support and acceptance of their family and friends, however confronted by verbal discrimination of others. Furthermore, homosexuals make use of those verbal discrimination told about them as their motivation in life. They take it as their strength and want to show them that they can also achieve what others can do. In addition, support from church, government and school are highly needed. Essentially, members of LGBTQ may have doubts at first but coming out does not make someone less of a person. It can be reflected from the results that it will never be wrong to be who you are and no matter what other people might say as long as your family and friends support you. You are more than enough even though a lot are still doubting and undecided.

Implications for Practice

Based on its findings and conclusion, the researchers came up with varied implications of the study. The research results imply that the community must give chance to accept and support LGBTQ. For the government, gender mainstreaming at work must be strengthened. Work agencies must hire people for the talent, knowledge and skills not the physical outlook and gender preference alone.

On one hand, the government should repeal outdated and stigmatizing laws that deter and arguably prohibit discussion of LGBTQ issues in schools, and enact laws protecting students and staff from bullying and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The government must also enact an anti-discrimination bill that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, including in

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education, employment, health care, and public accommodations.

Moreover, school should ensure that policies, curriculum, and resources explicitly include LGBTQ people, and that the school environment is responsive to the specific needs of LGBTQ youths. In school, fair treatment to LGBTQ students should be the culture. School administrators and teachers should make opportunities for the LGBTQ students where they can be comfortable at like wearing the uniform they have always wanted or having comfort room for them to have personal space. Schools should have symposium regarding homosexuality and also anti-bullying or discrimination symposium, and with this they can open the eyes of every individual regarding homosexuality and stop the widespread stigma. Similarly, parents should also be more open to the possibility of having a homosexual daughter. They should focus more on the potentials that their daughters have rather than judging them based on the gender that they choose to be. They should be the foundation of acceptance and support to guide and pave the way for their homosexual daughters to have a more meaningful perspective in life.

Lastly, to every homosexual around the world, the research implies that they should never stop believing in their selves. More people are opening their eyes regarding homosexuality, thus, they should never stop believing and conquering their fears. However, it should their utmost concern to be responsible, respectful, and effective at school, home and in their future field work.

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