

**UNDERSTANDING INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA AMONG
HOMOSEXUAL MEN AT CENTRAL LUZON STATE
UNIVERSITY**

A Thesis Presented to the
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by

ANTHONY ROMERO DRIZA

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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7. Abstract

7.1 Rationale/Background

Internalized homophobia has attracted little attention in the field of research despite its destructive impact on the physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being of LGBT people. Internalized homophobia is defined as the negative attitudes and feelings towards homosexuality that many gay, lesbian, and bisexual people hold within themselves. However, internalized homophobia remains unconscious, hidden, and unknown to some homosexuals. Therefore, the

rationale of this study is to understand the narratives and experiences of homosexual men at Central Luzon State University who suffer from the negative attitude towards their own sexuality. Moreover, this study aligns with the fifth sustainable development goal of the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which focuses on gender equality.

7.2 Summary

Internalized homophobia has been shown to negatively impact the lives of homosexual individuals. However, limited local studies have been found to further examine the lived experiences of homosexuals who suffer from this internal conflict. Thus, the focus of this study is to understand and analyze the internalized homophobia among homosexual men at Central Luzon State University. Therefore, to obtain all the essential knowledge, data, and information, the research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the causes of internalized homophobia experienced by homosexual male students?
2. What are the effects of internalized homophobia experienced by homosexual male students?
3. How does internalized homophobia affect the development of self-identity of homosexual male students?
4. How do homosexual male students deal with internalized homophobia?

Moreover, this study employs qualitative research design, phenomenological study, purposive and snowballing sampling, in-depth and semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis. Therefore, this study is anchored in Queer Theory to analyze the narratives of homosexual male students who experience internalized homophobia.

7.3 Major Findings

The present study revealed significant themes in understanding internalized homophobia. It found that the causes of internalized homophobia include perceived stigma, sexual orientation discrimination, identity confusion, and self-loathing. This study showed that negative social environments greatly affect homosexual male students' perception of themselves towards their sexuality, resulting in self-criticism and self-abomination. Hence, the study disclosed that participants acquired internalized homophobia not entirely because they hate themselves too much but because of the negative views implied by pre-established societal norms, religious beliefs, and stigma towards homosexuality, which converted it into self-rejection and created self-deprecating attitudes and conflicts within themselves. Moreover, the study showed that same-sex attraction influenced identity confusion and self-loathing. As a result of having internalized homophobia, homosexual male students developed eating disorders, anxiety and depression, and relationship gaps. Although eating disorder is considered as a mental illness, it can lead to an array of physical health problems. In addition, the

study revealed that due to anxiety and depression influenced by the negative views about homosexuality, internalized homophobia has been linked to self-harming and suicide ideation. Moreover, the study found that internalized homophobia negatively influenced quality relationships among family and friends, resulting in detachment and avoidance. Furthermore, the study discovered that some homosexual male students detach themselves not only from heterosexual people but also from fellow homosexual and LGBT people as well. It revealed that some homosexual male students do not want to identify themselves as homosexuals and have disassociated themselves from the LGBT community. As a result, the study found that some homosexual male students felt uneasiness and discomfort around LGBT people. Additionally, due to their prejudice directed towards themselves, homosexual males are having identity crisis, self-questioning, thoughts of self-acceptance and self-awareness, and thoughts of being undecided and having self-uncertainty. Therefore, the study revealed that some homosexual male students experienced having multiple identities, different characteristics, and different versions of themselves. In accordance, a web of queries about sexuality and self-identity was connected with these identity confusions. Also, the study found that the sentiments of homosexual male students were divided into two distinct perspectives, in which some of the respondents chose to accept themselves as who they are while others remained undecided and uncertain. Meanwhile, to handle internalized homophobia and mitigate its adverse effects to themselves,

homosexual male students revealed seven strategies, namely: going with the flow, utilizing distraction, emotional release, optimism, concealment, resistance, and acceptance and understanding.

7.4 Conclusions

The findings of this study led to various conclusions. First, its causes include perceived stigma, sexual orientation discrimination, identity confusion, and self-loathing as a result of the negative experiences they have encountered. The development of eating disorder, anxiety and depression, and building a gap with their social relationships are the effects of internalized homophobia to homosexual males. In addition, the impacts of internalized homophobia on their behavior and the development of self-identity are having identity crisis, self-questioning, thoughts of self-acceptance and self-awareness, and thoughts of being undecided and having self-uncertainty. Moreover, in dealing with internalized homophobia, homosexual males use the following strategies: going with the flow, utilizing distraction, emotional release, optimism, concealment, resistance, and acceptance and understanding. Indeed, studying and understanding the narratives and experiences of CLSU homosexual male students who suffer from internalized homophobia, is relevant and significant in light of Queer Theory. It allows to examine and explore this specific phenomenon, which is beneficial to the marginalized group of LGBTQ+ community. It successfully collected the voices,

perspectives, and stories of the untold narratives which are necessary for the understanding of internalized homophobia.

7.5 Recommendations

The fact that the current study produced various themes indicates that these topics and their relationship with internalized homophobia must be investigated further. Analysis could encompass the other sexual minority groups evident in the society as participants in order to know whether or not it could reveal similar findings. Furthermore, because there has been little research on this topic to date, the adverse effects of severe internalized homophobia and its source on Filipino homosexual males may be studied further. Moreover, to collect more in-depth data for important intervention programs, researchers may analyze the relationship of individual themes and internalized homophobia in a quantitative approach. The researcher recommends that universities, companies, and communities implement awareness-raising and desensitization programs with regards to the sexual minorities. Finally, in order to manage internalized homophobia more effectively and combat self-critical judgments, the researcher recommends for homosexual males to consult mental health professionals.

8. Translated Abstract (Filipino)

8.1 Rasyonale

Ang “internalized homophobia” ay malimit na binibigyang atensyon sa larangan ng pananaliksik sa kabila ng mapanirang epekto nito sa pisikal, mental,

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
TITLE PAGE	i
APPROVAL SHEET	ii
THESIS ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xiv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xv
LIST OF TABLES	xviii
LIST OF FIGURES	xix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xx
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	
Rationale of The Study	1
Literature Review	6
Theoretical Framework	25
Conceptual Framework	26
Statement of the Problem	26
Objectives of the Study	27
Significance of the Study	28
Definition of Terms	31
2. MATERIALS AND METHODS	

Research Design	33
Research Locale	34
Sampling Method	35
Scope and Delimitations	36
Research Instrument	37
Data Gathering Procedure.....	38
Data Analysis	38
Ethical Consideration	39
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
Results of the Study	41
A. Causes of Internalized Homophobia	43
B. Effects of Internalized Homophobia	62
C. Impact of Internalized Homophobia on Development of Self-Identity	74
D. Dealing with Internalized Homophobia	84
Discussion	98
Summary of Findings	122
Conclusions	125
Recommendations	127
REFERENCES	130
APPENDICES	

A. Ethics Approval from the Ethics Review Committee	150
B. Informed Consent letter for the Participants	151
C. Consent form for the Participants	153
D. Interview Guide Questions	154
E. Sociodemographic Profile of the Respondents	155
F. Interview, Transcription, and Translation	156
G. Thematic Coding	180
CURRICULUM VITAE	211

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page
Table 1:	Sociodemographic Profile of the Respondents	155

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Title	Page
Figure 1:	Conceptual Framework	26

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- IH** : Internalized Homophobia
- LGBT** : Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
- LGBTQ+** : Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning
- CLSU** : Central Luzon State University
- UN** : United Nation
- UNFE** : United Nations Free & Equal
- UNDP** : United Nations Development Programme
- USAID** : United States Agency for International Development
- SDG** : Sustainable Development Goals
- DSM** : Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders
- HIV** : Human Immunodeficiency Virus

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