

LEVEL OF OPENNESS TO HOMOSEXUAL CROSS-DRESSERS: A CORRELATION

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of openness to homosexual cross-dressers among the 54 policemen and policewomen of Sto. Tomas Municipal Police Station located in Brgy. Poblacion, Sto. Tomas, Batangas. To find out the level of openness to lesbian and gay cross-dressers using the physical, social and emotional attributes, a 21-item researcher made questionnaire was utilized. It appeared that the respondents agreed that they are open to homosexual cross-dressers based on the three attributes. This study also aimed to find out the significant difference on the level of openness between lesbian cross-dressers and gay cross-dressers. It turned out that there was no statistically significant difference between the level of openness to lesbian and gay cross-dressers. The result showed that the relationship between sex and social and emotional attributes was significant when it comes to lesbians while the rest showed no significant relationship. It also showed that the relationship between age and the level of openness to physical attributes of lesbians is significant. It showed as well that there was a significant relationship between age and emotional attributes on both gay and lesbian cross-dressers.

Keywords: *cross-dressing, gays and lesbians, openness*

INTRODUCTION

The L and G in the acronym LGBT stand for lesbian and gay. Lesbians and gays are often referred to as “homosexuals” although it is not widely used by people nowadays because of its negative implication (Kort, 2014). A website called LGBT Helpline provided definition for the words lesbian and gay, respectively. A lesbian is defined as a woman who is sexually, romantically and emotionally attracted to women. Some often call lesbians as gays however, most prefer to be called as lesbian. On the other hand, gay means a man who is sexually, romantically and emotionally attracted to fellow men. Lesbians and gays break away from the masculine and feminine stereotypes which are set by the society which

may result in criticism or praise by the public for not meeting what is expected for them to be or because of breaking stereotypes.

Cross-dressing is commonly perceived by the people as the act of dressing how the opposite sex dresses up. For example, men wearing women's clothes and vice-versa. Cross-dressing is used for different purposes like for entertainment, for fashion and for self-expression. In the Philippines, some homosexuals practice the act of cross-dressing (Manalansan, 2007). Everyone should take note though that not all homosexuals cross-dress and not all cross-dressers are homosexuals as what Ruskin (2013) has stated. Talking about cross-dressing, it means wearing the clothes of the opposite sex according to Weber & Delfin (2014). However, it was also added that cross-dressers do not only dress like the opposite sex but act as if they are in the opposite sex. Bolich (2007) stated that cross-dressing can be a "behavior involving more than clothes" (p.221). It was added that some cross-dressers cross-dress to express their gender identity. These people wanted to express that their "gender identity is not paired with their sexual body in the way their culture expects" (p. 24).

Some people might not know but there came a time when homosexuality was a mental illness. In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-I) and DSM-II, homosexuality was listed as a mental illness. A number of gay activists and psychologists protested that homosexuality should be removed in the DSM since it does not meet the standards of considering it as a mental illness. Dr. Robert L. Spitzer (1973) made a letter addressed to American Psychiatric Association (APA) to remove homosexuality in DSM-II. In the next editions of DSM, it was then removed and was substituted but distinguished to a new category called Sexual Orientation Disturbance. Sexual Orientation Disturbance as stated in the DSM-II 7th Printing refers to individuals whose sexual interests are primarily directed towards people of the same sex and who are either in conflict with, disturbed by their wish in changing their sexual orientation.

On the other hand, openness is defined as the free expression of own feelings and beliefs, being able to understand new ideas, being accommodating and so on. Openness is sometimes being linked to acceptance. Acceptance, however, is described as approval, allowing or acknowledgment (Rad, 2011) towards something or someone. There is no hesitation in doing things which may involve these persons. There are no doubts whether or not make friends and interact with them.

With the development and exposure to media, people are being more exposed to matters relating to the lesbians and gays. That is why the researchers wanted to seek answers on how open are the people nowadays knowing that gay and lesbian cross-dressers are now slowly

being more visible in the society. In that way, after finding out the level of openness of the policemen or policewomen to gays and lesbians, gays and lesbians can freely express themselves more publicly and simple rules could be developed as well in order to avoid discrimination and promote equality.

Research framework

This study was all about lesbians and gays. With the great number of mentions regarding gays and lesbians, there are various types of gay and lesbians. In the study, gays and lesbians are referred to as the transvestite type of gay and lesbian. In an article by Weber & Delfin (2014), “transvestite” means a person who wears the clothes of the opposite sex. Transvestites “do not only dress like the opposite sex but act as if they are in the opposite sex”, they also added. It was stated as well that instead of the word “transvestite”, the word “cross-dresser” is more used because of the derogating implication of the former. On the other hand, one of the definitions provided by McCrae & Costa (2003) in an article cited by Hogan (2012), openness may mean “intellectual curiosity” (para.7). Open people are curious to what is new for them. They like to discover and experience things which could be what they have not seen or done before.

Objectives of the study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the level of openness to homosexual cross-dressers such as lesbians and gays among the policemen and policewomen of Sto. Tomas Municipal Police Station in Sto. Tomas, Batangas. It specifically sought answers to describe the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex and age, to determine the level of openness to lesbian and gay cross-dressers using the physical, social and emotional attributes, to tell whether there was a significant difference on the level of openness between lesbian and gay and to identify whether there was a significant relationship between the level of openness and the sex and age of the respondents.

METHOD

The research was descriptive type. It is said to be descriptive because it attempted to describe and explain what naturally existed in the phenomenon of cross-dressing homosexuals and the relationships or differences between the variables in the research. The research took place in the Sto. Tomas Municipal Police Station located in Brgy. Poblacion, Sto.

Tomas, Batangas. The respondents of the study were the policemen and policewomen of Sto. Tomas Municipal Police Station. The total population of the police force was 94. Through the use of G-Power, the sample size was 54 ($n = 54$). Effect size is 0.5, alpha error is .05 and the power was .95. Purposive sampling was used to come up with the respondents since the researchers were interested in learning the level of openness of policemen and policewomen to homosexual cross-dressers.

The researchers used a 21-item researcher-made questionnaire which had gone through expert validation and pilot test to ensure the reliability and validity before distributing to the respondents. After the responses from the pilot test were tallied, through SPSS, Cronbach's alpha was equivalent to .972. It shows that the questionnaire was consistent and valid. Given the set of situations or statements, the respondents were supposed to rate their response by the use of Likert scale. The Likert scale uses a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). For the analysis of data, frequency, mean and percentage were used for the demographics. For determining the level of openness, the weighted mean was used. The chi-square test of independence is the statistical treatment that the researchers used to determine the relationship between the level of openness and several demographic profiles.

Below is the rating scale and the corresponding interpretation:

<u>Rating Scale</u>	<u>Arbitrary Scale</u>	<u>Verbal Description</u>
4	3.50-4.00	Strongly Agree
3	2.50-3.49	Agree
2	1.50-2.49	Disagree
1	0.50-1.49	Strongly Disagree

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Below are the results of the gathered data:

Demographic profile of the respondents according to sex and age

In the distribution of the respondents according to their sex, 33 were male and 21 were female. Results imply that there were more male respondents with 61.11% than female respondents with 38.89%. It shows that the police force is dominated by men. According to Parnaby & Leyden (2011) as cited by Chen (2015), policing still presents a masculine image and men are more suited in law enforcing occupation. It was also stated

that number of women who are into policing is increasing but then men still outnumber women.

In the distribution of the respondents according to age, majority of the respondents belonged to age bracket of 26-30 years old, equivalent to 38.89%. Only one respondent was categorized in the age bracket of 20 years old and below. The results imply that the police force in Sto. Tomas, Batangas is dominated by policemen/policewomen belonging to the age bracket of 26-30 years old. It may be possible that in this age bracket, most have met the qualifications to be part of the police force.

Level of openness to gays according to physical attributes

The item which states that “It is okay for me to hear a person trying to sound like his/her opposite sex (e.g. Men raising the tone of their voice to sound like a woman, women lowering the tone of their voice to sound like a man)” with a weighted mean of 2.74 is the highest while the item “It is okay for me to see a person wearing clothes that are not typical of his/her sex (Men wearing dress and stilettos, women wearing men’s polo and men’s jeans)” with a weighted mean of 2.39 is the lowest. The overall weighted mean under physical attributes was 2.55 interpreted as *agree*. This implies that in terms of physical attributes for gay cross-dressers, the respondents agreed.

The item wherein that the respondents disagreed which was “It is okay for me to see a person wearing clothes that are not typical of his/her sex (Men wearing dress and stilettos, women wearing men’s polo and men’s jeans)” is consistent to what Bolich (2007) has said that anything that deviates the societal norm is abnormal which results to criticism. On the other hand, it appears that majority of the respondents agreed when they hear gays trying to raise the tone of their voice to sound like a woman. This result contradicts what Piccolo (2008) stated that sounding heteronormative or sounding straight is perceived as the sole positive form of sexuality.

Level of openness to gays according to social attributes

The item “Talking with a cross-dresser is okay for me” with a weighted mean of 2.70 was the highest, interpreted as *agree* while the item “Being in a relationship with a cross-dresser is okay for me” with a weighted mean of 2.15 was the lowest, interpreted as *disagree*. With the overall weighted mean of 2.52 under social attributes, it shows that the respondents agreed. It appears that the respondents were open to possibilities of maintaining or developing social ties with gay cross-dressers. The results imply as well that despite the perceived macho

image the respondents possess, they were still gender sensitive for fair treatment towards gay cross-dressers except for having romantic relationship and being with a group of gay cross-dressers.

Most of the respondents agreed that they felt comfortable when talking with gays. Result contradicts to some instances or some perceptions of people that when they are seen talking with a gay, others might think that the other person could be gay as well. Some also fear that they might be influenced when they start talking to gays. Result is also incongruent to what the website Face to Face (2009) has stated that some men dislike seeing gays talking to their girlfriends because they think that gays can pollute their girlfriends' minds. Campos (2005) argued and supported the result that one does not simply turn into a homosexual just by merely talking to or making friends with him or her which might have been one of the reasons the respondents have thought of which made them agree that they feel comfortable talking with a gay cross-dresser. On the other hand, the result with regards to engaging in romantic relationships with gay cross-dressers wherein the respondents disagreed is in relation with the explanation that the respondents may somehow still possess the usual macho image that cops are expected to possess. Gerber (2001) noted that aside from the macho image, cops also possess stereotypic attitudes and behaviors for men. When someone breaks the norm of a stereotypical man, society judges him (NoBullying.com, 2015).

Level of openness to gays according to emotional attributes

The item "I am comfortable to have a cross-dressing relative" with a weighted mean of 2.70 was the highest, interpreted as *agree* while the item "I am comfortable to use the same comfort room with cross-dressers" with a weighted mean of 2.33 was the lowest, interpreted as *disagree*. It appears that the respondents agreed that they were comfortable in maintaining or developing emotional ties with gay cross-dressers. As what was stated previously, results also imply that gender sensitivity and equality are being regarded by the respondents.

It shows that most of the respondents agreed more that they "feel comfortable to have a gay cross-dressing relative". Some people are being made fun of when others know they have a homosexual cross-dressing relative. But result turned out to be the other way around. The respondents who are known for being masculine agreed that they were comfortable in having a gay cross-dressing relative. One reason could be that the respondents are sensitive and aware that gay cross-dressers should be importantly accepted by family members and be given fair treatment.

The result wherein the respondents agreed that they feel comfortable having a gay cross-dressing relative contradicts Bolich (2007) stating that family members cannot accept the fact that their family member is homosexual or is cross-dressing because their gender experiences cannot meet with the homosexual/cross-dressing family member's gender experiences. With regards to the item wherein the respondents disagreed that they feel comfortable using the same comfort room with cross-dressers, this has been an issue since then whether members of the LGBT community should use the comfort room according to their gender presentation or according to their sex. Heterosexual men find it awkward to share restrooms with a gay man (Trejbal, 2013).

Level of openness to lesbians according to physical attributes

The item "It is okay for me to see a person wearing accessories which are not typical to his/her sex (e.g. Men wearing dangling earrings, women wearing men's watches)" with a weighted mean of 2.78 interpreted as *agree* was the highest while the item "It is okay for me to see a person wearing clothes that are not typical of his/her sex (Men wearing dress and stilettos, women wearing men's polo and men's jeans)" with a weighted mean of 2.39 interpreted as *disagree* was the lowest. With the overall weighted mean of 2.59, it shows that when it comes to physical attributes, the respondents agreed when they saw lesbians physically looking the same like the opposite sex.

One reason why the respondents disagreed that they felt comfortable when they see lesbians dress like the opposite sex is because of the expected gender roles. From the book *Social Perspectives in Lesbian and Gay Studies* (Nardi & Schneider, 2013), it was not considered to be part of the gender role when someone tries to dress according to the opposite sex. It could also be possible that the respondents are not open towards lesbians who dress up as men because they may see them as someone who has power or looks arrogant. According to Kleiman (2007) as cited by Bolich (2007), women dressing up as men are perceived to be seeking power or privilege.

Level of openness to lesbians according to social attributes

The item "Working with a cross-dresser is okay for me" with a weighted mean of 2.78 interpreted as *agree* was the highest while the item "Being in a relationship with a cross-dresser is okay for me" with a weighted mean of 2.41 interpreted as *disagree* was the lowest. When it comes to maintaining social ties with lesbian cross-dressers, the

respondents were open. The respondents felt comfortable socializing with them.

Results show that majority of the respondents agreed that they felt comfortable working with lesbian cross-dressers. The respondents might have felt that it was okay for them to work with a lesbian cross-dresser as long as their work was not affected. Moreover, respondents felt uncomfortable being in a relationship with a lesbian cross-dresser. This is in relation to the previous literatures stated in this research that when people see someone deviating from the social norm, they feel different that something from that person is not what he/she normally sees in other women that is why not everyone may feel comfortable in having romantic relationship with a lesbian cross-dresser.

Level of openness to lesbians according to emotional attributes

The item "I am comfortable to give respect to cross-dressers" with a weighted mean of 2.72 interpreted as *agree* was the highest while the item "I am comfortable to use the same comfort room with cross-dressers" with a weighted mean of 2.39 interpreted as *disagree* was the lowest. It is observed through the overall weighted mean of 2.62 that the respondents agreed when it comes to emotional attributes, it appears that the respondents were emotionally comfortable in maintaining close relationships with lesbian cross-dressers.

Moreover, it shows that most of the respondents agreed more that they "feel comfortable to give respect to lesbian cross-dressers". As what was stated previously, it could be possible that the respondents were gender sensitive towards members of the LGBT community. Although some might thought that it was shameful to accept them (Garcia, 2013), lesbians also pose a threat to men for lesbians date women as well and heterosexual men see these lesbians as rivals (HubPages, 2015), the respondents were still against discrimination of lesbian cross-dressers. The respondents might have thought that even though they may be different, they still deserve to be respected by the public.

Significant difference on the level of openness to lesbian and gay cross-dressers

The table presents the significant difference on the level of openness to both lesbian and gay cross-dressers according to each attribute. Results show that there was no significant difference between the level of openness between lesbian and gay cross-dressers considering the physical, social and emotional attributes. The results that there was no difference on the level of openness between gay and lesbian cross-

dressers negate Welch (2013). She stated that people can tolerate lesbians than gay men.

Table 1. Significant difference on the level of openness to lesbian and gay cross-dressers according to physical, social and emotional attributes

Variables	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
A (Physical attributes)	-.136	.892	Not Significant
B (Social Attributes)	-1.007	.316	Not Significant
C (Emotional Attributes)	.000	1.000	Not Significant

**If p-value is < .05, then there is a significant difference on the level of openness to lesbian and gay.*

**If p-value is > .05, then there is no significant difference on the level of openness to lesbian and gay.*

Significant relationship between the level of openness and the demographics (sex and age)

The table presents the relationship between sex and the three attributes (physical, social and emotional). It shows that in terms of physical attributes, there was no significant relationship between sex and level of openness to both gay and lesbian cross-dressers. In terms of social attributes, there was a significant relationship between sex and level of openness to lesbian cross-dressers while for gay cross-dressers the relationship was insignificant. Lastly, same goes for the emotional attributes. There was a significant relationship between sex and level of openness to lesbian cross-dressers while for gay cross-dressers, the relationship was also insignificant. This denotes that the sex of a respondent has an effect on the level of openness to lesbian cross-dressers in terms of the social and emotional attributes. Results support at the same time are related to what Chapman et al. (2007) had stated that older men scored higher in openness than older women. In the research, they used the NEO-FFI or NEO-Five Factor Inventory among the respondents of older adults in primary health care. The literature stated supports to the findings that sex has a relationship to level of openness.

Table 2. Relationship between sex and level of openness

Variables	Pearson- Chi square Value	p-value	Interpretation
Sex vs. Physical Attributes (Gay)	2.052	.562	Not Significant
Sex vs. Physical Attributes (Lesbian)	2.796	.424	Not Significant
Sex vs. Social Attributes (Gay)	2.013	.570	Not Significant
Sex vs. Social Attributes (Lesbian)	14.143	.003	Significant
Sex vs. Emotional Attributes (Gay)	1.336	.721	Not Significant
Sex vs. Emotional Attributes (Lesbian)	8.918	.030	Significant

**If p-value is < .05, there is a significant relationship between the level of openness to lesbian and gay and the demographic profile of the respondents.*

**If p-value is > .05, there is no significant relationship between the level of openness to lesbian and gay and the demographic profile of the respondents.*

The table shows the relationship between age and the level of openness to lesbians and gays. It presents that age had a significant relationship to physical attributes when it comes to lesbians. It shows as well that there was a significant relationship between age and emotional attributes on both gays and lesbians. The relationship between age and level of openness found from the result is somehow related to the literature presented previously that age has a relationship to openness. As what was stated previously, openness increases then declines after the age of 30 (Terracciano et al., 2005). Srivastava et al. (2003) indicated that the decline was stronger among men than women. Knowing that most of the respondents belonged to the age bracket of 26-30 years old, the previously stated literature support the results that those who were at the age of 26-30 years old should be more open and it turns out that the respondents were more open towards gay and lesbian cross-dressers.

Table 3. Relationship between age and level of openness

Variables	Pearson- Chi square Value	p-value	Interpretation
Age vs. Physical Attributes (Gay)	18.616	.098	Not Significant
Age vs. Physical Attributes (Lesbian)	25.030	.015	Significant
Age vs. Social Attributes (Gay)	19.323	.081	Not Significant
Age vs. Social Attributes (Lesbian)	16.611	.165	Not Significant
Age vs. Emotional Attributes (Gay)	27.588	.006	Significant
Age vs. Emotional Attributes (Lesbian)	29.028	.004	Significant

**If p-value is < .05, there is a significant relationship between the level of openness to lesbian and gay and the demographic profile of the respondents.*

**If p-value is > .05, there is no significant relationship between the level of openness to lesbian and gay and the demographic profile of the respondents.*

CONCLUSION

The respondents both policemen and policewomen are open and comfortable to homosexual cross-dressers considering the results presented. They agreed to lesbian and gay cross-dressers in terms of physical, social and emotional attributes. Knowing that the respondents were mostly men belonging to the police force, it shows that they prove themselves to be open to gay and lesbian cross-dressers despite their masculinity. The outcome in this research turned out to be the opposite. Instead of not being open towards gay and lesbian cross-dressers, the respondents agreed that they are comfortable and open based on three attributes. Results show as well that there is no significant difference on the level of openness between lesbian and gay cross-dressers. On the other hand, sex has a significant relationship to level of openness to lesbian cross-dressers in terms of social and emotional attributes. Results show as well that age has a significant relationship to the level of openness to lesbian cross-dressers in terms of physical attributes. Lastly, age shows a significant relationship to the level of openness to both gay and lesbian cross-dressers in terms of emotional attributes.

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