

**The Negative Effects of Homophobia on the Academic Performance of  
LGBTQ+ High School Students of Saint Mary's Academy – Dipolog City**



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# Chapter 1

## The Problem and Its Scope

### Introduction

According to the Journal of Interpersonal Violence by Herek, G. M. (1990), a person's negative attitude towards people who identify as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) including belief that being a homosexual is wrong, unnatural, pathological or sinful is called heterosexism.

Saint Mary's Academy is an institution that focuses on strong religious beliefs. This includes the fact that the students can be influenced to be wary of homosexuals by the school's teachings. However, the Being LGBT in Asia: The Philippines Country Report (2014) stated in their research that *the Pew Research Center (2013) noted the strong relationship between the increased level of a country's religiosity with negative opinions about homosexuality. In the survey's "religiosity scale", a score of "3" was considered as the "most religious", and the Philippines got almost 2.5. However, surprisingly, over 70 percent of the survey's Filipino respondents are said to be accepting of LGBT people.*

Filipino teenagers, especially high school students that identify as a part of the LGBT community, reside in a place where there is still a high chance that they can be bullied for having romantic attractions for the same sex.

Eric Julian Manalastas and Gregorio E.H Del Pilar from the University of the Philippines, Diliman, once stated in their research study on Filipino attitudes towards gay men and lesbians that the analysis of one or the two heterosexism measure included in their surveys indicated that Filipinos held largely negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. In addition, about 1 out of 4 Filipinos expressed not wanting gay men/lesbians as neighbors.

In this study, we aim to identify whether there is a negative impact on the academic performance of teenagers who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual in an environment that can have homophobic tendencies.

### **Theoretical Framework**

According to the Ecological Systems Theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner, an American psychologist, the inherent qualities of a child and his/her environment interact to influence how he/she will grow and develop. Most of the time, a child will be simultaneously be involved in various ecosystems, from the most basic home ecological system toward the larger school system where the individuals' interaction with the child will affect how the child grows. The Bronfenbrenner Model identifies this as the **microsystem**, wherein more nurturing and more supportive interactions and relationships will understandably foster the child's improved development.

Bronfenbrenner's theory supports the fact that negative interactions because of a certain student's sexuality can have an equally adverse impact on the child's development as a student. If the child is exposed to bullying centered on homophobia, this could affect the child's academic performance as he/she becomes distracted as they dwell more on the said adversity, especially since they are at a stage in life where adolescence is a life phase when mental health problems make a significant contribution to morbidity and mortality, which if unrecognized renders young people vulnerable to poor psychological functioning in the immediate and longer term, as stated in a study on Adolescence: Developmental stage and mental health morbidity by the International Journal of Social Psychiatry.

Based on the same study, a curriculum tailored to individual capacities and interests, in which opportunities are provided for each young person to experience mastery and growth, increase in knowledge and skills, feel socially included, receive constructive feedback, and be protected against humiliation and marginalization is essential. This supports the fact that homosexual students should be in an institution where they similarly treated as heterosexual teenagers, and where they are not exposed to homophobic bullying and humiliation in order for them to have an excellent academic performance.

John Bean's psychological theory states that the background characteristics of students must be taken into consideration in order to understand their integration into a new university environment. One of the significant background characteristics of the said student would be his/her sexual orientation, thus, this should first be noted so that it is possible to observe their assimilation into a catholic institution.

## **Hypothesis**

1. Homophobic bullying can have a negative impact on a homosexual student's academic performance.

## **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant to the following:

**Humanity** – This study can encourage homophobic-minded people to be more sensitive to homosexual teenagers in order for them to have a more than satisfactory academic performance so as to lead a successful future.

**Community** – This study can minimize and hopefully eradicate blatant homophobic bullying in order for the teenage LGBT community to live in a safe and comfortable place.

**Authorities** – This study can convince the authorities to advocate and embolden more anti-bullying movements in order for their students to perform well in their academic performance

**Researcher** – This study can be used as reference for future research studies.

## **Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study mainly focuses on junior high school students from Saint Mary's Academy who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and whether homophobic bullying would have a negative effect on their academic performance. This study will be based on a survey taken from the homosexual population of Saint Mary's Academy, their report cards this school year, and whether they have a record of homophobic bullying from the Prefect of Discipline.

The data will be collected from studies concerning the developmental stage of teenagers and how bullying could potentially have a negative effect on their academic performance. This study will also refer to research materials about homophobia among teenagers. There will also be observations regarding the personal experience of the subject.

## **Key Terms and Definitions**

These following terms are used in this paper:

**Homosexuality** – romantic or sexual attraction to a person of the same sex.

**Homosexual** – a person who directs romantic or sexual attraction to the same sex.

**Heterosexual** – a person who directs romantic or sexual attraction to the opposite sex.

**Homophobia** – the aversion to or discrimination of homosexuality or homosexuals.

**Sexual Orientation** – this is what the person would identify as whether they are homosexual or heterosexual.

**Academic Performance** – the measurement of whether the student has a general average of 80% or above.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Related Literature and Studies

#### Related Literature

In an online article written by Bino A. Realuyo, a Filipino novelist and poet, it is stated that Uganda and Philippines have similar aversions to homosexuality because of their common cultural influence which is Christianity. Additionally, he stated that there is also a possibility that because of our historical background of being *colonized twice, occupied once, and Christianized forever*, Filipinos may have been hesitant to accept modern ideas and open-mindedness.

Ryan Thoreson, a researcher in the LGBT Rights Program, and Daniel Lee, associate with the Asia division, published an article that emphasizes discrimination against homosexual Filipino teenagers especially in the school environment. It is stated that students have observed that when LGBT issues are discussed in class, their teachers frequently have a negative perspective on homosexuality, thus rendering gay and lesbian students to be labeled as deviants and outcasts.

To further prove that the Catholic school system in the Philippines could be more accepting of homosexual students, The Halton Catholic school board in Burlington, Vermont decreed a policy outlined as “standards of behavior” for students regarding gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation *wherein students must promote a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all pupils, including pupils of any... gender expression, gender identity, sex , or sexual orientation*. Moreover, *students must respect and treat others fairly, regardless of gender, gender expression, gender identity, or sexual orientation*. Basically, their policy stated that homophobia and harassment on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation will see students suspended or expelled from their institution.

## **Related Studies**

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory can support the fact how regardless of whether a student has positive or negative experiences inside a school environment, they will always have these experiences ingrained in their developmental profile. This refers to the **microsystem** wherein direct social interactions with these social agents will have an effect on the environment and the subject.

Moreover, the International Journal of Social Psychiatry stated in their study that adolescents who suffer bullying in their social environment such as their school can more often than not result in academic failure. This is because the social environment, which includes educational institutions and the wider community, is a powerful determinant of the mental health of adolescents.

It is also stated in the "Theoretical perspectives on factors affecting the academic performance of students" (Jama, Beylefeld, Mapesela) that although the factors influencing the academic performance of a student is multi-dimensional and complex, the general aspects of what these factors are can be from a familial perspective, or in this case, the institution's environment itself; whether the institution can satisfy the students' needs or not.

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