

Self-Esteem of Male Homosexual Students

Prawichaya Nutthakornkul

Social Technology Faculty, Rajamangala University of Technology, Isan, Kalasin Campus

Prasart Isarapreeeda

Faculty of Liberal Arts and science, Nakhon Phanom University

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate male homosexual students' self-esteem and validate the consistency of the male homosexual students' self-esteem model and empirical data. A snowball technique was used to recruit 416 male homosexual students studying in the academic year 2010 at institutions of higher education in the northeastern region of the Kingdom of Thailand. The instrument used was a questionnaire eliciting data concerning self-esteem with discriminating powers ranging between 2.67 to 6.04 and a reliability of .86. The collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and the confirmatory factors were analyzed through LISREL version 8.72 Program. The results of the study were as follows: The male homosexual students showed self-esteem, as a whole, in a rather high level. Four aspects were found in a rather high level; while the two remaining aspects were in a rather low level. The confirmatory factor analyses of self-esteem model revealed 3 factors namely self-proud factors consisted of 2 aspects including self-satisfaction and self-acceptance, ranking factor loadings of .74 and .66 in order. The self-respect factors consisted of 2 aspects including self-well feeling, and self-positive thinking. The factor loadings ranking were .88 and .78 in order. The self-efficacy factors consisted of 2 aspects including self-confidence and self-security, ranking factor loadings of .81 and .79 in order. The results of secondary order confirmatory factor analyses revealed that three factors were intimate important with factor loading ranking were .92 .81 and .76 in order. The validation of a goodness of fitted model yielded a Chi-square of 49.22, $p = .05$ at a degrees of freedom of 30 ($\chi^2/df = 1.64$, GFI = .93, AGFI = .97, CFI=.91, RMR = .03, RMSEA = .04). The variables in the self-esteem model were consistent with the empirical data.

Keywords: confirmatory factor analysis, self-esteem, male homosexual students

1. Introduction

The self-esteem is a perception and feeling that one has in oneself for justifying one's self-strength, self-worth and self-pride (Freud, 1914, pp. 67-102). It may thus be a meaningful element nourishing one's soul and preventing the distress and sadness (Nongpanga Limsuwan, 2009).

In spite of more understanding of sexual diversity and greater acceptance of gays or male homosexuals in the Thai society, there are still both positive and negative social attitudes towards them. Seemingly, the negative one is more influential, especially the negative reaction of the family members. According to Telljohan & Price (1993, pp.41-56), 30% of gays report that their family has a negative reaction after their disclosure of sexual orientation. Therefore, 77% of male homosexuals reveal their sexual orientation to their close friends, while 33% and 43% of them disclose it to their family members and to the society in general such as workplaces or educational institutions, respectively (Perkins, 2003). Under the social value, male homosexuality should be kept in secret because it is embarrassing, saddens the parents and causes the family's negative reactions (Male Homosexual Lifestyles, 2006). Thus, gays must hide their sexual orientation because of being humiliated, imperfect or different from the others and of social bias and hatred. A low level of self-esteem in the teenage guys may be attributable to their feeling of disadvantage caused by such embarrassment and bias leading to the problematic behaviors (Savin-Williams, 1995; Maslow, 1943, pp. 370-396). Likewise, the society's rejection of gay lifestyles contributes to the confusions and denial of self-concept among gays and may be most important reasons behind a low level of self-esteem (Rogers, 1959). They lack the self-pride, self-respect and self-efficacy leading to self-unwell feeling, self-dissatisfaction, self-pessimism, self-insecurity, poor self-confidence, poor self-respect and self-feeling of inferiority (Kaufman et al., 1992). The researchers, as counselors, are thus interested in examining the self-esteem of male homosexual students at institutions of higher education in the northeastern region of the Kingdom of Thailand. The confirmatory analysis technique is employed in order to reflect the most accurate factors based on the humanism of Rogers (1959) and Coopersmith (1967) who believe that the three factors of self-esteem consist of self-proud factors, self-respect factors and self-efficacy (Figure 1). All of them are closely related to the health risks. That is to say that a level of self-esteem has a positive relationship with the sexual health awareness and a negative one with the embarrassment in revealing one's health problems publicly (Adam et al., 2005, pp.238-248; Dowshen et al., 2009, pp.371-376). Therefore, a low level of self-esteem may create the contributory behaviors to the health problems resulting in the loss of valuable human resources (Rolf & Johnson, 1992).

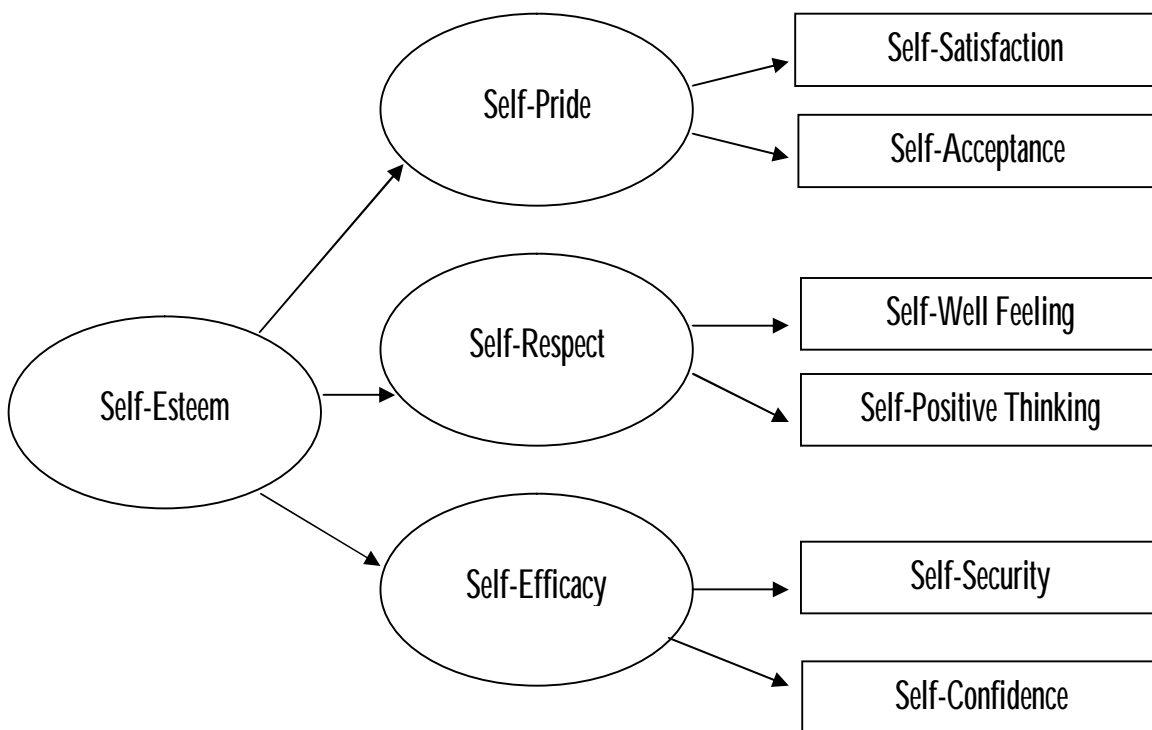


Figure 1: the Factors of Self-Esteem

2. Methodology

2.1 Population and Sample Group

The population consists of 416 male homosexual students studying in the academic year 2010 at institutions of higher education. They are chosen by means of snowball technique.

2.2 Research Tools

The data collection tool is the self-esteem questionnaire adapted from the one of Rosenberg (1965). It consists of 3 parts: self-pride (3 items), self-respect (3 items) and self-efficacy (2 items). Its index of congruence is between .80 and 1.00 with the validity of .84. The discrimination is between 2.67 and 6.04 and the reliability is .86.

2.3 Data Collection

During the course of data collection, the researcher has chosen five research assistants from the students who accept themselves as the homosexual. They are explained about the research objectives and trained to ensure their capability to collect data. Then, the researcher requests them to nominate the qualified persons for the sample group with an aim to form a network. The nominated persons are then interrogated and urged to answer to the questionnaire. The researcher and research assistants recheck the completeness of the data filled in questionnaire prior to scoring and data analysis.

2.4 Data Analysis

The researcher uses the package software for data analysis.

2.4.1 The analysis of the general data of the sample group in line with the studied variables is conducted using the package software in order to identify the sample group's characteristics including the mean and standard deviation.

2.4.2 The analysis of the correlation coefficient among the observed variables in the male homosexual students' self-esteem model is conducted using Pearson's correlation coefficient to find a correlation matrix among the observed factors. Then, the correlation matrix used in the factor analysis is examined if it has a significant difference from zero with the consideration of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measures of Sampling Adequacy.

2.4.3 The confirmatory factor analysis is conducted using the qualified correlation matrix through the package software. The parameter estimation is based on Maximum Likelihood (ML) for the verification of the construct validity by taking into account the consistency of structural equation model under the relevant theories and empirical data. The goodness-of-fit measures are Chi-Square (χ^2), Relative Chi-square (χ^2/df), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Squared Residual (RMR) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The confirmatory factor analysis is divided in to the two following steps:

Step 1: The confirmatory factor analysis aims to examine the construct validity of the observed variable in each self-esteem factor. Then, the factor scale is developed on the basis of the total score of those six factors.

Step 2: The second order confirmatory factor analysis is conducted to verify the construct validity of three factors and to compare between the factors' weight of importance and empirical data. The factor scale (Step 1) is also examined by means of the secondary order confirmatory factor analysis in order to find the weight of all six factors.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Data Analysis Results

3.1.1 Results of the Study on the Risk Sexual Behavior: the male homosexual students have a rather high level of self-esteem with a mean of 2.05 and standard derivation of .90. After categorizing each factor, self-proud factors are at the rather low level, while self-respect and self-efficacy factors are at the rather high level. When considering each aspect, it is found that self-pride, self-satisfaction, self-positive thinking and self-confidence are the four aspects with a rather high level. Their mean is between 2.05 and 2.53 with the standard deviation

between .76 and 1.13. In contrast, the self-acceptance and self-security are the two aspects with a rather low level having a mean between 1.42 and 1.78 and the standard derivation between .63 and 1.12 (Table 1).

Table 1: Mean and Standard Derivation of the Self-Esteem of Male Homosexual Students

Variables	\bar{x}	SD	Interpretation
Self-Pride	1.97	.53	Rather Low
Self-Satisfaction	2.53	.94	Rather High
Self-Acceptance	1.42	.63	Rather Low
Self-Respect	2.17	.81	Rather High
Self-Well Feeling	2.30	.76	Rather High
Self-Positive Thinking	2.05	1.01	Rather High
Self-Efficacy	2.05	.94	Rather High
Self-Security	1.78	1.12	Rather Low
Self-Confidence	2.33	1.13	Rather High
Total	2.05	.90	Rather High

3.1.2 **Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis** for creating the factor scale and comparing the factors' weight of importance: the self-esteem comprises of the three factors that are arranged in a prioritized order as follows. Firstly, the self-respect factors consist of 2 aspects: self-well feeling and self-positive thinking with the factor's weight of .88 and .78, respectively. Secondly, the self-confidence and self-security, having the factor's weight of .81 and .79, respectively, are the two aspects of self-efficacy factors. Lastly, the self-proud factors also have two aspects including the self-satisfaction and self-acceptance with the factor's weight of .74 and .66, respectively.

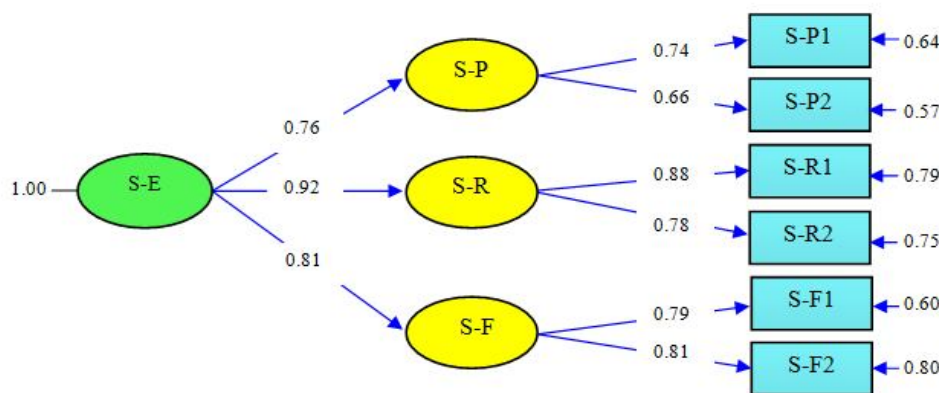
According to the secondary order confirmatory factor analysis that examines the construct validity of the self-esteem of the male homosexual students, the factor's weight can be arranged in the following prioritized order. The self-respect factors, self-efficacy factors and self-proud factors have the factor's weight of .92 .81 and .76, respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Factor’s Weight, Standard Deviation, Test of Statistical Significance, Coefficient of Prediction based on the Analysis of Main Factors and Indicative Behaviors of Self-Esteem Factors

Factors/Indicators	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> ²
1. Self-Pride	.76	.05	14.94**	.58
Self-Satisfaction	.74	.01	19.60**	.64
Self-Acceptance	.66	.01	17.60**	.57
2. Self-Esteem	.92	.06	15.51**	.84
Self-Well Feeling	.88	.01	17.70**	.79
Self-Positive Thinking	.78	.01	18.50**	.75
3. Self-Efficacy	.81	.06	14.09**	.65
Self-Security	.79	.01	21.10**	.60
Self-Confidence	.81	.01	18.80**	.80

***p* < .01

3.1.1.3 **Results of the Examination of the Consistency** between the male homosexual students’ self-esteem model of and the empirical hypothesis, The Goodness-of-Fit Index between the said model and the empirical data is as follows: $\chi^2 = 172.22$, *df* = 105, *p* = .05, χ^2/df = 1.64, GFI = .93, AGFI = .97, CFI = .91, RMR = .03 and RMSEA = .04. Therefore, the hypothesized model has a consistency with the empirical data (Figure 2).



Chi-Square = 172.22, *df* = 105, *P*-value = 0.057, RMSEA = 0.042

Figure 2: The analysis of main factors and the indicative behavior of self-esteem factors of male homosexual students

3.2 Discussions

1. The male homosexual students at institutions of higher education in the northeastern region of the Kingdom of Thailand have a rather high level of self-esteem in the following aspects: self-satisfaction, self-respect, self-positive thinking and self-confidence. The perception towards the alternative sexuality in Thailand may be more positive with greater acceptance of sexual diversity. In addition, gays are allowed to work in the public sector. There are a range of gay right movements too (Kritiya Achawanichakul, 2011, p. 43-66). Thus, a higher number of male homosexual students tend to disclose their sexual orientation to the society, while the advanced online communications systems may eliminate their loneliness so they are not lonely as the previous generations. All these factors enhance their self-esteem leading to their higher confidence and self-trust to encounter the negative situations. The study of Phornthep Phraekhao (2013, p. 142-146) also reveals the similar findings that Thai gays enjoy the happiness in the same way to other Thai people. In spite of more acceptance of sexual diversity, the gays' rather low level of self-respect with respect to the self-concept and self-security may be due to the fact that they are still defined by the society as "gays" implying the negative connotation that have an emotional impacts resulting in the distress. Their expression of certain behaviors in contradictory to the norm of male and female practices is also unacceptable by the family or the society (Maneesrikum, 2002). The unfair discrimination of homosexual lifestyles is still found in the society. In this regard, the analysis of general perception of the Thai society towards gays by the foreign academicians has defined this situation in Thailand as 'it is tolerable but unacceptable.' (Jackson & Cook, 1999). This conforms to several studies and reports (Office of the High Commission on Human Rights, 2013; Mahidol University et al., 2014) that reveals that 56% of male homosexuals are abused verbally (being scolded), physically (being beaten/kicked), socially (being prejudiced) and sexually (being harassed) during the last month on the ground of gender and sexuality. Consequently, the male homosexual students have a low self-security and self-acceptance because they need to hide their gender and sexuality in order to prevent themselves from possible violence and threats (Takács, 2006).

2. Under the hypothesized model of self-esteem of male homosexual students, the three following factors are determined by the researcher: self-proud factors, self-respect factors and self-efficacy. The research results reveal that the factors of self-esteem of male homosexual students are consistent with the humanism of Roger and Coopersmith who believe that the self-pride, self-respect and self-efficacy are the three factors of self-esteem. In particular, self-respect is the most important factor for creating the male homosexual students' self-esteem. Hence, the male homosexual students need to put their great effort to develop the self-respect in order to create their self-esteem. Likewise, the study titled "Family, Life and Function Issues of Men who Have Sex with Men" of Naphawee Srichannil (2010) disclose a similar result regarding the gays' perception that one advantage of being a male homosexual is that he has a higher ability to perform the family duties when compared to the straight male. The crisis of sexuality leads to the

struggle of male homosexuals to develop a higher level of self-respect than the straight male. They need to act as male and female at the same time so that they are able to provide more helps to their families and to be proud to be born a male homosexual. It can likely be said that being the gay is a motivational force to create the social acceptance of his capability for the pursuit of life's achievement. Therefore, the self-respect is regarded as the important self-esteem of gays.

4. Conclusion

The male homosexual students' self-esteem model consists of three factors, namely, self-pride factors (with two aspects: self-satisfaction and self-acceptance), self-respect factors (with two aspects: self-well feeling and self-positive thinking) and self-efficacy (with two aspects: self-confidence and self-security). In particular, the self-respect factors have the highest factor's weight followed by self-efficacy and self-pride with the factor's weight of .92, .81 and .76, respectively. Besides, the hypothesized model of self-esteem has a consistency with the empirical data as follows: Chi-square of (χ^2) 172.22 with the degree of freedom of 105, possibility of .05, Relative Chi-square (χ^2/df) of 1.64, Goodness-Of-Fit Index (GFI) of .93, Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) of .97, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of .91, Root Mean Squared Residual (RMR) of .03 and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of .04.

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6. References

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