Self-Acceptance of Sexual Orientation in Gay Men: A Consensual Qualitative Research

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate related to experience of self-acceptance of sexual orientation in gay men. Key informants were 10 gay men who had score of points on the self-acceptance of gay men scale as of 4.5 to 5 points. They were selected purposively according to the fixed set of criteria. Data were collected by in-depth interview and analyzed by using consensus qualitative research method. The results reveal six domains: (1) Beginning to sense one's won homosexual orientation, (i.e., sensing of gay vibe, the attraction to heterosexual, and self-denial of the gay sense) (2) Experiences that facilitate adopting gay identity, (i.e., encountering with social prejudice, having a sexual experience and relationship with men, and the acceptance of same-sex attracted feeling) (3) Sexual identity acceptance, (i.e., the acceptance of gay identity, the attitudes toward society with self-acceptance, and entering to gay society) (4) Disclosure of the gay identity, (i.e., self-disclosure to family and selfdisclosure to society) (5) Perceiving difficulties of living a gay life and to live harmoniously with oneself and with others, (i.e., Perceiving difficulties of living a gay life, and to live harmoniously with oneself and with others and(6) Integrating gav identity to self identity and emerging a coherent and integrated self, (i.e., Integrating gay identity to self identity, and emerging a coherent and integrated self).

Keywords: self-acceptance, gay men, sexual orientation

Introduction

Self-acceptance is the self-consciousness of oneself by individual through the process of understanding their own life with reasonable reality, perceiving the pros and cons, and accepting the limitations and errors of their own judgment. This also includes understanding the environmental contexts and situations involved in determining one's own idea with the responsibility of their decision that will result in the ability to live life with efficiency and using the full potential of their own capabilities. Moreover, this acceptance leads to the feeling that they are valuable, as well as building relationships with others effectively and creatively (Hamachek, 1992; David, 1997; Rogers, 1974). Previous research found that for lesbians, gay and bisexuals, "the acceptance and disclosure of their identity" is significant in developing, and or increasing personal self-worth, as individuals experience difficulties in the duration of life (Bohan, 1996) - particularly for gay men. Many researchers have determined that the disclosure of one's sexual orientation to their parents and the intimate is extremely important to the well-being of the gay men (Bangon Taptien, 2008; Bohan, 1996; de Monteflores, 1993; Dew et al., 2005; Gonsiorek, 1995) and self-disclosure is also crucial to the healthy development of gender identity in gay men(Cass, 1996).

In contemporary Thailand, sexual segregation is rampant; gay men grow up as a subgroup of society at large which can be seen from the social stigma attached to the sexual orientation. According to Jackson's (1999) study, the image of gay men in the context of Thailand's public media in a domestic altercation and or death, always degrades men who have sex with men (MSM) as being murdered because of jealousy. Moreover, the media depicts gay men as a carrier of AIDS. These negative stereotypes serve to make a male feel embarrassed of his sexual preference and identity. Jackson also revealed that the social perception of gay men in Thailand is only "tolerance but not accepted" and can be accept only limited expression in Thai society.

The research of Bongkodmad Aekeim (2008) studied the culture of sex and family life of homosexual in Thailand, and the influence on the idea of "Family" that affects the senses. Ideally, homosexuals start from the definition of self. This is reinforced through the growth that has been nurtured in the family, and ideally society's heterosexual population as well as the abolishment of various negative societal biases. Negative deviation concerning the perception of homosexuals causes negative effects in the feelings and psychological conflict within gay men when they are stigmatized as different from others. In some cases, this leads to the formation of negative feelings towards themselves into the spirit of their own being because of society's prejudice against the internalized homonegativity (Kimmel, 2004; Herek, 2004).

Theories regarding homosexual identity on the issue of disclosure have revealed that there is no difference in the experience within this group of people. Predominately, the assertion that experiences do not differ in terms of self-disclosure in the social context has been strongly opposed (Cass, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). Some authors have proposed that individual differences and the environment may affect one's ability and desire of the individual to deal with the challenges in the process of self-disclosure (Cass, 1996).

Different theories have been influenced by the psychoanalytic perspective. One possible explanation of the interpersonal relationships in the previous study of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) may affect the experience of LGB. This includes, the level of self-acceptance and disclosure concerning sexual orientation on their own, naturally.(Cohler & Galatzer - Levy, 1996; Laird, 1996). However, one question never explicitly posed to gay men is: "how different factors affect competence for self-acceptance and disclosure for themselves in different ways". Although many theories explain the variability of factors in groups of gay men, there is no framework to explain about these differences. Also, in Thailand, there are limited numbers of research studies vis-à-vis the psychology in gay men. This paper therefore aimed to focus on the experience of self-acceptance of sexual orientation in gay men in order to provide some insight into void in important contemporary qualitative research.

Methodology

This study employed a consensual qualitative research (CQR) design as detailed below:

Key Informants. They were 10 Thai gay men who had score of points on the self-acceptance of gay men scale ranging from 4.5 to 5 points of 5. They were selected purposively according to the criteria: accepted himself as gay man, committed or living within gay world at least 1 year, had score of points on the *Self-acceptance of Gay men Scale* (SAG) as of 4.5 to 5 points of 5, ability to articulate their experience, and willingness to participate in the study and share their information. The key informants participated in the study during September 2012–February, 2013.

Instruments: Instruments included *the Self-acceptance of Gay men Scale* (SAG) and interview guideline. The instruments were developed by the researcher and reviewed by 3 experts before application.

Procedure and Data Analysis. After receiving the approval from the Committee for Human Research, Chulalongkorn University, the researcher contacted the gatekeepers to recruit the qualified key informants. Then, the appointments with the key informants were made to provide them with information about the study and their rights to participate in the study. Those who were willing to participate in the study were asked to sign the consent form and completed the self-acceptance scale. After the completion of the preliminary forms , the gay men who passed all the criteria on the scale were invited and interviewed once, each for approximately 1-2 hours. After a verbatim transcription of the interview tapes, the data analyzed using CQR method (Hill et al 2005). Trustworthiness of the analysis - validity of the findings,

interpretation, and summary from supportive data were achieved through an external audit conducted by 2 experts on qualitative research, as well as member checking.

Results

Findings revealed six main themes of the experiences of self-acceptance of sexual orientation in gay men as presented below.

1. Beginning to sense one's own homosexual orientation

1.1 Sensing of gay vibe: all of key informants (N=10) started to sense their own homosexual feeling since they were young. The feeling was already there and waiting for them to explore and discover it – this was a common sensation shared by the key informants. (i.e. the attraction to a man) They were interested in the samesex, and were satisfied by those feelings. Some of them started to masterbate to porn, during which, they were focusing on men more than women. During that time, many of them reported that they did not know and understand those feelings since they lacked information on sexual orientation.

"Because I felt during that time, the word "gay" did not exist, only "queer" and "tootsie". The word "gay" just came about, and was quite new. I remembered I couldn't even explain "what is gay?" I didn't know for sure, I only knew that I loved my friend, I loved him like a puppy love." (ID4)

1.2 The attraction to heterosexual: many key informants (N=7) used to have a crush on woman and were interested in women; some even had a relationship with a woman. Two of them had a curiosity that they might be a bisexual and tried to uncover/discover their own true nature.

"Because I remember when I was a boy, I liked girls as well. I liked (a Thai actress). She was so beautiful, you know? Well, it's not clear, but I knew I was gay (as a child). When I saw a pretty girl I wanted her to be my girlfriend when I was a kid." (ID3)

1.3 Self-denial of the gay sense: Since some of key informants (N=3) started to be aware of their homosexual feelings which was incongruent with the expectation of family and society, they tended to suppress those feelings in the initial period because of the stigmatization of society

"Speaking of that time I felt that I liked it, but deep down I went against myself a lot. Yes, it was up against. That It wasn't me. I would not do anything, it deviates from the norm. Because we're afraid of the family's standing (in society). It was not too severe. But it's a feeling of "No, not me ... I felt like it was something that people do not want, it was really embarrassing. I will not be the case. If so, then it is bad. Every teacher I know. My mother was there, something like that."(ID4)

2. Experiences that facilitate adopting gay identity

2.1 Encountering social prejudice: the key informant confronted some negative biases of people in society. As such, they had to learn to adapt themselves to survive.

2.1.1 Being discriminated from society: some of key informants (N=5) suffered discrimination and was parody which causes the feeling of being devalued as a human. They felt embarrassed, angry and being looked down upon, diminished their dignity. They think what happened to them is not fair. They felt a sense of alienation from the group. The informants stated that their experiences and their behavior are different from a typical boy which trend toward a girl.

"Well, I took my parody, I did not really like being called like this ... to have people call you a tootsie, and how can I express it. It's like you are stranger, something like that. I don't know if it sounds, like at that time the word "toot", you know. There wasn't a word for gay only toot. Nobody would like it if you were called like that." (ID5)

2.1.2 Reaction to negatively social biases: The key informants (N=3) attempted to protect themselves from the social stigma that comes from all those around society. They attempted to suppress the expression of their identity as gay to prevent being denounced. They felt anxiety and fear of being punished for expressing themselves as gay. They gradually learned to live in that society or learned to deal with the pressure, to be a driving force for their perceived inferiority is accepted, and not be ostracized from their own society.

"It's stressful. Cause there's nothing I could do, you know? It's a situation that I didn't know how to solve it, if I could have, I would have fixed it. I don't mean I have to change my behaviors or my sexual orientation. But what would make it better? I'd have liked to, but I couldn't. So I tried very hard to study hard to do some activities that I felt would make me have more value. I was able to do this, to lead me for what I am today."(ID6)

2.2 Having a sexual experience and relationship with men: the key informants that had experienced a sexual and romantic relationship with men emphatically stated that it helps GAY MEN. This became more self-evident the higher experiential level.

2.1.1 Having a sexual experience with a man: The key informants (N=6) benefited through sexual experiences with men. They may have sexual feelings for a man involved. As well as having sex with other men, they were satisfied in the feeling that they experienced, which aided in greater self-understanding and clarity. The feelings that occurred during the sexual encounter fulfilled their emotional and mental desires, longings and needs. In some cases, the informants had sexual experiences with both males and females. They will realize that they were happier, and had higher levels of with men more than women.

"If I speak about my sexual experience, well I had it first time after I graduated. At first I didn't know how to do it and I didn't think it possible as well. But he was older than me. He knew what to do so we did it. After that, it supported my feeling that it is right feeling, sort of." (ID5)

2.1.2 Having a romantic relationship with a man: The informants (N=4) experienced a romantic relationship with a man, which provided clarity and opportunity to a full gay identity. They were able to understand on an experiential level about how a romantic relationship with a man would feel. Some informants mentioned that having a relationship with the man aided their transition into a "complete" gay man.

"I'm a complete woman. This would be a good sentence to explain myself. It's like I'm ready in every single way. From the very first time, I felt like I liked men, then I started to develop my gay identity. My identity is like being overwhelmed. Do I have everything I need? How can I say this? I can feel and I can sense everything even though, in the past, I can only feel this with my mind. But now, I can feel this even more. For example, if I had to have a boyfriend, we can touch each other and we can start to learn from each other too."(ID8)

2.3 The acceptance of same-sex attracted feeling: Informants (N=9) listen to their inner feelings and desires. They do not refuse or try to change their feeling, but they accept the feeling of loving men as part of them. The acceptance of this feeling is the way they are happy to be with men more than women. Being with women cannot fulfill their needs on the same level compared to being with men.

"I don't feel like I should have to change myself to love women. No. I don't have to do that to satisfy my parents' needs. Well, it's about accepting yourself as being gay as I said before. This is very clear and it is still clear that it's impossible. I don't feel like I should stop being gay or I should have strong feeling towards women." (ID2)

3. Sexual identity acceptance

3.1 The acceptance of gay identity: This is how the informants (N=10) discovered and understood their own nature, and learned to accept their gay identity as an integral part of being. They accept their expression through behavior that is different compared to straight men. They see that being gay is not a negative thing, but rather, just sexual preference even though society may see it in an opposing or contrary manner. They do things that make them happy and they have never felt unhappy or having any conflicts with their identity. Moreover, some of the informants also stated the definition of gay for themselves.

"It's just like comparing a lotus with a rose. It depends on your preference whether to choose lotus or rose. OK, I choose a rose and I don't choose a lotus. That's all" (ID9)

3.2 The attitudes toward society with self-acceptance: This is the way the informants (N=6) hold a positive attitude towards society, realize and accept the fact that there are some people in the society who cannot accept the diversity of sexual preference. This includes how the informants harmonized themselves with society, and how they represent themselves in their own position in society.

"I cannot change anybody's attitude or even cannot force them to accept the way I am but I can live in society as being a little part of it and I don't want to do anything big like saving the world or whatever but at least I don't make any troubles for anyone. On the other hand, I try to make things better. I believe there are some people who cannot accept my sexual preference but IF they could accept the way I am then it's just OK."(ID6)

3.3 Entering into to gay society: This shows how the informants (N=8) gained access to gay society including online society that made them feel like a part of that particular society where they met many people who have the same sexual preference. They have their own way to stand in society and this gay society helped them learn many things such as gay idol, understanding of their own way of living as being gay, learning to improve their appearance to attract other gay men along with opening up opportunities to interact with other gay men. One of the informants stated that being part of gay society made him feel free, feel attachment to the group and feel happy to be in gay society.

"Then it led me to be in this society even more. Especially when I was in high school, I used Pirch application to chat with other gay men. High School Gay and Bangkok Gay were my favorite chat rooms. I met many people through this application. It also helped me learn how to have sex with other gay men like learning to know what lubricant is and learn how to prepare yourself before having sex"(ID3)

4. Disclosure of gay identity

4.1 self-disclosures to family: This section refers to experience after the informants got a clarity and acceptance of their own sexual orientation. It is similar to the next challenging stage in developing gay identities. They have to accept themselves and to reveal themselves to the other people, such as non-gay family members. The informant's decision to reveal themselves or not, depend on many factors.

4.1.1 Fear and anxiety to reaction of family member: The informants (N=7) realize that they are not what they family expected. As a result, they feel anxious, disappointed and afraid of rejection and punishment. They are afraid

they will embarrass their family. Those informants know how they will be perceived in their society, and that their parents will be disappointed by their gay children. However, the informants do not really know their family's position and/or opinions towards them. The informants choose not to disclose themselves to their family at their first stage of self-acceptance due to anxiety and lack of readiness.

"When I came back to the same old environment, I was very certain that I was gay. I started flirting with men but the same limits still existed. I was afraid that my parents and my close friends would know that I was gay. I did not want anyone that knew me to know it especially my parents. I was afraid I would disappoint my parents and that they would be embarrassed of me. I was afraid that that would not be proud of me. That was what mattered to me." (ID4)

4.1.2 Perceived attitude of family member toward being gay: The attitude of the informants' family (N=7) towards them as gay individuals, as well as the gay community has an impact on the informants' decision to disclose themselves.

"I think my family still cannot accept it. I still have to hide it from my family, especially my father. He really dislikes the gay community. That is why he still does not know (that I am gay)." (ID5)

4.1.3 Readiness in coming out to family member: The informants (N=8) start expressing themselves as gay individuals to their family by directly discussing the subject or giving them hints such as bring their partner home to meet the parents. They feel secure and ready to take care of themselves if they are rejected by their family. They may wait for their family to accept them in other aspects in life before they come out. They do not feel like they are letting their family down and they will try to compensate in other areas. Some informants feel stressed and want relief. They want their family to know their real self and do not want to hide it any longer.

"Because my parents see me with this guy for a long time, they can tell that my behaviors are not those that belong to just a typical friendship. My parents asked me what was really going on. That gave me the opportunity to discuss the issue with them.. Actually, I had been meaning to discuss this for over ten years but I had never had the opportunity to do so. Back then I did not know how I would turn out. When I was done with college and had a job, I felt like I was ready to be myself. It was time."(ID5)

4.2 self-disclosures to society: Whether or not the informants disclose themselves to society depends on the core values and attitude of that particular society. Moreover, living in a gay accepting community helps homosexuals feel more at ease and not discriminated against. They are more open about their identity.

4.2.1 The attitude of their living society and the choice of coming out: The informants (N=6) understand that society is unaccepting of homosexuals and that the attitudes towards gay people still have not evolved over time does not make it

easier for the informants to disclose themselves. However, they may or may not choose to disclose themselves to the public. Some informants feel more comfortable disclosing themselves to a community that has other gay people besides themselves.

"The new generations especially nowadays are more open and accepting. I had the opportunity to come out and accept myself for who I am, not having to feel guilty and suffer. The new generations express themselves more. They accept themselves for who they are and would like other people to accept them as well. They have more opportunities to communicate and inform other people about their self identities." (ID6)

4.2.2 Living in society that is open in diversity: Thai society being open and non-resenting of homosexuals and the gay community assists the informants (N=7) to accept and express themselves more, and the more they feel comfortable with man-to-man relationships in public. They do not feel pressured to hide their same sex relationships. Some of the informants stated that they felt very lucky to be part of Thai open-minded society.

"We can fully be ourselves. That does not mean that just because we were in this society, we will behave indecently like some man-to-man or gay people. We are in a society that accepts us and we are good citizens. We want to contribute to our society and the people around us and not holding them back. So, I think that if we do the right things, we can live our lives to the fullest or something like that. We do not have to put ourselves under pressure. We do not have to hide from the people around us. It makes us more sincere to our friends and family. And they are sincere to us as well."(ID6)

4.2.3 Balancing in coming out: The informants (N=7) make their decision to come out or not based on the consequences after coming out as well as their comfort level towards certain people such a close friends.

"If they want to know, I will tell them directly that I have a boyfriend (giggles).I think it would waste my time not to because I am confident with whom I am. I do not create drama or something of that sort. That is "too much" (femininely suggests)."(ID1)

5. Living a gay life

5.1 Perceiving difficulties of living a gay life: The section addresses the way informants (N=7) realize certain difficulties and limitations associated with living a gay life. For example, they cannot have children or cannot have a typical family as men and women can as expected by the society. Moreover, keeping a gay relationship is also a difficult task. They are also worried about the end of their lives along with limited working opportunities given by the prejudice in society. On the contrary, some of the informants stated that they have never been worried about difficulties of living a gay life.

"If Mai had to have a girlfriend or to have sex with a girl or even to get married and be in a fake relationship with a woman, having my own family, have a child, just to fool myself into thinking that I have my own perfect family. "I cannot do that". As there are so many people involved; a wife, a child. If one day they happened to know I am gay then what would happen? I am scared of the consequences. So I accept the way I am and I realize that I may have to be alone or to be with a gay partner instead of having my own family." Being gay takes away many opportunities in one's life. As I said, at least it takes away the dream of having a perfect family, having children and marriage." (ID2)

5.2 To live harmoniously with oneself and with others: Informants also develop their own identity in many ways apart from sexual identity in order to live harmoniously with oneself and with others. Significantly, they tend to value their parents as the first priority.

5.2.1 Having a commitment to self-development: The way the informants (N=6) are likely to develop themselves in many ways such as education, work, creativity and their individual potential. They believe in their own capabilities even though their own identity may not be relevant to the expectation of society. Still, they can balance their identity along with maintaining various ways of self-development in order to be accepted by their family members and the society.

"Someone like me, I feel like I have to be on top you know, Top performance, everything. Which way that we are good at, we go that way. I don't know. It feels like a gift."(ID2)

5.2.2 Focusing of parent and family member: The informants (N=7) realize that they will not startup their new family, hence, having no children. Accordingly, they tend to focus on taking care of their parents and other family members. On the other hand, they also tend not to create troubles by disappointing the family in order to balance some of gay life's difficulties such as not being able to have children, not being able to startup new family like heterosexuals, inter alia. They overcome all of these by creating new identity as a "good son" in order to live harmoniously with parents as parents are immensely important to them.

"Well, I don't see any chance to have my own family in the future, like having a wife, having my own kids (laughs). So the only one thing I have is my family, dad, mom, and brother. So instead of focusing on a future family, I am focusing on myself, mom, dad, and brother. Those are the people I have to take care of." (ID2)

6. Emergence of an integrated personality

6.1 Integrating gay identity to self-identity: The informants(N=9) were open to all of the experiences; developing the self in others aspects gradually, to combine gay self with self-structure, which has been the life time process since they were young- the success of which increases self-worth, and reinforces what makes them happy to be themselves. They do not want to be something else beside themselves. They have a fulfilled life.

"I live my life the way I think I'm happy, but all the relationships I think I have built them up for so long since I was a teen so I can mingle and live with all others no matter they are straights or whatever. I can live with them peacefully. No one has ever bullied me. It might be because I'm a bit quiet but not that quiet but when I'm with my friends I still have fun with them without being in fear if they know that I'm gay. I don't feel frustrated at all, and there's no problem."(ID1)

6.2 Emerging a coherent and integrated self: After the formants (N=9) integrated the gay self with the other self the found the harmony in their complete self. They will be proud of being gay. Having increased self-esteem, and confidence in being gay. They have satisfaction of life. They feel relaxed in their own self.

"I think I'm happy with the way I choose to live my life as being gay. Now I enjoy living my life and I don't think being gay is good or bad or whatever just because I'm happy."(ID5)

Discussion

The experience of Thai gay men with high self-acceptance of sexual orientation was depicted as a positive one by many interview respondents with the weight of trust in one's own organism and openness to experience about the sense of self and experiences of sexual orientation as gay men that lead to one identity synthesis and full self-acceptance. According to the findings, self-acceptance is a vital process for those who are homosexual, including gay men. As gay men start to explore their gay identities it might cause incongruence with social values, and in turn, they internalized that dichotomy within themselves. This idea will be elaborated upon in the following section;

First, the discovery of sexual identity; every gay man in this research began to sense some signs within himself at an early age. Those signs are the sensing of a gay vibe since they were young. However, in their childhood, they might have lacked the knowledge and understanding about sexual diversities. Thus, they might not have understood their own feelings; this is consistent with the findings of Savin-Williams (2005) stating that mostly young LGBT begin to be aware of their own sexual orientation since adolescence. So this period of experience is an ignition of a process of self-acceptance, it's a wakeup call of being gay. The findings are supported by the study of Cass (1979) the first stage; Identity confusion, also the first stage of Troiden (1979); Sensitization. The function of self-acceptance will work continuously if they don't not ignore those signs but rather they go on an exploration of those feelings..

Moreover, the "Self" theory of Rogers (1951) explains about self-acceptance which begins as they open themselves to experience and perceive them as reality (openness

to experience). According to the informants, some of them used to have an attraction to women, and this attraction is like an alternating current. The occurrence of this phenomenon can be viewed as the beginning of the process of developing identities in the first step of the model bisexual identity of Martin et al (1994) (Initial confusion). In this stage the person begins to be confused about their own sexual orientation. They feel the strong sexual desire for both male and female. In another aspect, the confusion may be a self-defense mechanism that gay men created in order to achieve a sense of harmony with the values of society. The mechanism is *"Self-denial of the gay sense"*. Since they internalized the social values to be their own values, the incongruence can lead to interrupt the process of self-acceptance. However, only 3 out of the 10 cases use to deny their inner feelings, which can be explained by Rogers (1951). As all of the emerging feelings are sensory and visceral, the experience can be quite confusing and extremely difficult to suppress.

Some of the informants used to be confronted with negative social biases. Moreover, most of them have a quiet polite personality and their behaviors tend to be effeminate. This is congruent with the results from the study of Sharpe (2002) that those targets of homophobia will be effeminate boys or butch girls. But at the same time "facing with prejudice" is likely to be a test before they will reach to the top of the mountain. Facing stigmatization - though difficult and painful- can result in a person having increased clarity of the understanding that he is homosexual.

One of the vital factors in an effective self-acceptance process is "the acceptance of same-sex attracted feeling" working in 2 dimensions; 1) Making gay men realize that he is satisfied with the attraction to men and 2) the key to drive the process "Openness these attracted to men feeling to be as a part of his experience", consistent with Rogers (1951) "The fully functioning person", composed of 3 factors; openness to experience, organism trusting and Existential living; the combination of these three steps aid in acceptance of ones' self as gay men. They will reach out to other gay community members by entering into gay society. This materialized in some emerging gay men entering gay society via online social network –this is consistent with the study of Hillier and Harrison (2007) that found that young LGB who are not ready to come out will find the LGB information through the internet.

After gay men can answer to themselves "Who am I?" then they can keep it within themselves, or progress to find satisfaction and an answer for the question "Where do I belong?" This is substantiated by the study of Cass (1996). But in the Thai culture context, gay men have to find the answer of "Where do I belong in society, especially in respect to my family?" At first, informants will be worried about the acceptance of the family, and they tend to hide themselves because in Thai society "if your son turns out to be gay, the parent would not be happy." So they are afraid that they might shame their family by being gay, consistent with the findings of Bangon Taptien (2008) the family has a vital effect on Thai gay men. In addition, in line with Rogers (1951), all human beings have a definitive need for positive regard, gay men

included. If gay men know that their parents accept them with conditional positive regard. They will not disclose themselves until they are ready in this sense readiness is in reference to the ability to live on their own, etc (self-reliance). Also they try to develop themselves to live harmoniously with oneself and their families. Eventually, gay men, they will increasingly open all of the experience and then merge gay self and other self to be integrated within a new self-structure for which I purpose the word "Harmosexual"- this denotes a homosexual who has a harmony in self, and life.

Conclusion

The process of self-acceptance in gay men is a life time process. These findings suggest that trust in one's own organism, openness to experience about the sense of self and experience of sexual orientation as gay men and also existential living leading to one's identity synthesis. As in the Cass's theory (1979) homosexual identity development, gay men are going to develop their homosexual identity from the first stage to the last stage in life. This knowledge has considerable implications for psychological services trying to understand and enhance the well-being of the gay men. However, further investigation on the experience of self-acceptance in gay men should be carried with a cohort study in the future.

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Domain	Category	Subcategory	Frequency
1. Beginning	1.1 Sensing of gay		10/10(genera
to sense one's	vibe		1)
own	1.2 The attraction to		
homosexual	heterosexual		7/10(typical)
orientation	1.3 Self-denial of the		
	gay sense		3/10(variant)
2.	2.1 Encountering with	2.1.1 Being discriminated	5/10(typical)
Experiences	social prejudice	from society	3/10(variant)
that facilitate		2.1.2 Reaction to	
adopting gay		negatively bias of	
identity	2.2. Harris a second	social	(10(+-1))
	2.2 Having a sexual experience and	2.2.1 Having a sexual experience with a	6/10(typical)
	relationship with	man	4/10(variant)
	men	2.2.2 Having a romantic	
		relationship with a	9/10(general
	2.3 The acceptance of	man)
	same-sex attracted		
	feeling	101	
3.Sexual	3.1 The acceptance of		10/10(genera
identity	gay identity		1)
acceptance	3.2 The attitudes		
	toward society		6/10(typical)
	with self-		
	acceptance		
	3.3 Entering to gay		8/10(typical)
	society		
4. Disclosure of the gay	4.1 Self-disclosures to family	4.1.1 Fear and anxiety to reaction of family	7/10(typical)
identity		member	7/10(typical)
		4.1.2 Perceiving attitude	
		of family member	8/10(typical)
		toward being gay	
		4.1.3 Readiness in coming	6/10(typical)
		out to family member	
	4.2 Self-disclosures to	4.2.1 The attitude of their	
	society	living society and the	7/10(typical)
		choice of coming out	
		4.2.2 Living in society	7/10(typical)
		that is open in	

Table 1. The experience of self-acceptance of sexual orientation in gay men

Domain	Category	Subcategory	Frequency
		diversity 4.2.3 Balancing in coming out	
5. Living a gay life	5.1 Perceiving difficulties of		7/10(typical)
	living a gay life 5.2 To live	5.2.1 Having a commitment to self-	6/10(typical)
	harmoniously with oneself and with others	development 5.2.2 Focusing of parent and family member	7/10(typical)
6. Emerging of integrated personality	6.1 Integrating gay identity to self identity	for	9/10(general)
	6.2 Emerging a coherent and integrated self		9/10(general)



