

UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS OF SELECTED FILIPINO TRANSGENDER

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to understand the psychological dynamics and affective factors of ten (10) male-to-female (MTF) transgender living within Metro Manila. The study used multiple-qualitative and mixed-method case studies to fully understand each unique experiences of Filipino MTF transgender. Measures were three (3) psychological tests, an outcome survey and a formal interview. Among the ten (10) participants, two were enclosed to the idea that their sexual identity is female; the rest were psychologically affected by the acceptance of family and discrimination of society that made gay sons transcend to female appearance, more so being a transgender. Results indicated that transsexualism thoughts are being mediated by the affection of romantic relationship.

Keywords: *Transgender, Familial Aspect, Social Aspect, Romantic Relationship, Transsexualism, Psychological Experience, Psycho-Social Experience*

INTRODUCTION

Miss International Queen is a prestigious pageant held in Thailand for people with beauty and wit around the world. Its primary aim is to promote human rights awareness among international communities, by presenting equal opportunity for each candidate. The Philippine local version of Miss International Queens is Super Sireyna, a segment in the noontime show Eat Bulaga. Both are not ordinary pageants because candidates are transgenders who have experienced social marginalization (Brennan, Kuhns, Johnson, Wilson, Garofalo, 2012) and are perceived psychologically impaired individuals due to gender dysphoria (Wylie, 2008).

Transgender is classified as Gender Identity Disorder (GID). According to Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorder (4th ed., text revision, 2000), GID is defined as a strong persistent cross-gender identification, in which a person's view of one's physical appearance is incongruent of how he/she feels about him /herself. GID is clustered into Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT). Transgender, therefore, are people who are uneasy and/or are greatly disturbed by their biological body composition, that contradicts a psychologically sexual preference over the physical component hence acting and dressing up as the opposite sex and sex reassignment are usual behaviours.

James Kirk and Robert Belovics (2008) used transgender and transsexual interchangeably. Literature, however, states that these words are different. Transsexual on one hand, is a subgroup of transgender where in transsexuals are people who have undergone surgical or hormonal procedures to obtain their desired sexuality (Carroll, 2010 as cited by Singh, Hays and Watson, 2011; Bieschke, Effrig and Locke, 2011; Bockting, W. O., Miner, M. H., Swinburne-Romine, R. E., Hamilton, A., Coleman, E., 2013). The biological composition of the person who is transsexual is already of that opposite sex which has 3 phases; a real-life experience in the desired role, hormone therapy and surgical change (Gomez-Gil, Vidal-Hagemeijer, and Salamero, 2008). In addition, Kosenko (2011) found that hormonal change was also responsible to the differences in sexual urges of a transsexual. Some other transgender are drag queens and kings (Bockting et al., 2013) and are know to be transvestites (Silverstein & Picano, 2003).

Seeing a man wearing a woman's clothing, and vice versa, has a negative connotation to society. In Minnesota, USA, half of transgender samples reported that they experienced discrimination and other harassments (Bockting et al., 2013). Minnesota is populated mostly of Protestants who are perceived to be more accepting to homosexuality, however has shown negative behaviour towards transgenders. This caused a low rate of employment amongst homosexuals. In the study of Conron, Scott, Stowell, and Landers (2008), unemployed transgenders are said to be healthier compared to employed transgenders. Another study stated that transgenders in New York who have experienced verbal and physical abuse generated major depressive disorder, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts most especially during adolescence (Nuttbrock, L. A., Bockting, W. O., Hwang, S., Rosenblum, A. Mason, M. Macri, M. Becker, , 2010). The verbal and physical abuse starts in the LGBT's adolescence stage of development where in the parents show rejection and discrimination to their homosexual children. Parents have described homosexuality as a way to grieve a loved one's death where feeling of shock, denial, anger and sadness happen (Baptist and Allen, 2008; D'Augelli, 2006; Robinson, Walters & Skeen, 1989; Savin-Williams, 2001 as cited by Hilton and Szymanski, 2011). In the Philippines, transgenders have been reported to suffer from familial rejection, specifically by their fathers (Winter, Rogando-Sasot, and King, 2007). Just like how the parents reacted to children's sexual orientation, siblings also felt shocked and concerned though they tend to be more accepting compared to their parents' initial and accepting processes (Hilton and Szymanski, 2011). The transition process itself from male to female: cross-dressing then sexual reassignment- is a hard phase for the transgender. A study about life quality of transgenders have found that people who have undergone sexual procedures are mentally healthy compared to people who did not (Ainsworth and Spiegel, 2010). Sexual reassignment seems psychologically positive but the process of undergoing such procedures leads to psychological disorder which is gender dysphoria.

Despite the social and family involvement to transgender, a romantic relationship is believed to be part of the transgender's life. It has always been said that a partner in life is a better source of support in a lifetime. The researcher used the term romantic relationship to differentiate sexual or physical attraction to relationship. Simon Levay (2011) stated that physical attraction of a person involves desire for sexual contact while romantic or emotional attraction is “*a desire for psychological union that need not always be expressed in sexual contact*” (p.3). Presence of romantic relationship is better compared with physical attraction among sexually confused individuals due to its emotional involvement. However, people who experience identity confusion, often conceal their sexual orientation, which leads to problematic relationship. In a research of Steiner (1985) as cited by Nuttbrock, L. A., Bockting, W. O., Hwang, S., Rosenblum, A. Mason, M. Macri, M. Becker, (2010), a relationship is terminated due to the concealment and late disclosure of sexual identity to their long-term partner. Early affirmation of sexual identity leads to a better relationship because value of admittance surface between the two parties.

There is, however, the factor of religiosity. Majority of the population are Catholics. Catholics and other religious beliefs oppose homosexuality. This has led the researcher to identify how these transgender cope up with the social values that they went through, focusing on discrimination and other harassments (Bockting, Miner, Swinburne Romine, Hamilton, and Coleman, 2013). Although some religions are against the behaviours or actions that transgenders manifest, Filipino transgenders believes that their sexual identity and discomfort with what they biologically have is God's will (Winter, Rogando-Sasot, and King, 2007). Despite religions objection to homosexuality, a person spiritual and strong belief to God is a support, especially when it comes to unjust treatment of society. Social discrimination happens when friends, acquaintances, co-worker/s and other people involve in the social life of the

individual suddenly develop some form of social distance. Literature claims that friends will be acceptable about the changes but others will be shocked and built a barrier between their relationships. Heterosexuals, however, seek a re-establishment relationship due to one's new sexual orientation causing positive or negative reaction of behavior (Bolin, 1988, as cited by Nuttbrock, et al., 2009). In the process, there is an acceptance in a social setting however it needs proper adjustment. Winter, Rogando-Sasot, and King (2007) furthered that society is a minimal factor that influences transgenderism. The findings suggests that social influence have equal effect to familial rejection. Besides social discrimination, the other significant variable that influences transgender is the familial rejection (Chakrapani, Newman, Shunmugam, and Dubrow, 2011). Literature reveal that it produces homeless homosexuals because they are forcefully moved out of their home (Morton, 2007, cited by Scottish Transgender Alliance, 2008). The usual reaction to a coming-out child about his/her sexuality is rejection such as verbal harassment, physical abuse and/or cutting off their familial lineage. According to Singh, Hays, and Watson (2011) the rejections would lead to uncovering of the resilience of the Filipino transgender. This rejection is called transphobic harassments (Morton, 2007, cited by Scottish Transgender Alliance, 2008).

The resilience style in transgenders' psychological dynamics, particularly transvestites, is anchored from the interpersonal theory of Harry Stack Sullivan on tensions and energy transformations (Sullivan 1953, as cited by Feist and Feist, 2009). Psychological dynamics is defined in this research as the totality of a person's psychological, emotional and spiritual health from initial formation of intellect until such time of self-realization and acceptance. Furthermore, it is the perception of an individual whether early identification of sexuality, how he / she was raised by the family, how emotionally stable he / she is, and affective experiences that influenced their well-being. The researchers aim to identify if the three (3) factors, familial (Greene and Britton, 2013), social (Meyer, 2003, cited by Nuttbrock, et al., 2013), and relationship (Levay, 2011), influence transvestites to be a transsexual. Filipino transvestites are assumed to have hormonal and surgical procedure due to the pressure that people still view them as men even though they present themselves as women. A common thinking among transvestite is that if they have changed their sexual organs to the opposite sex, people will treat them as real women. Silverstain and Picano (2003) stated that some transgender are heterosexuals which mean that they don't think or sexually fantasizing other men but they are focused on their sexual organs. However, in this study, romantic relationship is added to see if it mediates the psychological dynamics of a transvestite to be a transsexual.

The researcher formulated four (4) assumptions. The assumptions are:

1. Psychological dynamics are expected to highly influence transvestite's sexual reassignment
2. Due to familial rejection and social discrimination, a transvestite is assumed to undergo transsexualism.
3. Romantic relationship is expected to influence transvestite decision of become transsexual.
4. Even if transvestites experience familial rejection and cultural discrimination, a transvestite with an accepting sexual status partner is assumed to neglect a sex reassignment.

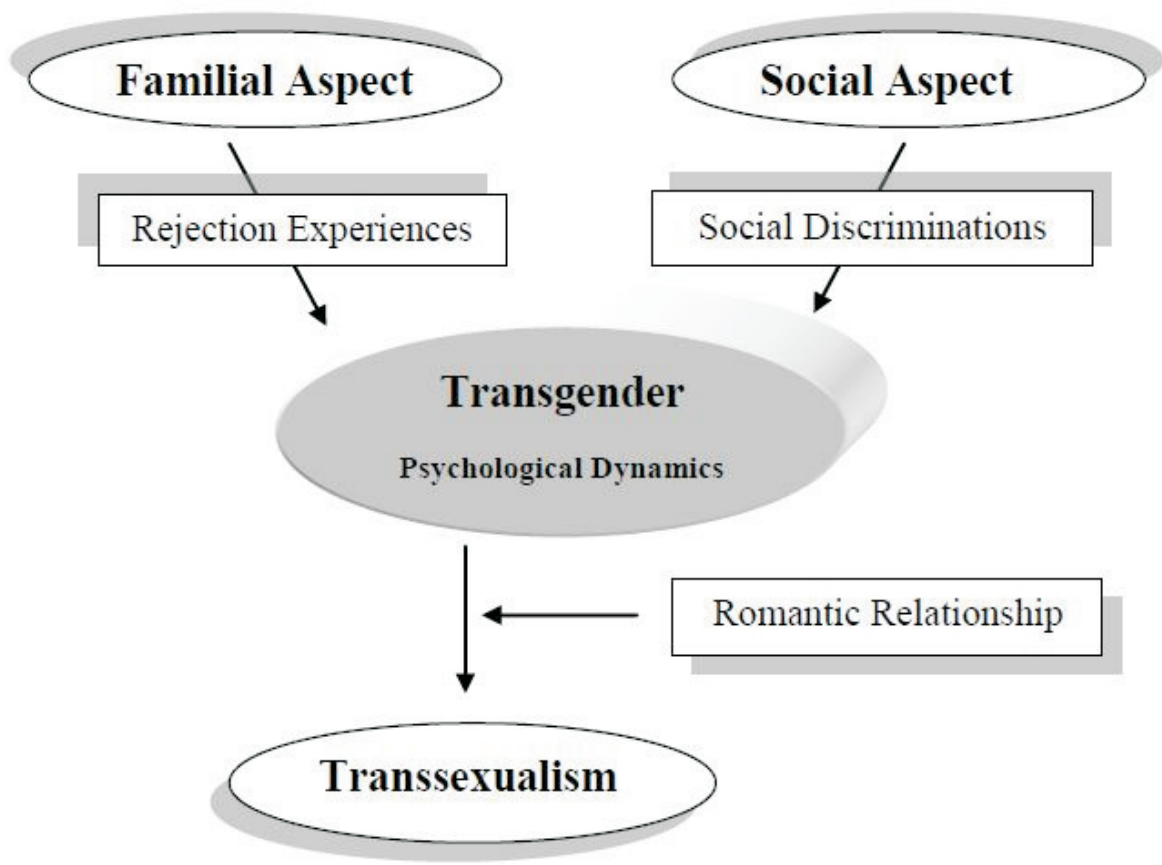


Figure 1. *Conceptual paradigm of the study.*

This research is focused within the Filipino context and how the “kultura” affected the personality of the individual. However, no generalization can occur as the result of the study is limited only to some Filipino transgender.

The research aimed to: 1.) Understand the psychological dynamics of Filipino transgender particularly their personality 2.) Identify the resilience strategies of a transgender 3.) Understand the familial and social marginalization to transgender's well-being, and 4.) Determine the level of influence of a current romantic relationship to a transgender.

Conceptual Framework

Experiences are major contributor to the psychological dynamic of a person, where in, in this conceptual framework the researcher is looking into two life-long influences to a transgender. Familial aspect's major consequential factor to a transgender to be transsexual is by rejection, while social aspect's effective factor is its cultural discrimination. The study aims to investigate if both aspects affect transgender's decision to undergo sex reassignment. However, a mediating factor, which is a romantic relationship, will cause incongruence to their decision. If a transgender experience acceptance of what they sexually have (penis) from their partner, chances of having sexual reassignment could be expected.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Throughout the study, there is an opportunity to uncover the anonymity behind the different faces of the transvestite in the Philippine context. Also, it aims to show how significant a life-long partners' to a transvestite regardless of his/her sexual character. This study will not only benefit the transgender community, but the whole LGBT community since LGB also experience harassments and other oppressive actions. On the side of the heterosexuals, this paper promotes higher level of understanding to the transition of transgenders. Most specially, it aims to describe how family and the society should treat the transgender individuals in the community.

METHOD

To deeply understand the psychological dynamics of Filipino transvestites, this research used multiple-qualitative mixed method case study as its design for the reason that one's experience differ with the others and it uses both psychological tests and formal interview. Another factor is due to the complex involvement of both society and culture. According to Robert Stake as cited by Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos, Elden Wiebe (2010) multiple case study refers to case study research in which several instrumental bounded cases are selected to develop a more in-depth understanding of the phenomena than a single case can provide. Commonality is however, aimed at after thematizing the responses of the informants. In-depth interview was conducted in order to collect the important data. Personal information was subjected to privacy check and consent was taken then debriefing followed afterwards. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interview questions include personal history, family background and social relations. The interview lasted for less than two hours per case. The gathered data were kept private. Confidentiality was kept throughout the study.

Research Participants

Ten (10) selected Filipino male transgender were the participants of the study. The selection process was made via a social networking site. A promotion campaign was posted in the social networking platform to invite willing informants. Each participant is from the Philippines, residing within Metro-Manila. The participants had varying educational background. Approximation of age was twenty (20) to forty (40) years old. Lastly, they must be in a romantic relationship for at least six (6) months with a discreet same-sex partner.

Research Instruments

A projective test and two personality tests were used to add weight to the result. House-Tree-Person (HTP) test which measures the unconscious thoughts and other significant information evaluated one's personality dynamics (Buck, 1937). The Manchester personality questionnaire (MPQ 14.2) measured fourteen (14) primary dimensions and five (5) big dimensions of personality (Cameron, 2006) Emotions Profile Index (EPI) was used to measure personality traits and at the same time, documented the conflicts inside the life of the individual (Plutchik and Kellerman, 1970). The MPQ14.2 is a 1 to 5-point likert scale questionnaire that has a total of 120. The EPI include a selection of one out of two words that bests describe the person. The two personality tests verified the interview results of the respondents. Another instrument that could measure contentment with the participant's physical

attribution is the facial feminization surgery outcome evaluation (FFSOE). It consisted of nine close ended questions that evaluate their physical, emotional and social domain of contentment. The FFSOE is a 5-scale evaluation with both positive and negative poles.

Research Procedures

The sampling of the respondents was selected via social media. An orientation was given before the collection of data started. After the initial process, the personality tests (HTP, MPQ 14.2 and EPI) and satisfaction test (facial feminization surgery outcome evaluation) was administered to the participants. After the assessment of the tests, it was followed by an interview. The interview validates the results of the psychological results. Then, psychological data interpretation and analysis follows. Aside from their actual answers, all behaviours, mannerisms, and facial reactions were observed for deeper analysis. The interview data was transcribed for further analysis.

RESULTS

Among the twenty-two (22) Filipino transgender who have shown interest, the participants were shortlisted via age the criteria of age, locality, education, and identification and duration of the romantic relationship. Only 10 were selected because of the parameters. Table 1 presents the demographics data.

Table 1 Demographic Data

	Mean age	Accepted >16 y/o	Accepted <16 y/o	College degree	Professional work	Romantic relationship > 2 year	Romantic relationship < 2 years	Plans for sexual reassignment
Transgender Single (5)	26.6	2(40%)	3(60%)	4(80%)	3(60%)	*4(80%)	*1(20%)	4(80%)
Transgender In a relationship (5)	28.8	3(60%)	2(40%)	3(60%)	1(20%)	1(20%)	4(80%)	2(40%)
n=10	27.7	5(50%)	5(50%)	7(70%)	4(40%)	5(50%)	5(50%)	6(60%)

*- had longest relationship

The sample respondents (n=10) are subdivided in terms of relationship status. There were five (5) single respondents and five (5) committed respondents. The average mean of the single respondents is 26.6 while committed respondents got an average mean of 28.8. The average mean of the both groups is 27.7.

One factor that was analyzed was the rejection of the family or even the duration of actual acceptance process. It is subdivided into two categories; (16) accepted below the age of 16, and accepted (16) above the age of 16. There were five (5) participants who received acceptance younger than 16 years old and the other five (5) were accepted 16 years old and older. Seven (7) respondents are college degree holder which includes majors in bachelors in arts and also in science. Four (4) of them are from single transgender group while three (3) participants are from transgender in a relationship group. Four (4) of the seven (7) graduates are practicing professional work in the corporate world which is 60 percent of transgender single group and 20 percent of transgender in a relationship group respectively.

It was included in the selection criteria of the participants that they should have romantic relationship for at least six (6) months or more. The duration of the romantic relationship was subdivided into categories; less than two (2) years, and more than two (2) years. Four (4) out of five (5) respondents in the transgender single group had a relationship of not more than two (2) years. On the other hand, four (4) out of five (5) transgender in a relationship group are in current relationship for more than two (2) years. Eighty (80%) percent from the sample population of single transgender are looking forward for sexual reassignment surgery while forty (40%) percent from transgender in a relationship.

Table 2 Psychological Data

	Mean Age	H-T-P	MPQ factor 14	EPI (mean %)	
N=10	27.7	House	Primary Dimensions	Trustful	(74.3%ile)
		>frustration	>Originates action/ invents things	Dyscontrolled	(52.2%ile)
		>hostility	>Challenges assumptions/ take risks	Timid	(55.7%ile)
		>aggressive	>Practical, grounded, task oriented	Depressed	(44.1%ile)
		>concern / acceptable facade in interpersonal relation	>Holds back ideas/ gives way to others	Distrustful	(31.9%ile)
			>Less comfortable in social situation	Controlled	(35.7%ile)
			>Individualistic/ self reliant	Aggressive	(43.3%ile)
		>home is treated as prison	>Communicative/ open/ expressive	Gregarious	(62.3%ile)
			>Self contained/ works well alone	Bias	(69.3%ile)
			>Intuitive/spontaneous		
		Tree	>Committed to career/ contesting		
		>ungratified needs	>Conscientious/ persevering		
		>castration anxiety	>Quality driven/ detail oriented/ methodical		
		>obsessive desire for something	>Decisive/ controlling		
			>Apprehensive/ worried		
		Person	Big Five Factor		
		>suspiciousness	>Adaptive/ pragmatic/ implementation focused		
		>fear of voyeurism	>Individualistic/ self reliant/ independent		
		>expressing rejection and contempt	>Quality driven/ achieving/ conscientious		
		>homosexual ind.	>Reserved/ socially inhibited/ introvert		
		>maintain facade or social font	>Calm/ stable/ decisive		

Table 2 presents the psychological summary of the ten (10) transgender. Three psychological tests (House-tree-person, MPQ Factor 14, and Emotions Profile Index) were used to assess the psychological dynamics of the respondents and one test related satisfaction to from surgical procedure (Facial Feminization Outcome Survey). The psychological summary is presented below:

House-Tree-Person

The house-tree-person test or HTP is a projective test that measures personality in the aspects of inner view of self of the test-taker. It also depicts the environment and the things important to the subject. As part of the administration, the respondents were asked to draw a house, tree and person, and these drawings provide a measure of self-perceptions and attitudes (Kline, 1999). The result showed that there was a sign of frustration among the respondents. They unconsciously use facade in interpersonal relation, an issue related to acceptance from their family. They unconsciously feel ungratified with regards to their needs in social setting which can be connected to their feelings that they were unwanted

individuals in the society. They have obsessive desire for something and that could be power over people because they experience castration anxiety. Their feeling of being powerless would bring them to unsatisfied needs. They are also generally suspicious that serves as an expression of their rejection and contempt to others. Lastly, their drawings proved that they are homosexual. Transgender's drawings were identified that expresses homosexual tendencies based on the H-T-P interpretation manual.

MPQ Factor 14

The Manchester Personality Questionnaire (MPQ Factor 14) is a 120 item test on a five-point scale with an allotted time of 30 minutes to answer. It is an occupational personality test focused on traits relevant to creative and innovative behaviour (Society for Human Resource Management. 2007). MPQ factor 14 further evaluates the personality of the transgender. Based on the result, the respondents found to have initiative personality and tend to invent new things, they are also grounded, task oriented and methodical. They do things with quality because of being persevering and take risk if their intuition makes it a call. They are competitive, committed, individualistic and self contained that makes them less comfortable in social situations; however they are communicative and expressive with what they feel. Lastly, they are controlled because they are worried-some but they express stability.

Emotions Profile Index (EPI)

The emotion profile index summary of the respondents which was found to be sociable, friendly, affectionate and extroverted (gregarious dimension = 62.3%ile). The mean percentile of the transgender with trustful dimension is 74.3%ile which indicates that transgender tends to take things at their face value and avoids rejecting actions (distrustful dimension = 31.9%ile). Dyscontrol dimension (52.2%ile) agreed with the personality test result that they like to try new things and experiences however disagrees that they are methodical and detail oriented because of low score in control dimension (35.7%ile). Same as to timid dimension (55.7%ile) that they tend to be cautious and worries of what would people think or say about them. For depressed dimension (44.1%ile), it indicated that they are satisfied with their life style. They are not aggressive and they express little anger and even reluctant to show it. All interpretations are based on the EPI manual (Plutchik and Kellerman, 1989).

Facial Feminization Surgery Outcome Survey

Table 3 Facial Feminization Surgery Outcome Survey Scores			
	N=10	Mean value (SD)	Mean score (%)
Satisfied	7	21.4 (1.8)	59.5%
Unsatisfied	3	15 (2.2)	41.6%

Facial feminization surgery outcome evaluation is a well known survey, most commonly for women and who has undergone surgical procedure. It evaluates the patients' satisfaction level (Ainsworth and Spiegel, 2010). On the other hand, the researcher used this survey to the ten (10) respondents to identify their level of satisfaction to their current physical appearance. The outcome of the survey was that seven (7) out of ten (10) transgender are very much satisfied with their facial and physical appearance. The respondents were satisfied with a mean value of 22.5 (SD=1.5). The other Three (3) scored unsatisfied with a mean value of 14.5 (SD=2.5).

Interview Results

A transgender's transition starts as early as childhood when they are accepted by the family. Transition is according to Grant, J. M., Mottet, L. A., Tanis, J., Herman, J. L., Harrison, J., Keisling, M. (2010) is a process that some, but not all, transgender and gender conforming people undertake to live as a gender different from the one they were assigned at birth. However if the family does not approve the sexual preference, transition will start by the time one can stand on his own feet in order to express the real identity. The respondents started playing girl things and their playmates are mostly female cousins. Most of the respondents grew up with their grandparents and had little support and advises from their parents. They were tolerated by their grandparents so this led to effeminizing. They started to use hormonal pills to experience low sexual urge and emotional imbalance during the use of the drug. Some of the respondents used enhancement surgery to look more feminine. During the transition they experience more discrimination but eventually they look undeniably more woman-like. Their relationship started during their transition. What is more interesting is that all claimed that their partners are heterosexually straight men. Some were able to manage and maintain years of relationship.

Two sexual identities were classified within the sample respondents: transgender with homosexual identity and transgender with heterosexual identity. Eight (8) respondents are transgenders with homosexual orientation classification that they consider their selves as homosexual two (2) transgenders are in heterosexual orientation.

Table 4 Summary of Interview

	Gay identification >6 y/o	Transition >16 y/o	Transition <16 y/o	Experienced familial rejection	Experienced social discrimination	Relationship consideration for sexual reassignment
Transgender PSE (8)	8	5	3	3	8	7
Transgender PE (2)	1	-	2	2	2	0
n=10	9	5	5	5	10	7

Table 4 presents the summary of the interview results. There were eight (8) transgenders falls into transgender with Psycho-social Experience (PSE) while two (2) falls under transgender with Psychological Experience (PE). All eight (8) respondents from transgender with PSE identified themselves as gay Six (6) years and older while one (1) from the transgender group with PE already identified as gay. In terms of transition from gay to being transgender, there were five (5) respondents under the transition during 16 years old and above, while there were also five (5) respondents under transition younger than 16 years old. Five (5) of the respondents experienced familial rejection while, all the ten (10) respondents experienced social discrimination. Lastly, seven (7) of the respondents considered relationship as basis in deciding for a sexual reassignment.

Table 5 Resilience Strategy Based on Interview Data

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage %	Rank
Being woman-like	7	70	1
Being successful	2	20	2
Being married	1	10	3
		100	

Three themes were drawn from the interview results in terms of resilience strategy of the respondents. The resilience strategy is the coping mechanism of the transgenders from social discrimination. The most common resilience strategy is being woman-like with a frequency of 7 (70%), followed by being successful, 2 (20%). Being woman-like is the absolute transition from being gay to transgenderism. One (1) of the respondents or ten percent (10%), reported that being married is her strategy to avoid social discrimination.

DISCUSSION

Understanding the psychological dynamics of selected Filipino transgender demands an essential method for data gathering. The psychological dynamics of the transgenders was identified via three (3) psychological tests. The result found that the respondents (HTP) are frustrated from familial and social discrimination, had ungratified needs in social setting, and had obsessive desire for acceptance. In terms of emotion (EPI), they are trustful, dyscontrolled, timid, and gregarious. Their emotional profile summary result presented that they are reserved and introverted; moreover they are sociable, friendly and affectionate. These result is congruent to the works of Brennan, J., Kuhns, L., Johnson, A., Beizer, M., Wilson, E., Garofalo, R. (2012), where in they saw that psycho-social factors adds to a transgender well-being. The frustration of the respondents was caused by family rejection and social discrimination as revealed in the interview data.

The first assumption that psychological dynamics influences their needs for sexual reassignment was accepted as it was revealed (based on psychological result) in their unconscious frustration to fulfil an ungratified need, more so interpreted by the researcher as the need to be womanly. Like in the cases of the participants, although they are enclosed with the thinking that they are gay that is the reason why they want to be a woman, the experiences revealed that they admire the responses of people to them when they are womanly looking than the old time that they expresses a stereotypical gay and even during the transition for an instance the hormonal procedures (Rotondi, N. K., Greta, B. R., Scanlon, Kaay, M., Travrs, R., Treavers, A.,2013). The assumption that social discrimination is a factor that made them transcend to be a transgender was also proven. They have a need to be womanly, however, not to the extent of having sexual reassignment. This was supported by the result of the facial feminization survey where the respondents found to be satisfied with their appearance. Furthermore, It is also congruent to the study of Bozkurt, A., Isikli, H., Demir F., Ozmenler, K. H., Gulcat, Zeynep, Kerlidere, T., & Aydin, H. (2006) about body image which stated that the homosexuals are generally satisfied in terms of body image as compared to female transsexuals. Familial relations were strong between the family and the transgender. They reported that although they experienced rejection for being gay, the support and love were instilled. It contradicted the assumption that family is a factor that made a gay transcend to be a

transgender. However, it is showed that family's disapproval and rejection is not a factor, but rather toleration. It was as if they supported their children's homosexual personality that includes changing of physical appearance. Although, two (2) of the participants had a parental advice that say it's okay to be gay, but not to the point where in you have to look gay. This is parallel to the claim of Greene and Britton (2013) that culture variation plays a major role within the family setting. Therefore, Familial rejection and social discrimination is not a contributing factor for the transgender to undergo transsexualism or sexual reassignment. Also, rather than rejection, a word that better describe the relationship of a family to a gay son is disregard, meaning the action or state of paying no attention to the sexual preference gave more strength and toleration to their identity crisis.

The third assumption is also accepted. It was revealed that romantic relationship is a major influence towards transsexualism. Most of the respondents considered the consent of their partners in deciding whether they would undergo for sexual reassignment or not. Moreover, acceptance of their sexual identity from their partner is the main factor why most of them consulted them regarding the issue of transsexualism. This claim further proved the fourth assumption wherein, despite of experiences in familial rejection and social discrimination, acceptance of their partner about their sexual identity caused them to reject sexual reassignment.

In terms of resiliency strategy from social discrimination, it was revealed that being womanly is their main strategy. The respondents stated the when you are womanly, you are accepted in the society and thus, they were able to avoid discrimination. This finding is related to the works of Singhn, Hays and Watson (2011) in which they identified 5 common resiliency themes (evolving a self-generated definition of self, embracing self-worth, awareness of oppression, connection with a supportive community, and cultivating hope for the future). From the five resiliency themes, being womanly is can be associated to self and self worth.

Based on the interview data, both familial influence and social marginalization takes place in transgenders well-being. They are innovative and their life is more meaningful because they possess extroverted personality despite of the fluctuation of commoners to them. They are frustrated because they experience discrimination from the society. Their frustration due to social discrimination is congruent with the study of Bradford J., Reisner, S. L., Honnold, J. A.(2013) which stated that frustrations of homosexuals made them to camouflage with female sexuality and for lesbians, masculinity. What is more interesting that influences the actual perception of a transgender is their romantic relationship. The acceptance of a romantic partner with what they have cuts the initiative to further change their sexual identity, rather than to fulfil the call of norms and stigma to the transgender community.

Based on the four assumptions the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1.) There was a need to be womanly (due to social discrimination) but there was no indication of behaviour leading to sexual reassignment.
- 2.1) Familial rejection is **not** a contributing factor towards transsexualism.
- 2.2) Social discrimination is a **not** contributing factor towards transsexualism **but** a contributing factor to be womanly
- 3.) Romantic relationship is a major influence in deciding whether to undergo sexual reassignment or not.
- 4.) Acceptance of a partner caused the transgender to neglect sexual reassignment.

In summary, the result of the study found the following conclusions: 1.) Transgenders are frustrated caused by family rejection and social discrimination. They are introverted, affectionate, reserved and adaptive. They possess ungratified needs (social acceptance) but they are satisfied with their physical appearance 2.) To avoid social discrimination, the most common resilience strategy among the respondents is being woman-like or absolute transition to transgenderism, 3.) Both familial and social marginalization contributes to transgenders' well-being, 4.) Due to love and acceptance of their partner, relationship became a basis in deciding for a sexual reassignment.

The researchers recommend further study with the same population in terms of lifestyle and coping strategies in handling relationship. Relationship issues among the respondents are less studied in the Philippines due to religious and cultural norms. Studying their relationship behaviour is an avenue to understand better the transgenders. Another recommended area to explore is the parenting style of transgender parents and/or the lifestyle of their children.

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