

## PEER RELATIONSHIP AND ITS EFFECT ON LGBT'S MOTIVATION AND WORK PERFORMANCE IN XYZ BPO COMPANY

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### ABSTRACT

*Employees spend their time a lot in their organization than their homes, it is important that their relationship to their colleagues should be in a positive way as possible despite of their sexual identity to have a harmonious working environment. The objectives of this study are. 1) To identify the relationship between peer relationship and motivation among employees of XYZ BPO company. 2) To determine the relationship between peer relationship and work performance. Based on the responses gathered from 150 LGBT employees, there is a significant relationship between peer relationship and work performance but it is quite low with the average of ( $r = .490$ ). Meanwhile, Peer Relationship has a significant relationship to motivation with the average of ( $r = .537$ ).*

**Keywords:** Peer Relationship, Motivation, Work Performance, LGBT employees

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### INTRODUCTION

Some people around the world faced inequality because of what they have chosen to be or how they look. Sexual orientation and gender identity are fundamental aspects of ourselves and this should not lead to discrimination or abuse. In the Philippines, religion plays a major role in the Filipino lives and this affects the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) people, usually they are the center of abuse, discrimination and bullying (UNDP, 2014). According to Subhrajit (2014) marginalization of LGBT usually starts from their family members. It is because of the stigma that was attached to LGBT.

Due to the prejudice comments because of the traditional thinking about gender, LGBT employees usually suffer from demotivation, stress and anxiety that may affect their effectiveness on the organization (Meena, 2015). LGBT are still trying to establish their worth in the workplace because of the challenges and issues that they faced and they tend to be uncomfortable when they feel that they are discriminated in the workplace (Andrada, Estrella & Laya, 2016). It is said that 1 out of 25 complaints about workplace discrimination and harassments came from LGBT employees (Baksh, 2017). Hunt and Rowe (2017) stated that a LGBT person who is not comfortable in being open to their sexuality affects their performance and the group that they belong. It is suggested that organizations should be open in the world of LGBT employees to understand them further to have a productive work place (Woods, 2011). Moreover, peer relationship via communication makes a big impact in their work (Sias, 2008). Lipman (2014) found out that peer relationship motivates the employees. Motivated employees are needed in the workplace and an effective industry knows what motivates the employees (Safiullah, 2015).

David (2015) stated that Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industries aim to create a relaxed working environment to workers such as organizing team building events that can help build good relationships to the organization. BPO industries are the impartation of a company's non-core business and operations to a third-party service provider that uses information technology (Errighi, Bodwell & Khatiwada, 2016). According to Shead (2017) the Philippines has overtaken India as the number one outsourcing destination. Also, Shead stated that the number of employments here in the Philippines of BPO industries in year 2016 is one million (Shead, 2017). The BPO industries are growing in the near future and as the job expands, the demand for call center agents is expected to increase whether with low skills or high skills. (Errighi et al, 2016).

The objectives of this study are 1) To identify the relationship between peer relationship and motivation among employees of XYZ BPO company. 2) To determine the relationship between peer relationship and work performance. Knowing gender equality is important because we can have respect and appreciation to the differences (Cabanos, Escosura, Kasan, Lemus & Mantes, 2016).

This study will contribute the society to give a clear vision on how important peer relationship in spite of gender diversity in the working environment. Furthermore, the study will help the Department of Human Resource to bind the employees regardless of their gender and help them to be more productive and motivated.

### Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (2000). It is a macro theory that is commonly used in the fields of work.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a motivational theory of personality, development, and social processes that interrogates how social contexts and individual difference makes it easier to process different types of motivation, especially autonomous motivation and controlled motivation, and in turn predict learning, performance, experience, and psychological health (Deci & Ryan, 2015). This theory focuses on how motivation is obtained and sustained to a person. It assumes that people are self-motivated by nature and their behaviors are based on their inner desires. There are three psychological needs that affect the intrinsic motivation. These are Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness (Weibull, 2011). Autonomy is about having the freedom to do something a person wants. Competence is the ability to do the task and how the person controls the outcome. Relatedness is the need to feel that a person belongs to a group.

The application of the theory to this study according to Broeck, Vansteenkiste, Witte, Soenens & Lens (2010) in the context of work, the productivity of the employees increases when the three needs (Autonomy, Competency and Relatedness) are satisfied. These three needs affect the relationship of the LGBT employees to their colleagues that results to optimal functioning.

## Review of Related Literature

### Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender also known as LGBT are used to describe an individual's sexual orientation. It includes men and women that are attracted to the individuals with the same sex. ("Understanding Issues Facing LGBT Americans", 2012) According to (Prism, 2008) They are contented and happy to be called Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender and that people should avoid addressing LGBT people as "homosexuals" for it has a negative view.

In Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland there are groups that worked hard to support and raise awareness to understand the needs of LGBT employees, most specially their health care needs, resolution of stigma and discrimination (Prism, 2008). However, in Oklahoma there is evidence shows that there are many LGBT employees that are underemployed and paid less regardless of how well they performed in the workplace. In this situation, it results to closeting themselves to conceal their sexual orientation (Mallory, Herman & Badgett, 2011). In the Philippines, in the year 2010, the Commission of Human Rights (CHR) signed a memorandum that will help, promote, and implement LGBT rights. These are 1) Right to security of the person, 2) Right to equality and non-discrimination, 3) Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health and Protection from Medical Abuses, 4) Rights to Recognition before the Law, and lastly 5) Rights to Family. ("The Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights in the Philippines", n.d.). Right now, the congress was on their final reading about the bill regarding Prohibiting Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity or Expression

(SOGIE). The bill is about the right of every person regarding of their sexual orientation to be free from any form of discrimination ("Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)", 2017). Although the government signed a lot of contracts about human rights, the society and culture still give a lot of prejudice comments and that it still lacks of support and effort to better understand the LGBT community.

LGBT people are considered as part of minority often suffers from prejudices that are usually rooted in beliefs and traditions about sexuality and gender. Due to their sexual identity they are more likely to experience discrimination and harassments (Subhrajit, 2014). Woods (2011) also states that sometimes gender orientation and gender identity are labeled as "uncomfortable" issues in the workplace.

### Peer Relationship

Peer relationship plays an important role in development. It also focuses on a goal which is to make friends and find comfort to other people (Henderson, 2012). According to Sias, Krone & Jablin (2002, as cited by Sias, 2015) Peer relationship fulfills different important functions in the workplace. It provides an idea not only for friendships but also for development of social skills, problem solving skills, and empathy (Buhs, Cadd & Herald, 2006 as cited by Veed, 2009). From the recent study that was conducted to the nurses in California, it is said that Peer relationship can build trust, comfortability and it helped the nurses to work together in the workplace (Blegen & Purpora, 2015). In a previous research study also to the employees who worked in enterprises in China, staffs that receive support and care from their colleagues help them to perform better at work. Thus, having a good relationship with their colleagues will lead them to communicate cooperatively. (Min & Yong, 2014). Also, the recent research study to the employees of higher education institution in Pakistan shows that peer relationship has an impact to the performance of employees (Amjad et al, 2015). Mass and Moretti (2009) also claimed that when the relationship of the employees in an organization are strong the contribution from the performance of an individual is high. Going back to the study, in the workplace LGBT employees who are valued by their employer is most likely to commit themselves in their work and it can also increase their performance (Coughlan, 2010).

According to Goodwin & Griffith (2008) employees who are usually given compliments by the head or supervisors, leaves the employee at high satisfaction and motivated to work more. King & Cortina (2010, as cited by Mallory & Sears, 2014) found out that the performance of LGBT employee is the same as the non-LGBT employee. It also said that if the organization is supporting LGBT employees in the workplace it can help them to perform more and to express themselves (Huffman, Rodriguez & King, 2008). However, a survey that is conducted in California shows that the performance of some LGBT employees is affected when they feel that they do not have the right relationship with their colleagues. They tend to be

depressed, distracted and exhausted ending up leaving the organization and finding a new job ("Human Rights Campaign", 2009, as cited by Mallory & Sears, 2014). Therefore, the level of work performance of LGBT employees varies on their relationship to their colleagues if they are not comfortable.

H1: *The better the peer relationship, the higher the Performance*

## Motivation

Mullins (2005, as cited by Osabiya, 2014) said that Motivation is the reason why people behave in different ways. It also tells about the continuity and success of every actions (Bloisi, Cook, & Hunsaker, 2003, as cited by Osabiya, 2014). There are two sources of motivation which is Extrinsic motivation and Intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is described as the motivation that comes from the environment of an individual (e.g. rewards, money) while Intrinsic motivation is described as the motivation that comes from within. It is also characterized by the means of self-efficiency, effectiveness, personal enjoyment, satisfaction and simply the activities that you find challenging. (Larson & Rusk, 2011). This motivator is an influential source that drives an individual's behavior (Deci and Ryan 1985 as cited by Sun, Seung & Wenhao 2012). In the workplace, keeping employees motivated is one of the main problems of every leaders and managers. Employees that are unmotivated tend to put no effort on doing their jobs, leave the workplace as soon as they can, and low quality of work are produced. On the other hand, motivated employees are more likely to spend their time in the workplace. They are productive, determined, and innovative. (Ganta, 2014).

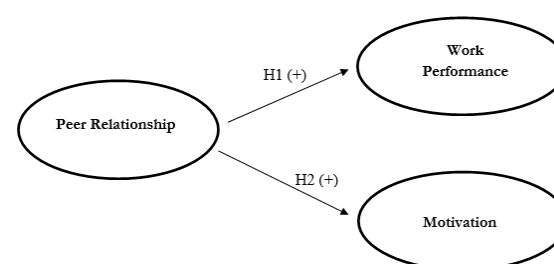
It is said from the study conducted to high school students in Portugal, a positive relationship to peers may motivate the students to be active in school especially those children who are at risk of dropping out (Abrantes, Cardoso, Ferreira, 2011). This result is also the same to the teachers in the Public school of Norway, when there is a positive peer relationship in the workplace it increases their motivation to work and it also leads them to have a good communication with their students (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). According to the study of Hewlet (2013) in Los Angeles, Organizations are starting to embrace the LGBT community for the sake of the firm and the employees itself. The success of the organization will vary if the employees and the working environment inside is harmoniously tight. Those LGBT individuals tend to feel more accepted, opened and motivated to work with their careers if they have someone at their back that will support, guide and will not discriminate them when it comes to their gender and vice-versa.

Relating these studies to LGBT employees who tend to be closeted with their colleagues about their sexuality can surely affect them, they tend to be more less motivated, less comfortable and unable to put their best in their work but if their senior co-workers shows support for them regarding their sexuality, it makes them more motivated at their work (Miles, 2011). However, the biggest

issue that organizations are facing today is keeping an employee motivated to do their work. (Maduka & Okafor, 2014). Therefore, LGBT employee who has a supportive working environment tends to be more motivated than those who are not open to their sexuality.

H2: *The higher their peer relationship, the higher the motivation*

## The Hypothesized Model



**Figure 1.** Hypothesized model of the effect of peer relationship on self-motivation and work productivity of LGBT employees in BPO companies.

LGBT people are usually getting prejudices comments from other people because of the traditional beliefs regarding gender. These beliefs have an effect to their relationship with others. In a workplace, Peer relationship improves social skills, problem solving skills and empathy to other people. It is said that when LGBT employees feel valued they tend to commit and perform more. Commonly, the issue about LGBT makes some employees uncomfortable. This is the reason why other LGBT chose not to reveal their gender identity. Closeting their gender identity makes them feel demotivated at work.

## METHOD

### Design

This research used a quantitative descriptive – correlational design to determine the effect of peer relationship to the motivation and work performance of LGBT employees.

### Subjects and Study Site

The target respondents of this study are LGBT employees who are at 18 years old and above working in a BPO companies. The researchers gathered their data through online survey.

### Instrumentation

The researchers used self-made Peer Relationship questionnaire with a Cronbach's alpha of .94, Motivation questionnaire that has a Cronbach's alpha of .90 and Work Performance questionnaire with a Cronbach's alpha of .90. Overall, the questionnaire has a .95 reliability. The researchers used a 4- point Likert scale (Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

### Data Gathering Procedures and Ethical Considerations

The researchers chose the BPO Call Centers as the locus considering its growing population and accessibility. The participants of the study answered the survey online. Rest assured that all information gathered will be treated with strict confidentiality and no harms are intended to the subjects.

### Data Analysis

The data that gathered in the present study includes age, sexual orientation, work status, position and followed by their answers in the three questionnaires. The data gathered in the present study are encoded in SPSS. Then, a correlation coefficient was used for this study. Correlation coefficient is used to see the relationships between variables.

## RESULTS

Table 1. Demographic Profile Questionnaire

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
18-22 yrs old	10	6
23-27 yrs old	58	39
28-32 yrs old	51	34
33-36 yrs old	25	17
37-40 yrs old	6	4
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		
Lesbian	48	32
Gay	59	39
Bisexual	43	29
Transgender	0	0
<b>Working Status</b>		
Part time	44	29
Full time	106	71
<b>Work Position</b>		
Agent	82	55
Recruiter	39	26
Team Leader	28	19

The weighted mean rating of respondents according to their Demographic profile shows that majority of respondents' ages are ranging from 23- 27 years old which is 39% of the total participants, followed by ages ranging from 28- 32 years old at 34%, 33-36 years old at 17%, 18-22 years old at 6%, and the least number of participants came from ages between 37-40 years old with the percentage of 4%. Based on the participants' sexual

orientation the majority of them are Gays having a percentage of 39%, followed by 32% of Lesbians and the least participants are Bisexuals at 29%. Unfortunately, there are no transgender who respond to the survey. The working status of most participants are Full-time (71%). Also, most are them are working as call-center agents (55%).

Table 2. Peer Relationship Questionnaire

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I have a good relationship with my co-workers	3.11	0.72	Agree
2. I feel connected to the people inside my organization	3.1	0.78	Agree
3. I can share my thoughts with my co-workers if I want to	3.09	0.77	Agree
4. I am able to communicate effectively with my peers at work	3.21	0.82	Agree
5. My co-workers and I work well with each	3.17	0.71	Agree
6. I enjoy my job because of my co-workers	3.17	0.8	Agree
7. My co-workers respect me	3.23	0.71	Agree
8. I feel that I am valued by my co-workers	3.13	0.77	Agree
9. I am comfortable working with my co-workers	3.19	0.7	Agree
10. I feel supported by my co-workers in the tasks that I do	3.12	0.7	Agree

The weighted mean rating of respondents according to their answers on the Peer Relationship Questionnaire was it clearly shows that most of them are being respected by their colleagues with the mean of 3.23. LGBT employees are least experienced when sharing their thoughts whenever they want to with the mean of 3.09. The overall mean score of peer relationship questionnaire is 31.53 with a standard deviation of 6.1. This means that LGBT in the BPO industry are averagely connecting to their peers.

**Table 3.** Motivation Questionnaire

ITEMS	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I feel excited to go to work everyday	2.99	0.7	Agree
2. I find my work very interesting	3.13	0.74	Agree
3. I am passionate with my work	3.17	0.76	Agree
4. I exert my full effort in every task given to me	3.17	0.72	Agree
5. I am dedicated in meeting set goals at work	3.18	0.67	Agree
6. I feel motivated by rewards given by my organization	3.29	0.68	Strongly Agree
7. I am willing to learn new things	3.33	0.7	Strongly Agree
8. I feel motivated when my organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work	3.34	0.68	Strongly Agree
9. I feel motivated to execute my job properly	3.18	0.66	Agree
10. I feel motivated to perform better at work because of our company's reward system	3.38	0.68	Strongly Agree

The weighted mean rating of respondents according to their answers on the Motivation Questionnaire was most of the respondents felt that they are motivated to perform better at work because of the reward system they received from their workplace with a mean of 3.38. However, the respondents mostly do not feel excited to go to work every day. Overall, Intrinsic motivation questionnaire has the total mean scores of 32.16 with a standard deviation of 5.17 shows that the respondents are averagely motivated.

**Table 4.** Work Performance Questionnaire

ITEMS	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I feel that my efficiency at work is higher than expected	3.08	0.76	Agree
2. I always complete my work on time	3.08	0.65	Agree
3. The quality of my work is higher than expected	2.87	0.78	Agree
4. I always come at work on time	3	0.7	Agree
5. I always think of other ways to be more productive at work	3.15	0.7	Agree
6. I always submit my work on time	3.11	0.76	Agree
7. I prioritize the things that should be done at work	3.16	0.68	Agree
8. I know how to deal with the interruptions and distractions at work ( ex. Social media, Texts and calls that are not related to work)	3	0.71	Agree
9. I prioritize my tasks at work	3.2	0.63	Agree
10. I am focused with one task at a time.	3.15	0.7	Agree

The weighted mean rating of respondents according to their answers on the Work Performance questionnaire was prioritizing their tasks at work has the highest mean of 3.20 while the lowest is their quality of worker is higher than expected having a mean of 2.87. The total mean score of the questionnaire is 32.16 with a standard deviation of 6.17. Results showed that LGBT employees are averagely productive towards their work.

**Table 5.** Summary of Correlation Analysis of Peer Relationship, Motivation and Work Productivity

VARIABLES	Computed- R	P-value	DECISION	CONCLUSION
Peer Relationship and Work Performance	0.49	0	Reject Ho	Significant
Peer Relationship and Motivation	0.537	0	Reject Ho	Significant

\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2 – tailed)

Correlation of the three variables were analyzed to see if there has a relationship between them. For hypothesis 1, table shows that the relationship between Peer Relationship and Work Performance has an average correlation ( $r=.490$ ). For hypothesis 2, there was a high correlation between Peer Relationship and Motivation ( $r=.537$ ).

The correlation between Peer Relationship and Work Performance is significant but quite low ( $r=.490$ ). One of the possible explanations why there is a low correlation between Peer relationship and work performance is that the LGBT employees are minimally affected by how their co-workers treat them. However, the researchers found out that there is a strong relationship between Motivation and Work Performance of the employees.

The correlation of Peer Relationship and Motivation is highly significant ( $r=.537$ ). This is similar to the findings of Abrantes, et.al (2011) and Skaalvik, et.al (2011). This only shows that a positive relationship of LGBT employees with their co-workers affects their motivation to work in the organization.

## CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this study was to examine if the Peer Relationship has an effect to Motivation and Work Productivity of LGBT employees in XYZ BPO companies. Based on the results, there is a significant relationship between the Peer Relationship and Motivation. It is related to the first objective of the researchers which is to see if there is a relationship between Peer Relationship and Motivation among employees of XYZBPO companies. It means that second hypothesis is correct that the better the peer relationship, the higher the motivation. On the other hand, there is also a significant relationship between Peer Relationship and Work Productivity. However, the researchers found out that it is quite low for some reason. Despite of the treatment of their co-workers toward the LGBT employees whether good or bad, it does really affect their productivity in work but not that high to stop them from being productive. Although, it shows low significant relationship, the first hypothesis is still correct that the better the peer relationship, the higher the productivity. These results are related with the researchers' second objective which is to see if there is a relationship between Peer Relationship and Productivity.

The findings of this study showed that the mission of BPO industries of having a harmonious environment in their workplace here in the Philippines is effective. It helps their organization not only to gain more LGBT employees but also respect from the LGBT community itself for accepting them regardless of their sexual orientation. Thus, this study will help the Department of Human Resource and future researchers to bind the employees regardless of their gender and help them to be more productive and motivated.

## RECOMMENDATION

The researchers found out that the peer relationship has a positive effect with the work performance and motivation of LGBT employees in the XYZ BPO companies. As a result the study shows that LGBT employees are well accepted in their workplace. Further studies should focus on examining the factors that will sustain more the acceptance of LGBT employees in the organization. The study only focused on the relationship among colleagues but not with their supervisor or management. Additional variable may be used like extrinsic motivation and working environment.

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