

International Anthems for LGBTQI+ Community: A Gay Pride– Thematic Analysis

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Abstract

Music as an art form of expression brings the inner side of an artist to the surface, and gives the world an insight of his vision. On the other hand, art is a conscious use of skill and creative imagination especially in the production of aesthetic objects or works. Music is a unique form of art and a lyrical and auditory representation of story. Thus, the study analyzed the patterns or themes of the five selected Gay Pride Playlists or songs such as *I'm Coming Out*, *Born This Way*, *I Will Survive*, *True Colors*, and *Beautiful*. The study found out three major themes and patterns that reflected in the five selected Gay Pride Playlists and entailed us to deepen our understanding about sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression. Furthermore, Gay Pride Playlists music, and music as an art, is made for expressing a free spirit that constitutes beauty.

Keywords: International Anthems, Gay Pride, Queer Theory, Thematic Analysis

1. Introduction

Martin Landsky defined *music* as an art form of expression that brings the inner side of an artist to the surface, and gives the world an insight of his vision; it is a form of communication (French, 2017). On the other hand, art is a conscious use of imagination and skill particularly in the production of artistic and creative objects or works (Mirafuentes, Alegria, Chua, & Arcipe, 2015). Scruton (2018) opined that music as an art begins by examining music through philosophical lens, engaging in discussions about tonality, music and cognitive science. Hence, he argued that tonality and expression are significant components of musical compositions in this enlightening academic work. Thus, music is a unique form of art and a lyrical and auditory representation of story. Literature, on the other hand, is a written art that expresses the significant human experience in well-chosen and arranged words. Therefore, when art and text blend, literature is born and from that, literary acumen man's philosophical, moral, and spiritual qualities are developed (Mirafuentes, Alegria, Chua, & Arcipe, 2015). Kant (2000) called it as an art of genius is a kind of representation that is purposive in itself and, though without an end, nevertheless, promotes the cultivation of the mental powers for communication.

Adajian (2018) discussed Hegel's philosophy of art as a wide-ranging account of beauty in art, the historical development of art, and the individual arts of architecture, sculpture, painting, music and poetry. Moreover, art provides an a priori derivation—from the very concept of beauty itself—of various forms of beauty and various individual arts. Art, for Hegel, also gives an expression to spirit's understanding of itself that exudes in and through objects that have been specifically *made* for this purpose by human beings. The independence of spirit is made visible or audible to an audience through such items, sound, or words. This sensory expression of free spirit, according to Hegel, is what beauty is. As a result, for Hegel, the goal of art is to create beautiful objects that represent the genuine character of freedom in a sensual way (Nisbet, 1975). Schaper (1976), for Hegel, music gives direct expression to free subjectivity. It thus gives no enduring *visual* expression to such subjectivity. Music originates in the immediate uttering of feeling or what he calls “interjection”—“the Ah and Oh of the heart”. As a result, music is more

than a sob or a sigh; it is a planned, matured, and "cadenced" interjection. It is the systematic manifestation in sounds of interior subjectivity, not just a sequence of sounds for its own sake. Music expresses and allows us to hear and experience the soul's progress through time, from diversity and dissonance to union with itself. It also expresses and moves us to a variety of emotions, including love, longing, and joy. Finally, Hegel points out that music can express feelings more clearly when it is accompanied by a lyrical text. Interestingly, he claims that in such circumstances, the language serves the music rather than the other way around, because it is the music, above all, that expresses the soul's deepest impulses (Knox, 1975). According to Hegel as cited in Houlgate (2016), he considered the art of sound, but sound understood as the sign of ideas and inner representations—sound as *speech*. This is the art of poetry. He regards poetry as the most perfect art because it provides the richest and most concrete expression of spiritual freedom. Therefore, poetry is capable of showing spiritual freedom both as concentrated inwardness *and* as action in space and time (Knox, 1975). Shapiro (1975), likewise, discussed that for Hegel, poetry has been “the most universal and cosmopolitan instructor of the human race”. Thus, the logic or meaning of poetry is radically *unprosaic*.

On the other hand, Adorno's claims that art in general stem from his reconstruction of the modern art movement. Adorno combined the ideas of Kant and Hegel, which they focused on the forms with Hegel's emphasis on intellectual import. As a result, this is the key to modern art's social character or the “social antithesis of society (Hullot-Kentor, 1977). In other words, for Adorno, art reconstructs the modern art movement from the perspective of philosophical aesthetics, though he does not reject Hegel's point of view on aesthetic art. From both sides, Adorno tries to elicit the socio-historical significance of art and philosophy (Hullot-Kentor, 1977). This is one reason why academic specialists find his texts so challenging, not only musicologists and literary critics but also epistemologists and aestheticians. All of his writings contribute to a comprehensive and interdisciplinary social philosophy (Zuidervaat, 2007).

The principal aim of art is not only to imitate nature, to decorate our surroundings, to prompt us to engage in moral or political action, or to shock us out of our complacency, but also to allow us to contemplate and enjoy created images of our own expression of freedom. Art's purpose, in other words, is to enable us to bring to mind the truth about ourselves, and so to become aware of whom we truly are. Art is there not just for art's sake, but also for beauty's sake, that is, for the sake of a distinctively sensuous form of human self-expression and self-understanding. The statements that art's duty is to show beauty and that beauty is a matter of substance as well as form are perhaps Hegel's most important legacy. Hegel defines beauty as the sensual embodiment of spiritual freedom and vitality in music or language, not only formal harmony or elegance. In the classical and romantic periods, as well as in many specific arts, such beauty takes on subtle differences. Even in modernity, it remains the goal of art in some form or another. Adajian (2018). In this connection, the study aspires to analyze the patterns and themes of the selected Gay Pride Playlists (Crowley, 2018; Harris, 2018): namely, *I'm Coming Out*, *Born This Way*, *I Will Survive*, *True Colors*, and *Beautiful*, exemplified in the Filipino LGBTQI's attitudes

specifically in the household, workplace, and community using Thematic Analysis. Thus, this study links with the necessity to encourage legislators, lawmakers, religious leaders, and common people in promoting awareness on Gay Pride in the Philippines. As a consequence, this study does not just only to blaze towards educating people to a deeper gamut of the significance of LGBTQI community in elucidating their virtues and myriads of ways in which individual can learn in a delightful manner, but also to essentially show respect to LGBTQI people as humans. Ultimately, this study liberates everyone from contemporary constructions of sexuality and gender that eventually and gradually accept and recognize LGBTQI people. Therefore, through music as an art and expression of human self-expression and self-understanding illuminates the Philippine government to rule out most measures to ease inequality, discrimination, oppression, and injustice. In doing so, therefore, it promotes the pursuit of sex and gender equality, liberty, justice, and anti-discrimination towards a more diverse, tolerant, inclusive, and democratic society.

2. Theoretical Framework

The current study is primarily anchored on Queer Theory. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2018) defined and discussed Queer theory as an academic tool came about in part from gender and sexuality studies that in turn had their origins from lesbians and gay studies and feminist theory. It is a much newer theory, in that, it was established in the 1990s, and contests many of the set ideas of the more established fields it comes from by challenging the notion of defined and finite identity categories, as well as the norms that create a binary of good versus bad sexualities. Queer theorists contention is that there is no set normal, only changing norms that people may or may not fit into, making queer theorists' main challenge to disrupt binaries in hopes that this will destroy difference as well as inequality. However, what is queer theory for Foucault (1978), as cited in Spargo (1999), is not a singular or systematic conceptual or methodological framework, but a collection of intellectual engagements with the relations between sex, gender, and sexual desire. If queer theory is a school of thought, then it is one with a highly unorthodox view of discipline. In other words, the term describes a diverse range of critical practices and priorities, such as readings of the representation of same-sex desire in literary texts, films, music, images; analyses of the social and political power relations of sexuality; critiques of the sex-gender system; studies of transsexual and transgender identification, of sadomasochism and of transgressive desires. This is because queer theorists, unlike gay liberationists, do not fight for the liberation of oppressed sexuality, their rallying cry is not to "come out", rather their goal is to liberate everyone from contemporary constructions of sexuality (Foucault, 1978; 1990) and gender (Butler, 1990; 1999).

In addition, for Butler, this liberation can be brought about by practices that became known as *gender fucking*, performing the scripts of maleness and femaleness subversively. She believes that we cannot stand completely outside of those scripts but we can tinker with them in such a way as to reveal their non-essential and performative nature. Furthermore, Butler (1990; 1999), as cited in Pilcher and Whelehan (2004), clearly made a profound contribution to the field, most

notably with her idea that gender is masquerade – not that these are roles one can adopt or not at will, but they are the result of social scripts we actively conform to or reject. Moreover, she clarified what is meant by *gender performativity* by saying that is “is not a matter of choosing which gender one will be today. More so, gender is performative (Butler, 1990; 1999), bringing identities into existence through action, rather than being the expression of some pre-existing reality – but of actions that subvert identity, disrupt gender dichotomy and displace gender norms (Connell, 2009; 1995; 1987). Performativity is a matter of reiterating or repeating the norms by which one is constituted; thus, it is not a radical fabrication of the gendered self” (Butler in Phelan, 1997).

Twenty years ago, it would not have seemed particularly productive to ask what the study of minority sexualities might have to offer to the field of religion and gender. Arising only recently out of the affirmative justice seeking movements, there is rather the coming of age – the Gay Liberation Movement. Gay Liberation Movement which centers on the act of “coming out” became the ritual by which men and women claimed with pride an identity which others despised and in the process challenged and undermined the modern construction of the homosexual. Gay Liberation is the name used to describe the radical lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movement of the late 1960s to mid-1970s in North America, Western Europe, and New Zealand. Stuart (2003) discussed the symbolic beginnings of the modern gay liberation movement. Historically, the Stonewall Riots of June 1969 – caused when the patrons of a New York bar, known as a relatively safe space for the sexuality marginalized, resisted a routine police raid and fought back against the harassment for four days – have become the mythical and emblematic genesis of this movement. It symbolizes the transformation of homosexual people into lesbian and gay people as they claimed their own voice, subjectivity, moral agency and right to self-definition and determination. Thus, lesbians and gays were urged to “come out” publicly revealing their sexuality to family, friends, and colleagues as a form of activism, and to encounter shame with gay pride (Graham, 2009).

At heart queer theorists, in common with queer political radicals, are not to undermine the naturalness of gender in order to decenter heterosexuality as a privileged identity. For some the word is still closely linked to the establishment of a personal identity, even as it deflects singular identity: Allison (1995) used the word queer to mean more than lesbian. Since this word was first used in 1980, for Allison, it meant to imply that she is not only a lesbian but a transgressive lesbian – femme, masochistic, as sexually aggressive as the women she seeks out, and as pornographic in her imagination and sexual activities as the heterosexual hegemony has ever believed. In the light of Queer Theory with its relations with Gay and Lesbian Theology, Queer Theory followed the emergence and popularity of Gay and Lesbian (now, LGBT or Queer) Studies in the academy. Whereas LGBT Studies seeks to analyze LGBT people as stable identities, Queer Theory problematizes and challenges rigid identity categories, norms of sexuality and gender and the oppression and violence that such hegemonic norms justify. Often considered the “deconstruction” of LGBT studies, Queer Theory destabilizes sexual and gender

identities allowing and encouraging multiple, unfettered interpretations of cultural phenomena. It predicates that all sexual behaviors and gender expressions, all concepts linking such to prescribed, associated identities, and their categorization into “normal” or “deviant” sexualities or gender, are constructed socially and generate modes of social meaning (Ruhsam, 2017). In other words, heterosexuals whose gender or sexuality does not conform to popular expectations have used the term “queer” to define themselves. Thus, queer theory is a framework of ideas that suggests identities are not stable or deterministic, particularly, concerning an individual’s gender, sex, and/or sexuality. While heteronormativity assumes that heterosexuality and the relations of the binary masculine and feminine genders expected within it are secure and constant, queer theory is a discourse model that destabilizes the assumptions and privileges of secure heteronormative models of study and everyday life and politicizes and acknowledges the fluidity and instability of identities (Giesecking, 2008). Moreover, because Queer theory follows and expands upon feminist theory by refusing the belief that sexuality and gender identity are essentialist categories determined by biology, can thus be empirically judged by fixed standards of morality and “truth” (Ruhsam, 2017). Thus, accordingly, Queer theory’s origin is hard to clearly define, since it came from multiple critical and cultural contexts, including feminism, post-structuralist theory, radical movements of people of color, the gay and lesbian movements, AIDS activism, many sexual subcultural practices such as sadomasochism, and postcolonialism.

However, Foucault (1978) looked for a slightly different escape route from modern constructions of the human person and found it in the pre-modern Christian ascetic self which was under constant self-scrutiny, conscious of being a self in production and which sought to de-sexualize itself. In addition, for Foucault (1990) to be gay was not have a sexual identity characterized by certain psychological traits and ways of behaving, to be gay was to seek to develop a different type of life and way of relating to that demanded by the dominant discourses. Stuart (2003), however, posited that there is a general adoption of the gay liberationist agenda which does not seek the integration of the gay or lesbian person into pre-existing socio-ethical structures but seeks the radical reform of society and Church to allow for a variety of sexual orientations and expressions. An embracing of the bisexual theory of human nature is also evident in both these volumes. This is, however, combined with a strong sense of gay identity. Gays are presented as people who have clearly defined patterns of relating; they have a distinctive “experience” which must be placed at the heart of any future theological reflection surrounding sexuality. There is also a tendency to portray the Christian tradition as simply wrong on issues of sexuality and of little use in helping Christians to reconstruct a theo-ethical response to issues arising from sexuality. In other words, one serious obstacle to the incorporation of lesbian and gay perspectives in the studies of religion, gender arises from the fact that most religious traditions have either sought to silence or oppress sexual minorities (Stuart, 2003). King and Beattie (2004) argued this can occur when we take seriously the insight derived from lesbian and gay studies that such apparent exclusionary definitions are in fact central to the maintenance of a heterosexual binary, which is symbolically connected to the construction of what are deemed acceptable forms of masculinity and femininity within a patriarchal society. This is important not

because such teaching does marginalize gay and lesbian people but because the close kinship between heterosexuality and patriarchy damages everyone: “heterosexual relationships and marriage as traditionally experienced are basically unhealthy. They are based on inequality resulting from the male dominance/control mentality.”

In spite of these gender inequalities, behind the scenes of historical struggles for gender equality lie long-standing and ongoing debates about the meaning of equality. Gay men and lesbian women, whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual, have also campaigned for social acceptance and for legal rights, including age of consent and spousal or “marital” rights, equivalent to those enjoyed by heterosexuals. When it comes to LGBTQI rights, there is still a very real struggle for equality. LGBTQI people around the world somehow face violence and inequality – and sometimes torture, even execution – because of who they love, how they look, or who they are. Yet, sexual orientation and gender identity are integral aspects of people’s selves and should never lead to discrimination or abuse. Cameron and Berkowitz (2016) reported, in *The Washington Post* dated June 14th, 2016, about countries whose laws punish homosexual with its acts through death. Likewise, Runkin (2017) reported, in *The Guardian* dated June 20th, 2017, about a Russian law that bans gay “propaganda” encourages homophobia and discrimination, the European court of human rights has ruled, in a sharply worded rebuke to the Kremlin. The law bans giving children any information about homosexuality and is widely thought to have made life harder for gay Russians, who were already battling deep social prejudices. It concluded that Russia had violated the European convention on human rights on freedom of expression and prohibition of discrimination.

Likewise, LGBTQI people in the Philippines likewise have a distinctive, influential culture but limited legal rights. Gays and lesbians are generally tolerated, if not accepted, within Filipino society, however widespread discrimination remains. Elemia (2016) reported that Rappler flashed the bill is seeking to protect the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) community from hate crimes and discrimination has finally reached the Senate plenary after two decades. Senate Bill 1271 otherwise known as the Anti-Discrimination Bill vocalizing that the bill, if passed into law, would ensure that stigma and hate would not hinder LGBTQIs from accessing education, healthcare, employment, and other basic rights. Moreover, Philippine President Duterte clarified that he had “nothing against gays”, but he explained his side about same-sex marriage based on the Philippine Civil Code (BBC News, 2017). Article 1 of the Family Code of the Philippines: Executive Order No. 209 states that “Marriage is a special contract of permanent union between a man and a woman entered into in accordance with law for the establishment of conjugal and family life.” The issue on legalizing same-sex marriage has been going on for decades in the country. It received a voluminous objections and oppositions since it contradicts the accustomed meaning of marriage as a “union between a man and a woman.” Though, there have been few countries which approved or have begun to legally formalizing marriage between same sex, still, it is a long voyage to steer until the Philippines will have come to decision.

Meanwhile, on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme, Peking University's sociology department conducted the largest survey of views toward and among gays and other sexual minorities in China in 2016. It was discovered that the majority of LGBT Chinese people remain in the closet. Only 5% claimed they had come out at work, and less than 15% said they had told their family. They also face widespread prejudice, particularly at home, with 58 percent of respondents (both gay and straight) agreeing that gays are rejected by their family. However, the idea that homosexuality is a mental illness is widely dismissed (only 2 percent supported it). There is also a significant generation gap: 35% of those born before 1970 stated they would reject a gay child, compared to only 9% of those born after 1990. This does not, however, imply that Chinese attitudes about sexual minorities. Furthermore, according to a survey of LGBT Americans conducted by the Pew Research Center Social and Demographic Trends (2013), the vast majority of LGBT adults in America (92 percent) believe society has become more accepting of them in the last decade, and an equal number believe it will become even more accepting in the coming decade. They ascribe the shifts to a range of causes, including people knowing and engaging with LGBT persons, high-profile public personalities advocating on their behalf, and LGBT adults starting kids. At the same time, a new nationally representative study of 1,197 LGBT adults reveals how they feel stigmatized by society in a variety of ways. About four out of ten people (39%) say they have been rejected by a close friend or family member because of their sexual orientation or gender identity at some point in their lives; 30% say they have been physically assaulted or threatened; 29% say they have indeed been made to feel unwelcome in a place of worship; and 21% say they have been treated unfairly by an employer. Six out of ten people (58%) claim they've seemed to be the target of slurs or jokes. In addition, only 56% of respondents claim they've told their mother about their gender or sexual orientation, while only 39% have told their father. The majority of those who did tell a parent say it was challenging, but only a small proportion believe it harmed their relationship. Moreover, when it comes to the human rights of LGBT persons, the *accountability* of governments in developing countries is generally very poor. Few governments show willingness to make commitments to protect the human rights of LGBT persons. However, there are positive examples, such as South Africa that has one of the most protective constitutions for LGBT people in the world; Nepal which has a third legal gender; and Uruguay, which recently introduced legislation to allow change of legal gender. Argentina, as the first country in Latin America, has legalized same-sex marriage. Similarly, the Economist said on June 1st, 2017 that gay-rights verdicts in Taiwan and Hong Kong could influence the Mainland. The judgement by Taiwan's top court on May 24, 2017 ordering parliament to draft a bill providing homosexual couples the right to marry within two years was mostly ignored by the state-run media. Unfortunately, in November 2018, Taiwanese voters rejected a referendum on same-sex marriage (Humayun & Cullinane, 2018). They also mainly ignored a narrower judgement from Hong Kong's top court two days later, which stated that the authorities could not deny a gay official's partner the same benefits as other civil servants' marriages. However, Taiwan's 2004 Gender Equality in Employment and Gender Equity Education Act made discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender illegal in the

fields of employment and education.

On the positive note, Armbrrecht (2016) reported in The World Economic Forum (2016) about the cost of discrimination that affected countries economy. Discrimination against LGBT is not a community issue; it is both a national and human issue. Mental health issues and suicide rates continue to be higher among LGBT person than in other communities. In addition to the toll discrimination can take on a community, non-inclusive work environments have a strong impact on productivity in the workplace. In their 2014 report, The Economic Cost of Homophobia: A case Study of India, Badgett (2014) reported that the World Bank found that the Indian economy was losing as much as 1.7% of its GDP due to homophobia. The loss of labor force and shrunken productivity has been shown to cause a ripple effect. Furthermore, Free and Equal, an initiative of the United Nations, explained that in the study of 39 countries, the marginalization of the LGBT community was causing a substantial loss of potential economic output. In an economy the size of India's, as much as 32 billion dollars a year are lost, resulting in a drag on growth and lower tax revenues, which in turn damages education and health funding. In other words, LGBT discrimination and unequal giving of workplaces for LGBT community affects a country's economy.

On the other side of the coin, speaking about LGBT-related information and mainstreaming social media, there has a strong potential to promote LGBT rights and movements with internet (Mirafuentes, 2018). In fact, in Taiwan, representations of LGBT people in literary and cinematic works are also instrumental in promoting public awareness of LGBT people and advancing LGBT rights in Taiwan. In the 1970s, some novels regarding homosexuality were published. One of the most prominent writers is Pai Hsien-yung, who introduced gay characters in his novels, the most famous being *Crystal Boys*. More recently, some gay TV series and movies have been produced and have gained great attention among gay communities in both Taiwan and China. Examples include the TV series *Crystal Boys*, adapted from Pai Hsien-yung's novel by the same title, and the movie *Formula 17*. In 2005, Taiwanese director, Ang Lee, directed the gay Western film *Brokeback Mountain*, receiving high critical acclaim and Academy Awards. *Spider Lilies*, a lesbian film directed by Zero Chou, was screened at the 2007 Berlin International Film Festival. It won the Teddy Award for best gay feature film (Central News Agency, 2011).

In terms of self-expression through music, for Adajian (2018), French (2017), and Schaper (1976), music is known that any form of art helps us develop our creativity and imagination. Hence, music also facilitates someone's feelings and emotions to be expressed. The inability, however, to express themselves leads to frustration, anger, become socially isolated, and even depressed or anxious. As a result, self-expression is a vital aspect of interpersonal communication, and if we have trouble expressing ourselves, we may always turn to alternative treatments to help us release our feelings and thoughts less easily. Likewise, through gay pride playlists, LGBT people ooze their self (Crowley, 2018; Harris, 2018). An analysis of selected *Tingabisa* songs was categorized, classified and analyzed its themes that are sung by various families, clans and nations groupings during national ceremonies. *Tingabisa* are the regiments of

girls that are known for cultural dance, game and mimic songs. The domains of history, love, nature, politics or dissatisfaction and education are reflected in their songs. The dramatic, rhythmic lyrics, rhyming combinations are enhanced in most songs. Despite the specific thematic groupings of songs in this paper, they encompass the totality of values, norms, and culture of people. The research found out that participants were able to create and present their songs in an art form. They reflected creatively and critically on artistic and cultural styles, processes and products. The thematic and interpretive analyses are employed to explore the explicit and implicit, rational and irrational phenomena that exist as potential guides for the life and behavior of the people. Also, Huff (2008) reported that country music has gained commercial success, but it is more than just a business. To many listeners, it provides a commentary on itself. Lyrics are dominant in country as in no other form of music. Normally, she added that songs tell stories of the lifestyles of both the composer and audience. They immortalize tales of heartache and happiness, home life, and love and laughter.

Ultimately, to close, it is said that every person, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, is entitled to his or her human dignity rights that are same human rights that heterosexual people enjoy. Therefore, these rights must be held and be afforded to all individuals. Who knows how long it will take before the global mindset about homosexuality will change. The LGBT community has gained some powerful supporters over the past few years but there is much more to be done before they can truly feel equal to heterosexuals.

3. Research Methodology

The study utilizes thematic analysis to systematically identify, organize, and code patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset. For analysis, the researcher reduces the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion. In qualitative research, data analysis entails preparing and arranging data (such as transcripts or images) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a coding and condensing process, and then presenting the findings in figures, tables, or a discussion (Creswell, 2007). To develop themes, the researcher creates, organizes, and manages files for data – which are the five selected Gay Pride Playlists. Reading through text and *memoing* describe the different gathered data from the files and classify them in accordance with its commonalities (Creswell, 2007; Fereday & Cochrane, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012).

4. Results and Discussions

Gay Pride Playlist is known for compelling the fundamental themes that speak of the basic human nature and the basic communal questions that human often ask about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. Even though the themes of these five selected playlists differ from one song to the other, however, definite patterns can be found among them. The theme is the central or dominating idea of a song; in that, it is the total meaning in the work after having wholly taken into account the entire literary and lyrical piece's aspect. In consequence, this part undertakes the analysis of the common themes.

4.1 Journey and Adversity

These are the common themes found in the selected Gay Pride Playlist, which LGBT people face challenges and adversities as they express what and who they are. In the song *I'm Coming Out*, lines like *Somehow, I have to make them just understand I got it well in hand And, oh, how I've planned* entails us that there is a planning and decision-making done to come out and express LGBT selves before the people. In other words, there is a real struggle within selves so LGBT people need to be ready themselves before coming or expressing. Yet, it takes courage to do it. Narca (1997) maintained that this journey signifies the change of emotions, intellect undergoing a travel to other situations of one's life, behavior, and personality; that every step along the way has significance relative to the culmination of the individual's reason for self-actualization. For a person to fully functioning, Rogers (1961) deemed the actuality of the congruence between self – that is the sense of who the person is, and the ideal self – who that person feels he or she should be. Other than that, Maslow and Harpham (2012) recognized peak experiences. This means that the moments in one's life that take one beyond his ordinary perceptions, thoughts, and feelings, causing the individual to feel energized, or more alive, thus transforming his understanding of his self and the world. Also, the journey of LGBT people worldwide is not easy from liberating and fighting for their existence and acceptance. When it comes to their adversities and struggles for equality, they somehow face violence, torture or even execution because of their experience is being ignored whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual that leads to discrimination and abuse. In the song *I'm Coming Out* expresses a person's openness of oneself to the public. This is a process of journey of disclosure. There are lines in the song that are repeated *I'm coming out* 'till the next line *I want the world to know Got to let it show*. Also, in the next lines state that *The time has come for me to break out of the shell I have to shout that I'm coming out* implies freedom of expression. Likewise, the song *True Colors* states a line that opens and expresses oneself, it is *So don't be afraid to let them show your true colors*. The title of the song itself entails openness. But the songs imply that is not easy to just come out. They still feel the real struggle within selves.

Mirafuentes (2018) found out that the challenges for LGBT include the lack of umbrella organization, lack of understanding within the LGBT community about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression concepts. This is within the context of continued social and political challenges for LGBT communities and individuals. In reality, on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme, Peking University's sociology department conducted the largest survey of views toward and among gays and other sexual minorities in China in 2016. It was noticed that a lot of LGBT Chinese people who remain in the closet. Only 5% claimed they had come out at work, and less than 15% said they had told their family. They also face widespread discrimination, notably at home, with 58 percent of respondents (both gay and straight) agreeing that gays are rejected by their family. Nevertheless, the idea that homosexuality is a mental illness is widely dismissed (only 2 percent supported it). Furthermore, there is a significant generation gap: Only 9% of those born after 1990 stated they would reject a

gay child, compared to 35% of those born before 1970. This does not, however, imply that Chinese attitudes about homosexual people will soon catch up to those in more progressive nations.

Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals are targets of violence in America in 1992 survey conducted by Comstock. Comstock (1992) reported that 24% of gay men and 10% of lesbians reported some form of criminal assault because of their sexual orientation during the past year (as compared to general-population assault rates in a comparable urban area of 4% for women and 6% for men). Also Comstock (1992) reported in his book a Massachusetts study found that 21% of lesbian and gay students, compared to 5% of the entire student body, reporting having been physically attacked. An average of five US non-college surveys on anti-gay/lesbian violence showed that 33% of those surveyed had been chased or followed; 23% had had objects thrown at them; 18% had been punched, hit, kicked or beaten; 16% had been victims of vandalism or arson; 7% had been spat on; and 7% had been assaulted with a weapon. In other words, to live as a gay or lesbian in America is thus to live with fear.

4.2 Freedom of Self-Expression and Liberation of Self-Identity

When it comes to the freedom and liberation of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, there is still a very real struggle for and understanding acceptance and equality. In many countries, it is shameful to be but heterosexual. Members of the LGBT community often have to prove their worth and value in the workplace, and society as a whole. The outlook for them is a bit brighter in the US and a few other countries, but there is still much work to be done before the LGBT community is respected all over the world.

In everyday life, we take gender for granted. We instantly recognize a person as a man or woman, girl or boy. We also arrange everyday business around the distinction. Conventional marriages require one of each. Mixed doubles tennis requires two of each, but most sports require one kind at a time (Connell, 2009). These arrangements are so familiar that they can seem part of the order of nature. In the light of “identification”, theories described and made few explicit distinctions among gender identity, gender role, and sexual orientation.

Researchers now acknowledge, however, that the three issues are conceptually separate and, in fact, not necessarily correlated. Lips (2008) abridged the different psychoanalytic and identification theories on gender of their important concepts. *Gender Identity* is defined as the individual’s private experience of the self as female or male – a powerful aspect of the self-concept that is formed early in childhood and, in most adults, is extremely resistant to change. Only a tiny percentage of people form a gender identity that is incongruent with their biological sex when no physiological abnormalities are present. Lips (2008) added that *Gender Role* refers to the set of behaviors socially defined as appropriate for one’s sex. It is now quite clear that an individual can refuse to conform to society’s gender-role prescriptions without experiencing any conflict about underlying gender identity. For example, a man can reject the masculine stereotype of being aggressive and tough without experiencing any serious doubts about whether he is

actually male. Lastly, *Sexual Orientation* refers to individual's preference for sexual partners of the same or other sex. A person with a heterosexual orientation is attracted to partners of the other sex; one with a homosexual orientation is attracted to partners of the same sex. Despite the early theorists' equation of male homosexuality with femininity, sexual orientation does not necessarily correlate with either gender identity or gender role.

The songs *Born This Way*, *I Will Survive*, and *True Colors* signify a message of self-expression and self-identity of one's sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. If we take a look at its lines, *Born This Way, I must be myself, respect my youth* implies essentialist sense of self-identity. Also, there are lines that encourage to just be "oneself" or "yourself" like *Don't be a drag just be queen*, and it is repeated several times. In addition, lines like *Whether you're broke or evergreen You're black, white, beige, chola descent You're Lebanese, You're Orient Whether life's disabilities Left you outcast, bullied, or teased Rejoice and love yourself today* "Cause baby you were born this way entails that no matter what and who you are just be what and who you are regardless of race, ideology and status. The song *I Will Survive* entails us that no matter what the pains and adversities life comes your way, one can still survive couple with courage, determination and willingness like in the lines *Do you think I's crumble Did you think I'd lay down and die? Oh, no, not I, I will survive. I've got all my life to live And I've got all my love to give and I'll survive*. This message also mentioned in the songs *I'm Coming Out* and *True Colors* like *I want the world to know got to let it show* and *So don't be afraid to let them show You're true colors*, respectively. These lyrics imply openness and acceptance.

Twenty years ago, it would not have seemed particularly productive to ask what the study of minority sexualities might have to offer to the field of religion and gender. Arising only recently out of the affirmative justice seeking movements, there is rather the coming of age – the Gay Liberation Movement. Gay Liberation Movement which centers on the act of "coming out" became the ritual by which men and women claimed with pride an identity which others despised and in the process challenged and undermined the modern construction of the homosexual. Gay Liberation is the name used to describe the radical lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movement of the late 1960s to mid 1970s in North America, Western Europe, and New Zealand. Stuart (2003) discussed the symbolic beginnings of the modern gay liberation movement. Historically, the Stonewall Riots of June 1969 – caused when the patrons of a New York bar, known as a relatively safe space for the sexuality marginalized, resisted a routine police raid and fought back against the harassment for four days – have become the mythical and emblematic genesis of this movement.

The Stonewall Riots are commemorated each year all over the western world and beyond in annual gay pride celebrations. The Stonewall symbolizes the transformation of homosexual people into lesbian and gay people as they claimed their own voice, subjectivity, moral agency and right to self-definition and determination. Thus, lesbians and gays were urged to "come out" publicly revealing their sexuality to family, friends, and colleagues as a form of activism, and to encounter shame with gay pride (Graham, 2009). Stuart (2003) added that the key target for the

gay and lesbian studies that emerged from the gay liberation movement was the psychological construction of homosexuality as an illness.

In the light of openness and transparency, a state's silence on the existence, as well as the rights, of LGBT persons in many countries, contradicts the principles of transparency and good governance. There are enormous challenges on accessing data related to LGBT groups, for example, public health statistics, related to sexual identity or practice. Information on LGBT issues is generally nonexistent, and the dissemination of such information is in many cases criminalized.

Similarly, in the United States, LGBT rights fade under Trump administration. LGBT advocates are sounding the alarm over what they say as is a quite campaign being waged by Trump's administration to chip away at hard-fought protections for LGBT Americans. The issue was, Chad Griffin, the president of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), said the move was a deliberate effort by the Trump administration to erase LGBTQ people from federal data used to inform budgets and policies across the government. However, the HRC said it had submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to the Department of Commerce in response to find out who directed the change at the Census Bureau.

However, there are positive examples, such as South Africa that has one of the most protective constitutions for LGBT people in the world; Nepal which has a third legal gender; and Uruguay, which recently introduced legislation to allow change of legal gender. Argentina, as the first country in Latin America, has legalized same-sex marriage. In terms of LGBT Community, the Community Marketing & Insights (2017) researched on *Reaching LGBT Travelers: Taiwan Report Profile of Taiwanese International Visitors* to Hawaii. The report discussed about the LGBT Community in Taiwan. Specifically, they said that LGBT rights in Taiwan are regarded as one of the most progressive in Asia. Taiwan has become increasingly tolerant in LGBT issues in the past few years. Also, same-sex sexual activities have never been a crime in Taiwan. Discrimination based on sexual orientation has been banned statewide in education since 2003 and employment since 2007. Moreover, on the registration of same-sex partnerships, it has been implemented in 11 cities and counties that account for 80% of the country's population. However, legal protections to the couple are still limited under the registration since over 400 rights like property rights, social welfare, and government health benefits are granted exclusively to marriage.

4.3 Love

The theme of love in its varied facets in general but in this article based on the selected songs tells us about self-love and the love taught in religion. This self-love and love in general are mentioned in the songs *I'm Coming Out*, *Born This Way*, and *Beautiful*. The lines *I'm spreadin' love There's no need to fear and I just feel so glad* imply that love as a universal language is the only thing one can show irrespective of what your ideals are. This is also reflected in the lines *"There's nothing wrong with loving who you are"* She said, *"Cause he made you perfect, babe"*

and *Don't hide yourself in regret Just love yourself and you're set*. Another lines that speak of love is *Give yourself prudence and love your friends so we can rejoice your youth*. This means that instead of thinking on the things one is hurt, instead, focus on loving oneself and others. In addition, there is another line that says *A different lover is a not a sin Believe capital H I M. I love my life I love this record Mi amore vole fe*. The lines tell us that loving someone is definitely not a sin irrespective of sex and gender.

Hibbert, as cited in Stuart (2003) started with the assumption that gay liberation has got matters right and Christian tradition has gone wrong. He attributed this erring to a disconnection between moral and dogmatic theology. Thus, there has been a separation between the theology of what we do from the theology of what we believe a split between faith and love, which has produced a hard legalism within the Church. Christians have traditionally also made the mistake of taking the application of the law, for example in Paul's teaching on same-sex love, which is culturally conditioned, as the absolute law which it is not. The absolute law is Christ's new commandment/covenant to love one another (John 15:12). It is only by obeying that law, by loving "unrestrainedly" that we discover the law for our actual loving. This emphasis on love as the key element in a Christian understanding of human nature is also evident in Pittenger's (as cited in Stuart, 2003), essay that echoed Cotter's construction of human nature as one that is in process. Hence, to be human for Pittenger, is to move towards the image of God who is love. Our sexual desire is the fuel that propels us on that road and the fact that a significant minority of people is homosexual demonstrates that for sure, such desire is the natural route to take. Therefore, to deny them that path would be to consign them to an inhuman life. Both gay and straight are under the same moral law when it comes to sexual ethics – the command to love and avoid behavior that is self-seeking and which treats the other as an object.

In the song *Beautiful*, there are lines that are repeated like *I am beautiful, You are beautiful, and We are beautiful*. These reflect that when you feel and believe that you are beautiful inside and out, you love yourself. There is no insecurities, doubts, and hence, you are able to express what and who you are.

Theologically, gay is good (Stuart, 2003). On the contrary of the statements above about homosexuality is a sin, there are reasons why gay is good in terms of existence, experience, virtues, and attitudes. McNeill (1976) then turned to reflection upon what he regarded as the special virtues of the lesbian and gay community. These he identified as hospitality and compassion, both of which came into particular prominence in the AIDS crisis. He also presented lesbian and gay people as being gifted celebrants of life. Not in the gay community has the Protestant work ethic stifled the freedom to play. With an exile status comes a freedom to engage in activity purely for its own sake, for the delight of it. Such freedom comes from a self-love and acceptance and ultimately from an acute awareness of God's unconditional love. Furthermore, such self-love must embrace the body and sexuality as gifts of God and McNeill (1976) believed that it is part of the prophetic mission of lesbian and gay people to lad the Church back to an embracing of embodiment and the sexual as paths to God and to rediscover the playfulness of

sex, which has been tied to the work ethic of reproduction, even in the Roman Catholic Church, for too long. Playful sex must be between equals who engage in sex in a spirit of mutuality, reciprocity and intimacy. Thus, McNeill (1976) further believed that a committed and faithful relationship is therefore the ideal context for sexual expression.

Gay theology, on the other hand, began to emerge in the 1970s as gay Christians started to reflect theologically upon the gay liberation movement. Johnson (1974), as cited in Stuart (2003) began his essay *The Good News of Gay Liberation* by interpreting the Stonewall Riots in Paul Tillich's terms as an assertion of the "courage to be", "the ethical act in which a person affirms his/her own being in spite of those elements of his/her existence which conflict with his/her essential self-affirmation. Gay men and women, in finding the courage to be, find a hermeneutical lens, the lens of their own experience, with which to observe and expose the patriarchal and heterosexist basis of much Church teaching. Johnson accused the Church of being over concerned with "intellectual theology" and under concerned with the grounding of theology in experience. It is therefore vital that gay people come out, articulate their experience and reflect theologically upon it for, 'we who are Gay know the validity of our experience, particularly the experience of or love. That love calls us out of ourselves and enables us to respond to the other. Through our experience of love, we experience the presence of God. Thus, this experience must be placed against "an unexamined tradition that is the source of every form of discrimination we suffer. Furthermore, Johnson (1974) adopted a liberationist approach to the issue of sexual ethics drawing a distinction between sexual relationship – "an integrative, interpersonal, growing experience" which gay people have often been told they are incapable of – and sexual relating in which sexual desire, not love, is expressed. Sexual relating is not sinful as long as it is not exploitative or manipulative and it may well develop into sexual relationship. The Church has traditionally taught that sexual relationship is only possible within marriage; what is has to realize is essentially a covenant relationship and that such a relationship is available to people of any gender as lesbian and gay experience verifies. Moreover, the great fidelity evident in many gay relationships is a *true* fidelity which has grown from love and freedom, not a response to social or religious expectations: it is then a higher form of fidelity than that found in many heterosexual marriages (Stuart, 2003).

5. Conclusion

The study found out three major themes and patterns that reflected in the five selected Gay Pride Playlists and entailed us to deepen our understanding about sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression. Furthermore, Gay Pride Playlists music, and music as an art, is made for expressing a free spirit that constitutes beauty. Thus, expressing oneself exudes freedom of expression just like music. Hegel notes that music is able to express feelings with especial clarity when it is accompanied by poetic texts like song lyrics. Interestingly, it is really the text that serves the music, and for it is the music above all that expresses the profound movements of the soul. The study somehow mirrors the importance in which acceptance is pivotal that eventually illuminates the idea to create laws to eradicate inequality, discrimination, oppression, and

injustice, and in doing so, therefore, promotes the pursuit of sex and gender equality, liberty, justice and anti-discrimination towards a more diverse, tolerant, inclusive and democratic society.

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