

INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA OF HISPANIC GAY MEN
WHO MIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES

A Dissertation

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By

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INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA OF HISPANIC GAY MEN

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

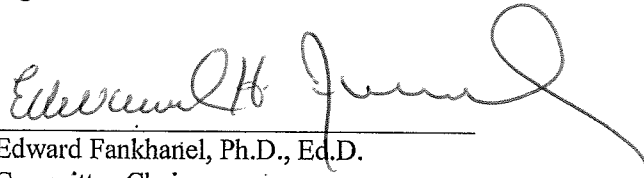
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The final copies have been examined by the Dissertation Committee and the signatures which appear here verify the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given the final approval with reference to content, form and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

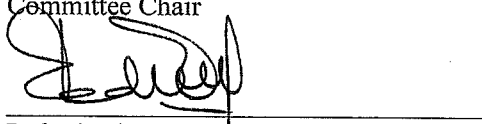
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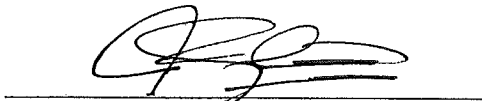
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Abstract

The present study is a qualitative research study in the area of clinical sexology that focused on the effects of the internalization of homophobia among a selected group of Hispanic gay men who migrated to the United States. This study gathered the narrative/case study of 10 Hispanic/Latino men and their sexual experience during their rearing while living in their country of origin. Ten random subjects from Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Panama, and Puerto Rico, living at the time of the study in the Tampa Bay area located in the State of Florida, volunteered to participate in the study. This descriptive study explains the reasons for which Hispanic men who are homosexual experienced internalized homophobia. In addition, it gathered information on how difficult, different, or challenging their “coming out” process was, and how they dealt with this event. Furthermore, it studied how internalized homophobia has affected their mental/emotion well-being, and their emotional and behavioral state during their upbringing. The study is a significant contribution to the future of studying internalized homophobia among Hispanic/Latino gay men, as it shows a great insight into the topic discussed and the analysis presented. Moreover, it presents some of the concerns presently related to the subject of internalized homophobia. For instance, the study described how participants experienced being bullied, feeling sad and fearful, feeling frustration, sadness or depression, and lack of self-acceptance. Furthermore, it described how their lack of assertiveness in disclosing their sexual orientation to their families has affected their emotional well-being.

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Vita

Mr. Rafael E. Fuentes-Jaimán is native of Salinas, Puerto Rico. He is completing his Ph.D. degree at The American Academy of Clinical Sexologists in Orlando, FL in 2015. He completed his Master's Degree in Mental Health Counseling from Springfield College, Tampa Bay Campus in 2006. In addition, he completed his Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Puerto Rico in 2001, and his high school diploma at Stella Márquez High School, Salinas, Puerto Rico in 1997.

Mr. Rafael Fuentes is a bilingual (Spanish-English) counselor, consultant, and adjunct professor. He has experienced working with multicultural issues, immigration, and minority groups such as Hispanics/Latinos, LGBTQ, and African-Americans. He has clinical experience in individual, couple, family, and group therapy. He is educated and experienced in different areas such as couple issues, anxiety, stress, intimacy, infidelity, self-esteem, immigration, depression, anger management, and LGBTQ issues. Mr. Rafael Fuentes is a Board Certified Clinical Sexologist by the American Board of Sexologist #2937, and a Human Services - Board Certified Practitioner (HS-BCP #1384). Additionally, he is a Public Notary in the State of Florida. Moreover, he has been a member of The American Mental Health Counselors Association. Mr. Rafael Fuentes has served on several community advisory boards such as Suncoast Mental Health Counseling Association, Latino Men Cancer Survivor, and Springfield College Tampa Bay Campus.

From the clinical perspective, Mr. Rafael Fuentes has worked in the mental health field since 2001. He initiated his career working as a counselor for critically ill mental health clients, and then as an outreach case manager working with families, minority groups and forensic cases. Mr. Rafael Fuentes has experience working in community mental health, in-home therapy

services, and foster care. Furthermore, Mr. Rafael Fuentes has been in private practice since 2006 with the group of Attainable Solutions.

From the academic perspective, in 2010 Mr. Rafael Fuentes serves as Adjunct Professor at Springfield College, Tampa Bay Campus, Hillsborough Community College (HCC), South Shore Campus, and Ana G. Méndez University System (SUAGM), Tampa Bay Campus. He has been serving since 2013 as a Lead Professor at SUAGM. Furthermore, Mr. Rafael Fuentes completed a certifications, such as master trainer in Ex-CELL (English as a second language), Clinical Education Supervisor by the State of Florida, and IRB. Mr. Rafael Fuentes has been the professor representative at the Academic and Student Affairs Commission at SUAGM for the following academic years: 2011-2012, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016. Besides, Mr. Rafael Fuentes has done Study Abroad with his college students from SUAGM and HCC to Italy, Greece, France, Switzerland and Spain. He is fun, loving, goal-oriented professional who is passionate about his career and subject matter.

Dedication

This dissertation dedicated to my loving father, José E. Fuentes-Reyes. Loving Father, you were an outstanding role model to follow for your morals and good manners. You were the best father ever. I remember great memories from my childhood with you, such as you dropping me off at school, or when you used to take me to my extra-curricular activities after you having a hard day at work. Furthermore, I remember when we used to play wrestling together or when I used to write you letters telling you how much I love you! God gave me the fortune to enjoy you for 33 years of my life. Even though you suffered the illness of Alzheimer, you were part of this journey because you were a motivation and inspiration to continue working on my goals. I know you will be proud for me to be the first Dr. Fuentes of the family. Daddy... I am gay! I will always love you.

R.I.P.

José Enrique (Quique) Fuentes-Reyes

May 29, 1938 – May 8, 2012

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Chapter One: Introduction

Human life begins when a male inseminates a woman's body (Grupper, 2007). Then, it begins to develop and, for most, to live inside the mother for about nine months. The fetus begins bonding and nurturing a connection with its mother. When babies are born, they become infants. Following their stage as infants, they go into the early childhood stage, and then middle childhood. Consequently, the human being will confront the pre-adolescent stage, and then adolescence (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2009). In that developmental process, human beings learn how to crawl, to walk, to speak language, live a culture, and recognize immediate family, extended family, friends, neighbors, values, customs, community, society, law, and government. Overall, the human being is reared in an environment that has a microsystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Berk, 2010). Nonetheless, society can also influence human beings through the experiences in certain stages of their life (Acuña-Ruiz, & Vargas, 2006).

As an adolescent, human beings experience a challenging metamorphosis that may affect individuals throughout their entire life. When human beings reach the puberty stage, they start planning for their future, building confidence in themselves; they may begin to challenge adult authority, and they may have doubts or perhaps feel confident about their sex role. Adolescence has been known as one of the most difficult stages throughout the lifespan (Berk, 2010; Papalia et al., 2009). In fact, it is difficult and challenging to be an adolescent. Furthermore, it is harder for young people to struggle with their sexual orientation when they like a person of their same gender. They may feel different, because all their friends like the opposite sex.

Human beings have been the focus of research from the biological, sociological, and psychological perspective for years. The extent of these studies have ranged from study of the cultural, religious, legal, medical, philosophical, and *sexological* field. According to Cherry

(2005), some theories can span from the study of the contribution of nature and nurture in the human being, and how each one person may affect another. Human beings develop in a series of stages that influence different stages of their life (Cherry, 2005). While a number of studies in human sexual behavior exist, human growth and their development, homosexual behavior and the Latino/Hispanic population, many have been limited studies that combined all topics under one area of study.

Human sexuality is an important component in the study of the human being. Research from theorists such as Freud, Kinsey, and Hirschfeld has contributed significantly to this field (as in Berk, 2010; Kranz & Cusic, 2005; Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948). Rathus, Nevid, and Fichner-Rathus (2011) defined that “human sexuality is the ways in which we experience and express ourselves as sexual beings” (p. 4). Therefore, sexology has been a subject to a vast history of research. According to Granzig (2002), “sexology is largely defined by its unique history of intellectual curiosity in the face of bitter repression, by its controversies, by its institutions, and by the sum of the individual enterprises of sexologists: clinical, forensic, erotological, educational, research, organizational, political, and so on” (p. 6).

According to Granzig (2002), the Victorian era influenced the history of sexology. In that era, scholars had a narrow concept of sexual propriety and "normality." Additionally, they became concerned with eliminating sexual abnormalities, perversions, and deviations. Victorianism marked the history of sexology. When the field of sexology is studied, a tendency for the subject to be controversial exists because it may contradict consensus belief (Health Solutions, 2009). Although homosexuality has existed for many years, Károly Mária Kertbeny coined the word homosexual in the nineteenth century by a journalist Austro-Hungarian man (Endres, 2004). Then, in the beginning of the twentieth century, a medical doctor named

Sigmund Freud studied nervous diseases, created psychoanalysis, and constructed theories of sexuality (Granzig, 2002). “Perhaps the first homosexual rights group, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, was formed in Germany by Magnus Hirschfeld, Max Spohr, and Erick Oberg” (Kranz & Cusic, 2005, p. 167). In 1948, Kinsey published his report *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* and indicated that in the white male population of the United States “10 per cent of the males are more or less exclusively homosexual for at least the years between the ages of 16 to 55” (p. 651). Additionally, other scholars at the time emphasized, “eight percent are exclusively homosexual” (Kinsey et al., 1948, p. 651).

In 1973, The American Psychiatric Association removed “...homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) II” (Kranz & Cusic, 2005, p. 169). However, in 1980, DSM authors left in the DSM-III the word Ego-dystonic homosexuality. The term described the diagnosis as, “if a sustained pattern or homosexual arousal persistently causes distress, and the patient wishes to acquire or increase heterosexual arousal, a diagnosis is made, and treatment warranted” (Granzig, 2002, p. 35). It was not until 1994 that the American Psychiatric Association officially eliminated this category from the DSM IV.

Researchers, doctors, educators, biologists, therapists, and other professionals have made history among homosexual communities since the last decade through the Internet by addressing issues of the gay world. Internet and technology have endorsed the gay cyber world, a key element for the current and upcoming generations’ information sources. Additionally, Facebook, aol.com, Adam4adam.com, Gay.com, Grinder.com, Manhunt.com, and many other websites have developed as online social networks for the homosexual community. Additionally, gay

bars, nightclubs, bathhouses, and special gay events have been current avenues to meet people through entertainment and social gatherings.

Latinos in the United States

During the colonization of America by Spain, Spaniards arrived to what is now the American Southwest from the 16th century onward (History Word International, 2007). From a history perspective, the Spanish language has been spoken in North America before the English language. According to History Word International (2007), prior to the Mexican War, the Southwest area of the United States, from Texas to California, the territory was a Spanish-speaking territory with their characteristics of culture and heritage. During the past 10 years, the Hispanic population has grown considerably, in part because of relatively higher levels of immigration (United States [US] Census Bureau, 2010). The Census Bureau of the United States defined the word Hispanic or Latino referring to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race (US Census Bureau, 2010).

According to Johnson, Johnson-Webb, and Farrell (1999), the Hispanic population in the United States grew faster than the population of the nation between the years 1980-1995. “Between 1970 and 2000 the Hispanic population grew by 25.7 million and immigrants accounted for 45 percent of that increase while the second generation accounted for 28 percent” (Suro & Passel, 2003, p. 3). In 2010, 50.5 million Hispanics resided in the United States; composing a 16% of the total population (US Census Bureau, 2010). In addition, the US Census Bureau (2010) indicated that the Hispanic population grew by 43% between 2000 and 2010—rising from 35.3 million in 2000, when this group composed 13% of the total population.

Predictions indicated that one out of four people in the United States would be Hispanic by 2050 (Vasquez, Gonzalez-Guarda, & De Santis, 2011).

Latinos have been an asset in the development of the United States' history, prominently in building the West of the United States, science, medicine, entertainment, education, business, civil rights, politics, and the American pastime of baseball (Garcia, 1994). According to the United States Census Bureau (2010), being Latino/Hispanic has been a major contribution to the United States. Hitherto, California, led the nation with the largest minority population (22.3 million); Texas (13.7 million), New York (8.1 million), Florida (7.9 million), and Illinois (4.7 million) encompass the other four states with the largest minority populations. Most of these states also had the largest non-Hispanic White alone populations—California with 15.0 million, Texas with 11.4 million, New York with 11.3 million, and Florida with 10.9 million (US Census Bureau, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

A critical need for additional studies about ethnic group's sexuality exists, especially when the population in the United States has become increasingly diverse (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). The Hispanic/Latino community has grown in the United States in the last decade, as well as the visibility of the gay community. Scholars and mental health professionals have studied these two minority groups from different perspectives and aspects. Many studies focused in aspects such as gay gender (Sandfort, Melendez, & Diaz, 2007), sexual orientation (Fankhanel, 2004 & 2008), mental health (González & Espin, 1996), substance abuse (Rhodes et al., 2009), label/stigma (Acuña-Ruiz & Vargas, 2006), sexual behavior (Rhodes et al., 2009), HIV (Ross, Simon-Rosser, Coleman, & Mazin, 2006), and other social issues. On the other hand, scholars who have studied the Hispanic/Latino community have mainly focused on topics

such as the American dream, immigration, race, ethnicity, welfare, gender (role and behavior), geographical issues and needs, parenting, family, and social issues.

Scholars (see Table 1) who are Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic have studied the gay Hispanic/Latino community. However, although they have conducted good research and the findings have been a recognizable contribution to the Hispanic/Latino gay community, the research completed has not been enough compared to the study of other cultures. Some of the studies have combined both minority groups. They have studied their culture, gender issues, sexual orientation, homosexuality, treatment, sexual behavior, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), mental health, and substance abuse. Some of these studies have generalized to include Hispanic/Latinos, when each ethnic group has their own dynamic, behavior, and culture. Moreover, some researchers added the word Latino in their studies when their sample has consisted of one ethnic group, such as Mexicans (Tajón, 2009). Scholars have recommended further examination to gain meaningful understanding of the Hispanic/Latin culture and its diversity (Zea, Reisen, & Díaz, 2003).

Table 1

Latino/Hispanic Gay Community Known Studies

Study Reference	Topic of Study
Acuña-Ruiz and Vargas (2006)	Prejudice Against Male Homosexuality
Barbosa, Torres, Silva, and Khan (2010)	Agape Christian reconciliation conversations and homosexual identity in Latino and European Americans
Fankhanel (2004, 2008)	Self-perception and the coming out process of gay youth in Puerto Rico and Paraphilias Among Gay Men in Puerto Rico.
González and Espin (1996)	Homosexuality and Mental Health in Latino Men and Women.
Morales (1992)	Counselling Latino gays and Latina lesbians.

Table 1 (cont.)

Latino/Hispanic Gay Community Known Studies

Study Reference	Topic of Study
Peinado et al. (2007)	Role Versatility Among Men who have Sex with Men in Urban Peru
Raffaelli and Ontai (2004)	Gender Socialization in Latino(a) Families.
Rhodes et al. (2009),	Sexual and Alcohol Risk Behaviors of Immigrant Latino Men in the South-eastern USA
Rodríguez (2010)	At the Intersection of Church and Gay & Lesbian Christians
Rodríguez (1996)	Clinical Issues in Identity Development in Gay Latino Men
Ross et al. (2006)	Misrepresentation on the Internet and in Real Life about Sex and HIV in Latino Men
Sandfort et al. (2007)	Gender Nonconformity, Homophobia, and Mental Distress in Latino Gay and Bisexual Men
Tajon (2009)	Identity Development of Latino Gay Men
Zea et al. (2003)	Methodological Issues in Research on Sexual Behavior with Latino Gay and Bisexual Men
Zea, Reisen, and Poppen, (1999)	Psychological Well-being Among Latino Lesbians and Gay Men

Other scholars have researched internalization of homophobia as subject of their studies on gay issues in studies about the gay community. They see this internalization process as part of the stages of a gay person *coming out* (Shidlo, 1994). From the Hispanic point of view, internalization of homophobia can be seen as a reason for shame and guilt (Rodríguez, 1996). Nevertheless, the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) community does provide help when needed, although often many do not seek that help. Furthermore, obstacles to seeking help exist, such as when there may be a cultural factor or misconception of mental health as in the Hispanic community often happens (Rodríguez, 1996).

Many Latino gays tend to obtain more support from their friends rather than their families because they feel more accepted by their friends (Zea et al., 1999). Zea et al. recommended having more studies about sources of social support, as well as their relationship to mental health outcomes. Additionally, they have recommended the study of the Latino gays and their integration into the gay community. Scholars have also recommended the study of Hispanic families and their gender role expectations (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). Moreover, Barbosa et al. (2010) recommended the study of the qualitative aspect of religion as an important aspect in the identity of an individual, as well as the homophobic tendencies Hispanic/Latino gay men may tend to have. Finally, Sandfort et al. (2007) recommended studying the correlation between mental distress and homophobic past experiences among adults, as well as during their childhood.

Gay men may hurt themselves and experience difficulties accepting their sexual orientation. Moreover, it has more difficult when they have to learn to be gay, when they have rear and live in a heterosexual society (Malyon, 1982). Furthermore, Hispanic gay men may struggle when they belong to a community where the culture promoted is to be *machista* and presents with low support to the gay community (Rodríguez, 1996). Research on the internalized homophobia and studies of internalized homophobia in the Hispanic/Latino culture that lives in the United States is limited. Therefore, it is important to study such a fundamental issue that may help professionals as well as gay Hispanic/Latin men to understand in a deeper level their sexuality.

Justification

The rationale behind this study was that scholars have not studied internalized homophobia developed among Hispanic/Latinos homosexual men who have migrated to the

United States. The study gathered descriptive qualitative information that may provide a better understanding at a deeper level of the internalized homophobia, identify if these men feel proud of being Hispanic gay and the roots of their inner homophobia, if they have any. Additionally, the study aimed to provide a rationale and descriptive explanation in what are the reasons men who are Hispanic and homosexual continue experiencing internalized homophobia even though they are currently living a gay lifestyle.

The study gathered information on how difficult, different, or challenging their “coming out” process was, and how they dealt with this event. Limited studies exist about sexual orientation, and the range that may exist in a person in regards to his or her orientation (Kinsey et al., 1948). Different models exist in regards to the developmental stages and the coming out process that gay men experienced within their sexual orientation (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). Moreover, scholars have studied Latinos/Hispanics and LGBT Hispanics living as a minority and the struggles they experience living in the United States. However, the data collected has not integrated Hispanic gay men who immigrated to the United States and Hispanic gay men who have internalized homophobia.

Scholars have identified internalized homophobia among Hispanic gay men as an issue; however, it has not been studied. Moreover, numerous subject matter experts have done studies about the Hispanic gay community (see Table 1); however, is not enough compared to all the studies done within other ethnicities such as Caucasian. Not all the models created by and focused to one ethnic or race group (Caucasian) may fit the all-different ethnic gay groups.

The intention of this study was to explore the root of a problem and understand the cognitive perspective of Hispanic homosexual men about their sexual orientation and/or themselves. This study aimed to identify the needs of the Hispanic/Latin homosexual men who

migrated as adults to the United States. Therefore, the result will help to identify proper interventions to help them in their well-being of their mental health. Additionally, results will help to understand how Hispanic homosexual men adjust in their acculturation and living process coming from their country of origin and currently living in the United States. Additionally, the study had the intention to identify what are the roots of their internalized homophobia and, if such were the case, be able to create proper interventions on how to work toward this issue.

The study will help to enhance information to other providers in the mental health field, human services, education, and, perhaps, professionals in the medical field. The study will help to have a base research data toward Hispanic/Latin gay men who live in the United States. This research data can help to create new counseling programs in the future to blend the Hispanic homosexual minority in an integrated way in the United States. For the purpose of this research, the study group will be named as Hispanic homosexual men, or Hispanic gay men. At times, the term Latino/Hispanic or Latino will be used, for the purpose of research data as found in the literature or previous research.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions that this qualitative study aimed to answer:

1. In which ways did the internalized homophobia of Hispanic/Latino gay men reared in their country of origin has affected their gay identity?
2. In which ways did the internalized homophobia affected the behavioral and emotional state during their rearing?
3. In which ways the internalized homophobia has affected their mental health status?

Definition of Terms

1. Coming Out: Refers to a process in which a gay male or lesbian female recognizes and express his or her sexual orientation and/or behavior to others (Schneider, 2001).
2. Developmental Psychology: “The study of how we change (physically, cognitively, and socially) as we journey from conception to death” (Myers, 2011, p. 62).
3. Ethnic Identity: Refers to “an individual’s personal identification with a particular identification ethnic group. To achieve ethnic identity, one must identify and internalize the acceptable aspects of the dominant culture” (Franzoi, 1996, p. 58-59).
4. *Familismo*: “Refers to the importance of the family as the primary social unit and source of support. Frequently, the extended family is intimately and actively involved” (Morales, 1992, p. 130).
5. Homophobia: “Culturally produced fear of or prejudice toward homosexuals that sometimes manifests itself in legal restrictions or, in extreme cases, bullying or even violence against homosexuals (sometimes called “gay bashing”)” (“Homophobia,” 2013).
6. Homosexual: Is defined as “a person who is sexually attracted to people of one's own sex” (“Homosexual,” n.d.). For the purpose of this study, the terms gay and homosexual are synonymous. The term gay will be predominantly used.
7. Hispanic: Is defined as “A Spanish-speaking person living in the United States, especially one of Latin American descent. The origin of this word is from *Hispanicus*, from Hispania (Spain) (“Hispanic,” n.d., para. 1). For the purpose of this study, the term Hispanic refers to a person who speaks the Spanish language fluently and that is a Latin American descendant.

8. Hispanic/Latino gay: For the purpose of this research, Hispanic/Latin gay refers to the subject of study. At times, the term Hispanic or Latino alone will be used for the purpose of research data found in the literature or previous research. Additionally, it means a man who is attracted to other man, and that has been born in any country of Latin America and moved to the United States after the age of 18 years.
9. Immigrant: for the purpose of this study, is the person who was born in another country of origin and then moved out; currently lives in the United States.
10. Latin: “The language of ancient Rome and its empire, widely used historically as a language of scholarship and administration. Refers to native or inhabitants of a country whose language developed from Latin, especially a Latin American” (“Latin,” n.d., para. 1). For the purpose of this study, the term Latino will be used at times. It will be used to refer to people who are Latin American descents and live currently in the United States.
11. LGBT: lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.
12. *Machismo*: “Refers to the responsibility of the man to provide, protect, and defends his family. It is his loyalty and sense of responsibility to his family, friends, and community that makes him a man and is reflected in his machismo” (Morales, 1992, p. 130).
13. Masculine: “Having qualities appropriate to or usually associated with a man” (“Masculine,” n.d., para. 1).
14. *Personalismo*: Refers to a preference of Latinos for having personal relationship with other in their social group. In developing these relationships, a sense of trust and cooperation develops. Because health workers have established this special rapport, Latinos commonly relate to health providers as to members of their family (Morales, 1992,).

15. Sexual Identity: For the purpose of this study, when the word sexual identity is used, it refers to the process for which individuals define themselves more broadly as sexual beings, including their values and needs, and a ways of sexual expression. The word can be distinguished from the term *sexual orientation* (Muise, Preyde, Maitland, & Milhausen, 2010).
16. Sexual Orientation: refers to the dominance of sexual thoughts, fantasies, or erotic feelings toward persons of the same sex or the opposite sex (Savin-Williams, 2000).

Theoretical Background

Hispanic/Latinos in the United States

A high percentage of Hispanic/Latinos have moved to the United States in the recent decade (US Census Bureau, 2010). In the last decade, southern states of the United States, such as Florida, Texas, and California, have had the highest growing population of Hispanic/Latinos in the nation (US Census Bureau, 2010). One of the main reasons for which people have been moving into the United States is to pursue the “American dream” (Barros-Fernández & Zaldivar-Piedra, 2004). Part of this dream is to work and be able to achieve financial stability. According to Steele (2010), the American dream is an important factor for Latino families to provide a better future for their children, and be able to leave a positive legacy. One of the common attributes shared by these immigrants is their need to improve financially; therefore, becoming able to support their immediate family, as well as their extended family, which most of the time, are still living in their country of origin (Steele, 2010).

According to Comas-Díaz (2010), the American dream phenomenon has created a new culture in the United States, which continues to have strong ties to their native culture and values. Espinosa (1995) stated that the Hispanic culture is attached to its native language.

Immigrants belong to different ethnic groups; therefore, they have different gastronomic preferences, music, beliefs, and dynamics. According to Keefe and Padilla (1987), when an ethnic group has its own identity, it is referring to its own identification in regards to attitude and culture that differentiates them from others.

Nonetheless, Latino/Hispanic families have some similarities that identify them as a culture. Falicov (1998) stated that values such as *familismo*, *perlonalismo*, and respect are common characteristics of their cultural identity. One of the main values as a culture is familismo, where they prioritize one's family over oneself such as Hispanic people who live with extended families vs. other cultures (Schwartz, 2007). "To envision America untouched by Latinos is to imagine a country without much of its folklore and many of its achievements" (Garcia, 1994, para. 6). The Hispanic community has contributed tremendously to the United States of America.

Homosexuality

Homosexuality has existed for centuries; it has different characteristics, and varies from cultures and generations (Kranz & Cusic, 2005). Rodriguez (1996) posited that the *coming out* process during the 1940s through 1960s vs. the 1970s through 1990s have developed identities with different sets of social and political influences among homosexual individuals. Moreover, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the gay rights' movements raised and advocated for their gay identity in society (Kranz & Cusic, 2005). Additionally, Kranz and Cusic stated that homosexuality is not one thing, and that it has many different meanings over centuries. On the other hand, the American Psychiatric Association considered homosexuality as a mental illness. However, they removed from the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) homosexuality as a mental health illness in their third edition published in 1973 (Acuña-Ruiz & Vargas, 2006).

Homosexuality has had a negative label in society; however, it varies depending of the culture (Kranz & Cusic, 2005). The feelings that homosexual individuals experience are challenging and difficult at times to accept and deal, especially when they lack knowledge about it (AVERT, 2011). It is more challenging when the existing knowledge is attached to a stigma or negative label (AVERT). Furthermore, dealing with social and family stigma about homosexuality can be extremely challenging. According to Thomas (2007), gay individuals may experience homophobia and suicidal thoughts because they are in their denial stage; they feel threatened as homosexuals. At times, homosexual men feel trapped about their feelings, emotions, and their purpose in life. This is a delicate stage for many homosexual people.

According to Isay (2009), a difference exists between being homosexual and an identity as a homosexual man. Kort (2003) stated that gay men experience an identity confusion stage where they recognize thoughts, behavior, and sexual inclination to people of their own gender. In this stage, it is challenging to understand unusual feelings that homosexual men feel toward their same sex gender. They start looking for more information about homosexuality and seek meaning for their behavior (Kort, 2003). Gilles-Thomas (1989) stated that no scientific reason exists to perceive homosexuality as abnormal.

Gay men experience a *coming out* process through an acculturation process. In this process, they learn a new culture, dynamics, lifestyle, and adapt in expressing their emotions to another man (Isay, 2009). Homosexual man experience a process for which they have to learn and adjust to live in a society that has been built for heterosexuals (Isay, 2009). According to Acuña-Ruiz and Vargas (2006), society has been built to fulfill the needs of the majority, not the minority. Therefore, at times people who belong to majority may look at minority as people unnatural or strange.

The *coming out* process is a long process of exploring sexual orientation (Kort, 2003). This is not a single action, and is a process to come to terms about being part of the LGBT community (AVERT, 2011). This process is unique in that it has important factors that may affect the process. Factors that may affect the individual in this process can be age, ethnic group, positive/negative experiences, and gender (AVERT).

People in the LGBT community may experience oppression and cope with discrimination in regards to their sexual identity, causing at times mental issues (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). Many homosexuals still struggle in this process, may be difficult for them, and at times, they could decide not to self-disclose their sexual orientation, whereas others may have the courage to *come out* (Gilles-Thomas, 1989). Gay men may experience internalized homophobia as part of their homosexual development process (Shidlo, 1994). People who undergo internalized homophobia experience negative attitudes toward homosexuality as part of their early history of development (Shidlo, 1994).

Being Gay and Latino in the United States

According to Corrales (2009), being gay in Latin America has changed and has taken a different perspective throughout the years. The LGBT community continually advocates for their rights. However, ethnic groups, sexual orientation, and gender experience high levels of stress by the pervasive and oppression in society (Greene, 1998). Furthermore, in places such as Honduras, the LGBT community continues to be persecuted by the society and by the authorities because of their sexual orientation (Arroyo, 2008). In Honduras, a man called Donny Reyes stated his sad experience in his country. Police officers arrested Reyes and placed him in a police station cell while one of the guards uttered to the other inmates, "look, I'm bringing you a princess, you know what to do." Reyes was beaten and raped repeatedly. This incident

happened in a period of six hours (Arroyo, 2008). The *Hernandez-Montiel v. Immigration and Naturalization Service* (2000) court case reported stated that in Latin America groups continue persecuting and bashing homosexual males, especially while they encounter in sexual acts.

One of the characteristics of the Hispanic culture is machismo. Traditional conceptions of *machismo* in studies of Latinos are too simplistic, and overshadow the positive qualities of Latino men (Torres, 1998; Kulis, Marsiglia, & Hurdle, 2003). The movie “La Mission” demonstrated how a *machista* mind interfered with a love of a parent. In this movie, a single Mexican father is a recovery alcoholic, who has a son with good academic achievement. His son is in high school and is accepted in a prestigious university. His son is gay but, in front of his father, he hides his sexual orientation/behavior. Father feels dishonored by his son being gay and threatens his son’s boyfriend. His father expulses him of the house for being homosexual, demonstrating his homophobia. Another case study is Ricky Martin, who is a pop singer and actor, who has been an icon in the cultural crossover (Latin-America to the United States). Ricky Martin has been well represented as a Hispanic and homosexual person. Martin (2010) stated in his book that a considerable amount of people believe that a song that best describes him is *Living La Vida Loca*, which it can be culturally translated as living life as gay. However, he stated clearly that is not his favorite song, and that it does not describe him well as a person.

Britannica (2015) defined homophobia as culturally produced fear of or prejudice toward homosexuals that sometimes manifests itself in legal restrictions. The term homophobia was coined in the late 1960s and was used prominently by George Weinberg, an American clinical psychologist, in his book *Society and the Healthy Homosexual* (1972). Simultaneously, and according to Duarte-Vélez, Bernal, and Bonilla (2010), Hispanic/Latin culture has a strong inclination to spiritual or religious values. Christian religions view homosexuality as wrong or

evil. Ford (2001) stated that Christians see homosexuality as a perversion and forbidden (Ford, 2001). El Universal Newspaper (“Los Gays No Van al Cielo,” 2009) reported how Mexican Cardinal and former Minister of Health Vatican, Javier Lozano Barragan, said that homosexuals and transsexuals would never enter into heaven because their behavior goes against nature; therefore, they offend God. According to Walton (2006), conservative values about Christianity, family, and sexuality have been taught from the pulpit for centuries, and have been integrated into society. Some religions and organizations promote to see the LGBT community and their behavior as a sin choice (Kranz & Crusic, 2005). According to Kranz and Crusic (2005), some religions see homosexuality as a choice. This is a common pattern among Christianity or Catholicism, Jewish as well as Muslims. Homosexual men aware of their Latino heritage can experience uneasiness in their lifestyle (Morales, 1992)

Importance of the Study

The main goal of this study is to gather and obtain information about internalized homophobia among Latino/Hispanic gay men who migrated as adults from their country of origin and currently live in the United States. The information gathered and analyzed will allow to learn about internalized homophobia, as well as to identify the layers that may exist in terms of this phenomenon. Additionally, scholars will be able to comprehend individual perspectives and perceptions in terms of being Hispanic/Latin gay men. This information will be compiled through the assessment of needs of mental health, how they dealt in their coming out process, their sexual orientation, any history of trauma related to their sexual orientation, their support network as Hispanic/Latino gay men, and how they manage their current gay life.

The results of this study may provide information about cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development of Hispanic/Latino gay men. Additionally, will help to identify their

self-awareness and perceptions belonging to two minority groups in the United States, and challenges they experience as adjusting to the culture of being gay and Hispanic. Moreover, the results of this study may provide information on how others perceive them as being gay, indicators and dynamics of current relationships (e.g., intimate, friends, and family), values (e.g., religion/spiritual and family), rationale/irrational thinking, and decision making in terms of behaviors and emotions. Gathering and obtaining this basic information will help to identify proper interventions, mental health needs, and proper treatment to be effective when professionals in the medical, educational, social services, or mental health field need to help them. In general, this study will gather data on their perspective and perception of their identity and gender formation, coming out process, acculturation process, adjustment process belonging to two minorities, mental health status, and values of being a Hispanic/Latin gay man.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive literature review conducted regarding the effects of the internalization of homophobia among a selected group of Hispanic gay men who migrated to the United States. An overview is presented in this section; however, an in-depth discussion of reputable sources, professional organization journals, and prior studies on the topic or related topics are beyond exhaustible. The intention was to study other scholars and researchers who have stated, theorized, or studied similar topics.

Developmental Psychology

Erickson has been one of the most prolific and recognized contributors to the Developmental Psychology arena (Cherry, 2005). “Development refers to changes and continuities over time in an individual’s life course across a number of domains, including biological, psychological, and social arenas,” as stated in Savin-Williams (2000, p. 9). Erik Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development is one of the best-known theories of personality in psychology. Like Sigmund Freud, Erikson believed that personality develops in a series of stages. However, unlike Freud’s theory of psychosexual stages, Erikson’s theory described the influence of social experience across the whole lifespan (Cherry, 2005). Furthermore, Erikson contributed to modern models of gay identity development that scholars such as Coleman, Cass, Troiden, and others have adopted to define the *coming out* process as well as gay identity development models (Vaughan & Waehler, 2010).

Acuña-Ruiz and Vargas (2006) indicated that Erikson used Freud’s psychosexual theory as a foundation for his psychosocial theory; this helped him to expand the theory to different stages of the person, and to be more specific about developmental stages. According to Erikson

(as cited by Acuña-Ruiz & Vargas, 2006), human beings exhibit psychosocial crises or dilemmas in each stage of their life. A psychosocial issue is a conflict between emotional impulses and society. To achieve a resolution, it is important to create a balance between the individual and society. According to the Freudian theory, a person may face personal insecurity, anxiety, or hostility (Acuña-Ruiz & Vargas, 2006). “The sequence of development is somewhat predictable, children develop at different rates, and development is often characterized by spurts and plateaus with heredity and environmental factors making substantial contributions, most often interactive in their effects” (Byrd, 2011, p. 180).

Isay (2009) posited that some homosexual men feel different from other children since early childhood. Children who experience their first sign of attraction to the same sex in early childhood may feel attracted to be involved in activities with other boys from their same developmental level or stage to whom they feel attracted. They may also enjoy activities such as playing the piano or dancing more compared to other male peers who are oriented towards activities that are more athletic. Some children in their early childhood stage can be increasingly sensitive for their love of music or even nature, where most boys are not inclined to this way of thinking or feeling. Some children may have their first sexual fantasies with muscular male toys or even with some superheroes such as Batman, Spiderman, or Superman. Therefore, these early homosexual cognitive experiences may contribute to children’s tendencies to start repressing their homosexuality (Isay).

Ongoing debates regarding the aspect of the same gender sexual orientation as being innate or not exist, such as in Isay (2009), Pattatucci (1998), and Ritter and Terndrup (2002). Debates have been unbendable about nurture versus nature, social constructionist, cultural, or historical context (Pattatucci, 1998). Byrd (2011) indicated that the American Psychological

Association (APA) reported in 1998 that recent evidence suggested that biology factors, such as inborn hormonal factors and genetics, play an important role in a person's sexuality. However, 10 years later, in 2008, APA reported a scientist consensus statement denying an exact biological reason for homosexuality to exist. Furthermore, other scholars agreed, "Same gender sexual orientation, as well as most other human behaviors, cannot be definitely understood" (Pattatucci, 1998, p. 19).

Byrd (2011) stated that nature and nurture in human development play complex roles in regards to sexual orientation. One important fact is the existence of volumes of research completed about the development, social, cultural influences, hormonal, or possible genetics on sexual orientation. This research has reported that "no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or set of factors" (Byrd, 2011, p. 184). "LeVay, Bailey and Pillard, as well as Hamer have all clearly stated that their studies do not prove that homosexuality emerges from biology alone" (Byrd, 2011, p. 183). Byrd stated that LeVay indicated that he could not prove that gay men are born that way. Homosexuality is not a simple matter of biology or homosexuals having a gay gene. Byrd (2011) continued reporting, "The primary researchers whose studies have been used to support the notion of a gay gene have all admitted that their research far from proving that homosexuality is simply a matter of biology" (p. 183). LeVay did not prove that homosexuality is genetic through his research. LeVay indicated that the most common mistake was people interpreting his work and implying that a genetic link exists.

Human Development and Homosexuality

Isay (2009) indicated that parental loving, nurturing, and caring are fundamental components in the primary attachment of any human being. Therefore, children's development

should happen throughout a sense of security, comfort, caring, and love, which affects self-esteem and well-being. Thompson (1996) indicated that people in their lifespan experience losses through life, some of them are tragic and others as a normal part of life. Human beings experience the first loss in their lives when they lose the bond, comfort, and warm of the womb at birth. Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) (as cited by Thompson, 1996) offered his theory of attachment, indicating that people establish strong and emotional bond with the need for safe and security. Once that bond is broken, they may feel threatened and unsafe. Some parents may notice that their children appear to be different from other children's observed behavior. At times, fathers may withdraw noticing their son being too close, consequently feeling uncomfortable by the visible behavior from the child. Most often, parents notice their children are unacceptably different since their childhood (Isay, 2009).

Weststrate and McLean (2010) suggested that, as children, some homosexuals are predisposed to feel different or strange about themselves because of their sexual orientation. Some of these children may have become aware since childhood of their homosexual inclination. Therefore, they may not merge well into society. They could have a difficult time assimilating or accepting their homosexuality. This situation is even harder in Latin America because of the limited lack of support from society and culture (Weststrate & McLean, 2010). Hawkins (1992) indicated that boys who experience early signs of homosexuality might be affected during their development of identity, as they might be ridiculed and labeled as socially unacceptable. Consequently, they may start to believe that they are bad or experience feelings of being outcasts. For example, they may have an indirect powerful message that having feelings toward someone their same gender is anathema. This can lead to severe damage to boys and can affect their social development growing up. They may feel abnormal and most likely isolated.

Often, other teenagers bully or humiliate gay adolescents because of their sexual orientation (Rofes, as cited by Ridge, Plummer, & Peasley, 2006). Some may use bullying as a coping mechanism to overcome the issues and obstacles they may face in their social or school environment. Therefore, they bully others because they remind them of their hidden homosexuality. Additionally, this bullying behavior may happen because it is a way to gain masculine social status. Gay adolescents who are humiliated may feel bleak and have difficulties merging in their social or school environment. This situation could also affect their self-esteem, lowered sexual desires, and social involvement. They struggle to achieve a hegemonic male behavior, because they feel different from the majority of males (Ridge et al., 2006). According to Isay (2009), adolescents or children bullied by other children suffer damage to his/her their self-esteem and may create a wider or deeper wound from already burdened experiences.

According to DeLamater and Friedrich (2002), gay people experience a facing stage during the stage of adolescence, in which they need to develop a task as part of their psychosocial developmental stage. Adolescents experience a stage in which they need to resolve a conflict between their identity and role confusion. This stage develops in the middle of a conflicting social influence (Erikson, 1968, as cited by DeLamater & Friedrich, 2002). Gender identity as an important aspect of identity helps the adolescent later in their life to have a stable and self-confident of themselves. Additionally, it may help if they feel conflict about their gender role. Nonetheless, sexual identity emerges in the adolescent stage. Therefore, the person naturally experiences a sense of attractiveness toward people from their same, opposite, or both genders. In addition to that, during this stage they could possibly experience and learn about relationships, such as how to be emotionally and physically connected to others (DeLamater & Friedrich, 2002).

Isay (2009) suggested that the development of a heterosexual adolescent is different from a homosexual adolescent. Heterosexual adolescents tend to have a positive image about themselves. Gays and lesbians experience socialization differently from the heterosexual population (Murphy, 1992). The homosexual adolescent may feel socially inadequate toward society and experience an internal battle about accepting himself or herself as gay. A heterosexual cultural expectation toward men is to have a girlfriend at a certain age during their adolescence. They may experience peer pressure from society about their sexual orientation and behavior if they decide not to have a girlfriend or behave in the way society expects them to comply (Isay, 2009). Hawkins (1992) stated that, when a gay man is an adult, he tries to start a relationship by patterns and behavior he learned from his heterosexual parents. Therefore, this can bring frustration because the dynamics may be different.

Isay (2009) indicated, "Every child enters adolescence with a burden of guilt from forbidden childhood erotic feelings and impulses" (p. 46). During the adolescence period, homosexual men tend to experience their first homoerotic fantasies, masturbation, or sexual experiences with a person of their same gender. Depending on the moral and values of the person, they may feel and believe these experiences are immoral, evil, or sick. They tend to feel guilty and "in sin" after the act (Isay, 2009).

Some adolescents experience their coming out process through oppressed silence because of cultural or environment issues (Weststrate & McLean, 2010). They feel insecure and possibly undecided to disclose their sexual attraction toward their same gender. This coming out process is distinctive to each individual, even when two brothers are homosexual and have similar backgrounds. They need to be motivated towards constructing their own gay identity in their environment (Weststrate & McLean, 2010). Gays experience the milestone of coming out to

society, co-workers, neighbors, family members, and their parents (Groves, Bimbi, Nanín, & Parsons, 2006). In their identity development process, once individuals know they are gay and become aware of their attractions of their same sex, they begin to explore as individuals what it means to be gay (Ghavami, Fingerhut, Peplau, Grant, & Witting, 2011). Ghavami et al. reported, “As a result of this exploration, individuals begin to integrate the meaning of their sexual orientation into their global sense of self” (p. 80).

Adulthood. “In as much as empirical investigation into gay, lesbian, and bisexual development lacks methodologically sound longitudinal inquiry into how sexual minorities evolve across the lifespan” (D’Augelli, as cited by Ritter & Terndrup, 2002, p. 48). Ghavami et al. (2011) indicated that limited information about the association between identity achievement and well-being among gay men exist. When referring to identity achievement, scholars defined it as a “cognitive process that refers to exploring an identity and developing an understanding of the meaning of that identity in one’s own life” (Ghavami, et al., 2011, p. 80).

Gay men increase their well-being by enhancing their knowledge and understanding of being gay. “Youth ages 10 to 15 most frequently name the mass media, including movies, TV, magazines, and music, as their source of information about sex and intimacy” (DeLamater & Friedrich, 2002, p. 11). Kaiser Family Foundation (as cited by DeLamater & Friedrich, 2002) reported in 1997 a smaller percentage of adolescents who have received sexual education from sources such as parents, sexual education programs, professionals, and peers. Identity achievement and affirmation can predict psychological well-being (e.g., Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Kohatsu, 1997; Roberts et al., 1999; as in Ghavami et al., 2011, p. 80). According to Ghavami et al. (2011), no studies have identified how identity achievement and affirmation affect the psychological well-being. “Frable, Wortman, and Joseph (1997) found that gay men who had a

more positive gay identity reported higher self-esteem and enhanced well-being” (Ghavami et al., 2011, p. 80). Additionally, Ghavami et al. (2011) indicated through social identity theory that gay people develop a sense of belongingness and pride by joining groups of people where they feel connected, have similar points of view, and are able to be themselves. This has a positive effect on individuals, such as enhanced self-esteem. The more experience a gay person has in the gay life lowers the possibilities for that person to experience depression in regards to accepting his/her sexual orientation (Ghavami et al., 2011)

Homosexuality

A number of researchers from different fields, such as the biological, environmental, genetics, and others have tried to answer the homosexuality dilemma and explain the roots of the homosexual orientation (Fankhanel, 2004). On the other hand, social constructivists indicated that homosexual behavior cannot be certainly understood (Pattatucci, 1998). Ryan and Futterman (as cited by Fankhanel, 2004) indicated that the majority of people who have studied sexual orientation believe it is not a choice, while debates and arguments continue among scholars about the nature of this orientation (Fankhanel, 2004).

According to Kranz and Cusick (2005), research in the biological perspective has been one of the most common areas of study. Looking at homosexuality from the biological perspective is challenging and can be complicated. Kranz and Cusick indicated additionally that, although a correlation between homosexual behavior and genes exists, the conclusion remains unclear and complicated. Research in this area has not reached a consensus with a clear rational conclusion about homosexual behavior. However, it is important to understand in a broader perspective and a deeper levels the complex sexual natures and dispositions of homosexuals (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002).

According to Isay (2009), a difference between being homosexual and having an identity as a homosexual man exists. From a biological perspective, some research suggested that homosexual men are born this way. Men inclined with homosexual orientation learn to be gay. They learn how to express their emotions toward another man, learn the gay culture, and live as a minority and in a society that developed for heterosexuals (Isay, 2009). On the contrary, Nelson (1982) indicated that homosexual behavior should be guided similar as heterosexual behavior. However, they should be sensitive and aware of their status as a minority group.

In his report, Kinsey et al. (1948) explained homosexuality more as a heterosexual-homosexual rating scale, based on psychological reaction and experiences of the human male. Figure 1 presents a graphic representation of the heterosexual-homosexual rating scale. Kinsey et al. used a scale from zero to six, zero as being exclusively heterosexual and six as exclusively homosexual. Kinsey et al. indicated that a person could be predominantly heterosexual, but incidentally homosexual (rated number 1); on the other hand, a person can be predominantly homosexual, but incidentally heterosexual (rated number 5). Additionally, Kinsey et al. stated that a person can be predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual (rated number 2); moreover, he rated number 4 for predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual. He rated number 3 for the human male who is equally heterosexual and homosexual.

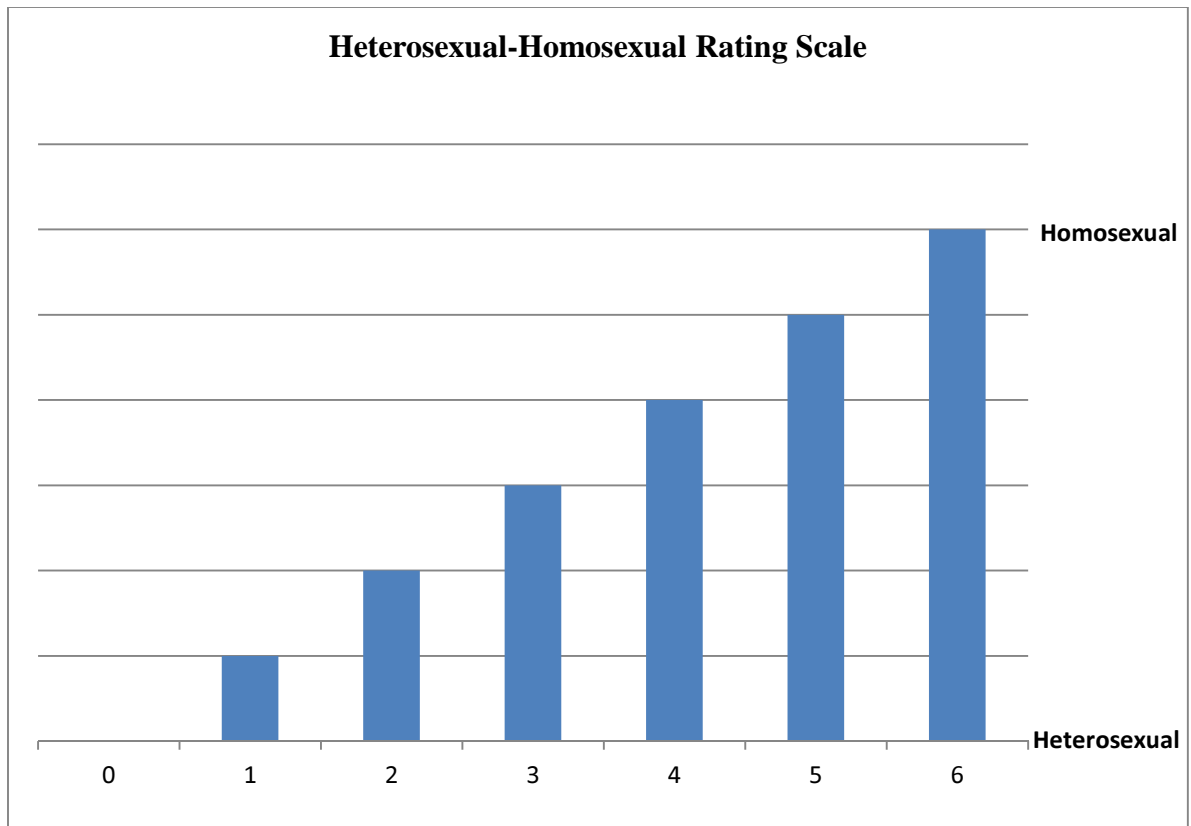


Figure 1. Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale. Adapted from “Sexual Behavior in the Human Male,” by A. C. Kinsey, W. B. Pomeroy, and C. E. Martin, 1948, p. 638, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company.

The results of this heterosexual-homosexual rating scale is based on psychological reactions and over experiences of the human male

0. Exclusively heterosexual with no homosexual
1. Predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally homosexual
2. Predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual
3. Equally heterosexual and homosexual
4. Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual
5. Predominantly homosexual, but incidentally heterosexual
6. Exclusively homosexual

This rating scale demonstrates or implies the elusiveness of entirely heterosexual and entirely homosexual.

According to Kranz and Cusick (2005), LeVay performed a study differentiating the brains of a gay and straight men. The selected subjects were homosexual who had died from Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). LeVay found that the hypothalamus of homosexual men were twice as large as those from heterosexual man. That finding suggested the possibility that homosexuality is inborn, and should not be considered a sin or a psychological disorder. Accordingly Kranz and Cusick, a Canadian psychologist named Ray Blanchard, from the Centre of Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, reported to the journal *New Scientist* that he studied 302 gay men and equally number of straight men and stated that on average, gay men are likely to have older brothers. Additionally, Blanchard “speculated that a mother’s body may change in response to being pregnant with boys, perhaps exposing each subsequent male fetus to higher levels of testosterone and antibodies, which might, in turn, produce a sexual attraction to men” (Kranz & Cusick, 2005, pp. 15-16). Some experts doubt Blanchard findings, because Roman Catholic and Mormon families tend to have large families and produce no greater numbers of gay man (Kranz & Cusick, 2005). Kranz and Cusick indicated additionally that John DeCecco, a professor of psychology at San Francisco State University, reported that this finding might result in political ramifications such as abortion of potential homosexual fetuses. Additionally, DeCecco stated (as cited by Kranz & Cusick, 2005) that homosexuality is more complicated than just a biological response, and has had many different meanings over the centuries.

Homosexuality has existed for centuries; however, gay rights movements in the 1970s and 1980s have advocated for recognition of gay identity in society (Kranz & Cusick, 2005).

According to Endres (2004), Károly Mária Kertbeny, who was an Austro-Hungarian man of letters, translator, and journalist, coined the word homosexuality in 1868. “On May 6, 1868, in a letter to pioneering German sexologist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Kertbeny used the word *Homosexualisten* ("homosexuals"), which he derived from Greek *homos* ("the same") and the Latin root *sexualis*” (p. 1). Endres indicated that, a year later, Kertbeny used the word homosexual in two pamphlets written in German and published in Leipzig. In this publication, Kertbeny criticized the laws attacked and criminalized same-sex activities (Endres, 2004).

Freud was the founder of modern psychology. Kranz and Cusick stated that Freud held that homosexuality was not a disorder, but that there may be the possibility that human may be attracted to homosexuality. According to Warren (1974) and Rodriguez (1989) (as cited by Rodríguez, 1996) “...noted that “homosexual” described as sexual orientation and is primarily based on the sexual behavior, whereas “gay” implies inclusion within a community, culture, and describes people who have adopted a particular worldview” (p. 130).

As part of human development, identity formation is a key component in the human development. From the homosexual perspective, identity formation is characterized by starting with an awareness of same-sex feelings, questioning, and explorations with the emerging identity. Duarté-Vélez, Bernal, and Bonilla (2010) emphasized that gay men go through identity integration when individuals accept their LGBT identity. As part of this process, Duarté-Vélez et al. stated that gay men experience increased positive attitude toward homosexuality (when they accept their homosexuality), which helps them to resolve their internalized homophobia. This process helps them to disclose their LGBT identity to others and be involved in LGBT activities (popularly referred to as coming out) (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010).

The Gay Stigma. From a cross culturally perspective, Herdt (1988) (as cited by Ritter & Terndrup, 2002) stated that same sex is variable and has four forms, (a) age-structured homosexual behavior, (b) gender transformed homosexual practice, (c) role-specialized homosexuality, and (d) modern gay movement. Kranz and Cusick (2005) indicated how some gay right activists argued they were born homosexual, noticing they were different since early childhood. Ritter and Terndrup stated that religious and civil organizations attributed less than positive social constructions to the intimate relationship of homosexuals; “In fact, these influential shaping forces have criminalized, condemned, and pathologized their inclinations and behaviors” (p. 25).

Forty years ago, doctors related the word homosexual “with implications of diagnosis and pathology” (Gonsiorek & Winrich, 1991, p. 2). Instead of supporting the emergence of sociopolitical identities rather than sexual behavior based, people in the homosexual community adopted the word gay (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). The word gay was introduced in 1893, and it promoted a positive image of the homosexual community, and not their sexual acts (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). It takes considerable effort for homosexuals to maintain a sense of dignity and self-worth in society. Additionally, at times they may have an ongoing battle in maintaining their values as a human being and homosexuals (Isay, 2009). However, homosexuals who feel confident about their sexuality generally do not feel threatened by others (Thomas, 2007).

Homosexuality has appeared in the United States’ media to educate society and decreased the misconception that being homosexual is more than having sex with the same gender, going to clubs, or having the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Homosexuality started to appear in the media, most of the time with positive popularity and not only for political purpose. Additionally, it was a means to educate society and show a facet of what it is like to be gay, (e.g.,

the NBC television program “Will and Grace”). Additionally, that information and education has been reinforced through books on a wide variety of gay topics (Weststrate & McLean, 2010). This media helped enhancing the knowledge of gay profiles, as well as to provide a different perspective of the gay dynamic. Nonetheless, Hispanic media in the United States still demonstrate rejection to the idea of homosexuality, and continue to display generally a lack of respect towards this minority group. Unfortunately, when homosexuality topics appear on Hispanic media, these tend to be offensive towards the gay community (Kranz and Cusick, 2005).

Identity Stages and Development. Homosexual men become conscious about their homosexual identity in their adolescence stage, late twenties, or later. However, “the entire process usually takes place during the teenage years and early twenties” (Rosario et al., 1996, p. 114). Fankhanel (2004) indicated that studies have acknowledged the gay sexual orientation; however, it is important to understand the gay identity development in each individual and his or her surroundings such as culture and family. Many articles and models exist explaining the coming out process, all describing how to adjust, to be aware, and individual identification as homosexuals (Thompson, 1996). According to Rodríguez (1996), the coming out process in the Latino culture is considered a significant event. For Latino gay men, not being out (hiding their true sexual identity) to their family is considered normal in an early identity stage of their homosexual identity development (Rodríguez, 1996). Thompson indicated that some gay men have difficulty renouncing to their heterosexual identity, and are not able to grieve from it. This identity issue may cause problems in adjusting to homosexual life and life in general.

Ryan and Futterman (as in Fankhanel, 2006) defined identity as “a complex integration of the cognitive, emotional, and social factors that make up a person’s sense of self” (p.8).

Remafedi (1987) (as cited by Rosario et al., 1996) posited that the development of a cognitive sexual orientation and sexual identity might occur at different ages. Remafedi found that, among middle class white males, a mean age for male adolescents to be aware of their sexual attraction toward males is at the age of 11 (ranges in the study were from ages six to 16). Moreover, the age of a male adolescent self-labeling himself or herself as gay or bisexual occurred at the average age of 14. The review of the literature failed to provide any specific studies that explored these domains among the Hispanic/Latino gay male adolescents.

Generally, men are raised to be heterosexual. Nonetheless, at some point in their development, they may experience a different sexual orientation or preference as part of their sexual identity. Rosario et al. (1996) defined sexual orientation as “cognitive components and sexual partner activity” (p. 113), and sexual identity as “self-identification as lesbian/gay, bisexual or straight” (p. 113). Human beings go through stages where they need to identify their sexual orientation and identity. Most likely, this process happens when they are adolescents. “Adolescence is a time of exploration and experimentation because identity formation is its developmental task (Erikson, 1950) (as cited by Rosario et al., p. 122).

When Rodríguez (1996) studied the gay identity development in the Latin culture, he found a strong correlation between identity development and family relationships. Rodríguez emphasized that the term “family” for Latino families includes immediate and extended family members. When participating gay Latinos in that study were asked to define the term *familia*, they stated that it encompassed anyone related to their immediate family as well as anyone from their social life, such as gay, lesbian, transgender, or heterosexual. *Familia*, for a Latino gay, is a support group that is able to connect with people who share the same values. Rodriguez reported, “People in the *familia* become a significant source of support, community affiliation,

and affirmation of identity” (p. 152). Rodríguez additionally indicated that family, gay, and lesbian friends, social organizations and their faith in God have helped gay Latinos to develop and maintain their identity.

Scholars have completed studies about homosexual’s self-consciousness in their identity process, even though society has been predominantly biased against them (Barbosa et al., 2010). According to Ritter and Terndrup (2002), Atkinson, Morten, and Sue created in 1993 the phases of identity development and sexual minority identity-formation chart or continuum (model presented in Table 2) for people who go through both phases (Table 2). “The minority identity development model for ethnic minorities captures the fluidity of the process and describes its phases in a clear and concise way (Atkinson et al. as cited by Barbosa, et al., 2010, p. 102).

Table 2

Phases of Identity development and Sexual Minority Identity Formation Chart

Different Phases	Minority Identity Development (ethnic/cultural) (Atkinson et al., 1993)	Sexual Minority Identity Formation
Phase 1	Conformity	Sensitization (Troiden) Pre-Coming Out (Coleman) Emergence (Grace)
Phase 2	Dissonance	Identity Confusion (Cass, Troiden) Identity Comparison (Cass) Coming Out (Coleman) Acknowledgement (Grace)
Phase 3	Resistance and Immersion	Identity Tolerance (Cass) Identity Assumption (Troiden) Exploration (Coleman) Finding Community (Grace)

Note: Adapted from “Handbook of Affirmative Psychotherapy with Lesbians and Gay Men,” by K. Y. Ritter and A. I. Terndrup, 2002, p. 193. New York: The Guilford Press.

Table 2 (cont.)

Table 2 (cont.)

Phases of Identity development and Sexual Minority Identity Formation Chart

Different Phases	Minority Identity Development (ethnic/cultural) (Atkinson et al., 1993)	Sexual Minority Identity Formation
Phase 4	Introspection	Identity Acceptance (Cass) Commitment (Troiden) First Relationship (Grace)
Phase 5	Synergetic Articulation and Awareness	Identity Pride (Cass)
Phase 6		Identity Synthesis (Cass) Integration (Coleman) Self-Definition and Reintegration (Grace)

Note: Adapted from “Handbook of Affirmative Psychotherapy with Lesbians and Gay Men,” by K. Y. Ritter and A. I. Terndrup, 2002, p. 193. New York: The Guilford Press.

Some children are capable of acknowledging their gay cognitive sexual orientation and identity before reaching adolescence. “This relatively early age of discovery, which may characterize a minority of youth who eventually identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, may be influenced in the relationship among cognitive sexual orientation, sexual partner activity, and sexual identity” (Rosario et al., 1996, p. 122). Rosario et al. additionally found a correlation between sexual orientation and identification in the gay community. They indicated that some individuals are certain about their gay identity before experiencing any sexual contact with a person of their same gender. Some gays have identified themselves as gay; however, they have considered themselves bisexual in the past or vice-versa. In the study, Rosario et al. were unable to identify and explain the changes in the sexual identity.

Moreover, at the initial stages of their identity process, many lesbians, bisexual, or gay attributed their sexual orientation to an early sexual experience, particularly if they had a

negative experience (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). These negative experiences were either physical, emotional, or of a sexual abuse nature. For some homosexuals, their first sexual activity may have been a rape or even incest. Ritter and Terndrup indicated that men have their first erotic experience with either someone from their same or opposite gender. However, if they have their first erotic experience with a male, they may develop differently from the males who experienced their first erotic experience with females. On the other hand, research has attempted to demonstrate a correlation between their first sexual experience and their sexual orientation although significant findings have failed (Ritter & Terndrup). Ritter and Terndrup added to the theoretical scenario by reporting a correlation between being homosexual and a history of abuse as being unraveled and complex and needing more study. Furthermore, Tajon (2009) indicated in his study that Latino gay men who have been sexually abused might blame their abuse to their sexual orientation. Others blame their sexual orientation to their sexual abuse. They may experience extreme feelings of guilt and shame. At times, they live for many years confused and questioning themselves about these incidents; without a clear idea of either one. These feelings lead some of the Latino gay men to suicidal thoughts or attempts.

Thompson (1996) described homosexuals as individuals who have difficulties in dealing or recognizing their unresolved grief issues or avoiding feelings of pain. This pain can result in anger or guilt. Avoidance may turn into a pattern of behavior. Thompson indicated, additionally that, when homosexuals confront their pain, they have as a result, a positive outcome such as feeling less angry with their families and straight friends. Rodríguez (1996) stated that sexual orientation and ethnic identity are two different things, but both are considered constructs on a continuum. Therefore, some models of identity development are not sufficient to accommodate the identity development for some gays with multicultural backgrounds. Hence, it is important

to find the correct models that are oriented for the minority group (Rodríguez, 1996). On the other hand, Barbosa et al. (2010) posited that researchers have created models for GLBT ethnic minorities to embrace negative or stigmatized identities; nevertheless, they have not created a positive and integrated approach. “They face many pressures and issues in reconciling their place in the world” (p. 103). Furthermore, Rodríguez found that participants oscillated within their Spanish and English language while performing the study. Participants used the English language as a safe emotional distance when talking about their homosexuality, and avoided using the Spanish language.

Coming Out Process

According to Tajon (2009), coming out is the process for which individuals identify as homosexual and, subsequently, communicate to others their sexual orientation. Additionally, Tajon stated that, when a man has finalized the stages of coming out and identifies himself with the homosexual community, is out and he has informed others of his sexual orientation. The perspective of the coming out process may be different depending of the age group. Rodriguez (1996) stated that the coming out in the 1940s through 1960s versus the 1970s through 1990s developed within different sets of social and political influences, such as culture, social, and political issues changes throughout the years. For example, in coming out, homosexual boys have no idea why they have such a strong and longstanding attraction to other boys. They feel confused and at times overwhelmed about these feelings (Isay, 2009).

In the process of “coming out of the closet” (accepting homosexuality publicly), homosexual men explore their sexuality in a different way than heterosexual men. Acuna-Ruiz and Vargas (2006) stated that, when a homosexual man feels attracted to another, that does not mean that he needs to play a woman’s role; nevertheless, some homosexual men do. From a

social perspective, gender roles are stereotyped as either masculine or feminine. In the homosexual community, they can do either one, and they enjoy doing both roles (Acuna-Ruiz & Vargas, 2006). In their study, Raffaelli and Ontai (2004) described the masculine role as being independent, stronger, and the leader; while on the other hand, the feminine role is the one that is dependent, faithful, and a follower. In their findings, they do not specify in which area the role is independent or dependent.

The word gender can be seen from different perspectives as well as the homosexual man in his coming out process. Crooks and Baur (2012) stated that gender is “the psychological and socio-cultural characteristics associated with our sex” (p. 111). Gender role, such as the behavior and attitudes a human being, does indicate degree as a female, male, or androgyny (Master, Johnson, & Kolodny, 1995). Androgyny refers to the “behavior that expresses aspects of stereotypical masculine and feminine characteristics by the same person either simultaneously or sequentially” (Master et al., 1995, p. 281). A man may have patterns of different gender roles, depending of the environment. Master et al. indicated that depending of the culture or their family, they have a gender schema for which they stereotype or classify beliefs about masculinity or femininity based on their own beliefs. A homosexual person may have a gender role more feminine than masculine, or vice-versa. It is about how they identify themselves and how they perceive themselves psychologically as male or female (Crooks & Baur, 2005). Additionally, Crooks and Baur indicated that a man’s gender identity is individual and unique. A man may look very masculine outside, but inside it may have a higher identification with his femaleness side or vice-versa.

According to Peinado et al. (2007), the sexual act in the homosexual community is different from heterosexuals. In the homosexual sexual act, they have one person that is the

receptor and the other one is the inserter. The inserter is also known as “the top” and the receptive as “the bottom.” In the Hispanic/Latino community, the top is known as “activo” and the bottom as “pasivo.” In their sexual act, they can assume either role, and, at times, they prefer to perform only one of the roles. Regarding the homosexual role or types of roles in their sexual activity, “Latino categories of *pasivo* (receiver) and *activo* (inserter) are not based on sexual activities but, rather, on the ability of man to reverse roles in sexual situations” (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002, p. 201). According to Fankhanel (2004), social constructionism indicated that, in the Latin culture, a man who is the receiver is considered homosexual and the inserter as heterosexual. Ross et al. (2006) reported in their study that, in the Latino community, the label that is given at times to a homosexual man in his sexual role as being receptive or inserter could be incorrect. This happens because at times, no correlation exists as to the way a man may behave in a society, which may lead others to conclude that he is an inserter, when in his sexual act he is the receiver. Another reason this might happen is the stigma that the Latino community may place on a man to play a role that the heterosexual community may see it as being less masculine, according to their standards. On the other hand, within the Latino community, a man may be seen as being receptive due to his mannerisms and their public behavior as related to love and romance, when in their sexual act they play the role as inserter in the sexual role.

According to Rodríguez (1996), the Latino culture in the United States is proportionally overrepresented as a low socio economic class. They generally overlook the fact that Hispanic/Latino’s belong to different socioeconomic classes; therefore, the role in their cultural value varies. In this case, the sexual orientation may play a significant role in their identity development as well as on their decision of coming out. Rodríguez presented an example of a gay person who is the main contributor in his family. A Hispanic gay man may fear to

acknowledge being out of the closet at work, believing he may be fired from his job. The issue in some cases can be homophobia or internalized homophobia. However, in this scenario it can be a survival situation in response to the stressors of being the main economic provider at their home. Nevertheless, the issue can be a combination of homophobia, internalized homophobia and/or, a survival situation (Rodríguez, 1996). When a homosexual is contemplating coming out to his family, he usually feels anxious, uncertain, fear of rejection, and loss (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). Therefore, it is a process in which takes time to take the first step. Many in our society have a negative perspective of homosexuality. Therefore, in the coming out process, the gay person needs to overcome the obstacle of prejudice, and internal and external homophobia (Thompson, 1996). Finally, the situations mentioned above are a sample of the struggle a gay or lesbian person goes through in the process of coming out.

Hispanic/Latino Culture

According to Barros-Fernández and Zaldivar-Piedra (2004), the phenomenon of people from Latin America, immigrating to the United States, is based on pursuing the American dream. “Like so many immigrants, Hispanic-Americans and Latinos have endured danger, hardship, and sacrifice, many risking it all for a chance at the American dream” (Steele, 2010, p. 303). During the decade of 2000s, southern states of the United States became the new destination for Latinos; as a result, the population has increased tremendously (Murphy-Erby, Stauss, Boyas, & Bivens, 2011). According to Steele, the American dream for Hispanics/Latinos is a big step and attainable challenge. The dream is to work hard, save money, own property, achieve financial stability, and leave a legacy for their children. Unfortunately, many people are denied the opportunity to achieve these benefits in their country of origin. However, many with hard work

and sacrifices are capable of achieving their dreams in the United States, even though some of them may not be legal United States' citizens.

The pursuing of the American dream has created a group of Latinos with a different culture in the United States. Many, who were born in the United States, have never visited their parents' country of origin and/or do not speak Spanish well. This does not make them less Hispanic. However, they have different cultural influences; more Americanized than Hispanic/Latino. "As Hispanic/Latinos bear a plural identity, ethnic names that are appropriate today may be obsolete or even offensive tomorrow. The mediating factors in self-designation are gaining a voice and power to name one's identity and define one's reality" (Comas-Díaz, 2001, p. 116). "Puerto Ricans do not face any statutes restrictions, because Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States. Puerto Ricans are United States citizens and therefore can move freely between the two countries" (Census Bureau, 2010). Although Puerto Ricans are United States citizen, they are part of the American dream phenomenon. Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Mexicans, Colombians, Venezuelans, and individuals from the rest of the countries from Latin America experience an adjustment process when they leave the country of origin and move to the United States. They experience acculturation.

When Latinos moved to the United States, their acculturation process is a key component in their experience (Miranda, Bilot, Peluso, Berman, & Van Meek, 2006). Ghaddar, Brown, Pagán, and Díaz (2010) defined acculturation as the process through which minority individuals adapt to and assimilate the mainstream culture (refer to Table 2, column III). Simultaneously, the Latino minority group is not the only one that goes through this adjustment process. Minorities that come from different cultures have experienced this process. This adjustment process can last from one to five years. In this process, people start generally in a

new country without access to resources. They start a new home, friends, and support system, learn a new culture and language, acquire new job or perhaps a new career. Acculturation is a complex process for which immigrants acquire different costumes, beliefs, behaviors, values, or attitudes in their process of adapting to a new culture (Ghaddar et al., 2010). When a Hispanic person arrives to the United States, the process of acculturation becomes an evolution from a uni-dimensional to a multidimensional construct (Miranda et al., 2006). This multidimensional construct helps them to think more systematically. Therefore, they become more multicultural aware of their environment.

In Table 3, Gutiérrez and Dworki (1992) presented a table of stages of bicultural personality development. Column I depicts the Erickson's psychosocial stages. The interaction among the other stages in Columns II and III do not occur in one direction. Column II includes the stages of disequilibrium that depicts when minorities, such as Hispanics or gay/lesbian, experience a transition into a new culture. For gay and lesbians, it is the transition from living in a heterosexual into a homosexual culture. For Hispanics/Latinos, is transitioning from their country of origin into the United States. Column II depicts the stages of acculturation/assimilation, of the formation when someone goes from one cultural experience to a bicultural experience.

Table 3

Stages of Bicultural Personality Development

	I Erikson's Psychosocial Stages	II Stages of Disequilibrium	III Stages of Acculturation / Assimilation
1.	Trust vs. Mistrust	Lack of knowledge of the host culture	Culture shock Vs. Conformity
2.	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Sense of nationalism for the native country	Alienation Vs. Role Accommodation
3.	Initiative vs. Guilt	Assimilation	Marginality Vs. Role Accommodation
4.	Industry vs. Inferiority	Militancy	Immigrant Group Appreciation Vs. Host Group Appreciation
5.	Identity Vs. Identity Diffusion	Introspection	Rejection of Host Culture Vs. Bicultural Sense of People hood
6.	Intimacy Vs. Isolation	Selective Appreciation	Self-Hatred Vs. Bicultural Adjustment

Note: Adapted from “Gay, Lesbian and African American Managing the Integration of Identities” by and S. H. Dworki & F. J. Gutiérrez, 1992, p. 146. In S. H. Dworkin, and F. J. Gutiérrez (Eds.), *Counseling Gay Men & Lesbians: Journey to the End of the Rainbow*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Comas-Díaz (2001) reported, “...the term Hispanic is inaccurate, incorrect, and often offensive as a collective name for all Spanish speakers or Latinos” (p. 116). Although a same language unites the Hispanic culture, this is not a homogeneous group; therefore, they represent different ethnic groups (Espinosa, 1995). According to Keefe and Padilla (1987), the

Hispanic/Latino culture has different ethnic identifications within their minority group. “Ethnic identification refers to the self-identification among members as well as their attitude toward affiliation with one ethnic group and culture as opposed to another” (p. 8).

Hispanic/Latinos have different cultures and characteristics in each ethnic group. Their food, music, dance, socioeconomic status, Spanish idioms, and spiritual beliefs are diverse. Nonetheless, they unite as a minority group and may support each other. Comas-Díaz (2001) stated that the Hispanic/Latino minority is an ethnic collage. Hispanics, Latinos, Hispanos, Latinos, Central Americans, or South Americans are some of the terms they use to identify their group. Furthermore, some use more specific terms to show their ethnic identity such as Chicanos, Xicanos, Ricans, or Boricuas. Moreover, others affirm their national origins and use terms such as Mexicans or Mexican Americans, Cubans or Cuban Americans, Colombians, Dominicans, Peruvians, Salvadorans, or Venezuelans, among many others.

Latin Americans are people from Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Perú, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Panamá, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, México, Cuba, Puerto Rico, República Dominicana, and Brasil. People are not Hispanic because they speak Spanish. They have to be of true Spanish descent to be Hispanic. For instance, Brazil is the only non-Spanish speaking Latin American country, because they are of Portuguese descent (Comas-Díaz, 2001).

Espinosa (1995) stated that Hispanics, as a whole, have strong family ties, believe in family loyalty, and have a collective orientation that supports community life. Morales (1992) indicated that, despite the cultural differences that Hispanics/Latinos have, they have cultural values that are common in their culture. Some of these cultural values are *familismo*, *simpatía*, *personalismo*, and *respeto*. Morales referred to *personalismo* (personalism) as “a preference of

Latinos and Latinas for having personal relationships with others in their social group” (p. 130). Moreover, this is a sense of trust and cooperation they build with other people. For instance, Hispanic/Latinos tend to see their health provider as a member of their family. *Simpatía* (sympathy) refers to “the sense of empathy and the importance of smooth relations and social politeness” (Morales, 1992, p. 130). *Familismo* is another term that has been coined by the Hispanic culture. Morales referred to *familismo* as “the importance of the family as the primary social unit and source of support” (p. 130). In the Hispanic culture, they include the extended family (godparents, uncles, cousins, aunts, and grandparents) as their family. Additionally, Schwartz (2007) defined familismo in the most general terms as “prioritizing one’s family over oneself, familism is regarded as a cultural value that sets Hispanics apart from other cultural groups” (p. 101).

Morales (1992) explained *respeto* (respect) as “the need for respect, especially for authority figures; *respeto* requires that the person be treated with dignity and respect” (p. 130). However, *respeto* can be also translated as “proper demeanor.” Harwood, Leyendecker, Carlson, Asencio, and Miller (2002) defined the word *respeto* (proper demeanor) as “knowing the level of courtesy and decorum required in a given situation in relation to other people of a particular age, sex, and social status” (p. 25.)

These beliefs and cultural concepts are the way for which families take care of their children, protect their adolescents, take care of a child with a disability, welcome them back when they finish college, support them financially when they are unable to find a job, and take care of their elders. These mores are not only for the immediate family; they are for the extended family too. “Culturally, this is represented by an emphasis on warm, personalized

styles of interaction, a relaxed sense of time, and a need for an informal atmosphere for communication” (Espinosa, 1995, p. 2).

Two Minorities

According to Acuña-Ruiz and Vargas (2006), society has been structured in a way that most people should go with and fulfill the needs of the majority in society. These structures in society are institutions of social power such as government and schools. Nevertheless, minority groups tend not to fit into that structure; therefore, it is a challenge for minorities to feel at times part of a society and to feel connected. Often people who belong to the majority of society may perceive people from minorities as unnatural or strangers. As a result, this is a challenge for minority groups and, at times, they feel rejected and discriminated.

According to Morales (1992), Latinos cannot hide their minority status as being Latinos, because it is visible; however, Latinos may hide their minority status of being gay. It is an invisible minority status, and it is their choice to disclose that status (Morales, 1992). According to Rodríguez (1996), Latino men may have achieved a high level of their Latino identity prior to achieving a high level of gay identity, although this process occurs simultaneously in some cases. It is more challenging for the Latino man when working with their gay and Latino identity simultaneously. They may feel pressured to oscillate between the Latino community and the gay community, presenting a constant challenge of the issue of allegiance that may result in misunderstandings. At times, this situation may cause anxiety; therefore, facilitating feelings of isolation and alienation (Morales, 1992).

Latinos who are born in their country of origin or in the United States feel like a minority within a minority because of being Latino and gay (Morales, 1992). During the transition of a gay person moving to the United States, Rodríguez (1996) explained that a conversion of

attitudes exist, in which Hispanics have to adapt or change some values, behaviors, or beliefs to be able to adjust to the dominant culture (Anglo), as well as from a minority culture (ethnic). However, a Hispanic gay man belongs to two minorities. Moreover, a Hispanic gay man goes through the same adjustment stages than the heterosexual culture to the homosexual minority culture. Therefore, they go through two conversion processes (Rodríguez, 1996). Rodríguez posited, “gay/lesbian identity becomes an aspect of a person’s internal definition and social presentation of self” (p. 128).

A homosexual man who is aware of being Latino and gay can experience uneasiness (Morales, 1992). When homosexuals immigrate to a foreign country, they move to a new geographical area; therefore, it is a beginning of a new identity. They begin a new experience in their life where psychological, emotional, and behavioral boundaries will be poles apart from their native culture (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). Ritter and Terndrup posited that a homosexual immigrant moving to the United States might experience identity formation and acculturation process concurrently. This may happen because homosexual immigrants may have had seldom contact with other gay, lesbian, or bisexuals in their country of origin; therefore, they are not acculturated (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). Rodríguez (1996) stated that, for individuals to accept themselves as part of the larger culture, they should be acculturated at some level, even though acculturation does not ensure assimilation. Minority groups have their ethnic identification as part of the multicultural group. Ceballos-Capitaine, Szapocznik, Blaney, and Morgan (1990) (as cited by Ritter & Terndrup, 2002) completed a study about the level of stress between Hispanics and Caucasian in the United States. They found that Hispanics experience more stress in regards to the daily interaction of their sexual orientation, as they have to deal with being part of a minority group as Latinos, as well as being accepted as homosexuals in their Latino/Hispanic

community. “The remarkable similarities between most other psychosocial domains were thought to be attributed to the Hispanic cohort’s level of acculturation.” (p. 264)

Whereas belonging to two minorities is part of the identity process that a Hispanic/Latino homosexual may face during poly-cultural integration, according to Espin (1987) (as cited by Ritter & Terndrup, 2002), the GLBT community may belong to more than three minority groups, including cohorts based on culture, race, and religion. “Many of these individuals are emotionally vulnerable and feel isolated and estranged from at least three cultures--their own ethnic/cultural group, the sexual minority community, and the dominant society” (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002, p. 219). Acuña-Ruiz and Vargas (2006) indicated that, when a gay man goes through a battle between picking either religion or sexuality, it is like picking between religion and themselves. Religious gay men struggle and may feel an internal battle between their sexuality and religion. At times, they may feel guilty or immoral because that is what they have learned from their religious roots (Acuña-Ruiz & Vargas, 2006). Ritter and Terndrup (2002) posited that the Hispanic/Latino community has a more negative attitude toward sexual minorities. The pervasive heterosexist influence may affect Hispanic/Latino homosexual individuals, leading them to feelings of oppression; therefore, they remain “in the closet” or deny their true sexual identity. They frequently perceive being gay as disloyalty towards their culture and family. Hence, this leads, at times, to non-compromising risk of their Hispanic identity; however, it does contribute to lift a significant psychological burden.

According to Rodriguez (1996), the minority-identity development model created by Atkinson et al. in 1989 (see Table 4) proposed a racial/ethnic identity model to understand minority-client attitudes and behavior within existing personality theories. Additionally, it described the schema of differences that may exist within people of the same minority group

with respect to cultural identity, and the potential that a person may endure in the transition of their sense of identity.

Table 4

Minority Identity Development Model

1. Stage	Attitude Toward Self	Attitude Toward Others of the Same Minority	Attitude Toward Dominant Group
1 Conformity	Self-depreciating	Group depreciating	Group appreciating
2 Dissonance	Conflict between self-depreciating and self-appreciating	Conflict between group depreciating and group appreciating	Conflict between group appreciating and group depreciating
3 Resistance and Immersion	Self-appreciating	Group-appreciating	Group-depreciating
4 Introspection	Concern with basis of self-appreciation	Concern with nature of unequivocal appreciation	Concern with the basis of group depreciation
5 Synergetic Articulation and Awareness	Self-appreciating	Group-appreciating	Selective appreciation

Note: Adapted “Counseling American Minorities,” by from Atkinson, M., & Sue, in R. A. Rodriguez, 1996, *Clinical Issues in Identity Development in Gay Latino Men*, p. 130.

Sexual identity is defined according to the emphasis that is given to the gender role behavior. For instance, in the Mexican culture a tendency exists to see the homosexual who is the inserter as more masculine versus the receiver as less masculine (Rodríguez, 1996). Morales (1990, 1996) (as cited by Tajon, 2009) believed that homosexuality is viewed and practiced in different ways, depending of the Latino gay men’s cultural background. “Men who inserted their penises are regarded as masculine; those who receive them are viewed as feminine and degraded” (Garnets & Kimmel, 1991, p. 158). Authors such as González, Espin, and Morales

(1996) (as cited by Ritter & Terndrup, 2002) stated that bisexuals are not homosexuals as long as they play a masculine penetrative sex role. This behavior is tolerated as for same sex behavior among Hispanics as long as the man does not label themselves as homosexuals (Greene, as cited by Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). According to Almaguer (1993), (as cited by Zea et al., 2003) the European American culture tends to classify the person as gay or straight. However, among Mexican immigrants, they tend to classify the person more as active or passive. Therefore, depending of the level of acculturation into the United States gay culture, the sexual identity in the Latino gay men may vary. Machismo is highly valued in the Latin culture. “Machismo refers to a code of virility and masculine conduct that prizes honor, respect, and dignity, as well as aggressiveness, invulnerability, and sexual prowess” (Staples & Miranda, 1980, as cited by Barbosa et al., 2010, p. 103). When homosexual men demonstrate a passive role and display feminine attributes, it creates a stigma as being less “macho,” and is not respected in the Latin culture in the same level as the active homosexual. That occurs because the active homosexual role behaves more macho than the passive one; thus, tends to be more respected than the passive homosexual role (Barbosa, et al., 2010). Additionally, Barbosa et al. stated that Latina mothers maybe the anchors of machismo in the Latin culture. In the Latino family structure, the mother, in most cases, is the person responsible for raising the child. She is the one teaching the male son not to engage in behaviors or activities associated to women, such as helping with house chores, cooking, or crying. Hispanic/Latinos have a firm dichotomy point of view of gender, in which distinctive behaviors are expected from men or women (González & Espin, 1996).

Among other gay ethnic groups, such as White gay men, sexual orientation is more guided as a self-definition of the individual, and to be able to have autonomy (Trianis, 1995, as cited in Zea et al., 2003). In the Latino culture, it tends to be more *allocentric* and collectivist.

Latino culture “is collectivist and allocentric, because individuals tend to view themselves as members of larger social groups and give more importance to interpersonal relationships than do members of individualist cultures” (Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994; Mills & Clark, 1982, as cited by Zea et al., 2003, p. 284). According to Zea et al. (2003), the Latino culture emphasizes the family as well as the community. Identifying themselves as homosexuals is not a matter of how it may affect them as individuals; it is a matter of how it may affect the whole family; how other members of the family will see their parents as having homosexual child. Additionally, it relates to how people in the community will perceive that family because of having a gay son. Because the Latino culture is allocentric, this places Latino gay men in a challenging situation that may create stress; therefore, it influences how they present, feel, and view themselves as Latino gay man in the community.

The Hispanic/Latino gay man places importance on the community and is often concerned about “El qué dirán?” (What will they say?) (Tajon, 2009). That may lead a Latino gay man to sacrifice his individual homosexual needs in order to avoid conflicts with his extended family (Caraballo-Diequez, 1989; Sue, 1987; Morales, 1990, as cited by Tajon, 2009). This also may cause a double bind for gay Latinos because if they distance themselves from family as result of their homosexual lifestyles, they may experience feelings of disloyalty or disrespect to their family. If they decide to stay close to their family and sacrifice certain needs of their homosexuality, they may experience disloyalty or disrespect toward their homosexuality (Caraballo-Diequez, 1989, as cited by Tajon, 2009).

Rodriguez (1996) proposed an identity formation model for ethnic minorities that are Gays/Lesbian (see Table 4). Gay men in their developmental process may have a greater understanding of their self as well as their sexual orientation and ethnic background. In that

table, each stage explains how gay men manage anxiety and tension when they experience changes in their cognitive as well as their behavior because of being gay and belonging to an ethnic minority group.

Table 5

Morales' Identity Formation Model for Ethnic Minority Gays/Lesbians

State	Identity Management Issues
1 Denial of Conflicts	During this phase, people tend to minimize the validity and reality of discrimination they experience as ethnic person and believe they are treated the same as others. Their sexual orientation may or may not be defined, but they feel their personal lifestyle and sexual preference have limited consequences in their life.
2 Bisexual vs. Gay/Lesbian	The preference for some ethnic minority gays and lesbians is to identify themselves as bisexual rather than gay or lesbian. Upon examining their sexual lifestyle, there may be no difference between those who identify themselves as gay/lesbian as compared to those identified as bisexual.
3 Conflicts in Allegiances	The simultaneous awareness of being the member of an ethnic minority as well as being gay or lesbian presents anxiety around the need for these lifestyles to remain separate. Anxiety about betraying either their ethnic minority or gay/lesbian communities, when preference is given to one over the other, becomes a major concern.
4 Establishing Priorities in Allegiances	A primary identification to the ethnic community prevails in this state, and feelings of resentment concerning the lack of integration among the communities become a central issue. There are feelings of anger and rage stemming from their experiences of rejection by the gay community because of their ethnicity.
5 Integrating the Various Communities	As gay or lesbian persons of color, the need of integrate their lifestyle and develop a multicultural perspective becomes a major concern. Adjusting to the reality of the limited options currently available for gay and lesbian people of color becomes a source of anxiety facilitating feelings of isolation and alienation.

Adapted from "Ethnic minority families and minority gays and lesbians," by Morales, 1990, as in R. A. Rodriguez, 1996, *Clinical Issues in Identity Development in Gay Latino Men*, p. 127.

Díaz (1997) posited that gay Latinos strive to maintain simultaneous connection with their family, partner, and sexual life issues, and may feel overwhelmed because of multiple dynamics, which lead them to engage in anonymous sex, especially far away from their social and family environment. Additionally, Díaz indicated that silence is a major approach to dealing with homosexuality within the family, and that a disassociation of sexual thoughts and feelings decreases the likelihood of accurate self-observation within the sexual domain.

From a social perspective, some overgeneralized or expected behaviors occur among men (Díaz, 1997). Diaz further indicated that men often show their masculinity through sexual encounters or in their sexual act with their partner showing strong, dominant, and penetrative practices. According to Ross et al. (2006), Latin America presents with complex barriers in terms of a notion of machismo and gender, for which it is more challenging when a man is a Latino homosexual. This situation may cause shame and stigma in their environment, causing varying barriers for them to perform safe sex (Ross et al., 2006). Díaz (1997) stated that research discloses that oppressive socio-cultural factors and values such as machismo, family loyalty, poverty, homophobia, sexual silence, and racism can strongly compete with a man's ability and desire to practice safer sex. At times, a Hispanic gay man incur in substance abuse during the sexual act as a mask to cover their internal battle and painful feelings, focusing only on the physical arousal and pleasure (Díaz, 1997).

The level of acculturation is another variable associated with unsafe sex in Latino men. Nakamura and Zea (2010) found that Latino gay and bisexual men with lower acculturation levels tend to have a higher percentage of unsafe sex compared to Latinos with a higher level of acculturation who engage in a lower level of unsafe sex. In addition, some of them may perform sex under the influence of drugs. Moreover, this population has experienced negative attitudes

toward homosexuality within their own Latino minority group, and may use drugs as a way to cope with their sexual orientation. Moreover, some homosexuals are able to attain their homoerotic experiences visiting public places such as urinals, bathhouses, or popular Internet sites (Isay, 2009). Akin, Fernández, Bowen, and Warren (2008) suggested that men from South Florida who travel to their country of origin for personal or professional reasons might encounter at times in sexual risky behavior with other men.

Diaz (1997) (as cited by Ritter & Terndrup, 2002) reported a high incident of unprotected sex, along with six specific socio-cultural factors that undermine safe sex practices, (a) machismo, (b) homophobia, (c) family cohesion, (d) sexual silence, (e) poverty, and (f) racism. Although it has been recognized that unprotected sex influences HIV/AIDS cases in Sub-Saharan Africa, awareness raised in recent years about the increasing number of HIV/AIDS cases in Latin America (Akin et al., 2008). Akin et al. (2008) stated that, according to the United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), it is estimated that Latin America has a total of HIV prevalence of 1.8 million individuals, and 440,000 more in the Caribbean. Furthermore, the number of Hispanic/Latino men affected by AIDS/HIV epidemic has increased, and continues to increase rapidly in the United States (Akin et al., 2008).

Hispanic Homosexual Man

Identification with the gay, lesbian, or bisexual (GLB) community revolves around the concept of a common marginalized sexual identity (Groves et al., 2006). The researchers further indicated that GLBT community felt liberated and confronted the homosexual taboo and stigma in society in the early 1980s. Simultaneously, the gay liberation movement and Aids and HIV appeared in the United States. Gays were advocating for their rights, but some of them were fighting the illness of Aids/HIV.

Demographic factors like race, ethnicity, gender, and age play important role in the coming-out process, but few recent studies have looked at this phenomenon (Groves et al., 2006). Rodríguez (1996) conducted a study on identity development with gay Chicano men. In this study, Rodríguez concluded that gay Latinos socializing with each other helped each other to build a support system and to see themselves as part of a culture. Additionally, Rodríguez indicated that, at times, Latin gay men have a misconception of what it is to be integrated in a Latino support group, such as the language to be spoken. Sometimes, the primary language for some gay Latinos is English. Hence, they assume that the language to be spoken in all Latino events is Spanish (Rodríguez, 1996). Furthermore, Savin-Williams (2000) (as cited by Fankhanel, 2004) stated that it is sub-groups such as Cuban and Mexican that need to be studied. This is because the family dynamics and culture is not the same and tend to have differences.

Family Values

Family is extremely important in the Latino culture, leading to strong core values and transcending above other cultures (Barbosa et al., 2010). The family dynamics in the Latino culture tend to promote more respect for parents and elder generations. Thus, Latinos tend to have a non-traditional perspective as well as traditional “Old World” values. This viewpoint is very challenging for homosexuals because elders usually dictate and emphasize the importance of family and tradition in everyday life (Barbosa et al., 2010). According to Duarte-Vélez et al. (2010), family values are an important key in their culture and “may be defined as a value for establishing and maintaining close-knit relationships with immediate and extended family members” (p. 897). Nonetheless, they also yearn to maintain a physical and emotional closeness they experience within the family dynamic. Rodríguez (1996) mentioned that, as part of the family dynamic in the Latino culture, the *respeto* (respect) and being *bien educado* (well

educated) are important components, such as the need to respect authority figures within the family. Additionally, Rodriguez explained that *bien educado* (well educated) is how a person interacts and behaves in a social environment as well as how a man presents himself in society. It is important for human beings to have family and social support. This is an important factor to experience stability in life. “Social support, sexual identity development, and ethnic identity development play key roles in individuals’ health and well-being.” (Gallor & Fassinger, 2010, p. 287)

Latinos/Hispanics may experience fear in their coming out process because they do not want to hurt their family for being homosexual (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010). It may be a big responsibility for them to bear and their close family members are the ones to whom they disclose their sexual orientation. Latinos have parents who may be fully responsible for the sexual education of their children. Unfortunately, sexual education in the Hispanic culture is limited and at times none. Grov et al. (2006) indicated that sexual education is an important element in the coming out process; however, often parents give that responsibility to health and social services providers. At times, this responsibility is also delegated to the education system. Hispanic parents often feel ashamed to talk about sex; therefore, they remain silent. Latinos/Hispanic homosexual men react in the same way, and they do not talk about their sexual orientation. Heterosexual parents and values consonant with those lifestyles are responsible for the raising of a vast majority of gay people. Some of the parents expect their children to be married and procreate grandchildren (Thompson, 1996).

Duarté-Vélez et al. (2010) stated that family values might conflict with LGBT identity. Latinos have high expectations about family value acceptance and conventional religion. Hence, that could create incongruence between homosexuals and family and tends to be a challenge for

a positive family dynamic. Duarté-Vélez et al. identified additionally machismo as a rooted belief to be stereotyped as strong, a leader individual with the capacity to carry that power into society. Hispanic/Latino men tend to remain silent about their homosexuality. “Being silent about their sexual orientation could be a way of protecting parents and other family members, which, for men, is congruent with the values of manhood” (p. 898).

Rodríguez (1996) posited that coming out of the closet, and a man identifying himself as gay can be mislabeled to be “*un mal educado*” (not well behaved) and disrespectful to the family. Moreover, this situation puts the family in a position of shame and looks at the Latino gay man as “*la verguenza de la familia*” (the shame of the family). When having a family member who is homosexual or lesbian animosity, blaming, or even familial disruption may occur (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). Hence, they confront a fear of risking losing their family if they come out publicly (Rodríguez, 1996). According to Ritter and Terndrup (2002), one of the disappointments for parents is to know that their gay son or lesbian daughter will not be able to give them grandchildren. Additionally, parents of gays have a difficult time not being able to have a bond or common experience as parents. “This process may be different for LGBTs from other cultural groups” (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010, p. 898).

According to Isay (2009), some fathers can be distant during the upbringing childhood of the homosexual man. The role of these parents tends to be more as a provider. They tend to be distant from their children and at times being absent from home. Fathers of homosexual men tend to lack caring and loving behavior toward their child. Isay asserted, additionally, that it is important for parents to be in society more emotionally connected to their children. Therefore, being nurturing helps the child’s development. Consequently, as adults, the sons will be capable of being nurturing, caring, and loving people, and being stable in loving relationships.

Sexual education from parents to their children is important and “is not simply limited to the transfer of information to children, but extends to other areas of development such as social/emotional and moral development” (Byrd, 2011, p. 179). Parents’ communication about sex in the Hispanic/Latino families toward their children is anxiety inducing, uncomfortable, embarrassing, and even emotional (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2006). Guilamo-Ramos et al. (2006) asserted that Latino parents have difficulty finding the right time and place to talk about sex. According to Raffaelli and Green (2003) (as cited by Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2006), “Latino parents engaged in more direct than indirect communication about sex with their children” (p. 170). Discussion tends to be more related to factual aspects of sexuality such as pregnancy and menstruation, as well as relationships and values. It is challenging to have a discussion and effective communication about sex when a high percentage of Latinos has been raised in a culture in which the sex topic was not discussed within their own families (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2006). As a result, parents do not have the effective tools to communicate with their children about sex, as their children needed (Murphy-Erby et al., 2011).

Byrd (2011) stated that schools ostensibly educate children; however, education does not occur within a vacuum. Education is taught to educators in the United States from a cognitive, emotional, and moral developmental perspective. “Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that what is taught influences child development in a myriad of ways not just limited to transfer of information” (p. 179).

Research pertaining to parents-children communication about sex in the Latin culture have yielded results predominantly focused on AIDS/HIV, birth control, sexually transmitted diseases, physical and sexual development, reproduction, and the factors related to when to start having sex (Guilamo-Ramos et. al., 2006; Kotchick, Dorsey, Miller ,& Forehand, 1999; Murphy-

Erby et al., 2011). Additionally, some of these studies have been completed in urban areas and out of the state of Florida (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2006). Moreover, other studies have used only one ethnic group and giving the title of Latinos (Murphy-Erby et al., 2011). Furthermore, some studies, when it comes to the gay Latino, continue correlating homosexuality with HIV/AIDS and the use or abuse of substances (Ross et. al., 2006). The review of the literature failed to provide any specific study that explored parents-children education about sexual orientation in the Latin culture.

The meaning of family from a gay perspective can be different from the heterosexual perspective. Therefore, the term family does not follow the hegemonic method about traditional family values. The term family operates in a different way, has a wider multicultural perspective such as intimate relationships, close friends, network and communities. This does not follow the traditional heterosexual nuclear family ideology (Williams, 1998).

“Spanish missionaries reported as early as 1619 that Maya told them about the social acceptability to male to male sex among youths” (Williams, 1998, p. 54). Spanish missionaries were culturally shocked and horrified to know that Maya’s parents were allowing male-to-male sex and even arranging marriages (Williams, 1998). Additionally, Williams stated that, from a history perspective, before the Western colonialism and Christian missionaries’ ideologies arise, some American indigenous society systems accepted and encouraged homosexuality and marriage of the same sex. At that time, one of the reasons for accepting same sex marriage was for population control. In society, it became part of the culture to have children and procreate when the Western and Christian ideologies started (William, 1998). Currently, nations with high numbers of the population face extreme difficulties. Nevertheless, some societies pressure the homosexual inclined man to get married to a woman (Williams, 1998).

Religion and Spiritual Values. “Spirituality or religion is another important value among many Latino families, the Judeo-Christian tradition being the most prominent. Conservative interpretations of traditional religion view same-sex relationships as wrong or evil” (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010, p. 898). In the Latino community, religion is a strong foundation in identity development. Christianity and Catholicism play significant roles as critically influence the culture. “The elements of Catholicism and machismo, separately and/or together, mold the identity of Latinos to a critical level, especially when it relates to individual attitudes towards homosexuality” (p. 111).

This leads to layers of complexity for the homosexual Latinos to understand their sexual orientation (Barbosa et al., 2010). Ritter and Terndrup (2002) asserted that heterosexism is an important component in the way religious people see homosexuality. They emphasized in differences between masculinity and femininity. Additionally, they defined the spiritual life as a selection paradigm between good or evil, and its eventual consequences about eternal salvation or damnation (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). “To develop a healthy sexual identity, sexual minorities within a conservative religious tradition may need to resolve a cognitive dissonance between two seemingly contradictory identities, integrating LGBT with Christianity or rejecting one or the other” (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010, p. 898). “Religious and cultural factors that drive individuals toward homophobic behavior do not need to be perceived as static” (Barbosa et al., 2010, p. 112). Therefore, gay Christians tend to have two psychologically inconsistent thoughts or beliefs that tend to be mentally challenging, build anxiety, and take the individual to a negative mental state (Rodríguez, 2010). Barbosa et al. (2010) reported limited studies to understand how religiosity plays a central role in both identity and homophobic tendencies among the Latino community.

The Christian Bible has passages that condemn homosexual activity. These passages are Genesis 19: 4-11, Deuteronomy 23: 17-18, Judges 13:22, Jude 7, Leviticus 18:22, I Corinthians 6: 9-10, and Timothy 1:10 (Gillis, 1998; Rodríguez, 2010). Gillis (1998) posited that the Bible uses terms such as sodomites, a man lie with a man as a woman and “indicate that homosexuals are among those people who are not, by their actions, part of God’s realm” (p. 252).

Theologians—lesbians homosexuals, and bisexuals—have argued that the biblical passages has been incorrectly translated from the original Hebrew and Greek text and not using in the original language the word homosexual. “Some Christians use the Bible to fortify anti-gay attitudes and actions. Interpretations of the Bible that are selectively literalist have led many Christians to believe that God condemns homosexuality” (Walton, 2006, p. 5-6). “Christians, Jews, and Muslims, view homosexuality and gay men, lesbian, and bisexual people as possessed of an unnatural and evil orientation that developed as a series of immoral choices” (Gillis, 1998, p. 253). The bible does not supply a real base of condemning homosexuality (Helminiak, 2000). Moreover, research has been studying the Western Christian culture; however, research has been lacking social-scientific data to study other religions such as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism (Rodríguez, 2010).

“In 1179, Lateran III became the first ecumenical church council to require punishment for homosexual acts” (Helminiak, 2000, p. 23). This part of history showed intolerance toward homosexuality that took place in Europe. The Spanish Inquisition was established in 1478, and the Portuguese Inquisition in 1536 (Berco, 2007). The main goal of the Inquisition was to investigate and punish people who were part of heresy and apostasy. Helminiak (2000) indicated that many volumes of law were promulgated to support the Inquisition. “For the first time in

Christian history, Jews and Muslims were persecuted, the poor were regarded as a menace and, in a crusade in southern France and through the Inquisition, ‘heretics’ were put to death” (p. 23).

Berco (2007) indicated that homosexual acts were classified as sodomy and unnatural practice. Church considered homosexuality as unspeakable sin, and often associated it with heresy. “Indeed, it is estimated that between 1570 and 1630 there were nearly 1,000 sodomy trials before the Aragonese Inquisition and almost 500 sodomy trials under the Portuguese Inquisition” (p. 1).

According to Berco (2008), inquisitors’ prosecuted male homosexual behavior that involved men engaged in same gender amorous behavior, anal sex, and other erotic acts were classified as *mollicies* (effeminacies). Cases of same-sex behavior among women made it to court because one of the partners had the role of the male. Furthermore, Berco indicated that a great part of cases by Portuguese and Aragonese inquisition involved same sex acts between male, men allegedly sodomizing adolescent boys, bestiality, and a few cases of heterosexuals. Later one, in the seventeen century, the inquisitors issued milder sentences and preferred to sentence convicted sodomites to exile.

According to Walton (2006), conservative values about Christianity, family, and sexuality have been taught from the pulpit for centuries and have been integrated into society. It is significant to see how numerous lesbian and homosexual volunteer to such ordeals and continue trying to fit in groups from which they are rejected. This is because they are fully embracing and combining to be both gay and Christian; furthermore, to be accepted in society with both identities (Rodríguez, 2010). “Anti-Christian attitudes and sentiments among some gays and lesbians are usually expressed as a reaction against Christian condemnation of homosexuals” (Walton, 2006, p. 14).

“The Catholic Church, a significant influence on Latin culture, supports traditional family Dynamics, and condemns homosexuality while promoting sexuality in the service of procreation” (Tori, 1989, as cited by Barbosa et al., 2010, p. 103). According to Tajon (2009), religion is encouraged in the Latin culture as an interpersonal relationship, in which sacrifice and charity are part of the dynamic, and men should endure all wrongs against themselves. Rodríguez (1996) posited that some gay who are Catholic struggle and have an ongoing internal battle about the dilemma of being Catholic and homosexuals. They pray to God many times to take away their feelings and homosexual behavior often without success. However, Rodríguez reported about homosexuals who are Catholic and have the faith of God as their coping skill in their internal battle. Nevertheless, Rodríguez reported additionally that one participant stated that being Chicano and being Catholic is the same thing and cannot be separated.

Latino cultures have families that are not actively involved in their Christian or Catholic religion, but they live under the religious influence (Barbosa et al., 2010). “Traditional elements of Catholicism such as machismo and family values are prominent in today’s Latina/o culture” (p. 110). Those elements, along with societal attitudes about homosexuality, pose with difficulties for the homosexual Hispanic men to develop their identity as homosexuals. Ritter and Terndrup (2002) indicated that homosexuals frequently have difficulty integrating their sexual orientation with their disapproving values and teachings of traditional religion. Ritter and Terndrup posited that “the conflict seems un-resolvable since frequently they are bonded to a church or religion that strongly condemns both their sexual behavior and their sexual orientation” (p. 272).

According to Williams (1998), same sex marriages and ceremonies happened in early Christian church. After Christopher Columbus discovery new territories, the Western

colonialism spread out quick and fast. One of the key factors of the imperialistic expansion was for erotophobics to teach the only purpose for sex was procreation. This antagonism toward sex was not only for “non-reproductive homosexual behavior, as well as masturbation, oral sex, birth control, and abortion, were likewise criminalized” (pp. 63-64). Rodríguez (1996) posited that, according to the writing of Saints Thomas and Thomas Aquinas, the Catholic Church understood that homosexual behavior should be regulated, and as a result, it should be punished. From roots of this European views, eventually inherited by the United States, homosexuals were classified as traitors and heretics. Therefore, “some homosexuals were mildly rebuked and given prayer as penitence. Others were tortured or burned at the stake” (Rodríguez, 1996, p. 168). Some religions identify homosexuality as a choice and therefore, as a sin (Kranz & Cusic, 2005).

“Religious organizations began to promote the vision of gay men and lesbians as making sinful choices” (Kranz & Cusic, 2005, p. 13). Some people reconsider to re-visit their church after reviewing their attitude toward them. Consequently, they decide to be part of the church or not; nevertheless, with a different attitude, clarity and feeling in peace with themselves (Rodríguez, 1996). Gillis posited (1998) that our current era has conservative Christians as part of the society. Christian fundamentalism sees homosexuality as unnatural, antifamily, immoral, against the bible, or even as a mental illness. Therefore, they are such a strong voice for anti-homosexual behavior.

According to Helminiak (2000), the twentieth century has the most virulent anti-gay century from all times, with many anti-gay incidents reported in history. The Nazis destroyed in the pre-World War II the Magnus Hirschfield’s Institute for Sex Research, sending homosexuals to the concentration camp. In the United States, from January to June 1999, 43 men and women were murdered in anti-gay hate crimes. In the first 25 years, 18 Metropolitan Community

Church (MCC) locations, a national and now international church, ministered by gay and lesbian, were burn. In 1973, the MCC church in New Orleans was burned, including 29 dead victims.

According to Ford (2001), Christians see homosexuality as perversion and forbidden. “At the same time, fundamentalist Christians frequently emphasize the unconditional love of God. As a closeted homosexual deeply in denial, I wanted somehow to find acceptance and love” (p. 71). Additionally, Ford posited a treatment called “Reparative Therapy” to convert homosexuals and lesbians. “The concept of reparative therapy was introduced by the British academic, Elizabeth Moberly, in the early 1980s” (Ford, 2001, p. 71). Reparative therapy attempts to help individuals to change their sexual orientation through prayers, group counseling, individual counseling, and religious conversations (Baxter, 2007). They provide support and treatment using harsh Biblical like condemnation warmly accepting the sinner, but not the sin (Borowich, 2008).

“Reparative therapy is referred to as a formal attempt to change a person's sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual” (Baxter, 2007, p. 1). People who seek for reparative treatment as a way to cope with their homosexuality is usually people who are very religious with an ideology against the acceptance and integration of the homosexual sexual orientation (Ford, 2001). According to Kranz and Cusick (2005), Exodus is a counseling program that helps homosexuals to be heterosexuals. Exodus was founded on 1976 and has over 100 local ministries throughout the United States. Exodus philosophy seems to portray “of classical Freudian theory: boys with absent fathers and girls with absent mothers do not progress through the ‘proper’ development stages, so they turn to people of the same sex to make up for the absent parent” (p. 17). They continue looking at homosexuality as pathological. “It is

assumed that by meeting the unmet needs of these “wounded” homosexuals, their true identity and orientation as heterosexuals will emerge” (Ford, 2001, p. 71).

Ford (2001) posited that reparative therapy focused on the idea that homosexuality is evil as belief system. Furthermore, it indicated that every time individuals have thoughts about homosexuality, it is a temptation from Satan that is capable to inhabiting their thoughts and bodies. Forasmuch, they emphasized in their treatment that Jesus Christ is the only hope and “the truth” for salvation; to be healed from homosexuality. Kranz and Cusick (2005) posited that this treatment includes support groups, prayers, therapy, and workshops to rediscover the inner heterosexual self. According to Ford, they see homosexual relationship as forbidden. Therefore, people who attend this treatment need to relate in a psychological and emotional level to provide support for each other when they have their sexual urges.

“Outside observers have found that at least two-thirds of those in such groups give up within two years, and that over 75% of ex-gay organizations fail within five years” (Baxter, 2007, p. 2). Additionally, Baxter posited that ex-gay ministries reject the idea of keeping the numbers of success and failure. The American Psychiatry Association “declared that such therapy was scientifically ineffective and possibly harmful” in 1997 (Kranz & Cusick, 2005, p. 17). According to Leslie (2009), The American Psychological Association confirmed in 2005 that reparative therapy does not work. In her study, Leslie reported that Dr. Judith M. Glassgold found that reparative therapy does not work because of evidence and support of psychological intervention. Borowich (2008) reported that Orthodox Jewish homosexual failed intensive reparative therapy, in which patients move at least one point toward heterosexuality on the Kinsey scale.

According to Tajon (2009), when people see their sexual orientation as an abomination, it is very challenging for them to be able to love themselves. “Because religion mediates several internal processes in the development of identity or self-acceptance, the conflict between religion, sexual identity, and acceptance may affect an individual’s self-esteem” (p. 67).

According to Weinberg (1985) (as cited by Tajon, 2009), research has indicated that homosexuals who are religious may have more difficulties accepting themselves because they have a conflict between their sexual orientation and religion. They may experience higher stressors socially involved in the heterosexual community, worried about passing as straight; therefore, being less socially involved with the gay community.

Walton (2006) studied gay men who have been able to achieved resolution about their identity as a gay Christian. In his study, he identified God and churches as different entities that overlap. Furthermore, it recognized important differences between human imperfection and spiritual beliefs. Gay Christians, in his study, indicated their current identity was not about trying to fit in a group that already exists as Christians. “The development of a gay identity had an impact upon their Christian identities, and vice-versa, in a dynamic, continually reciprocal, way” (p. 15). Some Christian’s denominations are working to find the best approach on how to work with homosexuals congregants. Some denominations are willing to work with them and others not, leading to disagreement, divisions, and disaffiliation (Barbosa et al., 2010).

Rodríguez (1996) posited that, in the gay community, the word religion could be used more as spirituality. The practice of spirituality in the gay culture has a wider perspective. This perspective is from going to church to practice prayers, attend support groups such as people with eating, alcohol, drug or other addictions, meditation and psychical activities such as jogging, walking, tai chi, yoga, and many others. What they really focus is on activities that

promote peace and well-being, for which they can fulfill hope and comfort grief (Rodríguez, 1996). Ritter and Terndrup (2002) posited that it is important to respect the value system of homosexual persons, including their spiritual or religious beliefs. “Religiously inclined sexual minorities frequently experience considerable distress in reconciling their faith with their sexual inclinations” (p. 291) Hostility toward homosexuality, verbalized by many Christians has not prevented for homosexuals and lesbian to continue their homosexual intimacy, identifying themselves as gay, fighting for their rights and social equality, or reconciling their homosexual Christian identity (Walton, 2006). It does not matter if the gay person visits a formal or informal church/synagogue, belong to a recovery program such as alcoholics anonymous, or is agnostic or atheist, most of them develop a strong relationship with their higher power (Rodríguez, 1996). According to Rodríguez (2010), research and literature regarding gay Christians is extensive; however, it is also fragmented because is lacking focus on small groups or minority groups (e.g., Latin gay Christians, Latin Catholics, or Hispanic Jewish).

Homophobia. According to Raffaelli & Ontai (2004) (as cited by Sandfort et al., 2007) diversity within the Hispanic/Latin community tends to be ignored and assessed from a singular perspective instead of a multiple perspective. Hence, Latino gay men tend to be ignored. Sandfort et al. (2007) indicated that one of the characteristics in the Latin culture is the strong division toward female and male, and what is to be expected in each gender role. Additionally, they emphasize on family dynamics, such as relationship between mother and child, respect, and hierarchy in social relationships. Core values in the Hispanic/Latin culture have a tendency to be conflicted with values in the LGBT identity (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010). Furthermore, Duarte-Vélez et al. indicated that heterocentrism in society encourages negative messages about homosexuality. Individuals who feel attracted toward people of their own sex could decide to

marry people of their opposite sex. Most of the time, they feel the social and political pressure to marry people that they do not feel a sexual attraction (Williams, 1998).

According to Barbosa et al. (2010), homophobia in society makes gay people more vulnerable and they decide to remain “in the closet” as a safety way to deal with the issue. These are extremely challenging times for homosexual men experiencing individual identity process. As a result, they become self-conscious about their gay identity because of discrimination and homophobia toward homosexuals. Sandfort et al. (2007) indicated in their research, “Gay and bisexual Latino men who considered themselves to be effeminate had higher levels of mental distress and more frequently reported various negative experiences, compared with gay and bisexual Latino men who did not identify as effeminate” (p. 181).

Furthermore, adolescents struggle with challenges and complexity integrating a healthy homosexual identity in their development when heterocentrism takes place in society (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010). Moreover, homosexuals who are nonconforming with their gender tend to be more harassed during their child/adolescence development because they do not conform to the rules society expect from men should behave (Sandfort et al., 2007). It seems to be a correlation between effeminate men and higher levels of distress and prejudiced experience about their homosexuality (Sandfort et al., 2007).

Numerous research studies have been done concerning the cumulative negative life experiences that gay, lesbian, or bisexual people experience in their life (Gillis, 1998). Sandfort et al. (2007) stated that studies have shown different levels of stress among minority groups as regards to being a minority. Some minority traits are more noticeable, such as race or physical handicap. Thus, some minorities are more affected than others are. Some homosexuals can avoid be stigmatized by not disclosing their sexual orientation. Furthermore, Sandfort et al.

indicated that, for some gays, their homosexuality could be more concealable than for others. Negative attitudes or homonegativity toward homosexuality occurs in Hispanic/Latinos as well as other cultures. According to Carballo-Diequez and colleagues (2005) (as cited by Nakamura & Zea, 2010), their sample reported that an 86% of Latino gay and bisexual men experienced anti-gay violence after the age of 16; 58% reported that they experienced it close to the year of study. Sandfort et al. found as result of the study that:

All men except one reported some kind of homophobic experiences during childhood and adulthood. The most common experiences of homophobia during childhood were hearing that gays are not normal people (91%), hearing that gay people grow up to be alone (71%), and a deep feeling that the respondent's homosexuality hurt and embarrassed his family (70%). The majority of men (64%) reported having to pretend to be straight at some point in their adult lives, 29% reported that they had to move away from family or friends to live their homosexual lives, and 20% reported some form of police harassment in relation to their being gay. (p. 185)

According to Gillis (1998), another component in these issues has been cultural heterosexism. When mentioning cultural heterosexism, it refers to discrimination or hate crimes toward homosexuals. Additionally, Gillis indicated that gay and lesbian liberation movements developed cultural heterosexism. They were stable to advocated and fight for equal rights, leading to changes in the law as well as reconsideration to the diagnostic statistical manual (DSM) regarding homosexuality as a psychological disorder. Other roots of cultural heterosexism are the systematic oppression in how people perceive homosexuality such as the morals, causes of homosexuality, how people are treated in the military, and pros and cons about same sex marriage (Gillis, 1998).

Acuña-Ruiz and Vargas (2006) indicated that, in 1973, the *American Psychiatric Association* removed from the DSM III homosexuality as a mental health illness. This change was a progress toward attitudes on the subject of homosexuality, as well as the beginning of a change on stigma and eventually, the laws. Moreover, in their research, Sandfort et al. (2007) found that the homosexual community suffers mental health problems at a high rate; most of the time the roots of this problem being the consequences of homosexuality stigma. Although, it has been much progress, acceptance, and awareness about homosexuality, people continue to show prejudice. The topic continues causing intense emotional reaction, and some people continues seeing homosexuals as deviant, as well as mentally ill (Acuña-Ruiz & Vargas, 2006). The psychological, sociological, and biological evidence do direct to the same direction, where people just happen to be homosexual (Helminiak, 2000).

Most people are straight but some are lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Some people are tall, and some are small. Some are black or brown; others are yellow, red, or white. Some are men, more are women. Most are right-handed, but some are left-handed. There is a wide range of individual differences among human beings. Sexual orientation seems to be one of those differences. (p. 26).

Internalized Homophobia/“La Auto-homofobia.” Internalized homophobia has had a different perspective from different writers, and many of them view it “as a normative developmental event, whereby almost all gay men and lesbian adopt negative attitudes toward homosexuality early in their developmental history” (Shidlo, 1994, p. 178). Rodríguez (1996) indicated the meaning of internalized homophobia for some Latino gays could be a shame and guilt. This could be related to an incident of sexual abuse in childhood. Rodríguez stated that he has worked in therapy with individuals helping them to break the silence, confront their trauma

and refocused on their identity formation issues. According to Malyon (1993), the development of identity is the influence by components of the ego. Therefore, different parts of this area are the self-esteem, their psychological integrity, object relation, and their elaboration of defenses. Moreover, some roots of homophobia may come from the society perspective about the role of a man and a woman. According to Isay (2009), the Western culture has firmly delimited the characteristics of a man and a woman's behavior. Therefore, when a man has certain characteristics that a woman has, the man may be considered as feminine. This is like a man who likes to wear pretty clothes, or has a job carried often by woman. That can be perceived as more feminine in comparison to other boys.

“While childhood gender nonconformity was not related to current internalized homophobia and self-esteem, there was also a relationship between current gender nonconformity and internalized homophobia” (Sandfort et al., 2007). A gay boy in his development years learns what others think and believe about having emotions toward people of their same gender. Forasmuch they learn to hate themselves and to develop internalized homophobia (Hawkins, 1992). Additionally, Hawkins indicated that internalized homophobia is often defended against through compulsive self-training in societal approved male practices. To an extent, gay men developed inner strength while living in emotional isolation. Moreover, Malyon (1993) believed that, “internalized homophobic content becomes an aspect of the ego, functioning as both an unconscious *introject*, and as a conscious system of attitudes and accompanying affects” (p. 78). Furthermore, Malyon (1982) indicated that some homosexuals are forced by society to develop a false heterosexual identity “the maturation of erotic and intimate capacities is confounded by socialized predisposition, which makes them ego alien and militates against their integration” (p. 60).

Individuals who claim gay or lesbian identities are culturally diverse and each individual's struggle to understand and accept her or his sexual identity. This takes place within the context of their particular cultural background as well as the social groups in which they participate (Gallor & Fassinger, 2010). One of the components of internalized homophobia among the Hispanic/Latin culture is machismo. Rodríguez (1996) indicated that machismo is a concept among the Latino culture that is a view as part of standards and norms of being masculine. The concept of machismo joined with homosexuality does not match well. Being a macho tends to create internalized homophobia as consequence of listening and witnessing verbal, emotional or even physical violence at times through many years. From a machismo perspective, homosexuals are men who are not following the norm. Additionally, the ones who decide to follow a different paradigm may suffer from mental health issues such as anxiety or depression (Rodríguez, 1996). On the other hand, Rodríguez indicated that a man might be living his homosexuality as a silence tolerance of a double life, and maintaining his job as a father or husband as long as he is following his expected cultural role.

Ritter and Terndrup (2002) indicated that, in a study by Kurtz, homosexuals who are Cuban American, Puerto Rican, African American, and Anglo have been predisposed specific social realities. Those include to "grown up without their father in the home, had been teased for effeminacy during childhood, were defensive about their masculinity, did not trust men, had been cheated on by boyfriends, and believed that long-term gay male relationships were problematic" (p. 262). The more internalized heterosexism and masculine influence by the society, the more difficult it is for homosexuals to have an identity formation of their homosexuality, as well as to develop detrimental consequences for intimate relationships (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002).

Rodríguez (1996) posited that gays have internalized oppression. He described it as a system in which gay people repress themselves as gay. This is when they are not clear if other people, such as family members, will accept their sexual orientation and accept who they are. They filter their thoughts with the “I don’t know” dilemma (e.g., “I don’t know if my father will accept me.”).

Hawkins (1992) posited that gay men might feel good when they feel understood, and when a person validates how hard their journey has been and how much they have renounced because of their sexual orientation. Some gay men have renounced the idea of having children, celebrating a wedding ceremony, living close to their family, or spending every holiday with their family, because their family has not fully accepted their sexual orientation. This is not general, because some gay people have children and are able to celebrate a wedding; however, it continues to be a small percentage. It is important to understand “the more conflicted a gay man is about his homosexuality, the more rigid and stereotyped his gender role identity is likely to be” (Forstein, 1986, p. 113). On the other hand, Malyon (1993) posited “homophobic incorporation also embellish superego functioning and, in this way, contribute to a propensity for guilt and intropunitiveness among homosexual males” (p. 78).

Some gay men avoid socializing in public settings with other gay men because they fear that their friends, family, or coworkers will discover their sexual orientation (Isay, 2009). Some homosexuals have issues with their level of intimacy in their relationships and may experience high levels of anxiety. This is a masculine gender role issue because of socialization with other males, creating a lack of acceptance and mirroring that consequence in internalized homophobia (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). “Similarly, we believe that homophobia in the culture is internalized and leads to self-hate and shame. One result of the negative self-image associated with being

gay may be that men rely on drugs or alcohol to alleviate sexual discomfort, shame, and anxiety in social and sexual situations” (Díaz, 1998; Díaz & Ayala, 1999, as cited by Zea et al., 2003, p. 283).

Meyer and Dean (1998) (as cited by Ritter & Terndrup, 2002) completed a study to find explanations about internalized homophobia and the correlation between intimacy and mental health, as well as risky behaviors for HIV or AIDS. In their findings, an association with becoming diagnosed with HIV or AIDS that may lead the homosexual men to suffer anxiety or depression exists. Meyer and Dean indicated that gay men have sex as an escapist behavior, use of drugs and alcohol, expose themselves to high-risk behaviors, and self-sabotage themselves. “Internalized cultural beliefs, such as low sexual control, would then inform the way individuals express, interpret, and regulate their sexuality” (Zea et al., 2003, p. 283). According to Isay (2009), when homosexual men do not accept themselves fully, the behavior can guide them toward self-destructiveness and even self-regard. For gay men to be stable about their sexual identity, it is important for them to be fully or nearly fully involved in a gay community.

In a study, Ridge et al. (2006) stated that internalized homophobia is common among gay-man, even when they have self-accepted their homosexual sexual orientation. Gay men who have high levels of internalized homophobia suffer feelings of guilt and a persistent self-oppression. As a result, they may not be able to enact self-enhancing defenses, and they need help to reinterpret their inner self to get better. Homosexuals may have issues in dealing with the societal perspective about homosexuality, because it tends to be negative (Byrd, 2011). At times, it takes a lot of effort for homosexuals to be accepted in society as homosexual. Moreover, it takes more effort to accept themselves as homosexuals. In addition, Byrd indicated that, when homosexuals’ struggle accepting their homosexuality, this could lead them to experience

depression or anxiety. If they do not seek for help, their mental status can lead them to suicidal thoughts.

Once men are able to be comfortable about their homosexual orientation, they become more authentic and self-determined to achieve success from conquering homophobia. According to Herek and Glunt (1995), gay men who are *out of the closet* have positive feelings about homosexuality and feel more support from other gay, lesbian, or bisexual people. They feel more connected to people from their same minority group and helps them to practice safer and healthier cognitively and emotional process as well as sexual behavior. Additionally, this helps them to feel more empowered with their sexual partner and practice safe sex.

Psychological Perspective

“In 1973, The American Psychiatry Association removes homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) II” (Kranz & Cusick, 2005, p. 169). According to Gillis (1998), the American Psychiatry Association decided to remove from DSM II homosexuality as a mental health illness. On the other hand, some psychologists and psychiatrists were not in favor believing that homosexuals, lesbians, and bisexuals can be cured. Therefore, this change caused debates and conflicts for many years. Homosexuals tend to seek psychotherapy as part of defining their sexual orientation and coming out process. Professionals enter into a social setting where they may experience a challenge in the therapeutic process to help clients to clarify and identify their sexual orientation (Ridge et al., 2006). Therefore, it is important for mental health providers to be ethical and to increase their awareness because of possible prejudice, transference, or counter-transference (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002).

It is significant for the mental health professionals to understand the perception and possible experience of oppression, and to understand how homosexual men have coped with

discrimination (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). Therefore, it is important to see GLBT issues from their perspective and not from the eyes of the professional, even if the professional belong to the GLBT community. Ritter and Terndrup (2002) posited that it is important to see things from a different perspective to address other issues such as race, gender, or sexual orientation because they could be in “danger of perpetuating ethnocentric, heterocentric, and androcentric biases” (Greene, 1994, p. 393). According to Ritter and Terndrup, many times a gay client seeks psychotherapy from mental health professionals to help them to cope with their sexual orientation. The mental health professional should be aware of the position of clients as homosexuals, assess their stage in their coming out process as well as their cultural variables and identity as homosexuals. It is important for the mental health professional to be knowledgeable about the needs of the GLBT people; otherwise, they should refer them to a most knowledgeable mental health professional. Moreover, Ritter and Terndrup stated that the mental health professional bias might contribute to internalized homophobia. Lack of knowledge or information may contribute to create obstacles, barriers, and lack of motivation for the GLBT client to seek treatment. Mental health professionals “are encouraged to apply both intra-psychic and structural intervention to modify internal and external barriers to healthcare treatment” (p. 240).

Ritter and Terndrup (2002) indicated that a man accepting his homosexuality appears to be associated with adjustment and mental health problems. Furthermore, a homosexual having difficulties accepting ones homosexuality tends to cope with his problems by having high-risk sexual behavior. In this escapist behavior, they tend to mix the use of drugs or alcohol during sex. In addition, they may experience symptoms of depression and the anxiety about getting a STDSs. Dupras (1994) (as cited by Ritter & Terndrup, 2002) did a study with 261 homosexuals,

ages 19 to 62, using the Multidimensional Sexuality Questionnaire (MSQ) as an assessment tool. The selected homosexuals participated in a survey of attitudes toward homosexuality. “Those who have difficulty accepting their sexual orientation rated themselves higher on sexual anxiety, sexual depression, fear of sexuality, and concern about sexual image” (p. 262). Snell, Fisher, and Walters (1993) posited that the MSQ is an objective self-report instrument designed to measure psychological tendencies associated with sexual relationships. This tool measures the areas of sexual-esteem, sexual-preoccupation, sexual-motivation, sexual-assertiveness, and external-sexual-control.

According to Rosario, Schrimshaw and Hunter (2006), homosexual and bisexual men may have sexual risk behavior and mental health issues. Furthermore, gay people may experience sexual orientation as well as substance abuse issues simultaneously, which can lead to dual oppression (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). They may experience stress related to their coming out process, issues with their sexual orientation, or other factors such as unresolved childhood sexual abuse. In addition, they may suffer negative attitudes toward homosexuality. At times, this leads them to substance abuse and unsafe or unhealthy sexual activities (Rosario et al., 2006). In their study, Ridge et al. (2006) reported that some gay men use unhelpful strategies, such as drug use or casual sex to cope with their issues. Denial and passive fatalism, such as the use of alcohol and recreational drugs, as well as unsafe sex may contribute negatively to the well-being of gay men (Ostrow, 1996).

Rosario et al. (2006) indicated that mental health concerns were related to low self-esteem, anxiety, substance abuse, and sexual risk behavior. This behavior among gay men may lead them to depression (such as low self-esteem, feeling guilty, feeling unmotivated, difficulty concentrating and making decisions, sleep problems, appetite disturbance, or suicidal thoughts)

or anxiety (such as irritability, obsessive or compulsive behavior, restlessness, panic attacks or phobias) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Rosario et al., 2006). Additionally “posttraumatic stress reactions are not uncommon and may be manifested through nightmares, numbing of feeling, and overwhelming feelings of guilt” (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002, p. 200). Sandfort et al. (2007) found in his study that the most common symptoms that gay men reported were sadness, sleep problems, depressed mood and, the most critical one, “thoughts of taking one’s life- was experienced by 17% of the men at least once or twice in the same period” (p. 185). Thereby, depression, anxiety, or trauma are results of their mental health. GLBT clients may experience or feel additional symptoms, such as denial, fear, suspicions, hostility, anger, rage, arrogance, guilt, shame, self-pity, powerlessness, isolation, alienation, helplessness, confusion, fragmentation, self-deception, passivity, victimization, inferiority, self-loathing, and low self-esteem” (Cabaj, 1995; Finnegan & McNally, 1987, as cited by Ritter & Terndrup, 2002).

“If there has been abuse, incest, chemical abuse, or illegitimacy in the family, old wounds and secrets may be exposed as members attempt to explain the reason for this homosexual ‘psychopathology’ in the system” (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002, p. 297). Some gay people have a history of sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual molestation, or sexual early experiences without their consent. Guitierrez (1992) asserted that these people at times misinterpret their origin of their sexual orientation; therefore, carry much guilt and shame. Some men experienced homophobia or the stigma attached to gender nonconforming. As a result, gay men may experience mental health issues by not seeking to get help (Sandfort et al., 2007). Furthermore, society’s negativity toward homosexuality may be a contributor factor for homosexual men to

feel as if they do not belong to society (Byrd, 2011). At times, gay men are unable to separate these two separate issues without attending affirmative psychotherapy (Gutiérrez, 1992).

According to Kimmel and Mahalik (2005), gay men tend to have greater body dissatisfaction than heterosexual men do. In addition, gay men have a tendency to experience eating disorder behaviors, body related distress, and poorer body image. Gay men may experience prejudice or even be victims of antigay attacks, which heterosexual men do not experience. As a result, this can bring to gay men internalized homophobic attitudes, feeling less masculine or negative body images. “Support for the idea of incorporating masculinity into understanding gay men’s body image concerns comes from scholars who suggest that gay men may seek ways to compensate for perceptions that they are less masculine” (p. 1185).

Kane (2009) studied the male body image in heterosexual and gay men. Kane found that gay pursue to be thinner and have a desire to have greater muscle mass. Additionally, gay men tend to be less satisfied with their body image; however, they tend to have a greater sexual satisfaction. Furthermore, heterosexual men tend to work out to have fun, have good health and fitness in opposition to gay men that exercise to enhance their attractiveness and thinness. “For some gay men, being masculine may be important because it makes them feel more accepted within the dominant heterosexual society” (Kimmel & Mahalik, 2005, p. 1188). This information is more inclined to white gay men than the other ethnic groups in the United States. Therefore, this literature review fails to find information in the Latino gay men.

Reece (1987) indicated that it is important to have a multilevel and multi-causal approach since there are many contributors factors “from simple misinformation about some aspect of human sexual response or behavior to deep transference within the relationship which unconsciously repeat unresolved childhood conflicts” (p. 159) when treating homosexuals.

Bridgewater (1992) indicated that a virulent type of homophobia is the hate crime, and people who are antigay. People may be violent toward the gay community. Anger can be shown in many ways, and it does not have to be by physical act. Some people act passive-aggressively or assertive about how being gay is something repugnant and an abomination. The survivors have to deal with this trauma as well as with their gayness. Early physical or verbal (emotional) attack may affect negatively the emotional well-being of a gay man. Many of these are later reinforced by rejection, hate, or prejudice, which affects them as adults in the nature and quality of their adult life (Isay, 2009). These situations can lead to depression and/or anxiety as adults, which are untreated or suffer maltreatment at times by the assigned clinician with limited or lack of knowledge about homosexuality. When offering treatment to gay men, the clinician has to be careful in diagnosing and selecting treatment for the client. Some of them may go further from an Axis I mental health diagnosis. Some homosexual may have features of a personality disorder and some of them may possibly meet full criteria for an Axis II diagnosis (Hawkins, 1992).

Greene (1998) indicated that sexual orientation, gender, and ethnic groups face high levels of stress by pervasiveness and oppression in society. For instance, oppression in the gay community can be seen when people in society have the assumption that perpetrators that commit their sexual offense with someone from their same gender are homosexual (Gutiérrez, 1992). Additionally, Gutiérrez indicated this is a myth toward the gay community because some of them may be homosexual, but does not mean that all of them are. Homosexuals experience issues such as “racism, homophobia, posttraumatic stress from childhood sexual abuse, multiple losses to HIV/AIDS, identity confusion, economic insecurity, multiple worlds—are all issues that may produce feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, anxiety and/or depression” (Rodríguez, 1996, p. 151). Additionally, different factors, such as race, disability, language, socio-economic

status, and other characteristics must be considered when treating a homosexual man (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010). Nakamura and Zea (2010) found that oppression in society is a strong predictor for psychological distress; therefore, they experience prejudice as being gay. At times, this contributes to increase their internalized homophobia or homo-negativity. As a result, this leads them to have a negative attitude and perspective toward homosexuality. When they experience racism and homonegativity, this may lead them to anxiety, depression, and possibly suicidal thoughts.

In their study, Sandfort et al. (2007) participants expressed they have experienced mental health problems, such as symptoms and feelings of depression, sleep problems, and sadness; a high percentage of them experiencing these symptoms for at least once in the preceding six months. Ritter and Terndrup (2002) asserted that most sexual minority migrants experienced sadness or depression apart from their concerns about their sexual orientation prior to migrating to the United States. Some men seek help, and some of them do not. Ridge et al. (2006) stated that a homosexual man may feel different from his gay minority group and may feel excluded or that he does not 'fit in' to the group, probably causing big stressors in the person. Moreover, Ridge et al. posited that men look for ways in how to cope with their mental health. Some of them are able to achieve a mental stability and become successful in dealing with their problems.

In the Archives of General Psychiatry, researches have concluded: "same-gender sexual orientation is significantly associated with each of the suicidality measures. The substantial increased lifetime risk of suicidal behaviors among homosexual men is unlikely because of substance abuse or other psychiatric co-morbidity" (Herrell, et al., 1999 as cited by Byrd, 2011, p. 195). Whereas suicidality refers to suicide ideation, thoughts, and even attempts, hence suicidality is a mental illness (Byrd, 2011). Most people in society have negative points of view

about homosexuality, which can be a contributor factor for suicidality among homosexuals (Bailey, 1999 as cited by Byrd, 2011). Research has consistently evidenced that homosexuals are more at risk of mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, suicidality, and multiple disorders (Byrd, 2011). Additionally, Byrd posited that homosexual suicidality is associated with their sexual orientation and not to other conditions such as substance abuse or depression. Furthermore, Byrd stated “good research concludes that for adolescents each year's delay in bisexual or homosexual self-labeling reduces the odds of a suicide attempt by 20% (diminishes to 80%) (p. 202).

Rodríguez (1996) stated that the existing psychological research and education continue to be a fundamental factor to improve society in this matter. It is a critical element in psychotherapy oriented toward gay Latino men to listen to their story, validate their reality and perception of their identity, demonstrate awareness of the complexity in the identity development, and provide emotional support and guidance throughout the hardships and joy (Rodríguez, 1996). “Ethnic minority status can be associated with additional stress, as can the process of immigration for those Latinos not born in the United States” (Zea, Reisen, & Poppen, 1999, p. 371). Ritter and Terndrup (2002) indicated that same sex orientation varies from a meaning toward sexuality, as well as the culture of the person; therefore, the role of gender may vary or have different meanings. “Latino gay men and lesbians are a population at increased risk of poor mental health outcomes, such as depression, because of a combination of factors” (Zea et al., 1999, p. 371).

It is important to help gay Latino men to understand their gender role and sexual orientation because it may help them to decrease anxiety or depression or even relive guilt associated with the wrong belief of the cultural expectations and norms (Rodríguez, 1996). On

the other hand, Ridge et al. (2006) reported that most gay men seek help with their partner, friends, relatives, or through self-help/management strategies. They use activities such as journaling, yoga, and meditation. They make better healthy choices in their live. As a result, they are inclined to learn how to behave better.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will explain how this study was conducted, and how the collected data was analyzed. For this study, a literature review was conducted to identify scientific research on internalized homophobia among Hispanic gay men. A few studies in the United States and Europe have gathered information about internalized homophobia; however, none has been conducted among Hispanic gay men. This study gathered descriptive information on internalized homophobia among Hispanic gay men with the purpose to provide a rationale and descriptive explanation about what are the reasons for which men who are Hispanic and homosexual experienced internalized homophobia, gathered information on how difficult, different or challenging their “coming out” process was, and how they dealt with this event.

Research Design

A descriptive research method was used in this study (Myers & De Wall, 2014). The investigator conducted 10 case studies to describe and analyze the meaning of being gay in countries of Latin America (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Furthermore, to identify the essence of their life during the childhood and adolescence. It is important to learn about prior studies that may add to the analysis process (Fankhanel, 2008). This study has selected Hispanic gay men as sample group. Hispanic gay men have been previously studied; however, internalized homophobia in the Hispanic gay men is a focus of study poorly addressed. This study gathered information using a structured open ended face-to-face interview focused on three research questions:

1. In which ways did the internalized homophobia of Hispanic/Latino gay men reared in their country of origin has affected their gay identity?

2. In which ways did the internalized homophobia affected the behavioral and emotional state during their rearing?
3. In which ways the internalized homophobia has affected their mental health status?

The study focused on internalized homophobia among Hispanic gay men who migrated to the United States, and whether if it affects their mental health or if their homosexuality has caused them problems toward their personal or family lifestyles.

Selection of Participants

The study involved Hispanic gay men who reside in the Tampa Bay area. Tampa is a culturally diverse city located in the State of Florida, and is geographically located in the central west area of the peninsula of Florida (Geology, 2013). Tampa Bay has been selected for this study because it is a popular area adopted by numerous Hispanics to relocate in the United States of America. According to TampaBay.us (2012), Tampa Bay has a population of over four million people. Moreover, 16.20% of that population belongs to the Hispanic/Latino community. The Hispanic/Latino community has increased in the state of Florida since the year 2000, especially in the referred area. Therefore, Florida has become one of the most popular states for the Hispanic/Latino community in the last decade (Census Bureau, 2010). Tampa Bay includes the counties of Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando, Polk, Manatee, and Sarasota, and is currently a culturally diverse city with many ethnic groups.

In the study, the target group was Hispanic gay men born and raised in a Latin American country who migrated to the United States as adults. Tampa Bay has a good representation of the Hispanic/Latino gay men who were born and raised in their country of origin. Inclusion requirement for prospective candidates was to pass a pre-screening interview, and met all the following criteria:

1. Be a male.
2. Identified his sexual orientation as gay.
3. Born in one of the following countries: Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Perú, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Panamá, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, México, Cuba, Puerto Rico, or República Dominicana.
4. Reared in the country that he was born and move out after the age of 18.
5. Be a Spanish speaker.
6. Be a resident of the Tampa Bay area at the time of the study.
7. Born on or between the years of 1958 to 1983.
8. Experienced internalized homophobia during their upbringing.

In the selection process, two gay men from five different Latin American countries were recruited through a snowball sampling (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The study recruited two volunteers from the following countries: Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Panamá, and Puerto Rico. The researcher recruited volunteer participants from gay clubs, gay special events, word of mouth, and also through mobile gay chat applications.

Instrumentation

Confidential interviews were performed because of the nature of the study. Hence, a confidential interview allowed collecting data with a reduced bias from participants. The instruments for this study were prepared and administered in Spanish, as the Spanish language was the primary language of the participants. For the purpose of this written document, each instrument was translated into English for the benefit of the reader. The researcher interviewed 10 candidates. Each participant completed six demographic questions and 23 open-ended questions that fulfill the main three research questions.

The instruments used in this study compromised four main areas of information. Table 6 provides the content description of the interview document.

1. Socio-demographic information.
2. Questions about if internalized homophobia affected their emotional and behavioral state during their upbringing.
3. Questions about if internalized homophobia has affected their mental/emotion well-being.
4. Questions about the level of comfort and/or discomfort as Hispanic/Latino gay men while being reared in their country of origin.

Table 6

Interview Protocol Main Areas of Research and Their Relation to Open-Ended Questions

Area of Research (Constructs)	Question(s)
Pre-selection	Question 1: Where are you from? Question 2: Where you born and raised in your country of origin until the age of eighteen? Question 3: Where you born and raised in your country of origin until the age of eighteen? Question 4: What is your sexual orientation? Question 5: Do you live in the Tampa Bay area? Question 6: Did you experience internalized homophobia during your rearing as a child/adolescent? Are you still experiencing internalized homophobia?
Demographic Information	Question 1: Age Question 2: Where are you from? Question 3: What is your highest level of education completed? Question 4: What do you do for a living (career, job, etc.)? Question 5: What is your approximate gross annual income?

Table 6 (cont.)

Interview Protocol Main Areas of Research and Their Relation to Open-Ended Questions

Area of Research (Constructs)	Question(s)
Level of comfort and/or discomfort as Hispanic/Latino gay Men as Relation to Country of Origin	Question 1: How did you become aware you are gay? At the time, how old were you (age range)?
	Question 2: How did you react to being gay? Did you accept or rejected?
	Question 3: When you were living in your country of origin and knew about being gay: How did you accept it? How did affect your identity development?
	Question 4: If you tried to hide your homosexuality, how did you do this?
	Question 5: During your rearing, how were you affected when looking at yourself in the mirror and questioned your sexual orientation?
Internalized Homophobia Effect over Emotional and Behavioral State	Question 1: How did you manage your sexuality during your childhood/adolescence stage?
	Question 2: What or who did you think about when you masturbated? What emotions or feelings did your experience after masturbation?
	Question 3: When did you have your first gay sexual experience? How did you feel about it?
	Question 4: How did internalized homophobia affect your behavior during your adolescence? How is it affecting you now?
	Question 5: How did internalized homophobia affect your emotions during your adolescence? How is it affecting you now?
	Question 6: Who do you speak about the first time about being or feeling gay?
	Question 7: How did you handle and felt about your homosexuality with family and/or parents?
	Question 8: How did you handle and felt about your homosexuality with school and friends?
	Question 9: How do you address machismo and/or comments toward gay people/being gay?
	Question 10: How do you manage your homosexuality with church and/or religion? Are you still practicing the religion instilled in you by your parents? () Yes () No
	Question 11: How has your homosexuality affected your relationship with God?
	Question 12: Presently, from a general viewpoint, what is your perspective about religion?

Table 6 (cont.)

Interview Protocol Main Areas of Research and Their Relation to Open-Ended Questions

Area of Research (Constructs)	Question(s)
Internalized Homophobia Effect over Mental/Emotion Well- being	Question 1: How you were able to determine a resolution in regards to internalize homophobia?
	Question 2: What is your current mental health state in regards to being gay? Do you think that you have problems to manage it?
	Question 3: If you experienced internalized homophobia, do you continue to have problems in dealing with internalized homophobia but to a lower intensity?
	Question 4: Have you started a new stage in your life once you accepted yourself as being gay? If so, how has this been manifested?
	Question 5: Do you think your values as a Hispanic gay man continues evolving? If so, how?
	Question 6: If you have the opportunity to be born again and select your sexual orientation, which one would you select and why?

Assumptions

The study was limited to collecting data among a limited amount of participants (Hispanic gay men who live in the Tampa Bay area), with limited representation or countries, and socio-demographic indicators. Additional limitations included the following:

1. The sample of the study was limited to one geographic area (Tampa Bay).
2. The sample was limited to Hispanic/Latino gay men from the following countries: Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Panamá, and Puerto Rico.
3. The information gathered for this study relayed only in the information reported and provided during the interview by the selected participants.
4. During the interview process, the investigator asked questions that required recollection of memories from their childhood. Therefore, some participants encountered difficulties to recall childhood memories.

5. The study focused on the internalized homophobia in the Hispanic gay men during their rearing. The level of comfort or discomfort could affect the validity of the study.
6. Tampa Bay has a good representation of the Hispanic/Latino gay men who were born and raised in their country of origin. To motivate participation, a five dollars gift certificate to Starbucks was provided as remuneration.
7. The assessment tools and formal study was performed in the Spanish language. Spanish language is the primary language of the investigator as well as the 10 participants selected for the study. Each interview was transcribed verbatim and translated by the researcher, as he is fluent in both languages.

Procedure

The researcher completed the institutional review board (IRB) certificate to administer this study. The investigator prepared the questionnaire which contained five inclusion questions for the selection process, six demographic questions, and 23 questions distributed among three research questions. The interview questions were open-ended. The questionnaire was submitted to the investigator's dissertation committee for approval. Once authorized, a pilot study was performed with two Hispanic Gay men, who also live in the Tampa Bay area. The purpose of the pilot study was to report opinions, ask for feedback, and obtain possible clarification of questions to be asked. The pilot study group contributed to enhance the quality of the questionnaire. Therefore, the instrument suffered some changes as result of the pilot study group. Consequently, their contribution helped the questionnaire with specificity, fluency, and clarity. Furthermore, it contributed to keep focus of the main research purpose. Once the pilot study was done, proper changes, and recommendations from participants were made and re-submitted to the dissertation

committee. Once approved, the recruitment process for the study was performed using a snowball sampling process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

In the recruitment process, the researcher asked for help from colleagues or acquaintances, from any sexual orientation or any ethnic group, to refer at least one Hispanic gay man as possible candidates for the study. The persons who participated in the study were neither friends nor acquaintances of the researcher to remain objective and avoid ethical issues, with relation to avoid dual relationships' issue.

The researcher started the recruitment process on July 2013 and concluded in October 2013. The researcher recruited people from the Gay club that celebrates "La Noche Latina," word of mouth, and mobile gay chats applications such as Grindr, Hornet, and GROWLr. In addition, the researcher recruited people in The Gay Film Festival, celebrated during the month of October in the Tampa bay area. Conversations were initiated with the possible candidates, asking them if they wanted to volunteer for a study of Hispanic gay men. If the potential candidates agreed, the investigator obtained his phone number and followed up within 48 hours with a call to provide the pre-screening. The purpose of the 48 hours window was because most of the recruitment happened on Saturdays, and researcher wanted to respect potential candidates' time on Sundays. In some cases, the researcher called the potential candidates the date and time they requested. Once they agreed to participate, the researcher scheduled an hour meeting with the candidate. The researcher sent a reminder through a text message or phone call on the date of the scheduled meeting to remind them about time and address of the location. The researcher asked for permission to each candidate to provide the reminder via a phone call or text message.

The interviews were performed at the researcher's private practice office, a private and confidential place. This location was selected because it is an office where the investigator

offers psychotherapy, and the environment of the place meets the requirement for privacy and confidentiality. Prior to begin the interview, each participant waited in the reception area, read and signed an informed consent (see Schrimshaw A) to authorize the interview as well as audio-recording the meeting. The interview of each participant was audio recorded for the purpose of transcribing and translating from the Spanish language to English. Each recorded interview was destroyed once transcription and translation were completed. Each transcription had a code identifying only the nationality with either number one or two, for instance, Cuban #1. All documents have been securely safe following the code of ethics. The researcher is the only person who has access to all transcriptions.

The created questionnaire addressed the issue of internalized homophobia among Hispanic gay men. The questionnaire gathered information and addressed different areas such as:

1. Ethnic group
2. When they migrated to the United States
3. Religion / Spiritual belief
4. How internalized homophobia has affected their gay identity during their upbringing in their country of origin.
5. How they hid their sexual orientation during their upbringing.
6. How internalized homophobia affected the behavioral and emotional state during their rearing.
7. How they managed their sexual behavior and sexuality during their upbringing.
8. How they managed their sexuality with their family, school, and friends.
9. How internalized homophobia has affected their mental health status.
10. How they currently feel and behave toward their homosexuality.

Once the study was completed, the investigator performed data analysis using a research software program analysis named *NVivo 10*. The main purpose of these case studies was to answer, validate, or invalidate the problem statement. Case study was conducted to analyze the data for themes, patterns, and issues, as well as to acquire a detailed description of each case (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

Data Processing and Analysis

A questionnaire was created, submitted, and approved by the Dissertation Committee for this study. The questionnaire addressed the internalized homophobia among gay men born and raised in a country of Latin America until the age of 18 years. Once the Dissertation Committee approved the questionnaire, the following step was to recruit and interview 10 volunteer participants for the study. The researcher followed the procedure process as explained in the previous section.

For each interview, the researcher scheduled an individual appointment with the participant at the investigator's private practice, in which he offers mental health counseling services. The researcher provided a consent form in the native language of the participant (see Appendix A). The consent form explained with details that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Besides, the consent form explained the purpose of the study, the research question, the procedure process in the interview, and the importance of confidentiality. The investigator provided his telephone number, email, and physical address of the location where the interview occurred if they want to obtain a copy of the results once the investigation is completed. Once the participant agreed to proceed with the interview, the investigator invited the participant to go inside the office. Once inside the private room, the investigator provided a list of mental health providers if they needed to speak or seek

help with a mental health professional after the completion of the interview. Then, the investigator asked for permission to record the interview for the purpose of transcription and translation. The investigator provided a hard copy of the questionnaire (see Appendix B). Formerly, the investigator proceeded to initiate the interview and each interview was recorded individually and recorded it in a separate and confidential file, as well as the notes taken. All recorded and written information followed the ethical and confidential standards of qualitative research. The investigator performed each transcription verbatim and the written translation.

The investigator assigned a code of each participant, including their ethnic group and assigning either number one or two. Number one was assigned to the person of the ethnic groups that first attended the interview and number two for the second person attending the interview. For Chapter Four, the investigator created a profile of each participant with the date of the interview, age, place of recruitment, and important facts about their statement of the interview. Then, a table is presented to provide the participant's socio-demographic (questions 1 through 6, see Appendixes B & C) information. Research question number one had a total of five questions in the questionnaire (questions 7 through 11, see Appendixes B & C). Research question number two had a total of twelve questions (questions 12 through 23, see Appendix B & C). Last, research question number three had a total of six questions as part of the questionnaire (questions 23 through 29, see Appendixes B & C). To help in analysis date and report findings, Chapter Four present a detailed and comprehensive report of the following areas:

1. Analyzing data and reporting findings: Divided into the three main research questions, followed by the interview questions designated for each research question. The data analysis was divided by each question and presented the information

gathered from all participants. On each question, the data analysis was coded by the participants' country.

2. Interpreting the findings: Divided into the three main research questions, reported findings of the data analysis on each research question. The findings were coded by the comparing the results with the literature review presented in Chapter Two.

To further help the analysis, findings, and interpretation of the qualitative research, Chapter Five will present the following sections:

1. Summary: Presents a brief description from each chapter with their specific areas and related to the main three research questions.
2. Conclusions: It shows a great insight into the topic discussed, the analysis presented as well as the overall conclusions to the three central research questions conducted in the study.
3. Recommendations: Explains many different areas explored in the research. Besides, it explains another set of questions or concerns that should be studied to create a broader database of information to understand better internalized homophobia among Hispanic gay men.

Limitations of the Study

This qualitative study has some limitations that should be addressed. Any biases, that the researcher might have, can be considered a limitation. Here is a list of the limitations of the study:

1. Research question number two focuses on how internalized homophobia has affected the behavioral and emotional state, and research question number three on how internalized homophobia has or has not affected their mental health. There is a similarity to both

research questions because the mental health field studies the cognitive perspective as well as the behavior of people. Consequently, there were some similarities in the answers provided by the participants during the interview in both research questions.

2. Length of the questionnaire: the questionnaire presented six demographic questions and 23 open-ended questions. Both the demographic and open-ended questions were created to answer four main research areas. However, the amount of the open-ended questions contributed to the length of the data analysis. Each participant narrated their life story as being or feeling gay in growing up in a country of Latin America.
3. The participants selected for the study were a total of two per country. The selected participants are from five different ethnic groups. They are a small representation of the Hispanic gay men population despite the fact that the investigator offered an incentive of a five dollars Starbuck gift card. Consequently, their life experiences as well as their personal challenges and limitations as Hispanic gay men cannot be generalized.
4. Similarities as well as differences exist in the findings within the ethnic groups studied. Therefore, the environment and culture of each ethnic group is unique and cannot be compared or generalized to other ethnic groups.
5. Lack of representation of the Hispanic gay men community of the following countries: Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Perú, Ecuador, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, México, and República Dominicana.
6. Most of the information found in the literature review reflected research done among Hispanics who were Mexican descendants. The researcher was not able to recruit Mexicans for this study as they did not volunteer to participate in the study.

Summary

The study met the standards to follow the code of ethics, professionalism, reliability, and validity. This study aimed to fulfill the primary objective of the study to benefit the Hispanic gay men, mental health services, community settings, and any other mental health professionals. The methodology presented in this chapter attempted to generate appropriate information to provide a descriptive overview of 10 participants' descriptive narratives regarding internalized homophobia. The chapter described the research design of the study and how the topic was previously addressed. This chapter explained the structure of the open-ended face-to-face interview focused on the three research questions. Additionally, it described the protocol and the criteria's implemented for the selection of participants. It explained the instrumentation and the importance of the confidential interviews that were performed for the study. It also described the different assumptions and the procedure of the study for the selection of participants and the resources used in the recruitment process. It provided detailed explanations of the meaning and purpose of the questionnaire and the different areas covered. Last, it described the data processing, analysis, and a list of some limitations of the study. Study results are presented in the following chapters.

Chapter Four: Analyzing Data, Reporting, and Interpreting Findings

The rationale behind this study was leveraging the fact that scholars have not studied internalized homophobia developed in the country of origin among Hispanic/Latinos homosexual men who have immigrated to the United States. The study gathered descriptive qualitative information, providing a better understanding on a deeper level of internalized homophobia among the selected sample. In addition, the study aimed to explain the roots of their inner homophobia. Additionally, the study provided a rationale and descriptive explanation about the reasons that men who are Hispanic and homosexual have to continue experiencing internalized homophobia even though they are currently living a gay lifestyle.

Different models exist in regards to the developmental stages and the *coming out* process that gay men experienced within their sexual orientation (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). Additionally, studies about Latinos/Hispanics and LGBT Hispanics living as a minority in the United States have reflected the struggles they experience as well. However, the data collected has not integrated Hispanic gay men who immigrated to the United States and Hispanic gay men who have internalized homophobia. Rather, this study gathered information on how difficult, different, or challenging their coming out process was and how they dealt with it. Scholars have identified internalized homophobia in the Hispanic gay men as an issue; however it has not been vastly studied.

The intention of this study was to explore the ground issues and roots of the problem of internalized homophobia among Hispanic/Latino homosexual men. In addition, it aimed to understand the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral perspectives of Hispanic/Latino homosexual men and their sexual orientation. Another purpose of this study was to identify the needs of the Hispanic/Latino homosexual men who migrated as adults to the United States. Consequently, the

study helps to identify proper interventions to help Hispanic homosexual men and their well-being, as well as their mental health. Additionally, these interventions would help Hispanic/Latino homosexual men to adjust in their acculturation process when they transition from their country of origin to living in the United States.

This chapter presents the findings obtained during the course of the investigation. A brief description of each participant as well as important reports and facts about their individual narrative interview are presented through several Hispanic/Latino men (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Two participants of the selected countries were not included in the sample. Recruitment for the interviews was unsuccessful, as two pre-selected countries (i.e., Mexico and Venezuela) had no participants in the study. Subsequently, the five participatory countries were Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Panama, and Puerto Rico. These countries represent the Hispanic community in the geographical area study.

After a brief description, report findings, and facts for each participant, the chapter shows demographic information gathered (see Table 7) from all participants (see Tables 8 through 17) and the results from the six open-ended questions performed. Subsequently, it exhibits the three main research questions. Each research question is followed by all the questions asked during the interview. Then, the information, report of findings and results gather from all the narratives interviews perform to each participant (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Formerly, the chapter will provide the three main research questions once again. Each question will provide an analysis report as well as the interpretation and findings of the data.

Table 7

Participants' Demographic Information

Participants	Age	Highest Level of Education	Job	Gross Annual Income (\$)	Religion practiced and instilled as a child/adolescent
Colombian #1	36	2 years of College	Restaurant	30,000 to 39,000	Catholic
Colombian #2	51	High School	Restaurant	10,000 to 19,000	Catholic
Cuban #1	42	Bachelor's Degree	Technician	40,000 to 50,000	Catholic
Cuban #2	54	1 ½ of College	Management	20,000 to 30,000	Catholic
Guatemalan #1	42	Pursuing a bachelor's degree	Management	20,000 to 30,000	Catholic
Guatemalan #2	35	2 years of College & Technical Degree	Restaurant	20,000 to 30,000	Christian/ Catholic
Panamanian #1	40	Bachelor's degree	Management	40,000 to 39,000	Catholic
Panamanian #2	32	Bachelor's degree	Management	50,000 to 60,000	Catholic
Puerto Rican #1	41	Bachelor's degree	Management	30,000 to 40,000	Protestant/ Evangelical Church
Puerto Rican #2	46	1 year of College	Management	30,000 to 39,000	Catholic

Table 8

Participant's Profile - Colombian #1

Date and time of interview:	July 19, 2013 @ 4:18 PM
Age:	36
Source of recruitment:	Gay nightclub at Saturday Latin Night

Important Facts:

1. "I was sexually abused by a man when I was eighth years old. He was around 28 years old."
 2. Reaction as being gay: "I had a tendency to have two genders. I did not identify myself completely as gay, neither as straight."
 3. "I experienced premature ejaculation when I was with women. When I was with a man, I was able to last hours."
 4. Knew his first consensual gay sexual experience with a man who was eight or nine years older than him. He was 15 years old at the time.
 5. How internalized homophobia affected his emotions during his adolescence: "I remember being at school where we have a lot of gangs, people bullying weak people. That was like being in prison..... I needed to be in that group and dynamic in order to survive."
 6. Almost was sexually abused by a Catholic priest. He was able to escape. His mother did not believe him, and he was grounded by the lie stated by the priest.
 7. Presented a history of depression because of his sexual orientation.
-

Table 9

Participant's Profile - Colombian #2

Date and time of interview:	August 28, 2013 @ 7:28 PM
Age:	51
Source of recruitment:	Gay Chat: Grindr

Important Facts:

1. His sexual orientation: "I hid it a lot in my country. I used to have a double life."
 2. How the identity development was affected: "It has been affecting me because I have not had a stable relationship with one or the other" (referring to men and women).
 3. "I have not accepted myself. A lot of times, I look at myself and (pause) ... I don't know. I think, I still have a lot of conflicts and things that I have not accepted in me."
 4. How internalized homophobia has affected his emotions: "This is affecting me a lot, because I felt like I was not able to live a life that I really wanted to live."
 5. Handling machismo or comments toward gay people: "It still hurts and sometimes I even get frustrated when people make comments or talk about it. I feel sorry and embarrassed."
 6. Homosexuality and relationship with God: "I ask him to change me if I am wrong as being gay. Therefore, I do not think it is wrong to be gay because he has not changed me... So, I do not feel guilty about being gay."
 7. Resolution in regards to internalized homophobia: "I have not fully accepted myself. I still care what people think or comment about me."
 8. Current mental health well-being in regards to being gay: "I feel good. Sometimes I feel frustrated. I feel like I have not accomplished myself yet as a gay man."
-

Table 10

Participant's Profile - Cuban #1

Date and time of interview:	September 7, 2013 @ 3:36 PM
Age:	42
Source of recruitment:	Referred by a friend

Important Facts:

1. "It was something normal for me. As an innocent boy, I did not see it as something bad. I did not have any adverse reaction."
 2. Came out to his mother at the age of thirteen. He is the only child. Mother was overprotective as well as a single parent.
 3. "In my case, I was involved in things related to culture, music and theater. So, I was surrounded in an environment that it has a lot of gay people."
 4. "When I was a little boy, I questioned myself if I was normal or not. I did question if I was the only one. I questioned if it does exist more people just like me."
 5. Cuban #1 lived in Mexico, D.F. for 10 years (ages 24 to 34): "I hid my homosexuality while living in Mexico. Mexico City was more metropolitan than Havana, Cuba, but more closed-minded and more "machista." I did not personally experience the social rejection; however, I was able to witness it."
-

Table 11

Participant's Profile - Cuban #2

Date and time of interview:	October 19, 2013 @ 1:11 pm
Age:	54
Source of recruitment:	Tampa Bay Gay Film Festival 2013

Important Facts:

1. Identity development: "I think it did not affect me much because I play a dual role. It was like being on an acting role in theater. My family knew about me once I moved to the United States."
 2. "I had a girlfriend during my adolescence. I think I repressed my behavior during my adolescence."
 3. "I left Cuba, because I am gay. I let the government know about my homosexuality. The event happened when we had the Mariel boat lifting in Cuba in the 1980s."
 4. "My father passed away when I was nine years old. So, I was pretty much raised by my mother. I never reproach my mother for my homosexuality or the loss of my father."
 5. "When I was a child, speaking or being gay was denigrating. Nowadays, people speak up in Cuba. They are open-minded and understanding that being gay is not something bad."
 6. "In Cuba, we have a document of identification (*carne de identidad*). They marked me down as gay in my documents of identification after I attended this evaluation with a psychologist. It was reflected in my part time job while attending college."
-

Table 12

Participant's Profile - Guatemalan #1

Date and time of interview:	July 17, 2013 @ 4:33 pm
Age:	42
Source of recruitment:	University /College

Important Facts:

1. "When I was a child, I used to feel curiosity to see men older than me. Some of my friends used to bother me for the way I am."
 2. Reaction for being gay: "I did not want to accept it."
 3. "I accepted it as being harassed by my friends. I had a few friends who wanted to have something with me."
 4. How the identity development was affected: "It affected me a lot as I was bullied by other people. It did affect me because I was even afraid to walk outside."
 5. "I felt bad about it (referring being gay). The main reason was the low tolerance for acceptance in society."
 6. "Well, I tried a few times to have sex with women. However, I could not make it."
 7. Coming out to family/parents: "I haven't cleared that. They don't know about it. They might be suspicious, but I have not told them that I am gay."
 8. Selection of sexual orientation if born again: "I will select to be straight. First, I will try to have a family. Second, the gay life is very tough. It is very, very, very tough, because I was bullied as a child as well as an adolescent."
 9. "I think being gay back home is tougher compared to the gay life here in the United States. Even though, I have obtained information that they gay life in Guatemala is now a little bit easier."
-

Table 13

Participant's Profile - Guatemalan #2

Date and time of interview:	September 6, 2013 @ 1:34 pm
Age:	35
Source of recruitment:	Gay nightclub at Saturday Latin Night

Important Facts:

1. "I knew I was gay, but I did not have any contact with anyone until I was 20 years old. Currently, Guatemala is a little bit open, but back then it was very restricted ... a lot of discrimination."
 2. How the identity development was affected: "It affected me in being unable to focus in what I wanted in regards to my emotions and my professional life."
 3. Hiding homosexuality during rearing: "Hanging out with straight friends and behave like them."
 4. First gay sexual experience: "When someone is eight years old, it is pretty much without their sexual consent, because I was only a child. The event happened with a guy older than me. He was around 15 years old. He was my neighbor."
 5. How internalized homophobia affected his behavior during the adolescence stage: "I got confused because at a certain age, I even had girlfriends, and I was going to get married. I thought about having a family."
 6. Presently, how internalized homophobia is affecting him: "It's still affecting me that I wanted to have a family. I would love to be a father, but I can't because I am sterile due to an accident. I was in depression for almost a year."
 7. Coming out to family/parents: "My mother... I have not told her; however, I am psychologically preparing her. She is not dumb; she knows."
-

Table 13 (cont.)

Participant's Profile - Guatemalan #2

Date and time of interview:	September 6, 2013 @ 1:34 pm
Age:	35
Source of recruitment:	Gay nightclub at Saturday Latin Night

Important Facts:

8. Resolution in regards to internalized homophobia: "Accepting myself just the way I am. It is not going back. I was twenty years old when I accepted myself. Prior to twenty, I rejected that and I hid it, having relationships with women."
 9. Current mental health well-being in regards to being gay: "Psychologically: I am well. I feel good. I know where I am and what I want. Emotionally, I just would like to have a child."
-

Table 14

Participant's Profile - Panamanian #1

Date and time of interview:	September 14, 2013 @ 9:25 am
Age:	40
Source of recruitment:	Referred by a friend

Important Facts:

1. Reaction as being gay: "In the beginning, I was a little bit confused. I mean about confuse if man to man was correct or not."
 2. "At certain moments, I did hide my homosexuality. At home, I think in a way I walk. My mother questioned me the way I walk. I criticize myself about it."
 3. "I had a girlfriend when I was 9 or 10 years old."
 4. "I had some moments of sadness, feeling different, thinking that I was not going to be accepted by my family and society...but I think I was able to manage it."
-

Table 14 (cont.)

Participant's Profile - Panamanian #1

Date and time of interview:	September 14, 2013 @ 9:25 am
Age:	40
Source of recruitment:	Referred by a friend

Important Facts:

5. First time being able to speak about be or feeling gay: "I was around 20 years old when I attended an appointment with a psychologist. The psychologist accepted me as I am and knew what I wanted. The idea of the therapy session was to help my parents to understand my situation."
 6. At school/friends: "I was bullied because I was hanging out more with girls than boys."
 7. He continues to be actively involved at Catholic Church. When people ask him about his wedding ring, he replies that he is married to the church. He prefers to abstain.
-

Table 15

Participant's Profile - Panamanian #2

Date and time of interview:	September 30 th , 2013 @ 8:43 pm
Age:	32
Source of recruitment:	Social event

Important Facts:

1. "I rejected myself quite often. I did not accept myself as I did what others expected me to be. I even thought about committing suicide."
 2. How the identity development was affected: "It has helped me as I have a more meaningful life now. It helped me a lot to move from Panama to the United States."
-

3. “People were telling me that I should correct myself because I am walking like a fag, and I look like a girl. These messages were affecting me a lot and letting me know that I was not normal.”
 4. Looking himself at the mirror: “I was in denial. I questioned myself why I was like that.”
 5. Adolescence: “I was feeling confused. I used to like certain girls at school.”
 6. How internalized homophobia affected his behavior during the adolescence stage: “It affected me a lot because I was feeling insecure. I became a very insecure person.”
 7. How internalized homophobia affected his emotions: “I suffered a lot of depression. I attended a psychologist to help me to work with this mental illness. This treatment did not work.”
 8. Family/parents: “Overall, my family is not against it. However, it is a problem when is someone from the family; especially my mother. It does affect her.”
 9. At school/friends: “That was the most difficult stage in my life. I wish I can completely delete it. I still have the internal scars.”
 10. Resolution in regards to internalized homophobia: “Thanks to my friends here in the United States. They have supported me, and I have felt the warm affection as family. Family I did not have back in Panamá.”
 11. “Politics in Latin America are cruel with human rights as well as with gays.”
-

Table 16

Participant's Profile – Puerto Rican #1

Date and time of interview:	July 15, 2013 @ 3:55 PM
Age:	41
Source of recruitment:	Gay Chat: Grindr

Important Facts:

1. “As a child, I had an attraction for men. I don’t know if it was because I did not have a father (biological father).”
 2. “I always hid it, to the point that I got married and had children.”
 3. How affected identity development: “I’ve always lived a double life...definitely. I’ve always lived like someone that I was not. Living a double life is like wanting to react in a certain way and restrained to be myself.”
 4. Repressed his homosexuality for many years when looking at him in the mirror.
 5. First gay sexual experience: “I let him seduced me, even though I was a little child. I was like four or five-year-old. He was a teenager, like 13 or 14 years old.”
 6. He has been a responsible father for his two boys. One of his children has special needs. He has been open with them in regards to his homosexuality. Presently, they are young adults.
 7. Handling machismo or comments toward gays: “It is very challenging. I always remained quiet, because I was not able to take part of it.”
 8. Presently: “I do not attend any church, because I cannot be my true self.”
 9. “I think religion does not save you. I think who can be anyone as long as you have a correct live (well-behave). You have to stay connected to God and do things well.”
-

Table 16 (cont.)

Participant's Profile – Puerto Rican #1

Date and time of interview:	July 15, 2013 @ 3:55 PM
Age:	41
Source of recruitment:	Gay Chat: Grindr

Important Facts:

10. "I came out of the closet when I was 28 years old. At that time, I was very uncontrollable/wild as I repressed myself for so many years."
 11. "I have always tried to formalize a gay circle/group and I have not been able to make it happen."
-

Table 17

Participant's Profile – Puerto Rican #2

Date and time of interview:	July 31, 2013 @ 9:15 pm
Age:	46
Source of recruitment:	Referred by Colombian #1

Important Facts:

1. "I have always done masculine things for my entire life. Play sports and all of that."
 2. Rejected his homosexuality for a long time because of his job.
 3. Homosexuality during rearing: "I used to adore my girlfriend. But the only reason I did not get marry with her it was because I could not imagine having a child with her and be on the side with a man."
 4. When looking at himself in the mirror: "Ehhh... I feel sad every time I think about that because I always wanted to have a family. I love children, and I know because the way I am, I knew I wasn't going to have children."
-

Table 17 (cont.)

Participant's Profile – Puerto Rican #2

Date and time of interview:	July 31, 2013 @ 9:15 pm
Age:	46
Source of recruitment:	Referred by Colombian #1

Important Facts:

5. Sexually abused by his uncle at the age of five. Then, sexually abused by his volleyball coach from the age of nine until the age of 17.
6. Feeling very insecure during his high school years.
7. Machismo or comments toward gay: "I always remain quiet. Now if someone says something I talk back to them."
8. "The most difficult for me was to go to work and remain in silence (or to remain silent), and to go to work and be somebody else. To live a double life."
9. "I thought Puerto Rico was worse due to machismo, but it is worse in here (USA)."

Analyzing Data and Reporting Findings

This section reports the answers to three main research questions. Each research question is followed by all the sets of sub-questions asked during the interview. Main question #1 relates to sub-questions 1-5, question #2 relates to sub-questions 6-17, and main question #3 relates to sub-questions 18-21. Each question is accompanied by an analysis report and data interpretation.

Main Research Question #1: *In which ways did the internalized homophobia of*

Hispanic/Latino gay men reared in their country of origin has affected their gay identity? (See

Table 12)

1. How did you become aware you are gay? At the time, how old were you (age range)?

Table 18

Question # 1 Responses

Age group	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	20+
Nº of particioants	2	6	1	1	0

There is a foundation for this research, because it is related to being gay during childhood and adolescence. Two out of 10 (20%) knew about being gay before the age of five. In addition, six out of 10 knew they were gay between the ages of six to 10 years. During the interview, they did their best effort to provide the age range in which they became aware of being gay.

Colombian #1 stated knowing about his sexual orientation his entire life, and having tendencies to play with his friends. Furthermore, Colombian #1 indicated playing mom and dad, where they used to rub their bodies while playing. Cuban #1 stated knowing since he was homosexual at five years old. Cuban #1 mentioned in the interview that he used to collect pictures of men, cut, and glue them to a notebook, which he used to place on the bottom of his bed. Panamanian #1 indicated discovering his sexual orientation around the ages of six or seven. This process of feeling attracted to boys for Panamanian #1 was natural. Panamanian #2 mentioned feeling attracted to boys since he was six years old when he started kindergarten. Panamanian #2 explained that it was not a sexual attraction. It was an attraction to their natural beauty.

Panamanian #2 further mentioned that his eyes were naturally inclined to look at boys instead of girls. Puerto Rican #1 stated feeling attraction to boys at an early age, when he was five or six years old. Puerto Rican #1 stated that he did not know if this is because he did not have a father.

Furthermore, Puerto Rican #1 mentioned feeling attracted to the warm human connection that a man could provide him.

However, Cuban #2 stated that he was 17 years old, but he had some idea since he was five years old. He was not clear at the time. As a child, Cuban #2 used to play with a boy from his neighborhood. He was inclined to play doctor with other boys and not with girls. Cuban #2 explained experiencing an internal and ongoing battle during his childhood and adolescence for being gay. Furthermore, he thought it was something normal that may happen to anyone.

On the other hand, Colombian #2 felt attracted to other boys and not to girls since early childhood. Therefore, he started to have inclinations to be next, spend time, and be around boys all the time. Colombian #2 started to have these inclinations since he was 10 years old.

Guatemalan #1 was 10 years old when he was curious to see men older than him. Furthermore, he started to be bullied by his friends. Growing up, Guatemalan #1 was uncertain about being gay, similarly to Cuban #2. Around the age of 10 to 11 years, Guatemalan #1 started to have certain attitudes and mannerisms that it were uncertain for him. Guatemalan #2 clearly stated that he knew since he was 12 years old. Consequently, Guatemalan #2 was the only participant who knew about being gay from the ages of 11 to 15 years.

In this question, only one person answered becoming aware of being gay at the age of 19 years, which happened to Puerto Rican #2. He started to have an inclination toward men when he moved to the United States. Puerto Rican #2 stated having a completely sexual and not emotional relationship with an older man. Prior to this, Puerto Rican #2 was a victim of sexual abuse by his uncle and his volleyball coach. This incident could have affected his awareness of being gay at an early age.

2. How did you react to being gay?

The response for this particular question varies. Colombian #1 indicated feeling as “being male and female.” He communicated being unable to identify himself completely as gay, neither as straight. Colombian #1 experienced his first sexual relationship with a woman and had girlfriends during his adolescence. In addition, he had sex with other women during his adolescence stage. On the other hand, Colombian #2 reacted by hiding from society. He had a relationship with a woman just to hide this homosexuality. Colombian #2 described it as having a double life.

Cuban #1 described his reaction for being gay as something normal. Cuban #1 was the only child in his household. He had more interaction toward his mother and other adults rather than other children when growing up. Cuban #2 had this reaction at the age of 17 years, when he accepted it as the lifestyle he was going to have for the rest of his life. It seems that this reaction was similar for both Cubans, which represented a smooth transition to coming out.

Guatemalan #1 did not want to accept it. However, Guatemalan #2 did accept it but lacked a gay support system at the time. Guatemalan #2 was able to get support when he was 20 years old. Prior to that, he was afraid of people’s rejection, discrimination, being bullied, and being unable to find a job.

Panamanian #1 mentioned feeling confused and uncertain if man-to-man was correct or not. Eventually, Panamanian #1 perceived it as something normal. However, Panamanian #2 was bullied as well as Guatemalan #1 and Guatemalan #2. Panamanian #2 stated not feeling comfortable with himself. He was being bullied in high school almost daily by 90% of his classmates. Panamanian #2 stated being emotionally abused, but not physical abused.

Panamanian #2 started to accept more his gay sexual orientation when he came out of high school and started his college life.

Puerto Rican #1 was afraid to being bullied, even though he experienced it once in a while. He indicated that he allowed himself to be noticed as gay in certain occasions. As a result, people questioned his behavior. Puerto Rican #1 married a woman and had two kids with her, from whom he divorced. Puerto Rican #2 answered that he has engage in masculine activities his entire life, such as playing sports and not engaging in the gay lifestyle until he was older. Puerto Rican #2 indicated experiencing his first time in a gay club when he was 24 years old and not having a gay partner until the age of 31. Puerto Rican #2 almost got married to a woman (fiancée at the time). He suspended his wedding three months earlier. Furthermore, it seems like Puerto Rican #2 used sports as a way of coping with his sexual orientation.

Overall, most of the study participants had difficulties accepting their gay sexual orientation and experienced fear. Both Colombians and Puerto Ricans decided to have relationships with women, which all of them experience having sex with women. Furthermore, Guatemalan #2 had girlfriends and Panamanian #1 had only one girlfriend. Guatemalan #2 indicated having sex with multiple women and almost got married to one of them, similar to Puerto Rican #2. Guatemalan #1 indicated that he tried a few times to have sex with women; however, he could complete the act successfully. Nonetheless, their reaction of acceptance or rejection varies, which was explained in more detail through the next question: Did you accept or reject? (See Table 19)

Table 19

Question 2 (a): Did you accept or reject?

Accepted	Rejected
Cuban #1	Colombian #1
Cuban #2	Colombian #2
Guatemalan #2	Guatemalan #1
Panamanian #1	Panamanian #2
	Puerto Rican #1
	Puerto Rican #2
Total	60%
40%	60%

As reported in Table 19, 60% of the participants rejected their gay sexual orientation. On the other hand, accepting homosexuality can happen among Hispanic homosexual men as evidenced by Cubans #1 and #2, Guatemalan #2, and Panamanian #1. Only Cubans reported having a smooth transition in being gay in their country of origins, or it did not present any major complication. By their responses, it seems like both Cubans received the support they needed at the time. Guatemalan #2 accepted his gay sexual orientation; however, he did not have a support system until later in life. During the interviews, Panamanian #1 stated being assertive when he decided to come out to his parents. He attended family therapy with a psychologist who helped him and his family to have a better transition.

3. When you were living in your country of origin and knew about being gay:

a. How did you accept it?

This question yielded one of the major findings in this study, in which most participants coincided with the same answer. Nine out of 10 (90%) answered that they exiled from their countries because of their sexual orientation. Only Cuban #1 indicated that he exiled from Cuba to Mexico, where he lived in Mexico City for 10 years. Cuban #1 stated the gay lifestyle in

Mexico is tougher than in Cuba. In Cuba, being gay was not difficult for him as he was involved in activities related to culture, music, and theater. Cuban #1 stated that he was surrounded of an environment frequented by gay people. On the other hand, Cuban #2 was able to experience some of his gay lifestyle in Cuba, but not in his hometown. Cuban #2 indicated that he would visit Havana to enjoy better the gay lifestyle, because this was a bigger and more cosmopolite city in his country. Furthermore, he referred feeling like he would “go back to the closet” every time he returned to his small town. He accepted his gay sexual orientation while living in his hometown, but he could not be out of the closet because of his fear that his family knew or people would be gossiping. He stated in Spanish: “*Pueblo pequeño, infierno grande,*” which is translated literally to English as “small town, big hell.” As a result, he decided to stay in the closet until he moved to the United States.

Colombian #1 and Colombian #2 emigrated from Colombia and accepted their gay sexual orientation in the United States. Colombian #1 stated that his family knew about him four years ago, according to the date of the interview, which was in July 2013. Previously, he was living a gay lifestyle, but not fully accepting himself and feeling guilty about it. Colombian #2 did not accept it as well. He stated that he came out of the closet to certain people, but not publicly. Furthermore, he mentioned that he “does not fake it because he cannot hide it.” However, he continues to worry considerably about what people think about him, even though he has been living in the United States for many years.

Guatemalan #1 indicated being harassed by his friends, and only few of them continued socializing with him. Furthermore, he revealed a story from his childhood where he had sex with one of his neighbors with whom he used to play baseball outside with him until 10:00 or 10:30 pm. He described that this interaction started with his neighbor offering water, then kisses, and

later rubbing each other bodies through their clothes. Guatemalan #1 does not recall when they got naked and had sex. On the other hand, Guatemalan #2 stated experiencing freedom. He was visually attracted to men. He met some gay people when he was 20 years old. They encouraged Guatemalan #2 to come out of the closet until he did it. Guatemalan #2 expressed feeling afraid, but he felt good at the time, and wanted to engage in homosexual activity. Guatemalan #2 declared that his mother and siblings are the only ones in his family who know about his sexual orientation.

Panamanian #1 was afraid as well as Guatemalan #2. Panamanian #1 declared going through the process perceiving homosexuality as something normal or abnormal. Besides, he would think if his parents and the community would accept him or not. Eventually, Panamanian #1 accepted his gay sexual orientation, and described it as not having much problem or trauma. Panamanian #2 accepted that he felt good in the United States. He indicated that Panamá is different than the United States. He was able to come out of the closet while living in Panamá; however he was not able to be himself 100%. Panamanian #2 declared that his nature is to be feminine. Therefore, he would always be cautious of following his mother's advice, such as walking right, going to the right path, not crossing the legs when seated, and not moving much his hips when walking. Moreover, he felt like "living inside a shelf" when he attended gay clubs while living in Panamá.

Puerto Rican #1 always hid it, for which he married and had two children. Puerto Rican #1 declared making this decision because, as gay, he would have been rejected by his family, friends, and his local society. Furthermore, being gay would make him feel guilty, and he thought he was behaving wrongly, or challenging his religious perspectives. In Puerto Rico, he used to attend a Protestant/Evangelical Church. On the other hand, Puerto Rican #2 had a

difficult time accepting his homosexuality, as evidenced by feeling sad because of his sexual abuse as a child by his uncle, and as an adolescent by his volleyball coach. The abuse by his volleyball coach lasted for years. Besides, his volleyball coach was his neighbor. He declared putting his gay sexual orientation “in the back burner” and not taking the initiative at the time to accept it.

b. How did affect your identity development?

Similarities and differences exist in the way Hispanic/Latino gay were affected in their identity development. Colombian #1 declared being affected by feeling sadness and experiencing pain in his process of accepting himself. As a result, Colombian #1 stated going through a tough time as well as feeling loneliness when he decided to exile from Colombia. Then, he started a new life in the United States as a foreigner. Colombian #2 has been affected in his identity development by not having a stable relationship, neither with a man or a woman. Moreover, Colombian #2 declared to continue living with fear and frustrations because he has not fully accepted himself as gay.

Cuban #1 acknowledged his identity development as an organic process. He knew he was gay since childhood and came out to his mother when he was 13 years old. Cuban #1 stated that his mother first reaction was rejection. However, she eventually accepted it, and it did not create any more conflict. During the interview, Cuban #1 provided signs that his mother was overprotective during his childhood. On the other hand, Cuban #2 stated not being affected during his identity development as he played a dual role. He described living a double life in Cuba as “like to be a theater actor.” Cuban #2 came out to his family when he moved to the United States. He lived in Cuba until the age of 20 years. Furthermore, they knew more about it when he went back to Cuba to visit his family with his partner. Moreover, Cuban #2 stated that

probably his family knew about his gay sexual orientation, but they did not talk about it. Cuban #2 declared that he and his partner did not “behave gay” when they visited his hometown. However, they were able to interact differently when he visited his friend in Havana, Cuba. They were able to talk more about the gay life and other related topics. Besides, Cuban #2 acknowledged that gays could socialize together in society in Havana, Cuba; however, they were unable to hold hands. Nonetheless, they were not able to socialize as gay groups in small towns, because local people would gossip.

Guatemalan #1 declared that his identity development was affected considerably by being bullied by other people. Guatemalan #1 was afraid to walk outside. He explained that in Guatemala, if someone is gay and has mannerisms, people in society start to whistle at them and tell nicknames such as gay. He declared that this did not happen to him with strangers, but it did happen with his friends/acquaintances. Guatemalan #1 stated remembering when he started to walk like a cowboy. The situation got worse as people started to infer that his walking style was result of “something that happened to him” (referring that someone had anal intercourse with him). On the other hand, Guatemalan #2 was unable to focus in what he wanted in regards to his emotions and professional life. Guatemalan #2 described as being unable to concentrate because of the repression of his thoughts. He described it as having racing thoughts. It affected his career as a student because he stopped pursuing his studies for five years. He completed his high school at the age of 25 years. At the time, he was not able to relax or concentrate. Subsequently, he was able to overcome his tension, and consequently establish new goals, focus, and progress his life leaving this cited repression behind. Eventually, he was able to portray to his friends his true self. He worked in an office setting, portraying himself to be respected, and able to show his true personality, as well as to exercise his rights to show his true personality.

Panamanian #1 stated feeling confident and certain during his identity development. Nevertheless, Panamanian #2 described that moving from Panama to the United States helped him to have a more meaningful life. Panamanian #2 indicated feeling more comfortable in the United States because he feel free to demonstrate his true personality, which has helped him, in turn, to be his true self every time he re-visits Panama. He also described as he “does not have to hide himself anymore.” However, Panamanian #2 declared that he still has to be conservative and cannot be flamboyant when he meets with his family. He described as “just to be respectful to them.” He described this respect as behaving the way they want to see him. He further explained that he is not able to hold hands or kiss a guy in front of his family. He described not feeling comfortable because “it is not the right place or time for it” in his perception.

Puerto Rican #1 described his identity development as if he had always lived a double life. He described wanting to react in a certain way and restrained himself. Additionally, he declared that he would pretend to be somebody else. On the other hand, Puerto Rican #2 declared that his identity development was affected considerably. He was able to disclose his long journey of sexual abuse for the first time at the age of 20 years to his first male partner. He described it as “taking off a huge burden that he carried over” for many years. Besides, he declared not being able to be truly himself, which affected his social skills. Puerto Rican #2 was a shy person and afraid to meet new people.

4. If you tried to hide your homosexuality, how did you do this?

Colombian #1 indicated hiding his homosexuality by having a person in the city of Bogotá, Colombia, with whom he established contact to have sex. They used to walk for a few hours to the mountains to touch and kiss. They used to do it far away, avoiding to be seen.

Colombian #2 declared being unable to develop his freedom because of the cultural perspective.

Colombian #2 described that he would attract older men in public places to have sex. He declared that men initiating the sexual invitation; however, he had to do what they requested. He was not able to sexually express himself freely. Furthermore, he acknowledged feeling attracted to them. However, he felt many times as being sexually abused.

Cuban #1 hid his homosexuality in the social setting. However, he described how he would cut pictures of boys and glue them on a notebook. He used to kiss the pictures. Cuban #1 hid the notebook on the bottom of his bed as he did not want others to learn about it. He described this activity as pleasurable. On the other hand, Cuban #2 hid his homosexuality by playing baseball and soccer as a child. Furthermore, he had a girlfriend when he was 12 or 13 years old. He stated that sometimes gay people feel pressure by society to have a girlfriend. Moreover, Cuban #2 indicated that once in a while, when accessible, he would watch fashion shows or expose to other media related to the topic.

Guatemalan #1 described his behavior as being very discreet, and although he would socialize with his friends, he would not initiate a relationship with them. Guatemalan #2 used to socialize with men as well. Furthermore, Guatemalan #2 described how he would agree with his male friends when making flirtatious comments to women.

Panamanian #1 hid his homosexuality through his walking behavior. His mother questioned him about the way he used to walk. He criticized himself about it and concluded that something was not right. Panamanian #2 became conscious at the age of 10 years when people started to tell him denigrating comments. Panamanian #2 indicated that people would mention to him how he was walking “like a fag” and that he looked like a girl. Results of this study showed that both Panamanians and Guatemalan #1 identified walking issues growing up. Besides, Guatemalan #1 did not know how to walk and decided to walk “like a cowboy.” As a result,

people started to bother/bully him, suggesting that his walk style came from something that happened to him, meaning an anal penetration.

Puerto Rican #1 declared trying to do what society portrayed as normal behaviors for men. As a child, he always tried to practice outside activities, such as basketball, baseball, and riding bike. Furthermore, he stated behaving well and doing things correctly such as going to church and being with his family. Puerto Rican #2 hid his homosexuality by having girlfriends all the time. Puerto Rican #2 almost got married at the time with his last girlfriend. He cancelled the wedding three months earlier. Puerto Rican #2 indicated having sex with this girlfriend and described the sexual experience as pleasurable. Besides, he described this stage of his life as having a straight life and thinking that he was completely bisexual at the time. Another important fact to notice is that both Puerto Ricans and Cuban #2 played sports and had girlfriends to hide their homosexuality during adolescence. Puerto Rican#1 got married and Puerto Rican #2 almost got married; however, he cancelled the wedding.

5. During your rearing, how were you affected when looking at yourself in the mirror and questioned your sexual orientation?

Colombian #1 declared that “God brought him to this world as a man, and as a man he is going to die.” He described himself as a masculine man who does not dress up or behave like a woman. Besides, he indicated that being gay is not a scandal or shame for the family. He thinks that his masculine behavior is one of the reasons his family did not notice his gay sexual orientation. His masculine behavior helped him to hide his sexual orientation. On the other hand, Colombian #2 has not been able to accept his sexual orientation. He explained that he is still “reflecting on it” and continues having conflicts in accepting it. Furthermore, he declared not

having a boyfriend or friend to share and spend time together. He has not been able to spend the night with the same person for two consecutive nights or more.

Cuban #1 declared that he questioned his sexual orientation many times during his early childhood. He questioned if the normalcy of this sexual orientation. Besides, he questioned if he was the only one, and if more people like him would exist. Cuban #1 stated that he totally accepted his sexual orientation when he decided to tell his mother at the age of 13 years. Cuban #2 acknowledged questioning his sexual orientation around the ages of 12 to 14 years. When looking at himself in the mirror, he questioned how he could be homosexual. Eventually, he started to perceive it as something natural. Further, he did not think so much about it until he arrived to high school where his sexual curiosity increased. He started to look more at guys and admire their bodies and faces.

Guatemalan #1 questioned his sexual orientation a few times, and he felt bad about being gay. The main reason for these negative feelings was the low tolerance for acceptance in society. On the other hand, Guatemalan #2 stated that it did not affect him because he was conscious of his sexual orientation and what he wanted. Furthermore, he stated that he liked his personality, and it did not affect him as he continued to be himself.

Panamanian #1 declared that it affect him only partially. As an adolescent, it did not affect him as evidenced by his clear perspective about being gay. On the other hand, Panamanian #2 indicated being in denial and questioned why he was like that. He was uncomfortable, and did not accept his persona at the time. He described himself as a good person, sweet, loving, and innocent. At the time, he could not understand why people criticized him so much and could not accept him “just the way he was.” In addition, his parents and uncles tried to correct his behaviors and spoke harshly to him.

Puerto Rican #1 described it as a repression. He stated knowing deep inside, although it was not something that bothered him every day. He was not asking himself daily or having racing thoughts about it. On the other hand, Puerto Rican #2 described as feeling sad every time he thought about it, as he always wanted to have a family. He additionally stated that he loved children and wanted to have a family. When looking at himself in the mirror, he did not want to accept it because he would miss family interactions for being gay.

Variety of answers emerged on how they were affected when looking at themselves in the mirror and questioning their sexual orientation. Colombian #1 declared that “God brought him to this world as a man, and as a man he is going to die.” Colombian #2 has not been able to accept his sexual orientation. He explained it as still reflecting on it, which continues to create inner conflict. However, Cuban #1, Cuban #2, Guatemalan #1 and Panamanian #2 questioned their sexual orientation. Furthermore, Panamanian #2 indicated being in denial and questioned his sexual orientation. Puerto Rican #1 repressed his homosexual sexual orientation, and Puerto Rican #2 described it as feeling sad every time he thought about it as he always wanted to have a family. At the other hand, Guatemalan #2 and Panamanian #1 claimed not being affected as they were clear about their homosexual sexual orientation.

Main Research Question #2: *In which ways did the internalized homophobia affected the behavioral and emotional state during their rearing?*

6. How did you manage your sexuality during your childhood/adolescence stage?

Colombian #1 stated managing his sexuality through masturbation during his adolescence stage. Furthermore, he indicated meeting with some friends and masturbating as a group. Colombian #1 recalled looking at them, but they did not look at him. The activity was a game to test who ejaculates first (masturbation race). Colombian #1 declared managing his sexuality

during adolescence similarly to Colombian #2. Their similar behavior was through masturbation and playing the masturbation race. Besides, Colombian #2 shared doing this activity between the ages 10 to 12 with a group of four to five friends. They used to hide to do the masturbation race. In addition, they used to compare the size of their penises, explore their sexuality, and the growth of their pubic hair.

Cuban #1 also used to masturbate as well as Cuban #2. Cuban #1 indicated he started to masturbate at the age of 12 and Cuban #2 started around the ages of 12 or 13. Cuban #1 indicated fantasizing with men when he used to look at the pictures in magazines and images he saw in movies. On the contrary, Cuban #2 used to masturbate thinking about girls from school.

Guatemalan #1 declared trying unsuccessfully a few times to have sex with women, in this case with prostitutes. Instead, he tried to socialize with his friends and avoid the gay topic. Guatemalan #2 declared looking at straight porn magazines during his adolescence stage. He considers himself as a practical person and acknowledges not focusing on the man's penis; instead, he focused on the sexual act as it was exciting for him. Guatemalan #2 considers himself an open-minded person in regards to sexuality.

Panamanian #1 and Panamanian #2 used to masturbate as well. However, Panamanian #1 stated having a girlfriend at the age of nine or 10 years old. Panamanian #1 thinks the relationship with a girl was not a relationship. They like each other at the time, but they just spent time together at his house while being supervised by his mother. On the other hand, Panamanian #2 indicated starting to masturbate when he was eight or seven years old. Panamanian #2 started to put the hose with water in his private area when showering at night, experiencing tickling and enjoying the experience. Furthermore, he was curious about the men's body and initiated search for information on the Internet in Alta Vista (popular informational

website in the 1990s). In addition, Panamanian #2 enjoyed going to the department stores, such as JC Penny and Sears, to look at the Calvin Klein models in their underwear. Then, he moved forward to watch porn, masturbate while watching it, and started to discover an interesting side of homosexuality.

Puerto Rican #1 remembers being in kindergarten when he had his first sexual encounter with a girl. He described as going behind the classrooms, kissing, and hugging each other. He acknowledged being open to women sexuality and appreciate their beauty. However, Puerto Rican #1 described as being in the gay side when it comes to the psychological part, such as being in a relationship and be able to understand his partner. He hid his sexuality during childhood. Occasionally, he had some gay relationship. Besides, he masturbated, but he always used religion to help him channel his homosexual thoughts and sexual needs. When looking at straight porn, he focused more in men, instead of women. Puerto Rican #2 used to masturbate too, but three or four times daily. He declared that he used to fantasize with his coach, but not his uncle as he was an old man. His uncle passed away, but it makes him angry to think that he was abused by him when he was five years old. Furthermore, he declared not having any penetration with someone back in Puerto Rico, just masturbation and touching with others. He started to have penetration when he moved to the United States in his early 20s. He used only to masturbate when he was in Puerto Rico.

Overall, most of them had sexual encounters or fantasies with women. Cuban #1, as well as Panamanian #2, did not have any fantasies or encounters with women. Besides, Panamanian #1 did not consider his relationship with his girlfriend as a relationship. Puerto Rican #2 used to fantasize with his volleyball coach, which was his sexual abuser. Nonetheless, masturbation was for all of them the way they cope with sexuality during adolescence/childhood.

7. What or who did you think about when you masturbated?

Colombian #1 indicated thinking about “his last time” when he masturbated. Colombian #2 did not think about anyone. Masturbation for Colombian #2 was like a normal game. He described as similar to play with a deck of cards.

Cuban #1 used to fantasize with actors from movies, pictures, and magazines. Cuban #1 acknowledged that he had a sexual contact with a neighbor around the age of 12. His neighbor was around his age as well. They used to touch and kiss each other. Cuban #2 declared he started to masturbate around the age of 12 or 13 years. Cuban #2 used to fantasize with girls as he was taught by society that he should like girls. Besides, Cuban #2 indicated sexually playing a couple of times with his neighbor when he was younger.

Guatemalan #1 used to think in men when he masturbated. He fantasized in men that he used to see in public, particularly men wearing short pants. He used to look at their underwear and try to imagine/fantasize with them in that matter. Guatemalan #2 indicated that he honestly think in no one when he masturbated. He indicated thinking just in what “they were doing when looking at pictures in the porn magazines”.

Panamanian #1 declared he used to fantasize with his male friends and neighbors. Panamanian #2 declared still feeling confused during his adolescence stage. He tried to masturbate thinking about certain girls from school, but he could not achieve ejaculation. Panamanian #2 declared that he never had physical and sexual contact with girls or having a girlfriend or boyfriend during his adolescence stage.

Puerto Rican #1 stated thinking in men when he masturbated. He explained this process happening in stages. He started to think in women as a child. Later, as an adolescent, he started to focus more in men. On the other hand, Puerto Rican #2 was 10 years old when he masturbated

for the first time. He indicated not recalling what he used to think at that time. He did acknowledge thinking in both genders. Later on, around the ages of 13 and 16, he used to look at porn magazines that his father had in a locked area that he unlocked for his needs. He got in big trouble when his parents discover this behavior.

a. What emotions or feelings did your experience after masturbation?

Colombian #1 declared feeling guilty after masturbation. He regretted what he did. He would promise himself not to do it again, but he would fail. Colombian #1 indicated having these thoughts and feelings every day. Colombian #2 indicated starting to experience feelings around the ages of 15 to 16. At the time, he could not understand his emotions.

Cuban #1 experienced guilt at an early age. At the time, he used to feel that it was not a correct behavior. Cuban #1 decided not to tell his mother and kept masturbation as a secret, as well secretly hiding his notebook with pictures of males. Cuban #2 stated that he does not recall. In addition, he described his personality as a shy person during his adolescence stage.

Guatemalan #1 and Guatemalan #2 used to feel satisfied. Guatemalan #2 also declared feeling good about it.

Panamanian #1 described it as a normal experience, feeling satisfaction and happiness. Panamanian #2 felt satisfaction too. Additionally, he felt relief about it. He described it as being addicted to masturbation during his adolescence stage because he masturbated daily and had the sensation to do it again when he ejaculated.

Puerto Rican #1 described as feeling that relaxes and a sense of releasing a heavy load. Puerto Rican #2 stated feeling satisfaction and wanting to do it again when he ejaculated. He explained as that is the reason he used to masturbate from three to four times daily. He used to masturbate at his home and sometimes at the mall in the public bathrooms.

8. When did you have your first gay sexual experience? How did you feel about it?

Responses to this questions are compiled in Table 14.

Table 20

Responses to question: When did you have your first gay experience?

Participant	Age 1st Gay Sexual Experience	Result	With or Without Sexual Consent/Abuse
Colombian #1	15	Kissed and masturbated with a 25 y/o man	It was consensual, but one day was not consensual when anal sex occurs.
Colombian #2	8 or 9	Around the same age. Pleasant experience. Touch and kiss each other	Mutual sexual consent
Cuban #1	13	25y/o man. It happened at a public restroom in a pizzeria	Mutual sexual consent
Cuban #2	Between 17 or 19	At his parents' house with a 25 y/o neighbor. They fore played together.	Mutual sexual consent
Guatemalan #1	13	Around the same age. They touched each other and got naked.	Mutual sexual consent
Guatemalan #2	8	His 15 years old neighbor	Without his sexual consent
Panamanian #1	18	26 years old cousin. It happened at his house.	Mutual sexual consent
Panamanian #2	Between 18 to 21	With a person he has met at a chat. Experienced oral sex. He physically dislikes the person.	Mutual sexual consent
Puerto Rican #1	4 or 5	13 or 14 year old adolescent	Sexual abuse
Puerto Rican #2	5	His uncle made him touch his penis.	Sexual abuse

Colombian #1 indicated having a relationship with a man when he was 15 years old. The man was approximately 24 years old. Their relationship lasted approximately a year. Colombian #1 declared only kissing and masturbating together. He stated in this question: "...I ask myself why I continued the gay life?" This statement is because the man sexually abused him one day at

his mother's house. He was alone with him at the house. The man wanted to have anal intercourse with him, and he said no. The man started to hurt him physically, to the point that Colombian #1 started to bleed. Colombian #1 allowed him to get what he wanted in order for him to stop. Colombian #1 declared that the sexual activity was hard, painful, and without condoms. Colombian #1 declared having anal bleeding for days every time he used the bathroom. On the other hand, Colombian #2 indicated that his first gay sexual experience was with another boy around his age (8 or 9 y/o). They went far away, touching, and kissing each other. He acknowledged that he liked that it was a pleasant experience.

Cuban #1 indicated having his first gay sexual experience at the age of 13. The sexual activity happened in a public restroom at a pizzeria with a gentleman around the age of 25. The gentleman was two tables away from him. The gentleman was staring at Cuban #1. Cuban #1 went to the bathroom and the gentleman followed him. The gentleman was peeing at the urinal, and he started to touch himself. His penis got erected as well as Cuban #1 penis. The gentleman grabbed Cuban #1 hand and put it in his penis. The gentleman performed oral sex on Cuban #1. Cuban #1 did not perform oral sex on him. Cuban #1 indicated this experience being the first time he ejaculated in front of another man. Cuban #1 acknowledged having a pleasurable experience, but he felt like "he was going to die." Once he returned to the table, his mother asked him if he was okay because he looked pale. However, Cuban #2 declared having his first gay sexual experience during his transition when he started college, which it happened with another man from his hometown. The person was around approximately 25 years old. Cuban #2 acknowledged having foreplay with him. The sexual activity happened at his own house while his parents were upstairs. Cuban #2 described feeling nervous, but excited as it was the first time having sex with a man.

Guatemalan #1 declared having a beautiful experience with a handsome boy when he was 13 years old. The sexual activity happened with a friend from his neighborhood with whom he used to play baseball. Guatemalan #2 declared having his first gay sexual experience when he was eight years old with a neighbor who was 15 years old. His neighbor passed away. Guatemalan #2 declared that this experience was without his sexual consent because he was a child. However, Guatemalan #2 had a pleasurable experience when he was 20 years old, because it happened with a man that he had fallen in love.

Panamanian #1 indicated having his first sexual experience with a cousin when he was 18 years old. His cousin is eight years older than him and is not currently gay. The sexual activity happened back in Panama at his house when he needed to take a shower. Panamanian #1 declared feeling nervous at the time. However, Panamanian #2 indicated having his first sexual experience when he was in college. Panamanian #2 met the person at a gay chat. The person picked him up at his home. They did go out, and experimented as Panamanian was desperate to know about it. Panamanian #2 described the experience as interesting but unpleasant as he did not physically like him. Panamanian #2 only experienced oral sex and not anal sex.

Puerto Rican #1 indicated having his first gay sexual experience when he was four or five years old. The sexual activity happened with a 13 or 14 years old adolescent, who was gay and already passed away. Puerto Rican #1 described the experience as sexual abuse. Puerto Rican #1 acknowledged allowing him to seduce him, even though he was a little child. Furthermore, Puerto Rican #1 declared he still wonders if he finished being gay because of this first sexual experience. On the other hand, Puerto Rican #2 also acknowledged his first gay sexual experience through sexual abuse. In this case, Puerto Rican #2 declared his experience at the age of five with his uncle who made him touch his penis. Additionally, Puerto Rican #2 indicated

that his uncle kissed him once. Then, he suffered sexual abuse from his volleyball coach who started at the age of nine and lasted until the age of 17. Puerto Rican #2 stated: "I felt guilty the first time the coach did it to me. If I would tell my mother, she would have punished me, and she won't have believe me. Also, I used to think that man to man is bad. Who is going to believe me? Now, I do understand why so many children do not speak up, because they feel guilty." On the other hand, Puerto Rican #2 also declared his first time with his sexual consent at the age of 19 at a public restroom. A gentleman stood up next to him and started to masturbate. Puerto Rican #2 was looking at him and then the gentleman touched him. Puerto Rican #2 described the experience as exciting, but scary as he had not done it before.

9. How did internalized homophobia affect your behavior during your adolescence?

How is it affecting you now?

Colombian #1 stated that people with mannerisms suffer 100% through their adolescence stage and receive rejection from society. In his case, Colombian #1 did not behave with mannerisms. He even entered into the military service. Colombian #1 declared having a difficult time during the military service because he used to hear and see people masturbating. Besides, he needed to shower in front of naked men, which led him to repress more his gay sexual orientation. Colombian #1 declared being bullied only one time during his military service.

Colombian #2 stated feeling bad sometimes as he was living a double life. Colombian #2 felt social pressure, and he needed to approach women in order to be accepted by his friends.

Cuban #1 stated not having difficulties during his adolescence stage and experiencing a natural transition in terms of his gay sexual orientation. However, Cuban #1 described his childhood as being the only child. Therefore, he grew up by himself, in his bedroom, space, and world. Cuban #1 described his mother behavior as being extremely over protective because she

did not allow him to play outside or bring friends at the house. Cuban #1 was only allowed to play inside the house by himself.

Cuban #2 declared repressing his behavior and having a girlfriend during his adolescence stage. Cuban #2 described his behavior as straight during his adolescence in Cuba, during his 11th, 12th, and 13th grades and while preparing for college and staying in a residence during high school. Cuban #2 acknowledged starting to be curious, and looking at people naked when he was taking a shower. Cuban #2 had a girlfriend, but he also liked to play with boys at the time. Cuban #2 indicated as being well known as bisexual.

Guatemalan #1 expressed falling in love to a young woman at the age of 15 years. Besides, he mentioned having a total of three women that he felt attracted between the ages of 15 to 19 years. Guatemalan #1 felt attracted to women because of their personality, beauty, intelligence, and their behavior. Guatemalan #1 declared not having intimacy with any of them.

Guatemalan #2 indicated having girlfriends during his adolescence stage. Besides, Guatemalan #2 declared that he almost got marry because he wanted to have a family. Besides, Guatemalan #2 declared feeling confused at the time.

Panamanian #1 declared feeling safe and confident during his adolescence stage. Nevertheless, Panamanian #1 acknowledged having a difficult time when his parents learn about his sexual orientation.

Panamanian #2 indicated being a very insecure person. Panamanian #2 felt bad continually during social outings or in public because he felt as being targeted and bullied. Panamanian #2 declared feeling depressed and experiencing suicidal thoughts during his adolescence stage.

Puerto Rican #1 declared feeling bad as he always lived in repression. Besides, he declared behaving mature for his age at the time and getting compliments from other adults.

Puerto Rican #2 indicated portraying a presumptuous personality to other people in high school. However, Puerto Rican #2 acknowledged being an insecure man and having difficulties to socialize with others, which led him to be socially distant. At the time, Puerto Rican #2 only socialized with people from the volleyball team.

All participants declared not having current issues with internalized homophobia affecting their behavior, except Puerto Rican #1. Presently, it does still affect him when he reflects about it. He declared that this is because of his repression, for which he married at the time, lied to his wife, and had two boys with her. Puerto Rican #1 declared that his homosexuality affected her as well as his children. Furthermore, Puerto Rican #1 believes that he committed a big mistake because of his behaviors.

10. How did internalized homophobia affect your emotions during your adolescence?

How is it affecting you now?

Colombian #1 mentioned that many gangs were present in his local community. Colombian #1 described the environment in high school like being in prison. Gangs used to bully weak people. He needed to belong to a gang in order to survive and “pretend to be a bad person.” Colombian #1 needed to be strong in order to survive these groups (gangs). Besides, Colombian #1 said that they challenged him with activities such as stealing in public places (restaurants and liquor stores). Currently, Colombian #1 declared feeling protected, clear, and living peacefully in the United States.

Colombian #2 reported being emotionally affected as evidenced by feeling lonely and unable to live a life that he wanted to. Colombian #2 did not know if he would be happier as being

straight or gay. Presently, Colombian #2 said that he does not feel a sense of belongingness to the gay or straight community. Besides, he reported having little tolerance to living with another man. Currently, he does not feel that he would be able to experience a relationship with a man.

Cuban #1 claimed spending considerable time by himself as a child and feeling lonely sometimes. However, he described his behavior as a child as being creative. Cuban #1 created a fantasy world where he was able to have imaginary friends, do journals, play, and sing. Cuban #1 does not remember it as something negative or painful.

Cuban #2 stated that he did not feel depressed and to be always busy with his family.

Guatemalan #1 said he was unable to show his true personality, for which he hid his thoughts from others.

Guatemalan #2 mentioned this affected him as he wanted to have a family, but it did not happen. Guatemalan #2 compared the perspective of the gay and straight lifestyle. At the time, Guatemalan #2 was able to understand that there were two different perspectives/lifestyles. Guatemalan #2 said that “things do not happen in the way you plan, they happen in the way they come along.” Presently, Guatemalan #2 claimed this is still affecting him as he wanted to have a family. He would love to be a father, but he cannot because he is sterile as result of an accident. The accident caused him to be in a depression for almost a year. However, Guatemalan #2 has considered adoption, especially because he is currently in a relationship.

Panamanian #1 reported his personality as being “an emotional person just like any human being.” Panamanian #1 does not think that realizing his gay identity affected him. Panamanian #1 declared to experience moments in which he felt different, sad, and had thoughts of being unaccepted by his family and society. However, he was able to manage it.

Panamanian #2 claimed suffering depression during his adolescence stage. He described as experiencing trauma from being bullied at school, as well as being unable to focus and having racing thoughts. Panamanian #2 attended treatment around the age of 15 with a psychologist to help him with his mental illness, but it did not work. He clarified that the therapy was more for his parents than for him. The psychologist indicated that he was different, but his parents did not have the mentality to accept it at the time.

Puerto Rican #1 stated feeling repressed and being unable to be himself, which led to affect his feelings and self-esteem.

Puerto Rican #2 explained his emotions from a sexual perspective. He indicated having a girlfriend at the time, but not having sex with her. Puerto Rican #2 does not know if this was a result of his sexual abuse. Besides, Puerto Rican #2 felt behind in his psychosocial development as peers were growing faster than him. Presently, Puerto Rican #2 described himself as an insecure person. However, he expressed his emotions as feeling confident and being calm person. Moreover, he wondered in what it would happen if he were not sexually abused. He wondered if he, maybe, would be bisexual and married with children.

Most participants declared not having current issues with internalized homophobia affecting their emotions, except Colombian #2 and Guatemalan #2. Colombian #2 continues to struggle with emotions of internalized homophobia and Guatemalan #2 wanted to have a family.

11. Who do you speak about the first time about being or feeling gay?

Responses to this questions are compiled in Table 21.

Table 21

Responses to question: Who do you speak about the first time about being or feeling gay?

Participant	Person they spoke for the first time about being or feeling gay
1. Colombian #1	Straight friend
2. Colombian #2	Female coworker
3. Cuban #1	Female neighbor (She was like a mother-figure for him)
4. Cuban #2	A man he had sex
5. Guatemalan #1	Puerto Rican gay male friend
6. Guatemalan #2	Gay male friend
7. Panamanian #1	To a psychologist
8. Panamanian #2	A man he had oral sex for the first time in his life.
9. Puerto Rican #1	To his homosexual partner
10. Puerto Rican #2	To a male sexual friend

Colombian #1 reported disclosing for the first time his gay sexual orientation to a straight friend. She took him for the first time to a gay club. Additionally, she introduced him to her cousin who was gay as well, which led it to a short romance that lasted for a year. On the other hand, Colombian #2 claimed speaking for the first time to a female coworker. She confronted him for his gay sexual orientation because he was a married man and was untruthful to his sexual orientation. Eventually, Colombian #2 disclosed his gay sexual orientation to his sisters.

Cuban #1 claimed speaking to his neighbor prior to talking to his mother. His neighbor was like a mother figure for him. As a child, she was caring and nurturing to him. However, Cuban #2 reported speaking for the first time about his sexual orientation to a man that he had sex. The man was between 35 to 38 years old. At the time, Cuban #2 was 18 years old. They used to care for each other. Cuban #2 declared not falling in love, but feeling mutual support.

Guatemalan #1 declared speaking for the first time with a gay Puerto Rican male friend. Similarly, Guatemalan #2 spoke to a gay male friend who encouraged him to come out.

Panamanian #1 disclosed for the first time his gay sexual orientation to a psychologist. Panamanian #1 attended family therapy with his parents around the age of 20 or 21 years. The idea of the therapy session was to help his parents to understand his situation because Panamanian #1 felt confident in regards to his sexual orientation. On the other hand, Panamanian #2 declared disclosing his sexual orientation to a man that he experienced oral sex for the first time in his life. Subsequently, Panamanian #2 spoke to his oldest sister. Panamanian #2 is the youngest of three children.

Puerto Rican #1 declared disclosing for the first time his gay sexual orientation to his homosexual partner. Besides, Puerto Rican #1 indicated speaking to his mother about his gay sexual orientation around the age of 20 to 21. Nonetheless, Puerto Rican #1 blamed his mother for her lack of protection during his sexual abuse as a child. On the other hand, Puerto Rican #2 indicated speaking to a male friend about his sexual orientation as well as about his sexual abuse. This friend was his sexual friend as well. His friend was a married man, and is currently divorced from his wife. Presently, they continue their friendship.

12. How did you handle and felt about your homosexuality with family and/or parents?

Colombian #1 claimed feeling repressed because he wanted to have support from his family. Colombian #1 moved alone to the United States. Once he acclimated, a niece moved with him to the United States. At the time, Colombian #1 felt obligated by his partner to disclose his gay sexual orientation. His niece immediately accepted him. At another time, Colombian #1 has a nephew who used to criticize and hurt gay people. His nephew visited him. Colombian #1 stated feeling obligated again by his partner to disclose his gay sexual orientation. One day, Colombian #1 went to the beach with his nephew and came out to him. Colombian #1 stated that his nephew could not understand how he had hurt so many gays when his loving and favorite

uncle was gay as well. His nephew accepted him and continues to have a loving uncle-nephew relationship.

Colombian #2 said that he thinks everybody knows in his family; however, they do not talk about it. He acknowledges that his mother knows about it because his sister has told her. Colombian #2 mentioned that she has met and accepted his gay friends; however, she does not accept the ones she thinks are his partners. Furthermore, Colombian #2 declared that his mother is very pleasant with his gay friends, and treats them well. Nonetheless, Colombian #2 has not disclosed his gay sexual orientation to his father, but he thinks he knows about it.

Cuban #1 said his mother had an internal battle as she did not want him to be gay. Cuban #1 described that she lay down at her bed and cry. Cuban #1 said to his mother that she could “stay on her bed and cry for the rest all her life because he was not going to change.” After all, Cuban #1 claimed that she accepted him. His mother has been supporting him regardless of his sexual orientation. Cuban #1 described this experience as a natural transition because he does not know how the rest of the family reacted to it. He never told them. His mother communicated his gay sexual orientation to the rest of the family.

Cuban #2 declared that his father passed away when he was nine years old. He was predominantly raised by his mother. Besides, he stated that he has never claimed to his mother the loss of his father. Cuban #2 had his first gay thoughts when he was five years old. Cuban #2 said he has two cousins who are gay from his father’s side of the family.

Guatemalan #1 declared that he has not told his family yet. However, they seem to be suspicious about it.

Guatemalan #2 came out to his siblings. They questioned him, and he confirmed it. On the other hand, Guatemalan #2 declared that he has not told his mother; however, he claimed that

he is psychologically preparing her. He stated that his mother “is not dumb, and she knows about it.” Furthermore, Guatemalan #2 acknowledged this fact should not be extraordinary for his mother, even though she is evangelical (religion).

Panamanian #1 stated this was difficult for his parents, for which he felt hurt. However, Panamanian #1 said that they are currently on an acceptance level. They do not talk about it, but they know about him. Furthermore, Panamanian #1 claimed that he had learned from the psychologist that he does not have “to show it in their faces, but he does not have to hide it.” His parents currently live in Panama. Panamanian #1 acknowledges having a better dynamic and communication as a family.

Panamanian #2 said that his family was not against homosexuality. However, they do have a problem when is a family member. Panamanian #2 claimed that his mother is a person who has the most difficult time when homosexuality raises in the family. Panamanian #2 indicated that he had spoken to his mother and she has met his boyfriend. They have a good relationship. Besides, Panamanian #2 indicated that his siblings and aunt know about his gay sexual orientation. They have been supportive to him. However, his father does not know about his gay sexual orientation.

Puerto Rican #1 stated he has spoken to his mother about three times in regards to his gay sexual orientation. Puerto Rican #1 acknowledges being accepted by his mother; however, she has a difficult time understanding it because of her strong religious beliefs. Puerto Rican #1 indicated showing his mother a movie that explains well the phenomenon of Christianity and homosexuality. Puerto Rican #1 expressed that his mother still does not understand.

Puerto Rican #2 declared breaking up with his fiancé three months before his wedding date. He got separated from his fiancé at the age of 30 years. Puerto Rican #2 said that his

mother questioned him in why he has left his fiancé. Puerto Rican #2 did not give her the right answer until one day his mother confronted him declaring that she knew that he was gay. They both cried and talked about it. Puerto Rican #2 claimed that his father discovered it when he has had boyfriends. His father has not told him directly; however, through his brother, his father has disclosed his acceptance. They currently have a better child-father relationship.

13. How did you handle and felt about your homosexuality with school and friends?

Colombian #1 described handling his homosexuality with school and friends as pretty normal. Colombian #1 indicated not being bully as he always had girlfriends. Furthermore, Colombian #1 had feelings toward his girlfriends at the time. During this adolescence stage, Colombian #1 started to question his sexual orientation. He decided to write about the reasons for which to prefer women or men. Colombian #1 acknowledged that he finished completing only two columns for women and a whole page for men. Therefore, he decided to be with men.

Colombian #2 said that he participated in most high school activities in which men participated as well. He did it in order to feel accepted and avoid discrimination. Colombian #2 indicated that at times, they noticed and say things about his gay behavior. However, Colombian #2 indicated that he earned their respect and could behave at their level of acceptance. Besides, Colombian #2 declared that he was able to hide his homosexuality as he was able to perform well in sports, even though peers were doubtful about him. Colombian #2 claimed that most of the time, gay people do not like sports. It is a small percentage of gay people who like sports. According to him, gays are more inclined to movies, arts, and show business. He claimed to like all of that as well. However, he gradually started to like sports. He did it to disguise his homosexuality.

Cuban #1 reported that it was a natural transition for him as he did not experience rejection for being gay. Cuban #1 described his situation as behaving like a normal guy. Nevertheless, he declared that if he would behaved more feminine, the story would have been different because of the stereotypes in his local society.

Cuban #2 claimed managing well the situation. Cuban #2 stated growing up with the same group for most of his childhood until he arrived high school. He claimed not thinking about it when he was younger. Cuban #2 was able to meet and socialize with people from other towns when he arrived to high school.

Guatemalan #1 declared having friends who respected him during the last year he lived in Guatemala. Guatemalan #1 acknowledged that religion was helpful and a supporting for him. At the time, he converted to the Mormon Church where he learned much about not to be afraid. Additionally, he stated not thinking much about homosexuality at the time and enjoining more religion.

Guatemalan #2 described as behaving normal like the other adolescents to avoid being bullied. Guatemalan #2 described normal as being happy, active, and dynamic.

Panamanian #1 declared having a difficult time when he attended high school in his country Panamá. He claimed his friends bullied him because he used to socialize most of the time with girls. Panamanian #1 described it as “letting it go,” as he is not the type of person who likes conflict. He acknowledged being bullied many times, but he was able to manage it.

Panamanian #2 claimed his adolescence stage being the most difficult of his entire life thus far. He wishes that he can completely “delete it.” He described it as still having internal trauma from which he has healed. Panamanian #2 described as being targeted and bullied in his classroom when he was in high school. Besides, Panamanian #2 declared that the most

disappointing situation was when teachers agreed to it when they should have been better role models. Panamanian #2 claimed their mentality as *machista*. Panamanian #2 said a teacher asked him once if he wanted to change his sex. His teacher asked him when he was in elementary school. He replied no because he was a boy, and he did not want to change his gender. He described having friends who did not support him; however, they used to love him before. Panamanian #2 declared feeling disappointed and suffering a major depression when arrived to high school. Panamanian #2 felt lack of support and feeling bullied during this period. At the time, he did not want to go to college as he did not want to experience the same. Panamanian #2 disclosed being suicidal three times during this time, and having a plan such as shooting himself with a gun or jumping out of the bridge. Panamanian #2 declared having the plan, but not the intention. Panamanian #2 declared wanting to stop suffering in his life.

Puerto Rican #1 stated having a good time during his elementary school as he had his circle of friends. However, he indicated repressing himself and becoming more introspect when he entered into the adolescence stage.

Puerto Rican #2 declared having a long hair during his school years. He said some of his friends used to bother him for that and used to call him blonde. Besides, Puerto Rican #2 claimed they did not bother him much as he did not talk much to other people.

14. How do you address machismo and/or comments toward gay people/being gay?

Colombian #1 said in Colombia people utter denigrating comments toward gay people every day, especially to people with mannerisms. Colombian #1 declared that he avoided it for the most part. Colombian #1 indicated that he did not have confrontations for being questioned about his homosexuality. However, it has happened at his work here in the United States, and he has been able to communicate and defend himself. At the other hand, Colombian #2

acknowledged feeling sorry and embarrassed about it. He described that machismo still hurts, and sometimes he gets frustrated when people make comments or talk about his homosexual orientation. Furthermore, Colombian #2 said that he has not learned how to handle machismo.

Cuban #1 reported not having a big problem about it. However, he does remember an incident at the university cafeteria. Cuban #1 belonged to the performing art school, and they all gathered at the cafeteria. He remembered once when someone said that everybody from drama was fag (maricón). They had a food war that ended in chaos. Besides, he claimed being surrounded by people who had a more open minded attitude. Cuban #1 said that Havana is a city where more people have open-minded attitudes. However, the mentality in the countryside of Cuba is more closed minded. Therefore, he thinks that this was in his favor. Nonetheless, Cuban #2 was from the countryside. Cuban #2 claimed that he needed to remain in silence and “go with the flow.” Otherwise, he could have been hurt as he witnessed other gay people to experience. As a child, Cuban #2 described that speaking about being gay was denigrating. Presently, Cuban #2 mentioned that circumstances have changed and Cubans are more open-minded as well as understanding that being gay is not negative. Furthermore, Cuban #2 thinks that the Mariel and social oppression contributed to this as many people, even talented people, has left Cuba because of being gay.

Guatemalan #1 announced managing these issues as remaining quiet and responding to others in a smart way. On the other hand, Guatemalan #2 handled it by defending himself. He reported having coworkers who were homophobic, and who targeted and bullied him. His defense mechanism was to treat those bad, and rejecting and ignoring them.

Panamanian #1 affirmed being hurt when he heard about it. For instance, he mentioned watching television once with his family. A family member made a comment against gays when

they did not know about his sexual orientation. On the other hand, Panamanian #2 described it as a cruel and rude situation. He described them as being narrow-minded and ignorant. Panamanian #2 felt bad just listening to them. Besides, Panamanian #2 described these comments as derogatory comments such as the comments made by his classmates during his high school.

Puerto Rican #1 described it as a challenging situation. He reported remaining always quite because he was not able to take part of it. Currently, he continues to remain in silence because he does not vent to others his gay lifestyle. Puerto Rican #1 described it as living the gay life at his house. He does not reveal his gay sexual orientation at work. He does not know if they have noticed it, but he does not “voice it out.” However, Puerto Rican #2 described as continuing the silence as well. Presently, Puerto Rican #2 stated that if someone says something about it, he talks back to them. As an adolescent back in high school, he used to remain silent and felt afraid by walking the hallways at school.

15. How do you manage your homosexuality with church and/or religion?

Colombian #1 claimed to be a Catholic since he was born as well as an altar boy. Later, he decided to practice Christianity because an incident at the Catholic Church. Colombian #1 declared a priest and a monk tried to abuse him sexually. These were two different incidents. Colombian #1 declared the priest forcefully kissed him, but he was able to run away. The priest followed him to his home. The priest said to his mother that he disrespected him. Colombian #1 stated that he grabbed a knife on his defense. The mother believed the priest’s side of the story and he got punished for his disrespect toward the priest. On the other hand, Colombian #2 stated that when religious people talk about gay people, he responds to God that he did not select to born gay. He claimed to be gay since he was born because it was God’s will. Besides, he said

that he would not be born gay if God did not want him gay. Therefore, he does not think being gay is a sin.

Cuban #1 declared never been religious or devoted to any religion. Cuban #1 grew up in the Catholic Church from his father side of the family. However, he practices the Yoruba religion from his mother's side. Cuban #2 said he attended church until the age of 12 years. He manages it well. At the time, he did not think that being gay was wrong. Cuban #2 started to notice the situation about religion and being gay once he became an adult.

Guatemalan #1 stated that he manages his homosexuality with church/religion by hiding it. However, Guatemalan #2 claimed not believing in images, and only believing in God as a higher power. He does not believe in vain artifacts from religions.

Panamanian #1 described as something normal. He did not go much to the church when he was living in Panama. He voluntarily attended the Catholic Church at the age of 17 years. He was part of the church choir. Currently, he is actively involved at church. Panamanian #2 was Catholic as well. However, he declared feeling brainwashed. Besides, he felt that God would punish him and find him disgraceful for being gay. Panamanian #2 stated having a new experience and way of thinking once he moved to the United States in 2004. He was able to come to peace with God and knew that he loves him for "just the way he is."

Puerto Rican #1 declared repressing his gay inclinations and behaving the way society wanted him to behave during the period he was part of the church. However, Puerto Rican #2 claimed being Catholic, but not attending church at the time. Puerto Rican #2 said feeling the love of God and being accepted for the way he is; even though some Catholics do not accept gays. Puerto Rican #2 stated that he knows God is listening to him.

a. Are you still practicing the religion instilled in you by your parents?

Responses to this question are compiled in Table 22.

Table 22

Responses to question: Are you still practicing the religion instilled in you by your parents?

Participant	Yes or No	Comments
1. Colombian #1	No	He indicated believing in God, the Virgin Mary, and all the saints. He prays daily, speaks to God, asks for forgiveness, and is thankful for everything that he has given him
2. Colombian #2	Yes	Currently, he continues attending the Catholic Church and receives the Holy Communion.
3. Cuban #1	No	He claimed to be an atheist. He is interested in religion from an educational perspective.
4. Cuban #2	No	He goes to the Catholic Church, but not as often as he used to go when he was a child
5. Guatemalan #1	No	No comments
6. Guatemalan #2	No	No comments
7. Panamanian #1	Yes	He is actively involved in the Catholic Church.
8. Panamanian #2	No	He has not attended a Catholic mass in a long time.
9. Puerto Rican #1	No	He does not attend any church because he cannot be his true self. Furthermore, he said: "why bother to go to church to hide myself...that's ridiculous." He tries to live a life connected to God, such as doing things well and always meditating.
10. Puerto Rican #2	Neither one	He continues practicing his Catholicism, but he does not go to church. He prays at home and practices his spiritual beliefs.

16. How has your homosexuality affected your relationship with God?

Responses to this question are compiled in Table 23.

Table 23

Responses to question: How was your homosexuality affected your relationship with God?

Participant	Affected Yes or No	Comments
1. Colombian #1	Yes	“The Bible states that it is not on his command for a man to be with another man.” He has told God when he is fully in tears that he will remain single if it is God’s decision. Nonetheless, he is hurting no one as being gay, and he wants to have a man. He believes that he continues to be a good Christian.
2. Colombian #2	No	He has asked for forgiveness for being gay. Moreover, he has asked God to change him if it is wrong to be gay. Presently, he does not feel guilty about being gay, and he does not think that being gay is a sin.
3. Cuban #1	Neither	He declared never having a close relationship with God.
4. Cuban #2	No	He does not think being punished for being gay. He does not question his gay identity as well as he does not reproach or judge his sexual orientation.
5. Guatemalan #1	No	He does not think his relationship with God has been affected as he has had many responses from him. He understands that in the Bible scripts and other books states that being homosexual in an abomination. However, he is not practicing any religion at this moment. He speaks to God when he is surrounded by Mother Nature.
6. Guatemalan #2	No	He declares that homosexuality comes from many centuries ago, and it is not something from now or 40years ago. He prays to God from all things, forgiveness and to give him life every day.

Table 23 (cont.)

Responses to question: How was your homosexuality affected your relationship with God?

Participant	Affected Yes or No	Comments
7. Panamanian #1	No	It was different at the beginning when he started to attend church in the United States, but he was accepted. He said the priests have been open-minded to him. Currently, he does not say openly that he is gay. He thinks that people around him are smart, and they know about it as he is the one in charge of church's decoration, protocols, and special events.
8. Panamanian #2	No	He denies any current problem. However, it affected him in the past. He used to think that he was not a good person and that he was a sinner.
9. Puerto Rican #1	Both	He declared not feeling neglected by God. Even though, he has done things that are bad. Besides, he thinks that going to nightclubs, drinking, and smoking has been the only negative thing in his homosexual pathway and his relationship with God; besides or not having control by having sex with other people. He acknowledges God as his higher power, his savior, and father. He does not hurt others, and he does his best to do things well with his children and people around him.
10. Puerto Rican #2	No	He has felt protected by God and the Virgin Mary since he was a child. He does not think God is shameful of him.

17. Presently, from a general viewpoint, what is your perspective about religion?

Colombian #1 declared that there is only one religion and one God. He knows about many congregations, which is okay. Besides, Colombian #1 indicated that there is much inequality in church and people are not trustworthy. He does not understand the reasons for people suffering hunger when churches have money. Furthermore, he claimed that the church

helps the community, but minimally. On the other hand, Colombian #2 reported not having any personal problem or conflict with the Catholic Church. Besides, he thinks all religions handle themselves as the way they should and have decided to do so.

Cuban #1 indicated that everybody should believe in something, and it does not matter if they are heterosexual or homosexual. Cuban #1 referred to people to be faithful and believe in themselves. Furthermore, Cuban #1 indicated that human beings should live within a faith. However, he stated that religions in general create stereotypes that must be followed to be considered as part of the congregation. As a result, he indicated that religions have a barrier against homosexuals. On the other hand, Cuban #2 stated that the religion should be practiced, but not to judge others like some religions do. They outcast at others in what is right or wrong. Some religions impose that everybody should think the same way. Everybody has and practice the same religious beliefs. Besides, Cuban #2 stated that Cubans have Catholics, Christians, and Santeros. They have their way of thinking and they should not be hurting themselves.

Guatemalan #1 claimed that religions are just a disciplined mode to adore God. However, Guatemalan #2 stated “honestly and respectfully” that they are dumb. They are all looking for God from different paths. He declared being against conflict and rejection between religions when they are looking for the same God.

Panamanian #1 declared that some religions are a little bit different, but they all are seeking to adore the same God. Nonetheless, Panamanian #2 indicated feeling comfortable with the current pope from the Catholic Church. He said that Pope Francis is thinking about homosexuals, and for the first-time society is listening to a positive change. Besides, he claimed that religions should be more flexible.

Puerto Rican #1 said that the religion does not save people. The only factor that saves people is how well they behave and stay connected to God. Besides, he indicated that each country and culture has its religion. Puerto Rican #1 acknowledged having this debate often with his family. Furthermore, he said that religions criticize each other, which he considered these actions to be behaviors of fanatics or ignorant mentality. Nevertheless, Puerto Rican #2 declared that God is his higher power; however, religions have become businesses. As a result, this is one of his motivations for Puerto Rican #2 to avoid church. He thinks that what matters for him is “to be in good terms” with God.

Main Research Question #3: *In which ways the internalized homophobia has affected their mental health status?*

18. How you were able to determine a resolution in regards to internalize homophobia?

Colombian #1 said he ran away out of Colombia. At the time, Colombia had a considerable levels of homophobia when he exiled. Colombian #1 stated that he immigrated to the United States to be able to find his self and satisfy his needs. Colombian #2 said he came to a resolution accepting his internalized homophobia itself. However, he accepted that he has not fully accepted it. He continues to be affected by negative words, behaviors, or bullying comments.

Cuban #1 said that this was a normal transition for him, and it was not traumatic. Additionally, he felt in peace when he was able to reveal his gay sexual orientation to his mother. However, Cuban #2 indicated that he has always accepted his gay sexual orientation. However, Cuban #2 declared returning to the closet for the first two years when he moved to the United Sates. At the time, Cuban #2 did not feel comfortable to communicate it to the family members with whom he lived.

Guatemalan #1 said he read and did research in order to achieve a resolution and accept his homosexual sexual orientation. Previously to accepting it, Guatemalan #1 reported having a difficult time and repressing his feelings because myths and people's comments about faulty information, as well as stories. On the other hand, Guatemalan #2 claimed being 20 years old when he accepted it. Prior to his twenties, Guatemalan #2 rejected his sexual orientation and hid it by having relationships with women. He declared having an emotional and sexual relationship with his girlfriends at the time.

Panamanian #1 said achieving a resolution when he spoke with his parents. That made him felt calmed. On the other hand, Panamanian #2 said achieving a resolution by receiving warm affection and support from his friends and new family in the United States. He was able to get a support from a friend in Panamá. However, his support was limited. Panamanian #2 claimed this situation motivated him to move to the United States. He wanted to have a better quality of life such as financial, emotional, psychological, and spiritual.

Puerto Rican #1 claimed coming out of the closet at the age of 28 years. At that time, he declared having an uncontrollable and wild behavior. Puerto Rican #1 repressed his feelings for so many years that he did everything that he engaged in reckless behaviors that he did not experience at an early age. He disclosed his gay sexual orientation to his mother, children, and close family members. However, Puerto Rican #2 declared arriving to a resolution about his gay sexual orientation by the year of 2013. He acknowledged that the most difficult situation for him was to go to work and remain silenced. He described it as living a double life at the time. He said that his boss and coworkers adored him. He thought that they would hate him or think something different about him.

19. What is your current mental health state in regards to being gay?

Responses to these questions are compiled in Table 24.

Table 24

Responses to question: What is your current mental health in regards to being gay?

Participant	Current mental health state in regards of being Gay
Colombian #1	Feeling completely happy.
Colombian #2	Feeling good. However, he declared feeling frustrated at times because he has not accomplished full acceptance of his gay sexual orientation.
Cuban #1	Excellent! Additionally, he stated that he is at a certain point in his life where he feels fully stable.
Cuban #2	Feeling normal and good. He described as having a life that he wanted since he became gay. He wanted to have a partner, his house, and gay and straights friends. He feels accepted at work.
Guatemalan #1	Being a positive person in regards to his homosexual life
Guatemalan #2	He is doing well and feeling good from a psychological perspective. Besides, from an emotional perspective, he described that he would like to have a child.
Panamanian #1	Being happy and feeling proud about it. He stated that he has been in a relationship for four years with a Cuban-American.
Panamanian #2	Feeling comfortable and at ease.
Puerto Rican #1	Feeling good because he can be his true self and being finally able to live his life.
Puerto Rican #2	Described as living the best time of his entire life thus far.

a. Do you think that you have problems to manage it?

Responses to this question are compiled in Table 25.

Table 25

Responses to question: Do you think that you have problems to manage it?

Participant	Yes or No	Comments
1. Colombian #1	No	No comments
2. Colombian #2	Yes	He acknowledges not having many gay friends. Besides, he does not like gay clubs or attending gay private gatherings. Colombian #2 is more inclined to have straight friends and attend straight clubs.
3. Cuban #1	No	No comments
4. Cuban #2	No	No comments
5. Guatemalan #1	No	He used to have them back in 2001.
6. Guatemalan #2	Unclear	He stated not having any problems and feeling emotionally and psychologically well. However, he declared that his only problem is not having a child, which he would like to resolve one day.
7. Panamanian #1	Unclear	He declared that he does not like to tell other people about his sexual orientation and prefer to remain conservative about it. Furthermore, he claimed that he disclose his sexual orientation only to people that he feels comfortable.
8. Panamanian #2	Yes	He referred to an incident with his Caucasian boyfriend, when his boyfriend requested a kiss at a restaurant. Panamanian #2 said no to his boyfriend and indicated that place was not appropriate for a kiss. Panamanian #2 described the place as a family restaurant. His boyfriend replied that they should not care about what others think about them.

Table 25 (cont.)

Responses to question: Do you think that you have problems to manage it?

Participant	Yes or No	Comments
10. Puerto Rican #1	Unclear	He declared not having issues in managing his sexual orientation. However, he expressed his perspective about society and homosexuality. He thinks that the society does not accept homosexuals because they are homosexuals. He thinks that homosexuals project a bad reputation toward society through certain behavior and way of living. Furthermore, he indicated that his homosexuality is what happens in the privacy of his bedroom.
11. Puerto Rican #2	Unclear	He used to get embarrassed hanging out with gay people. However, he does not care anymore since he disclosed his sexual orientation at work.

A strong contradiction in this report exists. According to the results, 10 out of 10 (100%) have a current healthy mental state in regards to their homosexuality. Most of them reported feeling good and happy about it. However, four out of 10 (40%) answered no problem to manage their internalized homophobia. An inconsistency exists between 100% who declared having a stable mental health in regards to being gay and the 60% who declared to continue having problems in managing their homosexuality.

20. If you experienced internalized homophobia, do you continue to have problems in dealing with internalized homophobia but to a lower intensity?

Responses to this question are compiled in Table 26.

Table 26

Responses to question: If you experienced internalized homophobia, do you continue...

Participant	Yes or No	Comments
1. Colombian #1	No	No comments
2. Colombian #2	Yes	He continues to have internalized homophobia but to a lower intensity.
3. Cuban #1	No	No comments
4. Cuban #2	No	No comments
5. Guatemalan #1	No	No comments
6. Guatemalan #2	No	No comments
7. Panamanian #1	Yes	It happens when people ask him if he is married or has a family. Furthermore, he declares that sometimes he wants to say to others that he is gay, but he does not do it. Moreover, he indicated that he wears a wedding ring and when people ask him if he is married, he replies that he is married to the church.
8. Panamanian #2	Yes	He behaves according to his environment. Besides, Panamanian #2 indicated that he was not as flamboyant as other people, and homosexuals should respect the heterosexual community. Moreover, he declares that is his perspective in America, which is different in Europe and Argentina, where people are more open about it.
9. Puerto Rican #1	Yes	He claimed not screaming out loud his homosexuality through his behavior.
10. Puerto Rican #2	Yes	Sometimes, he constrains himself to speak loud in certain places. At times, he request to his gay friends to lower their voice in public places because he does not want for other to listen when they talk about their gay topics.

This report explains some of the reasons for gay Hispanic/Latino men to continue experiencing internalized homophobia. Overall, these reasons are related to family or social related issues. Furthermore, it is related to personal issues as experiencing internalized homophobia but to a lower intensity. However, a contradiction in the answers by both Guatemalans exist. They stated not having problems in managing internalized homophobia while being unable to be fully open about their homosexuality, and continue grieving of being unable to have a child.

21. Have you started a new stage in your life once you accepted yourself as being gay?

Most the interviewees responded positively to this question. Some of the statements were feeling freedom, starting a new life when moved to the United States, enjoying life to the fullest, feeling accepted by their family and friends, being totally a new person, and having a complete changed in their life. Besides, the interviewees responded this has been manifested by being able to communicate and express themselves and feelings, live happy, no need to hide anymore, having a better support system, being respected by others, and having a better relationship with their family. The only participant with negative feelings was Puerto Rican #1, who declared experiencing a big change in his support system, especially from people who do not support his homosexuality. Puerto Rican #1 experienced a major loss in this change as his main support as growing up were people from church and family members that are religious. He declared that family is not the same with him anymore.

22. Do you think your values as a Hispanic gay man continues evolving?

Most participants declared that their values as Hispanic gay men continue evolving, with the exception of Puerto Rican #1 and Puerto Rican #2. Puerto Rican #2 claimed that he thinks his values are evolving; however, his answer was not a completely yes or no answer.

Consequently, he was not completely assertive. In addition, Puerto Rican #1 answered that he has not lost his values and because he is gay, and this does not mean that he will take advantage of others or sexually abuse children. It seems like the question was not clear for Puerto Rican #1 and his response did not fully correlate with the intended purpose of the question.

Then, it was requested for all participants to explain how their values as Hispanic gay man continue evolving. Colombian #1 said as being a consistent, faithful, and patience person. In addition, he claimed that sometimes things “do not get there overnight.” Furthermore, he stated that he inherited high and proper values from his family, which has helped him to survive in the United States. Colombian #2 indicated that he has grown more as a person, and it has had more possibilities to know more people and had an increased circle of friends.

Cuban #1 has experienced many changes, and it has been a learning experience. Cuban #1 claimed that he left Cuba when he was 24 years old. Cuban #1 moved to Mexico, D.F. and lived there for 10 years, which was a cultural shock for him. Cuban #1 declared that he hid his homosexuality as an adult while living in Mexico for those 10 years. Cuban #1 indicated that Mexico, D.F. is a more metropolitan city than Havana, Cuba, but more closed-minded as well as “machista.” He did not experience personal social rejection; however, he was able to witness it. Furthermore, Cuban #1 claimed that they have double morals. For instance, he was able to see men coming out of work (wearing their tie and jacket) and arriving at the gay club. Then, after having a sexual encounter, to put-back their jacket and tie and go back home where they have their children and a wife. After living in Mexico, Cuban #1 arrived at Tampa, Florida. He described as another change to a different culture and place. In this case, the changes and cultural experiences have helped Cuban #1 to have a different perspective about being gay. On the other hand, Cuban #2 claimed that people see a gay person as someone weak and incapable to do what

a heterosexual does. However, he declared that times have changed, and society has evolved, which has helped to be more accepting of men who are Hispanic and gay. Besides, Cuban #2 acknowledges that television and politics has helped because some of the public leaders are gay as well.

Guatemalan #1 claimed that he continues to approach and treat people with respect. Furthermore, to respect boundaries according to the way he is. Guatemalan #2 described as making people understand that they have to respect homosexuals as well as homosexuality is not contagious. In addition, he declared that we are all equal, it does not matter the color, gender, culture, religion, or mental capabilities.

Panamanian #1 described as it is new things to learn every day. Besides, he declared that he does not have family members in the United States. Therefore, he considers that all his life milestones as a story of success. On the other hand, Panamanian #2 claimed to be more proactive in society. He declared that he has a voice to homophobic people, such as being assertive toward them when they try to say offensive comments toward gay people. Panamanian #2 also acknowledged that he advocates human rights and justice. Besides, he declared that it does not matter the skin color or sexual orientation, “we all are the same, and we all should respect each other.”

Puerto Rican #1 declared that he does not cross with his children certain boundaries. He described that he did not sexually abuse children, hurt, or take advantage of others. He said that his children had lived with him, and he fully respects them. Besides, even though they are currently divorced, he works cooperatively with the mother of his children. In addition, he claimed that one of his children has Down syndrome. On the other hand, Puerto Rican #2 said his personality as being a patient, caring, and kind person with a good soul. Once he accepted his

homosexuality, Puerto Rican #2 has been more open-minded in certain areas that he could not be previously. He is now even more open to counsel or advise others, which it has led him to evolve in his values.

23. If you have the opportunity to be born again and select your sexual orientation, which one would you select and why?

Responses to this question are compiled in Table 27.

Table 27

Responses to question: If you have the opportunity to be born again...

Participant	If re-born, selection of sexual orientation	Reasons/Comments
Colombian #1	Gay, but heterosexual if he has children.	He thinks that old, alone, and no one will take care of him because he does not have children who will be there to protect and take care of him. However, he will select to be heterosexual if he has children and a family. It is believed in Colombia that children of gay parents will have the same tendencies when they grow up.
Colombian #2	Gay	He would like to be gay again because he has always been attracted to men, as well as their physical attributes. However, he will be a gay person who will accept better himself. He said that his straight life was isolated and frustrated. On the other hand, he acknowledges living the gay life more openly and freely. Besides, he has been living a gay life to a fullest compared to a straight one. If he is born again, he will be gay, be happy having a relationship and spending time with a man.
Cuban #1	Gay	Being gay has not been a problem, traumatic, or painful for him. He said that he was born this way. He was able to identify his sexual orientation at an early age in his life. He described as a normal development process. He did not feel the family or social rejection. Besides, he was able to meet people with his same sexual interest at an early age of his life at the school of performing arts.

Table 27 (cont.)

Responses to question: If you have the opportunity to be born again...

Participant	If re-born, selection of sexual orientation	Reasons/Comments
Cuban #2	Gay	He was born gay, and he did not select his sexual orientation. He said that the society has influenced him, such as his experience in having a girlfriend. In addition, he declared that some people say they would prefer to be born straight due to society. He mentioned to be faithful to his values. His values are one of the reasons that he decided to leave Cuba because he would not be able to have a gay life in Cuba.
Guatemalan #1	Heterosexual	The primary reason is that he would like to have a family. The second reason he stated was because gay life is "very, very, very tough." He mentioned being bullied as a child as well as an adolescent. Nevertheless, he declared trying to let go of all his traumas and his life progressing very slowly.
Guatemalan #2	Undecided/Not clear	He acknowledges not regretting who he is as a person nowadays, but he will change many things if he is born again. He admitted feeling good and relaxed as gay; however, he does not know if he would be married with children if he did not have his early man-to-man experiences. He believes that gay people are born gay. However, gay people are brought up in a heterosexual environment.
Panamanian #1	Gay	He had a straight relationship, and he did not like it. The relationship with a girl lasted for nine months after he came out to his parents. He had sex with her, and he did not like it.
Panamanian #2	The decision is up to God	He is happy in the way he is. He is open to being heterosexual, gay, or lesbian. Whatever happens, it is going to be his new life.
Puerto Rican #1	Heterosexual	In order to avoid "a lot of headaches."

Table 27 (cont.)

Responses to question: If you have the opportunity to be born again...

Participant	If re-born, selection of sexual orientation	Reasons/Comments
Puerto Rican #2	Gay	He would it answer to be straight and have a family a year ago (2012). Nowadays, he is the way he is as he has experienced and learned about his life. He will not change it for anything because we evolve in life as well as we evolves mentally through problems. Consequently, if he will be select to be gay again. He declared that he was in denial for a long time and avoiding it. He would it love to accept it earlier in his life.

Additional Comments about the Interview:

Colombian #2 declared that he would like to learn how to have a gay relationship, how to date a gay man, and in how to have a stable gay relationship. Colombian #2 said being doubtful on how to fully accept his sexual orientation, as well as to have a gay relationship and not be alone. He admitted feeling lonely.

Cuban #1 claimed that his mother was overprotective, and her obsessive behavior was not good for him. He acknowledged that he questioned her many times in regards to his sexual orientation. Presently, he is aware that it was not her fault. He recognizes that perhaps he would experience social rejection as homosexual if his mother would give him more freedom. He is aware that social rejection toward homosexuals happened and continues to happen in Cuba.

Cuban #2 stated that homosexuality has been affected by communism in Cuba. Cuban #2 acknowledged attending an assessment for military services at his second year of college around the age of 18 years. In Cuba, men do not go to the military service if they go to college. Men are evaluated by a psychologist as part of the assessment. The psychologist asked him about his

sexual orientation during the evaluation. At that point, Cuban #2 felt that he did not have to hide it anymore. Cubans have a document of identification (*carné de identidad*). Consequently, Cuban #2 declared being marked down as gay in his document of identification after he attended this evaluation with a psychologist. It was reflected in his part time job while attending college. Cuban #2 declared being rejected gradually until one day they fired him, even though he was responsible and productive as a worker. He said that it was not beneficial to be purely honest in Cuba about homosexuality.

Guatemalan #1 said that being gay in Guatemala is tougher compared to the gay life in the United States. Even though, Guatemalan #1 declared that nowadays gay life in Guatemala is easier. Presently, in Guatemala people has declared their homosexuality openly. He acknowledged knowing people who are gay, but appear to be straight, married, and with children. Guatemalan #1 stated this is a situation in which they are behaving according to society's expectations and low acceptance toward homosexuals. Furthermore, Guatemalan #1 stated being aware of young men who are gay prostitutes and having clubs for gay sexual encounters.

Panamanian #2 indicated that the interview covered the topic of religion, but it did not cover the topic of politics. Panamanian #2 said that politics in Latin America are cruel with human rights as well as gays, for he believed it would be important to expose this topic as well. Panamanian #2 indicated that President Obama has done a good job in the United States in support to the gay community. Panamanian #2 claimed that Obama is building a good foundation for future presidents in the United States, and that he is a role model to follow. Latin American countries follow the United States government even though they do not admit it. Besides, Panamanian #2 indicated that Latin America imitate many times what the United States does.

Panamanian #2 hopes that God will grant ideas to politicians in Latin America. It will be good for them to be more flexible toward the homosexual families in Latin America.

Puerto Rican #1 declared that it is difficult to formalize a gay circle and support group. He said that he did not know if it is because the gay mentality is different, or because he has not found the right people to do it. Besides, he said that he has not been able to find a gay circle, and be only friends without involving the sexual piece. He refers to have picnics and social gatherings. Puerto Rican #1 indicated if being gay is so much physical attraction, he is concerned in what is going to happen when he gets old, and he does not have his family around.

Puerto Rican #2 declared much racism exists toward Hispanics as well as for homosexuals in the United States. Puerto Rican #2 thought Puerto Rico was worse because of machismo, but it is worse in the United States. Furthermore, Puerto Rican #2 said that Puerto Rico has certain laws that the state of Florida does not have. For instance, gay couples getting married and living together.

Interpreting Findings

Main Research Question #1: *In which ways did the internalized homophobia of Hispanic/Latino gay men reared in their country of origin has affected their gay identity?*

Finding #1: Six out of 10 (60%) knew about being gay between the ages of five to seven and three out of 10 (30%) became aware of being gay between the ages of 10 to 12 years. The results showed that participants became aware of their gay sexual orientation between the “Industry vs. Inferiority” and “Identity vs. Confusion” psychosocial stages of Erik Erickson (Cherry, 2014). Industry vs. Inferiority is the stage where people become aware of social interaction such as their experience at school. In addition, during this stage children develop a sense of pride. Industry vs. Inferiority psychosocial stage occurs approximately age five to 11

years. On the other hand, Identity vs. Confusion psychosocial stage occurs during adolescence where children develop a sense of self and personal exploration as well as explore their interdependence. Only one person answered becoming aware of being gay at the age of 19 years. Prior to this, he was a victim of sexual abuse by his uncle and his volleyball coach. The incident could it affect his awareness of being gay at an early age. According to Weststrate and McLean (2010), nine out of 10 (90%) homosexuals became aware of their sexual orientation during childhood. Furthermore, they may feel different or strange because of their sexual orientation. The results reified that the development of a cognitive sexual orientation and sexual identity may occur at a different ages (Remafedi, 1987, as cited by Rosario et al., 1996). Remafedi found that among middle-class white males, the mean age of a male adolescent to be aware of their sexual attraction toward men is at the age of 11 years. According to the results of this study, the ages ranged from five to 12 years.

Finding #2: Six out of 10 (60%) rejected their gay sexual orientation. Consequently, a small group demonstrated that accepting homosexuality can happen among Hispanic homosexual men, as evidenced by Cubans, Guatemalan #2, and Panamanian #1. Guatemalan #2 accepted his gay sexual orientation; however, he did not have a support system until later on in his life. Panamanian #1 stated during his interview that he was assertive when he decided to come out to his parents. He attended family therapy with a psychologist that it helped him and his family to have a better transition. On the other hand, four out of 10 (40%) questioned at some point their sexual orientation (i.e., Cubans #1 and #2, Guatemalan #1, and Panamanian #2). Besides, Panamanian #2 indicated being in denial and questioned his sexual orientation. Cubans coincided in coming from the only country in which being gay happened as a smooth transition, or it did not present a major complication; however, they also questioned at some point their gay sexual

orientation. It seems like both Cubans had the support they needed at the time. Findings validated that homosexuals can have a difficult time assimilating or accepting their homosexuality (Weststrate & McLean, 2010). Furthermore, internalized homophobia has had a different perspective on various authors. However, most authors have indicated that negative attitudes toward homosexuality exist during their development (Shidlo, 1994). This validates the point presented by Ritter and Terndrup (2002) in regards to the phase of identity development and sexual minority identity formation chart or continuum (model presented in Table # 2 in Chapter 2) created by Atkinson et al. in 1979. “The minority identity development model for ethnic minorities captures the fluidity of the process and describes its phases in a clear and concise way (Atkinson et al., 1979, as cited by Barbosa, et al., 2010, p. 102).

Finding # 3: Nine out of 10 (90%) behave according to what society portrays to be a man. There is an exception with Cuban #1 which did not behave according to what society portrays to be a man. However, Cuban #1 claimed being not fully open about his homosexuality during the ten years that he lived in Mexico from the ages 24 to 34 years. This finding validates that homosexuals are forced by society to create a false heterosexual identity (Malyon, 1982). Moreover, it seems like this 90% experienced oppression and behaved according to what society portrays to be a man as a coping mechanism (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). These roots of internalized homophobia may come from the society expectation affecting their identity as a Hispanic homosexual man (Malyon, 1993). Therefore, in the coming out process, the gay person needs to overcome the obstacle of prejudice and internal and external homophobia (Thompson, 1996).

Finding #4: Five out of 10 (50%) played sports as an activity that the society portrays as a men’s activity. Colombian #2, Puerto Rican #1, and Puerto Rican #2 played a variety of

sports. Puerto Rican #2 played mainly volleyball as he was part of the volleyball league. Cuban #2 played baseball and soccer, and Guatemalan #1 play baseball.

Finding #5: Seven out of 10 (70%) had sex with women. One out of 10 (10%) tried to have sex with women, but was unsuccessful (i.e., Guatemalan #1). Two out of 10 (20%) did not have sex with women. Both Colombians and Puerto Ricans decided to have relationships with women as well as having sex with them. Furthermore, Guatemalan #2 had girlfriends and Panamanian #1 had one girlfriend. Guatemalan #2 indicated having sex with multiple women and almost married one of them, similarly to Puerto Rican #2. These results reified Malyon's (1982) perspective on the false heterosexual identity. According to Rosario et al. (1996), Hispanic homosexual men were raised to be heterosexual, which is expected for them to have this behavior and this percentage tends to be high. Furthermore, they could have or tried to have sex with women as part of their sexual orientations confusion, as well as their sexual identity.

Finding #6: Nine out of 10 (90%) exiled from their country of origin because of being gay. Only Cuban #1 indicated that he exiled out of Cuba to Mexico, where he lived in Mexico City for 10 years. There is a significant finding in this research. The finding validates Ritter and Terndrup (2002) perspective about how homosexuals start a new life when they immigrate to a foreign country or move to a new geographical area. Furthermore, they begin a new life story where it plays a significant role in their psychological, emotional, and behavioral perspectives (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002). In their country of origin, Hispanic homosexual men were afraid to interact in a social setting and avoided public places because their family and friends could discover their homosexual sexual orientation (Isay, 2009). On the other hand, Cuban #1 stated the gay lifestyle in Mexico was tougher than in Cuba, referring that machismo was higher as well as people living in the closet a double life. Cuban #1 statement validates Rodríguez's (1996)

perspective about how a man may be living his homosexuality as a silenced tolerance of a double life, and maintaining his job as a father or husband as long as he follows his expected cultural role.

Finding #7: Two out of 10 (20%) were positively affected in their identity development. Cuban #1 described as an organic process and Panamanian #1 claimed feeling confident and certain during his identity development. At the other hand, eight out of 10 (80%) were negatively affected in their identity development. Colombian #1, Colombian #2, Guatemalan #1, Guatemalan #2, and Panamanian #2 were emotionally affected, such as being bullied, feeling sad, and fearful. Colombian #2 claimed that he continued living with fear and frustrations because he has not fully accepted himself as gay. Panamanian #2 needed to behave in a certain way according to family expectations. He could not be flamboyant in front of his family. Cuban #2 was not able to disclose his sexual orientation to his family. Cuban #2 came out to his family when he moved to the United States. Puerto Rican #1 described his identity development as he has always lived a double life. Puerto Rican #2 during his adolescence stage was sexually abused, and he was afraid to speak up. According to these results, 100% of the interviewees with mannerisms during their childhood/adolescence stage were victims of bullying and experienced rejection from society. The result validates previous studies in the gay community, where they have reported a history of mental health problems (Byrd, 2011; Ritter & Terndrup, 2002; Rodríguez, 1996; Sandfort et al., 2007). Moreover, results reified that most homosexual minority migrant experienced sadness or depression apart from their concerns about their sexual orientation prior to migrating to the United States. Only some men sought for therapeutic help. This study recorded that only Colombian #1 and Panamanian #1 indicated that they have received mental health treatment.

Finding #8: Five out of 10 (50%) claimed having a double life while they were growing up. Both Colombians and Puerto Ricans were part of this result. Besides, Cuban #2 is part of it, and he described as “being in an acting role in theater.” There is a strong correlation between having a double life and behaving according to what society portrays to be a man. All of them were part of the statistic of people behaving accordingly to society expectations. The result validates where Hispanic/Latino gay man places importance to society and is often concern about “El qué dirán?” (What will they say about me?) (Tajon, 2009). Latino gay men may sacrifice their individual homosexual needs to avoid conflicts with their extended family (Caraballo-Dieiguez, 1989; Sue, 1987; Morales, 1990, as cited by Tajon, 2009).

Finding #9: Five out of 10 (50 %) were sexually abused. 1 out of 10 (10%) (Panamanian #2) was not sexually abused; however, his first gay sexual experience with a stranger was not entirely pleasurable. He has met a stranger at a gay chat. Colombia #1 was eight years old when he was multiple times sexually abused by a man who was 20 years older than him. Colombian #2 had multiple times none fully consensual sex with strangers. Guatemalan #2 was eight years old when he was sexually abused by a man who was seven years older than him. Puerto Rican #1 was four to five years old when he was sexually abused by a young man who was approximately 14 years old. Puerto Rican #2 was sexually abused by an uncle and his volleyball coach. The abuse happened for years. Colombian #1 and Puerto Rican #1 wondered if they are currently gay because their first sexual encounter occurred with a man as result of this abuse. Both Colombians and Puerto Ricans were sexually abused. One Guatemalan was sexually abused. Nonetheless, Cubans did not present a history of sexual abuse. According to these results, 100% of the interviewees who were sexually abused did not speak to their parents about their abuse because they would not believe them. A high percentage of gay men who have been sexually abused,

sexually molested, or have had early sexual experiences without their full consent exist (Gutiérrez, 1992; Rodriguez, 1996). As a result, they may carry shame and guilt. Furthermore, they may misinterpret their origin of their sexual orientation as well as misinterpreted (Gutiérrez, 1992). There is a high percentage of Latinos has been raised in a culture in which the sex topic was not discussed within their families (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2006). As a result, parents do not have the effective tools to communicate with their children about sex, as their children needed (Murphy-Erby et al., 2011).

Finding #10: Three out of 10 (30%) presented walking issues growing up. Guatemalan #1 claimed he wanted to walk like a man, but he could not do it. Panamanian #1 said that his mother questioned him about his way of walking. Panamanian #2 stated that people told him that he should correct his way of walking because he looked like a fag and like a girl. The finding validates Isay (2009) perspective, in which Western culture has firmly delimited the characteristics of a man and a woman's behavior. Therefore, when a man has certain features that a woman has, the man may be considered as feminine.

Finding #11: One out of 10 (10%) stated having thoughts if he born in the wrong body. Panamanian #2 said he had doubts if he born in the wrong body. Sometimes he felt like a girl/woman. He wanted to play with Barbie's, dress up like a girl, and wear makeup.

Main Research Question #2: *In which ways did the internalized homophobia affected the behavioral and emotional state during their rearing?*

Finding #1: Nine out of 10 (90%) declared not having current issues with internalized homophobia affecting their behavior, except Puerto Rican #1. Puerto Rican #1 claimed this is a result of his repression, for which he married at the time, lied to his wife, and had two boys with her. Puerto Rican #1 declared this affected her as well as his children. The situation with Puerto

Rican #1 validates Greene (1998) perspective, in which oppression in society may lead for an individual to experience high levels of stress. On the other hand, Isay (2009) viewpoint validates the 90% in this result. Isay explained a difference between being homosexual and having an identity as a homosexual man. From a biological standpoint, some research suggests that homosexual men are born this way. Men inclined with the homosexual orientation learn to be gay. They learn how to express their emotions toward another man, learn the gay culture, live as a minority, and within a society that has been developed for heterosexuals (Isay, 2009).

Finding #2: Eight out of 10 (80%) declared not having any current issues with internalized homophobia affecting their emotions, except Colombian #2 and Guatemalan #2. Colombian #2 continues struggling with feelings of internalized homophobia and Guatemalan #2 wanted to have a family. The finding reified Rosario et al. (1996) viewpoint, in which homosexual men become conscious of their homosexual identity in their adolescence stage, late twenties, or later. In this study, most of them accepted their homosexuality within their adolescence stage and their twenties.

Finding #3: Eight out of 10 (80%) used masturbation as a way to manage their sexuality during their childhood/adolescence stage. Both Guatemalans indicated using other methods to manage their sexuality. Guatemalan #1 claimed trying a few times to have sex with women, in this case with prostitutes. Guatemalan #2 declared looking at straight porn magazines.

Finding #4: Five out of 10 (50%) used to think of men/boys when they masturbated during their adolescence stage (Cuban #1, Guatemalan #1, Panamanian #1, Puerto Rican #1, and Puerto Rican #2). Isay (2009) claimed that, during the adolescence period, homosexual men tend to experience the first homoerotic fantasies, masturbation, or even sexual experiences with a person of their same gender. Three out of 10 (30%) used to think of women/girls (Cuban #2,

Panamanian #2, and Puerto Rican #2). Panamanian #2 declared still feeling confused during his adolescence stage. He tried to masturbate thinking about certain girls from school, but he could not achieve ejaculation. On the other hand, Puerto Rican #2 was the only one who claimed thinking in both genders when he masturbated. Two out of 10 (20%) did not think of anyone (i.e., Colombian #2 and Guatemalan #2). Colombian #1 indicated thinking about his last time when he masturbated. He did not indicate a particular gender.

Finding #5: Six out of 10 (60%) felt satisfied after masturbation (i.e., both Guatemalans, Panamanians, and Puerto Ricans). Besides, Puerto Rican #1 described as feeling relaxed after masturbation. However, 2 out of 10 (20%) felt guilty about it (i.e., Colombian #1 and Cuban #1). Two out of 10 (20%) declared not remembering how they felt at the time (i.e., Cuban #2 and Colombian #2). Nonetheless, Panamanian #2 and Puerto Rican #2 experienced a feeling in wanting to do it again. The results contradict Isay (2009) point of view in regards to feelings after masturbation. During the adolescence period, homosexual men tend to experience the first homoerotic fantasies, masturbation, or even sexual experiences with a person of their same gender. Depending on the moral and values of the person, they may feel and believe these experiences are immoral, evil, or sick. They tend to feel guilty and in sin after the act (Isay, 2009). According to the results of this study, only two out of 10 (20%) indicated feeling guilty after the act. Conversely, 60% reported feeling satisfaction.

Finding #6: Four out of 10 (40%) (i.e., Colombian #2, Guatemalan #2, and Puerto Ricans #1 and #2) had their first gay sexual experience between the ages of five to 11, which is the Industry vs. Inferiority Stage of Erik Erikson. Three out of the four (75%) were sexually abused. They all presented self-doubt at some point during their childhood or adolescence stage which has a correlation to the psychosocial theory of Erikson (Cherry, 2014). On the other hand,

six out of 10 (60%) had their first gay sexual experience during their adolescence stage, which is the Identity vs. Confusion Stage of Erikson.

Finding #7: Two out of 10 (20%) had their first gay sexual experience with a boy around their age. However, eight out of 10 (80%) had their first gay sexual experience with a man/young man six to 12 years older than them. Four out of eight (50%) had their first sexual experience with a person 10 years older than them. The 80% had their first gay sexual experience with a family member (uncle or cousin) and others with a stranger. Part of the 80% had their first sexual experience with a stranger that reified that some gay men use unhelpful strategies, such as casual sex to cope with their issues (Ridge et al., 2006).

Finding #8: Three out of 10 (80%) (i.e., Colombians #1 and #2, and Cuba#1) spoke to a straight friend for their first time about being or feeling gay. Two out of 10 (20%) (i.e., both Guatemalans) spoke to a gay friend (no sexual activity involved). Two out 10 (20%) (Puerto Ricans #1 and #2) spoke to a gay friend (sexual activity involved). Two out of 10 (20%) (i.e., Cuba #2 and Panamanian #2) spoke to a man they had sex. One out of 10 (10%) (i.e., Panamanian #1) spoke to a psychologist.

Finding #9: Seven out of 10 (70%) grew up without their biological father. Two out of seven (i.e., Cuban #2 and Puerto Rican #1) their father passed away during their childhood stage. Only three out of 10 (30%) were able to grow up with both parents (i.e., Panamanians #1 and #2 and Puerto Rican #2). According to Isay (2009), some fathers are distant during the upbringing childhood of the homosexual man. The role of male parents tended to be more as a provider. They tended to be distant from their children and were at times absent from home. Fathers of homosexual men tended to lack caring and loving behavior toward their children. Furthermore, Isay claimed that the father may withdraw noticing their son being too close, consequently

feeling uncomfortable. Most often parents notice their son is different since their childhood. Ritter and Terndrup (2002) indicated that a study by Kurtz found that homosexuals who are Cuban American, Puerto Rican, African American, and Anglo have been predisposed to “grown up without their father in the home, had been teased for effeminacy during childhood, were defensive about their masculinity, did not trust men, had been cheated on by boyfriends, and believed that long-term gay male relationships were problematic” (p. 262). The more internalized heterosexism and masculine influence by the society, the more difficult it is for the homosexual to have an identity formation of their homosexuality, as well as detrimental consequences for intimate relationships (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002).

Finding #10: Four out of 10 (40%) (i.e., Colombian #1, Cubans # and #2, and Puerto Rican #2) reported that their mothers have accepted their gay sexual orientation. Three out of 10 (30%) (i.e., Panamanians #1 and #2, and Puerto Rican #1) continue to be in the acceptance process. Three out of 10 (30%) (i.e., Colombian #2 and Guatemalans #1 and #2) have not officially disclosed to their mothers about their gay sexual orientation. The results and incongruence validates that family values may conflict with the LGBT identity (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010). According to Rodríguez (1996), as part of the family dynamic in the Latino culture, the *respeto* (respect) and being *bien educado* (well educated) are important components such as the need to respect authority figures within the family. Latinos have high expectations about family value acceptance and conventional religion (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010). Hence, that could create the incongruence between homosexuals and family, and tends to be a challenge for a positive family dynamics. However, the 40% validates that people establish strong and emotional bond with the need for safe and security (Bowlby 1969, 1973, 1980 as cited by Thompson, 1996). Moreover, Isay (2009) indicated that it is an essential component of the primary

attachment of any human being for a parent to be loving, nurturing, and caring. Therefore, during a child's development, this should create a sense of security, comfort, caring, and love, which affects self-esteem and well-being.

Finding #11: Seven out of 10 (70%) has not come out to their father. Only one out of 10 (10%) (i.e., Panamanian #1) came out to his father. Puerto Rican #2 claimed his father knows through his family members. Besides, the brother of Puerto Rican #2 has disclosed to him that his father accepts him as gay. Cuban #2 and Puerto Rican #1 does not count because their father passed away. The results validates that coming out of the closet and a man identifying himself as gay can be misled to be "*un mal educado*" (not well behaved) and to be disrespectful to the family (Rodríguez, 1996). Moreover, this situation put the family in a position of shame and looks at the Latino gay man as "*la verguenza de la familia*" (the shame of the family). When having a family member who is homosexual or lesbian animosity, blaming, or even familial disruption may occur (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002).

Finding #12: Eight out of 10 (80%) came out to a family member(s) (siblings, nieces, nephews or parent) after they exile out of their country. Family is crucial in the Latino culture, leading to a strong core values and transcending above other cultures (Barbosa et al., 2010). The results validate that Latinos/Hispanics may experience fear in their coming out process because of not wanting to hurt their family because of being homosexual (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010). Moreover, some people experience their coming out process through oppressed silence because of cultural or environment issues (Weststrate, & McLean, 2010).

Finding #13: Four out of 10 (40%) (i.e., Cuban #2, Guatemalan #1, and both Puerto Ricans #1 and #2) remained silence in addressing machismo and comments toward gay people/being gay. Three out of 10 (30%) (i.e., Panamanians #1 and #2, and Colombian #2) had a

hurtful experience. One out of 10 (10%) (i.e., Colombian #1) avoided it. One out of 10 (10%) (i.e., Guatemalan #2) defended himself, resulting into bullying. One out of 10 (10%) (i.e., Cuban #1) did not experience problems in regards to machismo. Cuban #1 claimed being surrounded by people who have a more open minded attitude. The concept of machismo along with homosexuality does not match well, which these results validate Rodríguez perspective. Rodríguez (1996) indicated machismo is a concept in the Latino culture that is a view as part of standards and norms of being masculine. Being a macho tends to create internalized homophobia as a consequence of listening and witnessing through many years of verbal, emotional, or physical violence at times. Some of the participants experienced emotional abuse. From a machismo perspective, the homosexuals are men who do not follow the norm. In addition, Rodríguez claimed that the ones who decide to break the image may experience mental health issues, such as anxiety or depression, which was the case of Panamanian #2.

Finding #14: Seven out of 10 (70%) claimed having an existing good family support as being gay. However, three out of 10 (30%) (i.e., Guatemalan #1, Panamanian #2, and Puerto Rican #1) declared not having a good family support because of their sexual orientation. The Latino culture tends to be more allocentric and collectivist. Latino culture “is collectivist and allocentric, because individuals tend to view themselves as members of larger social groups and give more importance to interpersonal relationships than do members of individualist cultures” (Kim et al., 1994; Mills & Clark, 1982, as cited by Zea et al., 2003, p. 284). According to Zea et al. (2003), the Latino culture emphasizes the family as well as the community. Identifying themselves as homosexuals is not a matter of how it may affect them as individuals; it is a matter of how it may affect the whole family; how other members of the family will feel about having a homosexual relative. Consequently, there is a positive result with the 70% that claimed having an

existing good family support as being gay. Their families have embraced their homosexual sexual orientation.

Finding #15: Eight out of 10 (80%) presented an existing good social support as being gay. However, two out of 10 (20%) (i.e., Colombian #2 and Puerto Rican #1) claimed not having a gay circle and social support group. When Rodríguez (1996) studied the gay identity development in the Latino culture, he found a high correlation between identity development and family relationships. The 80% in this finding reified Rodríguez's perspective. Rodríguez emphasized that the term "family" for Latino families included immediate and extended family members. Participating gay Latinos in the study were asked to define *familia*, and they stated that they could be women, men, gay, lesbian, transgender, or heterosexual. *Familia*, for a Latino gay, is a support group that can connect with people who share the same values. "People in the *familia* become a significant source of support, community affiliation, and affirmation of identity" (Rodríguez, 1996, p. 152).

Finding #16: Four out of 10 (60%) (i.e., Colombian #1, Guatemalan #1, Panamanian #2, and Puerto Rican #1) indicated having negative experiences with church. For instance, a priest attempted to sexually abuse Colombian #1. Concurrently, Puerto Rican #1 declared that his religion contributed to his repression toward his homosexuality. As a result, he married and had two children. According to previous studies, Christians and religions see homosexuality as a sinful choice, perversion, forbidden, unnatural, antifamily, and immoral, against the bible or as a mental illness (Ford, 2001; Gillis, 1998; Kranz & Cusic, 2005). On the other hand, five out of 10 (50%) did not present any significant issue in managing their homosexuality with church and religion. The results reified that some people reconsider to re-visit their church after reviewing their attitude toward homosexuality. Consequently, they decide to be part of the church or not;

nevertheless, with a different stance, clarity and feeling in peace with themselves (Rodríguez, 1996). In addition, only one out of 10 (10%) indicated never been a devoted person to any religion.

Finding #17: Seven out of 10 (70%) are not currently practicing the religion instilled by their parents. However, three out of 10 (30%) (i.e., Colombian #2, Panamanian #1, and Puerto Rican #2) continue practicing the religion instilled by their parents. Gay Christians tend to have two psychologically inconsistent thoughts or beliefs that tend to be mentally challenging, build anxiety, and take the individual to a negative mental state (Rodríguez, 2010). Barbosa et al. (2010) indicated that studies lack to understand how religiosity plays a central role in both identity and homophobic tendencies among the Latino community. According to Walton (2006), conservative values about Christianity, family, and sexuality have been taught in churches for centuries and have been integrated into society. It is significant to see how many lesbians and homosexuals expose to such ordeals and continue working hard to fit in a group where they are rejected, which is the case of Panamanian #1. Panamanian #1 declared being actively involved in the Catholic Church. However, he has been questioned in regards to his marital status as he wears a wedding ring with the purpose of the commitment to his Cuban partner; however, he answers to other church member that he is married to church. Puerto Rican #2 stated he does not often go to the Catholic Church. The situation with Puerto Rican #2 reified that Latino cultures have families that are not actively involved in their Christian or Catholic religion, but they live under the religious influence (Barbosa et al., 2010). Ritter and Terndrup (2002) indicated that homosexuals frequently have difficulty integrating their sexual orientation with their disapproving values and teachings of traditional religion.

Finding #18: Eight out of 10 (80%) claimed the Catholic Church being their religion practiced and instilled as a child/adolescent. The findings reified that Judeo-Christian is the most prominent religion practiced by Latino families (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010). However, one out of 10 (10%) (i.e., Guatemalan #2) participants responded a combination of Christian and Catholic, and one out of 10 (10%) (i.e., Puerto Rican #1) answered Protestant/Evangelical Church. In the Latino community, religion is a strong foundation for identity development. They reified that Christianity and Catholicism play significant roles as they critically influence the culture (Duarté-Vélez et al., 2010).

Finding #19: Nine out of 10 (90%) indicated that their homosexuality had not affected their relationship with God. Only, Cuban #1 was not part of the group. He claimed that never had a close relationship with God. The result validates the study by Walton. Walton (2006) studied gay men who have been able to achieved resolution about their identity as a gay Christian. In his study, he indicated God and church as different entities, but they overlap. Furthermore, it recognized the importance that differences exist between human imperfection and spiritual beliefs. On the other hand, Rodríguez (1996) indicated that it does not matter if the gay person visits a formal or informal church/synagogue, belong to a recovery program such as alcoholics anonymous, or is agnostic or atheist, most of them develop a strong relationship with their higher power. In addition, Rodríguez indicated that gay men focus in activities that promote peace and well-being. In addition, they can fulfill hope and comfort grief. The finding as well as this information explains the incongruence between 70% who are not currently practicing the religion instilled by their parents, and the 90% that declared that homosexuality had not affected their relationship with God.

Finding #20: Six out of 10 (60%) indicated that homosexuality has affected their relationship with God on some level. For instance, Colombians #1 and #2 and Guatemalan #2 have asked for forgiveness because of being gay. Guatemalan #1 said that Bible scripts state that being homosexual is an abomination. Panamanian #2 used to think that he was not a good person and that he was a sinner. Furthermore, even though Panamanian #1 is actively involved in church, he declared that he is not openly gay at his church. Acuña-Ruiz and Vargas (2006) validates the case for Panamanian #1. When a gay man goes through a battle between picking either religion or sexuality, it is like picking between religion and themselves. A religious gay man struggles and may feel an internal conflict between his sexuality and religion (Acuña-Ruiz & Vargas, 2006). In addition, Acuña-Ruiz and Vargas (2006) reified the 60% who declared that homosexuality has affected their relationship with God because, at times, a gay person may feel guilty or immoral because of learned beliefs from religious roots.

Finding #21: Seven out of 10 (70%) indicated having a negative general perspective about religions. For instance, some of them indicated about fights and rejection between religions, being stereotyped as being gay, churches helping the community minimally, and some religions becoming like a business. On the other hand, two out of 10 (20%) (i.e., Guatemalan #1 and Panamanian #1) said that religions are a way to adore God. One out of the 10 (10%) (i.e., Panamanian #2) claimed that religions should more flexible. In addition, Panamanian #2 indicated that the new Pope (Pope Francis) in the Catholic Church is bringing a positive change toward homosexuality.

Main Research Question #3: *In which ways the internalized homophobia has affected their mental health status?*

Finding #1: Eight out of 10 (80%) claimed that they were emotionally affected at some point, such as feeling lonely or experiencing depression because of being gay. Two out of 10 (20%) (i.e., Panamanian #1 and Puerto Rican #2) did not present evidence of being emotionally affected because of being gay during their childhood/adolescence. However, Puerto Rican #2 presented evidence of being emotionally affected during his childhood/adolescence as result of sexual abuse. Evidence exists that most Hispanic homosexual men experience mental health problems because of their sexual orientation. Previous studies have presented similar results as well as data found in the literature review (Byrd, 2011; Ritter & Terndrup, 2002; Rodríguez, 1996; Sandfort et al., 2007; Schrimshaw & Hunter, 2006). The finding has similar results as Finding #7, in which eight out of 10 (80%) were negatively affected in their identity development. Panamanian #1 coincided with both results as not being emotionally affected and being one out of the two who received therapy with a psychologist during his coming out process. There is a possibility that Panamanian #1 does not belong to the 80% because of his mental health treatment. However, Cuban #1 was emotionally affected at some point, but he claimed not being negatively affected by his identity development. On the other hand, the results validate Byrd's (2011) point of view that homosexuals who struggle in accepting their homosexuality can experience depression or anxiety. If they do not seek help, their mental status can lead them to suicidal thoughts. Three out of 10 (30%) indicated having suicidal thoughts at some point during their coming out process (i.e., Colombian #1, Guatemalan #2, and Panamanian #2). Furthermore, some of the participants stated their participation in this study was their first-time experience talking about their homosexual orientation with a mental health professional.

Finding #2: Seven out of 10 (70%) experienced feelings of repression because of being gay. Repression happened among Colombians #1 and #2, Cuban #1, Guatemalans #1 and #2, and Puerto Ricans #1 and #2. Only three out of 10 (30%) (i.e., Cuban #1 and Panamanians #1 and #2) did not experience repression. On the other hand, eight out of 10 (80%) were afraid of being rejected by family and society because being gay. Two out of 10 (20%) did not experience it, which it was the case of Cubans #1 and #2. The results validated Rodríguez (1996) perspective when he indicated that gays have internalized oppression. He described it as a system for which gay people repress themselves as gay. It happens when they are not clear if other people, such as family members, will accept their sexual orientation and accept who they are. On the other hand, Nakamura and Zea (2010) found that the oppression in society is a strong predictor of psychological distress; therefore, they experience prejudice as being gay. At times, this contributes to increased their internalized homophobia or homo-negativity. In addition, many people in our society have a negative perspective of homosexuality. Therefore, in the coming out process, the gay person needs to overcome the obstacle of prejudice, and internal and external homophobia (Thompson, 1996).

Finding #3: Nine out of 10 (90 %) were bullied during their childhood/adolescence stage because being gay. The only case who was not bullied due to being gay was Cuban #1. The results coincided with the finding that 80% felt emotionally affected at some point because of their homosexual orientation. The results validates Carballo-Dieguez and colleagues (2005) (as cited by Nakamura & Zea, 2010), in which their sample reported that 86% of Latino gay and bisexual men experienced anti-gay violence after the age of 16; 58% indicated that they experienced it in the past year from the study. Bullying is a way of violence and lack of

acceptance in society. It can lead to a stressful experience, which tends to happen within minority groups (Sandfort et al., 2007).

Finding #4: Eight out of 10 (80%) stated not having any problem in managing their homosexuality. However, two out of 10 (i.e., Colombian #2 and Panamanian #2) continue having problems in managing their homosexuality. Colombian #2 acknowledged not having many gay friends. Besides, he does not like gay clubs or attending gay private gatherings. Panamanian #2 described his problem in regards to certain homosexual behavior in public places (kissing and holding hands to his boyfriend), and in the presence of his family. The results reified DeLamater and Friedrich (2002), which stated that gay men increase their well-being by enhancing their knowledge and understanding of being gay. Additionally, Ghavami et al. (2011) exposed in the social identity theory that gay people develop a sense of belongingness and pride by joining groups of people where they feel connected, have similar points of view, and are able to be themselves.

Finding #5: Ten out of 10 (100%) have a current healthy mental state in regards to their homosexuality. Most of them reported feeling good and happy about it.

Finding #6: Five out of 10 (50%) declared that they continue to have internalized homophobia but to a lower intensity. The results were present among Panamanians #1 and #2, Puerto Ricans #1 and #2, and Colombian #2. Consequently, five out of 10 (50%) stated not having any problems with internalized homophobia. The results were present among Cubans #1 and #2, Guatemalans #1 and #2, and Colombian #1. The results reified Herek and Glunt (1995) perspective that gay men who are out of the closet have more positive feelings about homosexuality and feel more support from other gay, lesbian, or bisexual people. Once men are comfortable about their homosexual orientation, they become more authentic and self-

determined, achieving success from conquering homophobia. The other 50% declared that they continue to have internalized homophobia, but to a lower intensity. This reified Gallor and Fassinger's (2010) perspective, which stated that people who claim gay identities are culturally diverse, and each one struggle to understand and accept their sexual identity. This takes place within the context of their particular cultural background as well as the social groups in which they participate (Gallor & Fassinger, 2010).

Finding #7: Ten out of 10 (100%) have started a new stage in their life once they have accepted themselves as homosexuals. Some of the statements were feeling freedom, starting a new life when moved to the United States, enjoying life to the fullest, feeling accepted by their family and friends, being totally a new person, and having a complete changed in their life. The result validates Rodríguez (1996) perspective in regards to support systems. Rodríguez conducted a study on identity development with gay Chicano men. In this study, Rodríguez concluded that gay Latinos socializing with each other helped each other to build a support system and to see themselves as part of the culture. In addition, according to Herek and Glunt (1995), they have a better attitude to homosexuality once they accept their homosexuality. They feel more connected to people from their same minority group, which helps them to practice safer and healthier cognitively and emotional process as well as sexual behavior (Herek & Glunt, 1995).

Finding #8: Eight out of 10 (80%) declared that their values as Hispanic gay men continue evolving, with the exception of Puerto Ricans #1 and #2. Puerto Rican #2 claimed that he thinks his values are evolving; however, his answer was not an entirely yes or no answer. In addition, Puerto Rican #1 responded that he has not lost his values and because he is gay, it does not mean that he will take advantage of others or sexually abuse children. It seems like the

question was not clear for Puerto Rican #1 and his response did not fully correlate with the purpose of the question. The value perspective in the Latino/Hispanic community predominantly view from a family viewpoint (Barbosa et al, 2010; Duarté-Vélez et al. 2010; Rodríguez, 1996). This viewpoint is challenging for homosexuals because the Latino culture tends to promote more respect for parents and elder generations, which they usually dictate and emphasize the importance of family and tradition in everyday life (Barbosa et al, 2010). Rodríguez (1996) mentioned that, as part of the family dynamic in the Latino culture, the *respeto* (respect) and being *bien educado* (well educated) are essential components such as the need to respect authority figures within the family. There is no evidence found in the literature review in regards to homosexual values in the Latino/Hispanic culture.

Finding #9: Six out of 10 (60%) claimed they would like to be gay if they can be born again and select their sexual orientation. Puerto Rican #2 is part of the 60%. However, he claimed that he would answer to be straight and have a family a year ago (e.g., 2012). Besides, he declared that he was in denial for a long time. The results reified Hawkins (1992) perspective when he posited that gay men may feel good when they feel understood, and when a person validates how hard their journey has been and how much they have sacrificed because of their sexual orientation. Some gay men have given up the idea to have children, to have a wedding ceremony, live close to their family, or to spend every holiday with their family, because their family has not fully accepted their sexual orientation. This is not true in all social contexts because some gay people have children and can celebrate a wedding; however it continues to be a small percentage. It is important to understand “the more conflicted a gay man is about his homosexuality, the more rigid and stereotyped his gender role identity is likely to be” (Forstein, 1986, p. 113). On the other hand, two out of 10 (20%) (i.e., Guatemalan #2 and Puerto Rican #1)

stated they will select to be straight if they can be born again. Guatemalan #1 said that he would like to have a family and described the gay life as tough. Additionally, Puerto Rican #1 declared that he would be heterosexual in order to avoid troublesome situations. Puerto Rican #1 was the only participant who declared having children out of the ten participants. One out of 10 (10%) (i.e., Guatemalan #2) was not being clear about his selection of being gay or straight.

Guatemalan #2 acknowledged not regretting who he is as a person nowadays, but he will change many things if he would born again. One out of 10 (10%) (i.e., Panamanian #2) indicated that this decision is up to God. Panamanian #2 is happy in the way he is. He is open to be heterosexual, gay, or lesbian. In a study, Ridge et al. (2006) stated that internalized homophobia is prevalent among gay-man, even when they have self-accepted their homosexual sexual orientation. A gay man who has high levels of internalized homophobia suffers feelings of guilt and a persistent self-oppression. As a result, they may not be able to enact self-enhancing defenses, and they need help to reinterpret their inner self in order to improve their mental states. Homosexuals may have issues in dealing with the societal perspective on homosexuality because it tends to be negative (Byrd, 2011).

Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to report the findings and extend the data analysis in this research. In addition, the chapter demonstrates an interpretation of the findings gathered by the researcher. The chapter aimed to present all research questions and respective answers. The chapter presented the findings attained by 10 narratives case studies, each completed in periods that ranged from 30 minutes to an hour and 15 minutes through individual in-depth interviews. In the next chapter five, a summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study will be presented.

Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

This study addressed internalized homophobia among Hispanic gay men who were born and reared in a country of Latin America. Ten random subjects living at the time of the study in the Tampa Bay area located in the State of Florida volunteered to participate in the study focused on internalized homophobia among Hispanic/Latino men. This study reported five chapters; each one focused on specific areas of study. For example, Chapter One provided an introduction to the study, an overview of the historical perspective of Latinos in the United States, and reported studies in the field of sexology. In addition, it presented information regarding the background problem as well as the justification of the study. Furthermore, it introduced the research questions and definition of terms used in the study.

Chapter Two provided a review of the literature on the inquiry line of study, as well as different areas related to the research topic. Chapter Two presented topics, such as the importance of developmental psychology and how it affects the human being. In addition, it presented a theoretical perspective of studies and information presented from previous studies related to homosexuality, the *coming out* process, internalized homophobia among non-Latino cultures, identity stages, and the development process in the gay community. Furthermore, the literature review presented an overview perspective of the Hispanic culture in Latin America, as well as the Latin culture in the United States. Moreover, it offered information about how Hispanic gay men live as two minority groups in the United States; as being Hispanics and gay. Additionally, it reported information about values that are important in the Hispanic/Latino culture, such as religion, family, gender expectations, and education. Chapter Two concluded

with the discussion of internalized and external homophobia, as well as the psychological standpoint and perspective of mental health as focus of study.

Consequently, Chapter Three presented used methodologies, specifically information on criteria for the pre-selection process and main areas that were studied. In addition, Chapter Three described in detail information about the instrument used, possible assumptions, and research procedures for the study. It also described the analysis process and limitations of the study.

A detailed and comprehensive report of the data analysis, report, and interpretation of the findings are presented in Chapter Four. This chapter presented a profile of each participant and a demographic table of the data collected. Specifically, Chapter Four presented a descriptive data analysis of 10 narrative stories of Hispanic/Latino gay men and their individual experiences growing up in a country of Latin America, where homosexuality is not fully accepted according of the results of this study. In addition, it explained the data analysis from the 10 participants as well as other valuable information voluntarily presented. Besides, Chapter Four also offered the findings of each research question with an analysis aligned to the literature review.

Finally, conclusions and recommendations for this study are presented in this chapter. Research question number one inquired in which ways internalized homophobia among Hispanic/Latino gay men reared in their country of origin have affected their gay identity. Some of the participants behaved according to society expectations of masculinity gender. Consequently, some of the participants experienced repression during their childhood or adolescence stage. As a result, some experienced unpleasant experiences, such as being bullied, feeling fearful, and suffering from depression. Research question number two investigated in which ways internalized homophobia affected the behavioral and emotional state during their rearing. Participants experienced many difficulties, such as dilemmas between their homosexual

sexual orientation and their family. In addition, some of them experienced issues with religious groups.

All participants had their first gay sexual experience during their childhood or adolescence stage. Besides, some participants decided to remain silent and did not speak up when dealing with machismo and homosexual issues. Last, research question number three inquired in which ways internalized homophobia have or have not affected their mental health. All the participants encountered at some point some issues with their mental health because of their sexual orientation while living in a Latin American country.

Conclusions

The present study should be seen as a solid base to the future of studying internalized homophobia among Hispanic/Latino gay men, as it shows a great insight into the topic discussed as well as the analysis presented. In addition, it presents some of the concerns that presently happen related to the subject. This section presents the overall conclusions to the three central research questions conducted in the study.

Research question number one focused on the ways internalized homophobia of Hispanic/Latino gay men reared in their country of origin affected their gay identity. Among the conclusions related to this matter, the study reported that Hispanic/Latino gay men repressed their gay sexual orientation because of the environment in which they grew up. Ninety percent behaved according to what society portrays that is to be a man. Fifty percent played sports as an activity that the society portrayed as a male activity. Seventy percent had sex with women. Fifty percent claimed to have a double life while growing up. Furthermore, ninety percent stated being aware of their gay identity during childhood. Only one person answered becoming aware of being gay at the age of 19 years. Prior to this, he was victim of sexual abuse. Therefore, most of

them were aware during their childhood or adolescence stage about their homosexual orientation, as expected to happen during their development as they explored and processed their identity during the adolescence stage. Participants behaved according to society expectations of manhood. For instance, some of them played sports to fit in the males group and hid their inclination toward people of their same gender. Consequently, they were not able to be their true selves. To come out, they needed to overcome wholly or partially their internalized homophobia, as well as external homophobia. In addition, they had to deal with prejudice and discrimination in society. These results validated that 80% of the participants were negatively affected in their sexual identity development. They experienced being bullied, feeling sad and fearful, feeling frustration, and not accepting themselves. In addition, they lacked assertiveness in disclosing to their family their sexual orientation. Some of them experienced sadness or depression because of their homosexual orientation.

Another significant finding was that most of Hispanic gay men moved out of their country of origin because of their sexual orientation. In the study, 90% of the participants' exiled out of their country because of being gay. They did not feel safe and comfortable with being gay in their country of origin nor living close to their families. Most of them lacked family or social support systems at the time. Participant-Cuban #1 did get the family support needed at the time, which helped him in his coming out process. Cuban #1 was the only person who exiled out his country for a different reason. According to the findings, it is noticed that among all Latino cultures represented in the study, there appears to be a similarity in regards to the homosexual perspective and psycho-social development among Latino gay men from Colombia, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. However, there appear to be differences among those from Panama and Guatemala.

Research question number two focused in the ways that internalized homophobia affected the behavioral and emotional state of Hispanic/Latino gay men during their rearing. According to the findings, 80% of the sample of gay men masturbated during their adolescence stage to manage their sexuality. Fifty percent used to think of men/boys and 30% used to think of women while masturbating. From this information, it can be inferred that masturbation was a safe way to manage their sexuality during adolescence, in particular for the 50% who would fantasize with men/boys. Some of the participants indicated that they enjoyed thinking of women as well; however, they felt confused as to which gender they should be attracted. The majority (80%) felt relaxed or satisfied after masturbation. Only 20% felt guilty after masturbation. This feeling could be produced because of the Catholic-Christian perspective that masturbation is a sin. Nevertheless, masturbation was a safe behavior that helped the majority of the participants in managing well their emotions of being gay within an oppressing society toward homosexuality.

Another finding reflected that the majority of the participants had their first gay sexual experience during their childhood or adolescence stage. Therefore, they behaved according to their needs. Forty percent (Colombian #2, Guatemalan #2, and both Puerto Rican participants) had their first gay sexual experience between the ages of five to 11 years. Sixty percent had their first gay sexual experience during their adolescence years. What it is known to be true is that sexual exploration is part of the development of a human being. According to the findings, they experienced homosexual inclination and exploration prior to adulthood. Therefore, it can be inferred that they all presented self-doubt at some point during their childhood or adolescence stages. These are expected emotions or common feelings for those experiencing behaviors that are against society expectations or religion dogmas in their respective country of origin. On the other hand, 50% were sexually abused. This incident in childhood may have contributed for them

to do not feel adequately assertive in their exploration process, as well as having unpleasant experiences at an early age of their life. As a result, it may have affected their identity process as gay, and possibly contributed to confusion and the repression of their homosexuality.

Furthermore, creating possible the roots of their internalized homophobia.

Hispanic/Latin homosexual men preferred to have their first's sexual encounter with an older man or a stranger. In the study, 80% of the participants had their first gay sexual experience with a man/young man six to 12 years older than them, and only 20% had their first gay sexual experience with a boy or adolescent around their age. This suggests that a strong tendency exists for Hispanic/Latino gay men to have their first sexual encounter with a man older than them. The outcome may have different and contradicting perspectives. Members from the Latin culture tend to show respect for their elders. It is a possibility that they were inclined to older people to be their mentors. On the other hand, some of the participants had their first sexual experience with a stranger. It can be inferred that some gay men use casual sex with a stranger as an unhelpful behavior to cope with their sexuality or fulfill their sexual needs. Another possibility is that this was their only opportunity to experience a first encounter with another man with whom to reveal their emotions, curiosity, and thoughts as gay individuals.

Findings revealed that 60% of the participants came out to a gay person first. Thirty percent spoke to a straight person, and only 10% spoke to a mental health professional. None of them talked to their parents or family members about their gay sexual orientation. The Latino community encourages talking with other family members about problems or issues. Hispanic gay men do not feel sufficiently comfortable to speak to their families about their homosexual sexual orientation. Family values are highly encouraged in the Latino culture; however, it tends to be challenging when it relates to a taboo topic, such as homosexuality.

According to the results, 40% (Colombian #1, both Cubans and Puerto Rican #2) of the participants' mothers have accepted their gay sexual orientation, 30% (both Panamanians and Puerto Rican #1) continue to be in the acceptance process, and the other 30% (Colombian #2 and both Guatemalans) have not officially disclosed to their mothers their gay sexual orientation. On the other hand, 70% have not come out to their fathers, with only one participant formally speaking to his father face-to-face about being homosexual. Consequently, contradiction appears to exist between the importance of family within the Latin Culture and the results presented in these findings. Subsequently, results suggested that family members are not the primary choice for homosexual men when disclosing sexual orientation and *coming out*. Additionally, it appears that parents tend to experience an inability to express feelings, experience denial, or even rejection. These feelings are similar to their sons experienced prior to coming out and disclosing their gay sexual orientation to their parents. Therefore, an acceptance process exists for Hispanic parents in accepting their gay child, especially for fathers.

Findings presented that 70% grew up without their biological father, and 28.57% reported that their father passed away during their childhood stage. Only 30% were able to grow up with both parents (both Panamanians and Puerto Rican #2). Therefore, Hispanic fathers tend to be less emotionally attached to their sons compared to their mothers. The role of Hispanic fathers tends to be more of a provider. Besides, fathers tend to be more emotionally disconnected when they notice unacceptable differences in the child's behavior (Isay, 2009). Furthermore, this may result in attachment as well as trust issues toward men when a Hispanic gay man tries to have a healthy relationship with another man.

Eventually in their lives, interviewees disclosed to their family their sexual orientation. As result, 80% came out to a family member(s) (e.g., siblings, nieces, nephews, or parents) after

they exiled out of their country. They may have experienced fear of being gay while living in their country of origin. However, the majority of the participants felt encouraged to disclose to their family members about their gay sexual orientation. It appears that a possibility exists of not wanting to hurt their family about their sexual orientation. Perhaps, they decided to come out as times progressed, and they had no children or girlfriends. However, being unable to hide their homosexuality for a prolonged time they communicated this to their best male friend, in some cases, their partner. Living out of their country helped them to be more confident and to embrace the “gay life.” For most of them, exiling out their country helped to release the oppression of hiding their true sexual orientation; therefore experiencing freedom.

Seventy percent claimed to have an existing good family support after coming out. However, 30% (Guatemalan #1, Panamanian #2, and Puerto Rican #1) reported not having proper family support because of their sexual orientation. The 30% who did not have support may be as a result of religion beliefs. This is because homosexuality is considered a sin among some religious groups. In addition, from a conservative perspective, their homosexuality may affect the whole family, particularly when these family members are still living in a country of Latin America. On the other hand, 80% reported having a good social support system as being gay. However, 20% (Colombian #2 and Puerto Rican #1) claimed not having a gay circle or social support group. According to this study, it appears that this 20% have not fully transitioned to the gay life. Their perspective tends to be from a heterosexual viewpoint. They lack participation in gay events, places, and social gatherings. As a result, they had not fully connected and immersed themselves in a gay lifestyle.

This study presented one participant that got married and had two children. Another participant almost got married; however, cancelled the wedding. Others want to have children;

however, have not been able to do so. This implies that Hispanic/Latino gay men have a strong inclination to family and society expectations. Consequently, they have the tendency to seek for a mate of their opposite sex to follow what family and society expects from them, which usually is to be married and have children. It is challenging for Hispanic gay men to be truthful to their sexual orientation, especially when they want to have children. Most of homosexual men think that the only way to have children is getting married to a woman. Mixed emotions of following their alter ego exist as being a man or a father. Consequently, a percentage of Hispanic gay men become parents, ending their marriages later to be truthful to their gay sexual orientation. They experience an ongoing battle because their cognition does not align well with their emotions. As a result, their cognitive, emotions, and behaviors might not be in synchronicity. These behaviors and mixed emotions are contributors of internalized homophobia.

According to the literature review, most religions (including Christians) see homosexuality as a sinful choice, a perversion, as forbidden and unnatural, as antifamily attitude, and as immoral behavior against the Bible, or even as a mental illness (Ford, 2001; Gillis, 1998; Kranz & Cusic, 2005). Seventy percent of the interviewees are not currently practicing the religion instilled by their parents, and only 30% (Colombian #2, Panamanian #1, and Puerto Rican #2) continue practicing the religion instilled by their parents. On the other hand, 70% indicated having a negative perspective about religions in general. Forty percent (Colombian #1, Guatemalan #1, Panamanian #2, and Puerto Rican #1) reported having an adverse experience with church that contributed to their repression toward homosexuality. For instance, one of the participants was almost sexually abused by a priest; however, he was able to escape from the possible sexual abuse. Though, his mother did not believe him and decided to believe the story of the priest. Nevertheless, participants believe in a Higher Power and their sexual orientation has

not affected their relationship with God. Another conclusion is that most of them have encountered negative experiences that have led to disconnect from religion and to be more inclined into spirituality.

Another conclusion is that considerable expectation exists from the Latin American society as how a “macho” should behave. A high percentage of Latino gay men have difficulties in transitioning from a “macho” to a less “machista” mentality once they exiled out of their country of origin. For instance, 40% (Cuban #2, Guatemalan #1, and both Puerto Ricans) remained silenced in addressing machismo and comments toward gay people/being gay. Thirty percent (both Panamanians and Colombian #2) had a hurtful experience. One out of 10 (10%) (Colombian #1) avoided it. Ten percent (Guatemalan #2) defended himself, resulting into bullying. Therefore, results reinforced the conclusion of previous studies that the concepts of being a “macho” and homosexuality are not fully embraced by the Hispanic culture, as they tend to see homosexuals as less “macho” or feminine. Furthermore, most Hispanic/Latino men do not consider themselves gay since they tend to see gays as being the passive role (receiver) in the sexual act and the top (insertor) as being a “macho,” even though they are having a sexual act with another man.

Last, research question number three focused in the ways internalized homophobia have or have not affected mental health among Hispanic gay men. According to the results, 80% claimed that their mental health was affected at some point because of their homosexual orientation. In addition, 80% were negatively affected in their identity development, while 30% indicated having suicidal thoughts at some point during their coming out process. Only two out of 10 (20%) have received mental health treatment. On the other hand, all stated that they currently have a healthy mental state in regards to their homosexuality. This shows lack of

willingness for seeking mental health professional services when they need it. Only one participant sought for mental health help. Another participant indicated not needing mental health services because he accepted his homosexuality during childhood and did not have any hurtful experience during his adolescence stage. Mental health treatment in Latin America tends to be for people who are severely mentally unstable. According to this study, evidence exists that seeking professional help may assist gay men in the coming out process and accepting their homosexuality. This was the case of two participants.

According to the results, 90% declared not having any current issues with internalized homophobia affecting their behavior, except Puerto Rican #1. However, 50% reported that they continue to have internalized homophobia but to a lower intensity (both Panamanians, both Puerto Ricans, and Colombian #2). Consequently, 50% declared not having any problems with internalized homophobia (both Cubans, both Guatemalans, and Colombian #1). On the other hand, 80% stated not having any problem in managing their homosexuality, and 100% have a current healthy mental state in regards to their homosexuality. However, a contradiction exists between these findings and other results evidencing that they continue to experience struggle at some level with their homosexuality. There is clarity with a small percentage of the participants (20%) who continue having problems in managing their homosexuality. Colombian #2 acknowledges not having many gay friends. Besides, he does not like gay clubs nor attending gay private gatherings. Panamanian #2 described his problem in regards to homosexual behavior in public places (kissing and holding hands with his boyfriend) and in the presence of his family.

Nonetheless, 100% of participants acknowledged that they started a new stage in their lives once they accepted themselves as homosexuals. Moreover, 80% declared that their values as Hispanic gay men continue evolving, with the exception of both Puerto Ricans, who were

unclear with their answers, and it did not correlate with the purpose of the question. Therefore, different stages take place in embracing and accepting homosexuality. Consequently, each participant had a different perspective and life story to his gay journey.

The result also reflected that 70% (both Colombians, Cuban #1, both Guatemalans, and both Puerto Ricans) experienced feelings of repression because of being gay. Only 30% (Cuban #1 and both Panamanians) did not experience repression because of their homosexuality. However, nine out of 10 (90%) were bullied during their childhood/adolescence stage because of being gay. The only participant who was not bullied as gay was Cuban #1. Eighty percent felt emotionally affected at some point because of being gay, and 80% were afraid of being rejected by family and society due to being gay; 20% did not experience this same fear. As a result, most of them experienced anti-gay violence as being gay that contributed to their internalized homophobia. These findings reinforced previous studies in which experiencing anti-gay violence lead to mental health issues. Additionally, their negative experiences have been repressed and have not been completely healed. Most of them experienced homophobia from their family members and struggled to be accepted as homosexuals. Contrastingly, there is the case of both Cubans who managed well this situation. Cuban #1 spoke to his mother at the age of 13, which helped him to become assertive as a Hispanic homosexual man. Furthermore, he grew up in an environment surrounded by other homosexuals. Cuban #2 stated that others respected him just the way he was, even though he was aware of homosexuality being against the political perspective in Cuba during the 1980s. Indeed, the Mariel Exodus was his exit ticket to exile out of Cuba.

Finally, findings reflected that 60% claimed they would like to be gay if they were to be born again and able to select their sexual orientation. This coincides with the 80% that claimed

not having any problem in managing their homosexuality and have embraced their homosexuality. They seem to be presently assertive about being gay and handling better rejection from society or family members. On the other hand, 20% (Guatemalan #2 and Puerto Rican #1) stated that they would select to be straight if they were to be born again. Guatemalan #1 said that he would like to have a family and described the gay life as tough. Additionally, Puerto Rican #1 declared "I would be heterosexual in order to avoid a lot of headaches." One participant was not clear about his selection of being gay or straight. Guatemalan #2 acknowledged not regretting who he is as a person nowadays, but he would change his circumstances if he were to be born again. One participant (Panamanian #2) indicated that this decision is up to God. Panamanian #2 stated being happy with the way he is. Therefore, the majority of participants seemed to have a clear idea in what it is to be gay. It seems that exile has helped them to embrace their homosexuality as well as to relief self-oppression. Having a family appears to be a common factor among most of them, not considering that other options exist that they may implement to attain their dream to be parents.

In summary, this study gathered descriptive data about the internalized homophobia among Hispanic/Latino gay men who grew up in their country of origin and how their life experiences, as well as environment, have affected their identity as homosexuals. The study cannot generalize internalized homophobia among Hispanic/Latino gay men because it only selected five countries of Latin America. Therefore, it only reflected the experiences of 10 participants of five countries. However, this information provides a general profile of internalized homophobia among Hispanic/Latino gay men, and a foundation to conduct a study in the other countries not represented in the study. Furthermore, it can be a basis to study internalized homophobia among other ethnic groups not included in this study.

Recommendations

The investigator completed a qualitative research exploring different areas of internalized homophobia among Hispanic gay men who immigrated to the United States during their adulthood stage. The population studied was born and grew up in their country of origin. As a result, the study created another set of questions or concerns that should be studied to create a broader database of information to understand better internalized homophobia among Hispanic gay men. In addition, it should create critical analysis and comprehensive study in the recommended areas of inquiry, such as:

1. It is recommended to conduct further similar studies within other Latin American countries not represented in the study. This study only included participants from Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Panamá, and Puerto Rico. These countries were selected randomly and successfully recruited by the researcher.
2. Based on the existing limitations, this study is a small representation of Hispanic gay men. Therefore, more studies should be conducted in the Hispanic/Latino LGBT community. Hispanics are one of the fastest minority groups growing in the United States. Expectations exist among the Hispanic/Latino community to adjust to the culture of the United States. However, further research within this group will help the community to comprehend different areas and perspectives of the Hispanic gay culture.
3. A study should be conducted about internalized homophobia of Hispanic gay men who got married and had children, and the reasons for them to follow this lifestyle prior to coming out.
4. Based on the findings, some homosexuals have sex with women prior to fully accept their gay sexual orientation. A study should be conducted on the reasons for which they

decided having sex with women, their emotional connection, as well as their sexual connection with them. Furthermore, to explore the possibility of bisexuality as “real” sexual orientation.

5. A study should be conducted on the sexual abuse incidence among Latino gay man.
6. Based on the results, there is a significant age difference among Hispanic gay men when they confronted their first gay sexual experience with people between six to 12 years older than them. Further studies should address the contributing factors for this sexual behavior.
7. According to a finding, a high percentage of Hispanic gay men grew up without their biological father. It is recommended to study the correlation between internalized homophobia as Hispanic men, growing up without their biological father, and how this might affect their behaviors and emotions in their relationships with other men during their adulthood stage.
8. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended further to research the similarities and differences from the homosexual perspective and psycho social development within Hispanic gay men. Furthermore, to explore the differences and similarities in sex education within countries of Latin America.
9. Future studies should explore political issues and the experience of Hispanic gay men growing up in their country of origin.
10. Based on the findings, it is highly recommended to promote mental health among the Hispanic/Latino community. A taboo exists about mental health services to be exclusively for people who are severely mentally ill. Moreover, a limited amount of mental health professionals speak Spanish and are able to comprehend the Hispanic gay

culture. It is recommended to raise awareness of these issues and promote mental health services to the Hispanic/Latino community.

11. The questionnaire had a total of five recruitment questions, six demographic questions, and 23 research questions directed to main research questions. In addition, nine out of the 23 questions had an additional question. As a result, the questionnaire was lengthy, and some of the questions were already answered by the participants' narrative story. Future studies should reduce the length of the questionnaire if this same instrument is used for other studies. Furthermore, some of the questions created redundancy in the answers presented in the questionnaire.

Much research is still to be completed in the following areas: clinical sexology, mental health in Hispanics/Latinos and Hispanic/Latino gay men, lesbians, and transgender. The word Hispanic/Latino seems to be singular; however, it represents plurality of meanings as each country of Latin America presents with different cultures. Therefore, the area of clinical sexology as well as mental health are not the exception to these connotations behind Hispanic/Latino cultures. Besides, internalized homophobia as well as being homosexual are not excluded from this problem. As a result, different evolving levels in mental health exist, such as sex therapy, sex education, and research in countries of Latin America. The area of clinical sexology should continue evolving as a different area of study to attain scholarly independence from other disciplines. This study is a contribution to the field of clinical sexology and mental health among the Hispanic/Latino gay men community.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent & Instructions

Spanish Version

**Aviso de Consentimiento Informado e
Instrucciones para las personas participando en el estudio.**

Estimado Hispano/Latino de la Bahía de Tampa,

Mi nombre es Rafael E. Fuentes-Jaimán, estudiante del programa doctoral en sexología clínica de la *American Academy of Clinical Sexologists*, localizada en Orlando, FL. Como requisito de mi grado doctoral, me encuentro haciendo un estudio en la comunidad hispana gay de la Bahía de Tampa. Por ende, estoy exhortando su participación voluntaria en este estudio. Usted puede negarse a participar. Inclusive, una vez empezada la entrevista, puede discontinuar su participación en cualquier momento durante el estudio. De ser así, esta decisión no repercutirá en una penalidad o consecuencias negativas. La información, consentimiento y propósito del estudio están explicados a continuación.

El propósito de esta disertación es estudiar la auto-homofobia (homofobia internalizada) durante su crianza (niñez/adolescencia) en su país de origen. Este estudio es exclusivo en la Bahía de Tampa, comprendiendo los condados de *Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando, Polk, Manatee* y *Sarasota*. Si usted decide participar en este estudio, (explicar el proceso del estudio). Este estudio es completamente confidencial. Por ende, no tendrá que escribir su nombre, ni apellido en ningún momento. Sin embargo, usted elegirá un nombre hipotético.

La entrevista será grabada e incluye preguntas variadas, tales como información demográfica, información de su experiencia como gay en su país de origen, experiencias y perspectiva personal como hombre gay hispano/latino, y valores personales familiares y/o religiosos. Su participación en este estudio tomara entre 30 a 120 minutos de su tiempo. Una vez haya terminado, se le dará un certificado o *gift card* de Starbucks, valorado en \$5.00.

El propósito de este estudio es académico y la información no será utilizada para otros fines. La información que usted provea será tratada estrictamente confidencial. Por ende, en ningún lugar debe poner/decir alguna información que lo identifique personalmente a usted. La grabación de su entrevista será guardada exclusivamente por el investigador. La grabación de este estudio será borrada una vez terminado el estudio. Se presentará los resultados globales del estudio.

Una vez terminado el estudio, usted tendrá derecho a revisar los resultados del mismo comunicándose con el investigador, Sr. Rafael E. Fuentes-Jaimán, a uno de los siguientes lugares:

Teléfono: (813) 732-6876
Correo electrónico: rafaelthecounselor@yahoo.com
Dirección: 8019 N Himes Ave, Suite 311 Tampa, FL 33614

Su colaboración en este estudio ayudará a poder servir mejor a la comunidad gay hispana/latina, y a sus familiares en como poder entender mejor a un miembro de su familia que sea gay. En adición, ayudará a poder educar a los profesionales de la salud mental y educadores, para que puedan proveer mejores servicios que vayan a tono con las necesidades de esta población.

El usted participar voluntariamente en este estudio se considera que usted ha dado permiso y consentimiento a participar. ¡Gracias anticipadas por su colaboración!

Queda con usted,

Rafael E. Fuentes, M.S. Fecha
 Estudiante a Nivel Doctoral
 American Academy of Clinical Sexologists
 Orlando, FL

Firma de Participante Fecha
 (Firma de nombre hipotético)

Usted puede buscar ayuda en alguno de los siguientes lugares:

Línea de Crisis (24 hrs):	211 ó (813) 234-1234
Attainable Solutions:	(813) 933- 1425
Ana E. Iosipan, LMHC, LMFT	(727) 550-7269
Grounding Center for Counseling	(727) 674- 5053
Metro Wellness & Community Centers (Ybor City):	(813) 232-3808
Metro Wellness & Community Centers (St. Petersburg, FL):	(727) 321-3854
Northside Mental Health Center:	(813) 977-8700

Appendix B

Questionnaire: Spanish Version

Cuestionario para Estudio de Casos

Por: Rafael E. Fuentes-Jaimán, M.S.,
 Estudiante de Doctorado en Sexología Clínica
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Propósito de investigación: Este es un estudio de casos narrativos que recopilarán la historia de hispanos/latinos gays con respecto a su auto-homofobia (homofobia internalizada) durante su crianza (niñez/ adolescencia).

Auto-homofobia (homofobia internalizada): para propósito de este estudio significa que el hombre hispano gay, en su país de origen, tuvo problemas en aceptar su identidad gay durante la etapa de la niñez/adolescencia y como le ha afectado a nivel emocional y/o conductual.

Pregunta para el proceso de pre-selección de posibles candidatos:

1. ¿Cuál es su país de origen?
 2. ¿Creció y vivió usted en su país natal hasta la edad de 18 años?
 3. ¿Cuál es su orientación sexual?
 4. ¿Es usted residente de la Bahía de Tampa?
 5. ¿Usted tuvo auto-homofobia (homofobia internalizada) durante el desarrollo de su crianza (niñez/adolescencia)? ¿Y en la actualidad?
-

Preguntas demográficas:

1. Edad: _____
2. ¿Cuál es su país de origen? _____
3. ¿Cuál el nivel más alto que ha completado de educación? _____
4. ¿Cuál es su profesión y/o a qué se dedica? _____
5. ¿Cuál es su ingreso anual? _____
6. ¿Qué religión le infundieron sus padres? _____

Pregunta #1: *In which ways did the internalized homophobia of Hispanic/Latino gay men reared in their country of origin have affected their gay identity?*

1. ¿Cómo supo que era gay?
 - a. ¿A qué edad aproximada supo que era gay?
2. ¿Cómo reaccionó a ser gay?
 - i. ¿Lo aceptó o lo negó?
3. ¿Cuándo estaba en su país y sabía que era gay:
 - i. ¿cómo lo aceptó?
 - ii. ¿cómo le afectó en su desarrollo de identidad?
4. ¿Cómo escondió su homosexualidad durante su crianza?
5. Durante su desarrollo, ¿cómo le afectó al mirarse al espejo y decirse que era gay o que no podía ser gay?

Pregunta #2: *In which ways did the internalized homophobia affected the behavioral and emotional state during their rearing?*

6. ¿Cómo manejó su sexualidad en la niñez/adolescencia? (Ej. se escondía, se masturbaba o qué tipo de conducta tenía)
7. ¿En qué pensaba o en quién pensaba cuando se masturbaba? ¿Qué emociones o sentimientos tenía después de masturbarse?
8. ¿Cuándo tuvo su primera experiencia sexual gay?
 - a. ¿Cómo fue esta primera experiencia?
9. ¿Cómo la auto-homofobia le afectó su conducta durante su adolescencia? ¿Y cómo le afecta en la actualidad?
10. ¿Cómo la auto-homofobia le afectó sus emociones durante su adolescencia? ¿Y cómo le afecta en la actualidad?
11. ¿Con quién pudo hablar por primera vez acerca de sentirse o ser gay?
12. ¿Cómo se sintió y manejó a su familia y/o sus padres?
13. ¿Cómo se sintió y manejó la escuela y sus amigos?
14. ¿Cómo llegó a manejar el machismo o comentarios machistas con respecto a ser gay?
15. ¿Cómo usted manejó a la iglesia y/o su religión?

- a. ¿Continúa practicando la religión que le infundieron sus padres? () Sí () No
16. ¿Cómo su homosexualidad le afectó en su relación con Dios?
17. Actualmente, ¿cuál es su perspectiva acerca de la religión en general?

Pregunta #3: *In which ways the internalized homophobia have or have not affected their mental health?*

18. ¿Cómo pudo resolver la situación de la auto-homofobia (homofobia internalizada)?
19. ¿Cuál es su estado emocional/psicológico actual con respecto a ser gay?
- a. ¿Considera que todavía tiene problemas en manejarlo?
20. Y esta auto-homofobia (homofobia internalizada) ¿podría estar presente todavía, aunque con menor intensidad?
21. ¿Cree que empezó una nueva etapa en su vida sexual cuando aceptó ser gay?
- a. ¿Cómo se manifestó en esa nueva etapa?
22. ¿Cree que sus valores como un hombre gay hispano continúan evolucionando?
- i. ¿De qué forma?
23. Si tuviera la oportunidad de volver a nacer y seleccionar su orientación sexual, ¿cuál seleccionaría y por qué?

Appendix C

Questionnaire: English Version

Questionnaire for Case Study

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Purpose of Research: This is a narrative study that gathers the life story of Hispanic/Latin gay men and their experience with internalized homophobia during their rearing in the country of origin.

Internalized homophobia: for the purpose of this research, it means that a Hispanic gay man experience internalized homophobia during the rearing (childhood/adolescent stage) while living in their country of origin, and how it affected them in their emotions and behavior.

Pregunta para el proceso de pre-selección de posibles candidatos:

1. Where are you from?
 2. Where you born and raised in your country of origin until the age of eighteen?
 3. What is your sexual orientation?
 4. Do you live in the Tampa Bay area?
 5. Did you experience internalized homophobia during your rearing as a child/adolescent?
 Are you still experiencing internalized homophobia?
-

Demographics:

1. Age:
2. Where are you from?
3. What is your highest level of education completed?
4. What do you do for a living (career, job, etc.)
5. What is your approximate gross annual income?
6. As a child/adolescent, what was the religion practiced and instilled in you by your parents?

Question #1: *In which ways did the internalized homophobia of Hispanic/Latino gay men reared in their country of origin has affected their gay identity?*

7. How did you become aware you are gay? At the time, how old were you (age range)?
8. How did you react to being gay? Did you accept or rejected?
9. When you were living in your country of origin and knew about being gay:
 - a. How did you accept it?
 - b. How did affect your identity development?
10. If you tried to hide your homosexuality, how did you do this?
11. During your rearing, how were you affected when looking at yourself in the mirror and questioned your sexual orientation?

Question #2: *In which ways did the internalized homophobia affected the behavioral and emotional state during their rearing?*

12. How did you manage your sexuality during your childhood/adolescence stage?
13. What or who did you think about when you masturbated? What emotions or feelings did your experience after masturbation?
14. When did you have your first gay sexual experience? How did you feel about it?
15. How did internalized homophobia affect your behavior during your adolescence? How is it affecting you now?
16. How did internalized homophobia affect your emotions during your adolescence? How is it affecting you now?
17. Who do you speak about the first time about being or feeling gay?
18. How did you handle and felt about your homosexuality with family and/or parents?
19. How did you handle and felt about your homosexuality with school and friends?
20. How do you address machismo and/or comments toward gay people/being gay?

21. How do you manage your homosexuality with church and/or religion?

a. Are you still practicing the religion instilled in you by your parents?

() Yes () No

22. How has your homosexuality affected your relationship with God?

23. Presently, from a general viewpoint, what is your perspective about religion?

Question #3: *In which ways the internalized homophobia has affected their mental health status?*

24. How you were able to determine a resolution in regards to internalize homophobia?

25. What is your current mental health state in regards to being gay?

a. Do you think that you have problems to manage it?

26. If you experienced internalized homophobia, do you continue to have problems in dealing with internalized homophobia but to a lower intensity?

27. Have you started a new stage in your life once you accepted yourself as being gay?

a. If so, how has this been manifested?

28. Do you think your values as a Hispanic gay man continues evolving?

a. If so, how?

29. If you have the opportunity to be born again and select your sexual orientation, which one would you select and why?