

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE) Bill as Perceived in One State University

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54476/apjaet/45320>

Abstract

This descriptive-comparative and correlational research aimed to determine the level of awareness and perception of one state university on the SOGIE bill including terms and behaviors associated with it. The study was participated in by 224 respondents who are affiliated with the university under survey. With the aid of various statistical tools such as frequency counts, weighted mean, standard deviation, Kruskal-Wallis H test, Mann-Whitney U-test, and Chi-square test of independence, the study found out that there is a significant difference in the respondents' level of awareness and perception on SOGIE when grouped according to gender. In addition, a significant relationship was observed between their level of awareness and perception of SOGIE. These results may lead the Office of Student Affairs and Services (OSAS) in cooperation with the Gender and Development (GAD) office to craft guidelines and policies that will cater to the needs of individuals who are members of the LGBT community to promote a gender-bias-free environment inside the campus all the time.

Keywords: SOGIE bill, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, LGBT

Introduction

The acronym for gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation is SOGIE. The term "sexual orientation" describes a person's emotional and physical attraction to another individual. An individual's sexual orientation can be classified as heterosexual, gay, bisexual, or even asexual; however, LGBTQIA+ is an inclusive word that encompasses individuals of all genders. Gender identity is how a person feels internally which can be categorized as either cisgender or transgender while gender expression is how they present themselves to the outside world as either masculine or feminine.

Issues on SOGIE have been bothering most countries all over the world. Hate crimes in some countries are reported to be against members of the LGBTQIA+ community commonly referred to as the LGBT group. Lawmakers have been very vigilant in finding ways to protect the rights of these people. In the Philippines, local government units (LGUs) addressed issues of sex discrimination thru ordinances that protect this group of individuals. The

Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Education (DepEd) have also released a separate memorandum that safeguards each person's rights and privileges in an educational institution to guarantee that an individual's right to a formal education will be upheld. These are the CHED Memorandum Order No. 1, s. 2017 also known as the Policies and Guidelines on Gender and Development, and the DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017 also known as the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy. Both memoranda commit to integrate the principles of gender equality, gender equity, gender sensitivity, anti-discrimination, and human rights in all its projects, programs, and activities.

Rugay, C. (2022) emphasized in an article that the Philippines is the second most gay-friendly country in Asia-Pacific, with 73% of adult Filipinos agreeing that homosexuality should be tolerated by society, according to the Global Divide on Homosexuality Survey by Pew Research Center. This statistic, however, only suggests tolerance rather than acceptance, as a United Nations survey indicates that 21% of the LGBT population in the nation report being denied employment due to their sex orientation, and 30% of the community report experiencing harassment, bullying, or discrimination.

Philippines' lawmakers addressed issues on gender discrimination by passing a bill known as the Anti-Discrimination or SOGIE Equality Bill. It was filed initially by then Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago and Cong. Etta Rosales in year 2000 during the 11th congress. Similar bills were also filed during the succeeding congress but none of these were successfully turned into law. The clamor of LGBT community for this bill to formally become a law was supported by right activists, celebrities, and politicians, but there were also those who are against the scope and content of the said bill, as they believe that it is not part of the Filipino culture.

In her work, Melsa, V. (2021) discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the SOGIE bill draft. She lists the following as some benefits of the bill: (1) it aims to control public behavior and perception toward others based on sexual orientation; (2) it advocates for equality and fairness not only to LGBTQ members but to every person in the country; and (3) it ensures that LGBTQ members can access hospital services and other facilities without fear of discrimination. However, there are drawbacks as well: (1) LGBTQ members may use the law to intimidate others who might disagree with their terms; (2) the draft aims to erode academic and religious freedoms and principles; and (3) transgender people will act outside the bounds of morality and standard behavior.

State universities and colleges are expected to promote gender equality and ensure to provide a gender sensitive environment among its stakeholders. Students' sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression have been observed to be one of the foremost concerns of state university officials and administration that need attention. Complaints from instructors and professors concerning their students' gender preference and their freedom of expression inside the campus have been recorded. As a higher education institution (HEI), it is believed that adherence to policy and guidelines set by CHED should be monitored and ensure that its implementation will not be abused. Since the draft of the SOGIE bill has been disseminated for further discussion and debate for it to become a law, the researchers desire to hear what the community of one state university has to say about the SOGIE bill. Their awareness of the scope of the SOGIE bill as well as their perception of SOGIE per se matters, since state universities are surrounded by people with different sex orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

Objectives of the Study

The study primarily aimed to determine the level of awareness and perception of one state university on the SOGIE bill.

Specifically, it aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Determine the respondents' profile in terms of gender, age, and affiliation with the state university.
2. Identify the respondents' level of awareness of the scope of the SOGIE bill and their perception of SOGIE in terms of sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.
3. Test the significant difference in the respondents' level of awareness on the scope of the SOGIE bill and their perception when grouped according to their profile.
4. Test the significant relationship between the respondents' level of awareness and perception of SOGIE.

Methodology

This quantitative research utilized a descriptive-comparative and correlational research design. The state university under survey is composed of 129 employees and an estimated undergraduate student population of 2000. From these, a total of 224 participants responded to the prepared self-made questionnaire which was shared and disseminated as Google form. Ethical considerations, as stipulated in RA 10173, commonly known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, were included in the letter to the respondents, before they responded to the provided questionnaire, to protect their identity and opinions. Statistical tools such as frequency counts, weighted mean, and standard deviation were employed to describe the respondents' profiles and perceptions. Hypotheses were tested using the Kruskal-Wallis H-test with Dunn's post-hoc analysis, Mann-Whitney U-test, and Chi-square test of independence.

Results and Discussion

1. Respondents' Profile

1.1. In terms of Gender

Table 1
In terms of gender

Gender	f	%
Male	64	28.6
Female	118	52.7
Lesbian	2	0.9
Gay	12	5.4
Bisexual	19	8.5
Transgender	2	0.9
Others	7	3.1
Total	224	100

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents of this study are straight individuals, that is 118 (52.7%) female and 64 (28.6%) male. It also involved individuals who are members of the LGBT community, with 19 (8.5%) bisexuals, 12 (5.4%) gays, 2 (0.9%) lesbians, 2 (0.9%) transgenders, and 7 (3.1%) who opted not to reveal their gender preference.

1.2. In terms of Age

Table 2

In terms of age

Age	f	%
19 – 22	180	80.4
23 – 26	25	11.2
27 – 30	8	3.6
31 – 34	3	1.3
35 – 38	1	0.4
43 – 46	2	0.9
47 – 50	2	0.9
55 & above	3	1.3
Total	224	100

The respondents' age distribution can be gleaned from Table 1.2. Clearly, it was dominated by students whose ages ranged from 19-22 which is 180 or 80.4%.

1.3. In terms of affiliation with the state university

Table 3

In terms of affiliation with the state university

Affiliation	f	%
Student	213	95.1
Employee	11	4.9
Total	224	100

The respondents' affiliation with the university is classified into two, that is, as a student or an employee. As reflected in Table 1.3, there were 213 (95.1%) students who responded to the shared questionnaire in Google form while there were only 11 (4.9%) employees who found time to respond to the said questionnaire. The number of student-participants comprised about 10.5% of the estimated student population of 2000 while the number of employees is just 8.5% of the actual number of employees, which is 129.

2. Awareness of the Scope of the SOGIE Bill

They have shown moderate awareness in every statement indicated with the exception that the SOGIE bill will not allow a change of gender markers in the birth certificates obtained a mean rating of 3.40 which is interpreted as somewhat aware.

Among the indicative statements above they are mostly aware that the SOGIE bill will protect LGBT persons from discrimination and that it gives equal access to LGBT persons in employment, education, and social services, as evidenced by the highest obtained mean of 4.25. Generally, with an overall mean rating of 3.95, the respondents are moderately aware of the scope of the SOGIE bill. These data may be attributed

to the various ways of disseminating information nowadays, particularly the role being played by social media.

The respondents' level of awareness of the SOGIE bill was summarized in Table 4.

Table 4
Respondents' level of awareness on the scope of the SOGIE bill

Indicative Statement	\bar{x}	SD	Verbal Description
<i>SOGIE Bill ...</i>			
1. is not a same-sex marriage bill.	3.75	1.24	Moderately Aware
2. will not penalize people who practice religious or academic freedom.	3.68	1.21	Moderately Aware
3. will not dictate churches on their teachings or hiring process.	3.81	1.17	Moderately Aware
4. will not allow a change of gender markers in birth certificates.	3.40	1.19	Somewhat Aware
5. does not violate the rights of "straight" people.	4.07	1.11	Moderately Aware
6. protects LGBT persons from discrimination.	4.25	1.07	Moderately Aware
7. gives equal access to LGBT persons in employment, education, and social services.	4.25	1.03	Moderately Aware
8. will promote programs for non-discrimination and diversity in schools and workplaces.	4.23	1.01	Moderately Aware
9. will penalize employers/teachers who discriminate against members of LGBT.	3.85	1.13	Moderately Aware
10. will provide programs to protect LGBT kids in schools.	3.94	1.11	Moderately Aware
11. extends equal rights to all persons.	4.11	1.12	Moderately Aware
12. advocates for equality and fairness not only to the LGBTQ members but also to every person in the country.	4.06	1.13	Moderately aware
13. seeks to control the behavior and perception of the general public towards others based on sexual orientation.	3.94	1.03	Moderately Aware
14. ensures that LGBTQ members will have access to hospital services and other facilities without fear of discrimination.	4.07	1.03	Moderately Aware
15. identifies a particular set of actions that it deems as discriminatory.	3.90	1.06	Moderately Aware
Overall Mean	3.95	1.11	Moderately Aware

3. Perception on SOGIE

In terms of the respondents' perception of SOGIE, Table 3.1 shows their level of agreement on how the members of the LGBT community are being described. They demonstrated familiarity with terms and behaviors associated with sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, as evidenced by the overall mean ratings of 4.11 and 4.10, respectively.

The society's acceptance of individuals who are members of the LGBT community contributed to these findings. Even though in some countries hate crimes against LGBT members were reported time and again, most nations remain optimistic that it will still yield a positive effect on the status of the LGBT community.

Table 5*Respondents' perception of SOGIE*

Indicative Statement	\bar{x}	SD	Verbal Description
<i>In terms of Sexual Orientation</i>			
1. Sexual orientation is who you want to be with.	3.96	1.21	Agree
2. Heterosexuals are attracted to the opposite sex.	4.05	1.08	Agree
3. Homosexuals are attracted to the same sex.	4.08	1.10	Agree
4. Bisexuals are attracted to both sexes.	4.41	0.92	Agree
5. Asexuals do not experience any sexual attraction.	4.04	1.05	Agree
<i>Overall Mean</i>	4.11	1.07	Agree
<i>In terms of Gender Identity and Expression</i>			
1. Gender identity is about who you are.	4.35	0.94	Agree
2. People may express their gender as either masculine or feminine.	4.27	0.97	Agree
3. Gender identity expressions can be manifested in the way people dress and behave.	3.91	1.13	Agree
4. Transgender identity is different from the body they were born with.	4.16	0.98	Agree
5. Cisgender are people whose gender identity corresponds with their birth sex.	3.80	1.05	Agree
<i>Overall Mean</i>	4.10	1.01	Agree

4. Significant Difference in the Level of Awareness and Perception of SOGIE

Table 6

Test of significant difference in the respondents' level of awareness on the scope of the SOGIE bill and perception when grouped according to gender and age

Variables	df	Kruskal-Wallis H-Value	P – Value	Remarks	
Level of Awareness	Gender	6	*30.183	0.000	Significant Not Significant
	Age	7	1.655	0.976	
Perception on Sexual Orientation	Gender	6	*14.503	0.024	Significant Not Significant
	Age	7	4.179	0.759	
Perception on Gender Identity & Expression	Gender	6	*29.795	0.000	Significant Not Significant
	Age	7	4.702	0.696	

***Significant at P < 0.05 level**

Table 6 summarizes the results of the test of significant differences in the respondents' level of awareness on the scope of the SOGIE bill and their perceptions when grouped according to gender and age. With the aid of the Kruskal-Wallis H-test of independence, the study found a significant difference when grouped according to gender, as the calculated P-value is significantly lower than the 0.05 level. However, there is no significant difference found between and among the identified variables when grouped according to age.

Table 7*Summary of post hoc analysis using Dunn test*

Variables		Post-Hoc Analysis	P – value
Level of Awareness	Male-Gay		*0.040
	Male-Bisexual		*0.002
	Male-Others		*0.033
Perception Sexual Orientation	Male-Bisexual	Dunn's Test	*0.023
	Male-Gay		*0.029
Perception on Gender Identity & Expression	Male-Female		*0.035
	Male-Bisexual		*0.028
	Male-Gay		*0.041
	Male-Others		*0.014

*Significant at $P < 0.05$ level

The significant difference observed in Table 4.1 was verified by Dunn's test post-hoc analysis whose results were summarized in Table 4.2. For the level of awareness, the differences lie when the responses of males were paired with gay, bisexual, and others. On their perception of sexual orientation, the differences lie when male responses were paired with bisexual and gay. Lastly, in terms of their perception of gender identity and expression, the differences lie when male responses were paired with female, bisexual, gay, and others. These are as evidenced by the calculated P-values which are significantly lower than the 0.05 level.

In terms of significant differences in the respondents' level of awareness and perception when grouped according to affiliation with the university, the Mann-Whitney U-test of independence was employed. Table 4.3 revealed that there were no significant differences observed as the calculated P-values were higher than the 0.05 level.

Table 8*Test of significant difference in the respondents' level of awareness on the scope of the SOGIE bill and perception when grouped according to affiliation with the university*

Variables	N	Mann-Whitney U-Value	P – Value	Remarks	
Level of Awareness		1059	0.570	Not Significant	
Perception Sexual Orientation	Affiliation	224	1079.5	0.641	Not Significant
Perception of Gender Identity & Expression		1237.5	0.737	Not Significant	

These findings may be attributed to the number of respondents who participated in this study.

5. Significant Relationship between the Level of Awareness and Perception on SOGIE

The relationship between the respondents' level of awareness and perception of SOGIE was tested with the aid of the Chi-square test of independence. Table 5.1 shows that there exists a significant

relationship between the identified variables as the computed P-value of 0.000 is significantly lower than the 0.05 level. This implies that the respondents with a high level of awareness of the SOGIE bill demonstrate strong agreement on the terms and behaviors associated with sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

Table 9

Test of a significant relationship between the respondents' level of awareness and perception of SOGIE

Variables	df	X ² - value	P - value	Remarks
Perception Sexual Orientation	16	*88.437	0.000	Significant
Level of Awareness Perception on Gender Identity & Expression	16	*101.002	0.000	Significant

*Significant at P < 0.05 level

Conclusion

The salient findings of this research revealed that respondents from one state university have moderate awareness of the scope of the SOGIE bill and positive perceptions towards SOGIE per se. These levels of awareness and perception were determined by their gender but not by their age and affiliation with the university. Furthermore, the study found a significant relationship between their level of awareness and perception of SOGIE.

Recommendation

In line with the findings and conclusions of this study, the following may be considered:

1. The university, through the Office of Student Affairs and Services (OSAS) in cooperation with the Gender and Development (GAD) office, may craft guidelines and policies that will cater to the needs of individuals who are members of the LGBT community to promote a gender-bias free environment inside the campus all the time.
2. The researchers may replicate this study with an additional number of faculty and student respondents to verify the results of this study.

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