

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender: How satisfied are they with their life conditions?

Article by Nathaniel Acolatse<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Naco.Lis Medical Centre, Akame Akpese Fofe, Ketu South Municipality, Volta Region, Ghana*

<sup>2</sup>*Ghana Health Service, Ga West Municipal Hospital, Amasaman, Accra, Ghana  
E-mail: yaonat@hotmail.com*

### Abstract

*LGBT population in Ghana experience numerous discrimination and abuses in their everyday lives. These issues have been found to have a detrimental effect on the life of these individuals. This study sought to examine how the discrimination and abuses faced by the LGBTs in Ghana affect their self-esteem and life satisfaction. The study used data from 494 self-identified LGBTs, recruited via non-probability sampling technique of snow-ball. Descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages were used to describe the distribution of responses of the participants. The inferential statistics of multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the impact the discrimination and abuses have on the self-esteem and life satisfaction of the LGBTs. The findings of the study revealed that LGBTs in Ghana experience a high level of self-esteem contrary to the assertion that LGBTs have low self-esteem. The findings of the study also revealed that majority of the LGBTs in Ghana are satisfied with their lives. The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that overall, the discrimination and abuses faced by the LGBTs accounts for 16.3 per cent and 38.4 per cent of the variation in the self-esteem and life-satisfaction of the LGBTs, respectively. Meanwhile, the findings indicated that the social and family discrimination and abuses faced by the LGBTs have a negative impact on their life satisfaction. It is recommended that policy makers, family members, health care professionals and the general public play their role in helping to lessen the discrimination and abuses faced by the LGBTs in Ghana.*

**Keywords:** *Self-esteem, life satisfaction, sexual orientation, mental health, LGBTs, Ghana.*

### Introduction

The most stigmatized people in the world are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people of all ages and in all parts of the world. Intolerance and marginalization-born violence and bigotry continue to take lives and create obstacles to justice and equality for LGBT people around the world (UNHCR, 2010; Human Right Watch, 2018). Deeply rooted homophobic and transphobic perceptions, sometimes coupled with a lack of appropriate legislative safeguards against prejudice on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identification, lead countless lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals to serious human rights violations (UNHCR, 2010; Acolatse, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c). LGBTs are picked out for physical abuse – beaten, sexually assaulted, tortured, and killed. Across a number of nations, the laws prohibiting cross-dressing are used to prosecute transgender

people on the basis of their gender identity and language. Yet, in certain 77 nations, oppressive statutes criminalize private, intimate same-sex marriages – exposing LGBT people to the possibility of detention, conviction, incarceration (UNHCR, 2010). Homophobia, stigma, violence and discrimination against LGBTs have been found to have negative effect on the health and well-being of this community. Homophobia, stigma, and discrimination against LGBTs have been found to be detrimental to their lives. For instance, homophobia, stigma, and discrimination against LGBTs have been found to have a negative influence on the self-esteem of LGBT individuals. LGBT individuals have reported lower levels of self-esteem and higher levels of loneliness than heterosexuals (Hu et al., 2016). By virtue of many obstacles encountered by LGBTs in their lives, as physical threats, experience in conservative environment, abuses and imposition of values and functions pre-set by

society, self-esteem in LGBTs tend to be lower when compared to heterosexuals (Rubinstein, 2010).

Stigmatization of any trait have been found to have a detrimental impact on a person's optimistic sense of self. Throughout the case of LGBT individuals, there is proof that homophobic, both experienced and internalized, impacts them throughout terms of their physical well-being and also in terms of their self-esteem. (Berg, Ross, Weatherburn & Schmidt, 2013; Isay, 1989; Rosser, Ross, Miner & Coleman, 2008; Szymanski, Chung, & Balsam, 2001). Self-esteem is a persons' own estimation of their own worth and, according to Rosenberg (1965), corresponds to the notion of a fairly secure sense of total or global importance, as is sometimes defined, of personal value. There is a vast volume of research that has established a connection between self-esteem and depression (Rosenberg, 1985), insecurity (Rosenberg, 1989), frustration, animosity and violence (Baumeister, Tice & Hutton, 1989) and life satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 1995).

Life satisfaction, on the other hand refers to the perceptual and judgmental cycle of an individual, perceived as a "national evaluation of the standard of life of a person according to his chosen parameters" (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985, p.71). Life satisfaction relates to a judgmental method, according to Pavot and Diener (2008), in which individuals determine the content of their own lives based on their own particular collection of parameters. A contrast of one's perceived life conditions with a supposedly rendered self-imposed ideal or collection of norms. Homophobia, stigma, and bigotry against homosexual, bisexual, and female women other sexual minorities have been shown to have a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of the LGBT people in their lives. For example, Hu et al (2016) found that low self-esteem and depression as a result of homophobic, stigma, and prejudice against LGBT individuals play a more important role in the happiness of LGBT people rather than heterosexual Chinese adults. Life satisfaction is observed to be considerably lower in places where LGBT people are at high risk of being abused or discriminated against – places where, for example, same-sex weddings or licensed unions are not allowed (Petrou & Lemke, 2017).

There is no apparent or suspected societal discrimination against LGBTs at the same degree

in all countries or cultures. Historical, economic and structural influences affect it's assumed or empirical prominence (Berg, et. al, 2013; Kitzinger & Coyle, 2002; Graupner, 2005). There is, for example, a broad range of institutional terms that covers places where gay conduct is prosecuted and places where same-sex marriage is accepted. There are places at these two ends where homosexuality is not criminal; neither are there rules for fair protection of people irrespective of their orientation. In relation to the context of this study, there is enough evidence that the Ghanaian society is homophobic and that LGBT individuals in Ghana dare not disclose their sexuality in public (Frimpong, 2018; MacDarling, 2011; Ofori, 2014; Haruna, 2015; Essien and Aderinto, 2009; Dankwa, 2009; Allotey, 2015; Human Right Watch, 2018; Acolatse, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c).

There are many recent surveys in the Ghana suggesting that homophobia is still widespread and experienced by gay men in their daily lives, affecting their psychological wellbeing. A number of studies have also shown the direct relationship between homophobia (or fear of being discriminated against) and mental health problems (Frimpong, 2018; MacDarling, 2011; Ofori, 2014; Haruna, 2015; Essien and Aderinto, 2009; Dankwa, 2009; Allotey, 2015; Human Right Watch, 2018; Acolatse, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c). Furthermore, recent empirical studies in Ghana found that LGB groups have a significantly higher prevalence of mental health problems than the general population; in particular, conditions including common mental disorders and alcohol and substance misuse, and attempted suicide (Acolatse, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c). In addition to a higher prevalence of mental health problems in gay men and LGB groups in general, further evidence suggests that there are disparities in access to mental healthcare.

Despite the breadth of literature highlighting the high prevalence of homophobic attitudes toward LGBT individuals in Ghana, and the negative effects these attitudes have on the mental health of LGBTs in Ghana, relatively lacking among LGBT community or individuals in Ghana are studies that explore how discrimination and abuses affect the self-esteem and the life satisfaction of the LGBT individuals. The purpose of this paper is to empirically examine how the discrimination and abuses

against LGBTs in Ghana influence their self-esteem as well as their life satisfaction.

## **Materials and methods**

### **Description of the Site**

Ghana is one of the African continent's nations, located on the western region of the world. Ghana lies on the Atlantic Ocean and shares boundaries with Togo, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso. In 1957, Ghana, established by the fusion of the British Colony of the Gold Coast and the Togoland Trust Territory, was the first western African sub-Saharan nation to achieve its independence. The nearly 30 million Ghana community (Worldometers, 2019) encompasses a number of ethnic, cultural and religious classes (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2018). According to the 2010 census, 71.2 per cent of the population is Christian, 17.6 per cent is Muslim and 5.2 per cent is traditional (GSS, 2013). In the last 20 years, Ghana has made significant progress in terms of democracy under a multi-party system, with its independent judiciary gaining public trust.

With large broadcast media (World Bank, 2019), Ghana is ranked among the top three countries in Africa for freedom of expression and freedom of the press. However, LGBT rights in Ghana are heavily suppressed. Ghanaians who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) suffer widespread discrimination and abuse both in public and in family settings (Human Right Watch, 2018). While some Ghanaian officials have publicly called for an end to violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity, the government is yet to repeal a colonial-era law that criminalizes same-sex activity (Human Right Watch, 2018). The Criminal Offences Act, 1960 prohibiting and punishing "unnatural carnal knowledge," and failure to actively address violence and discrimination, relegate LGBT Ghanaians to effective second-class citizenship. This has exposed LGBTs in Ghana to various forms of discrimination and abuses at all times and at all levels. Dozens of LGBT people have been attacked by mobs and even by members of their own families, because the law of the land has been found to prohibit the protection of the rights of these sexual minorities (Human Right Watch, 2018).

### **Instruments**

The study was conducted through the use of a questionnaire. Apart from questions on demographics, the questionnaire also included two scales: Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RES) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, is a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Psychologists and sociologists are common users for this instrument. A lot of studies have been conducted on the use of the scale to measure self-esteem (Gray-Little, Williams, & Hancock, 1997; Ciarrochi, Heaven, & Fiona, 2007; Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs 2003). Rosenberg (1965) conducted a series of test to measure the reliability of the scale. The author found out that the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale presented high ratings in reliability areas; internal consistency was 0.77, minimum Coefficient of Reproducibility was at least 0.90. A varied selection of independent studies each using such samples as – parents, men over 60, high school students, and civil servants – showed alpha coefficients ranging from 0.72 to 0.87 (all fairly high). Test-retest reliability for the 2-week interval was calculated at 0.85, the 7-month interval was calculated at 0.63. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RES) was also used to measure the impact the discrimination and abuses have on the quality of life – Self-Esteem of the LGBT individuals in Ghana.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was developed as a measure of the judgmental component of subjective well-being (SWB). The scale was developed to assess satisfaction with the respondent's life as a whole. The scale does not assess satisfaction with life domains such as health or finances but allows subjects to integrate and weight these domains in whatever way they choose. Two studies designed to validate the SWLS shown the scale to be a valid and reliable measure of life satisfaction, suited for use with a wide range of age groups and applications, which makes possible the savings of interview time and resources compared to many measures of life

satisfaction. In addition, the high convergence of self- and peer-reported measures of subjective well-being and life satisfaction provide strong evidence that subjective well-being is a relatively global and stable phenomenon, not simply a momentary judgment based on fleeting influences. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was also used to measure the impact the discrimination and abuses have on the quality of life – life satisfaction of the LGBT individuals in Ghana.

### **Procedure**

The participants of the study were recruited from the LGBT community all over Ghana. Non-probability sampling of Snowball sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. The snowball sampling technique was appropriate for the study due to the fact that the LGBT individuals are a hidden population in Ghana which makes it difficult to access them. However, because they know themselves, the individuals are closely connected. As a result, one participant is likely to know others who are LGBT that make them eligible for inclusion in the study. The only disadvantage of this sampling technique is that as the participants are not selected from a sampling frame, the sample is subject to bias. For example, an LGBT individual who have many friends who are also LGBT were more likely to be recruited into the sample than those who do not have many friends who are LGBT. The study used a sample of 500 LGBT individuals all over the country. A total of 500 questionnaires were therefore sent out to the participants of the study. Of the total of 500 questionnaires sent to the LGBT individuals, 494 were retrieved and were considered usable for the study. In all, a response rate of 98.8% was achieved for the study. According to Fincham (2008), response rates approximating 60% for most research should be the goal of researchers, and for survey research intended to represent all LGBT individuals in Ghana, a response rate of at least 90% is expected. This was however achieved in this study.

### **Statistical methods used**

The statistical analytic approach in this paper relied primarily on descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics – frequencies, percentages, were used to describe the participants' demographics, self-esteem as well

as their satisfaction with life. The inferential statistics of ordinary multiple linear regression analysis was used to analyze the impact discrimination and abuses have on the self-esteem and life satisfaction of the LGBTs.

### **Results**

Table 1 presents the demographics of the participants of the study. Of the total 494 participants whose questionnaires were considered usable for the study, 73.5 % (n=363) were males, while 26.5 % (n=131) were females. On the other hand, of the total 494 participants, 14.1% (n=70) identified themselves as lesbians; 41.9% (n=208) identified themselves as gays; 43.5% (n=216) identified themselves as bisexuals; and .4% (n=2) identified themselves as transgender. The participants were from the 14 years and above, with 4.6% (n=23) between the ages of 14-19 years; 17.9% (n=89) between the ages of 20-24 years; 39.0% (n=194) between the ages of 25-29 years; 22.7% (n=113) between the ages of 30-34 years; and 15.7% were 35 years and above. Of the regional distribution of the participants, majority (19.8%) were from the Greater Accra Region; 14.3% (n=71) were from the Volta Region; 12.7% (n=63) were from the Ashanti Region; 12.1% were from the Central Region; and 11.9% were from the Eastern Region. Less than 10.0% were from the Northern (8.1%), Upper East (2.6%), Upper West (3.0%), and Western (7.3%) Regions. Regarding geographical location, majority of the participants (89.7%) were located in the urban areas, while 10.3% were found in the rural areas. About 49% of the participants declared themselves as working full-time, 17.6% reported as working part-time, while 19.5% of the participants declared themselves as unemployed. However, 2.4% of the declared themselves as retired workers, house-wife/house-husband, and self-employed, respectively, while 6.7% (n=33) reported as being students/pupils. Nearly 29% of the participants had completed senior high school, 31.9% had Technical/Vocational Training/Diploma, 15.9% had university undergraduate degree, and 5.5% had university post-graduate degree. Meanwhile, 9.3% (n=46) had primary education, 1.6% (n=8) had middle school living certificate education, while 2.6% (n=13) had no formal education. With respect to ethnicity, 46.8 % (n= 232) considered themselves to be Akans, 20.8% (n=103) considered

themselves to be Ga/Dangme, while 14.5% considered themselves to be Ewes. However, 2.4% (n=12) regarded themselves as Guans, 6.0% (n=30) regarded themselves as Mole-Dagbani,

2.6% (n=13) regarded themselves as Grusi, 2.8% (n=14) regarded themselves as Gruma, and 3.4% (n=17) regarded themselves as Fantes.

**Table 1.** Demographic profiles of the participants

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	363	73.5%
Female	131	26.5%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		
Lesbian	70	14.1%
Gay	208	41.9%
Bisexual	216	43.5%
Transgender	2	.4%
<b>Age</b>		
14-19	23	4.6%
20-24	89	17.9%
25-29	194	39.0%
30-34	113	22.7%
35-39	35	7.0%
40-44	17	3.4%
45-49	12	2.4%
50 and above	14	2.8%
<b>Region</b>		
Ashanti	63	12.7%
BA	41	8.3%
Central	60	12.1%
Eastern	59	11.9%
Greater Accra	98	19.8%
Northern	40	8.1%
Upper East	13	2.6%
Upper West	15	3.0%
Volta	71	14.3%
Western	36	7.3%
<b>Geographical Location</b>		
Urban	399	89.7%
Rural	46	10.3%
<b>Working status</b>		
Working full-time	241	48.9%
Working part-time	87	17.6%
Unemployed	96	19.5%
Retired	12	2.4%
House-wife/husband	12	2.4%

Student/Pupil	33	6.7%
Self Employed	12	2.4%
Educational Level		
No formal school	13	2.6%
Primary school	23	4.7%
Junior High School	46	9.3%
Senior High School	140	28.5%
Technical/Vocational Training/Diploma	157	31.9%
University Graduate	78	15.9%
Post Graduate	27	5.5%
MSLC	8	1.6%
Ethnic group		
Akan	232	46.8%
Ga/Dangme	103	20.8%
Ewe	72	14.5%
Guan	12	2.4%
Mole-Dagbani	30	6.0%
Grusi	13	2.6%
Gruma	14	2.8%
Mande	3	.6%
Fante	17	3.4%

### Self-Esteem of LGBTs in Ghana

Table 2 shows the distribution of self-esteem of LGBTs who participated in the study. As clearly noticed in the table the Rosenberg self-esteem scale revealed that the LGBTs experienced quiet a high self-esteem, contrary to previous findings that highlights that LGBTs experience low self-esteem as a result of the discrimination and abuses they experience on daily basis. The findings of the study as in Table 2 reveals that of the 480 LGBT individuals who responded to the question, 360 (75.0%) had a high self-esteem, while 120 (25.0%) had low self-esteem. Bisexual were found to have a high self-esteem – 169(35.2%) than the Gays – 137(28.5%) and the Lesbians – 52(10.8%).

### Life Satisfaction of LGBTs in Ghana

Table 3 shows the distribution of satisfaction with life among LGBTs in Ghana. As shown in the table, the findings of this present study reveal that 8 (1.6%) of the LGBT individuals are extremely dissatisfied with their lives, 39(7.9%) are dissatisfied with their lives while 57(11.5%)

are slightly dissatisfied with their lives. On the contrary, 171(34.5%) of the LGBT individuals reported of being slightly satisfied with their lives, 160(32.3%) reported of being satisfied with their lives, while 12(2.4%) reported of being extremely satisfied with their lives. Life satisfaction as shown in Table 3 is found not to be the same across the sexual orientations.

### Impact of Discrimination and Abuses on Self-Esteem and Satisfaction with Life among LGBTs in Ghana

Table 4 shows the result of the impact of discrimination and abuses faced by the LGBTs on their self-esteem and satisfaction with life. As shown in the table the ordinary multiple linear regression analysis results indicates that religious discrimination and abuses faced by the LGBTs in Ghana ( $\beta = -.150, p < .05$ ) have a negative impact on their self-esteem. However, legal discrimination and abuses ( $\beta = .040, p < .05$ ), housing discrimination and abuses ( $\beta = .100, p < .05$ ), and family discrimination and abuses ( $\beta = .037, p < .05$ ) are found to have a

positive impact on the self-esteem of the LGBTs. This implies the more the LGBTs face these discrimination and abuses, the more they feel self-worth. The results of the study also show that, social discrimination and abuses ( $\beta = -1.39, p < .05$ ) and family discrimination and abuses ( $\beta = -1.030, p < .05$ ) had a negative impact on the life-style of the LGBTs. This implies that as social stigma and family stigma increases, the life satisfaction of the LGBTs decreases, and vice versa. Meanwhile, employment discrimination and abuses ( $\beta = 3.03, p < .05$ ) is found to increase the life satisfaction of the LGBTs in Ghana.

## Discussion

The aim of the study was to determine how the discrimination and abuses faced by LGBTs in

Ghana affect their self-esteem as well as their life satisfaction. The study was to empirically examine how the discrimination and abuses against LGBTs in Ghana influence the self-esteem and also life satisfaction of the LGBTs to assist policy makers, health care practitioners, and health care managers with valuable information on how to handle the LGBTs situation in Ghana. The results show that LGBT individuals in Ghana experience a high level of self-esteem contrary to findings in literature that these sexual minorities experience a low level of self-esteem compared to their hetero-sexual counter-parts, as a result of their frequent experience of discrimination and abuses (Hu et al., 2016; Rubinstein, 2010).

**Table 2.** Self-esteem of LGBTs by Sexual Orientation

Rosenberg Self-Esteem	Sexual Orientation				Total
	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Transgender	
Low Self-Esteem	16 (3.3%)	62(12.9%)	42(8.8%)	-	120(25.0%)
High Self-Esteem	52(10.8%)	137(28.5%)	169(35.2%)	2(.4%)	360(75.0%)

**Table 3.** Life satisfaction of LGBTs by Sexual Orientation

Life Satisfaction	Sexual Orientation				Total
	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Transgender	
Extremely Dissatisfied	1(.2%)	3(.6%)	4(.8%)	-	8(1.6%)
Dissatisfied	5(1.0%)	14(2.8%)	20(4.0%)	-	39(7.9%)
Slightly Dissatisfied	12(2.4%)	24(4.8%)	20(4.0%)	1(.2%)	57(11.5%)
Neutral	22(4.4%)	19(3.8%)	7(1.4%)	-	48(9.7%)
Slightly Satisfied	15(3.0%)	70(14.1%)	85(17.2%)	1(.2%)	171(34.5%)
Satisfied	13(2.6%)	71(14.3%)	76(15.4%)	-	160(32.3%)
Extremely Satisfied	1(.2%)	7(1.4%)	4(.8%)	-	12(2.4%)

**Table 4.** Regression estimates showing the impact of discrimination and abuses facing LGBTs on their self-esteem and satisfaction with life

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2
	DV: Self-Esteem	DV: Life-Satisfaction
Legal discrimination and abuses	.040**	-.028
Social discrimination and abuses	.010	-1.392***
Employment discrimination and abuses	.020	3.033***
Religious discrimination and abuses	-.150***	.135
Health discrimination and abuses	-.024	-.059
Housing discrimination and abuses	.100***	-.169
Family discrimination and abuses	.037**	-1.030***
<i>F</i>	13.371***	42.927***
<i>R</i>	.403	.620
<i>R Square</i>	.163	.384

<i>Adj. R</i>	.150	.375
<i>Constant</i>	2.049	21.632
<i>N</i>	490	490

Snapp et al. (2015) explained that sexuality-related social support from LGBT community contributes to these positive well-being and self-esteem with parental support providing the most benefit. This could possibly be the reason for this high level of self-esteem among LGBTs in Ghana. Another possible explanation for this high self-esteem among the LGBTs in Ghana is the fact that as a result of the high level of discrimination and abuses these individuals face on daily basis, they have developed “a tough skin” for it and as such do not allow these discrimination and abuses affect them.

The findings of the study revealed that the LGBTs in Ghana are satisfied with their life. Majority (69.2 per cent) of the LGBTs who participated in the study were found to be satisfied with life. This finding is also contrary to previous findings in literature which shows that victimization, that is, verbal insults, threats of violence, minor or major physical assaults and internalized homonegativity, are negatively related to life satisfaction of LGBTs (Petrou & Lemke, 2017; Hu et al., 2016). On the other hand, contrary to the findings of Powdthavee and Wooden (2015) that bisexuals have a lower life satisfaction than the rest of the population, this study revealed that bisexuals are more satisfied with their lives than the rest of the sexual orientation population. This could possibly be by the fact that these individuals are really not noticed by the public as a result of the fact that they are bisexuals and have sexual relations with both males and females. The Ghanaian populace are not able to identify these groups and so these group do not really face intense discrimination and abuses from Ghanaian populace which could explain their high level of life satisfaction than their counterparts.

The ordinary multiple linear regression analysis results indicated that religious discrimination and abuses, had a negative impact on the self-esteem of the LGBTs. However, the legal discrimination and abuses, housing discrimination and abuses, and family discrimination and abuses were found to have a positive impact on the self-esteem of the LGBTs. This implies the more they face these discrimination and abuses, the more they feel

self-worth. This finding is therefore in line with earlier finding of this study which revealed that the LGBTs have a high self-esteem. Another explanation for this finding is that along with its negative impact, stigma has self-protective properties related to group affiliation and support that ameliorate the effect of stigma on self-esteem (Crocker & Major, 1989, as cited in Meyer, 2003). The results of the study showed that social discrimination and abuses, as well as family discrimination and abuses had a negative impact on the life satisfaction of the LGBTs in Ghana. This means that, as the abuses and discrimination from the social and family circles increases the life satisfaction of these sexual minorities in Ghana decreases and vice versa. This result supports the fact that socialization and family are the basic unit of every society where an individual receives protection, care, and love, which are very immense for personal growth and happiness. This means that if a person does not feel a sense of love, protection and care from these very areas of life, he or she is more likely to feel a sense of worthlessness and will definitely not have a satisfied life. LGBTs receiving support from their family members and from the society or community in which they live in may feel a greater sense of self-worth, and this enhanced self-esteem may be a psychological resource, encouraging optimism, positive affect, and better mental health (Symister & Friend, 2003).

## Conclusion

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender population suffer widespread discrimination and abuses every day of their lives. These marginalization and discrimination experienced by LGBT people have contributed to barriers to access of healthcare and support services (Leonard, 2002; McNair, Anderson, Mitchell, 2003). However, as a result of the fact that there is a lack of research studies on how the discrimination and abuses faced by the LGBTs in Ghana affects their self-esteem and life-satisfaction, which could help in their mental health care provision, this study sought to bridge this gap by examining the impact of discrimination and abuses faced by the LGBTs on their self-esteem and life-satisfaction. The



findings of the study reveal that the LGBTs have a high self-esteem despite facing discrimination and abuses, contrary to previous studies that LGBT have lower levels of self-esteem. Also, contrary to previous studies, that life-satisfaction is significantly lower in countries where LGBT individuals are at a high risk of being subjected to victimization or discrimination, the present study reveals that they are, in general, satisfied with their lives, and a majority of them are even in general good health conditions. Meanwhile, a significant of note in this study is that the social culture and family have a crucial role to play in the life satisfaction of the LGBTs in Ghana. The quality of family relationships, and social support (e.g., providing love, advice, and care) can influence well-being through psychosocial, behavioral, and physiological pathways.

The findings of the study therefore support the fact that early detection and identification of factors associated with such at-risk groups will enable public health initiatives to expand the reach of strategies and interventions to promote and manage mentally healthy communities in Ghana. It is imperative that policy makers, stakeholders, family members, health care professionals and the general public understand that they play a significant and a crucial role in the self-esteem and the life-satisfaction of the LGBT individuals. Ensuring that these sexual minority groups receive the required legal, health, social and family support will be of immense help in preventing and managing mental health problems and suicide ideation which have been found to be prevalent (Acolatse, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c) among these sexual minorities in Ghana.

The findings of the self-esteem and life satisfaction of LGBT individuals in Ghana call for inclusive environments, acceptance and support from the family, the community in which they live in, the state, the general public, the media, health care practitioners and managers as well as healthcare service providers. Gaining the needed support from the public may help some of the LGBT individuals in Ghana to “come out”. Additionally, providing the needed legal support to these sexual minorities in Ghana will help to provide resilience in the face of marginalization, isolation, and victimization that will help them to maintain their self-worth and happiness. Safe environments and anti-discrimination laws and policies alleviate the stressors which make the

discrimination and abuses faced by these sexual and gender minority greater.

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