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Research Article

Sadness at the Rainbow: Unraveling the Unheard Sentiments of Non-Binary Students

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ABSTRACT

The number of individuals identifying as non-binary or genderqueer has significantly increased over time. This group experiences their gender identity as neither entirely male nor exclusively female; instead, they perceive it as a combination or a complete absence of binary gender identification that may evolve or remain consistent over time. Nevertheless, there is a limited amount of research focusing on the experiences of non-binary students, leading to common misunderstandings within their community. Consequently, this study sought to delve into the physical, mental, interpersonal, emotional, and spiritual experiences of non-binary students. To analyze the collected data, a qualitative approach, specifically a narrative research design, was employed. Three students from the Philippine Science High School - Ilocos Region Campus were chosen through snowball sampling to share their personal experiences as non-binary students. Based on the gathered information, it can be concluded that non-binary students in the PSHS-IRC community undergo a range of experiences that significantly affect their physical, mental, interpersonal, emotional, and spiritual well-being. It was observed that they struggle to form a positive self-image due to their dissatisfaction with their physical appearance. Additionally, their body dysmorphia, stemming from a dislike for their bodies perceived as too masculine or feminine, negatively impacts their mental health. Moreover, homophobia continues to disrupt their interpersonal relationships, as they often endure physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual abuse. Nonetheless, they still have support networks that provide ongoing assistance. Lastly, the results also indicate that their faith in Christianity has waned due to relentless verbal attacks from conservative individuals.

Keywords: *Experiences, Genderqueer, Non-binary, Students*

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Introduction

It has become customary for people to perceive gender as only two categories - male and female. However, in line with our progress as a society, there is an increasing recognition and acceptance of genders beyond the binary, such as Non-Binary or Genderqueer individuals. Non-binary individuals are those who do not identify strictly as either male or female. Their gender identity may encompass elements of both genders, and it can evolve. In simple terms, being Non-Binary means experiencing a gender that is neither male nor female (Understanding Non-Binary People: How to Be Respectful and Supportive, 2020). According to a study by the Pew Research Center (2022), nearly all non-binary individuals have known from an early age that they did not fit into the natural biological group they were assigned to. Some may feel uncomfortable in their bodies, while others may be attracted to individuals of the same gender. This often leads to ongoing self-exploration and the realization that their physical appearance does not truly align with their identity. Consequently, they face various challenges related to their physical appearance. Some of these challenges include complex interactions with other genders, sudden or delayed understanding by others, and confusion when interacting with people. Some are influenced by their upbringing, which reinforces their sense of being different. Pronouns are a significant concern for them, as they often feel that they no longer fit into the "male/female" group, sometimes resulting in misgendering. Another concern for non-binary individuals is their clothing choices, whether to conform to or deviate from sex-appropriate attire. They frequently encounter rude individuals who question their clothing choices, leading to resentment and conflicts. Some may not feel comfortable wearing sex-appropriate attire but are compelled to do so due to societal pressures, family expectations, and the world they live in. Clothing can also be a means of self-expression and identity, but it is often subject to stereotypes. For instance, men wearing blue and masculine clothing and women wearing pink and feminine clothing are common stereotypes. These stereotypes can be observed in schools

that enforce dress codes for male and female students (Duggal & Sood, 2020). According to Chacko (2019), uniforms are used to maintain gender norms and societal expectations. As a result, non-binary students often have to adhere to traditional uniform concepts, which can further exacerbate their discomfort and feelings of not being validated in their physical appearance. Studies also suggest that non-binary individuals experience higher levels of psychological stress due to their non-conformity with established gender norms (Baker et al., 2017; Gates et al., 2018). Additionally, Baker et al. (2017) presented the Minority Stress Theory, which posits that negative experiences related to being non-binary can lead to mental and psychological problems. Some of these negative experiences include social exclusion, victimization, and various forms of transphobia and discrimination. Furthermore, their interactions with others are affected as well. According to a study conducted by Smith and Wright (2015), one of the negative consequences of "being out" is continuous harassment by others. They often receive comments that indicate homophobic or transphobic discrimination. Consequently, they may feel invisible and isolated due to the concept of heteronormativity, where heterosexuality is considered the norm. On the flip side, there are positive effects of being "out." According to the study by Smith and Wright (2015), those who feel supported are individuals who have been "out" for a long time. They also found that non-binary individuals have role models from whom they derive validation. This study emphasizes the lack of knowledge among others about non-binary individuals, which is why many non-binary individuals struggle to reveal their true selves. This research can be beneficial for non-binary individuals, offering a means to better understand their experiences in school and how they are treated by others. The study's findings can provide valuable insights, especially to those outside their community, regarding the experiences of non-binary individuals and others in the LGBTQ+ spectrum. Additionally, this research aims to serve as a reminder of the importance of respecting others and combating homophobia and the discrimination it brings.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to deepen our understanding and knowledge of the experiences of non-binary students at the Philippine Science High School - Ilocos Region Campus. In addition, the study seeks to address the following specific objectives:

1. To identify the physical, mental, interpersonal, emotional, and spiritual experiences of non-binary students.
2. To create a representation that elucidates the experiences of non-binary students.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Physical Experiences of Filipino LGBTQ+ Individuals

According to a Human Rights Watch article (2017), some experience physical forms of bullying, which can lead them to engage in harmful behaviors such as using illegal drugs or having unprotected sex. Examples of physical bullying include punching, kicking, and shoving. Some even throw objects like notebooks, books, papers, chalk, erasers, and more. However, it's not limited to outright physical violence. Some individuals also face harassment, which can result in harm to their private body parts and affect their mental, interpersonal, and emotional well-being.

Mental Well-being of Filipino LGBTQ+ Individuals

LGBTQ+ individuals remain a minority group in the Philippines. A study by Manalastas (2013) shared the public's perspective on LGBTQ+ members, gathered from surveys conducted across various regions in the country. It revealed that 28% of respondents found being a member of this community unacceptable. Moreover, numerous religious institutions oppose the LGBTQ+ community and use their influence to affect national policies, sexual health services, and LGBTQ+ representation in government and schools. The Psychological Association of the Philippines (2021) exposed that many LGBTQ+ Filipinos hide their true selves due to social pressures, leading to psychological issues such as sadness, fear, anger, and isolation or self-isolation. According to Human Rights Watch (2017), LGBTQ+ students often experience discrimination and bullying, which

can impact their studies and lead to mental health issues like depression and anxiety. Consequently, they may skip classes, struggle to focus on their coursework, or drop out.

Emotional Experiences of Filipino LGBTQ+ Individuals

Some non-binary individuals have positive emotional experiences. According to a study by Budge et al. (2021), some non-binary individuals feel happiness and love, especially from their parents and partners. They experience a sense of freedom when they embrace their identity and gain confidence when they stop hiding their true selves. However, negative emotional experiences are also prevalent. Examples include teasing by others. Due to persistent bullying, some LGBTQ+ youth experience emotional and interpersonal struggles that negatively affect their emotional and social interactions with others. Some LGBTQ+ individuals may even contemplate self-harm or suicide as a result. A survey cited in Manalastas's study (2013) indicated that 16% of gay LGBTQ+ males had considered suicide, compared to only 8% of males who are not part of the LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, 27% of LGBTQ+ females had contemplated suicide, compared to 18% of females not in the LGBTQ+ community. Some LGBTQ+ individuals have attempted suicide due to bullying and discrimination—39% of the 16% gay LGBTQ+ males and 7% of the 27% LGBTQ+ females have attempted suicide.

Social Interactions of Filipino LGBTQ+ Individuals

According to the research, LGBTQ+ members have exclusive interactions through "swardspeak" or "gay lingo." They developed this language due to the discrimination they felt because of their clothing, physical appearance, actions, and speech. Feeling embarrassed, they decided to create their own language and way of speaking (Pascual, 2016).

Spiritual Experiences of Filipino LGBTQ+ Individuals

According to a study, nearly half of LGBTQ+ individuals in the Philippines are not religious. Of those who have a religion, many attend

church less frequently and do not prioritize their religiosity. Additionally, 33% of religious LGBTQ+ individuals believe their religion contradicts their sexual orientation or gender identity. Among non-LGBTQ+ individuals with a religion, 55% believe that homosexuality contradicts their spiritual beliefs. Generally, LGBTQ+ members are often non-religious and face judgment, abuse, and harassment from religious groups. This was one of the comments from the study: "The only thing holding me back from being open about my sexuality is the very strong religious Christian views that most of my family has. I have come out and been open with anyone and everyone who I know won't judge me based on their religious views and have yet to encounter any negative responses or discrimination. I am confident that the religious members of my family will judge me based on their conservative and radical views of their religion and will end their relationships with me, and I'm not prepared to lose such a large part of my family over it" ("A Survey of LGBT Americans Attitudes, Experiences and Values in Changing Times," 2013).

Youth in the LGBTQ+ Community

Studies indicate that LGBTQ+ youth are more vulnerable to discrimination based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. They often face verbal abuse. It was also noted that non-binary participants in the population have a higher likelihood of self-harm and mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety (Baker et al., 2017). Furthermore, non-binary participants experience gender dysphoria, characterized by anxiety due to the incongruence between their biological sex and gender identity. They often feel invisible and misunderstood in a society that clings to the binary concept of gender (Gates et al., 2018).

School Policies

According to McMurray (2021), school uniform policies that have separate rules for males and females can harm students' rights to gender neutrality, fluidity, and experimentation. These policies may send potential messages of inclusivity and support for LGBTQ+ individuals, but many schools fail to implement them properly. Consequently, some students choose

to violate uniform and hair regulations, often facing homophobic and transphobic abuse from both peers and teachers, sometimes daily.

Experiences of Non-Binary Students in School

In a study conducted by Carlile et al. (2021), it was found that school curricula were designed more for binary individuals, making it challenging for young non-binary individuals to openly discuss their sexuality in educational institutions. Non-binary youths aged 13 to 18 were required to educate themselves about gender identity, particularly regarding non-binary identities, without support from their schools. They felt that their schools could potentially discriminate against them, making them feel unsafe. They also faced pressure from transphobic bullying and societal expectations of binary behaviors and self-presentation. Some even hesitated to seek support, fearing the exposure of their sexuality.

Methods

Study Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach because it aimed to explore the experiences of non-binary individuals in their lives. According to Cleland (2017), qualitative research is better suited to address the "why" and "how" aspects of a concept. Phenomenology, as defined by the University of Warwick (2021), is used to provide alternative perspectives based on the experiences of a particular phenomenon. It also delves into how people attribute meaning to various things in the world through their experiences. Given the sensitive nature of this study, the researchers ensured that they obtained informed consent from the participants. The stories and experiences of the respondents regarding their physical, mental, interpersonal, and other related experiences were kept confidential to respect and protect their privacy.

Population and Sampling

The participants in this study were non-binary students at the Philippine Science High School - Ilocos Region Campus, spanning from any grade level, from seventh to twelfth grade. Three individuals were involved in this research, and it was conducted using Snowball

sampling. The sampling technique was based on a study conducted by Hayter et al. (2020), where they identified 35 LGBTQ+ community members currently studying in their schools using snowball sampling. In the current research, Snowball sampling was used to identify participants. In case of insufficient or limited connections by the researchers, they could seek assistance from a non-binary respondent who could use their knowledge and connections in the community to encourage additional participants to join the study.

Instrument, Data Collection Method, and Ethical Standards

The researchers conducted one-on-one interviews to collect data, following the approach used in the studies by Carlile et al. (2021) and Losty & O'Connor (2017). This process required permission from the participants' school, the Philippine Science High School - Ilocos Region Campus. If the respondent was a minor, they needed to inform their participation to their parent or a trusted individual over 18 years old. This was confirmed through a consent form signed by the respondent and their guardian or parent, indicating their agreement to the minor's participation in the study. The interviews covered various aspects of their

experiences in school and the effects on their daily lives. This study focused on the physical, mental, and interpersonal aspects of their experiences (Arcelus et al., 2019; Baker et al., 2017; Benotsch et al., 2017). There was also a section for general information or data not covered in the three mentioned sections but would contribute to the overall study. Data collection was conducted orally and could be done in person or online, depending on the respondent's preference and capability. The interview content was transcribed with the participants' permission. The study did not employ instruments or technology for statistical analysis. As this was a thematic analysis, the research emphasized themes identified from the experiences rather than quantitative numbers.

Results and Discussion

The experiences of three non-binary students at the Philippine Science High School - Ilocos Region Campus were obtained and understood in this study. This was conducted to deepen the knowledge and understanding of non-binary students and their physical, mental, interpersonal, emotional, and spiritual experiences. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to gather their responses and important data.

Experiences of Non-Binary Students

Table 1. Codes, Statements, and Themes from the experiences of Non-Binary students

Codes/Statements	Themes
<i>"The...reversible things, like clothes in that sense maybe... But not physical alteration."-R1</i> <i>"I'm contemplating chest removal. I-I just want detachable boobs, that's all."-R2</i> <i>"I was originally gonna say like through a haircut and clothing, but I believe that clothes and haircuts have no gender, so I just do whatever I want to express myself every day. And they change a lot."-R1</i> <i>"What I really want, sis, is just... Pockets [laughs]. You can stuff a whole tumbler in there, hehe."-R3</i>	Sentiments on Physical Aspects
<i>"Feeling po is like feeling uncomfortable, parang hindi sayo yung yung appearance mo, yung physical na katawan. So uhm, mahirap po parang...look in mirrors or look at photographs of yourself po."-R2</i> <i>"The... uh, chest area. It's normal for me to... I had breakdowns about it."-R1</i> <i>"I just had... a constant struggle with my self-image... and I had experienced a lot with gender envy."-R2</i>	Sentiments on Mental Aspects

Codes/Statements	Themes
<p>"It (Being Non-Binary) adds on the problems na I already have."-R3</p> <p>"I don't feel ashamed about it or anything. Like, I like being non-binary. Pero uhm, the thing with it is uhm... discouraged by society. Uhhh, practices and cultures and stuff, it's, uh, it's a bit challenging to live as non-binary. So, parang dumadagdag din sa problema."-R1</p>	
<p>"It doesn't affect the way I act, but uhh homophobic person. If homophobic people interact with me and they know I'm non-binary, it probably affects that—the way we interact."-R1</p> <p>"It doesn't affect the way I act. Pero it makes me uncomfortable if parang sa isang group sa 'Oh my god, babae tayo' ganon."-R3</p> <p>"I only came out to my friends so uhm, the changes naman is good. Pero yeah, I don't really come out to other people."-R2</p> <p>"I was a bit open about it, but uh they (family) just like, they don't think it's normal."</p> <p>"They would disown me!"-R1</p> <p>"They'll probably just say, pinagdadaanan mo lang yan. 'That's just a phase.' They would still try to push me as...as a girl."-R3</p>	Sentiments on Social Aspects
<p>"Having, like, a group of people to call yourself as to...uh...communicate with I suppose is uh nice. But sometimes, you get confused with yourself."-R1</p> <p>"Yeah, yes!! (They have people who support them)."-R2</p> <p>"I get distressed and conflicted a lot."-R3</p>	Sentiments on Emotional Aspects
<p>"I'm only religious in name. [laughs] Don't say that to anyone. Uhh, the concept of a higher being is uhm, a confusing subject. However, when I die, I don't think I'm going to heaven or hell [laughs]."-R2</p> <p>"I'm leaning towards agnosticism."-R3</p> <p>"When I was a child, I was really religious. Pero yeah, sexuality yung nauna, then yung gender. Not really started but... a buildup of things. But that is part of the build-up, I wouldn't say, like, led me astray from my faith. My faith was, like, different from the church. It led me astray from the church, tas medyo similar na rin."-R1</p> <p>"I was religious before as a kid. But, when I started dropping hints to my parents that I had a crush on this girl from elementary. And when we were in a car one time and we saw two men outside and they were very close together, and they said 'they should repent their sins.' And so, that kind of like was a factor in my faith decreasing."-R3</p>	Sentiments on Spiritual Aspects

Sentiments on the Physical Aspect

According to the participants' feedback, there have been instances where they found it

challenging to form their self-image or had difficulty perceiving themselves. The respondents often felt like their physical appearance and

bodies didn't truly represent them. They expressed characteristics aligned with the phenomenon of gender dysphoria, where an individual experiences anxiety due to the incongruence between their biological sex and gender identity.

Changes in Physical Appearance

Participants mentioned changes such as wearing different clothes and experimenting with hairstyles, are considered reversible alterations or non-permanent changes to the body. On the other hand, irreversible alterations often require medical or professional procedures, like chest removal. These responses align with what Bass et al. (2018) discussed in their research, emphasizing that body modification and hormone therapy are the most common medical interventions for non-binary individuals. However, many still opt for changes that involve visible markers of gender such as clothing, hairstyles, concealing the chest, sitting posture, and speech instead of undergoing medical operations.

Gendered School Uniforms

The topic of school uniform policies was also discussed during the interviews. Participants shared that the current school uniform proposals only reinforce the binary division between male and female, which further erases non-binary students. According to Chang et al. (2021), erasure is a form of discrimination where the rights, beliefs, and general experiences of non-binary individuals are ignored and not recognized. They expressed the need for gender-neutral uniforms to better accommodate and acknowledge the diverse student body.

Sentiments on the Mental Aspect Body Dysmorphia

Based on the participants' feedback, they often experience an ongoing struggle with their self-image and frequently encounter feelings of gender envy. They feel disconnected from their bodies and find it difficult to look at themselves in photos or mirrors. According to the study by Galupo et al. (2020), non-binary individuals described their body dysmorphia as a reaction to feeling excessively masculine or feminine.

Characteristics perceived as too masculine or too feminine were described as not genuine or correct. This theme is often expressed as a desire to achieve a balance in both feminine and masculine aspects or traits.

Psychological Distress

Another participant expressed that living as a non-binary individual is challenging and adds to their existing problems due to societal discouragement. According to Matsuno and Budge (2017), non-binary individuals face discrimination because societal structures are designed for individuals identified within the gender binary. Consequently, non-binary individuals are forced to exist in a world with little accommodation for their identity. As a result, increased levels of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem have been reported among non-binary individuals due to the difficulty of living in a world where understanding and role models are lacking. Therefore, the rise in anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem among non-binary individuals has been reported (Thorne et al., 2018).

Sentiments on the Social Aspect

Based on the responses given during the interviews, the interactions of the participants with other people have remained unchanged or have seen minor adjustments, especially among those who are aware of their gender identity. These changes may have both positive and negative effects on their social interactions.

Positive Effects on Social Interaction

According to one respondent, there have been changes in their interactions with friends, and these changes have been positive. Positive social interactions are beneficial for mental and physical health. According to Brody (2017), individuals who experience satisfying relationships tend to be happier, have fewer health problems, and live longer. Having positive connections with people also helps reduce the stress experienced by individuals and gives meaning to their lives. Therefore, being supportive of LGBTQ+ individuals is crucial. An ally refers to individuals who support and advocate for equal rights (Youth Engaged Change, n.d.).

However, some individuals may still feel uncomfortable around non-binary people.

Homophobia

Homophobia has negative effects on people and makes it difficult for LGBTQ+ individuals to express their true selves in a world without discrimination. According to Dresden (2021), homophobia takes various forms, from using negative language to bullying, abuse, and physical violence. Some participants shared that they have come out to their families, but their families do not accept their identity as non-binary, deeming it abnormal. Others hesitate to come out to their families because there is a possibility of being disowned. According to van Bergen (2020), many LGBTQ+ individuals receive invalidating responses from their parents, and some parents harbor negative feelings toward their children's identities. Some children accept that their parents will never be open to their sexuality. However, there are also cases where parents accept and support their children.

Sentiments on the Emotional Aspect Gender Dysphoria

Based on the participants' responses, they often experience emotions such as anxiety and self-discrepancy. These emotions are related to their self-identity, where participants also experience what is known as gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is a common experience among individuals who recognize their gender identity. According to the study by Dhejne et al. (2016), gender dysphoria is experienced by individuals whose biological sex does not align with their unique gender identity. This condition can lead to emotional issues such as sadness, which may manifest as depression. However, gender dysphoria can also lead to other negative experiences in various aspects, including mental and social aspects. For example, individuals experiencing gender dysphoria may also experience social ostracism (lack of acceptance by friends or peers), which can result in psychological distress (De Vries et al., 2016).

Friends, Peers, or Support Systems

According to some respondents, having support systems or trustworthy individuals

helps alleviate their emotional struggles. According to Steenberghs et al. (2021), students who often lack peers tend to actively withdraw from school activities and experience negative emotions within the school context.

Sentiments on the Spiritual Aspect

Based on the shared experiences of the respondents, the spiritual aspect of the lives of young people in the non-binary group appears to be diminishing. This is likely due to the strictness of their religion regarding the union of individuals of the same gender.

Agnosticism / Atheism

Their enthusiasm for their religion diminishes when their religion contradicts their non-binary identity, forcing them to lie or become agnostic in their faith or to completely renounce their religion (atheist). According to research by the Pew Research Center (2019), 48% of their respondents do not identify with any religion, and among those who do, they rarely attend religious services or sermons. This suggests that religion has a significant impact on the lives of non-binary individuals, with the majority believing that males are only meant for females and that two individuals of the same gender cannot be together.

Religious Verbal Terrorism

This includes the excessive ridicule by religious believers towards non-binary individuals. According to a study by Wilkins et al. (2022), Christians believe that the advancement of LGBTQ is against their beliefs and is an attack on their religion. Because of this, religious believers ridicule LGBTQ members using the Bible, which is why many non-binary individuals leave their faith or hide their non-binary identity. This also includes the overall impact of religion on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of non-binary individuals. According to the study by Beagan and Hattie (2015), some individuals become uncomfortable with their bodies and refrain from engaging in sexual activities due to religion. Many leave religious institutions to avoid the pain inflicted by religious believers on non-binary individuals.

A representation that elucidates the experiences of non-binary students

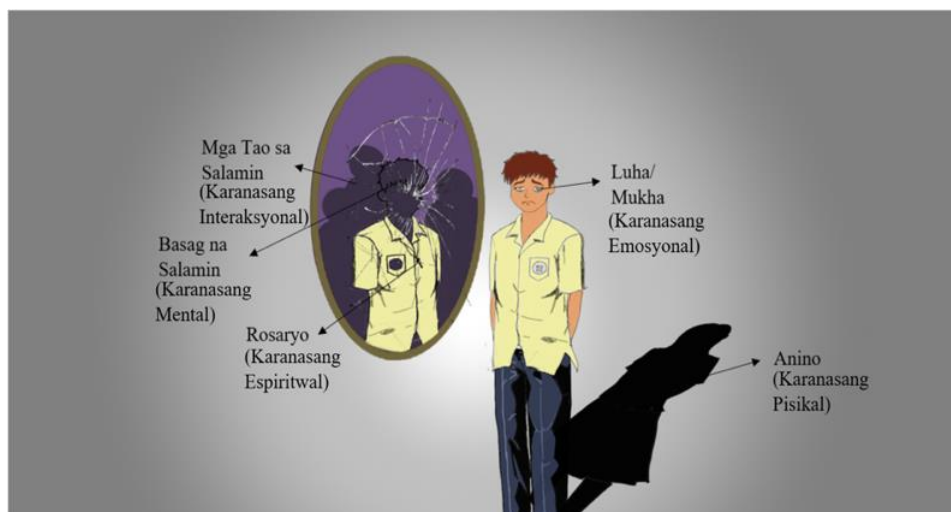


Figure 1: Representation that elucidates the experiences of non-binary students

Shadow

In the physical experience, the picture shows a difference between the student's appearance and their shadow. This symbolizes the physical aspects that the student wishes to change to align with their true identity.

Broken Mirror

In the mental experience, a broken mirror is depicted, where the student sees. This illustrates that the student is not happy with what they see within themselves, possibly experiencing gender envy or body dysmorphia.

Tears/Face

The emotional state of the student is conveyed through the image of their face, showing signs of distress and inner turmoil.

Rosary

Furthermore, a version of the student with a rosary is seen in the mirror; this symbolizes the student's potentially former religious affiliation or beliefs.

People in the Mirror

Finally, the people the student encounters in their daily life are reflected in the mirror, representing parents, friends, or even adversaries.

Implication

Non-binary students face significant challenges in various aspects of their lives, including physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, and spiritual dimensions. It implies that the impact of societal norms, prejudices, and personal struggles is substantial, leading to a need for support and understanding. The implication is that society and educational institutions need to foster a more inclusive and accepting environment for non-binary individuals, addressing issues related to self-identity, mental well-being, and freedom from discrimination. It also underscores the importance of supportive networks for non-binary individuals to cope with the difficulties they encounter. Additionally, it highlights the potential harm that conservative religious groups can cause to non-binary individuals and the importance of promoting tolerance and respect for diverse gender identities.

Conclusion

Many non-binary students at PSHS-IRC experience significant impacts on their physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, and spiritual aspects. They struggle with forming their self-image as they often feel that the reflection in the mirror doesn't represent who they truly are. They adapt by wearing different clothes and styles, which are reversible alterations,

and some even consider irreversible alterations like chest removal. Additionally, their mental well-being is affected as they experience body dysmorphia, struggling to accept their bodies due to societal pressures to conform to binary gender norms. Homophobia continues to disrupt their interpersonal aspects. Some individuals use physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual abuse to torment or change the minds of non-binary people. However, there are still those who support them. These support systems play a crucial role in helping them cope with the negative experiences they face. Some students have even contemplated becoming agnostic or atheist due to the continuous verbal terrorism from conservative Christians or other religious groups. Their beliefs weaken, or they leave their faith altogether as religion continually attacks their spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and interpersonal aspects of life. Their environment can significantly impact them, either positively or negatively. A simulacrum was also created based on their responses, symbolizing their physical, mental, interpersonal, emotional, and spiritual experiences.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers recommend that the school focus on inclusivity for better support and education of its students. This can be achieved by strengthening existing school policies like the Safe Space Act. Additionally, a reevaluation of the academic curriculum should be considered to reflect current changes, such as the use of gender-neutral pronouns in English. Everyone is encouraged to gain knowledge and understanding of various gender identities and to combat any form of discrimination and judgment that their peers may experience. This will help create an inclusive community for all.

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