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MEN LOVING MEN  
A Phenomenology of Gay Relationships

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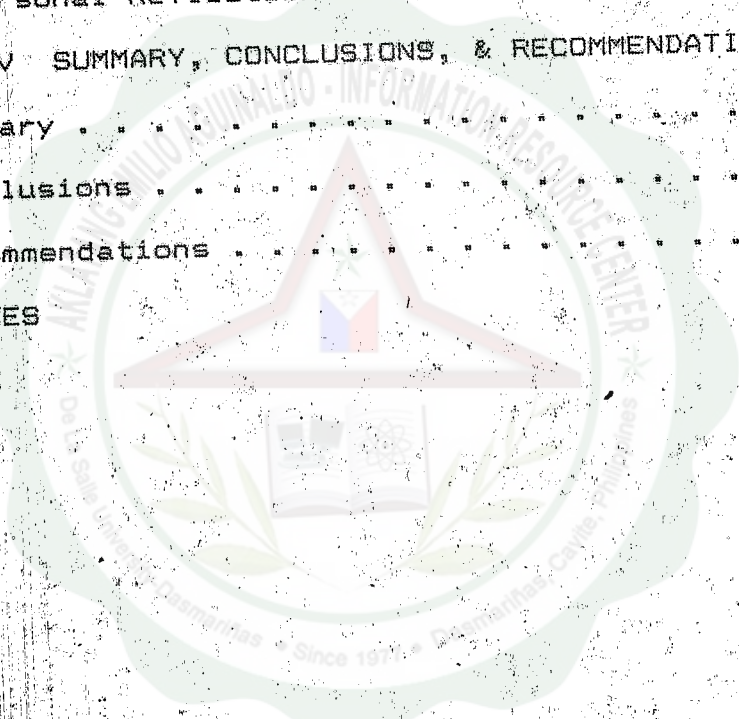
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## Chapter V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This is an exploratory investigation on gay relationships. It provides an indepth description of the first hand experiences of gay men in romantic relationships, as seen from their phenomenological point of view.

The subjects of this study consist of five selected male homosexuals. A combination of purposive and chain-referral sampling methods was used in the process of acquiring the needed participants.

The ages of the respondents ranged from twenty to twenty-five years old. Two of them are college students, while the other three are working professionals. They either come from middle or upper-middle class family. Three of the respondents have expereinced two long-term gay relationships, while the other two respondents have only experienced one relationship.



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The indepth interview method was used to gather the data needed for this study. A self-constructed interview guide consisting of thirty-six questions was used in conducting interviews with the respondents.

The results of the interviews indicate that for a majority of gay respondents, their romantic relationship is primarily characterized by the following components: attachment, caring, and pleasing. The respondents also identify the following factors as essential to the success of a romantic relationship: open communication, expression of affection and concern, mutual love, respect for partner's right to be different, and sexual compatibility. All gay men interviewed believe that as long as a gay couple is strongly committed to and genuinely love each other, then they will surely have a successful and long-lasting relationship.

The most frequent reason cited by the respondents for engaging in a gay relationship is to fulfill their need to give and to receive love. Aside from the fulfillment of emotional needs, a permanent relationship also enables the respondents to satisfy



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their sexual needs. For other respondents, a gay relationship primarily serves as a source of meaning and inspiration for them.

The data show that the process of gay relationship development generally involves the following stages: 1) entry stage; 2) exploratory stage; and 3) commitment stage.

The entry stage marks the process whereby the gay respondent got to be acquainted with his partner. The exploratory stage is characterized by dating and courtship activities. Each gay man tries to know more about his prospective partner, and to assess the possibility of developing an even deeper relationship at this particular stage. If everything goes well during the exploratory stage, two gay men are likely to commit themselves to each other in a permanent, long-term partnership.

The findings of this study also reveal that the gay respondents experience different problems in their relationships, namely: a possessive partner, partner's infidelity, jealousy, partner's personality problem, feelings of boredom, being closeted, and communication



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problem.

It has also been shown that the gay respondents used diverse strategies in dealing with their relationship problems. The ways by which the gay respondents handle their problems somehow reflect the type of personality each of them has, and the extent of true love and devotion in their gay relationship.

## Conclusions

As a whole, the findings of this study indicate that gays do fall in love. They engage themselves in a romantic partnership primarily to fulfill a basic human need--the need to give and to receive love, to care for someone special and be cared for in return. The views and experiences of gay men concerning romantic relationship are generally similar to those of heterosexuals. With true love and devotion, gay relationships can be as successful, or possibly even better than heterosexual ones.



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## Recommendations

### To Future Researchers

This study so far has provided an indepth description of the experiences of selected gay men in their romantic relationship. In connection with the present study, I would like to suggest several possible areas for further exploration and understanding.

- 1) Conduct a large scale survey on the views and experiences of gay men concerning romantic relationships.
- 2) Conduct a study on the dynamics of gay relationships using gay couples as units of analysis.
- 3) Do a comparative analysis of romantic relationships between gay men, lesbians, and heterosexuals.
- 4) Uncover the relationship between personality types and the ways by which gay men deal with problems in their romantic relationship.
- 5) Investigate the sociological factors that may affect the development of a gay relationship.
- 6) Conduct a research comparing the romantic





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relationships of gay men in their adolescent, adulthood, and old age.

## To Gay Readers

Based on the suggestions given by the respondents themselves, as well as the personal insights that I obtained through this study, I have come up with several guidelines that may help in establishing more successful, harmonious, and long-lasting gay relationship.

1) Have faith in yourself and in your relationship. Believe that gay relationship can be successful and long-lasting. Debunk all the negative societal messages about gays and gay relationships.

2) Genuinely care about your partner's welfare as much as your own. Respect your partner's right to be different.

3) Maintain open communication in your relationship. Express both positive and negative feelings to each other honestly and tactfully.

4) Express love, affection, and concern to each other constantly in order to keep the sparkle of romance



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alive.

5) Do not rush yourself into a commitment. Try to understand your prospective partner well before deciding on a permanent commitment.

6) Clarify you and your partner's expectations toward each other when getting into a commitment.

7) Make sure that you and your partner are emotionally, intellectually, and sexually compatible.

8) Do not try to change or to dominate your partner.

9) Examine your self-concept when you experience intense feelings of jealousy and insecurities.

10) Liberate yourself from societal constraints. Accept your homosexual feelings and be glad for being gay. Enjoy your gay relationship fully and try to make the most out of it. Just feel sorry for narrow-minded people who never learn to appreciate the richness of diversity.

