Exploring Discriminatory Practices Within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community

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Abstract

It has been found that there is an absence of research pertaining to the topic of within-group discrimination for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community. This research serves as a pilot study, while this poster represents a synthesis of available information on the topic.

Introduction

The investigator chose this topic due to personal discriminatory experiences encountered within the LGBT community. It is with great hopes that this research will lay ground work for additional conversations and future research by others on the topic.

This study is currently being carried out in three phases. Phase one included the completion of a systematic review of the literature which revealed a dearth of peer reviewed research dedicated to the topic. In an effort to gain additional information, the investigator examined non-scholarly sources (i.e. opinion editorials, documentaries, and magazine articles) and conducted interviews with higher education faculty. Results indicated that each group within the LGBT community faces some form of self-discrimination, and that entities under the LGBT umbrella show some form of discrimination against one another.

Phase two encompassed the development of a 46 item questionnaire based on findings from the literature review. Upon ECU Institutional Review Boards (IRB) approval, the survey will be distributed to East Carolina University students who self-identify as LGBT persons. Participation in this study is voluntary.

The third and final phase will involve aggregation and interpretation of the data. The researcher will then present all findings through a final manuscript.

Review of Literature

The literature review was divided into 4 parts based on each segment of the LGBT community. The following information was obtained:

- Within the Lesbian community, discrimination primarily pertains to the idea of heteronormative gender roles and how they play out within everyday life and in the relationships of these women. Also, physical appearance to fit the heteronormative mold placed on them tends to cause great strife.

- Intergroup discrimination in the Gay community has been shown to be related to the topics of race, physical appearance, perceived heteronormative sexual roles, and gender expression. Social media and dating apps also tend to provide a platform for this discrimination to take place.

- Discrimination pertaining to the Bisexual community focuses more on exclusion by Lesbian and Gay identified individuals. Bisexual individuals are viewed as confused persons. “Bi-invisibility” is described as, “a lack of acknowledgement and ignoring of the clear evidence that bisexuals exist” (LGBTQ, 2011, p.1).

- Although the “T” is included in the LGBT acronym, those who identify as transgender individuals are stigmatized by the LGBT population. Trans persons feel as if they are underrepresented within the “umbrella” community. Transphobic writings have become a part of lesbian feminist rhetoric against the inclusion of transgendered women. They feel that even though trans women (Male-to-Female) identify as female, they will always be male and never able to understand women empowerment and the struggles of being an authentic women (Morrison, 2010).

Expected Findings

Currently the investigator expects the following results:

- Participants will indicate they have experienced some level of within group discrimination.
- LGBT identified students are less likely to utilize services offered on campus due to a negative campus climate.
- Bisexual and Trans individuals will have the lowest survey response, but will account for the greatest number of those who feel excluded from the LGBT community.

References


