

Concern of The Marginalized Group and Progress in Partnerships

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ABSTRACT: *For same-sex love partners, the challenge of establishing a healthy relationship while dealing with the stresses associated with being members of a stigmatized minority group is particularly tough to overcome. The purpose of this research was to investigate the link between two potential sources of minority stress in lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) people (internalized homo-negativity and sexual orientation self-concealment) and changes in relationship commitment variables in LGB individuals (constraints, attractions, and satisfaction). Throughout the research, 51 LGB college students who were in a same-sex dating relationship with the same individual completed questionnaires at two different periods in time, six weeks apart from one another on the same day. Reduced attraction and pleasure in romantic relationships, but not limitations, were shown to be associated with higher levels of internalized homo-negativity at the outset. In contrast, the early levels of self-concealment were not associated with any of the factors studied in this study.*

KEYWORD: *Homo-Negativity, LGB, Same-Sex Couples, Satisfaction, Sexual Minority.*

1. INTRODUCTION

According to psychological research, the similarities between same-sex couples and heterosexual couples exceed the differences by a large margin. It is possible that one of the most significant differences between same-sex and heterosexual couples is the fact that close same-sex spouses in social environments that often marginalize and devalue same-sex partnerships must work hard to establish and maintain their love connection. As Meyer argued, the difficulties of coping with manifestations of sexual orientation stigma are part of an ongoing process of minority stress. Meyer also provided evidence that a variety of variables perceived to be minority stressors are associated with lower psychosocial functioning in LGG, ranging from external (e.g., acts of discrimination) to internal (e.g., feelings of worthlessness) (e.g. problems with self-acceptance).

These stresses have mostly been investigated in terms of individual well-being; nevertheless, among same-sex couples, they are often believed to have an impact on the quality of romantic relationships. For example, fear of prejudice and discrimination may cause some LGB individuals to conceal their same-sex relationship from others, which may in turn decrease the couple's levels of social support. Another example is that it may be difficult for LGB individuals who have not publicly recognized their sexual orientation to form a strong emotional connection with or commit to a romantic partner. A small body of research has shown a link between several kinds of minority stress and self-reported relationship effectiveness in same-sex couples and, more generally, in stigmatized partnerships, but the evidence is sparse[1].

These findings represent a significant step forward in our understanding of the role of stigma in same-sex couples; however, the study's reliance on cross-sectional data limited the conclusions that could be drawn about the relationship between minority stress and the quality of relationships in this population. It is difficult to determine whether a simultaneous association between minority stress and relationship satisfaction represents a situation in which minority stress affects relationship satisfaction, stress impacts satisfaction, or a situation in which there is reciprocal causality between minority stress and relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, cross-sectional data do not offer a foundation for determining to what degree minority stress sources are risk factors for the degradation of the consistency of the connection over time, which is important for comprehending the relationship.

In the current study, we addressed these limitations by examining data collected from LGB people who were in same-sex romantic relationships at two different periods in time. Conclusions The extent to which changes in relationship commitment determinants over a six-week period were predicted by two factors that have been proposed as causes of LGB minority stress, namely concealment of sexual orientation and internalized homo-negativity, was the focus of this study.

In recent decades, same-sex couples have been more prominent in the United States and Canada. A new study using the 2010 United States census data indicates that 646,464 same-sex couples live in the United States, with

around 20 percent of them married couples (i.e., one member reports being married). This visibility was combined with increased legal recognition of same-sex couples' rights, with a view to ensuring that Canada and 19 U.S. States and the District of Columbia (when written) offer equal-sex couples the opportunity to gain legal recognition of their partnerships equal to that afforded to other-sex couples[2].

A recent ruling in the U.S. Supreme Court now allows for federal recognition of same-sex marriages given in states where same-sex marriages are lawful. However, most of the US states do not offer equal legal recognition and several have a constitutional prohibition on any kind of homosexual acknowledgment. Alternatively, the public views on homosexual and homosexual relations in general improved during this period although the negative consideration and disapproval of homosexual and gender relations among two persons of a same sex remained high; more than 50 percent of the population of many states in the US. Therefore, same sex interactions occur within a societal environment marked by social and structural stigma.

1.1 Psychological Research On the Relations Between the Same Sex:

Studies on homosexual relations may be considered in two broad categories: (a) inter-group studies compared same sex couples to heterosexual couples in order to understand similarities and differences in key outcomes, such as closeness, satisfaction with relationships and commitment. Intergroup research indicate that same-sex pairs do not vary substantially from heterosexual pairs in most relation-well-being measures. Specifically, same-sex and heterosexual couples do not vary between love, confidence, closeness, commitment and fulfilment. Though not initially classified as such in the aforementioned research, these results suggest that good connections thrive. In contrast, internal group studies have generally focused on unfavorable circumstances and processes in same-sex couples that may harm the relationship between the spouses. Many of the study has used minority stress to explain how the experiences of discrimination, expectancies of rejection, stigma hiding and internalized homophobia of same-sex couples are social stresses and thus have a detrimental effect on connection well-being markers. In fact, research has shown that minority stress experiences have a detrimental effect in different ways on a range of relationship wellbeing outcomes[3].

Taken combined, the results of these two psychological study categories on same sex pairs are puzzling. If LGB people experience more minority stress than heterosexuals — both generally and in relation to themselves — and minority stressors are negatively associated with related well-being, how is it possible that comparative studies have little or no differences between same sex and heterosexual couples in the same relational well-being results? People in same-sex pairs may be able to manage, minimize and resist the negative consequences of minority stress in their relationships in ways that have not yet been taken into consideration within the broader psychological study group of same-sex partnerships. Variability in individual psychological responses to minority stress experiences in same-sex partnerships may explain the fact that, while the structure and interpersonal discrimination continues, many equal-sex couples have healthy and fulfilling connections. This opportunity is shown by studies on coping and resilience in the setting of general minority stress. For example, sexual minorities that can exercise more mastery may be shielded from the harmful consequences of minority stress. These results are consistent with growing studies showing the positive elements of the lives of sexual minorities. The next stage in developing healthier same-sex relationships is an understanding of how people are capable of having healthy and fulfilling relationships in the same-sex partnership in spite of a lasting social and political environment defined by minority stress[4].

1.2 Implications for Same Sex Practice:

In their review of the challenges and opportunities presented by psychological research in the field of the understanding and promotion of mental health and welfare of sexual minorities, researchers point out that both (a) "understand how same-sex couples achieve and maintain good relationships" and (b) exercise resilience and strength to sustain their welfare against continuous prejudice and discretion. In dealing with sexual minority clients, it is thus of greatest significance to promote resilience in love connections to assist couples overcome the harmful consequences of minority stress. For example, some have advocated for a social empowerment approach to sexual minority therapy aimed at affirming the identity of the sexual minority and promoting self-defense against dominant heterosexism. Others have mentioned the encouragement to emerge from and seek assistance from sexual minority groups in order to reduce the harmful consequences of minority stress, including

internalized homophobia. Further, the advisors were urged to concentrate on promoting self-forgiveness and externalization of guilt in order to fight internalized stress of shame and self-stigmatization.

This research group has given useful guidance to consultants and clinicians seeking to promote strength and resilience in their work with clients of the sexual minority, but is currently dominated by the focus on individual identity problems and the abatement of internalized culpability, disgrace and stigma. Additional information about how Same-sex couples are resilient to relationship-experienced types of minority stress thus may be of potential use to counsellors and academics who want to understand the reasons behind the achievement and success of sexual minorities in intimate relationships. It is thus of critical significance to understand how members of same-sex couples come across, comprehend and react to minority stress in their daily lives[5].

1.3 Sexual Orientation:

Social stigmatized individuals, such as LGB people, frequently attempt to control their public identities by hiding the stigmatized characteristic and 'passing' as someone who does not have the stigmatized trait, according to Goffman's now-classic study on social stigma (e.g., passing as heterosexual). While hiding may allow individuals to avoid prejudice and discrimination, the costs of doing so may outweigh the benefits in certain cases.

The researchers at Smart and Wegner found that chronic concealment of a stigma can cause individuals to experience a significant cognitive burden as a result of the need to monitor one's environment for stigma-relevant signs as well as control verbal and nonverbal actions in a way that maintains confidentiality. Over time, this stress may lead to fatigue and melancholy as a result. Chronic concealment, especially assistance for stigma-related stressors, may also result in individuals being deprived of social support for an extended period of time. Additionally, concealment may be detrimental to one's well-being since it threatens one's sense of self-integrity.

This subject shows how people's self-concealment of sexual orientation may serve as a source of minority stress for them, but it also considers how concealment of sexual orientation might have a negative impact on the quality of same-sex relationships in general. Same-sex couples will experience increased levels of stress as a result of the vigilance and self-monitoring required to maintain concealment about their sexual orientation and relationship over time. This will be disproportionate to the cost of maintaining secrecy[6].

Individuals and couples who are not 'out' may get less societal support for their relationship when compared to other couples, which, according to studies, may reduce their ability to deal successfully with the stresses and strains that all couples may experience in their relationship. Because family and friends may serve as a barrier to the dissolution of partnerships, the lack of social support that is believed to accompany self-concealment might effectively remove a barrier to the dissolution of the relationship.

Furthermore, it has been suggested that denying or hiding a connection can decrease the pleasure of partners since it might result in a devaluation of the partnership and a sense of ambiguity about the relationship between partners. Research on the interrelationships between concealment, well-being, and relationship functioning in same-sex couples has yielded a mixed bag of findings. One study found that concealment among LGB individuals was adversely associated with social support but not psychological well-being, which is consistent with the view that one's level of sexual orientation disclosure is influenced more by contextual variables than by individual adjustment characteristics. Consequently, it seems that concealment is more likely to negatively influence the quality of relationships via its effects on social support than it is to do so through its effects on psychological functioning[7].

1.4 The Relationship Quality and Homo-Negativity:

It is common to describe internalized homo-negativity as the self-implementation of anti-LGBTQ beliefs, and it may be seen as a kind of self-stigmatization. Meyer characterized it as a manifestation of 'internal and subtle' minority stress since it may develop even if a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGB) person has managed to avoid being the direct target of discrimination or prejudice.

According to research, identification with anti-LGBT societal norms is generally detrimental to the well-being of LGB individuals. Several studies have shown that internalized homo-negativity is linked with an increased risk of developing a range of mental health issues, as well as poor self-care and HIV-related medical complications, among other things. It's not clear why internalized homo-negativity in same-sex couples would be a predictor of romantic relationship problems.

Most people believe that internalizing negative attitudes and preconceptions about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people allows same-sex couples to maintain a relationship that they consider to be fundamentally unpleasant or morally wrong. This is perhaps the most common argument. To provide an example, Keller and Rosen have suggested that having such unfavorable views about same-sex love would decrease the commitment of partnerships by reducing the degree to which the connection is valued and appreciated.

This implies that an individual's internalized homo-negativity may have a significant impact on his or her ability to attract romantic partners. Given the findings that psychopathology in both partners is associated with relationship satisfaction, it is possible that the mental health problems that have been found to be associated with internalized homo-negativity may also have a negative impact on the nature of the relationship itself[8].

Internalized homo-negativity in same-sex relationships has received little attention in the study literature. According to the findings of many recent research, there is a link between internalized homo-negativity (or, in the opposite case, self-acceptance) and the quality of one's relationships. In addition, research has shown that the degrees of internalized homo-negativity of partners are linked, suggesting that homo-negativity is a characteristic that may be found in both individuals and couples, rather than just individuals.

2. DISCUSSION

Long-standing medical literature on same-sex partners has shown that internalized homo-negativity and concealment of sexual identity may have negative consequences for intimate relationships between people of the same gender. While the connection between these characteristics and the quality of the relationship has been examined in cross-sectional research, they have only been explicitly investigated as risk factors for the deterioration of the quality of the relationship in a small number of studies.

As a result of this research, the degree to which internalized homo-negativity and self-concealment are anticipated to diminish in three predictors of same-sex couple relationship involvement was investigated, and the findings were published in the journal *Psychological Science* (attractions, constraints, and satisfaction). As anticipated, throughout the course of the study's six-week duration, internalized homo-negativity was shown to be associated with reductions in both attraction and pleasure in romantic relationships[9].

However, homo-negativity did not seem to be a significant predictor of changes in relationship restrictions. It's important to note that none of these results were affected by controls that looked at gender, race, or sexual orientation. In fact, none of these three demographic factors was found to be significantly linked to changes in the variables of the connection in the study. It seems that the presence of homo-negativity will result in the decline of relationship engagement by decreasing the degree to which the partner and relationship are enjoyed and viewed positively, rather than lowering relationship investments and barriers to leaving the relationship.

Research is required in order to identify the precise processes that cause this to occur. On the one hand, internalized homo-negativity may have a direct impact on the attractiveness and pleasure that a person feels in a relationship. This idea may be investigated in a productive manner via studies in which homo-negativity is experimentally altered (e.g., by priming a positive LGB identity). Conversely, the negative consequences of homo-negativity may manifest themselves indirectly, such as via increases in negative impact or communication patterns, as well as reductions in positive impact and communication[10].

3. CONCLUSION

There is a limited but increasing body of research showing the negative effect of stigma on couples of the same sex, and this study is one of such studies. As a whole, our results suggest that efforts to reduce negative social signals about LGB people while simultaneously increasing positive representations of same-sex couples would be beneficial to their overall health. According to this and previous studies, a more supportive social environment for same-sex couples and their families may help to reduce the self-stigmatization that has been associated to poorer levels of relationship quality in the past.

Given the findings of the current study, it is perhaps unexpected that same-sex couples seem to be as content with their relationships as their heterosexual counterparts. It's hard to see how this might be possible considering the extra burden of guilt that same-sex couples must cope with. One hypothesis is that, as compared to heterosexual couples, same-sex couples may have greater amounts of specific resilience components, which may explain their higher levels of resilience. It has also been shown in one research that same-sex couples initiate dispute talks with

less negativity and more positive impact than their heterosexual or homosexual partners. This finding indicates that research on stigmatized couples not only has the potential to increase understanding of the negative effects of discrimination on couples, but it also has the potential to provide insight into the ways in which couples can become stronger by overcoming adversity successfully.

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