



Self-Perception and Discrimination at Workplace Against Intersex Individuals

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ABSTRACT

Modern India is striving for equality, people only aim at men and women but forget the one fourth of the population in the country i.e. intersex individuals. Intersex is the minority sex which is deviated from the social norms in India. Intersex individuals remain relatively ignored in the research area or are given token representation in research about sexual orientation. The perception of intersex individuals in India is anomalous and yet changing in the upcoming generations.

The purpose of this research is to study the understanding of self-perception among intersex individuals that is their self-awareness and perception of themselves and also study discrimination in work place for intersex individuals and study the difference in perception and discrimination among intersex individuals to that of male and female population. The study also intends to assess the relationship between self-perception and discrimination at workplace.

In the present study, sample of thirty from intersex individuals and thirty males/ females were taken for the comparison of self-perception and discrimination in workplace. The sample for intersex individuals has been collected from Non-Profit Government Organization's in Delhi NCR and for males/females sample has been collected from different sectors of workplace. Data was analysed with the help of descriptive statistics and t-test.

The findings of the present research indicate significant difference in discrimination at workplace between the two sample groups whereas there is no significant difference between the two groups for self-perception. Correlation between self-perception and discrimination indicated that both groups have above average self-perception and have no impact of discrimination on their self-perception.

Limitations of the study are that intersex individuals in workplace were hard to find as of their lack of opportunity and acceptance to work in our society. Also, most of the sample was not educated and it took longer to collect data. For future research qualitative research can be done on the sample. And more aspects related to the lives and issues can be taken in consideration. We can work as psychologists to sensitize and apprise them to balance their mental health issues.

INTRODUCTION

Intersex people are born with several variations in sex characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones or genitals that according to the UN office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights "do not fit the typical definitions of a male or a female." Intersex people were previously referred to as hermaphrodites. This does not apply now as such terms are not correctly defining a being; in particular, the term "hermaphrodite" is considered to be misleading, stigmatizing, and scientifically specious. People whose characteristics are not either genetically male or genetically female at birth are defined as intersex individuals.

Some intersex traits are not always detectable at birth; some babies may be born with ambiguous genitals, while others may have ambiguous internal organs (testes and ovaries). Others will not become aware that they are intersex unless they receive genetic testing, because it does not manifest in their phenotype (Ritchie, et. al., 2008). Throughout history, intersex people and their bodies were first glorified, then stigmatized and discriminated against (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina 2007, pg 11) Intersex conditions are not always accurately diagnosed, experts sometimes disagree on exactly what qualifies as an intersex condition, and government agencies do not collect statistics about intersex individuals. Some experts estimate that as many as 1 in every 1,500 babies are born with genitals that cannot easily be classified as male or female (American Psychological Association, 2006).

People in India do not have enough knowledge about the difference between intersex individuals and transgender individuals. People who identify as transgender are usually people who are born with typical male or female anatomies but feel as though they've been born into the "wrong body." For example, a person who identifies as transgender or transsexual may have typical female anatomy but feel like a male and seek to become male by taking hormones or electing to have sex reassignment surgeries. Some major differences between intersex and transgender individuals are that intersex individuals cannot reproduce whereas transgender individuals can. Where being an intersex individual is a biological condition, as in you are born with those genes and can only be replaceable through surgery but being a transgender individual is a psychological condition, where an individual is not happy with their own sex and feel and identify themselves as an opposite sex. A lot of transgender individuals do get surgeries but a lot of the transgender population doesn't as well.

Intersex individuals in India are treated very differently from birth. In most of the societies they are not accepted and given away to intersex communities who identify themselves as hijras and kinnars (eunuchs) which means belonging to neither sex. In a lot of cases intersex individuals find their identity when they hit puberty as their breasts start to come in this period of time. It is in this stage when families disown the intersex individual or the individual does not feel accepted and leaves their household. It is then hijra community steps in and helps out their fellow individual. In India people think in two different ways when it comes to intersex individuals and in this case hijras. On one hand hijras are invited to weddings and child birth ceremony so they can give their blessings which is actually a tradition in Hindu religion but on the other hand the same community is not accepted in a lot of places where it comes to the point that they have to beg on the streets,

this is where the discrimination of the third sex comes in our society. In India there are some traditions which are being followed for a long time. It is a ritual where in the hijra community when somebody passes, the members of the community come together and before cremating the body they hit the body of the intersex individual with shoes so eventually the body leaves the soul and never comes back in a body of a eunach. In India, the third sex in the community is not an accepted sex they are simply disparate hence the society feels that it is alright to treat them as not an equal. Intersex individuals in India have it difficult from the start of their lives. From given away at birth, to not being provided education properly. Not because the law does not allow it but because of the society's thinking and mindset. India itself is a country which is still taking small steps to modernizing like the western countries. Where women's rights and women's safety is one of the main political topics discussed in the country, there is yet no voicing about this sex as the equality of all sexes is yet not come to the picture. More than discrimination in the country there is yet no visibility of the third sex in the population. There are nonprofit organizations which try to help and voice out problems for this sex but it there are not enough population to either help the community voice out nor to hear.

Hijra communities have various rules of living, and one needs to follow them to be part of this community, as one needs shelter and other basic needs of life. One of the main rules of the hijra community is not to have a civil job. With civil job, it means a job which is giving independence to the individual. As the community expects the people in the community to work in groups, and help each other out in all ways possible. The job which is meant for the hijra community according to the norms of the society includes dancing at weddings and child birth and begging on the streets while giving their blessings. They have restricted access to education not because of the laws in the country but due to not having parents or a guardian to support them. They also have restriction to health services and public spaces. Reports of harassment, violence, denial of services, and unfair treatment against intersex persons have come to light. Things for the intersex community in India has improved in the past year and more intersex individuals have left the shadow of the communities which only asked them to live in a certain way but have now started to independently live their lives. Hence, a decent amount of population is found in the working sector. Which itself is a change.

Though there has been a step which has been taken by intersex individuals to make a better living there is still a lot of discrimination being faced by the intersex individuals in workplace. Unfortunately, there have not been enough research studies done on intersex individuals hence a lot of literature review has been taken from

studies on transgender people. Transgender individuals have reported workplace inequality in different phases. From not getting hired to getting hired and being treated differently from the other sexes. It has also influenced the salary of individuals. Such kind of discrimination is most commonly noticed for women but now needs to start being noticed for the third sex which is intersex. In India, due to lack of education with this community, the window of getting a decent well paid job is less. But even where they are applicable to apply, they don't get the job. There is also different kind of prejudices being faced by intersex individuals in the workplace. People do not know and are not aware of how to treat an intersex individual. They are not used to seeing the third gender in a workplace and do not know how to behave with them. Bathrooms are a common source of difficulty for intersex people in the workplace. Many report being refused access to bathrooms or being verbally or physically attacked in bathrooms (Herman, 2013). Transgender and gender non-conforming people report that gender-specific dress codes cause them difficulty, because they require them to dress in a manner inconsistent with their identity (Levi, 2007). Some modest proposals for challenging established dress code jurisprudence. People may lose their jobs for disregarding dress code rules. Some modest proposals for challenging established dress code jurisprudence (Levi, 2007)

Individuals come to "know" their own attitudes, emotions, and other internal states partially by inferring them from observations of their own overt behaviour and/ or the circumstances in which this behaviour occurs. Thus, to the extent that internal cues are weak, ambiguous, or unintermittent, the individual is functionally in the same position as an outside observer, an observer who must necessarily rely upon those same external cues to infer the individual's inner states. (Bem, 1967, p.1)

Review of the literature and research related to the assessment of Self-Perception of transsexual persons is relatively modest. In one of the few studies dealing with this issue, Cohen et al. [17] find no support for the idea that adolescent transsexuals significantly differ from nonpatients with regard to thinking disturbances and negative Self-Image (score operationalized with the increased number of MOR responses). In another study which assessed pre- and postoperative functioning of adolescents no increase of Morbid (MOR) responses was observed, nor were other significant increases within the Self-Perception cluster. These researches were focused on the evaluation of transsexual adolescents, whereas the authors of this study had no access to research concerning Self-Perception assessment of the adult transsexual persons. Self-Perception is associated with Self-Image and Self-Involvement. Self-Image is made up of the impressions that the client has about his/her own characteristics. Many of these impressions are easily accessible to conscious thinking, but some

are partially or completely out of reach of consciousness because they are unwanted or conflicting, so there is a tendency towards concealment or suppression. (Barisic et. al., 2014)

Self-perception theory holds that “self-descriptive attitude statements can be based on the individual’s observations of his own overt behaviour” (Bem, 1967, p. 185), thus suggesting that an individual is sometimes functionally “in the same position as an outside observer, an observer who must necessarily rely upon those same external cues [i.e., behaviour] to infer the individual’s inner states [i.e., attitudes]” (Bem, 1972, p. 2). Importantly, self-perception theory postulates two boundary conditions for individuals to rely on their own behaviour as a basis to infer their own attitude. First, individuals are assumed to consider the attitudinal implications of their behaviour only “to the extent that internal cues are weak, ambiguous, or uninterruptable” (Bem, 1972, p. 2). Thus, self-perception processes should be more likely to impact an individual’s attitude to the extent that the attitude is weak as compared to strong (i.e., internal cues to the attitude as the inner state are weak). Second, individuals are assumed to consider “the external stimulus conditions under which [the behaviour] occurs” (Bem, 1967, p. 185).

The aim of the study is to find the correlation between males/females and intersex individuals for self-perception and discrimination in a work place. According to Tebaac et. al. (2018) in their research study on, they studied the relationships among discrimination, mental health, and body image in a national sample of transgender adults. In this paper it was noticed that discrimination was expected to act as a risk factor and to positively correlate with depression and anxiety and negatively correlate with protective factors of self-esteem, satisfaction with life, and body appreciation. For the present study, it is hypothesized that there will be significant difference for males/females and intersex individuals for self-perception and discrimination at work place. Where there would be high self-perception for males/females and low discrimination in the findings whereas for intersex individuals there would be low self-perception and high discrimination at work place.

Present Study

1. To study self-perception between intersex individuals as one group and men & women as the second group in a workplace.
2. To study discrimination between intersex individuals as one group and males & females as the second group in a workplace.
3. To study the relationship between self-perception and discrimination in intersex individuals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants

A sample of thirty intersex individuals and thirty males/ females were taken for the comparison of self perception and discrimination in workplace. It was important to include intersex individuals who were employed and males/females who too were employed.

Research Design & Procedures

A well thought plan was made with first thinking of the topic of interest, in this case self-perception and discrimination in workplace for intersex individuals. Participants were chosen through finding them online who were working respectful individuals working. Majorly participants were found working in non-profit government organizations. Participants were not paid and the NGO'S were found online which were related to LGBT welfare. Collection of data was a little tough as not a big population of intersex individuals are found in workplaces. Sixty participants in total were chosen from Delhi NCR using convenience sampling, they were not compensated for the participation. Later scoring for the questionnaires was done respectively. Data was analysed with the help of descriptive statistics and t-test

Measures

Self-Perception. The Self-Perception Measuring Scale (SPMS) developed by K.G Agarwal (1962) was used to measure the self-perception amongst the sero-positive people. This measure has been validated and used commonly in Indian researches. The participant is given 40 situations in the questionnaire. They have to choose (a) or (b) statement as per their thinking and put a tick mark on the appropriate statement according to them. An example for the statements include "I fear failure." or "I do not fear failure.". There are two subscales which add up together to make self-perception. The two subscales are self-regard and self-acceptance.

When these items are combined, they measure self-perception. The scale measuring self-regard and self-acceptance when both these scales are paired, they measure self-perception.

(a) Self-regard scale: Self-regard (Sr.) measures affirmation of self because of worth or strength. It consists of 16 items. On each scale item, two alternatives are given, out of which one has to be checked by the respondent. The score range is 0 and 1. Depending on the score sheet the participants are given the score.

b) Self-acceptance scale: Self-acceptance (Sa.) scale measures affirmation or acceptance of self, in spite of weakness or deficiencies. It consists of 26 items. On scale items the respondent has to choose one of two alternatives provided to him. A high score of self-acceptance scale measures acceptance of one's weaknesses or deficiencies. A low score indicates inability to accept one's weaknesses. It is more difficult to achieve self-acceptance than self-regard.

(c) Self-perception'. Paired interpretation of scales of self-regard and self-acceptance may be considered to reflect the general area of self-perception (Sp.). Items are stated both positively and negatively. Thus, the particular or end-poles of the dichotomy in question are made explicitly clear. The reliability coefficient for Sr. & Sa Scales were quite high i.e., 0.75 and 0.80 respectively.

Discrimination in the Workplace. Discrimination experienced in the workplace by intersex and male/female participants was measured using a measure typically used in studies assessing discrimination experienced by intersex individuals in workplace. This measure, the Workplace Prejudice/Discrimination Inventory (WPDI), was developed by James, Lovano and Cropanzano (1994). Items for the WPDI are conceptually grounded in social identity theory (SIT), which postulates that group identity and membership influence individual's behaviours, cognitions, and emotions (see Tajfel & Turner, 1979, for a complete theoretical overview of SIT). The WPDI consists of 15 items using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from completely disagree (1) to completely agree (7). High scores on the WPDI are intended to reflect an individual's perception of higher levels of workplace prejudice/discrimination. Several items are reverse scored to control for any response bias. Sample items include, "At my present job, some people get better treatment because of their racial/ethnic group" (however the study being in India and on Intersex individuals the participants were asked to interpret the 'racial /ethnic' as simply intersex) and "At work I feel socially isolated because of my racial/ethnic group." James et al. (1994) examined reliability and construct and criterion-related validity in two development studies, and this represents the current psychometric evidence for the WPDI.

Scoring

For analysis t- test and Pearson's Correlation was used to find the difference of the two samples that is intersex individuals and males/females for self-perception and discrimination at work place.

Statistics Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to describe the sample. To test the relationship between self-perception and workplace discrimination a Pearson's correlation test was conducted.

T-tests were run to look for a significant difference between intersex individuals and male/females for self-perception and workplace discrimination.

RESULTS

Participant characteristics

Participants included 30 intersex participants, and 15 females and 15 males who were all employed. The self-perception mean was 22.7(4.1), which is an intermediate score. The mean workplace discrimination index score was 48.3(15.6). The intersex individuals mainly were employed in non-profit government organizations whereas males/females ranged from working in law firms, films and in schools,

Relationship between self-perception and workplace discrimination

Self-perception and workplace discrimination were found to be not significantly correlated $r(58) = .093, p = .478$.

Group differences

The independent samples t-test showed significant results for the workplace discrimination index, there is a significant difference between the two groups, intersex individuals and males/females, with intersex individuals reporting significantly more discrimination, $t(58) = 9.76, p < .001$. The second independent samples

t-test showed no significant difference between male/female group versus intersex group in terms of self-perception, $t(58)=-.119$, $p=.906$.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
S-P	60	15	30	22.73	4.309
WPDI	60	25	75	48.32	15.584
Valid N (listwise)	60				

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
S-P	Equal variances assumed	1.446	.234	-.119	58	.906	-.133	1.122	-2.380	2.113
	Equal variances not assumed			-.119	56.234	.906	-.133	1.122	-2.381	2.114
WPDI	Equal variances assumed	.015	.902	9.760	58	.000	24.367	2.497	19.369	29.364
	Equal variances not assumed			9.760	57.992	.000	24.367	2.497	19.369	29.364

Correlations

		S-P	WPDI
S-P	Pearson Correlation	1	.093
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.478
	N	60	60
WPDI	Pearson Correlation	.093	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.478	
	N	60	60

DISCUSSION

The goal of the study was to find the difference between self-perception and workplace discrimination among two groups i.e the intersex individuals and males/females. For this study thirty intersex individuals were chosen and 15 males/15 females were chosen to study self perception and discrimination at workplace. There was not much research found on intersex individuals replicating this study hence, most of the literature review has been done on transgender individuals. The different dataset suggests that mental health stigma, transphobia, and internalized transphobia may be higher among employed transgender individuals. In the present study only employed intersex individuals were taken into consideration. It was important to do so as the study indicated workplace discrimination findings. This study seeks to find the self-perception between intersex individuals as one group and males & females as the second group. Further this study seeks to find the discrimination between intersex individuals as one group and males & females as the second group in a workplace. Lastly the present paper seeks to study the relationship between self-perception and discrimination

in intersex individuals. To do so, the Self-Perception Measuring Scale (SPMS) developed by K.G Agarwal (1962) was used to measure the self-perception among the participants. Further, Discrimination experienced in the workplace by intersex and male/female participants was measured using a measure typically used in studies assessing discrimination experienced by intersex individuals in workplace. This measure, the Workplace Prejudice/Discrimination Inventory (WPDI), was developed by James, Lovano and Cropanzano (1994).

The findings of this research did not concur the previous researches where transgender individuals experienced low self-perception and high levels of discrimination at workplace. In the present study intersex individuals had a moderate score in self-perception equal to the other group being males/females. The independent samples t-test showed no significant difference between male/female group versus intersex group in terms of self-perception, $t(58)=-.119$, $p=.906$. This could be said to be different from the literature review as the studies were seen on transgender individuals who have a harder time transitioning and finding themselves compared to intersex individuals who from birth know who they are and what they stand for. As per the discrimination faced at workplace, intersex individuals scored much higher than males/females with intersex individuals reporting significantly more discrimination, $t(58)=9.76$, $p<.001$. This indicates that intersex individuals face more discrimination at workplace compared to the other group of individuals being males and females. Lastly, the study found that there is no correlation between self-perception and discrimination at workplace. Self-perception and workplace discrimination were found to be not significantly correlated $r(58)=.093$, $p=.478$. This indicates that discrimination at workplace has nothing to do with how one feels about one-self and perceives oneself. Although studies have shown discrimination being a stressful output for an individual, it still has nothing to do with self-acceptance, self-regard and self-perception of an individual. One can be highly aware of oneself while still facing discrimination. In a study done by Tabaac et. al. discrimination was directly correlated with low self-esteem and satisfaction with life. However, this study was done on transgender individuals and not intersex individuals. This indicates that there needs to be more studies on intersex individuals as they are different from transgender individuals. The situations between the two are drastically different and needs to be put into a consideration.

Limitations

There was not much literature review that was provided on intersex individuals. Finding intersex individuals working in respectable workplace in Delhi NCR was very hard to find. Furthermore, there was a language barrier as most of the intersex individuals were not educated. Hence, the study had to be converted in hindi language. Collecting data took longer than expected and was time consuming.

Future Directions

There should be a study done on the same dynamics covering males, females and intersex individuals differently. There can also be a study on transgender and intersex individuals as both the groups will have a lot of commonality yet they are different from each other. It could be highly educative to see a study on that. As this study took only two variables being self-perception and discrimination at workplace, there could be more variables which can be taken into consideration for a future study.

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