



Self-Consciousness And Emotional Well-Being Among LGBT Community: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The past ten years have been extremely significant for the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) Community; as a result of global acts of bravery and unification, the community has grown stronger and attracted a lot of support. The health equity research in India has revealed that the LGBTQ community is among the twelve marginalized groups with minimal representation, their discrimination and traumatic experiences directly contribute to certain correlates which affect their wellbeing and self-image (Self-consciousness). The main focus of the present study is the exploration of self-consciousness and emotional well-being among transgenders. In the LGBT community, the factors of self-consciousness like private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness and social anxiety as well as the factors related to emotional well-being (i.e. mental health, happiness, emotional resilience) are the main focus for their survival. Moreover, the trauma enforced upon them is so profound that it barely allows them to thrive and flourish, thus the need to explore the underlying causes behind it seems palpable. In this pursuit the proposed study is expected to uncover the aspects of their self-consciousness and emotional well-being, thereby, providing them with an opportunity to tap into their real self and experience the essence of bliss in their life.

Keywords: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Self-consciousness, Emotional wellbeing.

Introduction

The past ten years have been extremely significant for the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) Community; as a result of global acts of bravery and unification, the community has grown stronger and attracted a lot of support. Nearly every country, including India, has enacted legislation to support the LGBT community. The legal discourse is being accompanied by much more public discussion about the LGBT community since 2009, following the Delhi High Court's initial ruling and the Supreme Court's final ruling in 2018 regarding section 377 of the Constitution, as well as the national legal services authority (NALSA) judgment and debate regarding the Trans Rights Bill. In his ruling on Section 377, Justice Chandrachud underlined the responsibilities of mental health practitioners in delivering responsible mental health care. There are no systematically occurring data about the number of LGBT individuals in India.

However, according to some Gates and Williams Institutes estimates, LGBTQ individuals are likely to form 3.8% of the population, i.e., 45.4 million in 2011. There is much we still need to explore about this population.

The health equity research in India has revealed that the LGBTQ community is among the twelve marginalized groups with minimal representation. There exists a notable research deficiency concerning crucial aspects of health equity. To address this, the advisory body has emphasized four key areas for prioritizing research for the next ten years: first, descriptive studies outlining the health status of the LGBTQ community (and other identified groups); second, exploratory research to uncover the factors contributing to these health disparities; third, explanatory research delving into how health systems either exacerbate or alleviate these factors; and fourth, intervention-focused research offering guidelines for mitigating these inequities.

In comparison to their cisgender sexual minority counterparts, the LGBTQ community is a particularly vulnerable subgroup that experiences a variety of systemic and social oppression and stigma related to their gender identity or presentation (Bockting et al., 2013; Budge, Adelson, & Howard, 2013; Clements-Nolle, Marx, & Katz, 2016; Grant, Mottet, & Tanis, 2011; Norton & Herman, 2016).

The topic of the present study is: “Self-Consciousness as a predictor of Emotional Well-being: among LGBT Community.” Following the trend, researcher sought to investigate these variables among the stigmatized minority of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) Community. Moreover, members of the LGBT community manifest emotional aspects and face the daily obstacles in their life. This study focuses on two major variables which are discussed in the Background.

Self-Consciousness

Human beings have the potential of reflecting their thoughts which distinguishes them from other living organisms. This ability enables them to cogitate about their selves and the way they are being perceived by others, with this, human beings describe themselves persistently. If someone is asked to describe themselves, a substantial list of attributes and traits will be put front by them which stand in for their self-perception? In other words, humans constantly define their ‘self’ by enlisting the characteristics which reflects an awareness of their identities. An elemental part which acts as a representative form as it shines back their own apprehensive specifications in case of every human is Self.

According to Allport (1961), “Self is a haunting problem.” Allport (1961) has outlined the concept of self as “The self is something of which we are immediately aware.”

Self-consciousness is the state where awareness and attention is more towards the self which can associate the individual with introspecting and reflecting the issues and stress about self as a social object. It is also considered as a personality trait where the researchers have distinguished between the forms of self-consciousness i.e., private self-consciousness & public self-consciousness.

The concept of self, in literary texts of personality forms a concept of trait as well as state. Awareness of self contemplates as state of heed directed by him (Fenigstein et al., 1975). For a better understanding of self-awareness effects, researchers brings out the state of self-awareness by using mirrors, cameras and an “audience” all the self-directed heed media for scrutinizing the consequences of self-directed attention on conduct and mental actions. Self-awareness as a social object peculiarly, can bring about a drop off in socially objectionable and indecorous behaviours (Aggression et al., 1974).

Self-consciousness trait forms a concept of consistent attention which is directed at self (Fenigstein et al., 1975). Self-analysis, cognizance of intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of oneself, one’s behavioural concerns and intense awareness of self as a societal body describes the distinctive nature of self-consciousness (Fenigstein et al., 1975). Self-consciousness as a trait is adjudged as a perennial attribute along-with salient

individual variations. The tendency of directing the heed towards inside while having a private as well as public proportion is stated as Self-consciousness (Fenigstein et al., 1975).

Private self-consciousness is said to be the cognizance of intrinsic self which means to have an insight of one's own values which is also linked with realization of intrinsic sensitivity (Scheier, Carver, & Gibbons, 1979), consistency in attitude (Scheier & Carver, 1980), and stronger associations between self-report and behaviour (Scheier et al., 1978). Whereas, public self-consciousness is the common understanding of self on account of societal object also it is related to conformity, low levels of self-esteem, lesser amount of audacity (Tunnell, 1984) while having a lean towards raging the entre nous slant in public (Scheier, 1980).

Emotional Well-Being

Emotional Well-Being is an important dimension of well-being, and an integral part of holistic wellness. Emotional well-being is so essential that any other dimension of well-being cannot flourish effectively if an individual has a poor emotional state of mind, our emotions play a dominant role, in when, where and how we will react. Our reactions to a stimulus in a very same place and in an exact similar situation vary greatly depending upon what emotions we are displaying, and this difference can be seen in a as basic response of greeting someone to and intense task which possible. An individual displaying Happiness may greet a person passing by with a smiling face. Whereas, if the same person is sad or angry might ignore the person completely or may display a vicious look to the same person in the very same situation depending totally on the mood of emotion he is displaying. Which very much explains plainly how important emotion and emotion well-being can be in life decisions and the choices we make in it? Emotional well-being has been defined as an overall positive state of one's emotions, life satisfactions, sense of meaning and purpose, and ability to pursue self-defined goals. A sense of balance in one's emotions, thoughts, social interactions, and pursuits is among the characteristics of emotional well-being. Depending on the subpopulation and developmental stage, each construct's relative value will change (National Institute of Health, 2018). In numerous studies, the terms "emotional well-being" and "mental well-being," including "psychological well-being" and "positive affect," are used interchangeably. It conveys attributes like happiness, personal satisfaction, optimism, and morale by reflecting how an individual feels about their relationship to their surroundings (Ostir et al., 2000).

Objective

1. To compare the mean self-consciousness and emotional well-being among members of LGBT community.

Hypothesis

H₁. There will be mean differences in self-consciousness and emotional well-being among members of LGBT community.

Method

Participants

This Study included a total participation of 120 individuals belonging to the LGBT community from Delhi and NCR Region, India. The sample included 30 people from each subcategory of LGBT (i.e., Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender). Participants were chosen by using Snowball sampling method which ensured the ability to recruit the hidden population and increase's précised estimation of sample characteristics.

Measures

Self-Consciousness Scale

The Self-Consciousness Scale (SCS-R) developed by Scheier and Carver (2013) was employed to measure Self-Consciousness and Social Anxiety among Transgenders. The SCS-R consisted of 21 items rating scale ranging from 0 to 3. The Cronbach Alpha of SCS-R in the present sample was found to be .84.

Emotional Well-being Scale

The emotional well-being scale was developed by Portia and Shermila in the year 2015, to measure emotional wellbeing. The test consists of 26 items rated on 5 points rating Likert scale. The reliability coefficient of the tool has been established by Cronbach Alpha method. The computed reliability coefficient .898 shows that the tool is highly reliable. Cronbach alpha for internal consistency also ranges from .75 to .86. The test was also found to be valid as per the psychometric validity norms. Cronbach Alpha of EWBS in the present sample was found to be .72.

Procedure

The Researcher initially approached the participants and established a rapport with them. After building rapport with them and describing the study's objectives and community benefits, informed consent was obtained. Individual data were acquired from the participants via face-to-face interviews. Without consent, no person was forced to participate in the study maintaining the ethical code of conduct outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2002). They had the right to withdraw their participation at any point during the study. At the end of the survey Researcher expressed his gratitude to the participants and also made sure of attending to any queries raised by the participants.

Analysis

The data was Quantified using Microsoft Excel 2019, and a thorough examination was carried out to ensure there are no missing values. Further, Statistical analysis was carried out using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0. The hypothesis of the current research was tested using suitable inferential statistics.

Results

Following an investigation of all the assumptions made by parametric tests, it became clear that the variables of interest satisfied the requirements necessary for normality, homogeneity and other characteristics. The hypothesis of this study has been tested with the use of suitable statistical methods.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of Variables Under Study

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Self-Consciousness	120	48.27	5.04
Emotional Well-being	120	58.57	5.33

Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics of Self-consciousness ($M = 48.27$, $SD = 5.04$) and Emotional well-being ($M = 58.57$, $SD = 5.97$).

Table 2

Mean, Standard Deviation, and One-Way ANOVA to Compare Self-Consciousness and Emotional Well-Being Among Members of LGBT Community

Variable	L		G		B		T		F(3,116)	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
SC	57.67 _a	5.72	58.87 _a	5.38	58.80 _a	4.25	58.93 ^a	5.95	0.83	.02
EWB	47.13 _a	5.32	49.13 _a	5.47	48.53 _a	4.01	48.27 _a	5.27	0.38	.01

Note. Means in rows with different subscripts differ at the $p = .05$ level by Bonferroni (MCT). Here, SC is Self-Consciousness, EWB is Emotional Well-being, L is Lesbian, G is Gay, B is Bisexual, and T is Transgender.

Table 2 represents One-way ANOVA to compare mean differences in self-consciousness and emotional well-being among various subcategory of LGBT (i.e., Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender). Whereas, the mean scores and standard deviation calculated for Self-Consciousness in Lesbians ($M = 57.67$, $SD = 5.72$), Gays ($M = 58.87$, $SD = 5.38$), Bisexuals ($M = 58.80$, $SD = 4.25$) and Transgender ($M = 58.93$, $SD = 5.95$) respectively, with $F(3,116) = 0.83$ and $\eta^2 = .02$. The mean scores and Stand Deviation calculated for Emotional Well-being in Lesbians ($M = 47.13$, $SD = 5.32$), Gays ($M = 49.13$, $SD = 5.47$), Bisexuals ($M = 48.53$, $SD = 4.01$) and Transgenders ($M = 48.27$, $SD = 5.27$) respectively, with $F(3,116) = 0.38$ and $\eta^2 = .01$. Hence, our proposed hypothesis H_1 , *there will be mean differences in self-consciousness and emotional well-being among members of LGBT community* was not supported.

Discussion

Throughout the course of human history and across diverse nations and ethnic groups, individuals who deviate from traditional gender norms, sometimes referred to as gender-variant people, have been present (Bullough & Bullough, 1993). These individuals now commonly identify as a whole community LGBT which can be further broken into L for Lesbian, G for Gay, B for Bisexual and T for transgender. Prior to the emergence of contemporary synthetic hormones and surgical reassignment procedures, there existed instances where persons lived in a manner that deviated from their assigned biological sex and societal expectations associated with their assigned gender. Currently, transsexualism is predominantly examined within a medical framework, wherein it is commonly presumed that individuals who identify as transgender are inclined towards pursuing hormonal interventions and undergoing surgical procedures for sex reassignment. Nevertheless, throughout history, there have existed individuals who opt to conform to societal norms associated with the gender opposite to their assigned sex by the utilization of medical procedures (Hausman, 1995; Meyerowitz, 2002).

The Findings of One-way ANOVVA indicate that there is no significant variation in Self-consciousness and Emotional well-being among LGBT or the subcategories (i.e., Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender). This means that there is no significant effect of the self-consciousness on the emotional well-being of the LGBT community (i.e., Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender). They tend to live almost similar life style and challenges in terms of discrimination and other societal issues. The community as a whole encounters the same struggles as there cisgender counterparts in addition with managing the stress of navigating in the world that's fully accepting the people who are not heterosexual and cisgendered. The Disaffection from the family and friends, invisibility as citizen in society in some cases, harassment at school, work and public places are some direct contributors towards their poor emotional well-being and self-consciousness. This creates a conflicted identity and self-image full of vulnerability. According to a study conducted by Glenn Ostir et al. (2000), it was found that positive affect has a distinct impact on the purposeful position, mobility, and survival within the context of livelihood. Additionally, Carroll and Gilroy (2002) have documented that the affirmation of a transgender individual's identity is crucial for their emotional well-being. This argument posits that the emotional well-being of individuals is significantly influenced by their self-consciousness and awareness.

Conclusion

Based on our findings we can conclude that there has been no significant difference in experiences of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender individuals. Cultivation of self-Consciousness strengthens Emotional well-being that further leads to better living. But even in these modern times, there is still shown a strong resistance in terms of acceptance to the people belonging to LGBT Community.

Limitation and Suggestions

The generalizability of the study's findings is limited due to the exclusive focus on participants from a geographical region. Hence, it is imperative that future investigations encompass a comprehensive and extensive study conducted on a national scale. In addition, our investigation focused merely on comparison. In future research endeavours, it is essential to incorporate a broader range of component to address other underlying issues. The study should be undertaken to gain a comprehensive understanding about the population.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors do not have any conflict of Interest

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