THE INTERSECTIONALITY OF A SEXUAL MINORITY AND AN ATHEIST

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Problem: Research, with both atheists and sexual minorities show that they are highly marginalized by their families. Previous research has focused primarily on these groups separately and has yet to focus on the impact on familial relationships, when identifying as both an atheist and sexual minority together. (Bostwick, Boyd, Hughes, West, & McCbe, 2014; Hammer, Cragun, Hwang, & Smith, 2012).

Little research has been done on the challenges these individuals at this intersection face.

Religion ideologies cultivate values in our society and are influencing the oppression of individuals who do not fit their moral code. (Hooghe, Claes, Harell, Quinteller, & Dejaeghere, 2010).

A family that does not accept their child’s sexual identity may lead to a delay in identity, internalized homophobia, and the attempt at conversion therapy (Bregman et al., 2013; Brown & Trevethan, 2010; Maccio, 2011).

The theory of Intersectionality assume that holding multiple oppressive labels can influence inequality or act as a protective factor (Kurian, 2011).

It was hypothesized that primary relationship strain will be greater when an atheist sexual minority adult child offspring does not share the same religious beliefs as their parents when compared to a sexual minority adult child offspring that does share the same religious belief as their parents.
Social workers have the ethical obligation to uphold the importance of human relationships. By exploring the possible relationship challenges LGB who are atheists face, when having a parent who is religious, can perhaps start the developments of new specialized programs that can better serve families struggling with contradictory ideologies.
The LGB and atheist communities are highly stigmatized and are seen as immoral (Bostwick, Boyd, Hughes, West, & McCabe, 2014; Hammer, Cragun, Hwang, & Smith, 2012). Often, both communities have been active in trying to create an identity in society that combats the immoral misconception mainstream culture can perpetuate. One example includes the influence of religiosity on the mental health of African American Men who have Sex with Men (AAMSM). In a study by Smallwood (2013), with a sample of 345 AAMSM, found that higher religiosity was positively associated with personal and moral “homonegativity” and negatively associated with gay affirmation and consequently sexuality-related psychological distress.
METHODOLOGY

- Quantitative exploratory design
- Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual
- Over 18
- Convenience and Snowball non-probability sample
- Two key informants distributed an invitation letter to potential participants
- Two Organizational leaders approved to distribute the link to the questionnaire
- Online questionnaire posted on Survey Monkey.

- McMaster Family Assessment Device
- Likert Scale – Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Disagree (3), Strongly Agree (4).
- The higher score the more pathology
- Cut-off, Stressed, Non-stressed Scores
- Six demographic questions
- Frequencies, Descriptive, Chi-Square, Independent t-test, ANOVA.
- SPSS
RESULTS

- Independent t-tests were conducted and there were no significant differences in relationship strain between participants who shared the same theist orientation as their parents and participants who do not share the same theist orientation as their parents.

- Independent t-tests were conducted and as shown in Table 4, and there were no significant differences in relationship strain between atheist participants who have theist parents and theist participants who shared the same theist preference as their parents.

- A one-way ANOVA was conducted and there was a significant among group differences on the relationship strain subscale of roles because of sexual orientation $F(2,28)=4.73, p=.05$. The post hoc Scheffe comparisons showed that individuals who identified as lesbian (2.93 SD=0.23) were significantly more likely to score higher on the relationship strain subscale of problem solving than individuals who identified as gay (2.32, SD=0.54) ($p=.03$).

- Independent $t$ tests were conducted and as shown in Table 6, individuals who were not out to their parents regarding their sexual orientation when compared to those who were out to their parents had significantly higher scores of relationship strain on subscales of problem solving $t(31.34)=2.94, p = .006$, roles in the family $t(20.28)=3.35, p=.003$, affective involvement $t(27.32)=3.00,p=.006$, behavior control $t(21.20)=2.52, p=.02$, general family functioning $t(13.48)=2.88, p=.01$ and overall score $t(13.58)=2.62, p=.02$. 
RESULTS

• Independent sample Kruskal-Wallace tests were conducted to evaluate differences among ethnic groups and the subscales of relationship strain. The test, which was corrected for tied ranks, was significant ($H(38) = 11.32, p = .05$) with a mean rank for scores on the communication subscale of (23.7) for Caucasians, (17.6) for Middle Eastern, (4.5) for African Americans, (28.5) for Asian/API, (8.67) for Latinos, and (8.0) for Multiracial.

• Independent t-tests were conducted and there were no significant differences in the relationship strain scores between participants who were 18 to 30 years old and 31 and over. Younger participants had lower average scores 2.45(SD=0.45) on the communication subscale indicating less pathology than older participants 2.68(SD=0.38).

• A chi square analysis was conducted and the results indicated there were no significant differences between Atheists 52.2% and Theists 47.8% and their openness regarding their sexual orientation with their parents $\chi^2(n=44,df=1)= .954, p=.33$.

• The scores of all participants were above the pathology cut off for each subscale.
Based on the mean scores: all atheist and theist LGB adult children had overall strain in primary relationships.
- Further suggest that LGB in general have challenges relating to their theist parents.

Based on the mean score: atheist LGB individuals had higher relationship strain with their theist parents than theist LGB individuals.
- Further indicates that people at this intersectionality may be at risk for problems in their relationship with their theist parents.
Implications for social work practice is to emphasize the importance of theist belief or lack thereof, in family dynamics. In addition, social workers must advocate in religious institutions for civil treatment not only for LGB but for atheists as well.


