

Title: Sexuality and Self Esteem in the New Generation

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Abstract:

Our understanding of homosexual life has changed since it was first studied in the 1970s. Hooberman (1979) reported that homosexual and heterosexual men received equivalent scores on masculine traits on sex role inventories. Similarly, Crocker & Major (1989) found that levels of self-esteem among men did not differ as a function of their sexuality. However, more recent evidence may call into question the validity of these earlier findings. Specifically, Rubinstein (2010) found higher levels of self-esteem reported by heterosexual men compared to their homosexual counterparts. In addition, Lippa (2008) found evidence of greater gender non-conformity among homosexual compared to heterosexual men - with homosexuals endorsing greater feminine traits. While the significant discrepancies in findings between these two generations of studies are difficult to reconcile, one plausible explanation is that both have ignored within-group variability in the constructs examined. That is, research, to date, has not established a means of accounting for unique profiles of homosexual individuals that may differ by their gender identity. The purpose of the current study is addressing this limitation by moving behind the homosexual/heterosexual dichotomy and investigating within-group differences that may shape adjustment. Specifically, the goal of this project is to establish distinct profiles of self-esteem by individuals' reported sexuality and gender identification. The two testable hypotheses of this study are: First, that four unique profiles will emerge - (a) feminine-identifying homosexuals, (b) masculine-identifying homosexuals, (c) feminine-identifying heterosexuals, and (d) masculine-identifying heterosexuals. Second, self-esteem will be highest among masculine-identifying heterosexuals and lowest among feminine-identifying homosexuals.

Approximately 50 members of the Youth Pride Center, and approximately 50 undergraduate students at Loyola University Chicago, who are 18 years of age or older were recruited to complete the surveys. They were asked to answer items from the Bem Sex Role Inventory and the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale.