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Effect of Community Support on Locus of Control among Sexual Minority Group

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Running Title: Effect of Social support on Locus of Control

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Abstract

Human personality evolves through social learning, as interactions with societal norms and personal experiences intricately mold beliefs about self-image and the worldview. Locus of Control (LOC) is an expectancy variable based on Rotter's Social Learning Theory, representing an individual's belief about the causes of positive or negative outcomes in different life aspects. Concurrently, the incongruence between assigned sex and sexual orientation introduces multifactorial stress in individuals within sexual minority groups, shaping their unique experiences and feelings associated with it. **Objective:** The research proposed to observe the effect of community support on locus of control among sexual minority group. **Method:** A sample of 240 individuals from the LGBT community was selected using purposive sampling. The Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, developed by Rotter and translated by Bhogayata (1985), was employed as the research tool for data collection. Statistical analysis was conducted using a 4*2 ANOVA. **Result:** The findings indicate a significant difference in locus of control among the sexual minority group based on the duration of community support.

Key Words: Sexual Orientation, Homosexual, Psychological Health, Social Support

INTRODUCTION:

The concept of "normalcy" has been a longstanding debate, acknowledging the inherent diversity among individuals who may not conform to societal norms, not by choice but by intrinsic differences. Exploring various aspects of human expression, including sexuality, the discussion delves into the historical representation of sexual behavior across cultures. Sexuality, encompassing biological, psychological, and cultural dimensions, involves sex, gender, and sexual orientation. Sexual orientation, comprising desire, behavior, and identity, recognizes diverse attractions, such as heterosexuality, homosexuality (Gay and Lesbian categories), bisexuality, and transgender experiences. While heterosexuality has traditionally been accepted, other sexual preferences remain controversial, with categories like homosexual, bisexual, and transgender representing unique aspects of human diversity.

Though the scenario has changed and societal outlook on homosexuality has undergone a nuanced evolution, progressing from its initial recognition as a natural aspect to subsequent stigmatization, labeling it as abnormal, criminal, immoral, and even a mental illness. Over time, there has been a return to acknowledging homosexuality as a natural sexual orientation. This intricate process of acceptance or



rejection is deeply intertwined with the fabric of societal structures, perspectives, and cultural formations.

Sexual minority individuals are often surrounded by a predominantly heterosexual environment, shaped by familial, societal, and nurturing influences. The prevailing heterosexual perspective can lead individuals to perceive themselves as heterosexual, with society often negating the existence of non-heteronormative sexual orientations. The acknowledgment and acceptance of a non-heterosexual identity pose distinct challenges, requiring individuals to navigate societal expectations, potential stigma, humiliation, abuse, discrimination, and rejection. Adolescents in this context may exhibit cautious behavior in public, seeking validation while grappling with the impact on their self-concept, self-esteem, and sexual orientation. Unfortunately, these challenges may contribute to feelings of self-hate or self-harm, highlighting the profound psychological impact of societal attitudes on sexual minority individuals (Meyer, 2003) Identity acceptance, identity pride and identity synthesis gets stronger with community support (CASS, 1979).

As they progress and find supportive communities, individuals enter a pivotal phase known as coming out. According to Johnson (1996), this experience is significant, marking the first time they disclose their identity to a community member. The journey involves gaining the courage to share their sexual orientation within close heterosexual circles, such as siblings, parents, and close friends, as suggested by Ryan and Futterman (1998). Durby (1994) highlight that accepting one's identity helps resolve long-standing internal conflicts. Involvement in the LGBTQ+ community enhances self-identity, fosters deeper self-understanding, and broadens social connections through engagement in socio-cultural activities. Although this exploration enriches one's sense of sexual identity, it concurrently unveils vulnerabilities, affecting various facets of personality such as body image and social acceptance. The ongoing endeavor to conform to societal norms, shaped by audio-visual cues and interactions, persists as a recurrent struggle.

Locus of control (LOC) is a psychological construct derived from Rotter's social learning theory (**Rotter, Chance & Phares, 1972**), exploring the belief in one's ability to control life events. It distinguishes between internal (individual control) and external (environmental control) perspectives. LOC, rooted in Rotter's expectancy-value theory, reflects individual beliefs about the causes of positive or negative outcomes in various life areas. It highlights the variability in how people handle challenging circumstances, with some emphasizing self-evaluation competence and others focusing on the connection between efforts and outcomes. LOC encompasses two distinct sources of control: Internal and External.



It is a generalized perspective linking personal characteristics and actions to experienced outcomes. It evolves from assumptions based on specific encounters, shaping beliefs about the causal events in one's life. Individuals perceiving a connection between effort and outcome are more likely to exert themselves in important tasks, while those attributing outcomes to fate or external factors may engage in non-instrumental activities. Societal factors, such as nepotism, can influence perceptions of success, leading individuals to focus on luck or connections rather than personal effort. Individuals with an internal locus of control take more responsibility for their actions, are less influenced by others' opinions, perform well with freedom, have high self-efficacy, work hard for desired outcomes, remain confident in challenging situations, tend to be physically healthy, independent, and happier. On the other hand, those with an external locus of control attribute success to luck, blame unfavorable circumstances, experience hopelessness, have lower self-worth, and may not exert effort to change outcomes, making them susceptible to learned helplessness. They believe outcomes are predetermined regardless of their efforts. An internal locus of control enhances positive attitudes in Gay identity development (Binks, 1993). It not only moderates the impact of stress and anxiety (Ong, Bergeman, and Bisconti, 2005) but also moderates the relationship between health stressors and somatic symptoms (Hay and Diehl, 2010). Numerous studies focusing on minority-specific contexts suggest a robust association between an internal locus of control and improved psychological adjustment (Isikoff, 1983; Bink, 1993; Anderson, 1998).

RESEARCH METHDOLOGY

AIM: To study the effect of community support on locus of control among LGBT community.

OBJECTIVE:

1. To study and compare locus of control among sexual minority group (LGBT).
2. To study and compare locus of control among sexual minority group (LGBT) with reference to their duration of community support
3. To study the interaction effect between locus of control and duration of community support among sexual minority group (LGBT)



HYPOTHESIS:

Ho: There will be no significant difference between locus of control among sexual minority group (LGBT).

Ho: There will be no significant difference between locus of control and duration of community support among sexual minority group (LGBT).

Ho: There will be no significant interaction effect between locus of control and duration of community support among sexual minority group (LGBT).

SELECTION OF SAMPLE:

The study utilized a purposive sampling technique, targeting organizations in Vadodara and Ahmedabad districts dedicated to the LGBT community. Official permissions were secured from the respective authorities, and informed consent was obtained from each participant. The sample comprised over 10000 active members, with 240 individuals selected, evenly distributed among gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transsexual categories.

VARIABLES:

Independent Variable

Sexual Orientation:

- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual Male and Female
- Transgender Male and Female

Duration of Community Support:

- Less than 5 year of being in community
- More than 5 year of being in community



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Dependent Variable

Locus of Control

PROCEDURE

The sample group was obtained by securing official permission from authorized individuals within the organizations, with each participant providing informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity in a well-established rapport. The Internal-External Locus of Control scale was individually administered to each participant in a private and comfortable environment. Following data collection, responses were analyzed using a scoring key.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS:

A 4 X 2 Analysis of Variance F-test was employed to assess the mean difference and interaction effect of sexual orientation and the duration of community support on locus of control.

TOOLS

The Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, developed by Rotter (1966) and translated by Bhogayata (1985), assesses the locus of control in high-educational students through a set of 28 items, each offering two response options ("A" or "B"). Reliability testing in Bhavnagar District involved 1000 students in 1983-84, yielding a retest reliability of 0.70 and test-retest reliability of 0.85. The scale demonstrates a validity of 0.88 when compared to the original English test and 0.79 to 0.85 with the Hindi translation by Agrawal and Bedi. The validity between the Gujarati and Hindi translations is 0.79. Rotter's Locus of Control Scale shows a validity of 0.65 and a test-retest validity ranging from 0.49 to 0.83.



RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

Table 1

Result of ANOVA for Psychological well-being among LGBT community

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F
Sexual Preference	232.233	3	77.411	12.257**
Duration of Community Support	1.067	1	1.067	.169 ^{NS}
Sexual Preference * Duration of Community Support	54.367	3	18.122	2.869*
Error	1465.267	232	6.316	
Total	40666.000	240		
Corrected Total	1752.933	239		

Level of significant: ** $P > 0.01$, * $P > 0.05$, NS = Not Significant

The ANOVA results demonstrate a significant and meaningful difference in locus of control among specific sexual minority groups, including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender individuals ($F = 12.257$, $p < 0.01$), which indicates that there is significant difference between the locus of control among Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender group of differently oriented people. Consequently, the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected.

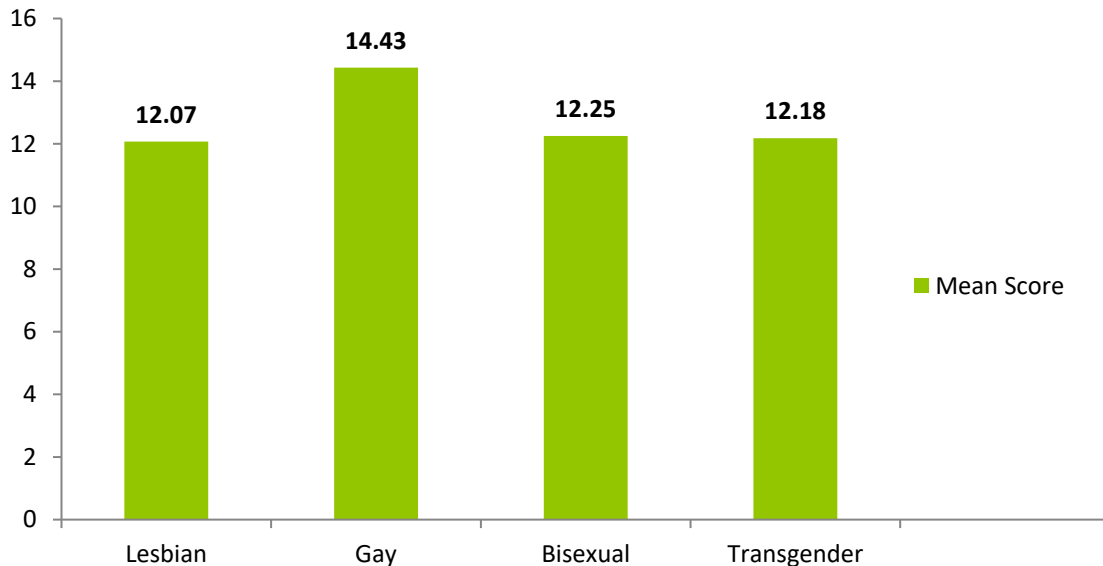


Figure 1. Mean Difference of Locus of Control among LGBT groups

The graph shows that among LGBT community, the mean value of locus of control, which indicates mean score of Locus of control in gay population is 14.43 which is higher. In contrast to that Lesbian population derived 12.07 is the lowest among all. It indicates that gay community tends to have external locus of control in compare to lesbian, bisexual and transgender. Carter II, Mollen, and Smith (2014) supported the outcome stating Gay, lesbian and bisexual tends to fall in external locus of control affecting the perceived workplace-based prejudice events and psychological distress.

The F value (0.169) from the analysis of duration of community support on locus of control (Table 1) suggests no significant difference between the two groups, implying an absence of discernible distinctions in locus of control based on varying durations of community support. Figure 2 illustrates the mean difference in locus of control between different durations within the community. Individuals who have been part of the community for less than 5 years exhibit a mean score of 12.8, indicating a balanced locus of control. Even those with over 5 years of community involvement have a mean score of 12.67, showing a non-significant 0.13 difference between the two groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

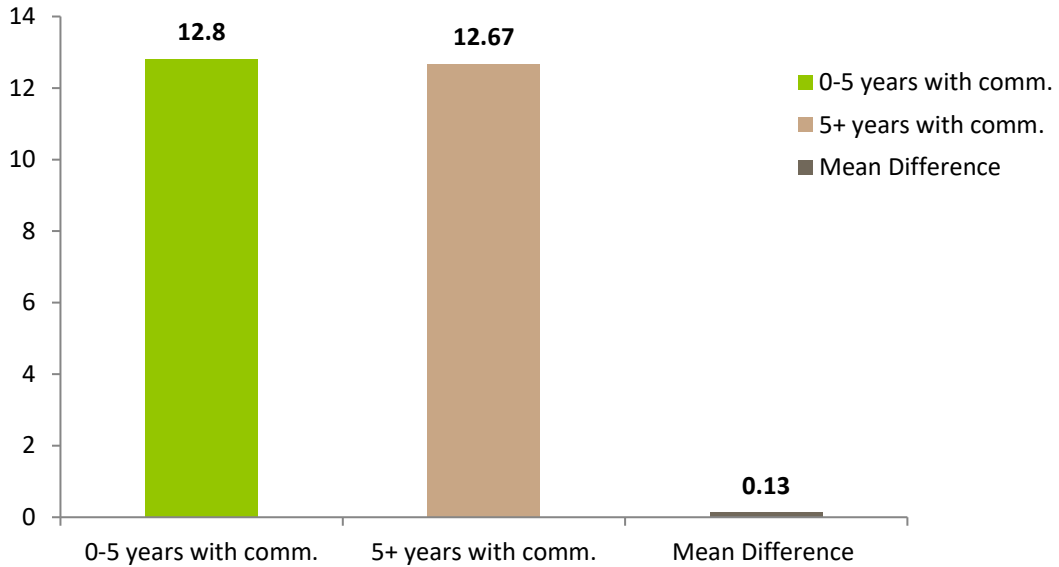


Figure 2 Effect of Duration of community support on Locus of Control

The statistically significant F ratio of 2.869 (Table 1) indicates an interaction effect between locus of control related to sexual preference and the duration of community support at the 0.05 level of significance. This suggests that the impact of the number of years an individual has lived in a community varies among different groups, leading to the rejection of the hypothesis.

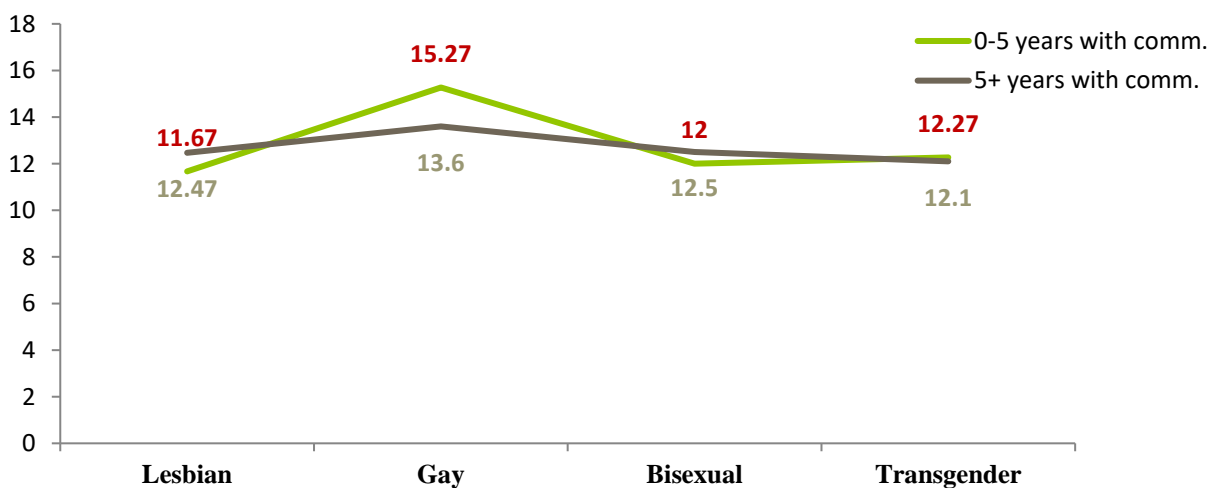


Figure 3 Interaction Effect between Locus of Control of Sexual Preference and Duration of Community Support



Figure 3 depicts the intricate interplay between sexual preference and the duration of community involvement on locus of control within the LGBT community. The graph delineates distinctive variations in locus of control across different phases. Notably, gay individuals experience a peak in external locus of control during the initial stages of coming out and community engagement, especially when confronting social stigma and heightened homophobia. In contrast, the lesbian and bisexual groups tend to exhibit a more balanced locus of control after an extended period of community support, indicating a nuanced trajectory in the psychological dynamics within these subgroups.

DISCUSSION

Sexual minority individuals grappling with stigma and discrimination experience a notable conflict with the dominant culture, leading to significant minority stress. Savin and Williams (1990) emphasize the overlooked status of LGBT youth, with historical research prioritizing adult issues. The evolving landscape of LGBT movements and research underscores the imperative to address the specific needs of these often-invisible youth. Exposure to homophobic comments and societal pressures contributes to delayed disclosure of sexual orientation, highlighting the universal prevalence of homosexuality. This conflict, central to social stress as described by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), arises from the misalignment between individuals and their societal experiences.

The concept of minority stress draws from diverse social and psychological theories, capturing the clash between minority and dominant values experienced by minority group members. Social support positively impacts individuals' feelings of control, especially for those with an external locus of control (Krause, 1987). The study emphasizes the shaping of belief systems based on social treatment within a homophobic society. It explores the impact of societal support on individuals' perception of control over their environment and the role of social support in enhancing the psychological well-being of those with an external locus of control, particularly women (VanderZee, Buunk, Sanderman, 1997). The study also acknowledges the varying benefits of social support for individuals with internal and external loci of control (Lefcourt et al., 1984). Observations indicate that a lack of social support is associated with adverse outcomes such as depression, anxiety, substance misuse, risky behaviors, shame, and low self-esteem (McDonal, 2018).

The study's findings underscore that the gay community tends to display pronounced characteristics of an external locus of control, particularly during the initial stages of community support. However, as the duration of community support increases, this extremity gradually aligns with a more natural state. In



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contrast, the lesbian group exhibits an internal locus of control during the early phases of community support, shifting towards a more balanced locus of control in the later stages. These observations suggest that the duration of community support plays a pivotal role in shaping an individual's belief system, highlighting the transformative impact of social support as a crucial mediator of resilience for sexual minority individuals (Krueger, Fish & Upchurch, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The findings underscore the distinctive challenges faced by the sexual minority group, as noted by Ryan and Futterman (1998). This is evident in their belief systems, with individuals identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender all leaning towards an external locus of control. Notably, the gay subgroup demonstrates more pronounced external traits compared to bisexual, transgender, and lesbian individuals. These observations align with the broader concept that social support is essential for shaping personality traits. As the duration of community support increases, each group undergoes varying degrees of change in traits among each group, ultimately leading to the development of a more balanced locus of control.

LIMITATIONS

The study's limited sample size raises caution against generalizing the results to the broader community. The research focused exclusively on participants from Vadodara and Ahmedabad District and City of Gujarat State in India. Additionally, important demographic details such as age, education level, socio-economic status, source of income, marital status, and family type were not considered, potentially influencing the study's outcomes.

IMPLICATIONS

Given the legal acceptance of homosexual relations and validated sex change surgeries, it is imperative to sensitize society through awareness programs and a homosexual-friendly approach to eradicate homophobia. Schools should ensure equal treatment for teachers from sexual minorities, contributing to overcoming societal taboos. Acknowledging the equal rights of sexual minority groups, parents, educators, health workers, social workers, law professionals, and administrators should actively foster a homo-friendly environment, fostering a healthier society.



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This study not only holds potential for further research in the field but also encourages mental health professionals to develop therapies facilitating smoother identity exploration. Policymakers can leverage insights from this study to address the invisible challenges faced by the youth and take affirmative action's for their betterment.

Furthermore, the study recommends the incorporation of sexuality education into high school curricula to establish a homo-friendly environment, and it suggests that minority groups engage in community and government health programs for self-development.



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