THE EFFECT OF PARTNER GENDER ON BISEXUAL'S PERCEIVED LGBT+

BELONGING

By

Danielle Siegel

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Committee Membership

Dr. Christopher Aberson, Committee Chair

Dr. Amber Gaffney, Committee Member

Benjamin Skillman, Committee Member

Dr. Christopher Aberson, Program Coordinator

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Abstract

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Bisexual erasure is a phenomenon in which the existence of bisexuality is broadly omitted from history, media, and research. Bisexual erasure contributes to stereotypes that bisexuality is a strictly transitional identity, only used in the process of sexually-experimenting or coming out as gay. Although well-documented in qualitative research on bisexuality, the negative effects of bisexual erasure on bisexual women's mental health and ability to access LGBT+ resources have not been shown in an experimental context. In a vignette study, participants (*N*= 276) were asked to review application materials for a potential recipient of an LGBT+ exclusive scholarship award. Regardless of whether applicants were highly or ambiguously qualified for the scholarship, bisexual women received the award at lower rates than lesbian women. Additionally, bisexual women in current opposite-sex relationships received the award at substantially lower rates than bisexual women in current same-sex relationships. These results suggest that common perceptions of bisexuality may bar bisexual women from accessing LGBT+ resources.

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Introduction

Sexual minorities are largely underrepresented in psychological research. However, the bulk of existing research on sexual minorities is focused on gays and lesbians. Bisexuals are often grouped with gay and lesbian participants within studies, or excluded entirely for the sake of conceptual clarity and methodological ease (Roberts, Horne, & Hoyt, 2015). However, research specific to bisexuality has demonstrated that bisexuality is an identity unique from others on the LGBT+ spectrum, and should be studied as such (Diamond, Dickenson, & Blair, 2017). In particular, bisexuals deal with a unique type of prejudice called bisexual erasure, which undermines or denies the existence of bisexuality (Rust, 2000). Bisexual erasure most frequently occurs when people assume a bisexual person is either gay or straight based on the gender of their romantic partner.

Previous correlative and qualitative research suggests that bisexual erasure negatively impacts bisexual's mental health (Feinstein & Dyar, 2017). Additionally, bisexual erasure bars bisexuals from access to LGBT+ resources, because they are not viewed as legitimate members of the community (Nadal et . al, 2011; Ross, Dobinson, & Eady, 2010). This study seeks to experimentally examine the impact of bisexual erasure on bisexual people's ability to access LGBT+ community resources.

Defining Bisexuality

A consequence of the lack of research on bisexuality, is that there is no single agreed-upon definition of bisexuality within the current research body. Rather, we see

many descriptions that vary based on aspects of self-reported attraction and behavior. One popular definition is that bisexuality is a fixed-from-birth attraction to multiple genders, and that these attractions to multiple genders can occur simultaneously. Another interpretation is that bisexuality describes those who have a highly fluid (changing) sexuality. Those with high sexual fluidity may only experience an attraction to a single gender at a time, but that attraction frequently shifts throughout their lives (Diamond, 2008). Some definitions (Albo, 2015) differentiate bisexuality (attracted to two or more genders) from pansexuality (attracted to people regardless of gender identities.) However, this definition is not representative of how many bisexual and pansexual people define bisexuality. A majority of bisexuals and pansexuals endorse that bisexuality encompasses romantic and sexual attraction with people outside the traditional gender binary (Flanders et al., 2017).

Another challenge presented in defining bisexuality is that self-reported sexual identity and sexual behavior are often at odds. It is not uncommon for people who identify as bisexual to only engage in sexual relationships with the opposite sex, and for those who identify as heterosexual to engage in same-sex sexual behaviors. Research comparing sexual identity and sexual behavior suggests that there is a relatively low rate of agreement between the two− participants were likely to engage in sexual behavior not typically associated with their preferred sexual identity. For example, large proportions of self-identified heterosexual participants had frequently engaged in same-sex behavior (Ross, Essien, Williams, & Fernandez-Esquer, 2003). Bauer and Brennan (2013) found that the majority of self-identified bisexual men (81.9%) and women (59.8%) did not

meet criteria for being "behaviorally bisexual" (sex with both men and women) within the past year. Additionally, people frequently identify as bisexual before their first sexual encounter (Morgan, 2011). For these reasons, using behavior as a measure of whether or not someone is bisexual may not adequately represent everyone who identifies as such.

Monosexism and Bisexual Erasure

Monosexism is the belief that sexual attraction is binary, and that people can only be gay, lesbian or straight (Roberts et al., 2015; Ross, Dobinson, & Eady, 2010). This belief is the root of many assumptions about bisexual people, including that they are sexually deviant and promiscuous (Nadal, Whitman, Davis, Erazo, & Davidoff, 2016). The most prevalent stereotype stemming from monosexism is that bisexuality is not a real identity, but a phase or a transitional tool (typically to come out as gay). Beliefs that frequently invalidate, question the existence of, or trivialize bisexuality contribute to a phenomenon known as bisexual erasure (Rust, 2000). Bisexual erasure is a term that refers to both the act of engaging in stereotypes that deny the existence of bisexuality, as well as the cumulative result of people perpetuating those stereotypes. It includes the broad omission of bisexuality from history, media, and research. It can also refer to the frequent assumption that someone in a same-sex relationship identifies as exclusively gay. Qualitative interviews with bisexuals suggest that people frequently assumed them to be either gay or lesbian, regardless of whether or not they were "out" as being bisexual. This was evident even when their bisexuality was disclosed to family and friends− notably, research suggests that close family and friends are the most likely to

invalidate a bisexual identity. This can have implications for a bisexual person's mental health, if they feel that those closest to them do not understand or support them (Feinstein, Franco, Henderson, Collins, & Davari, 2019). Bisexual erasure is perpetuated by both straight and gay groups. Bisexuals report feeling "not gay enough" for gay peers, and "not straight enough" for straight peers (Ross et al., 2010; Nadal, Issa et al, 2011).

There are several beliefs that contribute to bisexual erasure. Sometimes, bisexuality is considered a temporary identity used by straight people in order to express their interest in sexual experimentation with same-sex individuals. This belief is commonly directed at bisexual women, who are often perceived as straight women looking to sexually experiment. Colloquial terms like "gay until graduation" or "heteroflexible" reflect this belief. Alternatively, it is viewed as a transitional identity used by gay people in the process of coming out. This view is especially prominent in people's perceptions of bisexual men (Yost & Thomas, 2012). Interviews with participants from gay communities have reported that they view bisexuality as a way to have a same-sex relationship, while still maintaining the privileges of being heterosexual (Israel & Mohr, 2004).

The Role of Partner Gender

Recent research suggests that the most common cause of bisexual erasure is that others assumed them to be gay or straight based on the gender of a bisexual's current romantic partner (Dyar, Feinstein, & London, 2014; Feinstein, Franco, Henderson,

Collins, & Davari, 2019). The gender of a bisexual's partner leads to assumptions about sexual identity regardless of whether or not a person was out as bisexual. For example, openly bisexual women were perceived as gay when in a same-sex relationship, and straight when in an opposite sex relationship. (Dyar & London., 2014). Bisexual women reported more instances of bisexual erasure than bisexual men on the basis of partner gender, especially if they have had current or previous male partners (Feinstein et al., 2019). Bisexual women partnered with men also reported higher depressive symptoms than bisexual women partnered with women (Dyar et al., 2014).

Identity Stability

Despite a widespread belief that bisexuality is a transitional identity, longitudinal research examining bisexual women's preferences suggests that the bisexual identity is stable and distinct from other sexualities. Data on the sexual behavior and self-reported identities of non-heterosexual women over 10 years found that women were more likely to adopt a bisexual identity than to abandon one. Throughout those years, the percentage of bisexual-identified women hovered around 50-60% throughout the study, suggesting that participants retained the bisexual identity over extended periods of time (Diamond, 2008). More modern research tracking self-reported attractions over 30 days found that, those who identified as bisexual had the greatest and most frequent shifts in which gender they felt attracted to, compared to those who chose straight or gay identities (Diamond, Dickenson, & Blair, 2017). This suggests that there are real differences between those who choose a bisexual as opposed to a monosexual identity.

Bisexual Erasure and Mental Health

The persistent invalidation of bisexual peoples' identities leads to negative mental health outcomes. Bisexual individuals are at an increased risk for several mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and sexual health problems (Feinstein & Dyar, 2017). Lifetime rates of mood disorders for bisexual women (58.7%) exceed the rates for both heterosexual (30.5%) and lesbian women (44.4%). Recent meta-analytic examining 52 studies of sexual minority mental health suggests that bisexuals experience the same or higher rates of depression and anxiety as compared to straight people, gays, and lesbians. These high rates persist whether or not bisexuality was behaviorally-defined or assessed by self-report. (Ross, Tarasoff, MacKay, Hawkins, & Fehr, 2018).

A possible explanation for why bisexual people are at the highest risk of mental health outcomes is because they lack community support. A popular framework for understanding mental health in gay, lesbian, and bisexual groups suggests social support as a major moderating factor in mental health outcomes (Meyer, 2015). Since bisexual erasure is prevalent in both gay and straight communities (Ross et al., 2010; Rust, 1993), bisexual people may not feel completely comfortable or validated in either setting. This is illustrated in research comparing mental health outcomes between bisexual women in same-sex and opposite-sex relationships. Bisexual women in opposite-sex relationships reported higher levels of depressive symptoms, and these symptoms were fully mediated by experiences and rejection from gays and lesbians (Dyar, Feinstein, & London, 2014).

Aversive Prejudice and Resource Access

The theory of aversive racism suggests that, as it becomes less socially acceptable to engage in overt forms of racism, people will engage in subtle forms of discrimination where the discriminatory act is plausibly deniable (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1991). For example, research suggests that, for highly qualified job applicants, White and Black applicants get hired for jobs at approximately equal rates; however, when qualifications are ambiguous, White applicants get hired at significantly higher rates than Black applicants (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000).

Researchers have since attempted to extend the idea of aversive racism to other marginalized groups. Several studies applying the aversive prejudice paradigm did not find support for this theory extending to gay men (Aberson, Swan, & Emerson, 1999; Aberson, 2003). More recent research on aversive prejudice (also known as the plausible deniability hypothesis) applied to gay men did find an effect (Cox & Devine, 2014). With these mixed findings, there is rationale to continue exploring how aversive prejudice affects sexual minority groups. Covert discriminations are complex reactions resulting from people holding negative attitudes about sexual minority groups, and being unable to express those attitudes without social reprimand (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986). Since the initial research looking at aversive prejudice in sexual minority populations, public perceptions of minority sexualities have become substantially more positive (Ofosu, Chambers, Chen, & Hehman, 2019). It has also become less socially acceptable to overtly discriminate based on sexual orientation—an example of this attitude shift is the 2015 addition of sexual orientation as a protected class in the United States Civil Rights

act of 1964. These societal shifts in attitudes may contribute to an increase in aversive prejudice that was not captured in older findings.

Additionally, the aversive prejudice paradigm has been applied exclusively to gay men. There is evidence that bisexual people are denied resources more frequently than people of other sexual minority identities. The Bisexual Research Center reports that bisexual people have lower rates of cancer screenings and higher rates of STIs as compared to straight, gay, and lesbian groups (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2015). Survey research looking at workplace discrimination found that over 50% of openly bisexual participants reported perceived discrimination in the workplace, including being denied job positions. A large proportion of these bisexual participants were single or with an opposite-sex partner, suggesting that this discrimination can occur regardless of the visibility of one's bisexual orientation (Tweedy & Yescavage, 2015). A mixed methods study examining poverty in bisexual participants found that increased poverty rates could be attributed to factors including lack of community resources and lack of culturally competent health care (Ross, Gorman, MacLeod, Bauer, McKay, & Robinson, 2016).

Aversive prejudice, as a result of a widespread belief that bisexuality is not a legitimate identity, could provide an explanation for these disparities in access to resources. In situations where bisexual people are trying to gain access to LGBT community resources (e.g. LGBT therapy groups, funding for LGBT students), they may be viewed as "not actually gay", and therefore not an appropriate recipient of these

resources compared to those who identity as gay or lesbian. This effect might be especially prominent if the bisexual person is currently in a heterosexual relationship.

Predictions

A large portion of research on bisexuality is qualitative or correlative in nature. While this work is important, the field lacks experimental evidence of bisexual erasure and its impact. Moreover, little research focuses on the role of partner gender and how it can change whether or not a bisexual person receives social support from the gay community. The purpose of this experiment is to examine whether or not bisexual women, particularly those in opposite-sex relationships, will be rejected from an LGBT-exclusive scholarship due to their sexual identity.

I predict that in a situation where both lesbian and bisexual applicants are highly qualified, participants will choose lesbian and bisexual women for the LGBT+ scholarship at equal rates. In a situation where ambiguously qualified bisexual and lesbian women apply for scholarship funds, participants will choose lesbian women for the scholarship more often than bisexual women overall. Additionally, bisexual women in same-sex relationships will be chosen for the scholarship more often than bisexual women opposite-sex relationships. This is because those who believe bisexuality is a transitional identity will perceive bisexual women in opposite-sex relationships as straight, and therefore unfit to receive an LGBT-exclusive scholarship. Since the rejection of these women could be attributed to their ambiguous qualifications, rather than their relationship, this introduces an aspect of plausible deniability that allows us to capture prejudiced implicit attitudes toward bisexual women.

Method

Participants

Participants ($N = 276$) were recruited online via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). An a priori power analysis run in the Superpower package (Caldwell & Lakens, 2019) shows I will have sufficient power to find the hypothesized main effects for orientation/partner gender (*Partial eta^2 = .19*), job qualification (*Partial eta^2 = .30*), and their interaction (*Partial eta^2 = .19*). There is sufficient power for planned contrasts between ambiguously qualified lesbians vs bisexual women, as well as ambiguously qualified bisexual women in same-sex vs opposite-sex relationships. Each participant was compensated 45 cents for participation.

Participants in the sample identified as mostly male ($n = 105$) and female ($n = 130$). Nine participants identified as transgender, 12 identified as non-binary, and 20 listed other or declined to answer. Reported participant sexual orientations included straight ($n = 176$), gay ($n=17$), lesbian ($n = 19$), bisexual ($n = 42$), and other/declined to answer ($n = 22$).

Measurements

Demographic Data

Participants completed a short questionnaire detailing their own self-reported gender and self-reported sexual orientation.

Evaluative Rating Scale

Participants completed an 8-item scale found in Aberson (2003), with questions adapted to the current study's vignettes. Example items include "I believe this applicant would be able to relate to other LGBT+ students", and "I think that this person could have a negative impact on the scholarship program". Items were scored on a scale from 0 (Disagree Completely) to 10 (Agree Completely).

Candidate Ratings

After reading the vignette, participants rated each candidate on two items taken from Dovidio and Gaertner (2000; see *Appendix*). These items include: "would you recommend the applicant for this position" (0 = no, 1 = yes), and "how strongly would you recommend this applicant for the position?" (0 = not at all to 10 = very strongly). The strength of recommendation question will constitute a manipulation check for the qualification variable.

Procedure

After completing an informed consent, participants received an application packet of an applicant for a scholarship program designed to fund LGBT+ students' education and research projects. Surveys were hosted on the formr survey platform (Arslan, Walther, & Tata, 2020). They were asked their opinions regarding whether or not that applicant should be admitted into the scholarship program and why. It will also be stated that the program has limited funding, and cannot accept everyone who applies. Next, they received a form detailing the qualifications of an ideal scholarship applicant, as well as a vignette containing the applicant's resume, personal statement, and photo of the applicant with their romantic partner. Participants were assigned to one of six vignettes. Each

vignette indicated gender (female), sexual orientation (bisexual or lesbian), and partner gender (specified using the terms "girlfriend" or "boyfriend" within the personal statement). Additionally, vignettes included information about applicant qualification (highly or ambiguously qualified). In all conditions, scholarship applicants were female to control for differences in how people stereotypically perceive bisexual men (perceived as gay in the process of coming out) in contrast to bisexual women (straight but sexually experimenting; Yost & Thomas, 2012). Due to these stereotypes, bisexual men may be perceived as more belonging to the LGBT+ community as compared to bisexual women overall, regardless of partner gender.

Participants completed several measures to assess support for admittance of the applicant into the program, as well as a brief demographic questionnaire. As an attentional check, participants were asked to recall the sexual orientation and the partner gender of their randomly assigned scholarship applicant.

Design and Analysis

First, data from the 8-item scale were analyzed using a 3 (sex orientation/partner gender: lesbian/same sex, bisexual/same sex, bisexual opposite sex) x 2 (qualification level: highly qualified or ambiguously qualified) factorial ANOVA. Planned orthogonal contrasts were used to sequentially assess the differences in acceptance rates between bisexual women and lesbian women, and then between bisexual women in same- and in opposite-sex relationships. The second analysis used logistic regression to examine rating recommendations, since it is a dichotomous (yes/no) variable. Prior to analysis, all data were assessed to make sure they met the appropriate assumptions for each statistical

test. One question in the survey ("How strongly would you recommend this applicant for the program?") comprised a manipulation check for the qualification variable. Data were analyzed using the statistical package R (R Core Team, 2013).

Results

Data Screening

After viewing application materials and completing the outcome measures, participants were asked to recall the sexuality of their assigned applicant, as well as who they were pictured with in their application (boyfriend or girlfriend). Of the original 348 surveys collected via MTurk, 33 were completely missing and an additional 48 failed attentional checks in the survey and were removed from the final analysis.

Supporting the qualification manipulation, participants rated ambiguously qualified ($M = 6.75$, $SD = 2.5$), and highly qualified ($M = 7.94$, $SD = 2.01$) differently for strength of recommendation, $F(1, 271) = 25.7$, $p < .001$, eta-squared = .08. A Tukey comparison indicated that the two groups differed significantly in the expected direction ($t = 5.07$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.81, 1.85]).

Main Analyses

A 3x2 ANOVA suggests that the gender of a scholarship applicant's partner is significantly related to perceived candidate fitness ($F(2,267) = 5.39$, $p < .01$, eta-squared = .04). However, the qualification level of participants ($F(1,267) = 2.58$, $p = .10$), as well as the interaction between qualification level and perceived fitness ($F(2,267) = 1.14$, $p = .32$) were nonsignificant. Planned contrasts examining the partner gender variable

suggest that there was a significant difference in perceived candidate fitness between lesbian ($M = 6.35$, $SD = .39$) and bisexual candidates ($t(267) = -2.32$, $p < .05$, $d = .26$). There was also a significant difference in perceived fitness between bisexual applicants with same-sex partners ($M = 6.29$, $SD = .56$) and bisexual applicants with opposite-sex partners ($M = 6.08$, $SD = .66$; $t(267) = -2.38$, $p < .05$, $d = .33$). As predicted, lesbians were rated as overall more appropriate candidates for the program compared to bisexuals of either relationship type. Bisexuals with opposite-sex partners were perceived as less fit to receive the scholarship than bisexuals with same-sex partners.

A logistic regression assessing the dichotomous recommendation outcome suggests that both partner gender and qualification level significantly predict whether or not an applicant was recommended for the scholarship program, although their interaction was nonsignificant ($X^2 = 26.31$, $p < .001$). Orthogonal contrasts examining the partner gender variable suggest that lesbians (91% recommended) were more likely to receive scholarship recommendations than bisexuals, regardless of whether or not bisexuals were in a same- (87% recommended) or opposite-sex (69% recommended) relationship ($z = -2.27$, $p = .05$). Among bisexual applicants, bisexuals in same-sex partnerships were more likely to receive recommendations than bisexuals in opposite-sex relationships ($z = -3.09$, $p < 0.01$). Table 1 includes full results from this analysis. Although we do not see significant differences between lesbians and bisexuals overall, bisexual women in opposite-sex relationships saw reduced recommendations as compared to bisexual women in same-sex relationships. This supports the hypothesis that

bisexual women in opposite relationships were accepted at the lowest rates compared to lesbians and bisexuals in same-sex relationships.

Exploratory Analyses

There is evidence to suggest that discrimination toward bisexual women comes from both straight and LGBT groups. There is also very little research on whether or not bisexual people themselves endorse these stereotypes about bisexual women (referred to as "internalized biphobia"; Hoang, Holloway, & Mendoza, 2011). The participant sexual orientation demographic was widely variable in the sample, and many sexualities lacked adequate sample sizes for analysis (See Table 2). In order to create more even groups for analysis, those identifying as gay, bisexual, and lesbian were grouped together ($n = 78$) and compared against straight participants ($n = 176$). Participants who declined or identified as something other than LGB were excluded from the analysis ($n = 22$).

A 3 (sex orientation/partner gender: lesbian/same sex, bisexual/same sex, bisexual opposite sex) x2 (participant sexual orientation: straight or LGBT) ANOVA examined whether or not participant sexuality affected the rates at which different applicants were deemed fit for the program. Although variances among groups in this analysis were approximately equal, the highly uneven group sizes in the participant sexual orientation variable violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. Significance values for this analysis were bootstrapped using the lmboot package (Heyman, 2019) in order to address this issue. Participant sexual orientation was non-significant, ($F(1, 266)= 3.21, p = .05$). However, applicant sexual orientation ($F(2, 266) = 2.48, p = .07$) and the interaction ($F(2, 266) = 0.33, p = .71$) were non-significant in the bootstrapped model.

While this analysis provides no evidence to support that participant sexual orientation plays a role in how they perceived the scholarship applicants, it is important to note data were highly unequal and that unique LGBT+ identities were grouped together for the analysis. Future research on this subject with adequate sample sizes for separate analyses of gay, lesbian, and bisexual groups might reveal differences that could not be examined with the current dataset.

Table 1. Logistic Regression predicting scholarship acceptance rates from partner gender and qualification level

Variables	z	df	p	b	Exp(b)	LR	p
Partner Gender		267				8.75	.03*
Bisexual (Same Sex)	-3.09	1	.002**	-0.65	.52		
Lesbian (Same Sex)	-2.27	1	.02*	-0.44	.64		
Qualification Level		267				21.74	.0002***
Highly Qualified	-2.55	1	.01*	-0.58	.56		
Partner Gender x Qualification Level		269				1.15	.56

Discussion

This study provides mixed results for our original hypotheses. In both main analyses, there were no significant interactions between qualification level and applicant sexuality/partner gender, contrary to the hypothesis that bisexual applicants would only see decreased recommendation rates in the ambiguously qualified condition. This means that we do not have evidence for the aversive prejudice paradigm, wherein bias against bisexual women would only occur in situations where the discriminatory act is plausibly deniable. A possible explanation for this is described in Aberson (2003)-- that, although heterosexism and racism have similarities, theories derived to examine race- or ethnicity-based prejudice may not generalize well to other forms of bias. Although this study did not capture aversive prejudice, there is evidence to suggest that bisexual women experienced decreased recommendation rates regardless of qualification level compared to lesbian applicants. This effect was especially pronounced for applicants in opposite-sex relationships.

It is important to consider these results not as an illustration of whether or not it is more difficult for a bisexual woman to be in a certain relationship type. Rather, we should recognize that bisexual women face unique discriminations and challenges based on their current relationships, whether it is same- or opposite-sex. Bisexual women in current same-sex relationships are more likely to experience overt forms of discrimination than those in opposite-sex relationships, but those in opposite-sex relationships face ostracism from LGBT communities (Ross et al., 2010). Additionally, a

bisexual person's current relationship may not reflect a person's cumulative experiences. Research suggests that bisexual women in same-sex relationships may still encounter ostracism from LGBT+ communities based on having previous opposite-sex relationships (Feinstein, 2019). A bisexual woman with this history might deal with overt homophobia that comes from an open same-sex relationship, while also experiencing exclusion from LGBT spaces. Conversely, a woman in an opposite-sex relationship may experience exclusion from communities that were supportive when she was in a prior same-sex relationship. Future research might investigate prejudice toward bisexual women based on their entire relationship history, rather than just their current partner.

Other extensions of this research might include studying biases toward bisexual men. Since people tend to perceive bisexual woman as "more straight" and bisexual men as "more gay" (Nadal et al., 2011), we may observe an effect different, or even opposite than the one hypothesized for bisexual women. While bisexual men were not included in this study's vignettes to avoid a potential confound, bisexual men are a highly understudied population that would benefit from more research in this area.

Future research might also address whether or not the participant's sexuality plays a role in how people perceive bisexuals. Although it was examined here in an exploratory analysis, comparison groups were highly uneven even after restructuring the participant sexuality variable as a dichotomy of either "straight" or "LGBT". A future research sample would ideally be able to represent unique sexual identities rather than grouping them into a single category, as homogenizing LGBT groups is a major flaw in the current body of sexuality research.

Limitations

This study includes several limitations that should be considered in the interpretation of results. The evaluative scale used as the dependent variable for the main ANOVA in this study was adapted from previous research examining the aversive prejudice paradigm with attitudes toward gay men (Aberson, 2003). While questions were edited to make sense in the context of evaluating a scholarship applicant, they were not originally developed for this project and may not have been fully appropriate to measure participant attitudes.

Data for this study were collected via MTurk, a website that allows people to participate in survey research for monetary compensation. Recent studies have suggested that MTurk samples for psychological research may have issues with validity, primarily due to poor data screening (Chmielewski & Kucker, 2020). While this study had several attentional checks embedded into the survey, it is important to acknowledge that MTurk samples in particular might require much more stringent data screening procedures. Collecting more data to account for power lost due to invalid surveys may also be prudent. This study was funded through a grant received from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, so the sample size was limited to what those funds afforded.

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Appendix

Please rate your perceptions of the applicant in terms of the following questions. Use the

0 to 10 scale below, where 0 would indicate that you disagree completely with

the statement and 10 indicates that you agree completely with the statement.

Please only use whole numbers, do not indicate a range:

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Disagree Completely   Agree Completely

1. I believe this applicant would be able to relate to other   _____

     LGBT+ students

2. I think that this applicant would not be the right person   _____

      to accept.

3. I believe that this applicant would be reliable.   _____

4. I believe that this applicant isn't suited to the program.   _____

5. I believe this applicant would use the scholarship award   _____

 effectively.

6. I'm concerned about the applicant's past problems.   _____

7. I believe this applicant would make good use of an   _____

LGBT+ scholarship.

8. I think that this person could have a negative impact on   _____

     the scholarship program.

9. Would you recommend this applicant for the program? (Yes or No)

10. How strongly would you recommend this applicant for the program?

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Not at all   Very Strongly

Note. Items 1 through 8 comprise the evaluative rating scale. Items 2, 4, 6, and 8 are

     reverse coded. Item 9 is the "would you recommend" item. Item 10 is the

     strength of recommendation item.