

Self Acceptance, Suicidal Ideation and Self-Harm amongst LGB Adults

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Abstract

The present study aimed to examine the effect of self-acceptance on suicidal ideation and self-harm in adult members of the LGB population. It was hypothesized that there would be a negative association between self-acceptance and suicidal ideation as well as self-acceptance and self-harm. The current study is a secondary analysis of the data from Generations: A Study of the Life and Health of LGB People in a Changing Society. The sample comprised 1,518 individuals over the age of 18 that identified as members of the LGB community. This study utilized surveys to measure self-reported self-acceptance, suicidal ideation, and self-harm. The results of the study demonstrated a negative association between self-acceptance and suicidal ideation; however, there was no significant association between self-acceptance and self-harm. Implications of this study will involve the creation and testing of interventions that's primary objective is to increase self-acceptance through research. Once these interventions have been proven to be effective through research Micro practice social workers will utilize these interventions to increase self-acceptance resulting in decreasing suicidal ideation. Implications to macro social work will recognize the dangers of policies that have an anti-LGBTQ agenda and their harmful impact on the well-being on LGB individuals.

Introduction and Literature Review

- Approximately 5.6 % of the United States population identify as members of the LGB community. However, while the percentage of the LBG community is small, they are more prone to mental health problems
- Recent studies have discovered that 32% of the cisgender LBG community had experienced suicidal ideation while 10% had made at least one suicide attempt. Overall members of the LGB community are 4 times more likely to experience thoughts of suicide and attempt suicide than their heterosexual counterparts.
- Due to the anti-LGBTQ agenda present within society, members of the LGB community are more likely to experience psychological distress than their heterosexual counterparts
- Studies have shown that the presence of self acceptance amongst members of LGB community had higher levels of psychological quality of life
- There are variety of risk factors that are unique to the LGB population that increase their likelihood for suicidal ideation and self-harm such as social support, LGB victimization, hopelessness and depression.
- greater amount of internalized homophobia is associated with an increased likelihood of experiencing suicidal ideation and self-harm

Gaps in the Research

- Previous research on the LGB population has utilized samples that were mostly comprised of adolescents and young adults instead of the entire adult population of LGB individuals
- Additionally, there has only been one study that has confirmed a correlation between self-acceptance, suicidal ideation, and self-harm.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

- This study measured the effect of self-acceptance on self-harm activities of adult members of the LGB population.
- This study measured the effect of self-acceptance on suicidal ideation on adult members of the LGB population.
- It was hypothesized that lower self-acceptance scores would be related to increased rates of suicidal ideation and self-harm.

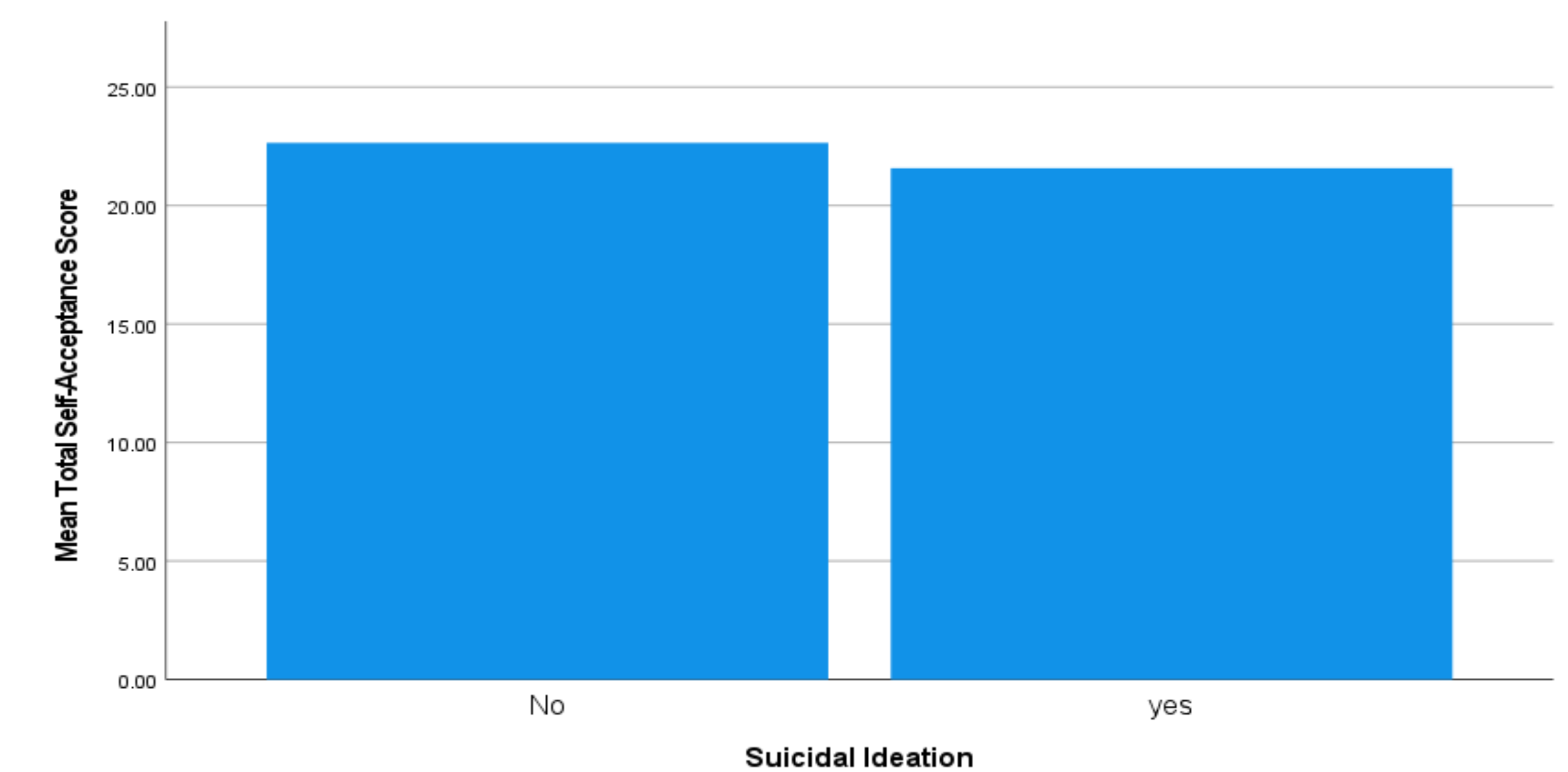
Methodology

- The current study is a secondary analysis of the data from Generations: A Study of the Life and Health of LGB People in a Changing Society, a longitudinal study with the objective of examining differences between younger and older cohorts of LBG individuals
- The original study utilized self-administered surveys and comprised of sample of 1.518 individuals that identified as LGB.
- Independent Variable: Self-acceptance score (mean of 5 items)
- Dependent Variable: Suicidal Ideation and Self-harm (yes/no)
- Mann-Whitney U tests were used to examine differences in self acceptance scores among those who reported suicidal ideation vs those who did not and those who reported self-harm vs those you did not

Results

- Participants who did not experience suicidal ideation had significantly higher self acceptance scores than those who had experienced any suicidal ideation.
- The results indicated that the self-acceptance scores of those who reported self-harm were not significantly different from the self-acceptance scores of those who did not report self-harm.

Self-Acceptance Difference Between LGB individuals with and without Suicidal Ideation



Discussion

- The public policy implications for this study are incredibly relevant to recent policies such as the "Don't Say Gay" Bill have the potential to significantly impact the rates of self acceptance for LGB individuals and increase psychological distress and suicidal ideation amongst the LGB population.
- In terms of the research, this study emphasizes the importance of the creation and testing of interventions that improve self-acceptance such as mindful acceptance.
- Micro practice social workers will utilize these interventions designed to increase self-acceptance and in turn decrease suicidal ideation and self-harm.
- In terms of strengths of the current study is a secondary analysis of the data from Generations: A Study of the Life and Health of LGB People in a Changing Society. The original study was conducted nationwide and consisted of a large diverse sample of LGB individuals. The original study obtaining a large and diverse sample allows for the reasonable assumption that the sample would be representative of the community.
- In regards to limitations the current study when measuring suicidal ideation and self-harm the study only asked the participants one question for each of these variables. In particular both of these questions only measured the prevalence of suicidal ideation and self-harm and not the severity. Lastly, this study may have been more beneficial utilizing a longitudinal study instead of a cross sectional study in order to examine the lasting impact of self-acceptance.