Intersectionality’s Effect on a Woman’s Sexual Self-Schema

Introduction
Sexual self-schema is a cognitive generalization based on sexual experiences and perceptions throughout one’s life (Hill, 2007). This study aims to analyze how the experience of women with different identities might, as a result, feel about themselves and their own sexual schemas.

Intersectionality is a way of seeing and analyzing diverse experiences of all identities (e.g., race, sexuality, gender, culture etc.) (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Understanding that identities intersect and create complex individual experiences as they interact with each other is key to interpreting differences in woman’s sexual self-schemas.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Women who follow more conservative religions rather than Western religions will have a more negative sexual schema.

Hypothesis 2: Race interacts with sexuality such that Queer/LGBTQ+ women of color will report the most negative SSSS.

Methodology

Our participants (N = 213) were recruited from the College of Staten Island, as well as through multiple social media websites and were given the Sexual Self-Schema Scale. Participants of the study included women with ages ranged from 18-68 with data collected from a diverse group of women. Participant’s data was analyzed by a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) that tested the differences on the sexual self-schema subscales (direct/outspoken, warm/passionate, and embarrassed/reserved) for race, sexual orientation, and religion.

Results

There were no significant effect for race and sexual orientation alone, but the test for religion was with Christians reporting more warm/passion, F (3, 194) = 4.4, p = 0.005, and more direct/outspokenness, F (1043, 1) = 5.7, p = 0.018, but no differences on embarrassed/reserved. There was also a race by sexual orientation interaction effect on embarrassed/reserved factor, F (396, 1) = 5.1, p = 0.024, with Women of Color and Queer/LGBTQ+ women reporting significantly less embarrassment/reserve in contrast to white Queer/LGBTQ+ women.

Significance

- Women who practice Christianity and Women who practice other religions scored similarly on the negative aspect (embarrassed/reserved), but women who practice Christianity did score higher than Women who practice other religions on direct/outspokenness and loving/warm.
- Black, Hispanic, and Asian women did not score significantly different than white women overall, and Queer/LGBTQ+ women’s sexual self-schema scores were not significantly different from heterosexual women overall.
- There was an interaction effect on race and sexuality with heterosexual women of color reporting the highest levels of embarrassment/reservation.

REFERENCE