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Challenges Faced by Bisexual and Gay Black Men on College Campuses

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Challenges Faced by Bisexual and Gay Black Men on College Campuses

By

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Claremont Graduate University

And

San Diego State University

2020

CHALLENGES FACED BY BISEXUAL AND GAY BLACK MEN ON COLLEGE CAMPUS.

Approval of the Dissertation Committee

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the committee listed below, which hearby approves the manuscript of Sammie L. Scales as fulfilling the scope and quality requirement for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

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Abstract

Challenges Faced by Bisexual and Gay Black Men
On College Campuses.

By
Sammie Lee Scales, Jr

Claremont Graduate University and San Diego State University: 2019

Many previous studies have focused on the aggressive homophobic discrimination and harassment that LGBTQ students face on college campuses, as well as measures taken to improve their situation. However, few studies have explored the unique forms of sexual and racial discrimination encountered by Black male gay and bisexual college students (BMGBCS). Using intersectionality and queer theory as guiding philosophies, this study looks at how BMGBCS—being Black, male, and nonheterosexual—are subject to oppression at multiple levels of identity and in ways that are unique as regards the overall LGBTQ community. To accomplish this goal the study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach utilizing a comprehensive survey to glean firsthand information from BMGBCS as regards their experiences of sexual discrimination and harassment on campus (SDHC) and racial discrimination and harassment on campus (RDHC), as well as well as the support they use to address these experiences. Survey results showed the majority of BMGBCS do experience SDHC and RDHC, that SDHC and RDHC cause their academic performance to suffer, that they tend to seek support off-campus, perceive campus as hostile, conceal their sexual orientation on campus, lack support from family or church, and seek out peer support more than professional support. The study results reveal the need to address SDHC and RDHC in ways that would

improve the mental health, social well-being, academic performance, and overall academic experiences of BMGBCS.

Dedication

No journey is completed alone; certainly, the completion of a doctoral program is no exception. This work is dedicated to four people in my community who have helped me become the man that I am today. My mother, the late Mary Scales, who instilled so much love in me in such a short time before she died. I will always love you mom, even though you are not physically here your lessons live on in me. Annie P. Young, my grandmother, you were the glue that held the family together. Thanks for instilling values and morals in me and for leading from the front. To my son, Traonte (Trey) DeWade Scales: you were the reason that I started on this journey and now it's complete. You offered unconditional love and quite patience while I devoted long hours to pursuing my dreams. I love you. Finally, my aunt, Carrie Savery, thanks for all of the advice and encouragement. You have taught me that humor is good for the soul. No matter my issue you were there to listen and to help. And thanks for providing your home as a sanctuary when I need to escape the snares of life while in this program. I am thankful and grateful for each and every minute that my family is in my life. To my aunts, Mozella Young, Dorothy Chandler, Lindy Young-Williams, and Annie M. Rice (R.I.P.), thanks for being there physically, mentally, and emotionally for me in my time of need.

As a child growing up in *Starkville, Mississippi* I was fortunate enough to be raised in *Blackjack*, a community that was and is truly a village. I thank *Blackjack* for continuing to care for the children being raised there in the community.

To my first-grade teacher, Ms. Emma Conley, who would twist my ears (out of love) for talking too much: "I did it"

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knowledgeable, caring, kind, and passionate about helping me in this process. Having you serve as my SDSU Chair has been my privilege and an honor for me.

Dr. J. Luke Wood, Ph.D. is the Associate Vice President for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion, and Distinguished Professor of Education at San Diego State University. Formerly, Wood served as the Director of the Joint Ph.D. program in Education between San Diego State University and Claremont Graduate University and Director of the Ed.D. Program in Community College Leadership. Dr. Wood, my fraternity brother, I am eternally grateful for your leadership and helpfulness throughout this tedious process. You have invested much care and concern in helping me realize the best in myself. You have worn several hats throughout this process: being my Alpha brother, professor, department chair, mentor, and committee member for my dissertation.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study explored the challenges encountered by Black male gay and bisexual college students (BMGBCS) and the impacts these challenges have upon them. Previous research has explored the unique stressors and risks encountered by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals and college students (Rankin, 2005; Rankin et al, 2010). The Minnesota college student health survey (MCSHS) – which was given to over 34,000 students from 40 education institutions – found that gay, lesbian and bisexual participants (as well as those who were unsure of their sexual orientation) had a higher prevalence of being diagnosed with a mental health disorder, and were more likely to experience frequent mental distress (FMD) and to have experienced a stressful life event than heterosexuals (Przedworski et al., 2015). The MCSHS provides conclusive evidence that LGBTQ college students encounter significant challenges that result in health problems.

LGBT students are both marginalized and targeted as victims of violence on college campuses at much higher rates than heterosexual students (Rankin, 2005). In a study of 14 campuses, Rankin (2005) found that 36% of all LGBT students had experienced being harassed on campus within the past year, with the most predominant forms of harassment being derogatory remarks (89%) and verbal harassment (48%). While 11% reported physical assault based on non-heterosexual sexual orientation, 20% feared for their physical safety due to their LGBT status, and 50% didn't disclose being LGBT because they feared intimidation.

A more recent report conducted by Rankin and colleagues (2010), found similar results. Based on a 2009 survey of over 5,000 college students, staff, and administrators in all 50 US states, 23% of LGBTQ college students reported experiencing sexual harassment as opposed to 12% of heterosexual students, including derogatory remarks (61%) and being stared at (37%).

The study found that 20% of respondents of color had experienced racial profiling harassment as opposed to only 2% of White students. Across the board, the study found that LGBTQ students had less positive and more negative perceptions of the college campus climate than heterosexual students. In general, LGBTQ college students also experienced less social support and more stressors than heterosexual students.

Given this context, this study explored the impact of sexual discrimination, harassment and violence on the college campus upon Black bisexual and gay men. The 2010 State Of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People report shows that bisexual and gay students are at much higher risk for harassment and view the college campus less favorably. When racial discrimination and harassment dimensions of the report are taken into consideration, in which students of color experience 10 times the racial profiling harassment than White students, Black LGBTQ students are at greater risk of social and psychological stress as well as physical violence. When considering the impacts of harassment, Rankin et al. (2010) flatly state, "LGBT students as well as faculty and staff were much more likely than their counterparts to consider leaving their institution because of experiencing or fearing physical and psychological harassment, discrimination, and violence related to their sexual identity" (p. 2). Seeing as how this study represented the entire US, this is a problem of epidemic proportions.

The racial discrimination and violence experienced via racial profiling against Black students, and the situation for Black LGBTQ students creates a high amount of social stress and negativity. BMGBCS therefore represent a unique demographic whose pronounced social stressors are worthy to be explored.

Significance

Studying the impacts of challenges faced by BMGBCS is important because this demographic represents a population that is at very high risk for outstanding and severe social and psychological challenges. BMGBCS experience higher rates of sexual discrimination and racial discrimination than White heterosexual college students (Rankin et al., 2010). Belonging to the LGBTQ community is recognized as being part of a minority group; therefore, Black males within the LGBTQ community represent another minority group that exists within a minority group. This double minority status means that BMGBCS face multiple layers of discrimination, both sexual and racial, and must deal with these challenges while participating in a college environment. The impacts of this double set of discrimination warrants further exploration so that this population can be better understood and supported.

The situation for bisexual Black male college students may be even more challenging. Bisexual people in general are subject to what Bruina and Arndta (2010) call "double discrimination" (p. 245). Citing studies by Firestein (1996) and Hutchins and Ka'ahumanu (1991), Bruina and Arndta (2010) claim, "bisexual men and women report lack of validation, isolation, ostracism, negative attitudes and stereotyping from the heterosexual and homosexual communities" (p. 245). The reason for this appears to be based on prevailing dichotomous thinking in which a person is expected to either be heterosexual or gay, and in which being both is seen as odd and deviant (Bruina & Arndta, 2010; Watson et al., 2017). Previous studies indicate that while gay persons experience discrimination from heterosexuals, bisexuals experience discrimination from heterosexuals and gay persons (Bruina & Arndta, 2010; Eliason, 2001; Watson et al., 2017).

Identifying and addressing inequities in college is a valuable prospect because it can enable greater understanding and support for a population that is suffering on multiple fronts. Understanding and support are necessary to decrease suffering and boost the academic and life success of BMGBCS. As such, this study hopes to provide valuable insight into the unique challenges experienced by BMGBCS, how these challenges impact their health and academic success, as well as suggest interventions that might be helpful.

Purpose of the Study

Much of the previous research on the challenges encountered by LGBTQ students is quantitative, taking the form of large-scale surveys that examine how LGBTQ students experience sexual discrimination and harassment as well as how this impacts their behavior, health, and academic performance. Such research demonstrates that LGBTQ college students experience higher levels of harassment at school, which leads to increased physical and mental health problems. The present study will take a mixed-methods approach to understand the firsthand experiences of BMGBCS.

Specifically, the purpose of this study is to 1) identify and understand the experiences of racial discrimination and harassment and sexual discrimination and harassment endured by BMGBCS, and 2) understand how these experiences impact BMGBCS in terms of physical health, mental health, and academic outcomes. As a subsidiary interest, the study will also address how racial and sexual discrimination and harassment impact BMGBCS' ability to obtain and maintain housing and food, as well as their ability to participate in religious activity.

Food insecurity denotes a person's difficulty or inability to obtain an adequate supply of food that provides adequate nutritional benefit (United States Department of Agriculture, 2013). Approximately 15% of college students experience food insecurity and upwards of 30% are at

risk of becoming food insecure—and Black students are more likely to experience food insecurity than other racial groups (Payne-Sturges et al., 2018). Food insecurity as experienced by college students is associated with depressive symptoms, poorer health, and decreased energy (Payne-Sturges, Tjaden et al, 2018), increased anxiety and suicidal ideation (Woessner, 2012), and lower academic performance (Dubick et al., 2016; Maroto et al., 2015).

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. Do Black male bisexual and gay students experience sexual discrimination or harassment on campus?

2. Do Black male bisexual and gay students experience racial discrimination or harassment on campus?

3. What challenges and support systems do Black male bisexual and gay students experience with regard to physical health, mental health, and academic outcomes?

4. How do these challenges impact their ability to obtain and maintain housing and food, as well as their ability to participate in religious activity?

The first two research questions were captured both quantitatively and qualitatively via survey and open-ended questions, while the third and fourth questions were captured through open-ended responses on the survey.

Definitions of Terms

The terms used throughout this dissertation are straightforward and do not deviate from common understandings throughout academia and the public at large.

Black: The broadest connotation of this term as used in the current study is "a person with African ancestral origins" (Agyemang et al., 2005, p. 1016). In a practical sense, the term refers

to persons who have at least partial African ancestral origins, but who may also have other ancestral origins, including Latin, Asian or Caucasian, and who tend to have a "brown or black complexion" (Agyemang et al., 2005, p. 1015). In the context of the present study, the term Black is used in the same way that the term African-American would be used, but Black was the preferred term because we are all Americans, regardless of our ancestral origins.

Bisexual: The most basic definition of this term in the context of the present study is persons of either sex or gender who "are sexually attracted to males and females" (Halperin, 2009, p. 452). However, the term bisexual as used in this study also includes persons who "are not prevented from being sexually attracted to anyone because that person is male or female; are sexually attracted to the individuals they are attracted to, whether those individuals are male or female," and may include persons who "are sexually attracted to their own sex but have a sexual history that includes sex with persons of the other sex; and are sexually attracted to the other sex but have a sexual history that includes sex with persons of their own sex" (Halperin, 2009, p. 452). In the context of the present study, sex and gender identity are considered synonymous.

Gay: This term refers to "the dominant descriptor often used for male same-sex attraction/behavior" (Adams et al., 2014, p. 457). While the term gay can also refer more specifically to "men who have sex with men" (Adams et al., 2014, p. 457), the current study will include both attraction/behavior and sex. In other words, being gay equally applies to a man who is attracted to men as it does to a man who is sexually involved with another man or men.

Physical Health: This term broadly refers to "the maintenance of physiological homoeostasis through changing circumstances" (Huber et al., 2011, p. 2). In the context of the current study, the following also applies to physical health: "When confronted with physiological stress, a healthy organism is able to mount a protective response, to reduce the potential for harm, and

restore a … equilibrium. If this physiological coping strategy is not successful, damage … may finally result in illness" (Huber et al., 2011, p. 2). Physical health denotes well-being as it applies to the body and one's capacity to function and engage with the social world via one's body, while also applying the concept of health as a resource that students can access and channel towards their studies.

Mental Health: This term is defined for the present study as "the presence of multiple human strengths rather than the absence of weaknesses … the dominance of positive emotions … subjective well-being … [and] … resilience" (Vaillant, 2012). In the present context, mental health is a variable under consideration which is impacted by the discrimination and harassment experienced by the study population.

Academic Outcomes: This term, also sometimes called academic performance, is defined in previous research as comprising the grades or grade point average (GPA) that students' attain while enrolled in an education process (Lizzio et al., 2002). The term is also associated with aspects and results of the education process, such as student satisfaction and acquisition of skills and competencies that will embolden professional careers (Lizzio et al., 2002). In the context of the current study, academic outcomes refers primarily to the first definition herein, and secondarily to the latter.

Limitations

A main limitation of the current study was the very low number of study participants. Although 545 students were contacted to participate in the study, only 8 of those who responded met the study inclusion criteria and were thus eligible to participate. There are a few reasons for the low number of study participants. One reason is the high specificity of the study population. According to a Gallup poll, in 2018, about 3.9% of men identified as bisexual or gay (Newport,

2018). When applied to the 545 students who were invited to participate in the study, 4% only comes to 21.8 students. If we round that number up to 22, 8 of 22 is a bit over 36%. While a 36% response rate is not great, it's better than 8 out of 545. However, other detracting variables apply to the response rate of the chosen study population.

Heteronormative and traditional masculine ideals of men predominate in the Black community, where being gay or bisexual is looked down upon and discouraged (Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013). Many of the participants who were willing to become involved in the study expressed fears of reprisal from the community if their sexual identities were revealed and had serious concerns with confidentiality in the study. Due to these factors, it can be reasonably assumed that a good portion of the potential participants were unwilling to become involved in the study due to fears of social recrimination—which is entirely understandable. Nonetheless, the low number of participants is a limitation that must be kept in mind and is a factor that decreases generalizability of the study across the university population.

Delimitations

The largest delimitation of the study is the population itself, because it is so very specific and represents a rather small, relatively speaking, portion of college students. Another delimitation of the study is the choice to use only surveys as a mode of data collection. As a qualitative study, the current study could have been expanded and deepened if the researcher had chosen to pursue other data collection techniques, including in-depth 1:1 interviews and focus groups. However, to pursue additional data collection strategies was simply beyond the scope of resources available to conduct the study—yet using them in future studies could prove to be valuable.

Chapter Summary

BMGBCS represent a double minority population comprised of Black males who are nonheterosexual. The paucity of research studies examining sexual discrimination or harassment on campus (SDHC) and racial discrimination or harassment on campus (RDHC) of BMGBCS was both a motivating and a justifying aspect for the present study. The current study shows that BMGBCS suffer from SDHC and RDHC in ways that are not well understood, which makes their problems hard to validate and resolve. The ultimate goal of the study was to provide greater data on the experiences of BMGBCS, which will hopefully lead to decreased SDHC and RDHC.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review examines social, psychological, academic and spiritual difficulties experienced by gay and bisexual men, emphasizing the experiences of Black men. It describes a social environment in which, historically, gay and bisexual men have been viewed as aberrant and problematic, have been medically and psychologically pathologized, and have been stigmatized, discriminated and harassed for their nonheterosexual orientation. It also explores the negative impacts of these challenges. The chapter looks closely at the intersection of maleness, Blackness, and nonheterosexual orientation as a combination of identities that imposes very severe challenges for this population. It also looks at the traditional binary view of sexuality that influences the pathologizing of gay black men, and explores how this population copes with overwhelming social and psychological challenges. Lastly, the literature review presents the guiding theoretical framework of the study, intersectionality and queer theory, which enables understanding of how multiple identities intersect to provide difficulties for gay black men as well as broadening the view of sexuality so that nonheterosexual orientations can be appreciated.

Homophobia & Heterosexism

Gay and bisexual men face discrimination based on their sexual orientation in the form of homophobia and heterosexism (Crawford et al., 2002; O'Brien, 2015). Homophobia has been defined as, "the irrational fear or hatred of sexuality, gender, or any behavior or belief that does not conform to rigid heteronormative sex role stereotypes" (Reference of Terms, n.d., p. 7). Heteronormative refers to the consensual view or cultural paradigm in which being heterosexual is regarded as the norm, while any other form of sexuality is viewed as abnormal. People express their homophobia in many ways, including verbal insults and derogatory remarks or gestures, social exclusion and physical attacks as well as social discrimination (e.g., housing, medical,

employment and education. About half of all gay and bisexual men have experienced

discrimination in these areas; meanwhile gay bashing—physical or verbal attacks on gay people

because they are gay—is the most prevalent hate crime reported (O'Brien, 2015).

The causes of homophobia seem to be based on fairly rigid gender norms in which being

gay is viewed or defined in accordance with ideas of gender-role and gender nonconformity

(O'Brien, 2015). As such, gay men tend to be conceived of as having more feminine

characteristics and lesbians more masculine characteristics. Gay and bisexual gender role

nonconformity is viewed as aberrant and deviant, immoral and anti-social because it threatens

the consistency of the *Leave It to Beaver* social framework of normalcy and decency that

pervades mainstream America. Violations of gender and gender-role expectations threaten

cherished cultural values of heteronormativity, and the responses tend to be homophobic.

Heterosexism is both a foundation for and a result of homophobia as the two seem to

function in a reciprocal relationship. Heterosexism is defined as "prejudice against individuals

and groups who display non-heterosexual behaviors or identities, combined with the majority

power to impose such prejudice" However, heterosexism is also the perspective that

heterosexuality is superior to nonheterosexuality because it is 'normal and natural', while

nonheterosexuality is 'abnormal and unnatural'. Institutionalized heterosexism is both dangerous

and effective because "individuals feel that their antigay attitudes and behaviors are legitimate to

the extent that these prejudices are entrenched in social institutions" (O'Brien, 2015, p. 790).

Homophobic persons feel increasingly emboldened to espouse and act out their homophobic

feelings and perspectives to the extent that heterosexism is ingrained in their social sphere.

Heterosexism has negative impacts for nonheterosexual persons—psychologically,

emotionally, and behaviorally—because it is a constant source of stress and anxiety (Crawford et

al., 2002). Living with a sense of ongoing anxiety about one's intrinsic identity, fearing rejection, humiliation and harassment from heterosexist individuals can lead to various mental health and emotional problems, causing gay and bisexual individuals to avoid certain social situations or hide their true identity (Crawford et al., 2002). Revealing one's nonheterosexual identity can have negative and disastrous consequences in a world governed by heterosexism—including losing access to housing, employment, and other life necessities. All of this adds up to a state of distress for nonheterosexual people living in a heterosexist world.

It is obvious that both binary gender beliefs and binary moralizing are at work in heterosexism. Heterosexism is deeply ingrained in our cultural consciousness, our mores and social norms, and was part and parcel of the scientific and mental health professions up until the late 20th century.

Most of us are all too familiar with the anti-gay, homophobic views expressed by some fundamental religions based on binary biblical interpretations that being gay is bad. Heterosexism as espoused by religious people has been demonstrated in multiple studies. Cotten-Huston and Waite (1999) found that persons with strong religious convictions expressed more negative attitudes towards bisexuals and gay persons than those without strong religious convictions. Previous research has also found multiple correlations between religiosity and homophobic attitudes, with more fundamental belief systems equating with higher degrees of prejudice towards gay persons (Fisher et al., 1994).

Heterosexism appears to have been historically ingrained in our modern collective psyche. From the scientific and professional health community to our prevailing religious institutions to the binary way in which we as a culture conceive of gender as well as develop a sense of morality. The mainstream paradigm through which we've been conditioned to view

sexuality emphasizes the goodness and acceptability of gender norms and corresponding sexuality norms as being heterosexual. Heterosexism has subsequently resulted in multiple kinds of suffering for nonheterosexual people.

Rankin et al. (2010, as cited in Woodford et al., 2015) finds heterosexism results in widespread discrimination against LGBTQ students on college campuses through perspectives that "devalue lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) and similar identities and perpetuate heterosexuality as normative and superior" (p. 73). A plethora of previous research has demonstrated that LGBTQ college students suffer from heterosexism-supported discrimination, harassment and violence that leads to significantly greater risk of both mental health and physical health problems than do heterosexual students (Woodford et al., 2015).

Minority stress theory contends that LGBTQ people who live in a society infused with heterosexism may experience a chronic emotional oppression that leads to stress, anxiety and compromised psychological and physical health (Woodford et al., 2015). Constant experiences of stigma, discrimination and prejudice with regard to their nonheterosexual orientation places LGBTQ college students into a minority status in which they are marginalized from the culturally normative group (Woodford et al., 2015). Silverschanz et al. (2008) found that LGBTQ college students who experienced verbal heterosexist harassment highlighting animosity towards their nonheterosexuality reported increased anxiety, substance abuse, school avoidance, and feelings of being rejected and not accepted on the college campus (Woodford et al., 2015).

Heterosexism is so widespread and integrated into our cultural norms that it can be overlooked. But this only makes it more dangerous because a person who is unaware of why they think or feel a certain way is likely less able to change. Heterosexism causes discrimination

towards nonheterosexuals, resulting in significant stress as well as physical and emotional suffering and self-injurious behaviors (Whitlock et al., 2006).

Whitley, Childs and Collins (2010) conducted a study to assess the attitudes of heterosexual Black students as opposed to heterosexual White students regarding their perceptions of gay male and lesbian female students. According to previous research, heterosexual Black students tend to have more negative and less positive attitudes towards gay men and lesbian women than heterosexual White students. Confirming the general findings of past research, Whitley et al. (2010) found that heterosexual Black students had less positive attitudes towards gay male and lesbian female students than heterosexual White students, and that heterosexual male students had less positive attitudes than heterosexual female students. Ironically, Whitley et al. (2010) also found that heterosexual male students had more positive attitudes towards lesbian female students and less positive attitudes towards gay male students, while heterosexual female students had more positive attitudes towards gay male students and less positive attitudes towards female lesbian students.

Overall, "two participants (1.7%) reported associating a Black person with the term homosexual, 90 (76.3%) reported associating a White person with the term, and 26 (22.0%) reported that the term could apply to a member of any racial/ethnic group" (306). This last finding confirms the notion that Black masculinity is rarely associated with being gay. The authors also found that right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) was correlated with negative attitudes toward female lesbian students and gay male students, and that Black students scored higher than White students in RWA—which is a factor that predisposed Black students towards more negative attitudes and less positive ones.

Altogether this research suggests that BMGBCS are apt to receive less acceptance, support and sense of community within their own race, in terms of their nonheterosexual orientation. It also means that BMGBCS are likely to experience more heterosexism and homophobic treatment within their racial group, which would likely be further alienating for BMGBCS, forcing them to struggle in terms of a sense of belonging within the Black community.

Internalized homophobia occurs when an LGBTQ person assumes homophobic perspectives and integrates these into their own perspectives, which often leads to self-loathing, intense self-criticism, self-hatred and self-rejection (O'Brien, 2015; Strayhorn et al., 2008). Through internalizing homophobic and heterosexist experiences of discrimination "the spoiled identity of the gay Black male is silenced, and the group becomes slaves to a masculinist–in the logic of Western racist, sexist, patriarchal discourse–organization of social life" (Lemelle & Battle, 2004, p. 48). Internalized homophobia and heterosexism by LGBTQ youth is likely a main cause of their profoundly high suicide rate (CDC, 1998), which is up to five times higher than heterosexual youth (O'Brien, 2015). Internalized homophobia and heterosexism are associated with worse mental health and riskier sexual behaviors (Schrimshaw, Downing, & Cohn, 2018). As such, homophobia and heterosexism attitudes and behaviors of heterosexuals and internalized homophobia and heterosexism are both significantly destructive to LGBTQ people.

Pathologizing of Gayness

In exploring the background of the challenges faced by BMGBCS, it is important to understand the cultural context and scientific theories on gayness that have influenced common views on nonheterosexual forms of sexuality and persons in the US and the modern world. While

religious perspectives have certainly been influential, we will first look at social theories of

gayness and bisexuality that have guided psychological and medical perspectives.

The modern scientific and health community severely pathologized gayness and

bisexuality up through the majority of the 20th century. Until 1990, the World Health

Organization (WHO) listed being gay on their International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10)

(Drescher, 2015). One cannot underestimate how stigmatizing it would be for a gay person to be

considered inherently diseased by the modern medical community. As a global authority on

physical and mental diseases, considering gayness to be a disorder also had a wide scale impact

on public social perspectives. In the first edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of

Mental Disorders (DSM-I) – which is the prevailing guidebook and voice of authority on

psychological pathology, used by psychotherapists, social workers, psychiatrists and doctors

alike – gayness was classified as a "sociopathic personality disturbance" (Drescher, 2015, p.

569). To be gay or bisexual in 1952 was akin to being considered to be a sociopath. In 1968, the

second edition of the DSM, the DSM-II, reclassified gayness as a "sexual deviation" (Drescher,

2015, p. 569). This is not much of an improvement – from a sociopath to a deviant, both views

are seriously stigmatizing.

In 1973, a revised edition of the DSM-II replaced gayness with sexual orientation

disturbance (SOD), which "regarded homosexuality as an illness if an individual with same-sex

attractions found them distressing and wanted to change" (Drescher, 2015, p. 571). This

qualification for gayness as a mental disease seems to be a veiled attempt at masking an

underlying belief that being gay is inherently problematic. If a gay person is judged as having an

aberrant form of sexuality, experiences discrimination and even violence, or the threat of

violence for being "gay", it would be no great stretch for a mental health professional to find

their "same-sex attractions" to be distressing. But, in this case, the distress is not coming from within, it is coming from without, caused by a rejecting and discriminatory society that tells the gay or bisexual person that not being heterosexual means the person is a deviant.

In 1980, SOD was changed in the DSM-III to ego dystonic homosexuality (EDH), which was really just another way of saying sexual orientation disturbance. It wasn't until 1987 that being gay was declassified as some form of mental health disorder in the revised DSM-III-R. (Burton, 1987; Drescher, 2015). For 35 years the professional mental health and medical community considered gayness and bisexuality to be bona fide mental illnesses, a psychological problem that should be treated just like any other kind of neurosis or personality disturbance. Certainly, this pathologizing of gayness and bisexuality has left a scar on the modern psyche, for those who were alive at the time and for those who were raised by persons who held these beliefs, as well as for all nonheterosexual persons.

Theories of gayness and bisexuality representing forms of pathology were widespread throughout the 20th century. A lesser kind of pathologizing theory held that gayness and bisexuality resulted from psychological immaturity, or a disruption in ordinary development in which a typical gay phase should be outgrown (Drescher, 2015). This theory is, at bottom, still pathologizing, contending that there is a problem which led to the *condition* of gayness. A more accepting theory is that of normal variation, which claims gayness and bisexuality are normal, just not as common as heterosexuality.

Binary Concepts of Gender

Perhaps underlying much of the prejudice, bias, and pathologizing of gayness and bisexuality are concepts of gender that are guided by the assumptions that gender is always binary. In the binary world, one is either born female or male, and is destined to either be a

woman or a man. Both women and men supposedly have certain psychological and behavioral characteristics that match and define their female and male genders. According to Drescher (2007), gender is a social and psychological construct by which we are conditioned, and in which "gender binary is based not only on body parts, for all feelings, thoughts, and behaviors must fall into either one category or the other" (pp. 224 - 225). Therefore, as members of society, we are expected to conform to a set of personality characteristics – feelings, perspectives, how we think and behave – that corresponds to prevailing ideas of what constitutes being a man or a woman. Persons who don't do this are challenging the binary gender paradigm. Men who wear lipstick, fingernail polish, or skirts are viewed as not corresponding to prescribed normative behaviors for men as regards the mainstream American culture.

Perhaps more than any other population, the LGBTQ community exhibits personality characteristics that go against the grain of binary gender concepts. Gay men and women may or may not dress like / act like / talk like the prevailing norms of men and women as they are defined by society. Therefore, persons who subscribe to these norms may view gay and bisexual men and women as not fitting in with the binary schemata. According to Drescher (2015) the male/female and masculine/feminine gender binaries are complicated through a binary moral lens equating to good/bad. A man who acts in accordance with our cultural definition of a "real man" is viewed as "good," whereas a woman who behaves in accordance with our cultural definition of a man is "bad." That is to say, our binary ideas of gender and gender identity correspond with moralistic ideas of right and wrong, good and evil. This way of thinking creates what is known as heterosexism.

Bisexual Men

According to a number of studies, bisexual men face a greater amount of discrimination and prejudice than bisexual women and gay men and women (Bruina and Arndta, 2010; Eliason, 2001; Watson et al., 2017). In a study involving 229 heterosexual university students and using surveys that measured acceptance and rejection of gay and bisexual men and women, Eliason (2001) found that bisexual men were rated as unacceptable by 26% of participants and bisexual women by 12% - which is a vast difference. The fact that the greatest degree of negative feeling in heterosexual university students was geared towards bisexual men indicates that bisexual men experience the greatest levels of discrimination and rejection based on their sexuality. In the study, bisexual men were also viewed with extreme variations of rejection – disgust and hatred – at much higher rates than other nonheterosexual sexuality groups.

According to Watson et al. (2017), bisexuals may experience higher levels of heterosexism, also known as binegativity, because they experience discrimination from both heterosexual and gay persons. Bisexuals are sometimes regarded as a group with an invalid identity because they are neither gay nor heterosexual, thus confounding the dichotomous, black and white, polarizing thinking that is common in the modern world. Bruina and Arndta (2010), agree, claiming that bisexuality does not fit it with common conceptions of a dichotomous view of sexuality as either expressing as gay or heterosexual, but is effectively nullified as it falls in between both extremes. Zinik (1985, as cited in Bruina & Arndta, 2010) claims, "Such a binary division is rooted in the basic biological dichotomy of male/female and assumes a similarly clear distinction between those fundamentally homosexual and those fundamentally heterosexual, based on the gender of one's sexual partners" (p. 234). While Bruina and Arndta (2010) consider the position of bisexuals as a form of "double discrimination," Watson et al. (2017) state, "given

their minority race and sexual orientation, Black bisexual men can be understood as double

minorities" (p. 244).

Taking into consideration the claims of both Bruina and Arndta (2010) and Watson et al.

(2017), the situation for Black bisexual men begins to come into focus as one that is most

precarious as they experience the most discrimination from heterosexual and gay persons, likely

subjecting this population to the highest levels of discrimination of any sexual orientation.

Therefore, the concerns of Black male bisexual college students may be seen as somewhat

distinct from the concerns of Black male gay college students – that is to say, although their

concerns may be very similar, Black male bisexual college students may have more to be

concerned about in terms of discrimination and prejudice.

This greater amount of sexual discrimination may be the main reason that most bisexual

men don't disclose their bisexuality to their female partners, a behavior that is associated with

decreased mental health, increased internalized homophobia, and higher propensity for

unprotected vaginal sex (Schrimshaw et al., 2018). Challenging presiding theories that non-

disclosure of bisexuality is based on a lack of clear sexual identity, Schrimshaw et al. (2018)

conducted a qualitative study of 203 bisexual men to explore reasons they had not disclosed their

bisexuality to their female partners. The main reasons for non-disclosure centered on fear of

being stigmatized by others. The number one fear was getting a negative emotional reaction from

their female partner or upsetting them emotionally, followed by the fear of a negative behavioral

response such as the female partner ending the relationship. Another fear was having to face the

stigmatizing attitudes that other, non-bisexual people have towards bisexuals, including being

labelled or referred to by derogatory names such as "faggot" or "queer." Overall, the research

shows that bisexual males are at high risk for discrimination, which corresponds with

maladaptive behaviors and excessive fears.

The Threefold Hazard of being Black, Male, and Nonheterosexual

Being Black, male and nonheterosexual are all minority identities when taken together.

Being Black and LGBTQ or nonheterosexual are both minority positions in the general society.

Black people in general are targeted by racial prejudice, discrimination, and violence more than

White people, and nonheterosexuals are targeted by sexual prejudice, discrimination, and

violence more than heterosexuals. While women are typically seen as the minority sex— in terms

of inequality, bias and violence – in accordance with being gay or bisexual, Black males are the

minority population as they are targeted by sexual prejudice and discrimination more than Black

females (Eliason, 2001; Watson et al., 2017).

With these elements in mind, there is a greater likelihood that Black male bisexuals and

gay persons, in general, are at high, severe risk of discrimination, harassment, and violence due

to the intersection of their sexual orientation, racial status, and gender. As per this assessment,

this study took a closer look at the specific and unique challenges faced by BMGBCS, based on

their being nonheterosexual, Black and male.

<div align="center">

Black Male Gay and Bisexual College Students

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While there is a great deal of research on the experiences of homophobia and

heterosexism, as well as the experiences of LGBTQ college students, there is a lack of research

on the experiences of BMGBCS. The Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource

Professionals (2016) released a report on the experiences of transsexual and queer students of

color (TQSOC) in which they acknowledged and examined the multiple dimensions of

discrimination experienced by this population. While their study population would certainly include BMGBCS, it does not specify this population.

The gestalt of the study was to reveal the challenges faced by TQSOC as opposed or in distinction to White trans and queer students – essentially including the racial dimension of discrimination that is so often ignored in the LGBTQ community. As such, the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals (2016) asserted that TQSOC experience virtual erasure as they are not identified or supported through the challenges they face on college campuses. While Duran and Jackson (2019) also explore issues pertinent to TQSOC, the research specifying the experiences of BMGBCS is paltry at best (Renn, 2010; Strayhorn et al., 2008).

Misawa (2010) acknowledges the reality of racism in our society and how it intersects with homophobia to create extreme bias towards nonheterosexual persons of color. Kumashiro (2001, as cited in Misawa, 2010) claims, "sexual minorities of color are at least doubly discriminated against" (p. 27). Convoluting the situation, the intersection of racial and sexual discrimination is not often noticed, therefore rarely addressed. Regarding racial discrimination on the college campus, Misawa (2010) argues that the very context of higher education is embedded in universal views about knowledge and learning that espouse the White majority perspective, and are based on "generalizations that operate hegemonically to marginalize learners and practitioners" (p. 27). Accordingly, the positionality – or access to positions of power – of Black students in college is inherently compromised.

Dilley (2002, as cited in Misawa, 2010) states, "current mainstream universities inadvertently created a norm of heterosexism in their learning environments that entailed professors using heterosexist practices in their lecture classes, and environments that are negative

towards gay men, discourage them from coming out and may lead to low self-esteem" (p. 29). The universal beliefs, generalizations and assumptions regarding the racial superiority of the White male perspective alongside the discriminatory sexual superiority views of heterosexism create a context of belief in which colleges operate in accordance with views and perspectives that are inherently discriminatory against people of color and gay and bisexual persons. This intersection of heterosexism and White privilege is automatically disempowering to those students who do not fit the mold, including BMGBCS.

Chapell et al. (2004, as cited in Misawa, 2009) claims that bullying is frequent in higher education, with over 60% of students reporting incidents of students bullying one another, and 45% reporting teachers bullying students. Twale and De Luca (2008, as cited in Misawa, 2009) claim that bullying in higher education is institutionally fostered and is an embedded cultural norm. Bullying can be direct, as in a physically violent or emotionally abusive attack, or it can be indirect, as in exclusion and isolation from the in-group – and it can result in physical injury and/or post-traumatic stress disorder, which includes extreme anxiety (Misawa, 2009). As such, Misawa (2009) views bullying as a systematic abuse of power in which "power dynamics based on positionality have become invisible in contemporary society, and consequently racist-homophobic bullying has existed but been ignored for a long time" (p. 10).

Due to their double minority status and marginalization from majority group norms, BMGBCS are subject to high levels of bullying in the college environment. Field (1996) describes racist and homophobic bullying as "inappropriate remarks, comments, aspersions, suggestions, etc. about a person's gender, race, color, beliefs, sexual orientation, background, upbringing, etc.; and jokes of a sexist, racist, ageist or similar nature whose objective is to humiliate" (p. 45). Misawa's (2009) narrative study of gay college students of color found that

students "experienced the ubiquitous college environment in the United States where gay men of color have to face racism and homophobia" (p. 16) in the form of threatening and offensive incidents of racist and homophobic bullying that entailed derogatory and insulting verbal remarks. BMGBCS frequently experience racial and sexual discrimination and harassment in college classrooms, cultural centers, residence halls, and throughout the college campus (Strayhorn et al., 2008; Strayhorn & Mullins, 2012; and Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013). The evidence is overwhelming that both Black males and Black nonheterosexual males endure a great deal of racism in college communities simply as per their race, which equals non-White.

According to Misawa (2011), "Higher education still perpetuates a sociocultural power imbalance wherein bullying is institutionally encouraged as a way to discriminate and marginalize gay people of color" (p. 454). Although Misawa's study focused on Black male gay and bisexual college instructors, the results are likely relevant to students as well. Having interviewed 19 male gay faculty members, Misawa found all participants reported having been harassed and manipulated via racist and homophobic bullying by other instructors and staff. Participants reported frequent "negative and hostile experiences on campus from administrators, departmental chairs, colleagues, and students due to bigoted ideas and stereotypes about race and/or sexual orientation" (Misawa, 2011, p.456). If Black male gay professional instructors— who were hired and paid to represent the college through instructing students—experienced significant racist and homophobic bullying, then it is nearly certain that gay male Black students would experience such discriminatory treatment, and perhaps at greater levels due to their lower positions of power.

Masculinity and Blackness

Strayhorn and Tillman-Kelly (2013) conducted a qualitative study to better understand how the social constructions of manhood and masculine identities made by gay Black college students impact their academic participation and performance, as well as their social experiences in college. They found that the majority of participants described Black masculinity in ways that reflected hegemonic masculine ideals, such as being strong, tough, and able to provide. They found that "accepting and adhering to stereotypically traditional notions of Black masculinity powerfully shaped the decisions and behaviors of BGMUs in this study" (p. 97). Some men in the study challenged the hegemonic ideas of Black masculinity by pursuing classes and activities that went against the grain of the masculine code of behavior. These men were intent on creating new ideas of Black masculinity that incorporated their experiences of nonheterosexual orientations. The authors did not suggest differences in student personality structure or other characteristics to explain the differences to responses regarding masculine identity.

Past studies culminate in findings showing that Black males tend to embrace heteronormative ideas and ideals of Black masculinity, often times based on sexual prowess, social power and confidence (Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013). Dancy (2012, as cited in Strayhorn and Tillman-Kelly, 2013) claim that Black masculinity is often time defined by a "narrow masculine code" of behavior in which Black males must maintain strength, power, control, *and be heterosexual*—even intellectual pursuits are often questioned as non-masculine. Black men who transgress the masculine code are stigmatized by derogatory labels, teased, harassed and ostracized from the masculine in-group. As such, "labeling, teasing, and physical or verbal threats of this kind have long-since been used to patrol, police, and/or enforce Black masculine behaviors, especially among Black male peers in educational contexts" (Strayhorn &

Tillman-Kelly, 2013, p. 90). In the majority of Black mainstream culture, it is explicitly not okay

for a man to be gay or bisexual; the cost for being so (and for revealing that one is so) is harsh

social punishment in the form of ridicule, emotional and physical abuse, and alienation. The

message is that you're not a man and you don't belong if you are Black, male and gay.

In a qualitative study of 29 Black male college students, Ford (2011) found that Black

masculinity is described as being in control and powerful, not being vulnerable, not being gay,

and being thuggish. Gay men are defined in contrast to Black masculinity, as essentially

feminine. The heterosexist and homophobic views within the Black community are so strong that

some Black gay men actually learn to be homophobic in order to maintain status in the Black

community. Further convoluting the situation, some gay men who are out of the closet have

difficulties associating with gay men who are still in the closet because these men fear their

gayness may be discovered (Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013).

Descriptions of Black manhood tended to be more mature, whereas Black masculinity

typically was not. While Black manhood was viewed as defined by integral and generative

characteristics that included care, respect, trust and sensitivity, Black masculinity was described

more in terms of façade, of appearance and behavior that gave an impression of being tough and

powerful and materialistic.

The Need for Belonging

Majors and Billson (1992, as cited in Strayhorn et al., 2008) claim that the main reason

for Black males being underrepresented at colleges is due to racist stereotypes that they are lazy,

uneducable, dangerous, and threatening—attitudes that some Black males internalize and which

worsens the situation. Black male students at PWIs report feeling unwelcomed, like outsiders, as

if they are under constant surveillance and feared by White students and teachers (Mitchell &

Means, 2014). Perhaps even worse, their very self-worth is called into question as they are often accused of only being admitted to PWIs based on affirmative action policies (Mitchell & Means, 2014). Smith et al. (2007, as cited in Mitchell & Means, 2014) state that the culmination of these negative and rejecting experiences tend to lead, as one would expect, to anger, fatigue, and hopelessness.

Feagin et al. (1996, as cited in Strayhorn et al., 2008) claim "Blacks attending PWIs [predominantly White institutions] report feeling alienated, marginalized, socially isolated, unsupported, unwelcomed and under undue pressure to prove themselves academically" (p. 92). The situation for BMGBCS is further convoluted by a homophobic college environment, heterosexism, and racism from within the LGBTQ community. These factors add up to an environment in which it would be extremely challenging for gay and bisexual Black students to meet the need for a sense of belonging on college campuses.

In a narrative-approach qualitative study that involved in-depth interviews with seven gay Black college students, Strayhorn et al. (2008) found that participants made their choice of college based on their ability to "come out" and to live their sexual identity freely. Exploring retention, the authors found that peer and family support as well as self-determination to succeed were crucial. However, most participants reported not having other gay Black men as support persons, but rather turned to White gay men and Black heterosexual women for support. Once again, the need for a sense of belonging may be only partially met or met by compromising intrinsic values due to the lack of peer support in one's in-group. For some of the participants in the study, "Making sense of their experiences and countering racism (in predominantly White spaces) and homophobia (in predominantly Black spaces) facilitated a sense of independence and self-determination" (Strayhorn et al., 2008, p. 101). However, this cannot be said to compensate

in any adequate manner for a lack of a sense of belonging. We don't thrive as human beings by facing the odds continuously.

Lack of support for Black men on college campuses is a serious problem, and it is even more serious for BMGBCS as their social networks are even more discriminatory and less supportive (Mitchell & Means, 2014). Because BMGBCS tend to be rejected by their Black community for being gay or bisexual, they will often not attempt to rely on LGBTQ communities or college campus student services because if they 'come out of the closet' they risk losing support from their Black support systems (Mitchell & Means, 2014; Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013). This creates a severely convoluted situation for BMGBCS at college campuses wherein they may feel compelled to hide their sexual orientation for fear of further discrimination in an environment wherein support is already at a very low level. BMGBCS also report feeling generally unsafe and isolated at PWIs, claiming that the majority of discrimination comes from their racial identities.

Crawford et al. (2002, as cited in Mitchell & Means, 2014) claim that "BGABM [Black gay and bisexual men] who have not integrated their racial, ethnic and sexual orientation identities are more likely to be unsatisfied with life and have more psychological stress" (p. 25). Patton (2011, as cited in Mitchell & Means, 2014) states that BGABM are further impelled to hide their nonheterosexual identity because they perceive that being gay or bisexual can potentially compromise their career opportunities. While White gay and bisexual men may feel similarly, they are not dealing with the more complex double minority status of BGABM, which makes a profound distinction between the experiences of both groups.

Coping Strategies and Navigating Identities

To manage, and sometimes mitigate, their sexual minority status, Wilson & Miller (2002) found that gay and bisexual Black men employed 5 coping strategies for non-gay friendly environments and one coping strategy for gay friendly ones. Role flexing, changing sexual behavior, standing your ground, keeping the faith, and accepting self were employed in gay-friendly contexts, whereas creating gay-only spaces was used in gay friendly contexts. Both role flexing and changing sexual behavior were strategies that gay and bisexual Black men used to avoid the stigma of being nonheterosexual. Role flexing was the most nuanced of all the strategies as it was employed in diverse ways: asserting an overtly masculine sense of self and even engaging in anti-gay talk within certain circles; being sanctimonious by assimilating anti-gay norms; deceiving others to hide one's sexuality; and simply remaining quiet and passive about one's nonheterosexual orientation, even in the face of gay bashing. Changing sexual behavior as a coping strategy equated with repressing one's gay or bisexual nature because it was perceived to be bad (Wilson & Miller, 2002).

Standing your ground and accepting self were used to effect social change. Standing your ground was perhaps the most assertive strategy as participants reported confronting people who voiced heterosexist or homophobic views. Accepting self was a strategy used both in gay friendly and non-gay friendly contexts, and entailed cultivating acceptance and positive regard for one's unique sexual orientation.

Keeping the faith and creating gay-only spaces were coping strategies used to build buffers between the gay or bisexual Black man and the perceived heterosexist or homophobic threat (Wilson & Miller, 2002). Keeping the faith was an interesting strategy because it employed strengthening religious views or faith in God, which was ironic as the majority of

participants also found the church environment to be overwhelmingly non-gay friendly. Creating

gay-only spaces served to bolster a sense of safety and camaraderie around experiencing

friendship and community with other gay and bisexual Black men. Doing this "provided some of

the emotional support that biological family members were unable to provide" (Wilson & Miller,

2002, p. 383).

Each coping strategy had a specific goal. Avoiding stigma is an important goal for gay

and bisexual Black men, the majority of whom have been harassed and discriminated for the

intersection of their racial and sexual minority status (Wilson & Miller, 2002). Building buffers

helped to mitigate negative experiences as well as the impact of a participant's own internalized

oppression. Creating social change was used as a highly proactive way to counter oppression and

improve one's circumstances.

Religion

Spirituality has historically been viewed as a source of strength and inspiration by the

Black community, in which it is used to transcend negative biases and develop a fortitude

harnessed to overcome oppression (Stewart, 1999). Spirituality is used by Black college students

as a coping strategy to deal with personal and social dilemmas, as well as way to approach

problem solving situation (Constantine et al., 2002). Dancy (2010) found that Black, male

college students regard God and spirituality as one of the few things they can depend on for

strength and guidance, so much so that they also reported their spiritual identities provide an

anchor for their overall identities as students.

In nearly every study on the challenges of BMGBCS and gay and bisexual black men in

general, the church was found to be a source of significant discrimination, highlighting the

heterosexist and homophobic views that are predominant throughout mainstream

heteronormative society (Ford, 2016; Glassman, 2016; Lemelle & Battle, 2004; Mitchell & Means, 2014; Renn, 2010; Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013; Whitley et al., 2010; Wilson & Miller, 2002). Discriminatory attitudes towards gay men and lesbian women in the church are ubiquitous. As such, Black gay and bisexual men report significant homophobic messages and heterosexist attitudes in religious contexts that tend to be quite discouraging of their nonheterosexual sexual orientation (Lemelle & Battle, 2004; Wilson & Miller, 2002). Having identified multiple non-gay-friendly environments, "church also was identified as among the most oppressive of non-gay friendly contexts" (Wilson & Miller, 2002, p. 382).

In order to fit in to the church environment, to pursue their religious inclinations, many BMGBCS and gay and bisexual Black men in general must cope with the discriminatory attitudes. As in other repressive contexts, BMGBCS employ various strategies, from denying their sexual orientation to dealing with harassment. Either way, coping with sexual discrimination in the church places undue stress on an area of life in which most people come to feel safe and loved. This, of course, marks yet another inequity that BMGBCS have to endure. Ironically, some BMGBCS report the church as being a place they obtain strength because the degree of their religious convictions outweighs the experience of stigma they also experience.

Conclusion

The review of literature provides a great deal of information and insight into the social, psychological, academic and spiritual challenges encountered by gay black males and BMGBCS; however, many questions remain. A foremost concern of any researcher into this subject area must be how experiences of SDHC and RDHC can be addressed and reduced. Also, how can BMGBCS best be supported to contend with and counteract instances of SDHC and RDHC as well as be empowered to avoid, confront or eradicate them in prosocial ways. Considering the

lack of support BMGBCS experience on college campuses as regards SDHC and RDHC, how can support be increased and how can BMGBCS learn to find support and build support networks. No student should be subject to targeted incidents of SDHC or RDHC, and seeing as how this is regularly reported on college campuses, it is something that warrants immediate and pointed attention.

Guiding Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical framework of any study sets the proper context in which the subject matter and population will be viewed. As the current study examines difficulties experienced by a very particular population, BMGBCS, intersectionality is an appropriate lens through which to understand the problem. Intersectionality is a theory that makes room for the rich nuances and particulars of experience that are unique to any population, and is especially effective with BMGBCS. Secondarily, queer theory is a useful lens through which to view sexuality from a non-traditional and more open-ended perspective that can allow a greater amount of appreciation for the multifarious manifestations of this universal phenomenon.

Intersectionality & Queer Theory

The bulk of research regarding the experiences of gay and bisexual persons involves the theoretical framework of intersectionality as well as queer theory. The model of intersectionality takes into consideration how multiple dimensions of identity – race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, etc. – impact a person's experience of any situation (Thomas-Card & Ropers-Huilman, 2014). According to Massaquoi (2015), intersectionality magnifies "the systematic ways in which differences in social location such as, but not limited to, race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status were interrelated as distinct categories rather than conflated into a single experience of oppression" (pp. 766-767). Through the lens of intersectionality, the

lack of power and privilege experienced by disenfranchised groups, such as BMGBCS, is better understood. Looking at the situation of all LGBTQ students through the lens of intersectionality enables acknowledgment of how such students are faced with multiple layers of discrimination and how this can detrimentally impact their access to resources, academic success, and mental health.

A study conducted by Henry et al. (2011) on the experiences of Black sexual minority students found that "students with multiple marginalized identities may be left feeling alone, isolated, alienated and ultimately unable to persist and complete college" (p. 68). Looking at the issues faced by BMGBCS through the model of intersectionality can reveal the distinct challenges faced by this population – and can distinguish the context of their experience from those students who are not categorically stereotyped and marginalized. Duran and Jackson (2019), claim that intersectionality can help us to discern how "overlapping structures of power and oppression" (p. 41) impact marginalized groups of people.

The theory of intersectionality and its perspectives are profoundly important to any study on the challenges faced by BMGBCS because they are apt to face discrimination in sexual, racial, and gender dimensions of their experience. The Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals (2016) claims that, historically, cultural centers and student support groups were created without an intersectional framework that would reveal the multiple layers of discrimination faced by TQSOC groups. They emphasize that intersectionality is vital to gain a comprehensive understanding of the TQSOC population, and thereby make progress towards racial and sexual justice in colleges.

Gamson (2000, as cited in Misawa, 2010) states that Queer Theory "insists that all sexual behaviors, all concepts linking sexual behaviors to sexual identities, and all categories of

normative and deviant sexualities are social constructs" (p.30). The idea that our concepts and categorizations of diverse forms of sexuality are social constructs implies that heterosexism is at play beneath these schemata, because our main social construct is that heterosexuality is normal and gayness is deviant, weird, unusual, or wrong. Queer Theory asserts that there is no inherent wrongness or weirdness in any form of sexuality, including gayness or bisexuality, because those views are based on assumptions or ideas undergirded by heterosexism—which is itself a discriminatory fallacy.

Queer Theory calls into question the heteronormative gender binary system and suggests that this perspective serves to create a binary good/evil split between normal heterosexuality and deviant gayness, bisexuality, and transgendered sexualities—as such it questions the gay – heterosexual binary (Misawa, 2010; Thomas-Card & Ropers-Huilman, 2014). Warner (1991, as cited in Massaquoi, 2015) claims that the very term 'queer' "is said to transcend difference … to be gay or lesbian is merely to be assigned an identity, and to be queer requires the visioning and production of abstract genderless free agents who are definitionally indeterminate" (p. 766). Thus, queer theory is interested in creating new understandings of sexuality that transcend the language and categorization imposed upon sexuality by common middle class White Western thinking. As such, "queer theory performs as a constant narrative with the power to challenge all norms relating to sexual identity" (Massaquoi, 2015, p. 767). However, Massaquoi (2015) and others (see Duran & Jackson, 2019; Olive, n.d.; The Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals, 2016) also claim that queer theory can only fully do this by embracing the perspective of intersectionality, in which all dimensions of a person's oppressed identities are considered. To be a bisexual Black college student is different than being a White lesbian instructor, which is also different than being a transgender Haitian refugee.

Massaquoi (2015) examines queer theory in light of its greater potential when combined with intersectionality. The need for this is based on queer theory having traditionally been couched in the concerns of White middle class gay men and women. Massaquoi (2015) claims that using Queer Theory in this limited context misses the larger potential to dismantle oppression as it occurs in multiple forms. Combining queer theory with intersectionality helps to see the other dimensions of marginalization – race, culture, religion, etc. – and how they mix with nonheterosexuality to create unique identities that are either ignored, silenced or oppressed by mainstream heteronormative society.

Queer theory must "provide a framework within which to challenge racist, misogynistic, and other oppressive discourses, as well as those that are heterosexist and homophobic, through an intersectional lens. It cannot simply challenge heteronormativity but must instead question and resist the very systems that sustain heteronormativity" (Massaquoi, 2015, p. 767). This is important with regard to the intersection of racism with heterosexism in the experiences of non-White LGBTQ persons. The underlying emphasis of the studies on queer theory is that race and ethnicity must also be thoroughly taken into consideration when using the lens of queer theory to empower the experiences of LGBTQ people.

It is noteworthy that Massaquoi wants queer theory and intersectionality to challenge the systems that support and promulgate heteronormativity—which likely refers to all major institutional systems, including education, law enforcement, justice, housing, etc., since all these systems have heteronormative foundations. The implication is that intersectionality can work with queer theory to accomplish a greater purview and degree of pro-LGBTQ goals. In summary of this collaborative capacity, Massaquoi (2015) claims, "Intersectionality accounts for the

multiple levels across which oppression operates, and queer theory pushes us to deconstruct categorical identities and question normativity" (p. 769).

<div align="center">**Additional Guiding Frameworks**</div>

Sense of Belonging

Strayhorn (2012) developed a model of sense of belonging geared specifically for college students of color, incorporating ideas about belonging from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954). In Maslow's popular theory of human needs a person progresses through meeting basic physical needs, such as those for food, shelter and safety, to meeting more complex emotional and psychological needs, such as belonging, self-esteem and actualization. In Maslow's theory a person must meet the basic needs before being able to truly commit to meeting the more advanced needs. However, even in Maslow's schemata, belonging can be viewed as a basic psychological need since most humans suffer immensely when bereft of any sense of belonging. Regarding college students, Strayhorn (2012) claims that when the needs for belonging are not met students are more apt to suffer academically or dropout from college.

Strayhorn's (2012) model of college students' sense of belonging places belonging in the middle of a hierarchy of needs, with physiological and safety needs beneath it, and self-esteem and actualization above. Strayhorn (2019) cites McMillan and Chavis (1986) who define sense of belonging as a "feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p. 9). When the need for belonging is met, student outcomes tend to be positive and include happiness, involvement, achievement, and retention in college. When student's needs for belonging are not met, student outcomes tend to be negative and include emotional problems such as depression, self-injurious behavior, and suicide.

According to Strayhorn (2012), belonging is a basic human need that must be met and if left unmet will cause significant suffering. Sense of belonging is a significant motivator of student behavior and is viewed as very important in identity formation. Strayhorn emphasizes that the social identity of college students—including intersections of race, sexual orientation, gender, religion, etc.—profoundly impacts sense of belonging. A student's sense of belonging is also conditional as per context and circumstance, but remains continual across these variations of experience, such that a person might feel a strong sense of belonging in one situation and a weak sense of belonging or even rejection in another. Due to their compromised social identities, Strayhorn (2012) claims that marginalized populations, such as college students of color, may feel the need for a sense of belonging even more profoundly than less marginalized groups, and thus might take greater efforts to meet this need.

Because the concerns and realities of LGBTQ students tend to be eclipsed by ingrained heterosexist paradigms on college campuses, they may feel a greater drive for validation as a group such that the need for a sense of belonging transcends the individual to also pertain to the individual's identification with a group population. This corresponds with Renn's (2010) assertion that LGBTQ rights movements on college campuses originally strove to establish a sense of normalcy and increased visibility as regards their presence as legitimate students with specific identities and needs.

The importance of sense of belonging for BMGBCS takes on an even greater significance when we consider the very low college enrollment rates of Black males (Mitchell & Means, 2014). While about 75% of Whites enroll in college after high school, about 35-50% of Blacks do, with Blacks obtaining only 9% of the bachelor's degrees awarded in 2014 (Strayhorn et al., 2008). Add to this the fact that Black women outnumber Black men at a ratio of 2:1, and it

becomes clear that Black men have the lowest graduation rates of any racial/gender population. How can any population feel a sense of belonging when severely outnumbered and underrepresented? While Black males are severely underrepresented in college environments, the situation for gay Black males is even more extreme.

Quadruple Consciousness

Developing strategies to cope with ongoing heterosexism, both overt and covert—as it is virtually embedded into the paradigm of modern social life—as well as explicit instances of homophobic behavior from heterosexuals, is important for BMGBCS as they are thoroughly immersed in a social microcosm that impacts their day to day life and their academic performance. Of course, every individual copes differently. A BMGBCS's capacity to cope may be correlated with his ethnic and sexual identity development, in terms of how far along he is with having embraced his real identity in terms of ethnicity and sexuality (Crawford et al., 2002).

Crawford et al. (2002) found that African American gay and bisexual men (AAGBM) who had achieved high levels of both racial-ethnic identity development and sexual identity development reported lower levels of gender role and psychosocial stress alongside greater levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction, and fewer incidents of high-risk sexual behaviors. Ironically, they also experienced more racist and homophobic encounters than AAGBM who were less developed in these areas. Ostensibly, they were more prepared to deal with these harassment encounters as they were resolute in their true identity.

Crawford et al.'s (2002) study was based on a theory that the inhibition of one's true feelings and thoughts can put significant strain on one's physical and psychological health. The authors label such a state of being as 'psychosocial dysphoria,' which is basically a sense of unease or dissatisfaction that, in this case, is elicited in situations in which being one's true

self—embracing and asserting one's true racial and sexual orientation identity—is risky and may provoke negative reaction responses from others. The authors emphasized that AAGBM who achieved the highest scores in functioning and health had integrated and developed positive feelings and attitudes about their dual identity as being both African American and gay—which is a totally unique identity form being either African American and heterosexual or a non-Black gay person, because both involve discrimination (Crawford et al., 2002).

The idea of dual identity is complex and has multiple meanings because BMGBCS can experience a dual identity in terms of the intersectionality of their race and sexual orientation (both of which are treated as minorities in our culture), but they can also experience a dual identity in terms of being Black and nonheterosexual but assimilating into a White-majority world and hiding their sexual orientation (Crawford et al., 2002). So how a BMGBCS experiences dual identity will vary as per the meaning and as per the development of the individual in terms of racial and sexual identity. Experiencing a dual identity in terms of feeling the need to hide one's true identity is stressful and tends to lead to negative outcomes, such as anxiety, depression and general emotional stress (Strayhorn, 2012). The truly disastrous reality is that coming out and being open about one's racial and sexual identity can also lead BMGBCS to experiencing negative responses from heterosexist and homophobic others (Crawford et al., 2002; Misawa, 2011; Mitchell & Means, 2014).

Based on Du Bois' (1903/2010) double consciousness theory blended with Vivienne Cass' (1979, 1984) sexual identity model, Mitchell and Means (2014) conjured their own theory, Quadruple Consciousness, for how and why BGABM move back and forth between four distinct modes of identity—mainly in order to cope with social situations and expectations. In this model the four modes of identity are: (1) White and heterosexual, (2) White and non-heterosexual, (3)

Black and heterosexual, and (4) Black and nonheterosexual. The theory is based on the context that the norm of social convention, upon which prevailing paradigms of identity are built, is based on being White and heterosexual—which is identity #1, the norm. In identity 2, White individuals must cope with being nonheterosexual, which is significantly stressful. However, as is made clear by the model (in identity #3), Black students are automatically marginalized from the norm of society simply by virtue of their race. However, Black students who are also nonheterosexual (identity #4) are doubly marginalized.

Mitchell and Means (2014) hypothesize that each of the four identities is unique, coming with its own set of norms and standards, expectations and so forth. While both Black and BGABM students are obviously not White, in PWIs they may be compelled to assimilate into identity #1 or #2 so as to cope with social race-based expectations and pressures. This model is helpful because it articulates just how difficult it can be for BGABM to participate in college life while also navigating their own true racial and sexual identity. According to Mitchell and Means (2014), "BGABM operating in three states of consciousness and suppressing parts of their true identities suggests they may have a harder time reaching identity pride" (p. 30). In this we see that BMGBCS coping strategies to deal with heterosexist and homophobic discrimination and harassment may involve negotiating identities in ways that compromises their lived integrity— that is, causes or influences them to deny, hide or repress parts of their true racial and sexual orientation identity.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter addresses all aspects of the study methodology, including a description of the epistemological perspective and transformative worldview, mixed-method research, the phenomenological approach, the research context and population demographics, the sampling criteria and techniques, recruitment process, ethical considerations – including confidentiality and informed consent, trustworthiness – including the study rigor and validation strategies, researcher's positionality, data analysis methods, and limitations.

Epistemological Perspective

The research approach of this study can be specified as aligning with a transformative worldview. In the transformative perspective of research, "the inquirer seeks to examine an issue related to oppression of individuals" (Creswell, 2014, p. 48). The sexual and racial discrimination experienced by BMGBCS certainly qualifies as a kind of oppression as it is stigmatizing and detrimental to health, social participation, and academic performance. Further, the transformative framework is inclusive of the researcher's own implicit values, and suggests that the researcher's worldview contends that "knowledge is not neutral" but is "influenced by human interests" (Sweetman et al., 2010, p. 442). Ultimately, the aim of expanding knowledge, according to a transformative perspective, is to provide improvement to society (Sweetman et al., 2010). The overt purpose of this study is to provide greater understanding of how SDHC and RDHC occurs in BMGBCS, while the underlying goal is for that new knowledge to result in improved conditions for BMGBCS.

The transformative perspective in qualitative studies is often used to address research problems relevant to a population that is marginalized or disenfranchised, and used in accordance with a theoretical lens that addresses such problems (Sweetman et al., 2010). This study does

exactly that by exploring the problem of SDHC and RDHC in the BMGBCS population through the lens of intersectionality and queer theory. At the same time, a transformative research perspective also looks at the issues of power and relationships in society as it seeks to transform those relationships to be fair and just for all parties. For all these reasons the transformative perspective is appropriate to my study.

Research Tradition

The research tradition employed by this study was a mixed-method approach. Mixed-method research is described as "integration of qualitative and quantitative research and data" (Creswell, 2014, p. 14) in which the qualitative data is usually open-ended, while the quantitative data includes close-ended questions on a survey or questionnaire. Using a mixed-methods approach was the optimal method of exploring the lived experiences of BMGBCSs in a cultural and social environment that has been established as being predominantly heteronormative and heterosexist. Specifically, I used a convergent parallel mixed method design to merge both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis for each participant, and for participants as a whole (p. 15).

Methodological Approach

This study used a convergent parallel mixed methods design, which is described as "collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, analyzing such data separately, and then comparing results to determine whether findings confirm or disconfirm each other" (Creswell, 2014, p. 219). The assumption of this mixed methods approach is that both qualitative and quantitative designs are equally pertinent to the exploration of the study topic and population. As regards my study, capturing quantitative data from participants was important to quantify the problem (percentage who experienced both SDHC and RDHC); however, including open-ended

questions on the survey allowed them to describe the nature, context, and content of these experiences. The quantitative approach verified the significance of the problem while the qualitative approach expanded its description so it could be more well known and understood. Therefore, a mixed methods research design perfectly met the needs of the researcher and the research questions.

A key aspect of using a convergent parallel mixed methods design is "to collect both forms of data using the same or parallel variables, constructs, or concepts" (Creswell, 2014, p. 219). In the current study, the central variable being investigated was SDHC and RDHC, which was looked at as it impacted multiple areas of participants lives, including academic, social and emotional well-being, and religion. The mixed methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection, was employed such that SDHC and RDHC were explored using both research designs. Sometimes convergent parallel mixed methods research will collect data from a greater number of participants using the quantitative method and a lesser number of participants using the qualitative method (Creswell, 2014); however, this research collected data from the same number of participants using both data collection methods.

In convergent parallel mixed methods design, data can be analyzed using a side-by-side approach, in which results of one set of data are presented, followed by the other set of data, then the two are compared (Creswell, 2014). Another way data can be analyzed using a parallel mixed methods design is by merging the databases, which involves converting qualitative themes into quantitative variables. Lastly, the two sets of data can be merged into a table or graph in a manner that compares both sets of data.

The current study mainly uses the first mode of data analysis, as the survey results are first presented in quantitative terms, then in qualitative terms, which expands the context and

enables participants to provide rich descriptions of how they experienced the study variables. The study incorporates the second mode of data analysis somewhat, in that qualitative themes of participant responses are noted and quantified through specification of how many participants experienced each theme. The quantitative results only are presented in tables.

Research Context & Setting

The research for this study took place at a large, urban, public, four-year University in the western region of the United States. Equity State University (ESU) is the largest and oldest university in the region and third largest in State. ESU is highly ranked among public universities nationally per U.S. News & World Report's annual ranking of America (2018). ESU has an undergraduate population of over 30,000 students.

In fall of 2018, the largest ethnic demographic population at ESU was White, representing 34.1% of students. The second largest ethnic demographic population was Hispanic/Latino students, representing 29.3% of the student population. International students represented 7.5%, Asian 7.4%, multiple ethnicities 6.7%, and Filipino 6.2% of the student ethnic demographics at SDSU. African Americans represented only 4% of the total ESU student population, making them a significant minority. The campus does not collect demographic data on LGBTQ students.

In fall 2018, the demographics of newly enrolled freshmen included 2,163 White students, 1,224 Mexican American students, and 230 African American students. Of those 230, less than half, 102, were male. Given these data, African Americans represent an extreme minority at ESU, with African American men being one of the most underrepresented minorities at the university.

Sampling

Sampling is a process of choosing participants who will most effectively enable the researcher to explore the phenomenon being studied as well as being accurately representative of the population who is believed to experience the phenomenon (Elmusharaf, 2012). There are various kinds of sampling, including convenience, purposive, snowball, and maximum variation sampling (Gentles et al., 2015). Van Manen (2014) claims that a sampling process "should not refer to an empirical sample as a subset of a population" because the idea backing this "notion of sampling presupposes that one aims at empirical generalization, and that is impossible within a phenomenological methodology" (p. 352). Van Manen (2014) asserts that an alternative and etymological view of the idea of sampling is more appropriate in that it regards the root French word 'example'. So then, according to van Manen (2014) the process of obtaining a sample in mixed-methods research equates with generating an example of the population being studied that is unique and not necessarily generalizable. While the intent of qualitative and quantitative research differs (i.e., gaining in-depth perspectives vs. generalizable information), a mixed-methods approach is interested in a comparison of both data to present a convergence of findings.

Sampling Criteria and Technique

To participate in the study, all participants must have self-identified as: (1) African American (Black); and (2) male; and (3) non-heterosexual, i.e. homosexual, bisexual or queer; and (4) college students currently attending ESU.

This study utilized a combination of convenience, purposive, and snowball sampling techniques to obtain a sample population for the research. Convenience sampling targets "a group of individuals believed to be representative of the population from which it is selected, but

chosen because it is close at hand rather than being randomly selected" (Elmusharaf, 2012, p. 7).

Convenience sampling occurred at the primary recruitment location, which was at ESU's

LGBTQ Pride Center. Therefore, the sampling process may fall partially under the category of

convenience sampling.

The sampling technique was also purposive, otherwise known as purposeful sampling

(Patton, 2015). Purposeful sampling involves "selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study

… from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the

inquiry" (p. 264). According to Patton, purposeful sampling is a technique aimed at obtaining

significant insight and understanding of the phenomenon being studied via the sample

population. This depth of information obtained from the study sample aligns well with in-depth

interviews with a few select participants.

Snowball sampling was also used to recruit participants for the study. Snowball sampling

is a mode of sampling that relies on social networks to draw interested parties to participate in a

research study (Noy, 2008). Snowball sampling worked with the study because the LGBTQ

community in which BMGBCSs exist at ESU is comprised of a network of individuals, many of

whom know each other and may provide good recommendations for other potential study

participants. As such, snowball sampling aligned well with the research setting as well as the

phenomenon being studied.

Recruitment

Creswell (2007) asserts that the sample size for a qualitative study should be within the

range of 5 to 25 participants. Given the mixed-method approach and the targeted population for

this study, I elected to follow the qualitative guidelines for data collection. Participant

recruitment began by sending out an IRB-approved recruitment email to all Black males

attending ESU. To reach all of the Black males registered at ESU, I met with the ESU liaison who collects data analysis of all students actively attending the Institution. For the sake of confidentiality, I will call him Mr. Data. During my meeting with Mr. Data, I explained my need to email all Black male students attending the Institution for the purpose of recruiting them to my research study. Mr. Data agreed to help me and gave me the student information I needed (names, email addresses, and phone numbers) on a flash drive. Hence, I produced an IRB form with a seal and date stamp. In addition to a campus-wide recruitment, I also worked directly with the Institution's Pride Center to recruit participants by placing fliers there and around campus.

The email contained three screening questions to determine if they were eligible for the study. These questions ensured that all study participants were African American, male, bisexual or homosexual, and at least 18 years of age. Participants who met the screening requirements were invited to complete the questionnaire and return it to the researcher. Participants were also invited to contact me if they wanted to further discuss the study.

Study Sample

The survey was emailed to all Black males currently attending ESU, which included 595 students: 550 undergraduate students (4.1% of student body) and 45 graduate students (2.7% of student body). Of the 595 surveys, only 8 were returned by qualified participants—who were Black, male and either bisexual or homosexual. The fact that so few people responded may indicate the reticence experienced by this specific population in terms of a non-heterosexual identity being socially taboo.

Data Collection

All the data for this study were collected via a survey in which participants completed independently. However, I did meet with the participants to review the consent form and obtain

their signatures, at which time some of the participants shared a bit about their sexual and racial identity experiences. A few of the participants expressed concern that their identities and survey responses be kept confidential, which I assured them would be the case. A couple participants mentioned that they'd had negative experiences at ESU regarding their status as BMGBCS. None of the participants said they'd had positive experiences regarding their BMGBCS status at ESU.

The survey was partitioned into seven sections addressing the following areas: (1) screening questions, (2) academic context, (3) experiences with sexual and racial discrimination, (4) social-emotional well-being, (5) support services, (6) basic need insecurities, and (7) family and religion. While the survey asked mainly yes or no questions, it also gave opportunity for more open-ended responses. For instance, if participants had experienced sexual or racial discrimination or harassment on campus, they were encouraged to elaborate on their experiences. If participants visited the campus Pride Center they were encouraged to say what services they sought. The survey included one open-ended question that prompted participants to share the kind of support services they sought to cope with experiences of racial or sexual discrimination or harassment. Overall, the participants gave a moderate amount of commentary regarding the answers to the survey questions, which is helpful in understanding their experiences more deeply.

Ethical Considerations

The treatment of participants in this study followed the ethical guidelines of ESU's Institutional Review Board (IRB). As such, permission to conduct this study was given by the ESU IRB prior to conducting the study. Ethical guidelines for research conducted with human subjects' covers multiple areas, but center around the idea of doing no harm to the participants.

Informed Consent

The most important ethical consideration falls under the idea of informed consent, which entails letting the participants know the purpose and goals of the research study as well as the intended use of the results and outcomes (Smith, 2003). According to APA ethical standards, research study participants should be informed of:

1) the purpose of the research, expected duration and procedures; 2) participants' rights to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research once it has started, as well as the anticipated consequences of doing so; 3) reasonably foreseeable factors that may influence their willingness to participate, such as potential risks, discomfort or adverse effects; 4) any prospective research benefits; 5) limits of confidentiality, such as data coding, disposal, sharing and archiving, and when confidentiality must be broken; 6) incentives for participation; and 7) who participants can contact with questions (Smith, 2003, p. 57).

Participants responded to a recruitment email, in which they were required to confirm that they were (1) Black, (2) male, (3) bisexual or homosexual, and (4) age 18 or older to be included in the study/research. Participants were excluded if (1) they were not Black, (2) not male, (3) not bisexual or homosexual, and (4) under age 18. The participation process was explained to all participants, along with the risks involved in participation. Furthermore, the benefits of participation were explained to each participant, inclusive of compensation and confidentiality. After reviewing the consent form line by line, after indicating full understanding of the form, and after having all questions (if any) answered, each participant was asked to sign the form. The closing section on the consent form states, "Your signature below means that you understand the information on this form, that someone has answered any and all questions you

may have about this study, and you voluntarily agree to participate in it." Lastly, the researcher

signed the form as well, indicating that they have reviewed the consent form with the participant

and answered any questions about the study. All this ensured that every participant fully

understood what was being asked of him.

Confidentiality

It is also important to communicate to participants the confidentiality of the study and

how confidentiality will be maintained. As such, the researcher must locate a secure and locked

place for research findings and all participant-related information. Along these lines, it is also

important to keep the identity of participants anonymous. Lastly, it is essential to follow all

federal and state laws while preparing and conducting the study.

The confidentiality of the study participants was maintained in multiple ways. To begin

with, participants were given and signed informed consent paperwork that clearly stated the

individual privacy of every participant would be protected with regard to all papers, books, talks,

posts, or stories resulting from this study. In order to protect the confidentiality of participant

identity and responses, the surveys were stored and will remain on the primary researcher's

computer, which entails a two-step process to operate. In addition, participants' online responses

are stored in a two-step password protection system on the researcher's laptop. All study papers,

notes, and consent forms are kept in a file cabinet under lock and key at the researchers' home.

Further, study participants did not reveal their true identities on the survey questionnaire forms

that they completed and submitted to the researcher. In all these ways, the confidentiality of the

participants was well-protected.

Trustworthiness

Procedural Rigor

The methodology of any research study is one that should have a high level of trustworthiness so that credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability of research findings and results can be obtained (Sousa, 2014). Establishing these research methodology criteria is a central feature of ensuring validity and reliability in the overall research study (Sousa, 2014). In order to do this, the research question(s) must be well-aligned with the research methodology. The current study utilized a mixed-method approach because the research questions sought to identify and understand the experiences of BMGBCSs on campus.

According to Sousa (2014), "the methodological design should reveal rigor and internal consistency in the application of the chosen method … thereby ensuring the credibility of the research process" (p. 214). Because the methodology design in the current study is phenomenological, the method of research requires direct contact and interaction with human subjects who have experienced the phenomena under study. This will be accomplished via a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Aligning the data collection procedures with the overall methodology helps to achieve internal consistency, validity and reliability of the research findings (Sousa, 2014).

To ensure procedural rigor and validation in the study, all the steps of the research methodology must be congruent and aligned because "one cannot make a dichotomy between the results and the process of the research" (Sousa, 2014, p. 217). Intentionality of conscious experience is an important concept in phenomenological research that promotes validity, which basically translates as an emphasis on the lived experiences of participants. However, a focus on the phenomenon itself over the individuals who experience it is also important. Thus, the current

study will look for themes in the experiences of participants regarding the phenomenon under study—and this will promote validation, rigor and reliability of research findings.

Validation Strategies

Validation of qualitative research is complex because the researcher is the instrument of data analysis (Starks and Trinidad, 2007). Ensuring trustworthiness of the results equates with trusting the responses of the participants as well as the analysis of the data by the researcher. There is no reason to believe that the participants in this study gave false or misleading feedback to the surveys they completed. The participants represent a specific group who are, according to a plethora of previous research, known to have experienced both sexual and racial discrimination in various quadrants of society—and the study sought to explicate the intricacies of this phenomena as pertains to the university campus. In other words, the phenomena is not new, but the details of the phenomena in this particular context, and in this highly specific population, are not fully understood—which is why this study was engaged. Therefore, in a general sense, there is a priori broad scale trust and validation of the phenomena of non-heterosexual persons experiencing sexual discrimination and Black persons experiencing racial discrimination.

While it is possible that participants lied about being non-heterosexual, it is unlikely that any lied about being Black or male, as these identity features are more obvious. However, there is really no mode of validating a person's sexual orientation other than their own free and unpressured statement about it. Though participants were paid a very small sum to engage in the study, none were coerced or influenced by any means, which, to the researcher and to the reader, should translate to an acceptable level of trustworthiness.

To ensure trustworthiness of data, there is a qualitative method known as epoche, or bracketing, that is used to reduce potential bias of unacknowledged preconceptions that can

influence the understanding and interpretation of the data, and thereby deleteriously impact the study rigor (Tufford and Newman, 2010). Bracketing is a qualitative methodology unique to phenomenology which purports to "see the world anew … rather than as it is constructed" (Caelli, 2000, p. 371). As such, contacting the "essence of experience and looking beyond preconceptions became known by various interchangeable terms: phenomenological reduction, epoche, or bracketing" (Tufford and Newman, 2010, p. 82).

While bracketing was accepted by a portion of qualitative researchers, some, including Heidegger, viewed this process as one of phenomenological reduction and rejected it (Tufford and Newman, 2010). He claimed that comprehending lived experience entailed acknowledging and embracing one's preconceptions and providing interpretation. In fact, he contended that removing one's preconceptions from the process was neither desirable nor possible. This is the route that I took with my study. I have fully acknowledged my own identity as a Black, gay male college student who has experienced SDHC and RDHC. My findings should be understood in the context of my own personal involvement and concerns with the subject matter. However, I have also made conscious efforts to remain true and professionally objective as regards the data collection process and analysis of the data through being as conscientious and objective as possible.

<center>**Researcher's Positionality**</center>

Simon (n.d.) states that in qualitative research the role of the researcher is as an instrument of data collection. Ideally, this entails that the researcher exercises great self-awareness regarding how they are functioning as a human instrument gathering data. Biases and assumptions should be conscious as self-reflection is mandatory (Simon, n.d.). The researcher

should explicate whether the role they play is more subjective or objective as regards

relationships to or with research participants.

In the current study, the author's role as a researcher posits him as identifying with the

research participant demographic, but also assuming as objective a stance as is required to not

pollute participant responses or skew data collection or analysis. Essentially, as a gay Black man

attending a university as a doctoral student, I meet the criteria for the study population I focused

on—so, in a sense, I was studying myself. The following is the story of my historical background

that contributed to my interest in the study topic and population.

As a child growing up in rural Mississippi it was difficult to live in my truth. My parents

were married in the summer of 1967 and soon started a family; I was the eldest child and my

sister was born a year later. During the summer my dad and uncles would gather in our driveway

to fix cars. They would end up greasy, oily and smelling like gas. At about age nine I remember

my dad storming into the house on a Saturday morning and dragging me out to the driveway by

my ear. He would force me to be outside with the men. I had to place the tools that they used into

a pan of gas and scrub them with a toothbrush until they were shiny. This took place for a few

consecutive Saturdays, and each time my mother would come to my rescue after about thirty

minutes. My mother would dare my dad to come after me once she enlisted me to help her in the

house—where my chores consisted of washing the dishes, cleaning the bathrooms, sweeping,

vacuuming, and moping the tiled floors.

As a child I would often wake up at night to hear my parents arguing about me and my

sexuality. I clearly remember my father saying, "I'm not raising a fag." My mother had many

conversations with me about leaving the house, and even leaving Mississippi, once I was old

enough. She told me that once she passed away there would be no one to protect me from my

father. I was only fourteen years old when my mother died, and at that time my life drastically. Almost immediately, my father began to abuse me. I felt that he sought revenge on me from all the times my mom protected me from him. As a young teen I was being punched in the face by my father. The pain of his physical abuse was temporary, but the pain of his psychological abuse has lasted to this day.

Any negative report from school resulted in my not being able to eat dinner that day with my sister and father. At such times, my father would also force me to literally sleep in my closet on the cold floor as punishment. In reality, he made many excuses for such treatment, but the underlying issue was that my dad knew I was gay and was doing whatever he could to punish me in hopes it would make me not gay. His beatings were frequent and brutal. The last straw came when my dad punched me in my face and knocked me unconscious. I was awakened by my sister holding my head in her lap on the floor as she cried. I can remember my sister saying to my father, "You killed him." At this point I clearly knew that I had to leave my father's home if I did not want to die.

At about this time, Bill Fields, a Navy recruiter spoke to all the students at my high school about joining the Unites States Navy, which he described as an opportunity to see the world. I thought this would be a good leave Mississippi behind and see what was outside of it. Being a tenth grader, and only fifteen years old, I needed my father to sign the delayed entry program (DEP) papers to join. My father said he would be happy to sign the papers, to see me leave and hopefully not return—because I was a disgrace to him and had tarnished his name. My father made me feel as if I was a failure and that I purposely choose my sexuality, when what I needed from him was to accept me and help me understand what was happening to me as I grew from adolescence to being a teen.

My father was obviously homophobic and had no realization that I was born the way I am and did not choose to be gay, in much the same way as I did not choose my race. Regardless of my father's disposition, I am true to myself and have always been forthcoming about my sexuality. The emotional and mental scars that my father inflicted upon me surfaced in my educational journey as I reflected on my life in various seminar classes. I had always felt that I had to over-achieve to compensate for my father's disappointment in me and obtain his acceptance and approval; however, at this point in my life his acceptance and approval is not desired or required.

My biggest life challenges have been with my father, finding out why I felt the way I did as a kid and answering for myself: "Who am I?" My upbringing as a gay man and the struggles I faced with my father led me to wonder about the impacts of challenges that BMGBCS face on college campuses. I conceived of the study as a way to address the kinds of discrimination and harassment that are unique to BMGBCS. Having experienced discrimination and harassment for my own identity, which is the same as the study population, I realize that I have a particular confirmation bias as to the reality of RDHC and SDHC for BMGBCS. In my study, I addressed these potential biases by asking simple straightforward questions in the surveys given to participants that enabled them to report on their experiences without feeling pressured to answer one way or the other. In other words, I did not influence them to confirm that they had experienced RDHC or SDHC.

The survey questions enabled yes or no answers and open-ended answers to all questions and prompts, without preferences given to any particular response. In meeting with potential participants, I expressed empathy and acceptance for their experiences. However, I will admit that it may have been possible for me to have unconsciously been more validating of the

experiences I was looking for, though I did not intend this. In my analysis of survey response data, I did my best to simply report the results without skewing them in either direction; however, again, it is possible that I may have done this to some unknown degree. In summing up my positionality as a researcher, I might add that conducting the research also provided a bit of a healing balm for me as I empathized with the study participants, many of whom shared similar struggles with both family and the college environment as I have had.

Data Analysis

To organize and make sense of the data collected on the complex issues investigated, the current study will employ thematic analysis as a primary research method. Thematic analysis is a very commonly used general qualitative research method that enables clarification and elucidation of major patterns and themes in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Further, thematic analysis involves making sense of the patterns and themes that emerge from qualitative research as well as interpreting the data so that it is increasingly meaningful (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Citing Braun & Clarke (2006), Maguire & Delahunt (2017) specify six stages of thematic analysis: 1) Become familiar with the data; 2) Generate initial codes; 3) Search for themes; 4) Review themes; 5) Define themes; and 6) Write-up. Step 1 entails becoming thoroughly immersed in the data; therefore, a great deal of time will be spent reviewing and reflecting upon the data gleaned from the in-depth semi-structured interviews. Step 2 is the first step that involves categorization and organization as coding "reduces lots of data into small chunks of meaning" (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3355). A code is described as "a name that most exactly describes what is being said" (Anonymous, n.d., para. 3); however, the difference between a code and a theme is somewhat arbitrary. Codes tend to be shorter than themes, while

themes are longer and more descriptive. As per Braun & Clarke (2006), codes appear to be more generalized or broader in scope, while themes are more particular as they articulate specificities in coded data sets (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Searching for themes entails looking for commonalities in codes, which boils down to the responses of individual participants. The potential of discovering themes is to distill a universal essence out of the cumulated responses of individuals, which has the potential to make the research findings more generalizable and applicable to a broader group (Creswell, 2007). Themes enable applicability of individual responses to a larger group—at least insofar as the participant group is representative of the population under study.

Reviewing themes is the process of making sure that themes are distinguished from one another, not repeating or overlapping, and each unique and original. This improves clarity and coherence of results (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Defining themes is about developing a deep understanding of each theme, what it is saying, and its greater implications for research findings (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Writing up the analysis is simply the final stage of the data analysis process.

The current study also used a data analysis method known as interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), which was appropriate as to the research problem and the study methodology for numerous reasons. IPA is an approach that uses inductive analysis to provide a detailed account of each participant's unique lived experience (Smith & Osborn, 2015), which was conducted through the survey and presented in the results section of the current study. Rather than relying on theoretical preconceptions, IPA seeks to make its own meaning (Smith & Osborn, 2015), which was applied to the current study through a presentation

of participant responses that sought to, as closely as possible, mirror and understand the meaning that their experiences had to them, as well as the empathic researcher.

As a data analysis method, IPA contends that humans are inherently meaning-making creatures and that this process involves interpretation of experience (Smith & Osborn, 2015). As such, the current study sought to analyze data collected from the participants in such a way that would make the most sense and meaning from their perspectives (Smith & Osborn, 2015). As the researcher belongs to the same identity group as the participants, this process involved both an objective and subjective stance insofar as the researcher resonated with many of the participant responses. Finally, IPA enables detailed accounts of each participant's experiences, which the current study presented in the results section.

Limitations

One of the primary limitations to conducting a study of a small minority group—BMGBCS represent an intersection of three minority groups: Black, nonheterosexual, and male—is the challenges to contacting and recruiting appropriate participants. (Although being male is not a minority group in and of itself, in conjunction with being both Black and homosexual and/or bisexual, it is.) As was demonstrated in the Chapter Two review of literature, the Black community expects Black males to express traditional heteronormative masculine values that run contrary to homosexuality and bisexuality (Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013), such that being gay or bisexual in the Black community tends to be stigmatized. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that eligible participants who met the study inclusion criteria were reluctant to engage in the study.

In addition, the study population was college students, and as was also evidenced in the review of literature as well as confirmed by actual participant survey responses (see Chapter 4),

the college campus tends to be viewed by both the LGBTQ community as well as BMGBCS as an unsafe environment in which to reveal their sexual orientation. The result of all these factors as regards the study population and study location likely resulted in significant limitations upon the number of participants who engaged in the study, and may have impacted the degree of their responses. Lastly, sending out email invitations to participate in the study may have been viewed as an impersonal manner in which to recruit participants, and may also have added to any reluctance to engage in the study. Perhaps, holding an actual face-to-face event about the study at the LGBTQ Campus Pride Center would have been more effective, but sending emails was probably the only way to reach all potential participants.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS & FINDINGS

This chapter begins with a description of the study participants (referred to as respondents), and contains the results and findings of the mixed-method study to answer the research questions. The study utilized a survey to elicit responses from BMGBCS as regards their experiences of sexual or racial discrimination or harassment. The survey addressed how these experiences impacted their physical and mental health, academic performance, social behavior, and seeking of support, as well as capacity to obtain food and housing security. The survey also assessed the role of family and religion in coping with sexual discrimination or harassment and racial discrimination and harassment.

Respondent Narratives

Respondent #1

Allen is an African American male, 5'9" in height, weighing about one hundred and seventy five pounds. A Black man with a brown cocoa colored skin tone and a short haircut, Allen greed to meet with me privately at the university in the joint doctoral program (JDP) office. This is an area in the doctoral office where meetings are conducted and students can study or socialize. I arranged to have the Equity Room as the meeting location due to the privacy it offered. Allen finds it necessary to speak about how he navigates a seemingly hostile college experience at the university. The youngest of four children in an intact family, Allen seem to enjoy privacy when it comes to his sexuality. He laughs as he says that his parents tried to "fix him" when they learned he was gay. Allen is employed at Chipotle.

Respondent #2

Brian is an African American male, 6'0" in height, weighing one hundred and fifty pounds. Although he is half Hawaiian, Brian identifies as a Black man. His curly hair

distinguishes him and he claims to be a good conversation starter. Brian's brown skin tone is without variation or blemish. As the eldest of two children in an intact family, Brian says that it's up to him to do all he can to set a good example for his younger brother. He feels that being of mixed racial heritage incites a certain degree of stigma on campus. Brian enjoys reading because it takes him places and he can enjoy and affords a certain amount of freedom. He is energetic and says he is trying his best to get through his education with as little notice as possible. He has experienced rejections on campus because of his sexuality or perceived sexuality. We met at a seating area near the food court at the university student center. Brian is a full time student and not working.

Respondent #3

Cashe is an African American male who describes himself as a bit femme, meaning, according to him, that he is not masculine or feminine. Cashe is 5'8" and about one hundred and sixty pounds. He is the fourth of five children. He "he is not concerned with who knows about his sexuality because "they are not feeding or financing him." Cashe wore skinny jeans and a button up shirt buttoned low to our meeting outside in an open and public area of the university campus. Cashe sat with his legs crossed and used slang that one in the LGBTQ community would understand. He states, "I am a proud, gay Black man" and "I only get one time to live this life." He is used to being called names by those who do not understand his lifestyle. Cashe is an only child who knows how to fend for himself. He enjoys painting in his free time, and is employed at the bookstore at his university.

Respondent #4

Donte is an African American male, 6'0' and about two hundred pounds. Being biracial (Black & White), Donte identifies as a Black man. With light skin, he claims his skin color is a

curse: he is too Black to fit into the White world and too White to fit into the Black world. He is

very emotional as he speak about his biracial background, and speaks about it with a degree of

dismay. Donte says that he does not hide his sexuality, but neither does he talk much about it. He

was raised by his father and states they were not middle class but were not poor. Donte is the

second of three children. A PhD student at the university, Donte experiences a disconnect with

the campus because of his fluid sexuality has had negative campus experiences that he attributes

to being a Black man. Donte work for U-Haul as a mover.

Respondent #5

Eli is an African American male, 5'11 and one hundred and sixty five pounds. Being both

Black and Latino, Eli says he has only identified as a Black man. He says to not let his fair skin

fool you, he is Black. Eli agreed to meet me on campus to sign the consent form. He was willing

to complete the survey and very supportive of my research study. He was excited that my study

focused on the experiences of Black, gay and bisexual men. He said that more research should be

done on Black men in general on this particular campus. Eli takes aim at the university's mission

statement, saying that the university does not practice "responding to and representing the

diversity" of the university and its community. He states when calling to schedule a doctor or

nurse appointment the phone system is terrible and frustrating. He also claims there is a lack of

diversity amongst professors and staff at the university, that it is rare to walk into any office and

see people working there who are Black. He works with Uber eats and is a full-time student.

Respondent #6

Frask is an African American male, 6'2", two hundred and thirty pounds. With dark skin

and natural hair, Frask is a big man who can easily fly under the radar and not be noticed. He

may be the last Black man on campus one would think is bisexual or gay. With an infectious

smile and Southern charm, he is very articulate and easy to talk to. Child number six, Frask has

four brothers and one sister. He is looking forward to graduating and leaving campus. He says,

"Being this tall and big comes with stereotypes. There are people on campus that think I'm a

football or basketball player." Frask says that he avoids being on campus at night because there

some female students who see him coming down the sidewalk will change sides or go another

direction. He says his family does know that he is gay. Frask is employed as a Special Ed Tech at

San Diego Unified School District.

Respondent #7

Greg is an African American male, about 5'8", one hundred and eighty pounds, and has

dark skin. Greg describes himself as homosexual/gay. Confident, articulate and self-affirming,

there is no indication of insecurity about his sexuality; rather, he feels that his sexuality is to be

celebrated. Greg mentions Pride as the one time of the year that everyone celebrates who he is.

Very proper, well dressed and well groomed, his family is middle class and has high hopes for

him. Greg says he dislike the campus and would not recommend Black students to come to the

university because of the racism and antipathy he has received from professors. Greg is not sure

why he chose the university and says if could do it over again he would go to another college.

Greg is employed at AT&T as a customer service specialist.

Respondent #8

Holland is dressed in a "unique" and very colorful manner. His neon green and neon

orange colors are hard to miss on campus. Holland exclaimed, "My pride can NEVER be

cancelled because it's as BRIGHT as the VIBRANT COLORFUL JOY that lives inside me. I

carry my pride EVERYWHERE I GO: at the intersections of my BLACKNESS, my

QUEERNESS, AND my TRANSNESS.". Holland stands at 5'11", but at 6'1" in heels, and

weighs about one hundred and fifty five pounds. Rail thin, Holland had a big personality and is very outgoing. He is well known on the university campus and in the gay community in the city in which he lives. Holland met with me at the Pride Center on the campus of the university. He was pleased to be asked to participate in research that would help me earn a PhD and excited that I wanted to interview him. Holland performs as a drag queen and is very candid in the responses that (s)he gives. An only child, he has a big smile and is a pleasure to be around. Holland is a full time student, works in the Pride Center at the university and does drag on the weekends for extra money.

Findings

This portion of the chapter will first look at the results of the survey questions, focusing on each section and thematic portion of the survey. The chapter will then elaborate on common themes found in the responses of participants to the survey questions. Finally, the results will be considered in terms of the specific population of BMGBCS. The survey results, presented in percentages, are represented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Academic Context

Six of the participants reported that they were undergraduate students, and three of these stated they were undergraduate transfer students. One participant reported being a master's level graduate student and one reported being a doctoral level graduate student. Seven participants reported different majors—ranging from marketing to psychology to interdisciplinary studies—marking a diversity of interests and specialties in education, while one participant did not indicate his major. All eight participants indicated they were planning to graduate; none indicated thinking about dropping out of school, definitely dropping out of school, or planning to transfer to another school before graduating.

Experiences with Discrimination

Six out of eight participants (75%) reported that they had experienced sexual

discrimination or harassment and racial discrimination on campus. None of these participants

reported having experienced one and not the other, but all reported having experienced one also

had experienced the other. Four of the six participants (66%) who reported having experienced

sexual and racial discrimination on campus also reported that both of these experiences had

caused their academic performance to suffer. Two of the participants who had reported

experiencing sexual and racial discrimination on campus indicated their academic performance

had not suffered.

The survey invited participants to describe their experiences of racial and sexual

discrimination or harassment on campus. Five of the six participants who reported having had

experienced sexual and racial discrimination or harassment on campus described their

experiences. Most participants who confirmed sexual discrimination or harassment cited being

bullied or verbally attacked. Frask claimed he was regularly harassed by one specific person:

> *I had a classmate that was very nasty to me in class because I am gay. He seem to dislike*
>
> *gay people and from what I think black people. He called me names before class and*
>
> *sometimes after class. And would make nasty comments when he saw me on campus.*

Brian also stated having been harassed. The harassment appears to be based on sexist

attitudes that simply being gay means he was targeting the person who harassed him.

> *I have experienced harassment because this guy was accusing me of being gay and said*
>
> *that I was lusting after him.* (Brian).

Holland claimed that he was physically harassed: "When folxs get a bit handsy at the

drag shows (possibly drunk)." He appears to be the only participant who claimed to be physically

harassed, although one respondent stated someone threated to attack him due to what he was wearing.

Donte stated that he and a friend had been accused of harassment and thought it was due to their racial and sexual identities. If this perception is correct, it would constitute discrimination as well. Donte stated:

> *A friend and I were falsely accused of sexual harassment because we were both Black men. I've been accused of using Black male privilege and toxicity for just daring to speak up for myself and other Black men. My personal story of sexual trauma has frequently been disregarded because I am a Black man and who can never be seen as a victim.*

Donte also described experiencing racial discrimination when being questioned by police for being on campus:

> *Yes, been profiled by the police, and experienced vicarious trauma after numerous incidents of other Black people being harassed by campus police.*

Frask felt that sexual and racial harassment and discrimination went hand in hand, culminating in a blended from of harassment in which both his sexual orientation and racial identity were equally targeted. This perception appears to be a theme, as well as the fact that all participants who reported sexual discrimination or harassment also reported racial discrimination or harassment. As regards an earlier comment about being harassed and discriminated against for being gay, Frask added that this occurred in collusion with racial discrimination:

> *This guy was white, I am black and he just seemed angry. In addition, I feel that some counselors on campus would disregard issues that I went to them with and I was not taken serious.*

Cashe reported experiencing racial discrimination on campus by instructors and on a level that would perhaps equate with institutionalized racism or racial bias:

I feel that these white people do not care about me here. They always rush me out of their office or appointments. There is little to no assistance here for black students.

Brian reported having overheard discriminatory remarks made by a colleague, which were, understandably, quite upsetting. Fortunately, the incident occurred only once, but that does not take away from its negative impact.

I have personally heard sexually derogatory terms spoken in my direction. It only happened once but it was an encounter that hit pretty hard, especially because the person who had said it was a teammate of mine. (Brian).

One final report made clear that racial discrimination can take a very indirect, though no less significant form. When asked about racial discrimination, Holland reported experiencing this via the vandalization of a resource center for POC associated with the campus.

Participants were also asked to indicate if they felt that either sexual or racial discrimination or harassment caused their academic performance to suffer. Four participants reported in an affirmative manner to this prompt. Recalling that 6 of 8 participants affirmed an experience of racial and sexual discrimination or harassment, this means 4 of 6, or two-thirds (66%), participants who did experience such discrimination or harassment felt that it adversely impacted their academic performance. This should be cause for alarm and concern.

Three of the four participants who felt discrimination impacted their academics described this. Two of the study participants reported a perception that due to sexual discrimination they were graded lower than other students. Frask stated:

I'm sure that I was graded more harsh that my white counterparts. I looked at some of my cohorts' papers and I know my responses to questions was more robust than theirs. I just keep quite get a passing grade and go to my next class.

After experiencing a false sexual harassment claim against him, Donte states having serious difficulty with academics due to a perceived hostile environment:

Yes, my friend dropped out of college after the false sexual harassment report. I developed a severe mistrust of the institution and women on campus. The emotional impact forced me to have to work even harder to maintain my grades. I almost dropped out of my MS program because of being sexually harassed by my peers.

Cashe describes a similar experience in response to racial discrimination as Frask described in response to sexual discrimination. Cashe states:

I really feel that my professor from two semesters ago gave me a lower grade because I was the only black person in the class. My classmates would ask me after class sometimes, "Why does he talk to you like that?" As long as I passed the class I just keep my mouth shut.

The experience of feeling discriminated against corresponded with more strenuous grading in these cases. The two other participants also experienced racial discrimination as a difficult phenomenon that adversely impacted their academic performance. They describe it as a lack of regard for their role as students. Frask states:

I feel that in my department there is less help or willingness to help black students. This leave us with no place to turn….the professors just don't cars to help us (in my opinion).

Sharing a similar experience, Donte states:

Complete disregard for my feelings as a Black man is common, and something I've had

to contend with throughout my academic career.

All in all, experiences of perceived sexual and racial discrimination cause BMGBCS to

suffer in ways that other students probably do not suffer.

Social-Emotional Well-Being

Participants were asked if they had ever sought counseling or emotional support to deal

with sexual discrimination or harassment, and if so whether it helped or not. Four of the six

students (66%) who stated having experienced sexual or racial discrimination or harassment on

campus responded that they had sought counseling or emotional support to address this. Three of

those four students described their experiences. Allen said he went to counseling just to satisfy

his parents, but didn't state whether this was helpful, though the implication seems to be that it

was not. Cashe stated seeking support from friends with whom he discussed how to avoid

stressful situations on campus as well as teachers who were notorious for being discriminatory.

Donte claimed that simply sharing his experiences and receiving empathy and support

from a therapist has been helpful. He states:

We don't have a conceptual model for how to deal with the pain and suffering

experienced by black men. I've had to teach my therapist how to counsel me. Counseling

has helped, and given me a space to freely process my experiences.

In response to this prompt, Brian marked no and added, "What good will it do?" implying

that he had little belief or trust that therapy or emotional support could be of benefit to him.

Participants were also asked if they had ever sought counseling or emotional support to

deal with racial discrimination or harassment, and if so whether it helped or not. Five out of six

participants (83%) who reported having experienced racial discrimination also responded that

they had sought support or therapy to address racial discrimination, and four participants

described their experiences. Once again, Allen did go to therapy at the urgings of his parents. He

claims they thought he could "be fixed" and he wasn't. Cashe states going to therapy to better

understand why he is gay, but to no avail. Donte states having a positive experience with

therapy:

> *Yes, and again we don't have a framework rooted in the experiences of black men to fully*
>
> *address our needs in therapy. But therapy has helped me process my experiences and*
>
> *heal.*

Frask states having good experiences with counselors outside of SDSU and is highly

critical of the ability for SDSU to meet his needs and those of other BMGBCS:

> *I see a therapist outside of SDSU. The counselors at school are not there to actually help*
>
> *black students. I also talk with my best friend about the shenanigans at SDSU. This*
>
> *school is a joke. They talk about equity just to sound good but there is none.*

Participants were asked if they conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid

discrimination and/or harassment. Six participants responded that they do. Allen, who responded

affirmatively to this question, had indicated that he had not experienced sexual or racial

discrimination or harassment on campus; and Holland, who had responded affirmatively to

having experienced racial or sexual discrimination or harassment on campus, responded that he

does not conceal his sexual or gender identity to avoid discrimination or harassment. Considering

the responses, 83% or participants who reported experiencing sexual or racial discrimination or

harassment on campus, and 75% of all participants, do conceal their sexual orientation or gender

identity to avoid discrimination and/or harassment. This item did not prompt participants to

describe their experiences with this.

Participants were also asked if they stay away from areas of campus where gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons congregate for fear of being labeled, discriminated and/or harassed. Four participants (50% total) responded affirmatively to this questions, and two described their experiences. Cashe stated:

> *I stay away because I have friends that have been harassed and one even beat up for being seen leaving the Pride Center. I don't wanna be called nasty names because of my sexuality.*

Frask claimed:

> *I have to avoid those areas in order not to be bullied and ostracized from the few black students on campus. It is disheartening to hear what some females say about black gay/bi-sexual guys on campus. At this point it I stay away to survive and graduate.*

Both these participants' experiences express emotional pain, anxiety and fear of being targeted for sexual orientation or gender identity, but also as regards racial identity. The interrelation of sexual and racial discrimination and harassment for BMGBCS is a central and ongoing these throughout the survey answers.

Table 1: Survey Results - Experiences with Discrimination / Social-Emotional Well-Being

Sexual discrimination or harassment on campus = SDHC
Racial discrimination or harassment on campus = RDHC

Exp. SDHC	Exp. RDHC	SDHC caused academics to suffer	RDHC caused academics to suffer	Sought counseling/ emotional support to deal with SDHC	Sought counseling/ emotional support to deal with RDHC	Conceals sexual orientation/gender identity to avoid SDHC	Avoids campus where LGBT persons congregate to avoid SDHC
75%	75%	50%	50%	50%	62.5%	75%	50%

Support Services

Study survey participants were asked how often they visit the Pride Center, and if so what was the purpose of their visit. Only 2 of 8 respondents (25%) reported having visited the Pride Center, while six participants reported having not visited it. Greg indicated visiting the Center a few times per semester for the purpose of emotional support. Holland reported visiting the Center 3+ times per week for all the purposes that were listed on the survey: emotional support, social (visiting friends/community members), to access resources (such as computers, books, and movies), and to attend student organization meeting or other event. Cashe indicated that he does not visit the Pride Center because he is "too scared that I will get beat up and called names," and that "I really would like to go but the risk is too great."

Participants were also asked what support services (on or off campus) they use to support their sexual identity. Five of eight participants (62.5%) responded that they do use support services, while three (37.5%) reported they do not. Three of the participants who do seek support state that one of the main sources of support is friends who they talk with about their experiences. Along these lines, Allen stated, "I just talk with my gay friends if I have problems then I return to my normal life." Brian stated, "I talk to my best friend." Although friends are helpful, one participant said sometimes more professional support is needed. Cashe stated, "I talk with my friends and at times when I'm really stressed I go to the Pride Center in Hillcrest, in the city of San Diego." Frask also found professional support to be helpful, stating "I talk to a therapist at the LGBT Center in San Diego (Hillcrest area). I can be free there to talk and meet with a support group." Holland stated he uses "my community and organizations like BlacQ Space."

Although he does not utilize social support, Eli stated some interest is visiting the Pride

Center:

I don't really use any support services from my sexual identity. I am comfortable with

who I am and don't feel the need for extra support. I would like to visit the Pride Center,

just to check it out, at some point but didn't have time during the semester.

Basic Need Insecurities

Participants were asked whether racial discrimination or harassment caused them to

experience food insecurities or problems with housing as a college student. Only one participant

(12.5%) responded that this had occurred, but he did not describe what had happened.

Participants were also asked whether sexual discrimination or harassment caused them to

experience food insecurities or problems with housing as a college student. Two respondents

(25%) indicated they had, and Frask was the only one who described his situation:

My first semester at SDSU was hard because I was forced out of my dorm room because

my dorm-mate found out that I am gay ... It was awful. Now I live off campus and I'm

happy with my living arrangements.

Table 2: Survey Results - Support Services / Basic Need Insecurities / Family & Religion

Visits Pride Center for support	Seeks support re: sexual identity	RDHC led to food insecurities/ problems with housing as a student	SDHC led to food insecurities/ problems with housing as a student	Family knows about sexual orientation	Being gay or bisexual has impacted religious activities	Religion plays role in revealing or hiding sexuality
25%	62.5%	12.5%	25%	75%	62.5%	62.5%

Family & Religion

Participants were asked if their family knew about their sexual orientation, and 6 of 8 participants (75%) claimed they did. Cashe, who indicated his family knew about his sexual orientation, added, "But we don't dare talk about it!" Allen, who also indicated his family knew about his sexual orientation, added, "They tried to fix me."

Participants were also asked if concerns or experiences regarding their status as a Black bisexual or gay male impacted their participation in religious activities. Five of eight participants (62.5%) reported affirmatively to this question, and four of them described their experiences. Participants who responded affirmatively to this question all reported negative consequences in church regarding being bisexual or gay and/or fears of what might happen if this was found out by the church community.

Brian expressed fears about the church learning of his sexual orientation:

Don't know how things would end up for me if people at my church knew I am gay. My

family would be embarrassed also and I can't do that to my family.

While not stating if the church group knew of his sexual orientation, Cashe reported negative experiences at church for not being overtly heterosexual:

I do sing in the church choir. But I am always passed over to head committees because I

am not married, and some of the guys make smart ass comments about homosexuals in

the church.

Frask reported an experience of having his sexual orientation maligned in an almost prosecutorial manner at church:

I do attend a Baptist church here in San Diego. I sit in church and listen to a pastor that

sends all gay and bisexual people to hell Sunday after Sunday. I do not participate in

some activities and committees at the church because of my sexuality, yet still I give them

my money each Sunday. In the Black community it is certainly frowned upon to be gay.

Holland indicated in his response that the church did know about his sexual orientation as

he claims there are "certain events where I am asked to tone down my queerness."

Lastly, survey participants were asked if religion plays a role in revealing or hiding their

sexuality. Five of eight participants (62.5%) responded affirmatively to this question. Four of the

five described their experiences, which are generally negative. The main theme is that it is not

okay to be gay in church and that being gay is a sin. Allen stated, "Can't be gay in the black

community," and Brian stated, "my church don't like gay people."

Cashe stated:

In the black church the pastor always talks about fags, homosexuals, and lesbians going

to hell and burning for all eternity. So I just do my best not to talk about sexuality.

Frask stated:

Being gay in the black community is a sin. People look at us as if we chose to be gay. I

know I was born this way. Just as I did not get to choose my race I was not able to choose

my sexuality. We are all pretending. Pretending to be something that we are not.

Themes in Respondent Experiences

This section of the study will describe major study findings and articulate common

themes in the experiences of respondents.

The majority of BMGBCS experienced SDHC and RDHC. The study results found

that 75% (n=6) of BMGBCS experienced both sexual discrimination or harassment on campus

(SDHC) as well as racial discrimination or harassment on campus (RDHC). While this was

expected as per previous research, it is a very high percentage and represents a significant social

problem in the college environment. Therefore, the first conclusion drawn from the study is that BMGBCS at ESU do in fact experience both SDHC as well as RDHC.

BMGBCS experience SDHC and RDHC in tandem. A related theme is that BMGBCS respondents did not report experiencing SDHC and not RDHC or RDHC and not SDHC; rather, all respondents who reported experiencing one form of discrimination or harassment also reported experiencing the other. This implies that the two occur in tandem and are somehow associated. It could also imply that the total effect, the intersectionality, of being both gay or bisexual *and* black amounts to a demographic that experiences significant discrimination or harassment. For instance, BMGBCS who felt that SDHC adversely impacted their academic performance also felt that RDHC had the same effect.

BMGBCS are resilient. While 75% (n=6) of respondents reported experiencing SDHC and RDHC, all eight respondents indicated a full intention and plan to graduate. None had been impacted to the degree that they were considering dropping out of school or planning to transfer to another school before graduating. This can be interpreted in two ways—maybe the experiences of SDHC and RDHC were manageable, not overwhelming; or perhaps the participants had developed resiliency to dealing with these significant social stressors. For the purpose of this research, the latter is emphasized because the former would only serve to minimize the problem. To be sure, any amount of SDHC or RDHC is a formidable challenge, and respondents reported significant hurtful and adverse impacts associated with their experiences of SDHC and RDHC.

BMGBCS experience lack of regard or value from college staff. Another theme throughout the survey responses was an experience of disregard for being Black, an experience of not being taken seriously or having one's experiences valued as highly as non-Black students.

This experience also occurs in the context of academic performance. Fifty percent (n=4) of total study respondents felt that both SDHC and RDHC adversely impacted their academic performance, which included being graded lower or more harshly than their non-Black student colleagues.

BMGBCS have mixed experiences with counseling. Fifty percent (n=4) of survey respondents sought counseling or emotional support to deal with SDHC and 62.5% (n=5) sought counseling or emotional support to deal with RDHC. However, the experiences they reported with counselors were mixed. BMGBCS reported counselors not understanding them and not really being helpful. Some had to train their counselors to understand their unique experiences with SDHC and RDHC, but did experience emotional benefit. Many BMGBCS turned to friends instead of counselors, tending to have more consistently positive experiences.

The majority of BMGBCS conceal their sexual orientation. The study found that 75% (n=6) of all respondents conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid SDHC. This is a very high percentage, matching only the number of participants who reported experiencing SDHC and RDHC. Five of the six respondents who reported having experienced SDHC reported concealing their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid it—which correlates the two together. If BMGBCS did not experience SDHC they might not feel compelled to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity.

In a subsequent but associated question, half the BMGBCS respondents reported avoiding areas of campus where the LGBT community congregates to avoid being identified as one of them. Some participants stated they do this to avoid being physically beaten or physically and emotionally bullied or psychologically terrorized.

A majority of BMGBCS rely on friends to support their sexual identity. Only 25% (n=2) of the respondents frequent the Pride Center and most reported relying on friends for emotional support to manage difficulties regarding their sexual identity and experiences of SDHC. Some of the respondents stated they wanted to go to the campus Pride Center but did not due to fears of being targeted and discriminated and/or harassed. Some respondents said they were more comfortable with going to the LGBT Center in the community—which indicates that there is something about the social atmosphere on the ESU college campus that makes seeking support unsafe for BMGBCS.

Most BMGBCS do not experience food or housing insecurities. Respondents were asked if they had experienced food insecurities or problems with housing due to SDHC or RDHC, and 75% (n=6) reported that they did not. Only one respondent described his experiences, which are listed in the previous section on basic need insecurities.

A majority of BMGBCS have negative experiences in church. Sixty two and a half percent (n=5) of BMGBCS reported attending church and all of them reported very negative, judgmental, critical, and demeaning experiences as regards their sexual orientation. Overwhelmingly, respondents reported that the church, including its leaders and congregation, did not approve of their sexual orientation and provided regular condemnation for being gay or bisexual. This motivated most BMGBCS to hide their sexual orientation and some suffered lack of opportunities for advancing in leadership roles within the church because they did not lead overtly heterosexual lives or lifestyles.

SDHC and RDHC negatively impact the mental health of BMGBCS. The survey results show that 75% (n=6) of respondents reported experiencing SDHC and RDHC, which 50% (n=4) sought counseling to deal with SDHC and 62.5% (n=5) sought counseling to deal

with RDHC. Additionally, 62.5% (n=5) of respondents reported seeking support for their sexual identity. This means the majority of BMGBCS experienced discrimination or harassment due to their sexual orientation and race, and that the majority that experience discrimination or harassment seek counseling to cope. People who seek counseling are typically significantly troubled by the issues for which they seek counseling. In this case it can be postulated that experiences of SDHC and RDHC by BMGBCS are troubling enough to motivate them to look for support. And the fact that 75% (n=6) of BMGBCS concealed their sexual orientation or gender identity indicates that they are psychologically impacted by experiences of discrimination and harassment to a very great degree. In this survey one respondent who reported not experiencing SDHC or RDHC reported concealing his sexual orientation—which means, even without a direct experience of discrimination or harassment, there is a fear of this.

All in all, experiences of discrimination and harassment by BMGBCS on campus significantly impacts mental health. Though this study did not go into depth regarding the specific psychological symptoms associated with experiences of SDHC and RDHC—i.e. increased anxiety, lowered self-esteem, social isolation, depression, etc.—some of these experiences were mentioned by participants, and the data gathered points to the need for future studies to plum these depths more comprehensively to gain greater insight into the psychological experiences of BMGBSC.

BMGBCS experience ESU as abusive and non-supportive. Experiences of SDHC and RDHC—such as being called names, verbally intimidated, bullied, being racially profiled, and threatened—constitute emotional abuse. And 75% (n=6) of respondents reported SDHC and RDHC at ESU. Emotional abuse is known to cause specific psychological and mental health problems. The fact that 50% (n=4) of participants avoid areas on campus where LGBT people

tend to congregate points to an insidious problem wherein BMGBCS can't even find solidarity in their in-group, for simple purposes of social interaction or support. And the fact that only 25% (n=2) of participants go to the campus Pride Center for support underscores the findings that the majority of BMGBCS respondents do not find a supportive atmosphere on campus.

Conclusion

In seeking answers to the research questions posed at the onset of this study, and at the beginning of this chapter, the data analysis and discernment of common themes in participants survey responses have provided a great deal of information on: (RQ1) whether Black male bisexual and gay students experience sexual discrimination or harassment on campus; (RQ2) whether Black male bisexual and gay students experience racial discrimination or harassment on campus; (RQ3) what challenges and support systems Black male bisexual and gay students experience with regard to physical health, mental health, and academic outcomes; and (RQ4) how these challenges impact their ability to obtain and maintain housing and food, as well as their ability to participate in religious activity.

In summation, the majority of respondents experienced racial and sexual harassment on campus which caused a range of adverse physical, mental, social, and academic outcomes. Some BMGBCS sought professional counseling services to cope with discrimination and harassment, but most did not feel comfortable seeking this on campus or believed that campus support is lacking. Many BMGBCS found it unsafe to seek support on campus, thus turning to off-campus support. And the majority of BMGBCS sought regular, ongoing support from friends.

The fact that the majority of BMGBCS experienced racial and sexual discrimination or harassment on campus is, in and of itself, indicative of an enormous problem that would negatively impact any sane person. The survey responses showed that participants suffer

extensively due to SDHC and RDHC: they experience this as abusive; SDHC and RDHC cause

them to distrust college staff and students; they isolate and try to hide their sexual identity; they

fear ridicule, condemnation, and physical attack; they try not to make trouble in class and do

their best while feeling overly-scrutinized and a lack of individual care or equal treatment by

teachers; they seek support off-campus and with friends. Though they evidence great resilience

in persevering with academic performance under significant duress, SDHC and RDHC impose

profound daily challenges and impediments in social expression for the majority of BMHBSC.

And, in the opinion of the researcher, all this is a tragedy that necessitates greater awareness,

attention and care for the experiences and concerns of BMHBSC.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, INTERPRETATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study sought to understand the experiences of BMGBCS. Specifically, I sought to identify instances of racial and sexual discrimination and harassment as experienced by BMGBCS. It is a problem that has been touched upon by previous research (Rankin et al., 2010; Strayhorn, Blakewood, & DeVita, 2008; Strayhorn & Mullins, 2012; Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013); however, the majority of research on sexual and racial discrimination and harassment is oriented towards the LGBTQ community in general, not BMGBCS. This study also explored how BMGBCS sought support to cope with their experiences of sexual and racial discrimination and harassment. Finally, the study also sought to determine whether or not BMGBCS experienced food and housing insecurity and/or the ability to participate in religious activities as a result of sexual or racial discrimination or harassment.

The significance of the BMGBCS population can best be understood by the theory of intersectionality as well as previous studies on the double minority status—being both non-white and non-heterosexual—and corresponding increased risk for discrimination and harassment, experienced by bisexual and gay Black males (Misawa, 2009; 2010). As previously noted by Eliason (2001) and Watson et al. (2017), Black bisexual and gay males are targeted by discrimination and harassment more than Black bisexual and gay females. This appears to be associated with the prevailing social expectations for Black men to be hypermasculine (Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013); therefore, BMBHCS are at high risk for internalizing the heterosexism and homophobia inherent in these views, which in turn can lead to significant emotional and psychological problems, including low self-esteem, negative self-regard, anxiety, depression, and suicidality (Strayhorn, 2019).

The study results confirmed previous research findings that BMBHCS do suffer from sexual discrimination and harassment on campus (SDHC) and racial discrimination and harassment on campus (RDHC) in multiple ways, and that these experiences adversely impact mental, physical, social and academic functioning. Results of the current study also showed that BMBHCS who experienced SDHC and RDHC sought counseling or emotional support to deal with these experiences, though they stayed away from campus counselors who were not experienced as effectively empathic, and turned towards off-campus sources as well as friends. While the majority of participants did seek support for their sexual identity, most tended to avoid the campus Pride Center, stating the campus environment (regarding their sexual and racial identity) was hostile. The study found that BMBHCS conceal their sexual orientation and/or gender identity to avoid SDHC.

The majority of BMBHCS reported that they did not experience food insecurities or problems regarding housing. The majority of BMBHCS also reported that their family knew about their sexual identity; however, experiences around this were mixed, with many feeling a lack of acceptance, support, understanding or empathy from family members, who tended to want their BMBHCS child to "recover" from not being heterosexual. The majority of BMBHCS also reported that their sexual orientation had impacted their religious activities and involvement with the church in ways that were experienced as psychologically detrimental. The general church experience was a rejection and condemnation of non-heterosexuality, which caused BMGBCS to hide their sexual identity and imposed limitations on how extensively they could become involved with the church as well as significantly limited the amount of support they experienced regarding the challenges they faced as a BMGBCS.

Conclusions

The overarching conclusion of the study based on the mixed-method design is that BMGBCS experience both sexual discrimination and harassment on campus (SDHC) and racial discrimination and harassment on campus (RDHC)—and the majority of respondents who experienced SDHC and RDHC also experienced adverse impacts on their physical, social, and mental health, as well as their academic performance. These results correlate with extant research, including the 2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People report which found that BMGBCS experience higher rates of SDHC and RDHC than white heterosexual college students of any gender (Rankin et al., 2010). Additional previous research has found that BMGBCS experience very high levels of SDHC and RDHC (Misawa, 2009; Strayhorn, Blakewood, & DeVita (2008); Strayhorn & Mullins, 2012), which indicates that the current study is well-correlated with past research.

The greater purview of conclusions relates to how experiences of SDHC and RDHC impact the physical, mental, social and academic dimensions of the lives of BMGBCS. The first finding of the current study stands in contrast with that of the 2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People report by Rankin et al. (2010) who found that LGBT students were significantly more likely than heterosexual students to think about leaving their current university due to SDHC and RDHC. The current study found that, though 50% of study participants reported that their academic performance suffered due to SDHC and RDHC, none of them considered leaving the university. One major difference between the current study and that conducted by Rankin et al. (2010) is the participant demographics—in which the previous study population was comprised of LGBT students and the current one focused only on BMGBCS. There may be a difference in how the two demographics deal with SDHC and RDHC

as regards decisions to complete college education. In any case, as per these results, it appears

that BMGBCS have a pronounced resilience or capacity to deal with SDHC and RDHC—which,

ironically, could be a strength or a weakness because developing tolerance for suffering could

ultimately have increasingly detrimental impacts on BMGBCS as regards personal, physical, and

social health as well as academic performance. In other words, the experiences of SDHC and

RDHC must be addressed because they are causing significant harm to BMGBCS.

The current study found that SDHC and RDHC impact the physical, mental and social

health of BMGBCS in profoundly harmful ways, causing stress, anxiety, alienation, and social

rejection. It is important to note the specific experiences of SDHC and RDHC experienced by

BMGBCS in this study. Participants reported being bullied, called names, ridiculed, physically

threatened, intimidated, experiencing hate crimes against the gay community, racially profiled,

falsely accused of sex crimes due to racial prejudice, and more. The overall response of study

participants was to keep their heads low, to conceal their sexual orientation and gender identity,

to seek support from friends and off-campus professionals, and to just get through their

university program in ways that reduced, as much as possible, further experiences of SDHC and

RDHC. Few respondents did not experience SDHC or RDHC and/or they reported experiencing

themselves as strong and confident enough in their identity as a BMGBCS to deal with any

social response. However, these participants mark the exception, not the rule.

The physical and mental impact of SDHC and RDHC experienced by BMGBCS are

supported by a plethora of previous research, including Crawford et al. (2002) who found that

the inhibition of one's true identity that is often experienced by gay Black men can result in a

state of 'psychosocial dysphoria' that diminishes one's physical and psychological health and

well-being. According to Strayhorn (2012), hiding one's true identity due to social condemnation

and retribution is stressful and can lead to deleterious outcomes for BMGBCS, including anxiety and depression. To avoid SDHC, participants in a study by Wilson & Miller (2002) reported concealing their true sexual orientation, which is a coping strategy known as changing sexual behavior in which a gay or bisexual Black man represses his sexual orientation because it is perceived to be bad and because he strives to avoid shaming, blaming or other stigmatizing social responses of rejection.

Another key finding of the current study was that BMGBCS do not generally feel seen, validated, or supported either academically or psychologically on the university campus. The majority of respondents reported that professors tended to grade them more harshly and that counselors did not appear to understand their experiences of SDHC and/or RDHC, and that they lacked empathy or insight into helping them. Furthermore, BMGBCS did not feel safe congregating as a group on the ESU campus or seeking support from the campus Pride Center because they were concerned about being aggressively targeted. These experiences generally reflect the findings of the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals (2016) who conducted a study on the experiences of transsexual and queer students of color (TQSOC), finding that they experience a profound lack of validation or support on college campuses.

The above findings also correspond with previous research by Mitchell and Means (2014) and Strayhorn et al. (2008) who report that BMBHCS attending predominantly white universities (PWIs)—which is the case in the current study—tend to experience lack of support along with social rejection and discrimination, which lead to feelings of anger, alienation, hopelessness and isolation. These experiences marginalize BMBHCS and may cause them to hide or compromise their true identity and assimilate into the homophobic and heterosexist PWI mode of identity as ways to avoid sexist or racist retribution (Mitchell & Means, 2014). The current study found

similar findings in that 75% of BMBHCS participants were compelled to hide their true sexual identity or gender orientation—because not hiding was experienced as markedly unsafe, physically and psychologically—as a coping strategy employed to avoid further experiences of SDHC and RDHC.

While Misawa (2010) reports that the double minority status of being both Black and nonheterosexual can lead to internalized homophobia and heterosexism, none of the BMBHCS in the current study reported this experience—which does not necessarily mean that they did not experience it, because the study did not address this criterion directly. However, the current study was congruent with previous research by Strayhorn (2012), who claimed that BMBHCS experienced lack of a sense of belonging as the survey participants overwhelmingly reported an experience of not feeling welcome, safe, understood, accepted, respected or validated on the SDSU campus, from staff, professors or students. Strayhorn (2012) further claims that when students are unable to meet their needs for belonging, they tend to suffer academically—which the current study participants reported.

Strayhorn (2019) claimed that unmet needs for belonging also cause students to experience psychological problems, including anxiety, depression, self-injurious behavior, and suicide. None of the participants in the current study reported self-harm or thoughts of suicide—once again, this does not mean they did not experience these because the study did not delve deeply into this specific area; however, 50% of participants reported seeking counseling or emotional support to deal with SDHC and 62.5% reported seeking the same to cope with RDHC. These study results indicate that unmet needs for belonging did cause participants to suffer enough to seek professional support. Although the survey did not directly prompt participants to state if they experienced a lack of sense of belonging at SDSU, these study results also indicate a

need to find a sense of belonging that was not to be had on the university campus. Even more

telling is the general response of participants that the campus counselors lacked empathy or

effectiveness at providing support, so participants looked off-campus for more beneficial

avenues of counseling and non-professional emotional support.

A noteworthy finding of the current study is that BMGBCS experience SDHC and

RDHC in tandem, not exclusively. This finding affirms the theory of intersectionality, which

emphasizes that persons may suffer from oppression on multiple dimensions (Thomas-Card &

Ropers-Huilman, 2014; Massaquoi, 2015)—in the case of the current study, being Black and

nonheterosexual are both dimensions in which BMGBCS experience oppression. If participants

of the current study had reported SDHC and not RDHC or RDHC and not SDHC, then the theory

of intersectionality would not apply. However, in the case of the current study, no participants

reported SDHC or RDHC exclusively.

Another defining demographic of BMGBCS that may lead them to experience SDHC and

RDHC on yet another dimension—which furthers the implications of intersectionality as a theory

of how oppression can be experienced—is their maleness. A study on the masculine identities of

gay Black college students found that the majority of participants thought of Black masculinity

as embodying prevailing traditional and largely heterosexual masculine ideals, including being a

strong protector, a reliable provider, having sexual prowess, social power and overt confidence

(Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013). A study by Whitley et al. (2010) found that college students

rarely associate Black men with gayness. Therefore, it is logical to assume that BMGBCS may

also contend with maleness as another dimension in which they are scrutinized for being

nonheterosexual and in which they internally judge themselves as not living up to social

standards of traditional masculinity. However, this is moreover theoretical speculation as the

current study did not specifically test for maleness versus femaleness in terms of experiencing racial or sexual discrimination or harassment as a Black nonheterosexual college student. Yet, this is an implication of the current study for future research.

The current study found that most of the BMGBCS respondents (62.5%, n=5) reported their nonheterosexual orientation adversely impacted their activities, participation and involvements at church. Sixty two and a half (n=5) respondents reported an experience of condemnation from the church regarding their nonheterosexual identity that influenced them to hide or downplay their gay or bisexual orientation as well as decrease their involvements with the church. These findings correlate well with previous research that has overwhelmingly found the church to be anti-gay and overtly homophobic as well as have significantly stress-inducing impacts on gay and bisexual Black men who are religious (Ford, 2016; Glassman, 2016; Lemelle & Battle, 2004; Mitchell & Means, 2014; Renn, 2010; Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013; Whitley et al., 2010; Wilson & Miller, 2002).

The final conclusion of the study is that though the majority (75%, n=4) of BMGBCS had informed their families about their non-heterosexual orientation or gender identity, their experiences were not markedly positive. Though the survey only prompted participants to indicate if their families knew about their sexual orientation, and did not request elaboration, two participants did make comments about this—and both these comments were negative. One participant claimed his family knew, then added, "but we don't dare talk about it!" Another participant who indicated his family knew about his sexual orientation added, "They tried to fix me." The experiences of the first participant indicate an avoidance of the issue, while the second indicates pathologizing the participant's sexual orientation or gender identity by seeking to somehow change it. While these parental responses could, in an ineffective way, be indirect

attempts to love one's child, they do not appear to be especially helpful for the participants. The remaining four participants who stated their family knew about their sexual orientation or gender identity were not compelled to elaborate—which indicates that the negative experiences are likely more predominant than the positive ones. As such, the current study can conclude that BMGBCS do not receive adequate support for experiences of SDHC.

Interpretation

The current study confirmed past research showing that gay and bisexual college students experience both sexual discrimination and harassment as well as racial discrimination and harassment on the college campus (Rankin et al., 2010; Misawa, 2009; Strayhorn et al., 2008; Strayhorn & Mullins, 2012). One sensible interpretation of the conclusions that BMGBCS experience discrimination and harassment on the college campus is that it actually exists. And if discrimination and harassment of BMGBCS is occurring regularly on college and university campuses throughout the US, then it would be helpful to BMGBCS to acknowledge and address it effectively. As Americans, it is our national goal and ideology to propagate a society based on equality and mutual respect leading to a recognition of the inherent dignity of each and every individual. If this is being impeded on college campuses due to sexist and racist perspectives and behaviors, it must be addressed and recommended.

Another interpretation is that the SDHC or RDHC experienced by BMGBCS may be, to some degree, an unintended effect of the college campus environment, including students and staff. This interpretation is not provided to invalidate the SDHC and RDHC experiences of BMGBCS, but is presented because in any interaction the totality of the context of the interaction, including an assessment of the roles and experiences of all parties, must be attempted. For example, in any given situation the manner in which one person understands

another person's behavior is in itself an interpretation. So, instead of blindly rushing to the adamant conclusion that ESU is rife with sexism and racism, we must also consider the interpersonal and institutional dynamics at play in the overall environment. Thus, future research may consider evaluating other institutional contexts (e.g., policies, practices, faculty, staff, and students) for sexist and racist perspectives—thus looking at the situation from the outside in.

Regardless of the cause of SDHC and RDHC experienced by BMGBCS, the current study found that the survey respondents suffered extensively and in multiple areas of their lives due to these experiences. A reiteration of the percentages of difficult experiences may prove enlightening: 75% (n=6) of BMGBCS reported experiencing both SDHC and RDHC; 50% (n=4) reported that their academic performance suffered due to both SDHC and RDHC; 50% (n=4) sought counseling or emotional support to deal with SDHC; 62.5% sought counseling or emotional support to deal with RDHC; 75% (n=6) conceal their sexual orientation/gender identity to avoid SDHC; 62.5% (n=5) seek support regarding their sexual identity; 50% (n=4) avoid areas of campus where LGBT persons congregate to avoid SDHC; and 62.5 % (n=5) report that being gay or bisexual has adversely impacted their religious activities. These data demonstrate that BMGBCS experience impactful academic, physical, social, and mental health problems due to being Black and nonheterosexual on the ESU college campus.

While a major limitation of the current study is the low number of participants—only 8 out of 545 students agreed to participate—the fact that the findings are, for the most part, aligned with past research indicates that they are at least somewhat reliable. At minimum, the survey findings portray actual experiences of BMGBCS attending ESU—and many of these experiences are congruent with one another, which is another indication of reliability. And what these

experiences emphasize over and over again is that BMGBCS feel generally unseen, unsupported, invalidated, and unsafe on ESU campus.

It is sensible that any college student who experiences sexual or racial discrimination and harassment on their college campus—or, for that matter, any form of significant discrimination or harassment for anything—will suffer from it academically and will seek both outside support as well as orient towards adaptive behaviors that will safeguard their integrity. We see this reflected in the study results as the majority of BMGBCS who experience SDHC and RDHC also find: it adversely impacts their academics; they seek support for their experiences; and they attempt to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid further SDHC and RDHC. These responses reflect the process of homeostasis. That the majority of BMGBCS also experience condemnation and rejection from the church—a primary place of support—adds both emotional insult and psychological injury to an already precarious mode of existence as a college student. And the final fact that 25% (n=2) of the participants did not reveal their sexual orientation to their family, while another 25% (n-2) of participants reported an unsupportive family response, indicates a lack of support.

The overall interpretation of the findings is that BMGBCS are suffering from SDHC and RDHC, which makes their experiences a reality that should be addressed to preserve the sanctity of the university education process.

Recommendations

When considered within the greater context of similar previous research, the findings of the current study provide implications for new directions in future research as well as developments in theory and practice as regards addressing the problems of SDHC and RDHC— in and of themselves and in terms of how they impact the academic performance, physical and

mental health, and social well-being of BMGBCS. However, considering the dire consequences of SDHC and RDHC that are experienced by both BMGBCS, as well as the LGBTQ community on the whole—which is illuminated by this and previous research—recommendations should also apply to restorative policies and practices that universities can engage in to reduce campus sexism and racism as well as to mitigate its impact on students.

While much of the current study, including its conclusions, implications and recommendations, are oriented towards improving the academic experiences of BMGBCS; however, they also apply to the welfare and interests of the university environment. Universities thrive on attracting qualified students who engage in the education process as well as harnessing positive reputations as centers of excellence, which includes the cultivation of professional environments where equality, fairness and respect are granted to students, staff and professors. When a particular demographic of the student body experiences a markedly threatening and problematic environment on campus, this necessarily also impacts the university in an adverse manner. With this in mind, it is clear that recommendations based on the current study apply to the mutual benefit of both BMGBCS as well as the university system on the whole.

Theory

The current study demonstrated the process of intersectionality as one in which individuals experience oppression in multiple ways. One recommendation for future research is to explore how maleness is an added dimension in which BMGBCS experience SDHC and RDHC. As a theory that is used to explain how people experience oppression, inequality, discrimination and other forms of maltreatment and inequity, intersectionality considers the multiple demographic categories that describe a person's identity—including race, sexual orientation, gender, and socioeconomic status (Thomas-Card & Ropers-Huilman, 2014).

While many previous studies have focused on SDHC and RDHC as experienced by LGBTQ students, few have looked specifically at BMGBCS—as did the current study. Of particular note in this demographic of students is the unique intersection of being male, Black and gay or bisexual. The current study has investigated previous research showing that social expectations of Black men orient around rigid traditional male stereotypes of heterosexuality (Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013; Whitley et al., 2010). Studies by Eliason (2001) and Watson et al. (2017) have shown that gay Black males are discriminated and harassed due to their sexual orientation more than gay Black females. Therefore, we can reasonably expect that BMGBCS experience an added layer of oppression, discrimination and harassment due to their sexual orientation.

The current study employed a mixed-methods approach utilizing surveys and brief informal meetings, but not in-depth 1:1 interviews, to glean information about how BMGBCS experience SDHC and RDHC, and how these experiences impact their academic performance and physical and mental health. Based on the current study, a central recommendation for future research would be to employ in-depth 1:1 interviews in order to better understand how SDHC and RDHC impact the physical and mental health and academic outcomes of BMGBCS as well as the kinds of support they seek to cope with these experiences.

More extensive and in-depth research would look more closely at how SDHC and RDHC impact the academic experience and performance of BMGBCS. The current study showed that, while 50% (n=4) of respondents thought SDHC and RDHC caused their academics to suffer, knowing more about the specific ways in which this occurs and how BMGBCS cope would be beneficial. We know from previous research that Black students attending PWIs "report feeling alienated, marginalized, socially isolated, unsupported, unwelcomed and under undue pressure to

prove themselves academically" (Strayhorn et al., 2008, p. 5). We also know that additional

pressures assail gay and bisexual Black men, for instance, "Black gay men not only face

concerns similar to their heterosexual counterparts, but they also contend with the negative

beliefs of others about gayness, intense homophobia in the Black community, and even racism

within the gay community" (Strayhorn et al., 2008, p. 5). The evidence is clear on the

intersectionality of being Black, male and gay or bisexual as it contributes to unique experiences

of SDHC and RDHC for BMGBCS; however, more in-depth studies would convey deeper

understandings and insights about how this impacts BMGBCS and how they cope.

   In their study, Strayhorn et al. (2008) reported that family and peer support as well as

independence and self-determination were essential factors that enabled gay Black male students

to experience academic success. Participants in the above study emphasized the importance of

peer relationships, but referred almost entirely to white gay friends, very minimally to Black

heterosexual female friends, and not at all to other gay Black male peers (Strayhorn et al., 2008).

Strayhorn et al. (2008) state that the lack of supportive relationships between Black gay male

students at universities is due to their fears of a homophobic environment in which, ostensibly,

Black gay male students would experience retribution for their sexual orientation in the form of

SDHC or RDHC. When any demographic of individuals is so stigmatized that they avoid

associating within their own demographic, it is clear that a profound form of social oppression is

occurring. Because this is the case, more needs to be understood about the underlying dynamics

as well as how to address and resolve the problem impacting BMGBCS.

   Using the theory of intersectionality provides a foundational framework for

understanding the significance of the intersection of being: 1) Black, 2) male and 3) gay as

regards SDHC and RDHC on the college campus. Queer theory works well in tandem with

intersectionality, as regards BMGBCS, because it posits that heteronormativity is a way of reinforcing homophobia, which likely also fuels sexual discrimination and harassment against non-heterosexual students. Insofar as it considers heteronormativity to be an arbitrary social construct used to defend against non-heterosexuality, queer theory also supports the premise that gayness and bisexuality are as equally valid forms of sexuality (Thomas-Card & Ropers-Huilman, 2014; Misawa, 2010). Therefore, it is a theoretical basis that supports the contingency of future research into how BMGBCS suffer from discrimination and harassment. If future research can create inroads to enlarging the theoretical basis for better understanding the experiences of BMGBCS as regards SDHC and RDHC, then the areas of practice and policy could also be improved.

Another area that the current study shed light on but did not answer in depth is how the experiences of SDHC and RDHC impact the mental health of BMGBCS. The survey results showed that 50% (n=4) of participants sought counseling/ emotional support to deal with SDHC and 62.5% (n=5) to deal with RDHC, but many participants reported that campus counselors were woefully insufficient when it came to this and reported relying on peers. One wonders if peer support is adequate, and it is likely not. It would be informative to conduct in-depth 1:1 interviews to understand more comprehensively the psychological and behavioral impacts of discrimination and harassment upon BMGBCS, as well as the benefits gleaned from peer support versus effective professional support.

Practice

Based on the current study there are multiple potential practice changes as regards BMGBCS and LGBTQ students at universities. One practice change is training counselors to be better able to address the needs and concerns of BMGBCS; another is holding educational

programs on sexual and racial discrimination and harassment to make students, staff, and professors more aware of this phenomenon. Both of these practices are likely occurring to some extent at some universities—but, according to the current and previous studies, if such practices are employed their efficacy is not high and needs improvement that can come from examining research. For BMGBCS as well as many LGBTQ students who have histories of being targeted for their sexual orientation and racial ethnicity, the topics of SDHC and RDHC may be easily triggering as well as one they'd rather avoid. Therefore, the ways in which practices and policies are implemented must be sensitive to the needs and concerns of these student body communities.

Practice changes need to revolve around acknowledging the reality of SDHC and RDHC as experienced by both BMGBCS as well as the entire LGBTQ community, and striving to reduce these forms of discrimination and harassment. Practices would also focus on improving the capacity for BMGBCS and the LGBTQ community to experience effective professional and peer-based support on campus. The university campus climate strongly influences the academic and social integration experienced by students (Linley & Nguyen, 2015), and BMGBCS tend to seek college campuses on which they can reveal and embrace their sexual orientation and gender identity are (Strayhorn et al., 2008). However, the campus climate tends to be rather negative for all LGBTQ students (Rankin, 2005; Rankin et al., 2010), including BMGBCS—therefore, policy changes are needed.

University policies reflect campus values and play a role in establishing norms and creating campus climate (Linley & Nguyen, 2015). Therefore, it is important for universities to include policies that protect the sanctity of all individuals, be they students, staff or professors. As per the current study, policy recommendations would focus on supporting BMGBCS and LGBTQ students, which means having recourse to restorative intervention when transgressions

have occurred. No student should experience ridicule, rejection, verbal abuse, academic

prejudice, or physical violence on a university campus in the form of sexual or racial

discrimination. As such, all forms of sexual or racial discrimination or harassment need to be

disallowed, viewed as serious infractions that constitute ameliorative actions, be they academic

or legal.

   BMGBCS and LGBTQ students need to feel as equally valid, normal, respected and

appreciated as any other student. The racial and sexual orientation of a student—just as the

religion, gender, socioeconomic status, mental health status, or any other identifying factor—

should not bring them disgrace or discrimination. University campuses need to be places where

people respect and value each other and support each other in a common goal of learning and

education. Any policy changes effecting these changes are desirable.

   As per the study results, there are a few concrete changes that ESU can implement which

would target reducing SDHC and RDHC as experienced by BMGBCS. Hiring Black male gay

and bisexual counselors would go a long way in enabling BMGBCS to feel that they have

support on the ESU campus. As per the findings of this study, feeling chronically unsupported as

well as unsafe on the ESU campus is highly problematic for BMGBCS, who largely reported

seeking support from counselors off campus. Having Black male gay and bisexual counselors

would provide a highly empathic and understanding as well as culturally sensitive and

appropriate source of support for BMGBCS in general, but especially those who have suffered

SDHC and RDHC.

   Along these same lines, hiring more Black male gay and bisexual professors and staff

will bolster the classroom environment for BMGBCS. It may not always be necessary to match

every demographic aspect of unique populations, such as BMGBCS, for them to feel understood,

valued and cared for; however, none of the study respondents reported experiencing support either in the classroom or the counseling room. Due to the profound lack of support, it seems that hiring more staff and professors who are similar to BMGBCS is warranted.

Addressing and decreasing incidents of SDHC and RDHC will be better accomplished by having clear expectations, rules and regulations that are reinforced by having clearly visible signs posted throughout the ESU campus that prohibit bullying and/or harassment. Students and staff need to know exactly what constitutes bullying and harassment, and they need to know that such behavior could result in severe consequences that can jeopardize their education or careers. This would give students and staff an informed choice about how to behave, which will make them responsible for their actions.

To do this, ESU needs to decide how to respond to instances of bullying and harassment, SDHC and RDHC, and determine consequences that will be followed through. However, there also needs to be a fair and measured process for reviewing incidents, allowing both parties to share their experiences and drawing conclusions based on reasonable assessments. It is possible that a BMGBCS might experience something that feels to them like SDHC or RDHC, or actually does constitute discrimination or harassment, coming from a person who did not intend that result. In other words, change is not just a "one-side-of-the-street" ordeal. It takes two to tango, so both parties need to be able to have dialogue that enables them both to better understand each other.

Along these lines, it will be helpful for the ESU community as a whole to have courageous conversations about gender and sexuality. It is likely that many people who might commit SDHC or RDHC would do so as a learned behavior based on social conditioning. They need to be able to explore this in order to resolve it. In a strange sense, they need support too;

support to examine their beliefs and social responses, as well as support to see how their

behaviors hurt others that will better enable them to make a choice to change. This requires

having open communication, which is risky, but taking risks is important when dealing with

harmful behaviors.

All ESU staff and professors need to be trained to understand how SDHC and RDHC

impact BMGBCS as well as all LGBTQ students. Rather than advocating specific responses,

trainings should inform staff, give them tools to increase skills like empathy and conflict

resolution, and enable them to devise effective responses. The ultimate goal is for everyone to

get along, and to reduce the harassment and discrimination experienced by BMGBCS and the

student body as a whole. Working together as a community, ESU should be able to attain this

goal.

New Research Questions

New research questions raised by the study results would focus on what kinds of support

BMGBCS need to adequately address experiences of SDHC and RDHC. As per the results, it

seems that a peer-based group therapy process could be effective. But the question also needs to

address the kinds of support BMGBCS need from professional college campus counselors and

how this training can occur.

Another research question would explore what BMGBCS need to feel safe and supported

to reveal their sexual orientation and gender identity on college campus. A related question

would ask what the college campus needs to be okay with BMGBCS revealing their sexual

identity. What changes need to occur in the administration and student body to reduce and

eradicate SDHC and RDHC on campus. In other words, the problem isn't so much with

BMGBCS, although they are suffering from it and are a clear indication of an underlying issue;

the problem is with the aggressive sexual and racial discrimination coming from the campus.
What is causing the belief system and attitudes that fuel SDHC and RDHC? Significant research
needs to be accomplished to better understand why college campuses are homophobic and racist,
or racially prejudiced, and determine how to get at the root of the problem.

      We will likely never fully eliminate sexism, racism or other forms of identity-based
discrimination and harassment entirely. But understanding how they come about and seeking to
resolve their causes, hold offenders accountable, and support those who suffer from these
transgressions are all essential activities to progress in a university college education
environment. For social equality to exist, we need comprehensive respect of all human beings.
That is the ultimate goal of this research. It is the hope of the author that the current study has
contributed something valuable towards the goal.

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Appendix A

Research Survey Questions

Screening Questions

1. Are you African American?
   a. Yes__ (Proceed to question 2)
   b. No__ (Thank you for your time.)
2. Are you a male bisexual or homosexual?
   a. Yes__ (Proceed to question 3.)
   b. No__ (Thank you for your time.)
3. Are you at least age 18?
   a. Yes__ (Proceed to question 4.)
   b. No__ (Thank you for your time.)

Academic Context

4. Which describes your academic level?
   a. Undergraduate Student
   b. Undergraduate Transfer Student
   c. Graduate Student: Master's
   d. Graduate Student: Doctoral
5. What is your major/academic discipline?
6. When thinking about your time at Equity State University, which of the following is most true for you:
   a. I am planning to graduate
   b. I am thinking about dropping out of school
   c. I am definitely dropping out of school
   d. I am planning to transfer to another school before graduating

Experiences with Discrimination

7. Have you experienced sexual discrimination or harassment on campus?
   a. Yes __
   b. No__
   c. If yes, please describe.
8. Have you experienced racial discrimination or harassment on campus?
   a. Yes __
   b. No__
   c. If yes, please describe.
9. Has sexual discrimination or harassment caused your academic performance to suffer?
   a. Yes __
   b. No__
   c. If yes, please describe how.
10. Has racial discrimination or harassment caused your academic performance to suffer?
   a. Yes __

      b. No__
      c. If yes, please describe how.

Social-Emotional Well-Being

11. Have you ever sought counseling or emotional support to deal with sexual discrimination or harassment?
      a. Yes __
      b. No__
      c. If yes, please describe how this has/has not helped.
12. Have you ever sought counseling or emotional support to deal with racial discrimination or harassment?
      a. Yes __
      b. No__
      c. If yes, please describe how this has/has not helped.
13. Do you conceal your sexual orientation/gender identity to avoid discrimination and/or harassment?
      a. Yes __
      b. No__
14. Do you stay away from areas of campus where gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons congregate for fear of being labeled, discriminated and/or harassed?
      a. Yes __
      b. No__
      c. If yes, how does this impact your need for support and/or community?

Support Services

15. How often do you visit the Pride Center?
      a. 1.__3+ times per week.
      b. 2.__1-2 times per week.
      c. 3.__1-2 times per month.
      d. 4.__A few times per semester.
      e. 5.__I don't visit the Pride Center.
16. If you have visited the Pride Center during this academic year, what was the purpose for your visit? (Select all that apply)
      a. 1.__Emotional support
      b. 2.__Social (Visiting friends/Community members)
      c. 3.__Resource Access (Computer, books, movies, etc.)
      d. 4.__Student Organization Meeting Other meeting Event
      e. 5.__Other: _____
      f. N/A
17. What support services (on or off campus) do you use to support your sexual identity?

Basic Need Insecurities

18. Has racial discrimination or harassment caused you to experience food insecurities or problems with housing as a college student?

a. Yes __
b. No__
c. If yes, please describe how.

19. Has sexual discrimination or harassment caused you to experience food insecurities or problems with housing as a college student?
    a. Yes __
    b. No__
    c. If yes, please describe how.

Family & Religion

1. Does your family know about your sexual orientation?
   a. __Yes
   b. __No
2. Have concerns or experiences regarding your status as a black bisexual or homosexual male impacted your participation in religious activities?
   a. Yes __
   b. No__
   c. If yes, please describe how.
3. Does religion play a role in revealing or hiding your sexuality?
   a. Yes __
   b. No__
   c. If yes, please describe how.

Appendix B

Claremont Graduate University

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY What Are The Impact Of Challenges That Bisexual And Homosexual Black Men Face On College Campuses?

None of the material with the turquoise background should appear in the consent form you submit to the IRB—these are instructions and examples only. **All elements of this form should be presented in *clear, nontechnical* language *appropriate to the age and expected literacy levels* of the participant pool** (no higher than 8th grade level).

You are invited to _____ a research project. While volunteering will probably not benefit you directly, you will be helping to the investigators to _____. If you decide to volunteer, you will _____, which would require about [# of m/h/d/w…] of your time. Volunteering for this study does not involve risk beyond what a typical person would experience on an ordinary day. [or "Volunteering for this study involves (description of risk)] Since your involvement is entirely voluntary, you may withdraw at any time for any reason. Please continue reading for more information about the study.

STUDY LEADERSHIP: This research project is led by name and title of Principal Investigator(s) of the Claremont Graduate University, who is being supervised by [if applicable, name, title and affiliation of faculty supervisor].

PURPOSE: Provide a specific statement of purpose in nontechnical language, and summarize, in lay language, the scientific, scholarly, clinical, and any other objective(s) of the research.

ELIGIBILITY: State the specific inclusion/exclusion criteria.

PARTICIPATION: During the study, you will be asked to _____.
This will take about # minutes/hours/days/etc.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION: The risks that you run by taking part in this study are _____ These risks include _____.[Use of **deception** in the study should be disclosed here.]

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION: [I **or** We] [do not] expect the study to benefit you personally. [***If applicable***, i.e., if you do anticipate benefits for the subject:] The benefit(s) is/include _____.
This study will benefit the researcher(s) by _____.
This study is also intended to benefit _____.

COMPENSATION: You [will/will not] be directly compensated [$ amount or description of item, if applicable] for participating in this study. [Include any conditions associated with reimbursement, such as completing a certain proportion of the study.]

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the study [***If applicable,*** add "or refuse to answer any particular question for any reason"] at any time without it being held against you. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone at CGU [*or with any other relevant entity/agency*]. [**For group settings**, describe the alternative to participation.]

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your individual privacy will be protected in all papers, books, talks, posts, or stories resulting from this study. [If confidentiality/privacy will not be promised, disclose this fact]. [**NEW REQ:**] We may use the data we collect for future research or share it with other researchers, but we will not reveal your identity with it [OR: "We will not use the data we collect for future research, nor share it with others."]. In order to protect the confidentiality of your responses, [I **or** we] will
_____.

SPONSORSHIP [*If applicable*]: This study is being paid for by sponsoring agencies/funding source(s).

FURTHER INFORMATION: If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact [name of the PI or a representative] at [phone number and email address] [**For student investigators:**] You may also contact [faculty supervisor] at [phone number and email address]. The CGU Institutional Review Board has approved this project. [**If status is EXEMPT**, replace "approved this project" with "certified this project as exempt**."** If you have any ethical concerns about this project or about your rights as a human subject in research, you may contact the CGU IRB at (909) 607-9406 or at irb@cgu.edu. A copy of this form will be given to you if you wish to keep it.

CONSENT: Your signature below means that you understand the information on this form, that someone has answered any and all questions you may have about this study, and you voluntarily agree to participate in it.
[If applicable: For online consent forms, surveys, or other projects in which the IRB specifically waives the requirement for a participant **SIGNATURE**, a checkbox or equivalent signal rather than a signature block is appropriate and acceptable.]

Signature of Participant   _____   Date _____

Printed Name of Participant _____

[**If Applicable:**] The undersigned researcher has reviewed the information in this consent form with the participant and answered any of his or her questions about the study.

Signature of Researcher   _____   Date _____

Printed Name of Researcher _____

Appendix C

San Diego State University

Sammie L. Scales is conducting a research study on bisexual and homosexual black male students. If you identify as a bisexual or homosexual black male please consider taking part in the questionnaire survey to find out if you will be a good fit for this research study. The purpose of this study is to 1) understand the unique challenges faced by black male bisexual and homosexual college students, and 2) to become clear on the specific impacts these challenges have on this population in terms of physical health, mental health, and academic outcomes.

Please contact Sammie Scales at

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