

THE ROLE OF MICROAGGRESSION IN THE COMING OUT PROCESS OF LGBTs

Barrameda, Lovely G.
Fojas, Angelo J.

Background of the Study

- According to Strunk and Takewell (2014), LGBT individuals report ongoing experiences with bias, discrimination and harassment in different forms in various settings including schools, workplaces, judicial system, medical care, and public settings and accommodations.
- Although many societies have made significant strides in human rights advocacy, LGBT rights struggle to find universal acceptance (Subhrajit, 2014).
- Many lesbian, gay and bisexual youth find the coming-out process challenging in a predominantly heterosexual and heterosexist society (Matthews & Salazar, 2012).

Terms and Definitions

○ MICROAGGRESSION

- Microaggression is defined as a subtle form of discrimination, often unintentional and unconscious which send negative and denigrating messages to various individuals and groups (Nadal, Davidoff, Davis, Wong, Marshall & McKenzie, 2015).

1. Microassaults- use of explicit derogations either verbally or nonverbally, as demonstrated through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or discriminatory actions toward the intended victim.
2. Microinsults- are often unconscious and are described as verbal or non-verbal communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's heritage or identity.
3. Microinvalidations- also often unconscious and include communications that exclude, negate or nullify the realities of individuals of oppressed groups.

◉ COMING- OUT PROCESS

- refers to the act of becoming aware of one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity and disclosing such information to others (Lee, 2014).

Statement of the Problems

- What are the common and various microaggressive behavior experienced by LGBTs?
- Does microaggression plays a role in the coming out process and specifically how?
- How do LGBTs cope with microaggressive behaviors ?

Objectives

- Highlight the different forms of microaggression received by LGBTs upon coming out and even on everyday basis.
- Examine the role of microaggression in the coming out process.
- Give emphasis in the coping up process of the identified LGBT people who receives microaggressive behaviors.
- It also aims to give awareness about sexual orientation microaggression in forms of interaction.

Hypotheses

1. Microaggression plays a role in the coming out process of LGBTs.
2. Microaggression oppresses the disclosure of LGBT.

Methods

- phenomenological, qualitative study
- recruited 13 self-identified lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders ages 25-46. Seven (7) of them are identified as gays, 3 are male bisexuals, 2 are lesbians, and 1 is a male transgender.
- Used snowball sampling method
- administered Key Informant Interview or KII.
- Interview questionnaire
- one-on-one interview was conducted

Results

Table 1: Main theme and sub-theme for the first statement of the problem

Statement of the Problem	Main Theme	Sub-theme	F
What are the common and various microaggressive behavior experienced by homosexuals?	Microaggression before coming out	Verbal Insults	5
		Assault	1
	Microaggression after coming out	Verbal Insults	5
		Gossiping	2
		Exclusion and discrimination in the workplace	2
		Others	2

Results

Table 2: Main theme and sub-theme for the second statement of the problem

Statement of the Problem	Main Theme	Sub-theme	F	
Does microaggression plays a role in the coming out process of LGBTs?	Negative Role	Victimization of Verbal Insults	2	
		Chances of being Isolated	4	
		Being Talked About	2	
			Exclusion and discrimination	2
		Positive Role	Resiliency	2
			Self-adjustment	2

Results

Table 3: Main theme and sub-theme for the third statement of the problem

Statement of the Problem	Main Theme	Sub-theme	F
How do homosexuals cope up with these microaggressive behaviors?	Maladaptive Coping Mechanism	Avoidance	3
	Positive Coping Mechanisms	Adjustment and Deeper Understanding Towards other People	2
	Personal Growth and Development	Resiliency	5
	Social Development	Breaking the Stigma	2
			Raise Awareness for LGBT

Discussion

- Analyzing and reviewing their responses, it can be seen how microaggression despite its presumed negative role, can influence one to disclose their sexuality on a wider note
- It is a fact that LGBTs continuously experience microaggression in today's contemporary society despite the significant strides.

1. **What are the common and various microaggressive behavior experienced by homosexuals?**
 - ⦿ The current study revealed that the microaggressive behaviors often received by the said social minority groups includes verbal insults, assaults, being gossiped about and marginalized in the workplace.

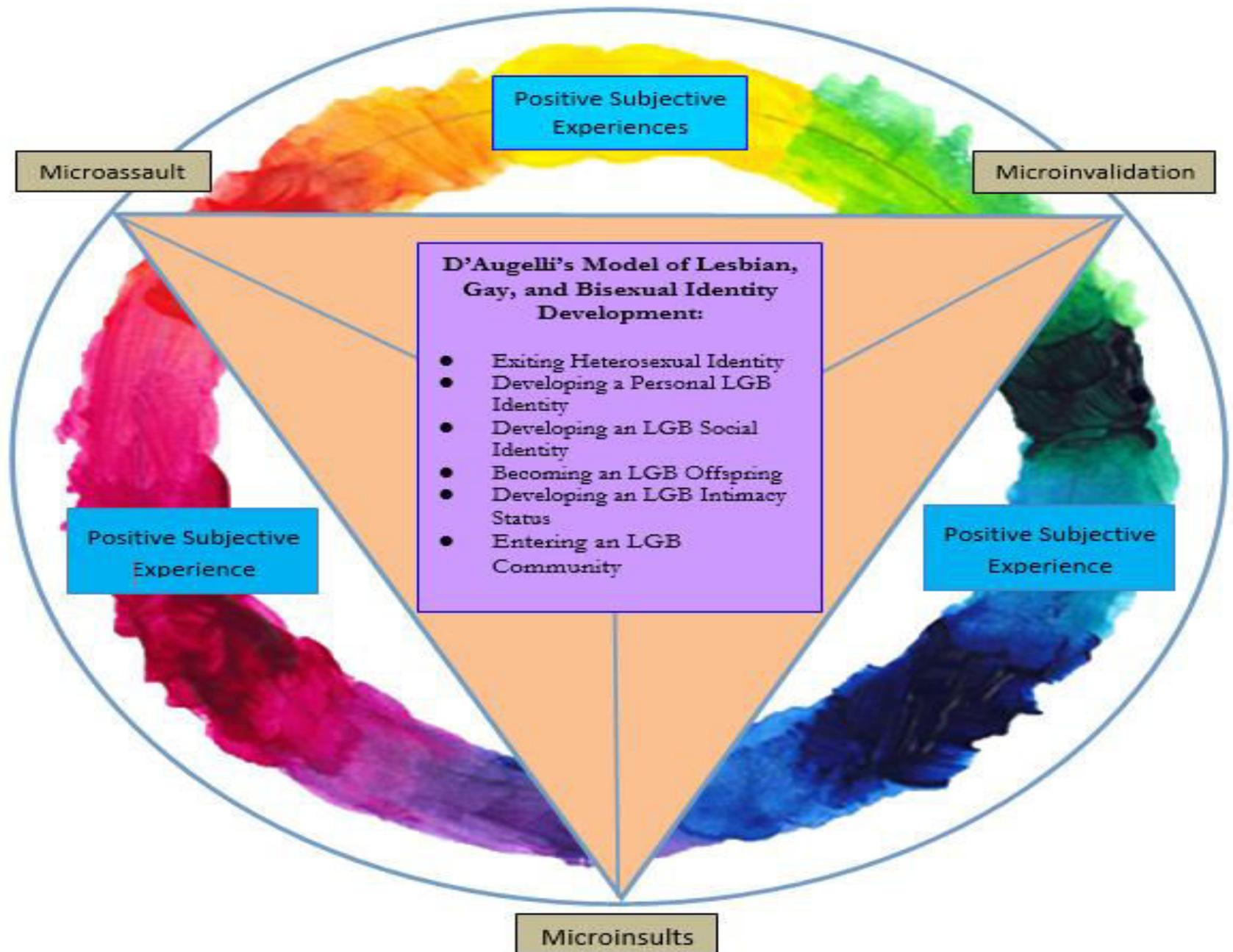
2. **Does microaggression plays a role in the coming out process and specifically how?**

- The results and research findings, revealed how these behaviors have facilitated the disclosure of the focused group and not necessarily led them from shutting off their sexual orientation to the wider society
- The respondents in this study acknowledged that their LGBT identity upon coming out would provide them a better understanding and awareness as well as with positive aspects such as resiliency, self-growth, and a better way of building their coping mechanisms with social stigmas and intolerance towards them.

- Another interesting discovery includes the positive aspects which are the results brought by someone's experiences of such forms of microaggression like how it helped them be manageable and optimistic in building up their coping mechanisms with social stigmas and discriminations. In connection with this, the researchers have not seen the close relationship of the used theory to the main variables of the study which mainly focuses on the microaggression and disclosure process.

3. How do homosexuals cope with microaggressive behaviors ?

- The findings revealed that most of the responses of the focused group denoted a positive coping mechanism that either involves them in ways on improving and strengthening themselves or maturely handling the situation as an emotionally equipped



Positive Subjective Experiences

- Positive subjective experiences capture a wide array of intrinsically valued experiences, including positive affective/emotional states, and aspects of subjective well-being like happiness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Vaughn & Rodriguez, 2014). As this pillar is linked to minority stress, these experiences center on healthy psychological adjustment in the context of social adversity like resilience (Carver, 1998; Vaughn & Rodriguez, 2014) and perceived experiences of psychological growth associated with such stressors (Park et al., 1996; Vaughn & Rodriguez, 2014).

Limitations

- Uneven ratio of respondents in terms of equal representation from each category.
- Age range
- Qualitative nature of the study

Implications

- Finding is important as it gives knowledge and awareness to those people who are still on the verge of deciding on when they would be admitting their sexual orientation from the society as the study shows that disclosing does not generally indicates harm to LGBTs that the aftereffects of it are not all negative as what many people presumed and have shown in past related studies

- Contributes to the optimal functioning of these people who belong to the said social minority group as how they would deal with stereotypes and stigmas even after their coming out process.
- The research implies that LGBTs do develop strengths despite the negative experiences of microaggressive behaviors. The manifestations of these strengths described in the said model contribute to the expansion of understanding in LGBT strengths and go beyond the presumed represented negative outcomes of sexual and gender minorities.

- It bridges the gap on other researches on how microaggression can help positively in the formation of one's LGBT identity and strengths.

Recommendation

- To shed light for future studies, it is recommended that one use mixed methods to further delve and strengthen the out-coming support and claim of the study.
- The present study as a whole explored how one's environment plays a role in the coming-out process, for future references one may discuss how oneself hinders the coming-out process and not just the influence of the environment.
- Also, the role of microaggression into an individual's tendency to involve himself into a romantic relationship and publicized it can as well be delved into future researches.

A word cloud on a rainbow background. The words are in white, hand-drawn style. The most prominent words are 'EQUALITY', 'GAY', 'HUMAN RIGHTS', 'LOVE', 'LGBT', 'TRANSGENDER', and 'RIGHTS'. Other words include 'COMMUNITY', 'COUPLES', 'PEACE', 'FREEDOM', 'MARRIAGE', 'RESPECT', 'IDENTITY', 'HAPPINESS', 'Pride', 'Rainbow', 'Lesbian', 'Sexual', 'Couple', 'Identity', 'BT', 'IAN', 'LGBT', 'HOMOSEXUAL', 'FREE', 'PRIDE', 'LOVE', 'MARRIAGE', 'RESPECT', 'LESBIAN', 'IDENTITY', 'PEACE', 'COMMUNITY', 'LESBIAN', 'RAINBOW', 'HAPPINESS', 'RIGHTS'.

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