GENDER, SPIRITUALITY, AND SEXUALITY:

EXPLORING MEN'S INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

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in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
December, 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank his family, in particular his parents, for their continuous and unconditional love and throughout his lifelong pursuit towards achieving a Ph.D. The author would also like to thank his advisor, Dr. John Foubert, for his mentorship and continued support, especially considering his transition to a dean-ship at another institution. Finally, the author would like to thank his committee and the faculty of HESA for all their assistance, advocacy, and patience through the years.

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Date of Degree: DECEMBER, 2021

Title of Study: GENDER, SPIRITUALITY, AND SEXUALITY: EXPLORING MEN'S INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

Major Field: EDUCATION LEADERSHIP & POLICY STUDIES

The present study examined the intersection of sexual orientation identity, spirituality, and gender in queer male university students. Many higher education institutions offer a supportive, secure environment for queer persons to explore and grow into their understanding of self, resolving any potential conflicts arising from their intersecting identities. While the literature indicates that many identity conflicts may arise from a clashing of sexual orientation and religious beliefs, new studies are beginning to reveal the roles that masculinity and beliefs about male role norms can play in potential identity conflicts. The literature is predominantly qualitative in nature; focused on constructing models of development and revealing the experiences of queer persons. The present study expands on the field by utilizing quantitative methodology to construct a predictive model for internalized homonegativity. Furthermore, the present study compared Christian participants to Atheist ones. A significant model was found predicting internalized homonegativity for the overall sample as well as for the Christian subset. No significant model was found for the Atheist subset. The primary findings indicate the power of self-rated masculine gender performance in predicting internalized homonegativity. Future directions for research, theory, and practice are discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many Christian college students with queer identities experience equivocating attitudes, feeling uncertain about the proper path forward in reconciling their faith and sexuality (Lease et al., 2005; Levy & Reeves, 2011; Sumerau et al., 2016). For men, this uncertainty increases when they consider their faith and sexuality through the lens of their gender (Annes & Redlin, 2012; Barrios & Lundquist, 2012). The present study examined the intersection of spirituality, sexual orientation, and gender, specifically masculinity, in college men.

Background

Problem Statement

Acceptance of queer identities varies across the United States. Within the so-called "Bible Belt," where issues of religiosity may be more salient than in other areas of the United States (Hubach et al., 2017), it can be particularly difficult for those who are queer to find community, especially because so many states either ignore or explicitly ban the positive presentation of sexual and gender diversity within public school settings (Hubach et al., 2017; Mollet, et al., 2021; Quinn & Meiners, 2009; Quinn & Meiners,

2011). For young people, the search for community can be particularly difficult. Many queer college students enter universities with high levels of internalized homonegativity. Homonegativity is related to negative mental health, social, and academic outcomes (Lease et al., 2005; Levy & Reeves, 2011; Love et al., 2005). Despite what may be expected, the levels of internalized homonegativity are consistent between those with a religious background and those without (Berg et al., 2016; Lease et al., 2005; Levy & Reeves, 2011). Despite dealing with internalized homonegativity, many queer individuals successfully matriculate and complete college (Hill, et al., 2021; Renn, 2020).

Various contemporary issues indicate the need to understand more clearly the experiences of queer students, and particularly queer male students, including the need to increase retention and graduation rates, the increasingly diverse body of students on campus, and the increasing push towards personalization of service in student affairs. Research has demonstrated that university staff and faculty can have a positive impact on reducing a student's level of internalized homonegativity (Abes, 2012; Evans et al., 2010; Lease et al., 2005). Within the nexus of these issues, it is increasingly important to understand factors that may impact the levels of internalized homonegativity for queer men; to understand their factors for success or difficulty. The literature has shown a connection between religious identity and internalized homonegativity (Lease et al., 2005) as well as one's relationship with their gendered expectations (Bryce, 2012).

Within the present study, the tantamount question is to investigate whether internalized homonegativity can be predicted by religiosity, quantified gender performance, and ascription to gender role norms. Narrowing the focus to men allows for a more focused understanding of the impact of gender, both masculine performance and beliefs about male

role norms, on internalized homonegativity. Additionally, the present study compared students who identify as Christians to those who identify as atheists. Again, narrowing the focus allows for a clearer picture of the impact of religious identity.

Significance

The leading theories examining this intersection of internalized homonegativity, religiosity, and gender in college men have been built upon qualitative research (Berg et al., 2016). Qualitative methodologies are adept at revealing phenomena in depth and assisting in the construction of new theory. The next step, of which the present study is a part, is to build upon the known theories through quantitative methods to suggest generalizable results.

Diversifying the nascent body of research will provide a stronger foundation upon which to develop interventions and strategies in working with queer students, particularly those struggling with their identities. Research has demonstrated that university staff and faculty can help reduce a student's level of internalized homonegativity (Abes, 2012; Lease et al., 2005; Stewart, 2008), positively impact students' spiritual development (Astin, 2004; Becker, 2009; Komarraju et al., 2010; Lovik, 2011; Shipp, 2017), and minimize the potential conflict of these intersecting identities (Abes, 2012; Means & Jaeger, 2015; Lease et al., 2005). An intersectional approach has the benefit of avoiding potential harm that might result if a student is encouraged to pursue one aspect of their identity over another. Taking into account a queer identity alongside a religious identity, and the impact of masculinity, will allow higher education professionals to holistically approach their work with students.

In a joint statement, both leading student affairs professional organizations declare an obligation of staff to assist their students as they develop their identities while at university

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(ACPA & NASPA, 2015). This statement is equally applicable to faculty as well, as faculty often provide a major touchpoint for students, often serving as the first touchpoint for students in times of challenge, including personal trials (Evans et al., 2010; Stewart & Howard-Hamilton, 2015). Therefore, faculty and staff should provide support for students who may be struggling with their identities, including their spiritual, gender, and sexual orientation identities. The present study contributes to this stated obligation through providing further foundation for the development of strategies to engage students through potential identity conflicts, particularly those that give rise to internalized homonegativity. The present study centers internalized homonegativity with the hope that understanding its contributing factors not only allows for the seeking out of students who may be having difficulties reconciling identities, but also allows for identifying those who are not having difficulties. Knowing the signs and experiences of both, as well as those in between, can play a valuable part in informing and strengthening higher education professionals' practice.

Study Design

The epistemology that guided this study wass a pragmatic approach. Pragmatism sets finding a solution as central to the methodology, choosing methods while being mindful of the study's societal setting (Morgan, 2014); this aligns with the study's purpose to contribute to and build upon the nascent research in intersectional identity development for queer men. Furthermore, the present study used a post-positivist framework; while no study can be completely free from bias, this theoretical framework assumes an objective orientation that allows for the results to approach breadth and potential generalizability by including a significant number of participants. This framework lends itself to a quantitative design,

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specifically, a regression analysis that allows for the prediction of a dependent variable from multiple independent variables.

The present study seeks to examine the intersection of spiritual identity, sexual orientation identity, and masculinity; asking whether internalized homonegativity can be predicted from religious identity and masculinity. The regression analysis will seek to address this question by examining the significance of models using religiosity, gender performance, and subscription to gender norms as predictors, comparing the models derived for Christian students and atheist students. It is hypothesized:

1. The overall model that includes all three independent variables, religiosity, gender performance, and subscription to gender norms, will be significant.

2. It is hypothesized that the model for Christians will account for more variability than the model for atheists.

3. The model will be consistently significant across the two institutions involved in the study.

Definitions

Various terms around sexuality, spirituality, and gender are employed throughout the present study. These terms are further explored in Chapter Two.

- Atheist - An individual who identifies with the belief that there is neither a supreme deity or deities nor a guiding force to the Universe (Converse, 2003).
- Agnosticism - This is a belief that there is an immutable uncertainty about the existence of a higher power or a pantheon of higher powers (Goodman & Mueller,

2009). In the present study, those who identify as agnostic will be grouped with those identifying as atheist for analysis purposes (Converse, 2003; Dein, 2016).

- Christian - An individual who identifies with the belief that Jesus of Nazareth was, is, or descended from God (Garriott & O'Neill, 2008).

- Cisgender - A person is cisgender when one's identified gender aligns with one's biological sex (Roselli, 2018).

- Gender - The set of social mores typifying "women" and "men" within a culture (Fausto-Sterling, 2019). These mores are passed generation-to-generation, building cultural gender schema through time (Bem, 1981).

- Gender Performance - The individual set of behaviors associated with behaving in a masculine and/or feminine manner. These behaviors are culturally enforced through the policing of "norms" to which societal members are expected to subscribe (Bem, 1974).

- Genderqueer - A person is said to be genderqueer when that person does not identify with either gender "man" or "woman" nor feels that transgender is appropriate (Roselli, 2018).

- Internalized Homonegativity – This occurs when a queer person holds on to the negative beliefs and dispositions that some of society has towards their sexual orientation (Lease et al., 2005).

- Masculinities - Are the collection of behaviors and social performances employed by a person in relation to the cultural expectations placed upon those identifying as men (Connell, 1995; Connell, 2013; Pascoe, 2012).

- Queer - Queer is an umbrella term that captures all those who identify within the LGBTQ+ community without highlighting specific identity labels. While the term has a checkered history, it is growing in acceptance since it is considered to be more inclusive (Somerville, 2007). Within the present study, queer will be used for all those who are cisgender men who identify as homosexual or same-gender loving ("gay"), non-monosexual (e.g., "bisexual" or "pansexual"), or any other non-heterosexual identity (such as "struggling with same sex attraction") (Somerville, 2007).

- Religion - "the human attempt to make sense of the self in connection to and with the external world" (Mayhew, 2004, p. 666). This encompasses faith traditions such as Christianity, atheism, and agnosticism.

- Religiosity - The amount of importance one places in their religious beliefs as well as the strength with which one clings to them (Cragun et al., 2015; Cragun & Sumerau, 2015)

- Transgender - A person is transgender when one's identified gender does not align with one's biological sex (Roselli, 2018).

Summary

As students make their way through their undergraduate years, they are navigating personal identity development alongside their academic and professional growth. Identity development for students who are queer can be complicated by their religious identities, sometimes resulting in negative mental and social outcomes. Furthermore, this interaction can be further confounded by a student's gender, particularly for men. One of the primary ways in which this negativity can manifest is through a person's level of internalized

homonegativity, which can lead to depression, anxiety, and other maladaptive outcomes. Institutions of higher education should seek avenues for informed practice in working with these students, paying particular attention to identity development. The present study seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature examining this intersection of sexuality, spirituality, and masculinity through quantitative methods, seeking to address the question of whether internalized homonegativity can be predicted by religiosity, gender performance, and subscription to gender norms. The study sits within a broader context of literature exploring these topics both individually and in various combinations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To examine the intersection of sexual orientation identity, spiritual identity, and gender, one must survey what has already been discovered in the literature as well as explore the dominant theoretical frameworks. The present chapter explores the literature by first defining the primary concepts of the present study – sex and gender, sexual orientation, and spirituality, followed by exploring the unique environment presented by the higher education context. Major models of identity development are then discussed. Finally, this chapter highlights what is known concerning the research on the intersections of these identity development processes.

The literature paints a picture connecting internalized homonegativity with a religious upbringing (Lease et al., 2005; Levy & Reeves, 2011; Meladze & Braown, 2015); however, scholars have studied the interaction of gender performance with religious beliefs less frequently within the context of examining internalized homonegativity (Avishai et al., 2015; Cragun & Sumerau, 2017; Sumerau & Edward, 2012). To analyze how internalized homonegativity, religious beliefs, and masculinity intersect, understanding each is necessary

Terminology

Sex

Gender and sex have evolving definitions as gender studies, philosophy, medicine, and biology intersect and interact (Berenbaum & Beltz, 2011; Fausto-Sterling, 2019; Roselli, 2018). The definitions mobilized within this study were chosen for their ease and the support in the literature. Sex is often conceived of as the biological component of a person's identity regarding their role in a potential reproductive pair; this is typically based upon a person's primary sex characteristics (genitalia), secondary sex characteristics (muscularity, breast development, bone structures), sex hormone ratio (testosterone to estrogen), and chromosomal make-up (XX versus XY) (Fausto-Sterling, 2019). Sex is typically designated at birth on the basis of a person's observed genitalia. There are generally three medically-accepted sexes: male, female, and intersex (when characteristics of both male and female genitalia are observed) (Fausto-Sterling, 2019). Typically, a person is raised to perform the gender associated with their designated sex; this is, masculine behavior for males and feminine behavior for females (Bem, 1974; Berenbaum & Beltz, 2011). People who practice masculine behavior typically identify as men and those who practice feminine behavior tend to identify as women (Berenbaum & Beltz, 2011; Roselli, 2018). Those who are intersex are often raised as the gender corresponding with the sex their genitalia predominantly resemble (Lugones, 2007). Those who identify as the gender typically associated with their sex are "cisgender" while those who identify as the opposite are "transgender" (Fausto-Sterling, 2019). Gender identity does not necessarily indicate the way in which one performs that gender, but gender performance is often policed socially (Butler, 1993).

Gender & Gender Performance

Some scholars identify gender as the role with which one identifies within their society: as a man, woman, both, or neither (Fausto-Sterling, 2019). In contrast, Bem (1974, 1981) identifies gender as residing within the embodied characteristics of masculinity and femininity. Additionally, a person may identify with a different label that they feel better fits their identity. In the present paper, the terms "male," "female," and "intersex" will be reserved exclusively for discussing biological sex; while colloquially these terms are often used as gender markers (Fausto-Sterling, 2019). Recent medical research indicates that there may be biological impacts on fetal development as a result of environmental factors during gestation (O'Hanlan et al., 2018; Roselli, 2018). Such studies theorize that these environmental factors, including hormone exposure and mother's autoimmune-response, influence physical development of the fetus. This theory is evidenced by studies showing that trans people have brains more similar to cisgender people of their identified gender than with those of the same sex (Roselli, 2018). Roselli (2018) conducted a meta-analysis examining the existing medical and biological research on the influence of genetic, hormonal, and pre-natal factors in determining sexual orientation and gender identities. Roselli reports on the limited evidence supporting a prenatal hormone effect on gender identity as well as the lack of reputable research on the genetic components of gender. He juxtaposes this with the stronger evidence of the similarities of brain structures between transgender people and cisgender people. While this is the strongest of three presented factors, Roselli points out that the literature is still limited in examining neuroanatomy in transgender persons and that it is possible the

brain structure similarities are a result of a transperson's self-perception and not the cause of their identity.

In addition to biological elements, gender is understood by some as being primarily the outcome of how one was raised and how one feels they fit within society's gender systems (Berenbaum & Beltz, 2011; O'Hanlan et al., 2018). Gender performance is the level at which a person embodies the accepted social norms associated with the two genders, how masculine or feminine a person is (Butler, 1993). Bem (1974) in her seminal work, "The measurement of psychological androgyny," was one of the first scholars to explore gender performance. She did not explore it as a singular spectrum from masculine to feminine, but as two intersecting spectrums, in which a person has levels of both masculinity and femininity, simultaneously. In contemporary gender theory, Bem's theory has become contentious, due to the implication that the individual is a mere recipient of societal forces and that her theory can be used to reinforce a binary approach to gender (Bursik, 1998; Hoffman & Borders, 2001; Starr & Zurbriggen, 2017). However, it continues to provide a reliable method for examining and comparing gender performance of individuals (Carver et al., 2013; Factor & Rothblum, 2017; Starr & Zurbriggen, 2017; Al-Musawi, 2017).

Sexual Orientation

There are commonly accepted terms in working with queer students (Denton, 2016). Sexual orientation is the relational and sexual disposition of a person towards other genders (O'Hanlan et al., 2018). Heterosexuality, the exclusive or predominant attraction relationally and sexually to those of the opposite gender, is the sexual identity

with which a majority of individuals self-identify. Those who identity with having

exclusive or predominant attraction relationally and sexually to those of the same gender

have historically been referred to as homosexual (Fausto-Sterling, 2019; Roselli, 2018).

Though, the term "homosexual" has since been identified as a pejorative due to its history

of being used to medicalize, criminalize, and otherwise oppress queer persons (American

Psychological Association, 1991; GLAAD, 2016). Those who are attracted relationally

and sexually to people of multiple genders are often labeled as bisexual or pansexual

(Fausto-Sterling, 2019; Roselli, 2018). The distinction between bisexual and pansexual is

currently a contentious issue (Flanders et al., 2017; Galupo et al., 2017); however, in the

present paper, there is not a necessity to draw this distinction. Queer can be used as an

encompassing term for those with a non-normative sex, gender, sexual orientation, and/or

perform their gender in non-normative ways (Denton, 2016; Somerville, 2007). In the

present paper, which focuses on sexual orientation and gender performance, I will use the

following terms interchangeably: queer, sexual minority, and non-heterosexual.

Religiosity

Mayhew (2004) established a commonly-accepted (Evans et al, 2010) definition

of faith: "the human attempt to make sense of the self in connection to and with the

external world" (Mayhew 2004, p. 666). This broad definition builds upon the seminal

work of Fowler (1981), which defined faith as "our way of finding coherence in and

giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives" (Fowler,

1981, p. 4). Together, these definitions encapsulate a broad grouping of beliefs, including

those systems often regarded as secular, such as atheism and humanism.

Defining Spirituality. People of different faith traditions interact with their faiths differently; furthermore, those within the same faith traditions can experience their faith differently (Avishai et al., 2015; Bryant, 2011; Bryant et al., 2003; Cotter, 2015; Elkins et al.s, 1988). The literature generally discusses faith as a general or specific set of beliefs a person holds (Allport & Ross, 1967; Cragun et al., 2015). Conversely, religion is the set of traditions associated with these beliefs (Cragun et al., 2015; Zinnbauer, et al., 1997; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2000). Love and Talbot (2009) discuss spirituality as being simultaneously a process and a state of being, describing five elements of spirituality in an essay in a leading student affairs journal. Love and Talbot first describe a state of unified identity, in which a person's values, morals, and beliefs coalesce into a consistent sense of self, "Spiritual development involves an internal process of seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness as an aspect of identity development" (p. 617). Next, Love and Talbot describe a yearning to continually extend beyond oneself, both locally (immediate family and organizations) and extended (all humanity, the cosmos, potentially a higher power); "Spiritual development involves the process of continually transcending one's current locus of centricity," (p. 618). This ties into Love and Talbot's third element of spirituality, "Spiritual development involves developing a greater connectedness to self and others through relationships and union with community," (p. 618). This centers spirituality as being distinctly communal; one element of finding meaning is through connections with others. Love and Talbot center spirituality as a directional search for purpose and meaning, "Spiritual development involves deriving meaning, purpose, and direction in one's life," (p. 619). Love and Talbot's final element of spirituality, "Spiritual development involves an increasing openness to exploring a

relationship with an intangible and pervasive power or essence that exists beyond human existence and rational human knowing," (p. 620). This last component is the most controversial, as it presupposes a supernatural element to spirituality which removes those who are atheist. Love and Talbot attempt to offset this by citing literature that describes spirituality as being a pervasive element to one's life; one's spirituality should be evident through their actions and relationships.

The author of the present paper would argue that one element of spirituality is the intensity with which one dives into the various aspects of its development. This amount of personal investment in one's beliefs and corresponding traditions is religiosity (Holdcroft, 2006). Religiosity is not constrained to a specific religious context and is discussed in more detail below in regards to Christianity and Atheism. Within the present paper, the term spirituality refers to how one integrates their faith, religion, and religiosity into their identity.

Christianity. Christian faith identity development has been thoroughly studied for decades (Garriott & O'Neill, 2008; Robbins, 2003). There are a wide variety of Christian sects which debate what it means to be "Christian" and how that looks cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally (Garriott & O'Neill, 2008; Robbins, 2003). People who self-identify as Christian may associate, either formally or informally, with at least one Christian religious sect within one of the three major branches: Catholicism, the Eastern Orthodox Church, or Protestantism (Garriott & O'Neill, 2008; Robbins, 2003). The religious sect to which one associates typically indicates the specifics of one's beliefs (Allport & Ross, 1967). However, even within a sect, there is disagreement over who qualifies as an authentic adherent (Hackett & Lindsay, 2008). The field of anthropology

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has wrestled with the question of "who is a Christian" (Garriott & O'Neill, 2008, p. 381) without a definitive answer. Following Robbins' (2003) exploration of this question, Garriott and O'Neill (2008) explore the complexity of this question. Using examples from Masowe apologists in Zimbabwe, Italian Catholic immigrants in the United States, and evangelicals in Guatemala, Garriott and O'Neil present three opposing definitions of Christianity, the first being a predominantly spiritually-directed emphasis, the second being a faith defined by community values, and the third focused on an intellectual approach to the faith. All three examples were notable as they centered around who is *not* a Christian. Ultimately, the authors fail to draw a conclusion to their titular question: "Who is a Christian" (p. 381). There is not a satisfactory operationalization of Christianity that meaningfully captures the wide array of beliefs and perspectives encompassed by that religious label (Garriott & O'Neill, 2008; Hackett & Lindsay, 2008). Hackett and Lindsay (2008), in their review of research on Evangelical Christians, conclude that the most effective way of capturing Christians is to let participants self-identify a religious label and then have space to define what it means.

In discussing the spirituality of those with Christian beliefs, the motivating factors behind one's religiosity becomes central. Religiosity is often measured by juxtaposing the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations behind a person's investment in their Christian beliefs as explored in the Allport and Ross' (1967) seminal study. Allport and Ross describe spirituality as primarily internally-driven (intrinsic) or externally so (extrinsic) (Allport & Ross, 1967; Foubert & Rizzo, 2013). Intrinsic religiosity describes when a person acts upon their faith for internal reasons and beliefs. While intrinsic religiosity is often seen as purely internal and individualistic, recent research is beginning to make the argument that

there is a social component that can be measured apart from the individual component of intrinsic religiosity (Van Camp et al., 2016). Extrinsic religiosity describes when a person acts upon their faith for external (typically social) reasons. Building on Allport and Ross' work, Hood (1978) led the charge to think of the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, not as a dichotomy, but as a fourfold classification in which intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity were two independent continuums upon which one could be high or low (Hood, 1978; Milevsky & Levitt, 2004). In various studies, those with a predominantly intrinsic religiosity have been shown to be more pro-social, more willing to stand up for others, and to demonstrate better mental health than their peers with extrinsic religiosity, particularly for Protestants (Chau et al., 1990; Cohen, et al., 2005; Milevsky & Levitt, 2004).

Among American college students, Christians make up the majority (Bowman & Toms Smedley, 2013; Mayhew et al., 2014; Small & Bowman, 2011). While Christians constitute a majority, many Christian students report their universities as negative and potentially hostile toward their faith (Moran, 2007; Moran et al., 2007). Christian students must navigate their beliefs while simultaneously building public personas their university community will find acceptable (Moran, 2007).

Despite the pervasiveness of these feelings, Christians generally benefit from being a privileged class on campus (Bowman & Toms Smedley, 2013; Mayhew et al., 2014; Small & Bowman, 2011). This privilege results in Christianity being the presumed norm on most campuses - with breaks built around Christian holidays, having Christian representation at all levels of university administration, and little institutional resistance to Christian organizations (Bowman & Toms Smedley, 2013; Mayhew et al., 2014; Small

& Bowman, 2011). However, in recent years, Christian organizations have begun facing challenges on public university campuses (Christian Legal Society v. Martinez, 2010; InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, 2018; InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, 2019). *Christian Legal Society v. Martinez* (2010) was the Supreme Court case that allowed colleges to remove approval and recognition of student organizations that do not meet established policies and standards of the university regarding discrimination and diversity. This ruling opens the door for universities to require religious organizations to accept all those the university deems acceptable, regardless of the specific organization's mission or values. In the wake of this ruling, religious organizations have been staging legal battles across the United States to maintain their presence on campus as well as their ability to choose leaders who are congruent with their organizational mission. Though, *InterVarsity Christian Fellowship v. University of Iowa* (2019) established a First Amendment protection for religious organizations to choose leaders in alignment with their religious mission.

Many Christian sects and denominations have established private universities through which they can deliver education alongside reinforcing the denomination's specific Christian ideals (Estanek et al., 2006; Fitzgerald Henck, 2011; Patterson, 2006). Christian colleges boast several advantages over secular ones. In particular, students at these schools report fewer alcohol-related incidents, fewer sexual assaults, and greater graduation rates (Burdette et al., 2009; Hill, 2009; Regnerus, 2003; Vanderwoerd & Cheng, 2017).

Atheism. Atheism lacks a cohesive definition (Dein, 2016; Goodman & Mueller, 2009; Siner, 2011) and sometimes includes Humanism (Dein, 2016) and/or Agnosticism

(Goodman & Mueller, 2009). Following the aforementioned definition from Mayhew (2004), within the present study, atheism has been defined as incorporating atheism, agnosticism, those identifying as nonreligious, and those humanists who identify as atheist or nonreligious. It is valuable to include a range of perspectives because many who identify as atheists still report experiencing varying levels of spiritual or metaphysical phenomena (Dein, 2016; Goodman & Mueller, 2009; Shults et al., 2018).

Converse (2003) identifies three forms of atheism; he based his differentiation upon the level at which one commits to the identity. The first are those with a shallow understanding; they simply believe that there is no higher power(s) and live their lives accordingly. They are not prepared or interested in defending their beliefs or deconstructing the beliefs of others. Converse's second identified type are those that believe there is no higher power(s) and can articulate and defend their beliefs, calling upon philosophy, religious studies, history, and other knowledge as needed. Finally, the third form of atheism are those who not only can articulate and defend their beliefs, but also structure their lives around their atheism and may even proselytize it (Converse, 2003; Goodman & Mueller, 2009). In defining atheism in this way, Converse indirectly creates an analogue for religiosity that can be used in a secular context.

There has been a lack of research into those with an atheistic identity (Brewster et al., 2014; Converse, 2003; Goodman & Mueller, 2009; Malark, 2017; Siner, 2011). Research has demonstrated that those who identify as atheist report feeling demonized and isolated from their communities (Converse, 2003; Goodman & Mueller, 2009); this is particularly true for those for whom atheism is a break from the religion of their family of origin (Malark, 2017). Atheists are also typically underserved by institutions of higher

education (Goodman & Mueller, 2009; Reisner, 2018; Siner, 2011) and mental health professionals (Brewster et al, 2014; D'Andrea & Sprenger, 2007; Malark, 2017). There are beneficial correlates with those holding atheistic beliefs. Primarily, those who identify as atheist generally test higher on measures of critical thinking and intelligence than those who do not (Converse, 2003; Shults et al., 2018).

Impact of Faith. As research investigates a diverse array of faith backgrounds, the benefits of engaging with one's spiritual identity have been revealed, regardless of belief system (Galen, 2018; Small & Bowman, 2011). It has been long established that belonging to a religious community carries certain pro-social benefits such as a network of strong interpersonal relationships (Galen, 2018; Galen & Kloet, 2011; Jong et al., 2012). These pro-social benefits are associated with higher levels of resilience during adversity as well as bolstering one's defense against depression and anxiety. These benefits are seen across faiths, including among atheists (Astin, 2004; Bryant et al., 2003; Chau et al., 1990; Evans et al, 2010; Galen, 2018; Galen & Kloet, 2011; Lease et al., 2005; Rosenkrantz et al., 2016).

The other major benefit of spiritual development is often described as an increase in self-knowledge (Goodman & Mueller, 2009; Malark, 2017; Shults et al., 2018; Stewart, 2008; Streib, 2001; Whitley, 2010). This intrapersonal knowledge is associated with improved mental health as well as feeling less "directionless." Like the pro-social benefits, this increase in self-knowledge can serve as a buffer against not just mental health issues, but also against bigger life difficulties.

Higher Education Context

Institutions of higher education impact the development of their students in a multitude of ways (Evans et al., 2010; Mayhew et al., 2016). A large portion of this impact is accounted for by interactions with staff and faculty (Astin, 2004; Baxter Magolda, 2007; Kim & Sax, 2009; Komarraju et al., 2010; Kuh & Gonyea, 2006; Love et al., 2005; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). University staff and faculty can reduce a student's level of internalized homonegativity – that is, the amount of damning ideas and perspectives that people who are queer believe about themselves and the queer community (Abes, 2012; Lease et al., 2005; Stewart, 2008; Stewart & Howard-Hamilton, 2015). Furthermore, recent research has demonstrated that this positive impact applies to other areas, including a student's spiritual development (Astin, 2004; Becker, 2009; Shipp, 2017). Staff and faculty can aid students in the self-discovery process (Baxter Magolda, 2007) as well as minimize the harmful effects of a potential conflict in intersecting identities (Abes, 2012; Means & Jaeger, 2015; Lease et al., 2005). Faculty, in particular, have been shown to have a strong impact on students' identity development (Astin, 2004; Kim & Sax, 2009; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005).

Role of Staff & Faculty

The potential for higher education professionals to be of service to students, queer and otherwise, coincides with their professional obligations. The ethics of higher education call upon staff and faculty to help their students, even at the expense of their own comfort (ACPA, 2006; ACPA & NASPA, 2015). In their joint set of professional competencies (2015), the leading associations for student affairs professionals – ACPA:

College Student Educators International and NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education – state that college educators must be foremost oriented toward supporting student development and growth. The statement determines levels of proficiency, stating the minimum standards for professionals in student affairs and academic affairs.

Key organizations that guide faculty and administrators' practice have also echoed the importance of diversity, often specifically highlighting sexual orientation diversity. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), an international collection of higher education institutions, spearheaded a statement reiterating a commitment to educating an ever-increasingly diverse student body; this statement was signed by forty higher education organizations, including the American Association of University Professors, the leading organization representing faculty, the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities, and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (AACU, 2013). In addition to signing on to the AACU's statement, the Association of Public & Land-grant Universities (APLU) explicitly includes banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in its Commitment to Diversity (2010) and its Statement on Preventing Harassment and Discrimination (2019). Furthermore, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the accrediting body for universities in the American Midwest, explicitly includes sexual orientation in its commitment to nondiscrimination in its statements of nondiscrimination (Higher Learning Commission, 2019a). In its September 2020 accreditation requirements, the HLC reaffirms its commitment to diversity, in student bodies, university employees, and

in helping the community develop and grow in regards to "human and cultural diversity" (2019b, p. 4).

Over the past decade LGBTQ+ persons have been gaining increased acceptance and rights within the United States, including on college campuses (Poynter & Washington, 2005; Stewart & Howard-Hamilton, 2015; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). Public colleges and universities have had LGBTQ+ resource centers since 1971, when the University of Michigan opened its Spectrum Center (Burris, 2015). However, campuses affiliated with Christian denominations did not start recognizing their LGBTQ students and developing specific programming for them until recently (Morris, 2015). Despite these recent trends, many sexual and gender minority students who attend Christian colleges (Wentz & Wessel, 2011; Wolff & Himes, 2010) or are involved in Christian student groups (Wolff & Himes, 2010) experience difficulty navigating these spaces. Even with these persisting challenges, Christian colleges are slowly beginning to offer support geared towards their LGBTQ students (Taylor & Mahoney, 2012; Yarhouse et al., 2009).

Working with Students in a Christian Context

Many Christian-affiliated institutions of higher education have taken policy stances that explicitly ban same-sex relational and sexual activities (Bailey & Strunk, 2018; Tapia, 1993; Wolff & Himes, 2010). Included in this is the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), which represents about 180 colleges and universities across a spectrum of protestant Christian denominations. The organization has expressly called upon its member institutions to not affirm queer students or employees who do not

practice celibacy (CCCU, 2001; Jones, 2004). The environment created by policies of non-affirmation can also contribute to psychological distress and emotional anguish for members of the college community who are queer related to worrying about harassment, expulsion, and job insecurity among other negative outcomes (Tapia, 1993; Wolff & Himes, 2010).

Georgetown University has led the way among Jesuit institutions in moving to accept its queer student, staff, and faculty population (Taylor & Mahoney, 2012). Since 2008, when Georgetown opened its LGBTQ Resource Center, 118 additional Jesuit schools have established similar centers and/or allowed queer-affirming groups on campus (New Ways Ministry, 2015). The establishment of these resources allows access to recognition and support for the multitude of queer persons at these schools. Additionally, beyond facilitating dialogue about faith and the contemporary context, these campuses model actions that others can take as either affirming, tolerating, or rejecting of LGBTQ+ community members.

Protestant campuses are beginning to make moves to support their queer community members (Wolff & Himes, 2010). The nondenominational seminary Pacific School of Religion established a Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry (CLGS) in 2000 (2015). While the original purpose of the CLGS was to investigate the status of queer persons and faith, the center has become a resource hub for queer people and allies of all faiths to find support, Bible guides, and lectures (CLGS, 2015).

Among CCCU-affiliated institutions, support for queer members of college communities has been much more controversial. The CCCU lost three schools in the summer of 2015 –Goshen College and Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), both affiliated with the Mennonite Church USA, as well as Union University, which is affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Goshen and EMU both decided to begin hiring and maintaining staff and faculty who are non-celibate queer persons. This, in turn, caused the directorate of the CCCU to meet to determine what the best course of action would be. Many schools expressed dismay that the CCCU was taking so long to arrive at a decision, resulting in Union leaving the coalition in protest. Leaders at Union stood in staunch opposition to Goshen and EMU's decision and felt that the CCCU should have issued an immediate decision (Jaschik, Division in Christian higher ed, 2015a). To avoid causing further controversy that may result in the fracture of the organization, both Goshen and EMU decided to withdraw from the CCCU (Jaschik, 2015b). As additional schools on both sides of this debate weigh their options and responsibilities, the CCCU will likely continue having to address matters related to LGBTQ staff, faculty, and students at member institutions.

Queer students on religious-affiliated campuses that they perceive to be unwelcoming or non-affirming toward those with same-sex attractions have reported negative outcomes, including increased levels of harassment from peers, mental distress, and difficulty with understanding a non-heterosexual identity (Bailey & Strunk, 2018; Wolff & Himes, 2010; Wolff et al., 2016; Yarhouse et al., 2009). Queer students who reported feeling congruency with their faith and sexual orientation as well as overall positive mental health reported being a part of a community of other queer students or

receiving support from faculty and staff (Lease et al., 2005; Wolff et al., 2016; Yarhouse et al., 2009).

Identity Development

Identity development is a lifelong process; however, traditionally-aged undergraduate students are typically going through more rapid identity formation than other age groups, particularly regarding spirituality and sexual orientation identities (Leaseet al., 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Sexual minority identities include gay men and lesbians, bisexual persons, and pansexual persons; whereas the term "gender minorities" covers those with identities such as intersex, transgender, or gender queer (Denton, 2016; Savin-Williams & Cohen, 2015). In identifying those with sexual or gender minority status, the terms LGBTQ+ and queer are often used. LGBTQ+ is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other identities (Denton, 2016). Queer is an umbrella term that captures all those who identify within the LGBTQ+ community without highlighting specific identity labels. While the term has a checkered history, it is growing in acceptance because it is considered to be more inclusive (Somerville, 2007).

Sexual Orientation Identity

There have been attempts to develop a generic model of development of sexual orientation to apply to all persons, regardless of physical or romantic inclinations (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005). Furthermore, there is evidence that sexual orientation identity development differs between men and women (Diamond, 2016; Rosario et al., 2011). Men have been shown to consistently react physically and subjectively to those who they

are sexually appraising, more so than women (Diamond, 2003; Kaestle, 2019). This is consistent across sexual orientations (Rosario et al., 2011). As such, the present chapter will focus just on male development as the present study investigates the identity development of men.

It is a popular belief that sexual orientation identity is immutable, both among the academic community and among laypersons (Beckstead, 2012; Diamond, 2016; Drescher, 2015). While this may be accurate for many, this approach privileges those without fluid sexual identities and potentially establishes sexual minority status as an inferior deviant of the norm (Beckstead, 2012; Drescher, 2015). However, even with a fluid interpretation of sexual orientation, very few change their self-applied queer/non-queer status or sexual behaviors (Beckstead, 2012; Diamond, 2016; Diamond, 2003; Drescher, 2015).

There is also a distinction between "sexual orientation" and "sexual orientation identity." Mohr (2002) invokes a sexual identity development scholar in illuminating this distinction, "as Troiden (1991) noted, sexual orientation identity refers to the ways that people 'actively interpret, define, and make sense of their erotic yearnings using systems of sexual meanings articulated by the wider culture' (p. 192)" (p. 536). Mohr offers a definition of sexual orientation to contrast this definition of identity, "[sexual orientation] refers to [the sex to which one is attracted], sex attractions, fantasies, and behavior" (p. 536). In the present study, one's orientation is not the focus as much as one's identity. As such, the present study will highlight theories of identity development and use these theories to inform its methodology.

Heterosexual Identity Development. Developing a heterosexual identity has not

received much attention in the literature (Jellison et al., 2004; Martinez & Smith, 2019;

Mohr, 2002). This is problematic as it establishes heterosexuality as a normative pattern

as well as fails to explore the experiences of those with that identity. Mohr (2002) built

upon models of identity development for sexual and racial minorities to construct a

model of heterosexual identity development to help heterosexual mental health

professionals better understand the experiences and identities of their queer clients

(Martinez & Smith, 2019; Mohr, 2002). In his model, adult heterosexual identity is

formed through the discovery of heterosexual desires as well as social interactions;

reinforced as one moves through varying social contexts. The phenomena of discovering

one's heterosexual desires and understanding societal messages about heterosexuality are

considered "precursors of adult heterosexual identity" (p. 537) as they typically occur

early in one's life. This leads to the "determinants of heterosexual identity" (p. 539). The

primary component of heterosexual identity determinants is the development of "working

models of sexual orientation" (p. 539), the process of building various schemas of sexual

orientation and romantic relationships in one's mind and incorporating these schemas

into one's sense of self (Martinez & Smith, 2019; Mohr, 2002). The most basic schema is

"democratic heterosexuality" (Mohr, 2002, p. 540) with which someone views sexual

orientation as an inconsequential character trait that results in seeing no differences

between heterosexual and queer life experiences. Next, is "compulsory heterosexuality"

(p. 542) - a schema in which one assumes that heterosexuality is the only acceptable

sexual orientation; those who have this schema tend to look with scorn toward queer

people, seeing them as "distasteful and disturbing" (p. 543). The "politicized

heterosexuality" (p. 544) schema is associated with understanding the societal privilege associated with heterosexuality, resulting in feelings of personal guilt and argue for the political actions that increase the equity between those who are heterosexual and those who are queer. Finally, "integrative heterosexuality" (p. 545) is the most complex schema, in which one views their heterosexuality as one portion of their identity, views sexual orientation as a non-static continuum, and understands that not every queer person has the same experiences or outcomes. One's schema is driven by a personal desire for social acceptance and a consistency of heterosexual desires. The motivations and schemas are reinforced, or deconstructed, through the strain placed on one's personal self-conception through individual experiences and the impact (and strength) of any potential non-heterosexual attractions.

Queer Identity Development. As with all aspects of identity, the experience of sexual orientation can vary from one individual gay man to another (Annes & Redlin, 2012; Barrios & Lundquist, 2012; Bishop et al., 2014; Stevens, 2004). Cass (1979) laid the groundwork for models explaining the development of a sexual minority identity.

While development is a personal process, there are theorized milestones of sexual orientation identity development. Cass' (1979; 1984) theory of homosexual identity development is the seminal model (Savin-Williams & Cohen, 2015). Cass' model is comprised of six linear stages moving one from an uncertainty about one's identity to a complex understanding of it. Stage one is "Identity Confusion" (Cass, 1979, p. 222) which is characterized by an increasing awareness that descriptors and traits associated with queer folks might apply to oneself, resulting in angst, self-reflection, and turmoil as one begins to question their own identity. The next stage is "Identity Comparison" (p.

225) during which one sees oneself as a potential queer person and begins to experience feelings of alienation from known social structures. Cass notes that this is a time when one articulates "feeling different" (p. 226) which can lead to an array of emotional reactions, from embracing the feeling of difference to furthering feelings of depression experienced in the previous stage; how one reacts determines how they form a new public image. Next, Cass says that one progress to "Identity Tolerance" (p. 229), a stage in which one seeks out queer communities and spaces in order to counteract the feelings of isolation in stage two. This stage requires incorporation, at least in part, of a queer sexuality as a part of one's identity. As one engages with the queer community, if one's public persona is incongruent with the expectations of the queer community, then additional emotional distress can be experienced. This distress can lead one to rejecting other queer people and seeking alternate communities. "Identity Acceptance" (p. 231) is the stage in which one understands who they are and in what communities they wish to belong; this can include having two separate public personas - one for queer communities and one for non-queer communities. For some, the peace that comes with this stage is enough and they do not continue down Cass' described trajectory.

For many, there may be a wish to completely integrate their queer identity in and out of queer communities; these individuals progress to stage five "Identity Pride" (p. 233). In this stage, one is "gay and proud" (p. 233) as Cass says. One has fully incorporated one's queer identity across all contexts, regardless of the predominant cultural norms. While this stage is generally seen as positive from the perspective of a queer person, there is the risk that one is rejecting the broader society as opposed to integrating into it, marking all non-queer individuals as threatening. Finally, one may

enter "Identity Synthesis" (p. 234) in which one transcends the "us vs. them mentality" (p. 234) of stage five. One is able to discern allies, non-queer individuals who are supportive, from non-allies. While Cass was one of the first to explore sexual minority persons' identity development as a stage theory, she was not the last (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005). Bilodeau (1994) built upon Cass' model and designed a similar stage model that broke from a forced linear progression.

D'Augelli's (1994) model describes lifelong processes through which a person constructs their sexual minority identity. While the model is described as being mostly-linear, a person can experience development in multiple areas simultaneously or not experience development in a specific area. D'Augelli's model covers two intrapersonal developmental areas and four social-oriented developmental areas: "(1) Exiting a heterosexual identity, (2) Developing a personal lesbian-gay-bisexual (LGB) identity status, (3) Developing an LGB social identity, (4) Becoming an LGB offspring, (5) Developing an LGB intimacy status, and (6) Entering an LGB community."

Exiting a heterosexual identity is the first step; it is the realization that one's sexuality differs from what society has deemed as normal or typical. Developing a personal LGB identity status is understanding and accepting oneself as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Developing a LGB social identity is the process of coming out, or publicly disclosing one's sexual orientation, to one's friends. Claiming an identity as an LGB offspring incorporates the process of coming out to one's family, particularly one's parents or guardians. Developing an LGB intimacy status encapsulates pursuing and entering romantic relationships and connections with other members of the preferred sex(es). Entering an LGB Community not only includes joining queer communities and

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seeing oneself as a part of the queer community, but also the process of coming out in multiple areas of one's life, including work, school, and social settings. From understanding one's orientation, to accepting it, to sharing it with others, D'Augelli's model is merely an overview. It does not take into account students who progress through the various stages quickly, nor does it examine the effects on someone who stalls within a stage. While other models of queer sexual orientation identity development exist (Rosario et al., 2011), D'Augelli's is considered seminal (Evans et al, 2010). D'Augelli's model not only broke from the traditional, linear models before it, but serves as the basis for transgender identity development as well (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005).

Yarhouse (2001) sought to build upon the basic developmental theories by incorporating the impact of one's ethics and values, what he deemed "valuative frameworks" (p. 335). Yarhouse established identity synthesis, the stage in which one is satisfied and accepting of their identity, as the result of progressing through a decision-tree-like stage model of identity model. Like his predecessors, the first stage "identity confusion/crisis" (p.337) occurs in response to same-sex attraction. This stage is characterized by feelings of uncertainty or panic and is generally resolved through the process of "identity attribution" (p. 337). This process calls upon an individual to determine from where the same-sex attraction originated. Yarhouse argues that those who resolve this stage by adopting a tentative gay identity "go through stages similar to what Cass (1979) and others describe. There is no compelling reason to contest these models" (p. 338). For those who do not accept a gay identity, they move towards "identity expansion" (p. 338) in which they seek out alternatives to same-sex inclinations.

Others may instead go through an "identity resolve" in which they commit to simply living in opposition to their same-sex inclinations without exploring alternatives. Finally, if identity expansion or resolve fail to lead to synthesis, then one moves into "identity reappraisal" (p. 338). This stage is typified by accepting a sexual minority identity, rejecting a sexual minority identity, or dissatisfaction with the identity development process, in which case, they return to the identity confusion stage. The processional steps of Yarhouse's model is theorized to incorporate one's valuative framework, with each step forward representing a supposed connection of one's identity to their values. It is the failure or displeasure with this coupling of identity and values, Yarhouse argues, that returns one to the state of identity confusion/crisis. He concludes that, regardless of whether a person decides to adopt a sexual minority identity or not and regardless of this adoption or non-adoption means in terms of behavior, identity synthesis is achieved if one is ultimately satisfied, which he defines as positive mental health indicators such as happiness and self-acceptance, with the congruence between identity and values.

Cass, D'Augelli, and Yarhouse lay a foundation for sexual orientation identity; however, such theories can obfuscate the societal aspects of sexual orientation and sexual orientation identity (Denton, 2016; Denton, 2019; Mann & Basmajian, 2008; Muñoz, 1999). There are models that take into account environmental factors (Cox & Gallois, 1996; Stevens, 2004). Queer persons must consider the environment that they are in; they must consider their safety and the roles in which they fill within their communities as well as the feedback from the environments they navigate regarding attitudes towards queer identities (Stevens, 2004). Stevens (2004) synthesizes existing social models with a

qualitative study to build a social-based model of identity development for college gay men. He identifies three primary, inter-connected interacting components: (1) individual factors, (2) environmental influences, and (3) finding empowerment. Furthermore, Stevens narrows the scope of his model to the residential college environment, examining the ways gay men develop their identities within the context of a university community. The individual factors are the characteristics a man brings with him to college, including religious backgrounds, race, economic status, and geographic location. These influence the way in which he accepts and understands his identities as well as his decisions regarding identity disclosure to others. Universities can foster a positive, negative, or neutral environment in response to the needs of those with queer identities (Fassinger, 1991). These environmental influences interact with the individual factors a man brings with him, impacting the self-acceptance and disclosure processes. Together, these individual factors and environmental influences can determine the level to which a student can feel empowerment. Empowerment occurs as a student makes sense of their multiple identities, particularly how they integrate the potentially-conflicting elements of their identities and how they would like to represent their identities in the communities they navigate. Stevens and other social-based models focus on the impact of context more so than identity models.

However, there is another approach that aspires to move beyond basic developmental models. Savin-Williams (2001) specifically demands that any theory of development identify elements that are common to one's period of life (such as, adolescence); then identify the elements unique to lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons; and then narrow in on individual components of development. This approach focuses on

discerning the differences between typical identity development and that of sexual minorities. This is not done to diminish the experiences of queer persons, but to demonstrate the preponderance of similarities between queer adolescents and their non-queer peers. Savin-Williams argues that this approach more accurately identifies the unique attributes of queer identity development than traditional models such as those proposed by Cass, D'Augelli, Yarhouse, and Stevens (Savin-Williams, 2001; Savin-Williams & Cohen, 2015). Savin-Williams and Cohen (2015) argue that contemporary adolescents are revealing new patterns of identity development that have greater nuances than in previous generations. Ultimately, Savin-Williams and Cohen note a trajectory of milestones without committing to a solid timeline or clear boundaries between each. They note that sexual minorities first identify feeling different than their peers in some nebulous way and then pinpoint this difference as an attraction to the same-sex. This leads to one questioning their heterosexuality and experimenting with same-sex romantic behavior. The authors note that their research and that of others neither conclusively nor consistently finds that experimentation with same-sex romantic behaviors comes before the next milestone, identifying as a sexual minority. Additionally, there lacks a consistent timeline for the final three milestones of disclosure (coming out to others), forming romantic relationships with same-sex others, and achieving self-acceptance of their identity. Despite the apparent parallels to traditional identity development models, Savin-Williams and Cohen's trajectory hones in specifically on how queer youth recognize and accept their identity as different from the norm as opposed to as a part of a holistic identity development.

Religious Identity

Fowler (1981) developed the seminal Faith Development Theory (Fowler, 2001; Love, 2001; Mayhew, 2004; Streib, 2001). He (Fowler, 1981) described a seven-stage, lifelong path of development that begins at birth. Stage 0 is the "Primal or Undifferentiated" faith (p. 119) during the earliest years of life, development of a sense of trust in the universe and the divine. Stage 1 is the first in which a faith can be articulated; it is the "Intuitive-Projective" faith (p. 122) developed throughout childhood during which one learns about faith and religion through stories and contact with others. This is followed by Stage 2, "Mythic-Literal" faith (p. 135), during which one blurs the lines between the figurative and the rules-based morality. By one's late teens, Fowler believes that one enters Stage 3: "Synthetic-Conventional" faith (p. 151). During this stage, one is beginning to form a religious identity primarily based upon authority figures as well as ignoring potential identity conflicts that can shake their faith. If a person moves through Stage 3, they progress to Stage 4 which is "Individuative-Reflective" faith (p. 174) during which one develops a personal responsibility for their faith and explores its nuances. This is also the stage at which one begins to acknowledge and confront conflicts of between one's beliefs and identity. Stage 4 is most common during one's emerging adulthood. Stage 5 is "Conjunctive" faith (p. 184) during which one works to resolve conflicts in beliefs and identities and begins integrating faith throughout one's life and relationships. If someone advances through Stage 5, they enter the final stage, Stage 6: "Universalizing" faith (p. 199). Someone in this stage treats others with love, respect, and grace; one understands and appreciates the applicability of faith beyond just its personal application. As noted previously, Fowler's model does not necessarily presuppose a particular

religious affiliation (aside from having a faith that allows one to treat others love, respect, and grace).

Neither McDargh (2001) nor Streib (2001) are satisfied with Fowler's Faith Development Theory model. McDargh situates his critique in the idea that Fowler's model lacks a strong intrapersonal component, despite its connection to Erikson and psychodynamic perspectives of development. He calls this a "problem of foundations" (p. 186) saying that the lack of a thorough intrapersonal component undermines the entire model. For McDargh, this problem can be assuaged by approaching Fowler's model with an in-depth, psychoanalytic framework that reads intrapersonal components into the model. In particular, McDargh latches onto Fowler's "'selfhood' the evolving, subjective experience of becoming and being a person in relation" (Fowler, 1989 as quoted in McDargh, 2001, p. 197). Streib (2001) offers a counter model based on the concept of religious styles,

> Religious styles are distinct modi of practical–interactive (ritual), psychodynamic (symbolic), and cognitive (narrative) reconstruction and appropriation of religion, that originate in relation to life history and life world and that, in accumulative deposition, constitute the variations and transformations of religion over a life time, corresponding to the styles of interpersonal relations. (Streib, 2001, p. 149)

Despite a resistance to stage models, Streib's five religious styles are still lifelong and sequential; the difference is that he structures them in overlapping arrays.

In Streib's model, as one progresses, one develops the foundations of the upcoming religious styles while holding on to key elements from previous religious

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styles. The first is "Subjective Religious Style," (p. 150) the starting point of development; it is characterized by egocentrism as one attempts to determine whether they should trust their caretakers and the world around them, or develop a general mistrust in others. This sees one's deity as a judicial ruler that one trusts or does not trust. The next is "Instrumental-Reciprocal Religious Style" (p. 151) during which one develops a theory of mind, understanding that others have a different set of interests and motivations. In this style, one's deity is perceived as parental in nature, an ultimate authority to be followed. As one develops trust in others and understands the motivations of those around them, one develops the "Mutual Religious Style" (p. 152) in which one searches for a sense of welcome and acceptance within one's religious community. This progresses into the "Individuative-Systemic Religious Style" (p. 152) in which one reckons with doubts, skepticisms, and beliefs one holds attempting to reconcile feelings of emotional distance and seek intimacy. Finally, one progresses into the "Dialogical Religious Style" (p. 152) in which one becomes open to others, seeking to minimize hostility to those with different beliefs and seek to learn from these others. Streib seats his religious styles within psychodynamic developmental theory while simultaneously breaking from the standard stage model.

Fowler (2001) defends his theory against these contemporary arguments that his model does not do enough to articulate the personal identity development of an individual and that the concept of a stage model, in general, is reductive and unuseful (Fowler, 2001; Streib, 2001). Fowler pushes back on the idea that his model lacks enough connection to individual identity development (McDargh, 2001) by arguing that his theory is founded in the idea of faith being of "triadic structure" (Fowler, 2001, p. 163):

oneself, one's relationships and communities, and one's source of values (i.e., God, gods, etc.). He argues that this assumed structure makes his theory adequately personal; his model points towards the personal through discussing the relational aspects and source of values. In response to the rejection of stage models (Streib, 2001), Fowler says that his stages are adequately broad-enough to facilitate any individual, as it does not presuppose a certain belief or set of relationships. Though, he does concede that Streib's (2001) idea of religious "styles" (Streib, 2001, p. 146) is a beneficial addition and incorporated what he calls religious "types" (Fowler, 2001, p. 169). Fowler argues that a types approach, which describe the ways in which one engages with their faith, can work alongside his previously established stages without having to replace them.

However, not every scholar finds Fowler, McDargh, or Streib useful, citing the lack of ethnic and religious diversity in the samples used to develop these theories (Evans et al, 2010; Love, 2001; Mayhew, 2004; Mayhew, 2012). Mayhew (2004; 2012) sought to articulate changes in spiritual understanding among participants to then gain an understanding of how spiritual identity develops. Using a religiously diverse sample, Mayhew (2012) developed a model of how spirituality changes during one's college years. Mayhew's model reveals that one's faith development changes as the result of interactions between one's internal characteristics (e.g., psychology, emotionality, pre-college beliefs), one's peer group's religious beliefs and shared religious struggles, the institution's religious affiliation and culture, and one's personal academic and religious struggles. Mayhew does not offer a specific array of stages or styles, but falls into alignment with those emphasizing the importance of higher education in helping develop

its students' spiritual identities (Astin, 2004; Bryant et al., 2003; Love et al., 2005; Love, 2001; Lovik, 2011; Mayhew, 2004; Small & Bowman, 2011).

Masculinity

Contemporary gender theory offers a robust and complex array of perspectives on masculinity (Beasley, 2013; Connell, 1995; Elias & Beasley, 2009; Pringle, 2005). This complexity can give rise to dissonance, particularly as the field progresses beyond its forebears. While the present project takes on a post-positivist approach to studying intersectionality between masculinity, sexuality, and religiosity, that is, seeking to capture the experiences of its participants while minimizing bias, the author also acknowledges that masculinity can only be understood within the context in which a person is employing it. The present project examined both, masculine performance as well as belief in male role norms. However, an acknowledged limitation of the project was the lack of modality in investigating how participants idiosyncratically employed these two aspects of gender. Therefore, the exploration of the theories of masculinity is with broad strokes to convey the concepts of masculine performance, hegemonic masculinity, and counter-theory to hegemony, constructing a narrative of the field that potentially groups together theorists that do not typically get grouped together.

Masculinities are often conceived of as existing in relationship with its opposite (femininity) and the ways in which it fits within the broader societal context (Bem, 1974; Bem, 1981; Connell, 1995; Connell, 2013; Kimmel, 1987; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016; Wedgwood, 2009). Bem's Gender Schema Theory establishes masculinity as a set of characteristics a society deems as being related to men (1981). Bem is clear that her

schema does not define masculinity or femininity, but instead focuses on the process of their formation; essentially, Bem cares much more about how a society defines gender than about the content of the definition. For this reason, modern researchers continue to assess the Bem Sex Roles Inventory, in order to determine what, if any, adjustments need to be made to the list of characteristics comprising masculinity and femininity. Masculinity is generally theorized as being characterized by competitiveness, seeking dominance, homophobia, and the strict policing of the masculine performance of other men (Connell, 1995; Connell, 2013; Ezzell, 2016; Levant et al., 1992; Pascoe, 2012). Other theorists argue that masculinity, if one is choosing rather than being forced to perform it, can take on more prosocial characteristics such as protecting others, leadership, and acting toward change (Elliott, 2016; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). The potential for a "healthy" masculinity is one of the major debates within contemporary gender studies (Buschmeyer & Lengersdorf, 2016; Christensen & Qvotrup Jensen, 2014; Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 2012; Lomas et al., 2015; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016; Robinson et al., 2011; Thompson, 2016).

Hegemonic Masculinity

Connell's (1995) conception of masculinity is the standard bearer in the field (Beasley, 2013; Ezzell, 2016; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016; Pascoe, 2012; Wedgwood, 2009). Foremost in Connell's argument is establishing masculinity as a Western concept (Connell, 1995; Connell, 2013). Because gender is centered as dependent upon its social setting, masculinity, as it is known in Occidental societies is, necessarily, a Western construction (Connell, 2013). Furthermore, Connell has defined masculinity, and gender in general, as a relational identity, defined as much as by what it is not as by what it is

(Connell, 1995; Connell, 2013). In particular, masculinity is often regarded as organized around using one's power and privilege, whether societal or situational, to oppress others, either actively or passively - this is called dominance (Connell, 1995; Connell, 2013; Ezzell, 2016; Kimmel, 1987). As different masculine performing individuals perform their masculinity, exercise dominance over others, a hierarchy results, privileging certain masculine performers over others and all masculinity over predominantly feminine performance (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1987). Masculinity also establishes heteronormativity as ideal, as it is a localization of the patriarchal hierarchy (Connell, 1995; Pasoce, 2012); therefore, any non-heterosexual activity is oppressed (Connell, 1995; Connell, 2013; Pascoe, 2012; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). Furthermore, heteronormativity requires compulsory heterosexuality, whether through male promiscuity or through marriage (Connell, 1995; Connell, 2013; Eck, 2014; Kimmel, 1994; Pasoce, 2012). Regardless of one's intention, anything short of active resistance to this cycle of dominance and hierarchy is considered, at best, complicity, and at worst, active perpetuation of the oppression of others (Connell, 2013; Ezzell, 2016). Masculinity is actively policed within society, both through structural means, such as laws and bureaucratic requirements, and cultural mores, such as ostracizing those who do not meet expectations (Connell, 1995; Connell, 2013; Levant, et al., 1992; Pascoe, 2012; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). This idealized version of masculinity is called "hegemonic masculinity" (Buschmeyer & Lengersdorf, 2016, p. 190) against which masculine performance is juxtaposed and enforced (Connell, 1995; Connell, 2013; Pascoe, 2012).

The threat of failing to live up to the hegemonic ideal can be the source of depression, aggression, and overall distress in men (Gebhard et al., 2019; Kaya et al.,

2018; Ramaeker & Petrie, 2019). Men struggle to meet the norms of hegemonic masculinity, particularly if they are emotionally invested in the norms but do not feel as if their personality or behavior aligns with them (Kaya et al, 2018; Ramaeker & Petrie, 2019). The hegemonic ideal of self-reliance leads to many men refusing help or otherwise not seeking assistance when they are having troubles, which exacerbates distress and mental health difficulties (Ramaeker & Petrie, 2019). In addition to personal distress and anguish, failing to live up to hegemonic ideals can lead some men to act out aggressively (Gebhard et al, 2019). Connell's articulation of hegemonic masculinity opened the door to turning a critical eye toward how patriarchy confines and oppresses men. However, contemporary scholars are starting to move away from relying solely on Connell to ground their conceptions of masculinity.

Shortcomings of Hegemony. While Connell (2005, 2013) argues that one is either supporting hegemonic masculinity or opposing it, others argue that this view is needlessly reductionist (Buschmeyer & Lengersdorf, 2016; Moller, 2007) or that there is a potential for a prosocial masculinity (Christensen & Qvotrup Jensen, 2014; Elliott, 2016; Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 2012). While Connell is often credited for defining the conversation on masculinity (Buschmeyer & Lengersdorf, 2016; Wedgwood, 2009), new theorists are pushing back against the concept of hegemony. Moller (2007) argues that Connell's theory narrows the discipline too much, limiting the field's ability to capture wider displays and embodiments of masculinity. Moller argues that because Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity is based upon a particular pattern of behavior, it therefore primes researchers to only focus on these patterns and behaviors to the exclusion of all others. Moller argues for a less constrained view of masculinity and male

bodies focusing not just on what a person does, but also the motivations and feelings behind those behaviors. He cites Evers (2004) specifically to demonstrate his point.

> An example of just such a conceptualization of masculinity, and of the work done through this kind of cultural analysis, can be seen in a recent study of Australian male surfers. Clifton Evers (2004) combines insights drawn from ethology, Tomkins' theory of affect, and a desire to 'move away from defining male bodies and attempting to "fix" masculinity' (Evers, 2004, p. 29) in a way that allows him to detail how surf culture both enables and limits the performances of male participants. Drawing on his own experience as a surfer Evers maps the textured feelings of what it actually feels like to be a surfer, and how these can and frequently do change, rather than, say, anticipating in advance that the gender politics of surf culture is exploitative. In the place of an 'underlying masculinity' (2004, p. 39), Evers conceives of male bodies and identities as always actively being configured and reconfigured. (Moller, 2007, p. 271-272)

Moller argues by decoupling the elements of power and privilege inherit to Connell's theory research can more authentically and accurately capture the range masculine experiences and expressions.

While this contemporary view of the multiple masculinities is not inherently in opposition to Connell's original concepts, Buschmeyer and Lengersdorf (2016) argue that there needs to be a reinterpretation of how these various masculinities relate to one another. Within Connell's theory, any masculinity falling short of the hegemonic ideal is considered less than in the established hierarchy of masculinities; however, Buschmeyer

and Lengersdorf argue that masculinities can exist in parallel to one another. The authors contend that this destabilizes the overall concept of "hegemonic masculinity" as a singular kind of performance, but instead points to hegemony itself being a nebulous assortment of ideas in which various masculinities can fit with equal value. For example, Connell as well as Buschmeyer and Lengersdorf would argue that aggression, rejecting queerness, and dominating others (particularly women) are all characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. However, Connell's model of hegemonic masculinity requires that these be packaged in a specific set of behaviors often associated with popular conceptions of jocks - physical, athletic, and eschewing intellectualism. Whereas Buschmeyer and Lengersdorf would argue that behaviors typical of other masculinities, such as the popular conception of geek culture, meet the basic characteristics of hegemonic masculinity while avoiding the tropes of Connell's description.

Positive Masculinities

There is a growing sentiment within gender studies (Beasley, 2013; Christensen & Qvotrup Jensen, 2014; Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 2012; McDermott et al., 2019) that one can have "positive masculinity" (McDermott et al., 2019, p. 12). Kiselica is a leading voice in the application of positive psychology in masculinity studies (McDermott et al., 2019). Kiselica argues that the positive psychology approach of strengths-based counseling is the most effective way to work with men to help them reform and amend their performance of masculinity, moving from problematic to healthy (Englar-Carlson & Kiselica, 2013; Kiselica et al., 2016; Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010; McDermott et al., 2019). They argue that affirming the pro-social elements of masculinity can create a masculinity script for individuals counter to the hegemonic ideal. For example, being

both a protector and provider are masculine traits within Western cultures. Kiselica would advocate that a positive approach would encourage this prosocial characteristic by encouraging a man to seek out the needs of others and listening and working cooperatively to meet the needs of those he cares about. Through this strengths-based approach, Kiselica believes a new, positive masculinity norm can be established.

Elliott (2016) builds upon this theory by promoting the "caring masculinities" (p. 240) archetype that is starting to emerge in the literature. Elliott established a "caring masculinity" as a potential solution to the problems of equality raised by Kittay (1999); particularly, her argument that most people who fill caretaking roles in Western society are women despite there not being a biological basis for this split. Elliott further connects Kittay's conclusions with Tronto's (1993); she concludes that the failure to acknowledge that each human is dependent upon others limits the discussion around equality, as dependency is an inherently unequal relationship. Therefore, Elliott seeks to articulate a new masculinity built with this emphasis on dependency; aiming to create a paradigm in which men are seen and expected to fill caretaker roles as much as women. She turns to feminist care theory (Berggren, 2014) to do so. Elliott contends "From a feminist perspective then, care can be seen as not just practical but also relational, emotional, intimate, and affective" (p. 249). In this way, her caring masculinity strives in the same direction as Kiselica's positive approach - emphasizing and building upon pro-social elements of masculinity to construct a new hegemony that privileges those that eschew dominance for caretaking, authority for cooperation in relationships of unequal power.

Both Lomas et al. (2015) and Robinson et al. (2011) discuss the limits of this movement towards a potentially positive masculinity. Lomas et al. (2015) discuss a

meditation community in which they conducted thirty interviews with male members.

Their findings found that, despite the development of pro-social characteristics and

expectations within the community, there still existed a hierarchy that presented as a

competition between male members to be the best at practicing these traits. Furthermore,

the authors found that participants discussed the difficulty of performing the new

masculinity they developed in the meditation community in the broader social context in

which they lived; this difficulty resulted in intrapersonal conflict within the participants

as they struggled to maintain their practice while also fitting into society. This

demonstrated to Lomas et al. that even for motivated individuals, the path forward is

wrought with challenges that can hamper the development of new masculinities and

potentially work against them. Robinson et al. (2011) found similar dilemmas in their

study on male hairdressers. The participants reported their gender performance was at

risk of being misunderstood and misinterpreted, both inside the salon and out.

Furthermore, heterosexual participants reported additional problems with both their

profession and gender performance, leading to them being misidentified as gay. They, in

particular, reported a constant self-monitoring as they struggled to maintain an authentic,

masculine self in the context of the women-majority occupation. Robinson et al. cite this

strain as one of the major barriers preventing true development of a new hegemony for

masculine performance. Difficulties like those experienced by men in both studies has led

researchers to argue for a post-masculinity approach.

Intersectional Development

Christensen and Qvotrup Jensen (2014) contend that the concept of hegemonic

masculinity in itself is too limiting; they argue that an intersectional approach must be

taken toward gender. This intersectional approach considers the potential impact of internal factors, such as other identities one holds in parallel to one's gender identity, and external factors, such as the mores of the predominant community, and how these factors influence the development and exercise of gender.

Queer Masculinity

Gay men experience their gender differently than straight men (Ravenhill & de Visser, 2019; Robinson et al., 2011; Sánchez & Vilain, 2012; Sánchez et al., 2010). This experience is further complicated for gay, cisgender men who must balance the potentially conflicting expectations for masculine behavior in dominant society and those in the gay community (Annes & Redlin, 2012; Barrios & Lundquist, 2012; Bishop et al, 2014). Annes and Redlin (2012), Barrios and Lundquist (2012), and Bishop et al. (2014) discuss the competing expectations for gay men's gender performance of not wanting to be associated with the negative aspects of either hegemonic masculinity or those of queer masculinity, particularly within the gay community. Participants in these studies made statements declaring their masculinity as being separate from their sexual orientation. This conflict resulted in many of the participants discussing a purposeful distancing from the gay community and its alternate masculinities to avoid being "seen as a screaming queen" (Ravenhill & de Visser, 2019, p. 331). This eschewing of being perceived as an effeminate man is "effeminophobia" (Annes & Redlin, 2012, p. 279).

Bishop et al. (2014) extend this concept to "hypermasculinity" – the belief and practice of not only avoiding the perceived stereotypical norms of the gay community, but also actively working to present oneself as a quintessential, hegemonic man. Among

gay men in psychotherapy, effeminophobia and hypermasculinity were associated with increased levels of internalized homophobia. This pattern was particularly true for younger gay men who see themselves as failing to live up to the hegemonic ideal (Sánchez & Vilain, 2012; Sánchez et al., 2010). Internalized homophobia, if left unchecked, can develop into serious mental distress and negatively impact life satisfaction (Kocet & Curry, 2011; Levy & Reeves, 2011; Michaels et al., 2019).

Barrios and Lundquist (2012) extend this look at gay men and masculinity by investigating the connection between sexual orientation and partnering practices. It is a common expectation for college-aged men in America to seek multiple sexual partners rather than lasting romantic partnerships (Barrios & Lundquist, 2012). Barrios and Lundquist state that, for gay men, there exists two primary, conflicting themes in the literature: gay men have more casual romantic partners than their straight counterparts; however, these same gay men are also more likely than their straight peers to be seeking a long-term romantic relationship. The authors noted a mix of findings partially supporting both of these hypotheses. The noted conflict within the literature, coupled with these results that supported two different hypotheses plus the limited narratives presented in the preceding articles, indicates that further research is needed to understand how gay males see themselves within cultural gender expression mores on campus. While the student affairs community begins to investigate identity interactions and potential conflicts, there is a need to go one step further and look at the complex intersectionality of sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and gender performance (Kocet & Curry, 2011; Lease et al., 2005; Levy & Reeves, 2011).

Queer Spirituality

In discussing the spiritual development of queer students, the literature almost exclusively focuses on the potential for conflict between one's queer identity and spirituality (Buchanan et al., 2001; Riggle et al., 2008; Rodriguez, 2010; Rodriguez et al., 2019; Stewart & Howard-Hamilton, 2015). However, there is a growing research giving voice to queer persons who find strength and comfort in their spirituality – either directly or through reconciling their identities (Harper et al., 2011; Levy & Reeves, 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2013; Rosenkrantz et al., 2016). Some of the literature highlights the positive impact of spirituality as compared to religiosity (Lassiter et al., 2017; McGlasson & Rubel, 2015; Rodriguez, 2009; Tan, 2005); however, as mentioned above, this differentiation is beyond the scope of the present study.

Durham (2018) attempted to investigate the spirituality of queer men without the presumption of conflict between participants' spiritual and sexual orientation identities. Using Q methodology, three types of faith were discovered. Ambivalent faith aligned with those participants who developed personalized beliefs but who did not incorporate those idiosyncratic beliefs into their identity. Immersive faith encapsulated those for whom their spirituality was integral to their identity and covers those who described their faith as communal in practice. Intentional faith described those who pursued faith beliefs on their own without necessarily instilling great value or import on these beliefs. While each participant confidently incorporated their sexual orientation into their identities, further study is required to better understand the satisfaction within each faith type as almost every participant, particularly those in the Ambivalent Faith and Immersive Faith groups, discussed overcoming a conflict among faith, religion, and sexual orientation.

Within the Christian context, heterosexuality has been regarded as the only

acceptable identity for generations (Gushee, 2015; Vines, 2014; Yuan, 2018).

Contemporary Christian philosophers Christopher Yuan (2018) and Matthew Vines

(2014) are leading voices in discussing the personal experiences of those who identify as

both gay and Christian. Yuan (2018) represents the branch of Contemporary Christianity

that promotes celibacy as the desired behavior for those who are queer. He refers to this

as "holy sexuality" (Yuan, 2018, p. 47) which advocates a God-centric chastity in

singleness and a God-centric monogamous marriage between partners of opposite sexes.

Yuan is consistent with the view of typical Evangelical Christian arguments (Cole &

Wilson Harris, 2017; Gushee, 2015; Hamblin & Gross, 2013; Subhi & Geelan, 2012).

Yuan discusses a long and arduous path towards choosing this path for his identity, citing

an abundance of help from his mother (Yuan, 2018; Yuan & Yuan, 2011). Yuan joins

other advocates of celibacy in claiming a gay identity; however, he still faces rejection

due to accepting being gay as a part of his identity (Suh, 2019). Yuan (2018) argues for a

vigilant, adaptive approach to this identity primarily through setting up figurative

guardrails in his life and using his social support network to keep himself accountable to

this lifestyle.

Conversely, Vines (2014) stands in opposition to this view; he argues that it is

both acceptable and Godly to embrace one's sexual minority identity and pursue God-

centric romantic relationships. While Vines would agree with the assertion that one

should be chaste before marriage, that one should commit to a monogamous marriage,

and that both should be God-centric, he would argue that heterosexuality is not a

requirement for either. Both authors cite a multitude of Biblical verses to support their

positions. Their disagreement represents a broader discussion occurring in Evangelical Christianity about the place of LGBTQ+ folks within the faith (Cole & Wilson Harris, 2017; Gushee, 2015). Beyond the scope of specific religious orientation is the impact negative faith experiences have on increasing one's internalized homonegativity (Lease, et al., 2005).

Religion and Gender

Men have been shown to experience their spirituality differently than women (Avishai et al., 2015; Bryant, 2007; Bryant, 2011; Chivers et al., 2007; Collett & Lizardo, 2009). Bryant (2007) specifically examined these gender differences in her study that sampled 3,680 college students from 46 institutions that utilized data from the national Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) and the College Students' Beliefs and Values Survey (CSBV). To pursue a longitudinal perspective, the 3,680 participants reflect just those who were sampled from all who took the CIRP and were given the CSBV three years later. Bryant's study included participants who identified as Christian, Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, and non-affiliated; she found that men were more likely to be skeptical about their religion, less likely to equivocate in their stated beliefs and less interested overall in spirituality and spiritual development. Furthermore, when Bryant reassessed men's beliefs three-years later, men's average level of religiosity was more likely than women's to stay the same, but still rated the importance of their spirituality as significantly lower than women's.

Collett and Lizardo (2009) sought to find a means to build a predictive model for explaining why women and men experience their faith differently. Pushing back against

theories and models that prescribe an explanation based on perceived differences between

men and women, the authors present evidence that social-engendering played a vital part

in explaining this difference. Collett and Lizardo employ "Power-Control Theory" (p.

216), a model from criminology originally built to understand the differences between the

rates at which women and men commit different crimes. The basic principle of the model

is that parents and society instill certain requirements and expectations upon children

based upon their gender; in particular, girls are more restricted and expected to follow

rules to a greater extent than boys. The authors also predicted that mother's socio-

economic level would negatively correlate with this socialization message: a more

financially-independent mother would work against the narrative that women need men

to support them. Collett and Lizardo found support for their hypotheses in examining data

from the General Social Surveys results from 1994 to 2004. In those who reported having

more stringent gender roles as a part of their upbringing, there was a significant gender

gap in religiosity. Additionally, mother's socio-economic level impacted women's

religiosity, with the gender gap disappearing in those raised in households with higher

mother socio-economic level.

Internalized Homonegativity

"Internalized homonegativity" (Lease et al, 2005, p. 379) occurs when a queer

person holds on to the negative beliefs and dispositions that some of society has towards

their sexual orientation. While this concept is similar to internalized homophobia, the

literature notes that this latter term infers a personal, subjective fear or hatred towards

queerness that is irrational, while internalized homonegativity incorporates these along

with feelings of disgust and shame that are often reported in studies assessing views of

queerness; internalized homonegativity is a distinct response to societal and political stigmas (Berg et al., 2016; Mayfield, 2001; Szymanski & Carr, 2008). Likewise, the term internalized heterosexism is equally as limiting as it does not necessarily take into account the fear or hatred that is captured by the broader internalized homonegativity term.

There is growing literature focused on how queer students find social and academic success in college, as opposed to their struggles (Hill, et al., 2021; Renn, 2020). Morrison and Bearden (2007) developed the "Homopositivity Scale" in order to contribute to this movement away from a focus on homonegativity. However, this measure employs "positive stereotypes" (p. 65); positive stereotypes in and of themselves can have negative impact on those who encounter them (Jones, 2002). This positive approach to understanding queer students and their experiences remain in the minority within the literature.

Understanding the concept of internalized homonegativity can help higher education professionals to both identify students who are thriving and those who may be experiencing negative outcomes, such as excessive alcohol use and unprotected sexual activities (Berg et al., 2016; Lease et al., 2005). When a higher education professional identifies a student with low levels of internalized homonegativity, that student may be able to identify qualities and experiences about themselves that contributed to their mental and emotional health. Conversely, if a person's internalized homonegativity is not resolved, then a person can potentially experience depression and anxiety leading to self-isolation and self-harming behavior, including suicide (Lease et al, 2005; Levy & Reeves, 2011). There are several models that attempt to map out the developmental phenomenon

of a person whose internalized homonegativity is thought to be rooted in a conflict between their spiritual and sexual orientation identities.

Resolving Conflict

Levy and Reeves (2011) developed a model to map the progress that queer persons who were raised in a religious tradition make in reconciling their identities. The study utilized interviews to explore the experiences of 15 queer men and women raised in Christian traditions that opposed homosexuality. The model showed a five-step progress through which a person moves, ultimately resulting in a reconciled identity consisting of an acceptance of their queer self and the development of a personal faith, including idiosyncratic versions of Christianity, pluralism, and humanism. Each step of the process is influenced by the person's environmental context, but Levy and Reeves found the following five steps: (1) awareness of the conflict; (2) an initial response, characterized by secrecy, depression, and increased engagement with religious activities; (3) a catalyst event that spurs within the person the awareness that reconciliation is possible; (4) working through the conflict by seeking new knowledge, talking to others, reflecting on one's experiences, and making changes to one's behaviors; (5) resolution of the conflict by the forming of a personalized faith identity that includes the acceptance of their sexual orientation. Levy and Reeves' model lacks nuance, as the 15 participants were nearly all white with backgrounds in Christian households, but of varying beliefs at the time of the study. These limitations make applying their findings to a racially diverse array of students difficult as racial minorities (and those with other minority statuses) report having to actively balance multiple identities beyond their faith and sexual orientation (Evans, et al, 2010; Stewart & Howard-Hamilton, 2015; Stewart, 2008). Furthermore, by

focusing on those with Christian backgrounds only, but not limiting their analysis to those who still identify with the Christian faith, Levy and Reeves miss an opportunity to further delve into the resolution process for queer Christians. This mutes the impact of the characteristic of resilience found in studies that focus on those who retain their Christian faith (Hamblin & Gross, 2013; O'Brien, 2004; Stewart, 2008; Sullivan-Blum, 2004). The emphasis on resiliency highlights the importance of studying the outcome of resolving the identity conflict as much as the resolution process itself not often noted in the literature.

Sociologists Sumerau et al. (2016) sought to expand the understanding of the identity development of queer male Christians. In particular, the study sought to deconstruct the process through which the participants justified the reconciliation of their identities and return to Christianity. The authors identified different aspects of their participants' "moral career" (p. 3):

> people go through stages wherein they must interpret their selves, beliefs, behaviors, values, and rituals in relation to the most significant relationships in their lives at a given time. In so doing, they rely upon and respond to existing institutional and ideological frameworks to interpret the value of their beliefs and actions as well as the ways they may adopt, maintain, lose, or reestablish creditable or valuable selves. (Sumerau et al., 2016, p.3)

The authors describe the developmental process of a moral career as non-linear. They instead identity four elements that contribute to its development.

We came to see that Gay Christian men were outlining a moral career and consequently generated labels to capture the turning points in this career: (1) essentializing religious belief and practice, (2) emotionalizing early religious experience, (3) spiritualizing coming out of churches and closets, and (4) sexualizing religious return. Although we outline these turning points in a specific order for the sake of clarity, our respondents' varied experiences suggest Gay Christians could experience these elements of the life course in varied chronological orders. (Sumerau et al., 2016, p. 10)

This model attempts to address the underlying question of how Christian gay men come to understand their identity and the meaning it has in their lives. Sumerau et al. chose a LGBTQ-identified church for their study, using a combination of observations, informal interviews, and formal life history interviews with the "10 gay men with the most authority in the church" (p. 7) in addition to lay parishioners for a total of 70 gay men captured across the three years of the study. It was through analyzing field notes and transcripts of the interviews that the authors built their model. Essentializing religious belief and practice describes the centrality of Christian belief to the identities of their participants. For example, this benchmark can include a man choosing to make his Christian faith a central driving force in his decision-making process in his day-to-day life. Emotionalizing early religious experiences is the process of identifying predominant feelings associated with one's memories of Christianity from youth. An example of this in the paper focuses on an evening Bible study. The participants discuss how, growing up, they derived great fear and shame from their religious practice and Biblical studies;

these feelings of fear and shame are directly juxtaposed with the satisfaction and safety they currently feel in the LGBTQ church to which they belong.

Spiritualizing coming out of churches and closets refers to how the participants portrayed their journey of coming out, leaving Christianity, and then returning to their faith. All the participants discussed these events using Christian language of following a Divine will and leaning into a Divine purpose to not only live authentically but also in needing to leave Christianity to gain an appreciation for it before ultimately returning to the faith. The authors note that the participants always couched their experiences using faith-based language, tying this branch of the model back to the first aspect of essentializing religious belief and practice. Sexualizing religious return refers to the common factor of a sex-based catalyst that spurs one to return to Christianity. The authors describe three ways in which this catalyst occurs. First, some participants remarked how the call to return to the faith occurred during a particularly good sexual experience; they described hearing or feeling as if, while the sexual experience was pleasurable, it was incomplete and hollow. For others, it was the opposite, a particularly bad sexual encounter awakened internal feelings of hollowness and an awareness of a need to return to Christianity to assuage that emptiness. Finally, there was a group of participants who described their return as a mark of wanting to move from promiscuity towards a more settled life. The evolution of belief and participation in Christianity described by Sumerau et al. poses an interesting challenge for identity scholars. Instead of focusing on any potential conflict posed by theoretically conflicting identities, their study focuses exclusively on the post-resolution development of its participants. This focus offers an additional perspective different than that seen in the literature examining

emerging adulthood; this study and the resulting model configure actions and beliefs into a broader narrative of one's spiritual and sexual identity development.

Next Steps in the Literature

The confluence of gender, religiosity, and sexual orientation is not well-studied (Sullivan-Blum, 2004). The present study will seek to fill this gap in the literature by becoming one of the first to focus on the intersection of gender, sexual orientation, and spirituality within a single study. Furthermore, most research on sexual orientation and gender as well as sexual orientation and spirituality has been qualitative. These theories and models do guide the present study; however, quantitative research's role is to confirm and build upon the findings of qualitative research to produce findings that are generalizable beyond the sample population.

Conclusion

The university years for traditionally-aged students are often marked by dramatic steps in one's personal development, particularly with regards to one's understanding of their own identity. In particular, many university students undergo a process that further develop their sexual, spiritual, and gender identities. The literature on these processes has become increasingly intersectional over the most recent decades, but there is still a dearth of studies examining the intersection of gender, sexual orientation, and spirituality together. Furthermore, there is a particular lack of quantitative studies on the intersection of these variables. The present study looked to fill this gap through examining the ways in which these variables can predict internalized homonegativity. Higher education professionals, who are often the first people students go to with a problem, require a

greater understanding of the identity conflicts that lead to increased levels of internalized

homonegativity so that they can better support their students through the identity conflict

resolution process. The present study sought to do this through utilizing quantitative

methodology to examine the intersection of sexual orientation, spiritual, and gender

identity development in college men in order to improve the field's understanding of

internalized homonegativity.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the intersection of spiritual identity, sexual orientation identity, and masculinity in male students. More specifically, the present study examined whether internalized homonegativity can be predicted in queer men of Christian faith and non-faith who are attending college in the Bible Belt. Focusing specifically on men highlighted the role of masculinity and gender performance. Predictor variables were religious identity, masculine performance, and beliefs about masculinity. The criterion variable was the internalized level of homonegativity.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study.

First, can internalized homonegativity be predicted from religious identity, masculine performance, and/or beliefs about masculinity?

Second, will models consisting of these variables account for more variance for those identifying as Christian or as atheist?

Third, will there be significant models for the two institutions surveyed?

Hypotheses

There were three hypotheses for the present research study.

First, it was hypothesized that the overall model that includes all three independent variables, religiosity, gender performance, and beliefs about masculinity, would be able to predict levels of internalized homonegativity, with all three variables significantly contributing to the model.

Second, it was hypothesized that the model would account for more variance for those identifying as Christian than for those identifying as atheist.

Finally, it is hypothesized that the model would be significant for both institutions involved in the study.

Research Design

The guiding philosophy of a research study, or the framework through which a research question is investigated is an epistemology (Fantl & McGrath, 2007; Reybold, 2002); the way in which a researcher determines what the outcome of a study can be. A pragmatic epistemology was most appropriate for this study. Morgan (2014) contests that knowledge exists within a social context. As such, Morgan's pragmatism requires researchers, regardless of framework, to focus on the impact and social context of choosing particular methods over others (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Morgan, 2014). For the present study, this approach follows from the stated purpose of examining intersecting identities of men. A framework that seeks to explore this intersection while

minimizing the biases such topics as spirituality, sexual orientation, and gender can trigger. To minimize the impact of bias, a quantitative framework was chosen.

The epistemology leads to the establishment of a framework of assumptions to guide the study design and potential outcomes. This framework is the theoretical lens through which a study is conducted. This study was guided by a post-positivist theoretical orientation. This means that it was assumed that, while no findings can be truly free of bias, bringing together many respondents' perspectives in a systematic way allowed the results to approach objectivity. This epistemological outlook and the assumptions of the post-positivist theoretical perspective lend themselves to a quantitative design.

Research Site

In the present study, a public institution was one that was chartered by the state to serve the population of the state. This institution was located in the south central part of the United States. Those in this region must contend with assumed Christian beliefs and levels of religiosity, an environmental context that is particularly salient for queer individuals (Swank, 2012). By keeping the participants limited to this region, respondents will all be from a common cultural setting. The original design of the study called for a second research site at a small, liberal arts college affiliated with a Christian denomination. This Christian institution failed to grant IRB approval in a timely manner and, therefore, could not be included in the present study. As a result, the third research question has been dropped from the present study.

Respondents

The population was traditionally-aged, cisgender male students who self-identify as queer and who are currently or recently (within the past 12 months) enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program. "Traditionally-aged," are students between 18 and 24 years old (Evans et al., 2010). Cisgender refers to someone who identifies with the gender typically designated to their birth sex. For respondents within this study, they needed to identify as a man who was designated male at birth. Queer identity refers to someone who identifies as either a sexual or gender minority; within this study, it referred to men who identify with any sexual orientation other than heterosexual. One of the objectives of this study is to suggest potential actions for universities to take with regard to their queer male students. As such, respondents had to be currently enrolled or recently graduated from a degree program at a participating university site.

Sampling. Sampling for this study was convenience sampling, utilizing avenues readily available to the researcher for recruiting respondents. The researcher had limited access to the populations at the participating institutions, as such, any qualifying person was invited to participate directly by the researcher, via a colleague of the researcher, or via an advertisement for participation. Additionally, advertising via social media, Facebook, was used to increase the number of participants. Facebook ads ran for a total of thirty days spread over two months and were targeted specifically to cisgender male students in the south central US states of Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Using these forms of sampling, directly asking qualifying persons to participate via in-person communication, electronic communication, and social media advertisements, allowed the present study to maximize its potential to reach as large a number of potential participants

as possible. It was hoped that this approach would allow those who were closeted to feel comfortable participating to capture a breadth of queer male perspectives. The statistical methods require at least 120 participants to reach validity (Pedhazur, 1997), the proposed sampling method allowed the participant recruitment process maximum opportunity to reach this minimum threshold.

While convenience sampling allowed for the widest net to be cast in order to recruit potential participants, it required that participants must self-select into responding to the survey. This automatically decreased the potential diversity of respondents to only those with the time, resources, and inclinations to participate. This limitation was addressed through the use of personal connections to potential participants, either the researcher or the researcher's connections, who could personally inspire a potential participant to respond. Additionally, this sampling method was limited because of its unsystematic nature. This means that the pool of participants had a high probability to likely not be representative of the larger population in terms of measurable elements of diversity, such as race or socio-economic level. This limitation impacted recruitment efforts resulting in social media and direct recruitments being used to target diverse arrays of people. Social media targeted university students who identified as queer men living in the south central United States.

Recruitment. IRB approval was granted at the researcher's home institution. It was not granted at the other participating school in a timely manner, resulting in the removal of research question three from the present study. At the medium-sized public school, the initial participant pool was comprised of students enrolled in classes that require research participation. As a researcher within the participant pool's college, the

researcher qualified for having the present study as a part of the pool (see Appendix A.1 for recruitment letter). Furthermore, recruitment efforts such as social media advertisements (see Appendix A.2) and snowball sampling were used.

At the other institution, the researcher had personal connections. The researcher is a part of several organizations geared towards queer students and used those connections to try to get IRB approval. The researcher had hoped to recruit respondents through collaborating with colleagues who would send an email to qualifying individuals known to them (see Appendix A.3).

The researcher also directly recruited qualifying persons known to him (see Appendix A.4 for script). While snowball sampling and any method relying on personal connections tends to narrow the potential candidate pool to those with similar experiences as previous participants, these methods attempted to reach those who may miss or otherwise ignore recruitment via other means. Furthermore, having a personal connection to the study hopefully encourages others to participate, particularly those who are not public about their sexual orientation.

Measures

Respondents completed five inventories within a single questionnaire that took about thirty minutes to complete (Qualtrics, 2018). They completed a demographic survey (Appendix B.1); the Nonreligious, Nonspiritual Scale (NRNSS) (Cragun et al., 2015) (Appendix B.2); the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) (Al-Musawi, 2017; Bem, 1974; Factor & Rothblum, 2017) (Appendix B.3); the Revised Male Role Norms

Inventory (MRNI-R) (Levant, et al., 2007) (Appendix B.4); and the Internalized

Homonegativity Inventory (IHNI) (Mayfield, 2012) (Appendix B.5).

Demographic Survey. The demographic survey consisted of qualifying

information: biological sex at birth, gender identity, sexual orientation, self-reported

religious identity, and religious identity of the family in which they grew up. Including

the questions about religious identity allowed for regression analysis on this variable, as

there was evidence that certain religious identities are correlated with greater subscription

to male sex role norms (Meladze & Braown, 2015). Respondents were also asked to self-

identify their faith; the second research question specifically calls for comparing people

with Christian identities to those with an atheist or agnostic identity.

Nonreligious, Nonspiritual Scale (NRNSS). The NRNSS is a relatively new

survey meant to capture levels of religiosity and spirituality without the assumption of a

particular belief (Cragun et al., 2015). The NRNSS relied on previous understandings of

religiosity and spirituality measures, predominantly Fowler (1974) and Zinnebauer et al.

(1997). The survey consists of two sets of eight items. The first focuses on religiosity,

defined as the level of importance of one's religious identity to one's self-concept.

Examples of items from this section include, "When faced with challenges in my life, I

look to religion for support" and "Religion helps me answer many of the questions I have

about the meaning of life." The second set of items measures respondents' spirituality

vis-a-vis the level of belief and interaction one has with a supernatural realm. Examples

of items from this section include, "I have a spirit/essence beyond my physical body" and

"I cannot find worthwhile meaning in life without spirituality." The 16 items are rated on

a five-point Likert scale. The items can then be averaged to create two sub-scale scores as

well as one overall NRNSS score. The higher the score, the less religious or spiritual the participant is.

Cragun et al. (2015) demonstrated the strength of their scale through two initial studies, first using exploratory factor analysis to establish that the two sub-scales exist. This study used 473 college student respondents with an average age of 21.3 with a diverse selection of religious beliefs represented. Their sample closely aligned with the population from which they drew respondents. After eliminating the one item that dragged down the internal reliability and failed to load on its intended factor, the resulting 17-item questionnaire showed a strong internal reliability, $\alpha = .95$. The researchers completed a principal axis factoring to demonstrate content validity by allowing this exploratory factor analysis to reveal the factor solution of best fit. Two factors that supported the survey design were revealed; the model had a strong fit, $r = .64$, as well as 67.74% of variance within the data; additionally, each item loaded on its respective factor with .4 or higher. The second study used a new dataset to assess test-retest reliability of the measure and convergent validity. The test-retest reliability was significant and demonstrated a strong, positive correlation, $r = .92, p < .001$ affirming this type of reliability. The NRNSS showed convergent validity with several scales, including the majority of the subscales of the Cross-Cultural Dimension of Religiosity Scale and Humanistic Morality Scale. These convergent scales demonstrate the NRNSS' ability to adequately predict respondents' ascription to certain faith beliefs and attitudes. A second exploratory factor analysis further supported the two factor solution found in the previous study. The third study found evidence for the same two subscales using confirmatory factor analysis. Post-hoc assessment further strengthened the validity of the NRNSS, $\chi 2$

[104, $N = 218$] $= 311.02$, $p < .001$; Root Mean Square Error Approximation = .075 [90%

CI of .065, .085]; Comparative Fit Index = .95; and the Standard Root Mean Square

Residual = .05.

Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). The BSRI was initially created by Sandra Bem

to provide evidence for her gender schema theory and to evidence the phenomenon of

androgyny (Starr & Zurbriggen, 2017). The gender schema theory postulates that

masculinity and femininity exist in all people at varying levels. These traits are meant to

represent hegemonic ideals and negative stereotypes of both masculinity and femininity

in order to capture a participant's self-perception of how they gender their own behaviors

(Bem, 1974). While some may argue that such a classification is problematic (Factor &

Rothblum, 2017), the BSRI is still valued as a valid survey for expressing self-perception

of gender performance (Carver et al., 2013; Factor & Rothblum, 2017; Starr &

Zurbriggen, 2017; Al-Musawi, 2017). The BSRI is 60 items comprised of one- to three-

word descriptors that represent three categories: 20 represent masculine traits, 20

represent feminine traits, and 20 are neutral. Respondents must rate each trait on a seven-

point Likert scale where one represents "almost never true" and seven represents "almost

always true." Masculinity and femininity scores are then calculated by averaging the

respective scores for both sets of traits. High masculinity (over 3.5) and low femininity is

considered "masculine," the inverse is considered "feminine." Someone who is high in

both areas would be considered "androgynous" and low on both would be considered

"undifferentiated." A final overall score can be found by subtracting the participant's

femininity score from their masculinity score.

Recent research demonstrate the continuing validity of the BSRI. Factor and

Rothlum (2017) employed the BSRI to investigate the gender performance ratings,

comparing the self-perceptions of gender minorities with the evaluations of the cisgender

siblings. With 395 respondents, 240 of which were pairs of siblings, Factor and Rothlum

found that transwomen respondents' self-ratings and cisgender women's self-ratings did

not differ significantly although they differed significantly from transmen, cisgender

men, and genderqueer individuals, femininity, $F(4, 286) = 6.59$, $p < .001$, masculinity,

$F(4, 285) = 2.88$, $p < .05$, and difference, $F(4, 285) = 7.31$, $p < .001$. Likewise, transmen

and cisgender men were not significantly different, but both groups were significantly

different from all others. When examining just the pairs of siblings, feminity $F(4, 232) =$

6.09, $p < .001$, and difference, $F(4, 232) = 4.68$, $p < .005$) were significantly different in

this same way; however, scores for masculinity, $F(4, 232) = 1.82$, were not. Though,

when examining each correlation between self-ratings and sibling-ratings on masculinity

scores, femininity scores, and the difference between them, self-ratings and sibling-

ratings were positively, moderately correlated for all comparisons except the masculinity

and femininity scores of transmen and transwomen.

Revised Male Role Norms Inventory (MRNI-R). The MRNI-R is an updated

version of the Male Role Norms Inventory first developed by Levant et al. (1992) that

demonstrated similar validity and reliability as the original inventory (Levant, et al.,

2007) and other male sex role inventories (Levant et al., 2010). This measure is designed

to capture a participant's ascription to hegemonic masculinity. It is distinct from the

BSRI. The MRNI-R adjudicates how much one believes and invests in hegemonic

masculinity whereas the BSRI assesses one's actual gender performance regardless of the

importance that one ascribes to this behavior. The MRNI-R has been correlated with internalized homonegativity (Bryce, 2012). The MRNI-R consists of 53 items in which the participant rates their agreement with a statement expressing a certain aspect of hegemonic masculinity on a 7-point Likert scale. There are seven subscales: avoidance of femininity, fear and hatred of homosexuals, extreme self-reliance, aggression, dominance, non-relational attitudes towards sexual behavior, and restrictive emotionality. Each subscale is calculated by taking the average rating of the relevant items. These seven scores can then be averaged together to create an overall MRNI-R score.

These subscales within the MRNI-R were initially supported through an exploratory factor analysis; a primary axis factor analysis revealed that each of the seven subscales had an eigenvalue over 1.0, meaning that each accounts for more than one-percent of variance within the entire sample: 40.92%, 6.26%, 5.25%, 3.01%, 2.87%, 2.39%, and 2.01%, respectively. After removing the lowest the loading items, this finding supports the ability of the MRNI-R to capture the same scores of the original. Additionally, Levant et al. compared the MRNI-R to more established masculinity measures, Male Role Attitude Scale ($r = .60$, $p < .01$), Conformity to Male Role Norms ($r = .60$, $p < .01$), Gender Role Conflict Scale ($r = .54$, $p < .01$), and Normative Male Alexithymia Scale ($r = .51$, $p < .01$). These positive correlations demonstrate strong convergent validity, reinforcing that the MRNI-R is consistent with other, well accepted masculinity scales. Additionally, the Personal Attributes Questionnaire – Masculinity Scale ($r = .08$, $p = .29$) was not significantly correlated, which is consistent with other masculinity scales. This also reinforces why the present study is measuring both, gender performance (via the BSRI) as well as masculinity role norms beliefs (via the MRNI-R).

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Internalized Homonegativity Inventory (IHNI). The IHNI (Mayfield, 2012) is

designed to assess the queer person's amount of negative self-regard as a result of their

sexual orientation (Mayfield, 2001). The validity of this measure has been well-

established (Choi et al., 2017; Lin & Israel, 2012; Szymanski & Carr, 2008); though the

usefulness of the subscales has been brought into question (Choi et al., 2017). The IHNI

consists of 23 items expressing sentiments of homonegativity (or, for the seven reverse-

coded items, which the researcher has termed homopositivity, that is, a positive regard

towards queerness) with which the participant rates their level of agreement on a 6-point

Likert scale where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 6 is "strongly agree;" this measure does

not provide a "neutral" option. The reverse-coded items are scored, and then all 23 items

are averaged to achieve the total IHNI score. Examples of items include, "When I think

of my homosexuality, I feel depressed" and "I am disturbed when people can tell I'm

gay." Examples of reverse-coded items include, "I see my homosexuality as a gift" and "I

believe being gay is an important part of me."

Mayfield (2001) developed the IHNI from an original collection of 42 items

meant to represent a dual perspective of homonegativity - a global opinion about

homosexuality and a personal opinion about one's own homosexuality. This original

development study used 421 queer men from across the United States of varying

backgrounds and ages. Principal factors analysis (PFA) revealed a three factor solution

supporting 23 items: "Personal Homonegativity" (p.65) (accounting for 35% of the

variance), "Gay Affirmation" (p.65) (accounting for 9% of the variance), and "Morality

of Homosexuality" (p. 65) (accounting for 8% of the variance). The 23 items selected

from this PFA were those that loaded at least .333 on a single factor without cross-

loading on any other factor. The coefficient alpha demonstrating internal reliability was

.7 for each found factor and .91 for the IHNI overall. All factors, now labeled as

"subscales" (p. 66), were positively correlated with the measure overall at least $r = .66$, p

$< .001$; each subscale was positively correlated with the others at least $r = .41$, $p < .001$.

Validity was demonstrated through IHNI's strong correlation with established measures;

particularly the Nungesser Homosexuality Attitudes Inventory, with which it had a

correlation of .85, $p < .001$, and the Gay Identity Questionnaire, with which it had a

correlation of -.68, $p < .001$. These correlations indicate that the IHNI measures similar

concepts without reproducing either of these measures.

Mayfield also demonstrated significant correlations with measures of extroversion

and neuroticism. The IHNI was negatively correlated with extraversion, $r = -.24$, $p <$

$.001$; Mayfield argues this is consistent with literature indicating that those with lower

internalized homonegativity are more willing to be socially outgoing, particularly with

other queer persons, a theory further supported by the negative correlation between the

IHNI and self-reported numbers of queer male friends, $r = -.31$, $p < 001$. The IHNI had a

positive correlation with neuroticism, $r = .25$, $p < .001$, which Mayfield argues is

consistent with literature indicating that higher levels of internalized homonegativity is

associated with increased psychological distress.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered via Qualtrics, an online survey tool. Online

surveys have been demonstrated as a useful tool for collecting data from this population

due to the convenience of accessing the survey as well as the potential for confidential or

anonymous responses (Riggle, Rostosky, & Reedy, 2005). Respondents were recruited via the Oklahoma State University College of Education and Human Sciences participant pool or, if they are at another institution, via social media fliers, email, or directly by the researcher. Participants then completed the survey online. The window for data collection lasted two months. The present study had four predictors: religious identity, NRNSS score, BSRI masculinity score, and MRNI score. Therefore, it was recommended that there be a minimum 108 respondents, following the convention that there should be between 25 to 30 respondents per predictor variable (Green, 1991); the present study had set as its goal to recruit 120 participants but only achieved half of this number. This study had one outcome variable, measured by the IHNI. The collected data was downloaded and analyzed via multiple regression utilizing a categorical construction of the variables via SPSS (IBM Corp., 2016). While a step-wise multiple regression could have allowed for a final predictive equation that removed those variables that do not account for a significant portion of variation in IHNI, there was insufficient evidence in the literature to suggest a particular order for adding or removing the variables.

Confidentiality. It is tantamount to protect the identity of respondents, particularly as it is assumed that respondents who are not out or otherwise comfortable with their sexual identity would not participate without the protection of confidentiality. Qualtrics is a secure site and did not collect any identifiable information. Furthermore, respondents completed the survey on their own; their identity was protected as they see fit. The researcher has no way of matching responses to respondents. The identity safeguards were emphasized in the informed consent document (Appendix B.6) as well as in the materials promoting the survey (Appendix A1-A4).

Analyses

In order to predict internalized homonegativity, the data was analyzed via multiple regression. The present study determined if internalized homonegativity regresses on religiosity, gender performance and male role norms using a category-constructed multiple regression. Furthermore, the study looked at this question between religious identities (Christian and atheist/agnostic) in addition to the overall population. Having grouped together participants into these two categories could have been problematic, as both contain multitudes. There is a diverse array of denominations of Christianity with an equally diverse number of ways of practicing that faith (Garriott & O'Neill, 2008; Robbins, 2003); however, the present study allowed participants to merely self-identify their religion. Multiple regression loses power with the increase of each additional variable without a corresponding increase in participants (Pedhazur, 1997).

All self-identified Christians were grouped together in order to minimize the loss of statistical power. There also exists an array of non-religious identities as well as nuances within and between atheism and agnosticism (Coleman et al., 2018; Lee, 2019; Streib & Klein, 2013); however, grouping these identities together for analysis purposes is common (Baker et al., 2018; Coleman et al., 2018; Dein, 2016), particularly since this group makes up a minority in the United States (Cragun & Sumerau, 2015).

After running initial descriptive statistics and ensuring that each variable's distribution was normal, correlation analysis was utilized to ensure each predictor variable was related to the outcome variable. Following best practices, variance inflation factor was used to test the assumption of the absence of multicollinearity between the

independent variables, this ensured that each variable is not too highly related to the others following best practices (Pedhazur, 1997).

As the correlational analysis revealed acceptable relationships between variables, regression analysis moved forward. There is insufficient evidence in the literature to suggest that a particular order should be used, so a simple regression was used instead of step-wise analysis. The multiple regression was run using a categorical construction to incorporate the categorical nature of religious identity within the present study; dummy coding was used to conduct a comparison between those with a Christian identity and those who are atheist/agnostic. The number of respondents allowed for individual slopes to be reliably calculated and evaluated for significance without the need for running multiple tests. Lastly, two final assumption checks were used to ensure that the results were reliable. The error variances needed to be insignificantly different from one another to ensure that the model met the requirement of homoscedasticity of residuals; this was accomplished by examining the scatterplots of the error variances. A histogram of the residuals was used to ensure that the data meets the assumption of normality of the residuals. Additional models were generated for the subsection of Christian participants, as a curved relationship existed between the masculinity and IHNI. Furthermore, initial analysis revealed that belief in male role norms was spurious for this subset. As such, a quadratic regression model was employed.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether internalized homonegativity can be predicted in queer men of Christian faith and non-faith who are attending colleges

in the American Bible Belt. This was achieved through collecting data from participants

attending or recently graduated from university. In order to minimize the influence of

potential bias, a quantitative approach, specifically, multiple regression analysis was

used. Respondents' religiosity, gender performance, and ascription to male gender norms

was used to predict internalized homonegativity. Each variable was examined

individually and as a group.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Demographics

There were a total of 63 cisgender queer male respondents in this study.

Respondents all resided in the south-central United States. Participants ages range from

18 to 25, with the average being 21.66 years. The participants were predominantly white;

white participants comprised 70% of respondents (n = 45). Hispanic/Latino participants

were the next highest group, comprising 12.5% of the respondents (n = 8), then mixed

race participants comprised 9% (n = 6). The remaining participants identified as

American Indian (n = 2), Black (n = 2), and Asian (n = 1). Of the 64 participants, 32

identified as gay, 18 as bisexual, nine identified as another non-heterosexual identity, and

five identified as heterosexual but experiencing some level of same-sex attraction.

Religiosity

There were 30 participants (47.6%) identifying as Christian and 22 participants

(34.9%) identifying as Atheist, Agnostic, or "none." Participants who identified as

Atheist, Agnostic, or "none" will collectively be called "Atheist" throughout this chapter

for simplicity. The remaining 11 participants had some other religious identity. The

Nonreligious, Nonspiritual Survey (NRNSS) was used to measure spirituality, a lower

score on the measure indicates a greater level of spirituality. The scale had the possibility

of scores ranging from 1 to 5; among participants, the range of scores was from 1 to 4.58.

The mean of the NRNSS for all participants was 2.978 with a standard deviation of

1.017. The average NRNSS score for Christians was 2.385 with a standard deviation of

0.712 with a range of 1.13 to 3.81. The mean NRNSS score for Atheists was 4.090 with a

standard deviation of 0.561 with a range of scores from 3 to 5. The difference between

these means is significant, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Difference Between Christian and Atheist Means

	Christians			Atheists		
	M	SD		M	SD	*t*-test
NRNSS	2.385	0.712		4.090	0.561	9.739*
BSRI	4.459	0.593		4.680	0.870	1.09
MRNI-R	2.102	0.774		1.643	0.599	-2.433*
IHNI	2.736	1.085		1.994	0.803	-2.859*

*p < .05

Masculinity

The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) was used to assess masculine gender

performance; a higher score indicates a more masculine gender performance. The

masculinity score can range from 1 to 7; the range for all participants was from 2.95 to

6.05. The mean masculinity score for the participants was 4.624 with a standard deviation

of 0.739. For Christians, the mean masculinity score was 4.459 with a standard deviation

of 0.593 with a range from 3.26 to 5.75. For Atheists the mean was 4.680 with a standard

deviation of 0.870 with a range from 3.15 to 6.05. These means are not significantly different, as noted in Table 1.

Male Role Norms

The Male Role Norms Inventory – Revised (MRNI-R) was used to measure participants' beliefs about the way men "should" be. A higher score indicates greater belief that men should be promiscuous, aggressive, hypercompetitive, restrictive emotionally, dominant, extremely self-reliant, avoidant of femininity, and homophobic. The male role norms inventory has a possible score range from 1 to 7. The range for all participants spanned from 1 to 3.51. The mean score for belief in male role norms was 1.906 with a standard deviation of 0.752. The mean score for Christians was 2.102 with a standard deviation of 0.774 with a range from 1 to 3.51. The mean score for Atheists was 1.643 with a mean of 0.599 with a range from 1 to 3.47. The difference between these means is significant, as seen in Table 1. One Christian participant did not provide responses to this questionnaire.

There was no significant relationship between masculine performance and belief in male role norms. There was a significant correlation between male role norms and NRNSS scores for all participants but not when the participants were split by religion. These two variables were weakly, negatively correlated ($r = -.232$, $p < .05$).

Internalized Homonegativity

Internalized homonegativity was the dependent variable; it was measured using the Internalized Homonegativity Inventory (IHNI). The higher the score, the higher the level of internalized homonegativity; score possibilities ranged from 1 to 6. The overall

mean for internalized homonegativity was 2.348 with a standard deviation of 1.006 with

a range from 1 to 4.91. The mean score for Christians was 2.736 with a standard

deviation of 1.085 with a range from 1.04 to 4.91. The mean score for Atheists was 1.994

with a standard deviation of 0.803 with a range from 1 to 4. The difference between these

means is significant, as seen in Table 1.

Internalized homonegativity was significantly correlated to each of the

independent variables for both the overall sample and the Christians. It was not correlated

with any of the independent variables for the Atheists. Internalized homonegativity was

moderately, inversely-related to spirituality and masculinity performance. It was

moderately, positively correlated with belief in male role norms. Correlation coefficients

can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlations Between Variables

	NRNSS	Masculinity	Male Role Norms
IHNI	-0.388**	-.355*	.436**
NRNSS		.600	-.232*
Masculinity			-.102

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Research Question One

Can internalized homonegativity be predicted from religious identity, masculine

performance, and/or beliefs about masculinity?

Assumption Tests

Before being able to answer this question using multiple regression, appropriate

assumptions must be met. The first is the assumption of independence of participants.

Each participant is presumed to be unique from the one another; while IP addresses were not collected, the survey software did ensure that multiple entries could not come from the same IP address. The next assumption is ensuring that there are linear relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Table 2 shows the correlations between variables and Figures 1-3 in Appendix C.1 are the corresponding scatter plots representing the correlations between IHNI and each other variable. Internalized homonegativity is significantly, moderately correlated with each independent variable. This also demonstrates that there are not any superfluous predictor variables included in the model. A scatterplot incorporating the residuals against the predicted values of the dependent variable, internalized homonegativity, is used to assess homogeneity of variance. Figure 4 in Appendix C.1 demonstrates a fairly even distribution of points without any clear patterns. Finally, to assess multicollinearity, the variance inflation factor (VIF) is used. The lower the VIF, the better; sources vary on what acceptable VIF should be, but a VIF of 4 is the lowest occurring benchmark (Salmerón, García, & García, 2018). The VIF for NRNSS is 1.104, for masculine performance is 1.018, and for beliefs about male role norms is 1.110.

The only assumption not fully met is that of normality of residuals. The histogram of the residuals does not show a definitive bell curve and therefore does not clearly meet this assumption. The histogram can be seen in Figure 5 in Appendix C.1. However, since all the other assumptions have been met and this assumption approaches the threshold of being acceptable, the model can still be accepted as valid with this noted as a limitation.

Further Refinement. The scatterplot showing the correlation (Figure 3 in Appendix C.1) between internalized homonegativity and masculinity performance could

be interpreted as being curved in nature. As such, the regression analysis was rerun using centered scores for masculinity performance and then linear, quadratic, and cubic regressions were executed to determine which would be the model of best fit (Aiken & West, 1991). There was no significant change in the model's fit when examining the quadratic or the cubic models. Therefore, the original model was used.

Model

The final model regressed internalized homonegativity on spirituality, masculine performance, and belief in male role norms was significant. The model was significant $F(3, 59) = 11.419$, $p < .001$. The model accounted for 33.5% of internalized homonegativity's variance, $R^2 = 0.367$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.335$. The calculated power of this statistic was moderate at 0.689.

$$\hat{y} = 4.250 - .288(\text{NRNSS}) - .288(\text{masculinity score}) + .451(\text{male role norms})0$$

The unstandardized coefficient for NRNSS was -.288 and the 95% confidence interval ranged from -0.499 to -0.077. The unstandardized coefficient for masculine performance was -0.412 with a 95% confidence interval of -.695 to -.129. Finally, the unstandardized coefficient for belief in male role norms was 0.451 with a 95% confidence interval from 0.165 to 0.737. Additionally, all three predictors were significantly contributing to the model, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Standardized Coefficient Statistics for Overall Model

	Standardized Coefficients	
	β	t
NRNSS	0.292	-2.733**
Masculinity	-0.365	-2.908**
Male Role Norms	-0.391	3.154**

Answering Research Question One

Internalized homonegativity can be predicted using spirituality, masculinity performance, and beliefs in male role norms. All three predictor variables significantly contributed to the model, therefore, the portion of the research question reading "and/or" is addressed.

Research Question Two

Will models consisting of these variables account for more variance for those identifying as Christian or as atheist?

Christian Model

Assumption Tests. For the subset of participants self-identifying as Christians, the predictor variables continued to be linearly-related to internalized homonegativity. The precise correlations are presented in Table 4. Again, internalized homonegativity is

Table 4

Correlations for the Christian Subset

	NRNSS	Masculinity	Male Role Norms
IHNI	-0.452*	-.391*	.471**
NRNSS		-.127	-.315
Masculinity			-.159

*p < .05, **p < .01

significantly, moderately correlated with each independent variable. In Appendix

C.2, Figures 1-3 are the scatter plots for the correlations between IHNI and each predictor

variable. Figure 4 in Appendix C.2 demonstrates a fairly even distribution of points without any clear patterns, meeting the assumption of homogeneity of variances. For this subset, the assumption of normality of residuals was also met, as the histogram depicted an overall bell-curve shaped distribution. The histogram can be seen in Figure 5 in Appendix C.2. The assumption test for multicollinearity revealed that this assumption was also met. The VIF for NRNSS was 1.139 and for masculine performance was 1.062.

In assuring that there were no extraneous predictor variables, belief in male role norms did not significantly contribute to the model, $t = 1.846$, $p > .05$. Belief in male role norms was subsequently removed from the model.

Table 5

Correlations for Christian Final Quadratic Model

	NRNSS	Masculinity[1]	Masculinity, Centered Squared
IHNI	-.403*	-.391*	-.258

NRNSS	-.127	-.343*
Masculinity, Centered		0.212

**p < .01

[1]Centering a variable does not impact the correlation with the dependent variable

Further Refinement. The scatterplot showing the correlation between internalized homonegativity and masculinity performance could be interpreted as being curved in nature. As such, the regression analysis was rerun using centered scores for masculinity performance and then linear, quadratic, and cubic regressions were executed to determine which would be the model of best fit (Aiken & West, 1991). The quadratic model proved to be the best fit, $R^2_{change} = 0.121$. The complete R^2_{change} results can be found in Table 1 in Appendix C.2. Table 4 has the updated correlation statistics for this model. The updated VIF for NRNSS was 1.138, for the centered masculinity performance score was 1.051, and for the square of the centered masculinity performance score was 1.172. This demonstrates that the assumption for there being no multicollinearity in the model was still met. Figure 6 in Appendix C.2 shows the correlation between internalized homonegativity and the squared masculinity performance. Figures 7 and 8 in Appendix C.2 demonstrate that the assumptions of homogeneity and normality of residuals were still met in the quadratic model.

Final Christian Model. The model for the Christian subset was significant, $F(3, 26) = 6.669$, $p < .01$. Additionally, the model accounted for 37% of the change in internalized homonegativity for those within the Christian subset, $R^2 = 0.435$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.370$. The calculated power for the model is moderate at 0.476.

$\hat{y} = 5.250 - .919(NRNSS) - .694$(masculinity score, centered) $- .932$(masculinity score, centered, squared)

The unstandardized coefficient for NRNSS was -.919 and the 95% confidence interval ranged from -1.409 to -.429. The unstandardized coefficient for the centered masculine performance was -.694 with a 95% confidence interval of -1.231 to -.157. Finally, the unstandardized coefficient for the squared, centered masculine performance score was 0.398 with a 95% confidence interval from -1.711 to -.153. Table 6 shows that each predictor variable significantly contributed to this final model.

Table 6

Standardized Coefficients for Christian Model

	Standardized Coefficients	
	B	t
NRNSS	-0.581	-3.857***
Masculinity, Centered	-0.385	-2.658*
Masculinity, Centered Squared	-0.376	-2.46*

*p < .05, ***p < .001

Atheist Model. The model for Atheists was not significant, $F(3, 18) = 0.813$, $p > .05$. Internalized homonegativity was also uncorrelated with each of the predictors. Further assumption tests were not examined as the model was nonsignificant.

Answering Research Question Two

The Christian model was significant whereas the Atheist model was not. Therefore, by default, the Christian model accounted for greater variance for those identifying as Christian than the equivalent for Atheists.

Summary

There were a total of 64 participants in this study, 30 of whom were Christian and 22 of whom were Atheist. In answering the first research question, internalized homonegativity can be regressed upon religiosity, masculinity performance, and beliefs in male role norms. All three predictor variables significantly contributed to the model. When investigating the models for Christians and Atheists, the Christian model was significant whereas the Atheist model was not. Therefore, by default, the Christian model accounted for greater variance than the Atheist model. Furthermore, the Christian model did not require the addition of beliefs in male role norms and so it was removed from the final model. The Christian model was also quadratic as it was determined to be a better fit than a linear or a cubic model. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS (IBM Corp., 2016) except for statistical power, for which the program G*Power (Faul, 2014) was used.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The present study sought to examine the intersection of spiritual identity, sexual orientation identity, and masculinity in college men. This was done through the construction of a predictive model for internalized homonegativity in queer male college students using masculine gender performance and belief in male role norms alongside spirituality. The number of participants was limited, but it did allow for comparison between Christian and Atheist participants.

Problem Statement

Many queer college students enter university while struggling with internalized homonegativity which can lead to negative mental health, social, and academic outcomes (Lease et al., 2005; Levy & Reeves, 2011; Love et al., 2005). The levels of internalized homonegativity tend to be consistent between those with a religious background and those without (Berg et al., 2016; Lease et al., 2005; Levy & Reeves, 2011). As universities seek to increase total numbers of individuals with degrees, student body diversity, and personalization of services in student affairs, issues facing queer students have become more salient in professional practice and theory. Research has demonstrated

that university staff and faculty can have a positive impact on reducing a student's level of internalized homonegativity, regardless of their personal identities (Abes, 2012; Lease et al., 2005; Evans et al., 2010). Within the nexus of these issues, it is increasingly important to understand factors that may impact the levels of internalized homonegativity for queer men and to understand their factors for success or difficulty. The literature has shown a connection between religious identity and internalized homonegativity (Lease et al., 2005) as well as one's relationship with their gendered expectations (Bryce, 2012).

The present study examined the intersection of sexual orientation identity, spirituality, and gender in queer male university students. To pursue this purpose, the tantamount question in the present study was to investigate whether homonegativity can be predicted by religiosity, gender performance, and ascription to gender role norms. The leading theories examining this intersection of internalized homonegativity, religiosity, and gender in college men have been built upon qualitative research (Berg et al., 2016). While qualitative research reveals and explores phenomena, the next step was to facilitate quantitative research that can apply those models in a generalizable way.

Methodology

To address the problem statement, the present study employed multiple regression to construct predictive models of internalized homonegativity. Furthermore, to build a clearer picture of how religiosity and gender can impact internalized homonegativity, the present study compared models using Christian students to atheist and agnostic students. A total of 68 Participants were recruited via social media advertising and a university-

based study participation portal. Multiple regression allowed for the incorporation of a variety of predictor variables in a singular model.

Limitations

Multiple regression can be a powerful tool for model building; however, it is not resilient against failed assumption tests. The statistical power of regression is particularly vulnerable to sample size. Furthermore, while statistical methods are used to reduce researcher bias, personal perspective can always influence social science research. The researcher, as a Christian, cisgender male identifying as gay used a post-positivist approach as the high number of respondents pushes the results towards objectivity. In multiple regression, the choice of which variables should be included in the final model can be a research decision. In order to mitigate this potential limitation, the researcher followed well-established statistical mores that set inclusionary criteria at .05 level of significance. Having this bar set prior to beginning the collection of responses reduces the decisions being made by the researcher, therefore reducing bias.

Research Question One

Can internalized homonegativity be predicted from religious identity, masculine performance, and/or beliefs about masculinity?

Findings

Statistical analysis revealed that internalized homonegativity could be predicted using religiosity, masculinity performance, and beliefs about male role norms. This model accounted for 33.5% of the variance in internalized homonegativity and the

statistic had a moderate amount of power. As someone's religiosity increases and beliefs about male role norms increases, their levels of internalized homonegativity increase. However, as masculine performance increases, internalized homonegativity decreases.

Implications

It is not surprising that religiosity and beliefs about male role norms were positively correlated to internalized homonegativity. This is consistent with the literature (Bishop et al., 2014; Lease et al., 2005; Levy & Reeves, 2011; Love et al., 2005; Sánchez & Vilain, 2012). It is particularly unsurprising as homophobia is one of the subcategories of beliefs about male roles (Barrios & Lundquist, 2012; Levant, et al., 2007; Levant et al., 2010). As noted in Chapter Two, there is a dearth of research around gender performance and homonegativity (Barrios & Lundquist, 2012; Kocet & Curry, 2011). The inverse relationship between masculine gender performance and internalized homonegativity is somewhat unexpected (Annes & Redlin, 2012; Barrios & Lundquist, 2012; Ravenhill & de Visser, 2019; Sánchez & Vilain, 2012; Sánchez et al., 2010) but does provide support for measuring the gender performance separately from beliefs about gender. This inverse relationship can be examined in the context of the societal policing of gender performance. Those who are more masculine are less likely to be bullied, condemned, or ridiculed for their behavior and, therefore, are less likely to experience dissonance between their gender and their sexual orientation.

Further analysis revealed that neither age nor length of knowing one's sexual identity were significantly correlated with any variable (Table 1, Appendix C.3). This means that higher education professionals cannot assume first-year students are more or

less likely than fourth-year students, or even that undergraduates are necessarily more or less likely than graduate students, to be wrestling with issues related to their sexual orientation, gender, and spiritual identities. Likewise, students who have been out longer than others should also not be assumed to have lower internalized homonegativity or identity conflict. This is consistent with developmental theory that acknowledges that age and progression do not necessarily go hand-in-hand (Evans et al., 2010).

Limitations

The primary limitation is the small sample size; this study had half as many participants as recommended for best practice (Pedhazur, 1997) as mentioned in Chapter Three. Additionally, the histogram displaying the normality of residuals failed to clearly meet the assumption test. Despite these flaws in the data, the effect size and power of the multiple regression are on the lower end of being acceptable for statistical analyses. Also, having to recruit via social media limits the ability to control the impact of regional culture. To account for this, social media advertising was constrained to states in the same geographical sub-region as the primary institutions, the South Central United States.

Research Question Two

Will models consisting of these variables account for more variance for those identifying as Christian or as atheist?

Findings

As with the overall model, religiosity and masculinity performance significantly predicted the level of internalized homonegativity in the subset of participants identifying as Christian. As in the broader sample, as religiosity increases and masculine performance decreases, internalized homonegativity increases. However, within this subset, beliefs in male roles does not significantly contribute and was removed from the final model. Within the atheist subset, there was not a significant model.

Implications

The findings from the Christian subset raises a number of questions. The first of which is: Why is there a significant model for the Christian subset but not for the Atheist one? Atheists were significantly less spiritual than their Christian counterparts, which is consistent with the literature (Converse, 2003; Cragun et al., 2015; Dein, 2016; Goodman & Mueller, 2009; Malark, 2017), as well as believed significantly less in male role norms. However, the groups showed no difference in terms of masculine performance. In comparing the models, the difference in belief in male role norms was disregarded because it did not significantly contribute to the Christian model. Nevertheless, masculine performance did contribute to the Christian model, indicating that there was still a gender component alongside the expected spirituality component.

Beliefs about gender roles maintained its strong correlation with internalized homonegativity in both the Christian and Atheist subsets. Masculine gender performance was a significant part of both models that were found. The two religion subgroups also significantly differed in beliefs about male role norms. Therefore, the next steps would be

doing further analysis exploring possible moderating and mediating effects of spirituality on the relationship between gender performance and internalized homonegativity. Additionally, qualitative follow-up interviews with participants could be used to explore the impact of the spiritual development processes for both subpopulations as well. While Atheists had lower internalized homonegativity than Christians, it is still vital to understand the factors that lead to increased or decreased internalized homonegativity in this population.

The next question these findings raise centers on the belief in male role norms. This predictor variable is highly correlated with internalized homonegativity, yet it did not significantly contribute to the Christian model. This means that belief in male role norms cannot be used to predict the level of internalized homonegativity for those in the Christian subset. This could potentially indicate that there is some unmeasured outside variable impacting both belief in male role norms and internalized homonegativity. The limited literature would suggest that spirituality may be that variable (Kocet & Curry, 2011; Lease et al., 2005; Levy & Reeves, 2011; Love et al., 2005); however, the results of the present study did not demonstrate this. Perhaps the unmeasured variable is orthodoxy, the level of belief in the prescribed and stated ideology of a given faith tradition. Just as masculine performance and belief in male role norms are similar but not congruent, spirituality and orthodoxy are similar but not congruent. It is beyond the purview of the present study to investigate orthodoxy, but future research can capture this variable.

The findings of the Christian subset spark the question as to why the level of power is lower for this model than for the overall sample. The immediate answer to this

question is the reduced size of cases incorporated within this sample. The number of

Christian participants, 30, is well-below the threshold for best practice for multiple

regression analysis with this number of predictors (Pedhazur, 1997). It also suggests

something about those who identified as neither Christian nor Atheist may have impacted

the general model but not the Christian one. Further data collection is needed to assess

both conclusions.

Limitations

The primary limitation in addressing this question is the differing sizes of the

Christian and Atheist samples. Like the overall sample size, neither group met the

standard of the number of participants generally considered to be required for validity as

set forth in Chapter Three. Since this was a cross-sectional study, it is difficult gauge how

the developmental process impacted participants, specifically spiritual development

between Christians and Atheists. The Non-Religious Non-Spiritual Survey (Cragun et al.,

2015) only measured current spirituality, not spiritual change over time. Concerning the

non-significance of belief in male role norms in the Christian model, and given the

strength of the correlation between it and internalized homonegativity, it is possible that

this can be the result of statistical error. However, the scatter plot, Figure 3 in Appendix

C.2, indicates that these two variables have a linear relationship and transformation of the

data would not change belief in male role norms' contribution to the model.

Future Directions

The findings from the present study have implications for filling gaps in research,

practice, and theory. In particular, the present study's findings regarding the impact of

gender performance on internalized homonegativity has the largest potential for impacting next steps.

For Research

As discussed in Chapter Two, the majority of research in this area is qualitative in nature. The present study contributes to our understanding of intersectional identity development in men through the construction of predictive models which future research can build upon moving forward. In particular, existing models integrating spiritual and sexual orientation identities now can expand to incorporating masculinity within future studies. These models can be developed through future qualitative studies. Interviews and focus groups can begin to investigate how gender impacts the integration of sexual orientation and spiritual identities both directly and indirectly. Moreover, as research attempts to clarify the independent impact of gender performance and beliefs about gender roles, observational methods and the analysis of artifacts may play a bigger role in future studies.

Observational methods will be important for gaining an understanding of the experiences of those with varying levels of masculine performance and how they move through the world; particularly how the performance of their gender changes across environments. As discussed above, a possible explanation for the differences in the scores on the Internalized Homonegativity Inventory (IHNI) for those with high masculine performance and low masculine performance is the impact of negative social reaction to a lack of masculinity. Specifically, within the higher education context, even universities that purport to be "safe spaces" for all students, regardless of gender and gender

expression, still have need for reliably assessing students' experiences with gender performance-based discrimination and adversity.

In order to identify successful climates and those requiring reform, research needs to better identify the kinds of experiences that occur within given campus spaces. This is particularly salient when considering Christian colleges. The original intent of the present study was to contribute to this specific discussion through the comparison of a secular university and a Christian one. As Christian colleges begin to explore how to best support their queer students within their unique context, it is vital that further research is done to identify factors that contribute to internalized homonegativity.

Artifact analysis can inform researchers to the specific articles of clothing, accessories, and other product choices one may use to express their gender play a role in a person's self-perception and how they are received by others. A project examining those scoring low on masculine performance and low on the IHNI, which goes against the model of the present study, can help reveal the avenues used by those who have found success in integrating their identities. Additionally, research can reveal those things that participants feel contribute the most to harassment or other negative social feedback.

Further quantitative research can further investigate the predictive model found here, particularly with Christian college populations and in other geographic regions of the United States. The literature suggests that the Bible Belt should be a unique region for those integrating spiritual and sexual orientation identities (Hubach et al., 2017); however, given that the present study found a significant influence of gender – both performance and beliefs about gender roles – there needs to be further investigation into

whether the predictive model of the present study persists in populations in different American cultural contexts. Additionally, further analysis incorporating feminine gender performance (also captured by the Bem Sex Role Inventory) could be a fruitful avenue for better understanding the differing impacts of gender performance and beliefs about gender roles, particularly in the subset of Christian participants, where gender performance still significantly predicts IHNI but beliefs about gender roles do not.

There needs to be further development investigating the potential of homopositivity as a construct in understanding intersecting identities. Morrison and Bearden (2007) offer the first steps down this path, but their measure, which relies on the use of stereotypes, is insufficient. It is also potentially possible to use the IHNI as a foundation, changing the wording of items to be phrased positively. This is untested and would need rigorous validation but could provide an alternative method of developing a homopositivity measure.

For Practice

Higher education professionals, both staff and faculty, feel underprepared to assist students with identity development, particularly when spirituality is involved (Astin, 2004; Becker, 2009; Kim & Sax, 2009; Shipp, 2017; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). The present study works to demystify identity development for higher education practitioners.

Student affairs programming focused on helping students process their identities are actionable next steps of the present study. Programs aimed towards engaging men are infrequent and in need of further development (Davis & Laker, 2004; Tillapaugh & McGowan, 2019). Developing spaces for men to be able to express their authentic selves,

particularly in relation to meeting societal expectations on masculinity, can help relieve some of the internalized homonegativity as queer men would meet other students of varying sexual orientation identities with similar struggles. These programs can be centered in Greek life or resident life, as both of these areas are typically divided on gendered lines and are best positioned to execute men-focused programming. Counseling, health, and other wellness services can also offer more therapy-oriented groups for men; this could be potentially quite helpful for those whose mental distress is severe enough for them to seek help.

For higher education training programs as well as student and academic affairs personnel, the field has incorporated gender diversity into its collection of identities to assist students with. Understanding gender diversity requires better understanding how individuals experience and express their gender identity, both for those who are in the majority and in the minority. The present study challenges the image of a stereotypically low-masculine gender performance in queer men as "loud, proud gays" or that high-masculine queer men have high levels of internalized homonegativity. Practitioners can seek to help students uncouple their self-worth from society's response to their gender performance. Moreover, student affairs and academic affairs professionals are uniquely positioned to lead campus cultural change (Astin, 2004; Baxter Magolda, 2007; Kim & Sax, 2009; Komarraju et al., 2010; Kuh & Gonyea, 2006; Love et al., 2005; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). They can provide support to faculty and administration who are working with students struggling with reconciling their identities. The present study can give a deeper understanding of this process for these professionals.

For Theory

The intersectional identity development literature needs to expand to incorporate masculinity and beliefs about gender roles into existing models explaining the reconciliation of spiritual identity and sexual orientation identity. The present study provides strong evidence that elements of gender identity, performance and beliefs about norms, impact internalized homonegativity. However, additional research is needed to construct refined models that incorporate the co-development of all three identities. As discussed above, further qualitative research is needed to garner information about how individuals perceive their own co-development processes. Furthermore, quantitative analysis should be used to specifically examine the interactions between each of the incorporated variables, determining what, if any, of the variables moderate or mediate relationships with internalized homonegativity.

The development of updated models is particularly important in regards to identifying those who have had little internalized homonegativity or who have had great change in their levels of internalized homonegativity. The preset study is a cross-sectional project, though it did not find any significant effect based on age or length of time that one has known of their own sexual orientation. A study with a larger sample size may be able to paint a more thorough picture upon which to build developmental models alongside longitudinal studies following participants throughout their time at university. These longitudinal studies, both qualitative and quantitative, will allow for more thorough model construction.

Summary

The present study sought to examine the intersectional identity development of college men in regards to their spiritual identity, sexual orientation identity, gender performance, and beliefs about male gender roles. Specifically, the present study hoped to address a gap in literature by investigating this topic utilizing quantitative methods. Predictive regression models were discovered for both the at-large sample and the Christian subset, but not the Atheist subset. In particular, masculine gender performance impacted internalized homonegativity independently from belief in male role norms.

These findings indicate that those who are less masculine tended to have higher rates of internalized homonegativity, particularly within the Christian subset; this could potentially be related to having greater societal pushback to their gender performance than their more masculine counterparts. This has implications for student affairs programming with queer male students, highlighting the importance of engaging them on topics around masculinity and identity. Future research is needed to examine the potential moderating or mediating effects between variables, particularly religiosity on the relationship between gender performance and internalized homonegativity. Furthermore, as the field moves toward affirmative perspectives, the development of homopositivity measures are needed to dive more deeply into the intersection of gender and sexual orientation identity. Ultimately, the present study is a mere stepping stone to bigger theory development that will require both, further quantitative and qualitative studies, in order to have a more nuanced understanding of the intersectional identity development of queer men and the role universities can play in that process.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.1. SONA Recruitment

SONA Brief Abstract
This approximately 30-minute survey seeks to investigate relationships between internalized homonegativity, spirituality, and masculinity. Your answers are completely anonymous; you will have the option of providing contact information for a potential follow-up interview. This is optional and will have its own associated SONA credit. If you are not chosen for a follow-up interview, your optionally-provided contact information will be deleted.

SONA Description
The purpose of this project is to investigate the ways in which spirituality and gender roles can predict one's internalized homonegativity. There is nascent research examining how spirituality and sexual orientation interact with one another in men, often times focusing on the potential for identity conflict. This project will aim to understand the implications of that relationship, particularly with how it interacts with gender. Furthermore, this study seeks to bridge research examining masculinity on spirituality and on sexuality as the compound relationship between them is not well understood.

You must be 18 years or older and identify as male to participate.

This research study is administered online. Participation in this research will involve completion of several questionnaires. You may choose to skip a question if you do not wish to answer it; however, we prefer that you answer all questions. It should take you approximately 30 minutes to complete this survey.

Appendix A.2. Social Media Ad

Study looking at men who are not straight - regardless of what that may mean to you (gay, bi, same-sex attracted, pansexual, etc). Please note - this study examines cisgender men (guys who identify their biological sex as male and their gender as man). Participate here! https://bit.ly/menspiritualitystudy please note - this post will NOT be monitored for comments; if you have questions, please refer to the FAQ.

FAQ:

-Will my identity be protected?
Yes. You do NOT need to like this page or follow it or share it or anything else like that. The survey is anonymous. If you are interested in being selected for a follow-up interview you have the option of providing an email address; your responses will be kept confidential. Once interviews are complete, all emails will be deleted.

-Why is this a study?
The findings from this study will assist in the creation of future best practices for faculty and staff at universities to better serve their students.

-Why are transmen excluded from this survey?
This study looks examines sexual orientation, spiritual identity, and gender. Due to the limited scope of the project, evidence of the fact that people of different genders experience their spirituality differently, and the fact that transfolks experience their gender differently than cisgender folks, it is not possible include transmen in this study. Hopefully future studies can be more inclusive.

-Why is one of the identities you list "Struggling with Same Sex Attraction"?
Simply put, this is not an uncommon identity used by many folks to label themselves. While for some, this is a term that carries trauma, pain, and anguish, for others, it is a way to identify their personal truths. The population that chooses to use this term also, typically, does engage with the queer community at large. This term is included because it is a clear inclusionary call to these guys who otherwise do not identify with other terms those in the queer community may know and use.

-What is this study?
This is the PhD dissertation project of André Durham. André is a PhD Candidate at Oklahoma State University. This study was approved by the OSU IRB (IRB-20-343-STW).

-Can I share this study with others?
Yes, you may share this study with cisgendered men attending (or graduated in the past 12 months from) technical school, community college, or university in the USA and who identify as anything other than straight.

-I still have questions!
Please message the page for further information. If you wish to remain anonymous, you can create an anonymous email account and email the project at andre.durham@okstate.edu.

Appendix A.3. Recruit Email

Hello,

My name is André Durham and I am a Ph.D. student at Oklahoma State University in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in Higher Education. I am conducting a survey as a part of my dissertation. I am examining whether we can predict one's level of internalized homonegativity based upon one's beliefs about spirituality and gender. I would like to ask that you consider participating if you 1) are at least 18 years old, 2) identify as male, 3) and identify as any identity that is non-heterosexual (e.g., gay, bisexual, pansexual, struggling with same sex attraction, same gender loving, same sex attracted, etc.). Your participation is completely optional.

If you would like to participate, please follow this link: https://bit.ly/menspiritualitystudy. If you would like more information, please contact me at andre.durham@okstate.edu. I am more than happy to answer any questions you may have. There is no direct compensation for your participation, but you will be contributing to how colleges and universities can effectively address the needs of queer men. This project has been approved by Oklahoma State's Institutional Review Board (IRB-20-343-STW).

Thank you for your consideration!
André

Appendix A.4. Recruitment of Those Known to the Researcher

Researcher: "Hello [friend]! As you know, I am completing my PhD dissertation. As a part of my project, I am conducting research on queer guys who are in college or recently (within the last 12 months) in college. While it would be helpful for me to have your participation, it is completely up to you on whether or not you would like to participate. If you like, here is the link to the survey: https://bit.ly/menspiritualitystudy. I will have no idea whether or not you participated unless you choose to tell me. Please feel no pressure to participate. Please let me know what questions you have."

Appendix B.1. Demographics

How do you identify your gender?
○ Man
○ Woman
○ Trans*
○ Genderqueer
○ Something else (Please Specify) _____

How do you identify your biological sex?
○ Male
○ Female
○ Intersex
○ Something else (Please Specify) _____

Age (in years):

Year in School:
Year graduated undergrad (if recent graduate or a graduate student):

Major(s):

Nationality:

How would you describe your race/ethnicity? (e.g., white, black, Hispanic, mixed-race: black and Filipino, etc.)

How would you identify your sexual orientation?
○ Straight/Heterosexual
○ Gay/Homosexual
○ Bisexual
○ Other Non-Heterosexual Identity (Please Specify) _____

How long have you personally identified with this sexual orientation (i.e., how long have you know that this was your sexual orientation)? (in years)

About what percentage of people in your social circle (i.e., family, friends, co-workers, etc.) know of your sexual orientation?

_____ Percentage of people who know

Anything you would like to add about your sexual orientation?

What is your current religious affiliation?
○ Christian (including Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, Lutheran, Mormon, etc.)
○ Agnostic
○ Atheist
○ Humanist/Secular Humanism
○ Other (Please Specify) _____

How long have you identified with this religion? (in years)

In what religion/faith tradition (including Atheism, Agnosticism, etc.) were you raised?

Please specify your specific denomination of Christianity (if applicable) as well as any other religions with which you have identified. (e.g., Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Baptist, Episcopalian, Mormon, Nondenominational Christian, etc.)

Appendix B.2. Non-Religious/Non-Spiritual Scale (Cragun, Hammer, & Nielsen, 2015)

Many people have heard the word "religion" before and probably have some understanding of what that means. For this survey, we want you to think about religion in a specific way. When you think about religion for the following questions, we want you to think of institutionalized religion, or groups of people that share beliefs regarding the supernatural (i.e., gods, angels, demons, spirits) that are members of an organization. In this sense, the Roman Catholic Church would be a religion as it is a group of people with shared beliefs toward the supernatural and who are members of an organization. Members of a soccer club would not be considered a religion because they do not have shared beliefs toward the supernatural, while Hindus or Mormons would as they belong to an organization that emphasizes the membership's shared beliefs toward the supernatural.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I'm guided by religion when making important decisions in my life.	○	○	○	○	○
Religion is my most powerful guide of what is right and wrong.	○	○	○	○	○
When faced with challenges in my life, I look to religion for support.	○	○	○	○	○
I never engage in religious practices.	○	○	○	○	○
Religion helps me answer many of the questions I have about the meaning of life	○	○	○	○	○

I would describe myself as a religious person.	○	○	○	○	○
Religion is NOT necessary for my personal happiness.	○	○	○	○	○
I would be bothered if my child wanted to marry someone who is NOT religious.	○	○	○	○	○

Non-Religious/Non-Spiritual Scale (con't) (Cragun, Hammer, & Nielsen, 2015)

Some people use the terms "spirituality" and "spiritual" in a broad, NON-supernatural sense. They see those terms as just having to do with: a special or intense experience, an appreciation for existence, meaning in life, peacefulness, harmony, the quest for well-being, or emotional connection with people, humanity, nature, or the universe. In this way, an atheist could technically describe her or himself as being "spiritual" or as having had a "spiritual experience." In contrast to that broad approach, when you answer the items in THIS questionnaire we'd like you to think about "spirituality" and "spiritual" in the specific, SUPERNATURAL sense. And by "SUPERNATURAL" we mean: having to do with things which are beyond or transcend the material universe and nature. God, gods, ghosts, angels, demons, sacred realms, miracles, and telepathy are all supernatural by this specific definition.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Spirituality is important to me.	○	○	○	○	○
The rightness or wrongness of my actions will affect what happens to me when my body is physically dead.	○	○	○	○	○
I have a spirit/essence beyond my physical body.	○	○	○	○	○
All other things being equal, a spiritual person is better off.	○	○	○	○	○
The supernatural exists.	○	○	○	○	○
I engage in spiritual activities.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel sense of connection to something beyond what we can	○	○	○	○	○

observe, measure, or test scientifically.					
I cannot find worthwhile meaning in life without spirituality.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Appendix B.3. Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974)

Rate yourself on each item, on a scale where 1 means "never true," 4 means "true about half of the time," and 7 means "always true."

Adjective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. self-reliant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. yielding	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. helpful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. defends own beliefs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. cheerful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. moody	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. independent	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. shy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. conscientious	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. athletic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. affectionate	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. theatrical	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
13. assertive	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
14. flatterable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. happy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
16. strong personality	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
17. loyal	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
18. unpredictable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
19. forceful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
20. feminine	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

21. reliable	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
22. analytical	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
23. sympathetic	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
24. jealous	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
25. has leadership abilities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
26. sensitive to the needs of others	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
27. truthful	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
28. willing to take risks	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
29. understanding	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
30. secretive	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
31. makes decisions easily	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
32. compassionate	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
33. sincere	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
34. self-sufficient	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
35. eager to soothe hurt feelings	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
36. conceited	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
37. dominant	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
38. soft-spoken	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
39. likable	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
40. masculine	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
41. warm	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
42. solemn	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
43. willing to take a stand	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
44. tender	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

45. friendly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
46. aggressive	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
47. gullible	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
48. inefficient	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
49. acts as a leader	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
50. childlike	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
51. adaptable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
52. individualistic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
53. does not use harsh language	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
54. unsystematic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
55. competitive	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
56. loves children	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
57. tactful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
58. ambitious	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
59. gentle	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
60. conventional	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix B.4. Male Role Norms – Revised (Levant, Rankin, Williams, Hasan, & Bryant Smalley, 2010)

Please complete the questionnaire by selecting the option which indicates your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Give only one answer for each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	No opinion	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Homosexuals should never marry.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My country's leader should always be a man.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should be the leader in any group.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A man should be able to perform his job even if he is physically ill or hurt.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should not talk with a lisp because this is a sign of being gay.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should not wear make-up, cover-up, or bronzer.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should watch football games instead of soap operas.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
All homosexual bars should be closed down.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should not be interested in talk shows such as Oprah.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should excel at contact sports.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Boys should play with action figures not dolls.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should not borrow money from friends or family members.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should have home improvement skills.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should be able to fix most things around the house.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A man should prefer watching action movies to reading romantic novels.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should always like to have sex.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Homosexuals should not be allowed to serve in the military.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should never compliment or flirt with another male.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Boys should prefer to play with trucks rather than dolls.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A man should not turn down sex.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A man should always be the boss.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A man should provide the discipline in the family.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should never hold hands or show affection towards another.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

It is ok for a man to use any and all means to "convince" a person to have sex with him.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Homosexuals should never kiss in public.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A man should avoid holding his wife's (or other female relation's) purse at all times.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A man must be able to make his own way in the world.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Men should always take the initiative when it comes to sex.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A man should never count on someone else to get the job done.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Boys should not throw baseballs like girls.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A man should not react when other people cry.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A man should not continue a friendship with another man if he finds out that the other man is homosexual.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Being a little down in the dumps is not a good reason for a man to act depressed.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If another man flirts with the date accompanying a man, this is a serious provocation and the	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

man should respond with aggression.						
Boys should be encouraged to find a means of demonstrating physical prowess.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A man should know how to repair his car if it should break down.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Homosexuals should be barred from the teaching profession.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A man should never admit hen others hurt his feelings.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Men should get up to investigate if there is a strange noise in the house at night.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A man shouldn't bother with sex unless he can achieve an orgasm.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Men should be detached in emotionally charged situations.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for a man to take risks, even if he might get hurt.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A man should always be ready for sex.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A man should always be the major provider in his family.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When the going gets tough, men should get tough.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

I might find it a little silly or embarrassing if a male friend or mine cried over a sad love story.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Fathers should teach their sons to mask fear.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I think a young man should try to be physically tough, even if he's not big.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
In a group, it is up to the men to get things organized and moving ahead.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
One should not be able to tell how a man is feeling by looking at his face.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should make the final decision involving money.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is disappointing to learn that a famous athlete is gay.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Men should not be too quick to tell others that they care about them.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Appendix B.5. Internalized Homonegativity Scale (Mayfield, 2012)

The following statements deal with emotions and thoughts related to being gay, bisexual, or another non-heterosexual identity. Using the scale below, *please give your honest rating about the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement in regards to your specific orientation* (gay, bisexual, or another non-heterosexual identity).

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe being gay (or bisexual/other non-heterosexual identity) is an important part of me.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I believe it is OK for men to be attracted to other men in an emotional way, but it's not OK for them to have sex with each other.	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I think of my sexual orientation, I feel depressed.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that it is morally wrong for men to have sex with other men.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel ashamed of my sexual orientation.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am thankful for my sexual orientation.	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I think about my attraction towards men, I feel unhappy.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that more gay (or bisexual/other non-heterosexual identified) men should be shown in TV shows, movies, and commercials.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I see my sexual orientation as a gift.	○	○	○	○	○	○

When people around me talk about sexual orientation, I get nervous.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I wish I could control my feelings of attraction toward other men.	○	○	○	○	○	○
In general, I believe that homosexuality (or bisexuality/other non-heterosexual identities) are as fulfilling as heterosexuality.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am disturbed when people can tell I'm gay (or bisexual/another non-heterosexual identity).	○	○	○	○	○	○
In general, I believe that gay (or bisexual/other non-heterosexual identity) men are more immoral than straight men.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sometimes I get upset when I think about being attracted to men.	○	○	○	○	○	○
In my opinion, homosexuality (or bisexuality/other non-heterosexual identities) are harmful to the order of society.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sometimes I feel that I might be better off dead than gay (or bisexual/other non-heterosexual identity).	○	○	○	○	○	○
I sometimes resent my sexual orientation.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I believe it is morally wrong for men to be attracted to each other.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I sometimes feel that my homosexuality (or bisexuality/other	○	○	○	○	○	○

non-heterosexual identity) is embarrassing.						
I am proud to be gay (or bisexual/other non-heterosexual identity).	○	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that public schools should teach that homosexuality (or bisexuality/other non-heterosexual identities) is normal.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I believe it is unfair that I am attracted to men instead of women.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix B.6. Informed Consent Form.

Title: Gender, Spirituality, and Sexuality: Exploring Men's Intersecting Identities

Primary Investigator: André Durham, M.Ed.
                              Ph.D. student, Oklahoma State University, USA

This consent form contains information regarding the study "Gender, Spirituality, and Sexuality: Exploring Men's Intersecting Identities" so that you may make an informed decision on whether you would like to participate.

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to investigate the ways in which spirituality relate to one's self-perception of their own sexual orientation while also observing the role of masculinity and its relation to this intersection. This study is a part of the graduate studies of the primary researcher.

Selection: This project studies men who are enrolled in community college, university, or other institute of higher education who have a sexual orientation other than heterosexual. This means, this study is focused on studying the experiences of gay, bisexual, pansexual, and other non-heterosexual identities. Additionally, this study examines spiritual beliefs, including atheism and agnosticism. Because this study utilizes statistics, up to 120 participants will be sought.

What to Expect: This research study uses internet survey methodology. Participation in this research will involve completion of a questionnaire. You may choose to skip or not answer any question if you do not wish to answer it; however, it is preferred that you answer all questions. It will take approximately thirty minutes to complete this survey. The survey contains questions asking about your spiritual beliefs, your beliefs about gender, and your thoughts on your sexual orientation. At the end of the survey, you will have the option of submitting an email address for a follow-up interview.

Risks: The risks associated with this study are considered minimal and are related to topics in the survey that could make you feel uncomfortable for any particular reason. You may cease your participation at any time. Your results are confidential and will not be accessible by any person other than the primary investigator.

Benefits: You may gain an appreciation and understanding of how research is conducted.

Compensation: There is no direct compensation for your participation in this study. Unless you are participating via the SONA system. Then, .5 SONA credit will be your compensation.

Your Rights: Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time, without penalty.

Confidentiality & Anonymity: All information about you will be collected anonymously. At no point will your name be collected; every participant will receive a randomized participant code. Your signature will not be collected. Your participation in this study will be kept completely confidential. Furthermore, once interviews are completed, all remaining collected emails will be deleted. In addition, research records will be stored securely and confidentially; only the primary investigator will have access to the records.
If you choose to provide your email, your responses will be kept confidentially (that means, securely-protected without anyone other than the PI having access to your email address and the corresponding responses). Once

interviews are completed, all email addresses will be deleted and your responses will be anonymous. Providing your email is OPTIONAL and there will be no connection between your email and your responses once interviews are completed. If you choose not to provide your email address, then your responses will be anonymous from their submission date.

Contacts: You may contact the primary investigator at the following phone number or email address, should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study:

André Durham, M.Ed.
andre.durham@okstate.edu
+1 410 830 1128

You may also contact the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board if you have questions, comments, or concerns about your right as a participant.

405.744.3377
irb@okstate.edu

If you choose to participate: By continuing and beginning the survey, you are indicating that you freely and voluntarily and agree to participate in this study and you also acknowledge that
you are at least 18 years of age. It is recommended that you print a copy of this consent page for your records before you begin the study by clicking below.

Consent: I have received and understood information about the project Gender, Spirituality, and Sexuality: Exploring Men's Intersecting Identities and have been given contact information to ask questions.

- ☐ I give my consent to participate in this online survey.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time by exiting the survey.

If you would like a copy of this informational letter and consent, please print this page or contact the primary investigator, André Durham (andre.durham@okstate.edu). By agreeing to each of the above statements, you consent to participate and will be allowed to proceed to the survey.

Appendix C.1. Assumptions Tests for Model for All Participants
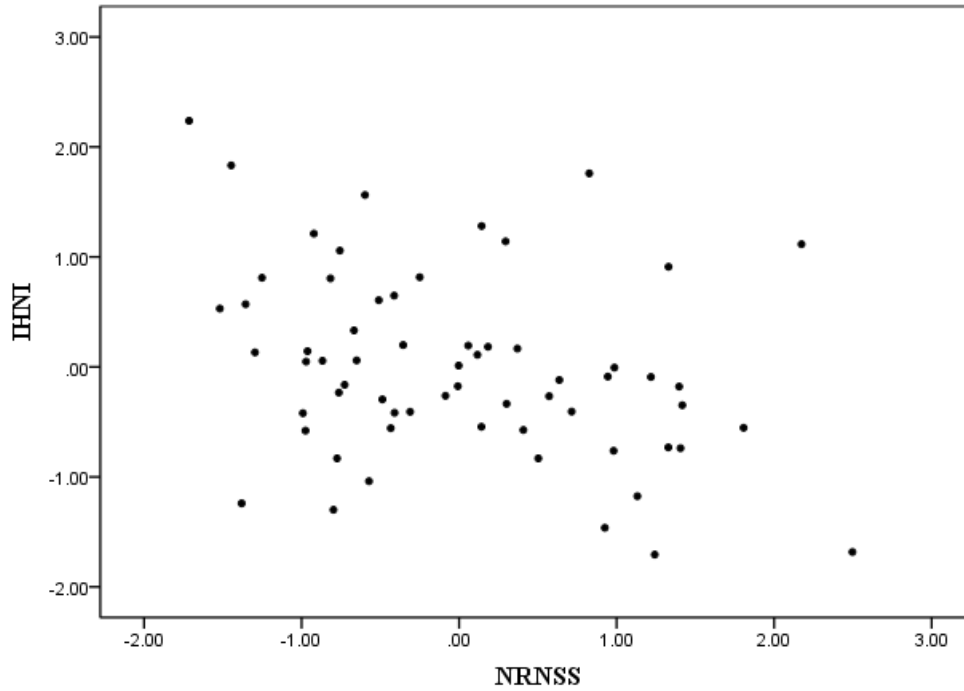
Figure 1. Correlation of IHNI and NRNSS

Figure 2. Correlation of IHNI and Masculinity Performance
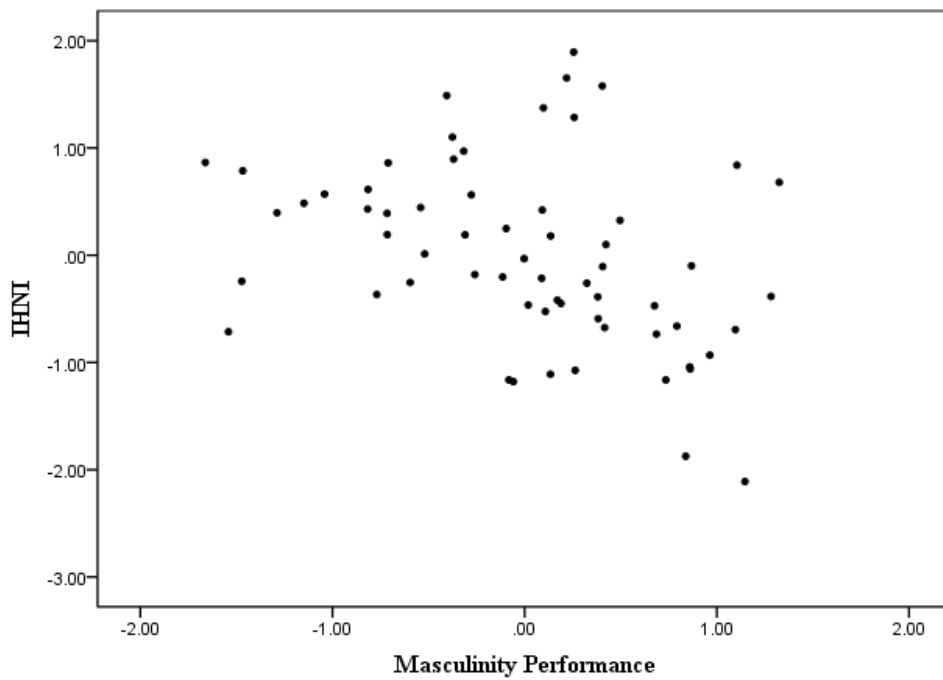
Figure 3. Correlation of IHNI and Beliefs in Male Role Norms
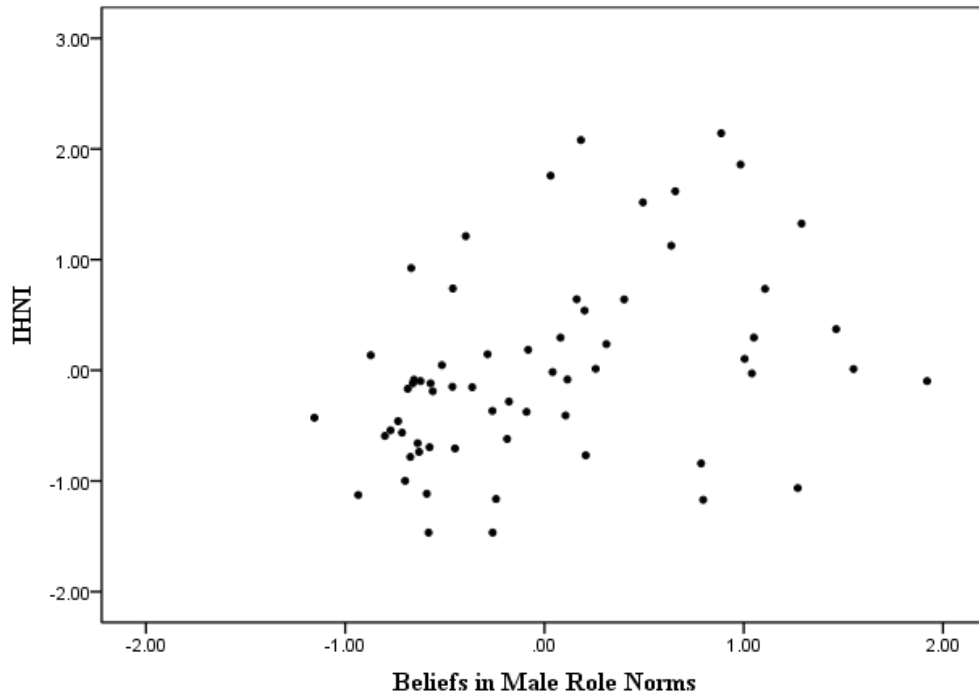

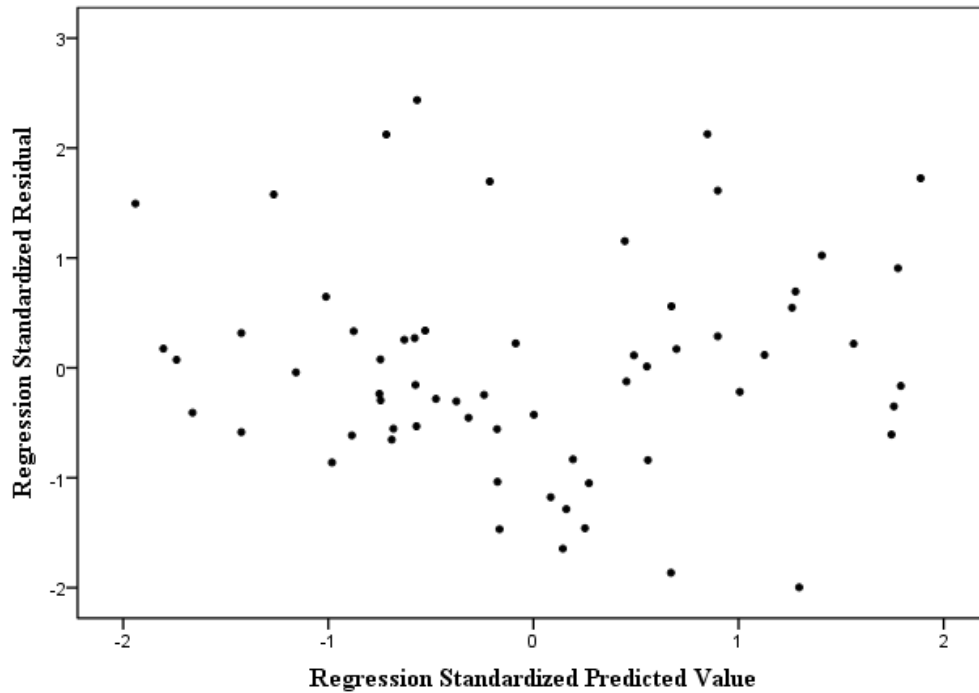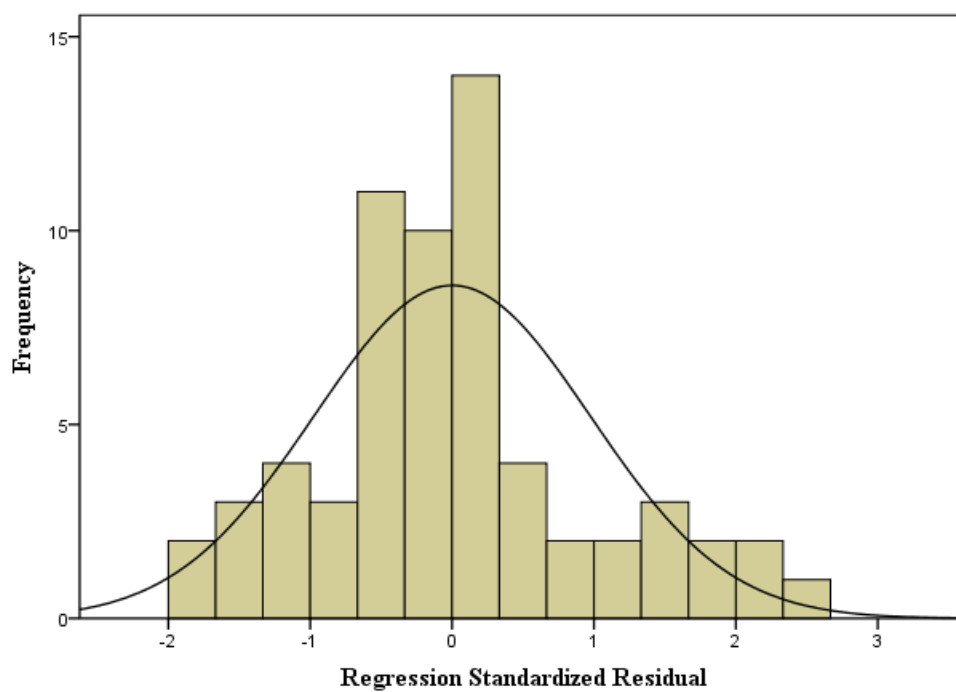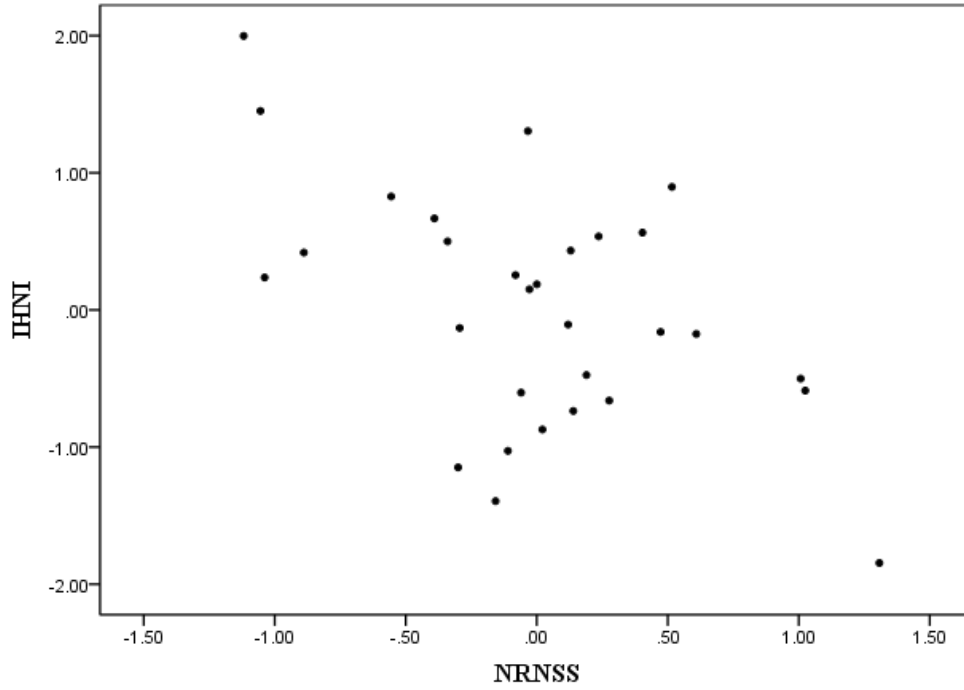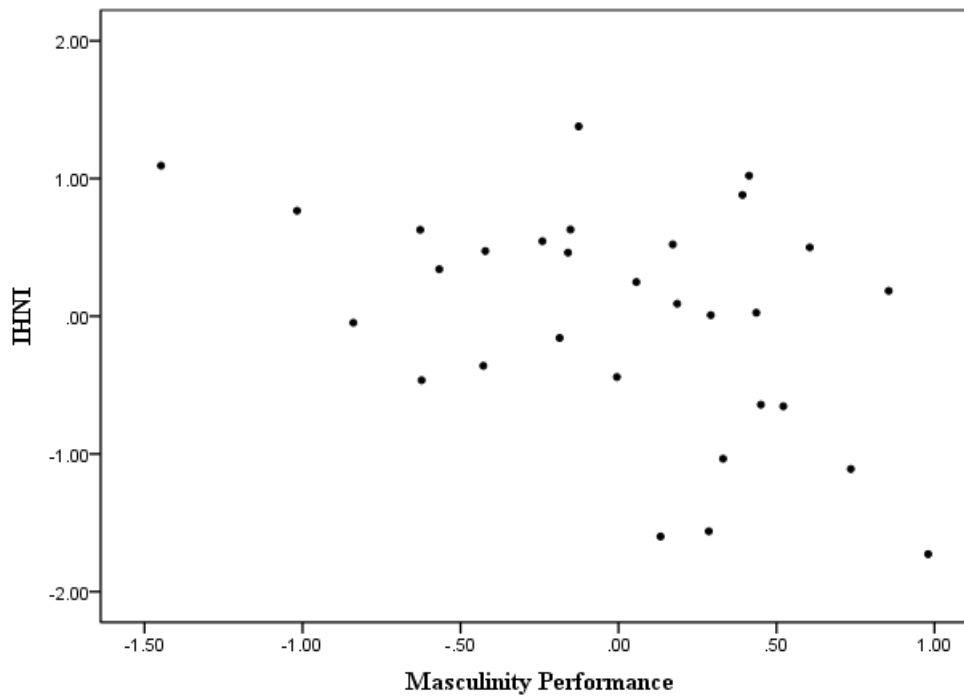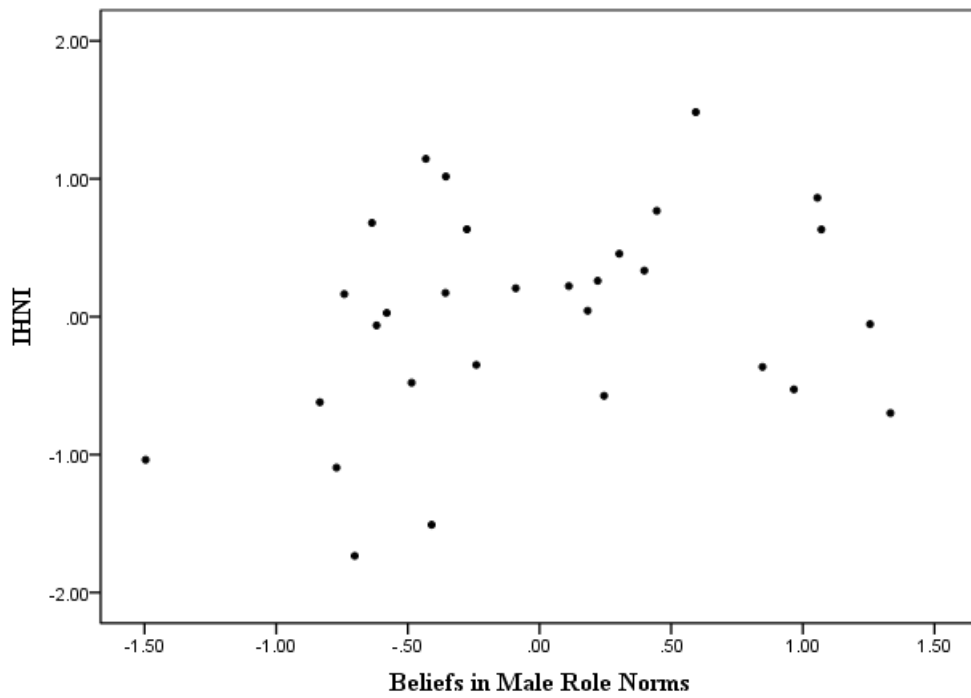**Figure 4. Residuals Plot to Assess Homogeneity of Variances**

Figure 5. Histogram Assessing the Normality of Residuals

Appendix C.2. Assumptions Tests for Christian Model

Figure 1. Correlation of IHNI and NRNSS

Figure 2. Correlation of IHNI and Masculinity Performance

Figure 3. Correlation of IHNI and Beliefs in Male Role Norms

Figure 4. Residuals Plot to Assess Homogeneity of Variances
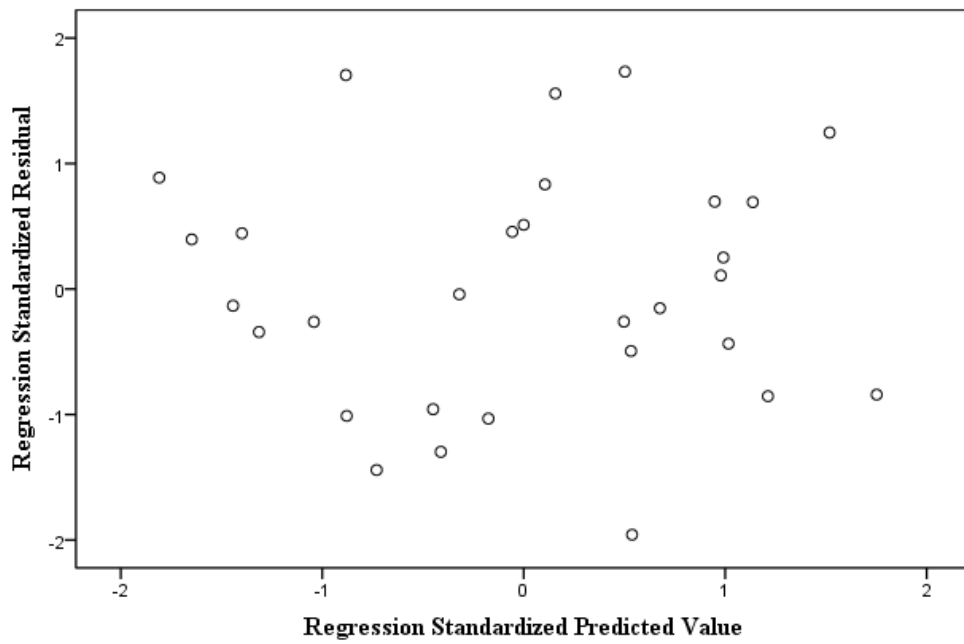
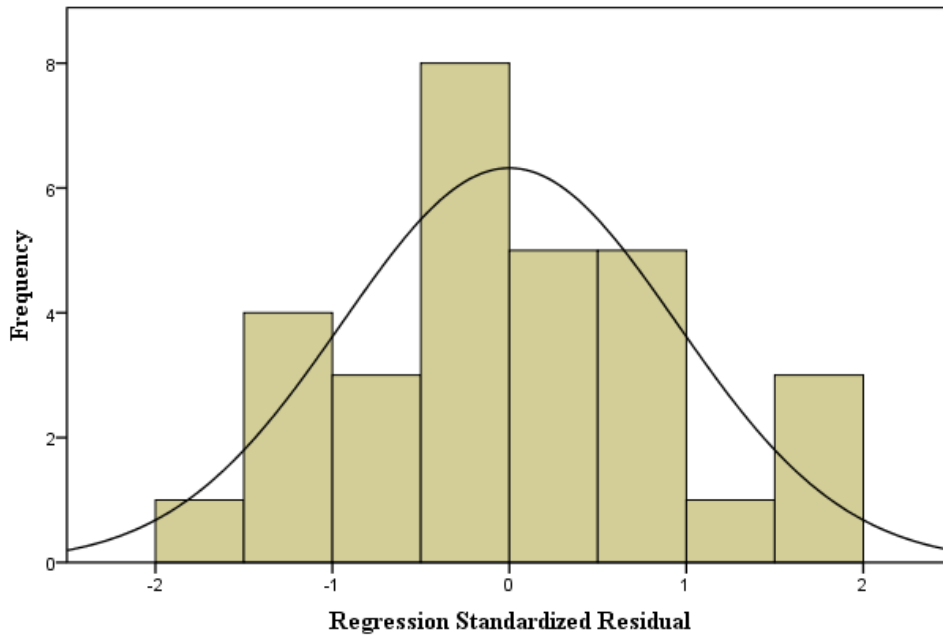**Figures 5. Histogram Assessing the Normality of Residuals**

Table 1

R² Change Statistics for Three Christian Models

Model	Change Statistics				
	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
Linear	0.361	7.622**	2	27	0.002
Quadratic	0.121	6.051*	1	26	0.021
Cubic	0	0.023	1	25	0.882

*p < .05, ***p < .001

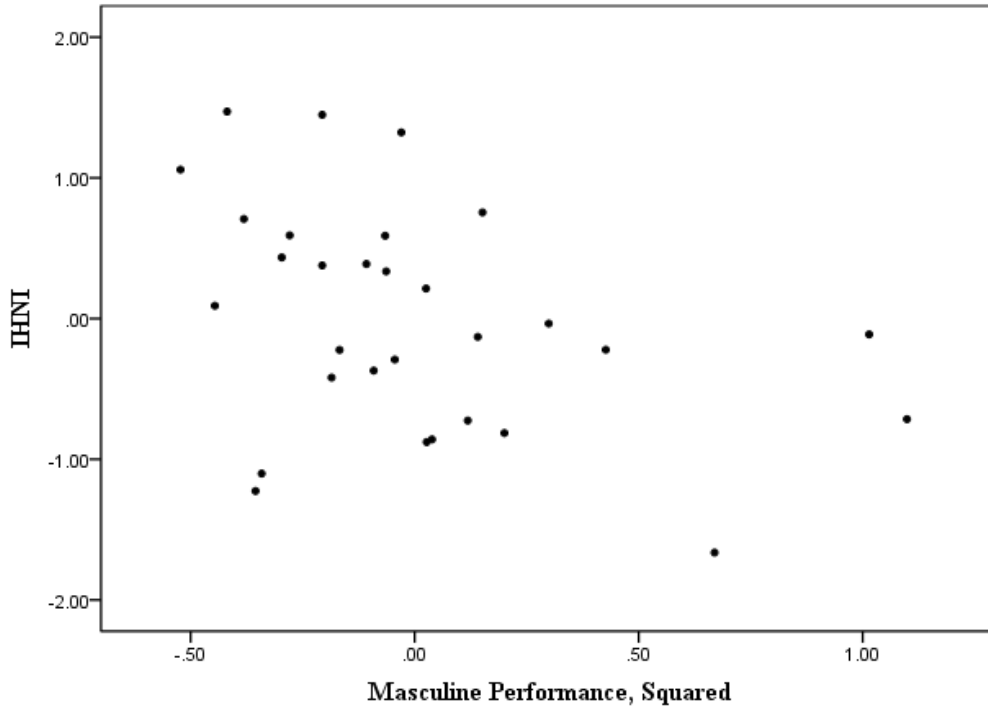**Figure 6. Correlation of IHNI and Squared, Masculinity Performance**

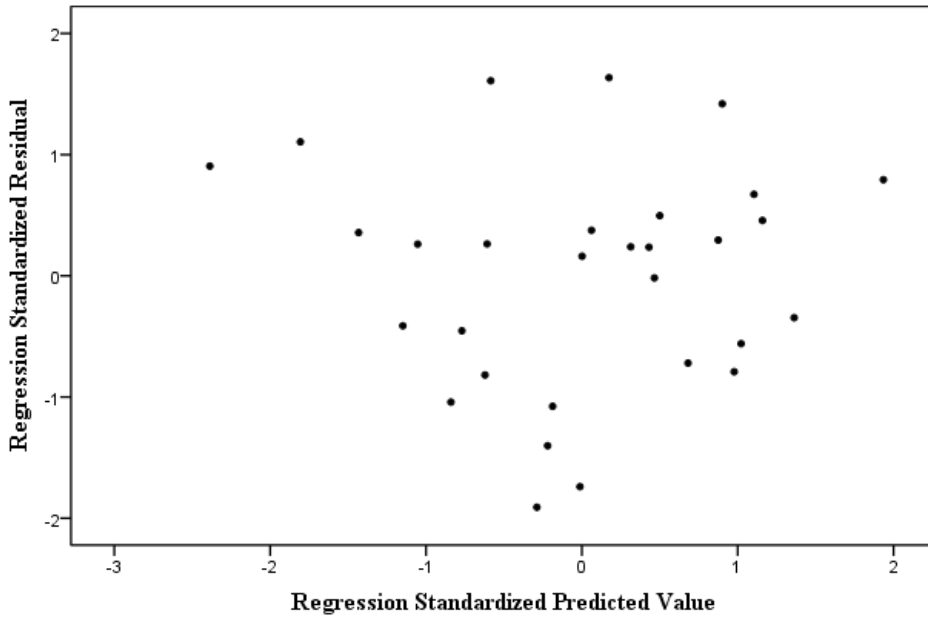**Figure 7. Residuals Plot to Assess Homogeneity of Variances for Quadratic Model**
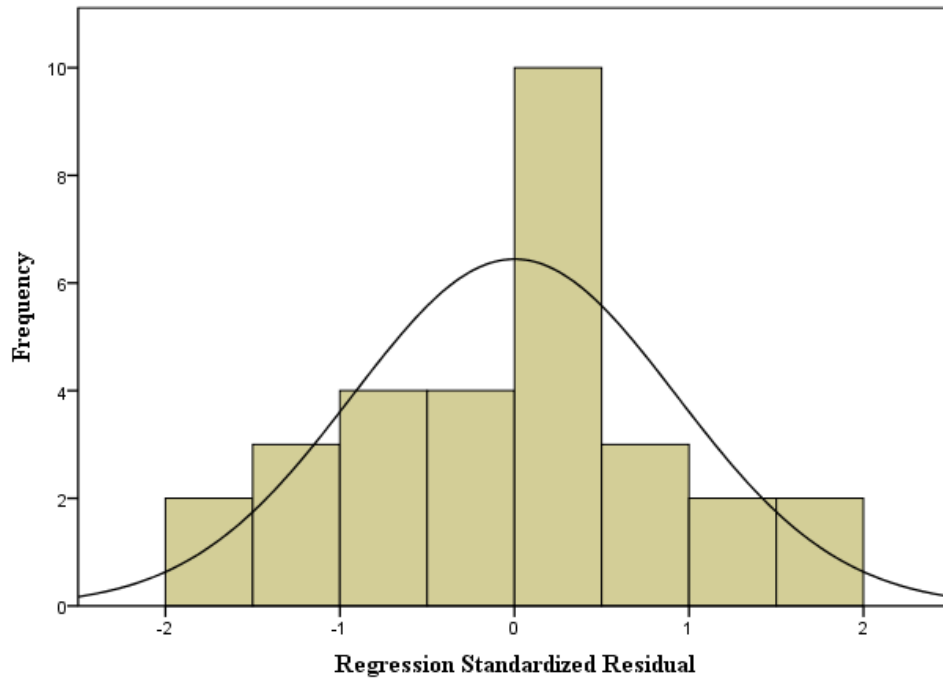
Figure 8. Histogram Assessing the Normality of Residuals for Quadratic Model

Appendix C.3 Age and Length of Time Out Correlation with Variables

Table 1

Correlations Between Demographics and Variables

	IHNI	NRNSS	Masculinity	Male Role Norms
Age*	-0.027	-0.057	-0.040	-0.031
Length of Time* Identifying with Sexuality	0.029	-0.069	0.065	0.122

*Measured in years; , p > .05 for all correlations

VITA

André R. Durham

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: GENDER, SPIRITUALITY, AND SEXUALITY: EXPLORING MEN'S
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