



Opinions of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and questioning individuals toward Evangelical Protestant churches.

“Colloquium”

March 24, 2018

Olivet Nazarene University

Dissertation

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Background Information

- During the last 65 years in America, the status of the LGBT community has changed dramatically following World War II (Morris, 2015).
- In 1973, the American public witnessed the largest advancement for this community due to the American Psychiatric Association's removal of homosexuality as a mental illness (Morris, 2015).
- In 1972, the United Church of Christ ordained the first gay male American (Morris, 2015).

Background Information continued

- In 1987 and 1993, the American public witnessed two of the largest marches in Washington on behalf of the LGBT community (Morris, 2015).
- In a landmark case on June 26, 2015 the supreme court legalized gay marriage, which was one of the largest advancements for the LGBT community (Dunning, 2015).
- Religious organizations and those opposed to the legalization faced many challenges in respect to offerings, benefits, and new obstacles (Dunning, 2015).

Problem Statement

- There is very little evidence that Evangelical Protestant churches have any influence within the LGBTQ community or those who support that community (Woodford, Walls, & Levy, 2012).
- The authors Buchanan, Dzelme, Harris, & Hecker's (2001) research found that many gays, lesbians, and bi-sexuals are looking for denominations that are accepting of their sexual identity, in order to maintain their need for religious and/or spirituality within their lives.

Problem Statement continued

- Research has identified that the majority of the LGBTQ community has testified to experiencing some type of negative experience with those affiliated with an Evangelical Protestant church. (Wood & Conley, 2014).
- Little research has been conducted concerning why members of the LGBTQ community are not involved in an Evangelical Protestant church.
(Hamblin & Gross, 2013) and (Levy & Edmiston, 2014).



The purpose of the current study was to investigate the opinions of LGBTQ individuals toward Evangelical Protestant churches, in order to discover the differences between the five sexual orientations concerning the factors that influence their current involvement, disconnection, or unwillingness to be a part of an Evangelical Protestant church.

Research Questions

1. What are the opinions of LGBTQ individuals towards Evangelical Protestant churches?
- 2: Are there differences between LGBTQ individuals within their denominational and self-reported level of involvement in church over time?
- 3: What differences exist, if any, in the total scale scores regarding barriers discouraging involvement in Evangelical Protestant churches between LGBTQ individuals?
- 4: What differences exist, if any, in the total scale scores for facilitators of involvement in Evangelical Protestant churches between LGBTQ individuals?

Research Design

The researcher chose to construct a survey based out of Salkind & Rainwater's theory that "the best application of sampling in theory and practice can probably be found in survey research"

(Salkind & Rainwater, 2003, p. 198).

Salkind & Rainwater, also identified that surveys hold the ability to "examine the frequency and relationships between psychological and sociological variables and taps into constructs such as attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, preferences, and opinions"

(p. 198).

Research Design continued

The researcher performed a pilot test in an attempt to work through any issues concerning the overall structure, flow, and question construction of the survey instrument.

The researcher made needed adjustments to the survey instrument following the pre-test and suggestions from experts within the field.

Limitations

1. The survey left room for individuals to self-identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, and questioning, which opened the door for individuals to falsely report. Activists within the Evangelical and LGBTQ community could have falsely reported.
2. Participants could have quickly maneuvered through the survey instrument in an attempt to finish.

Limitations continued

3. The survey instrument is newly created and studied a very broad area that had very little previous quantitative research surrounding it.

4. There also remained the possibility of biases on the part of the researcher in the development of the survey tool, due to the researcher's limited knowledge base, along with a limited amount of survey instrument examples that were quantitative.

Data Collection

The researcher began distribution of the survey instrument in August of 2016 and kept it open until May of 2017.

- In an attempt to receive an adequate number of responses, the researcher posted the survey multiple times on social media, which again included survey gizmo, organizations that primarily service the needs of the LGBTQ community, and on personal Facebook accounts where it was shared.
- Data collection concluded with the researcher obtaining 210 final participants who met all the needed criteria.

Data Collection (participants)

Participants Total: 210 qualified participants

Participant totals per sexual orientation

1. Lesbian = 30
2. Gay = 49
3. Bi-sexual = 93
4. Transgender = 5
5. Questioning = 33

Analytical Methods

1: What differences exist, if any, in the opinions of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, and questioning individuals on various measures of attitudes toward Evangelical Protestant churches?

The researcher began the analysis of RQ1 through an analysis of a calculated total scale score for the sixteen questions of the survey instrument that asked the questions pertaining to the overall opinions of the LGBTQ community concerning Evangelical Protestant churches.

Analysis: The researcher ran a one – way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between the groups on measures of attitudes toward Evangelical Protestant churches.

RQ2: Are there differences between lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, and questioning individuals within their denominational and self - reported levels of involvement in church over time?

Analysis: The researcher ran a mix between and within ANOVA to test for differences between the groups on their denominational involvement and self-reported levels of involvement in church over time.

The researcher ran several frequency and descriptive analyses of the data to determine respondent involvement in churches over time and the denominations in which participants attended church.

RQ3: What differences exist, if any, in the total scale scores regarding barriers discouraging involvement in Evangelical Protestant churches between lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning individuals?

Analysis: The researcher ran a one-way ANOVA testing for differences between groups regarding total scale scores for barriers discouraging involvement in the Evangelical Protestant church.

RQ4: What differences exist, if any, in the total scale scores for facilitators of involvement in Evangelical Protestant churches between lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning individuals?

Analysis: The researcher ran a one-way ANOVA testing for differences between groups regarding the total scale scores for facilitators encouraging involvement in Evangelical Protestant churches.

Findings

RQ1

1. The data provided an observation concerning the overarching opinions of the LGBTQ community towards Evangelical Protestant churches. The researcher discovered in the findings that the majority of participants identified as either strongly disagree or disagree.
2. The data provided no statistically significant results concerning the differences between sexual orientation.

Findings

RQ2

1. The data provided evidence that suggested there was a statistically significant result that over time participation within Evangelical Protestant churches did decline.
2. The data provided evidence that denominational change over the years did not have a statistically significant change.

Findings

RQ3

1. The data provided evidence of consistency across all five sexual orientations. For example, if a pastor was a barrier to the participants identified as lesbian, then the pastor was a barrier across all sexual orientations. There were no unique barriers for the different groups.
2. The data provided the top 5 barriers to involvement.

Findings

RQ4

1. The data concluded that there were no differences discovered between sexual orientations concerning the factors that keep the LGBTQ community involved in Evangelical Protestant churches.
2. The data provided the top 5 factors that encourage involvement.

Conclusions

1. Participants had a negative view of Evangelical Protestant churches.
2. There were no significant differences in opinions between sexual orientations regarding Evangelical Protestant churches.
3. Participants identified a decrease in participation over time within church.
4. There were no significant differences between sexual orientations regarding participation within church over time.

Conclusions Continued

5. There were no statistical differences between sexual orientations concerning the barriers that discouraged involvement within Evangelical Protestant churches.
6. The majority of participants identified with a large number of barriers, which prevented them from involvement within Evangelical Protestant churches.
7. There were no statistically significant differences between sexual orientations and the factors that contributed to their involvement within Evangelical Protestant churches.
8. The most significant factors to the encouragement of the participants' participation within Evangelical Protestant churches was provided.

Implications

1. Once a church connection is lost, the probability of reconnection with a church decreases significantly.
2. All five sexual orientations have the same feelings toward Evangelical Protestant churches.
3. There was an over-all negative opinion held by the participants of the study toward Evangelical Protestant churches.

Implications continued

4. The three top barriers to involvement within Evangelical Protestant churches and what those barriers teach Evangelical Protestant church leaders was provided.
5. The factors that contributed to continued current involvement and how those factors might assist Evangelical Protestant churches in maintaining a connection of LGBTQ individuals within their churches was provided.

Recommendations

1. Add an alternate study, which would ask identical questions to participants identified as heterosexuals, in an attempt to compare responses.
2. Acquire a larger sample size that may assist in providing more authenticated data.
3. Combine some of the questions asked, to provide a more concise survey instrument.
4. Contact more groups that have access to transgender participants that can take the survey.

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