Abstract

**Thesis:** Sexual Identity and Emotion Regulation

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**Background:** For individuals who have same-sex attractions, the discovery of those attractions can be associated with emotional distress due to either an internal conflict between their sexual attraction and social expectations or due the pressure associated with being part of a marginalized group. In the present study, I sought to understand the strategies that same-sex attracted individuals may employ to regulate potentially distressing emotions. **Methods:** Multiple regression was used to analyze the variance of intercorrelations between internalized homonegativity and lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) identity as well as intercorrelations between emotion regulation strategies and LGB identity. **Results:** The first hypothesis, which stated that internalized homonegativity would negatively contribute to the variance of LGB identity, was not supported. The second hypothesis, which stated that emotion regulation would significantly contribute to the variance of LGB identity, was not supported. **Conclusions:** Contrary to the research hypothesis, there was a positive relationship between internalized homonegativity and LGB identity instead of a negative one. Although emotion regulation strategies did not contribute to the variance of LGB identity, a significant positive relationship was determined between expressive suppression and internalized homonegativity, but only among females. Such a result could indicate that females employ expressive suppression to attenuate negative emotions associated with internalized homonegativity.