

How Schools Influence the Socialization Process of Sexual Minorities: Manifestations, Causes, and Effectiveness

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Abstract. With the development and progress of society and ideology, almost all countries show increasing concern and acceptance for sexual minorities. However, the social pressure borne by sexual minorities should not be underestimated, especially in schools, workplaces, and other places. LGBT teenagers are under tremendous pressure, and traditional schools' education and school climate often regard them as minorities or even freaks. The mental health of adolescents is also a critical issue. Therefore, our research studied how schools affect the socialization process of sexual minority youth groups: performance, causes, and effectiveness. This research idea is divided into four steps. First, it should clarify the relevant concepts of moral socialization and self-stigmatization of LGBTQ. Secondly, finding out the negative and positive factors in school and the specific performance of these factors' influence on teenagers' cognition and behaviors. Next, think about how to create a proper climate for sexual minorities. Finally, proposing a feasible solution. Our research not only recognizes the impacts and importance of schools on sexual minorities but also knows how to help sexual minorities integrate into society through schools in practical applications, breaking through the limitations of traditional themes and filling the gap in this study.

Keywords: Socialization; School climate; Bullying; Resilience.

1. Introduction

In the broadest sense, socialization is a process in which individuals learn the beliefs and values of their social groups and is also a process in which individuals learn how to adjust their behaviors to meet the expectations of other members of the group, and grow into a person with a unique personality, thus reacting to the society. It can also think that socialization transforms a natural person into a social person who can adapt to a particular social culture, participate in social life, perform certain sexual behaviors, and have specific personality characteristics. Students' socialization belongs to the combination of the early stage of human socialization and the expected stage, and it is also the key period critical to whole-life socialization. If a good foundation is laid at this stage, the socialization of the following steps may be realized smoothly. Therefore, the public must attach importance to the research on the socialization of individual students. With the development of science and society, all countries have shown increasing concern and acceptance of sexual minorities. By the end of 2020, 9 countries and one region have officially recognized the same-sex marriage law. However, the minor stress suffered by LGBTQ cannot be underestimated, especially for young people. Traditional schools' education and climate often regard them as minorities or freaks. LGBT teenagers have less resiliency power than adults, which is more likely to lead to mental health problems. However, the current research on the mental health of LGBT teenagers is also lacking. Therefore, our research studied how schools affect the socialization process of sexual minority youth groups: performance, causes, and effectiveness.

This paper is divided into four parts; the first part analyzes the impact of schools on the socialization of sexual minority youth groups, including positive and negative influences. The second

part examines the importance and role of schools in the socialization of sexual minorities. The third part considers how to help sexual minorities integrate into society through schools so that the research content can be applied to actual life conditions. First, our research clarifies the concepts and connotations of LGBT teenagers' moral socialization and self-stigmatization, laying a theoretical foundation. Secondly, through the investigation of how schools affect the socialization process of sexual minority youth groups, finding out the negative and positive factors in schools, as well as the specific manifestations of the impact of these factors on young people's moral cognition, moral emotion, and moral behavior. Next, based on the internal channels - how to shape the resilience of sexual minorities and external media - how to shape the living environment of sexual minorities- how to help sexual minorities integrate into society through schools. Finally, proposing feasible solutions to practical problems, pays attention to the physical and mental development of LGBT teenagers, scientifically guides the subculture of teenagers, and improves the educational intervention measures of the socialization function of schools and society. Our research not only recognizes the impact and importance of schools on sexual minorities but also knows how to help sexual minorities integrate into society through schools in practical applications. In addition, our research breaks traditional themes and limits the research objects to LGBT people and young students in school, filling the gap in this research.

2. The Impacts of Schools on the Socialization of Sexual Minority Youths

2.1 Positive Impacts

2.1.1 Good Education

School, where people undergo secondary socialization, is crucial to youths' development and performance in society. LGBTQ students are often prevented from socialization due to the conflict between their sexual minority identity and the normative heterosexuality belief held by the dominant culture. One way of promoting LGBTQ students' well-being is to provide them with a good education. A good education should be a resilience resource for LGBTQ youths and reduce cisgender classmates' prejudice against LGBTQ youths. Several studies have shown that an LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum can promote a positive school climate and healthy self-conception for LGBTQ students. A good education also helps shape wide horizons and comprehensive perspectives for all students so that they do not see their homosexual classmates through jaundiced eyes.

2.1.2 LGBTQ-Inclusive Climate

Several school policies, strategic programs, and practices have been proven to reduce the stigma experiences of LGBTQ students on campus. First, the presence of inclusive and enumerated anti-bullying school policies that identify specific rules to protect LGBTQ students is more effective and more accessible to implement than policies that vaguely or implicitly include the rules. Schools with inclusive and enumerated policies usually have fewer students reporting homophobic discrimination and harassment. Programs like gay-straight alliances (GSAs) based at school can also help LGBTQ students integrate into the school community. Studies have shown that students in schools with GSAs reported higher levels of community connectedness and lower possibilities of missing school. GSAs' presence has also been the most visible factor of perceived school safety for LGBTQ students. The last program through which schools can provide a favorable climate for LGBTQ students is to include an LGBTQ-related curriculum. When students can access LGBTQ-related information, they will perceive the school as a safe place and have more resilience power.

2.2 Negative Impacts

2.2.1 School Exclusion: Bullying in Schools

Typically, bullying means a physically or socially stronger person using power to threaten or harm the targeted victims, aiming to gain or maintain their high position among peer groups. In contrast to

direct bullying, which can include physical and verbal aggression, indirect bullying involves manipulating social relationships to scandalize the victim's reputation or marginalize the victim.

Bullying is one of the most common forms of perpetration and victimization of LGBTQ students at school, including homophobic name-calling, the spread of gossip, and physical violence, because the peer group appears most frequently in the school context and are often vehicles for the attack. Researchers have found that at the development age, adolescent peers can be incredibly influential on children's behaviors and attitudes. If the significant climate of a school is adverse and exclusive to LGBTQ students, their psychological well-being and socialization progress would be negatively influenced as they continuously face discriminating attitudes and behaviors from other heterosexual students. For example, young students who repeatedly experience school bullying may suffer anxiety, depression, self-deprecation, and even suicide attempts.

2.2.2 Internalized Stigma

According to Meyer's minority stress model, LGBTQ people usually experience extra stress than their heterosexual peers—stigma, prejudice, and discrimination—because of their membership in stigmatized groups. One of the minority stress processes in LGBTQ people is caused by the internalization of negative social and cultural attitudes regarding their sexual orientations and gender identities, also known as internalized stigma. In general, internalized stigma significantly impacts the formation and the level of concealment of individual sexual identity. Researchers have demonstrated the correlation between LGBTQ people's high internalized stigma and early identity formation, high hiding, and low self-esteem, which may cause adverse symptoms like anxiety and depression. For students, adolescence is a crucial part of their cognitive growth, where they begin their identity development and self-understanding. Additionally, adolescents experience notable changes at this stage: an increase in self-consciousness, concern for social acceptance, risk-taking behaviors, and mental health problems. Therefore, if they constantly receive a low level of acceptance and have frequent stigma experiences at schools, they will internalize heterosexism over time and suffer from severe psychological and developmental issues.

3. The Intrinsic Mechanism of Schools on the Socialization of Sexual Minority Youth

3.1 Schools are Essential Places for the Generation of Values of Sexual Minority Youth.

The actions of the school can have a significant influence on the LGB youth in school. LGBT children have elevated suicidality rates. These included school stigma factors (e.g., teachers not speaking out against prejudice, lessons being negative about sexual minorities), adverse reactions to coming out from family and friends, and LGBT-related harassment or crime experiences. So, health, social care, and school care should address LGBT-specific risks. School life is integral to socialization for more than ten years after a child enters school. School is one of the most critical factors influencing youth socialization.

Schools are charged with teaching social students to live to knowledge, teaching codes of conduct, inculcating values, and the responsibility of cultivating ideal goals. The atmosphere in the school is highly related to the quality of young students' physical and mentally healthy. It creates a pure and active environment which makes the students feel warm. It can wholeheartedly enter their studies and life, making sense of belonging and conducive to developing innovative thinking in young people. However, the imperfection of the school education system greatly negatively influences teenagers' growth schools are too closed due to strict regulations, and young people are turned into learning machines. It seriously affects the social communication ability of teenagers, and it isn't easy to have the opportunity to apply the knowledge learned to life. Teenagers live and learn by school rules, and individuality, interests, and talents are suppressed. At this age, they are in a crucial period of personality development. The strict school education system ignores the needs of teenagers in all aspects, resulting in the loss of their ability to learn the world more comprehensively and how to treat

people who are different from themselves (e.g., lesbian/bisexual), and even how to accept themselves. As a result, the school is to improve the education system, allow the students to establish proper values for sexual minority students, and try its best to minimize the discrimination and prejudice against such sexual minority students from other students. Only under an inclusive environment in school the sexual minority students could be more confident in studying and socializing, which could also improve their sense of identity.

3.2 Schools are Essential Social Support for Sexual Minorities.

Sexual minorities are often overlooked in the focus on school violence and bullying. Sexual minority students mainly refer to people whose sexual orientation is gay, lesbian, or bisexual and whose gender identity is transgender due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, and other reasons. These kinds of people are frail to school violence and bullying. The adverse effects of school violence and bullying have a significant influence on LGBT students more than other students. Wei Zhongzheng surveyed 751 LGBT students in China on bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The results showed that 40.9% had heard cruel nicknames at school, 34.6% had been verbally hurt, 21.9% had been isolated, and 6.0% had been threatened with physical harm. Not only are LGBT students affected by bullying, but some average sexual orientation students may also suffer violence and bullying from the person who fears gays or lesbians according to their gender expression. LGBT students are exposed to violence and bullying in schools at different stages of learning, with more than 30 percent of students receiving verbal abuse at all locations. There are regional differences in school violence and bullying that most often target LGBT students. Still, LGBT students in all regions report experiencing some form of school violence and bullying at some point.

Studies related to the education level variable found that individuals with higher degrees have more positive attitudes toward homosexuality, that higher grade level students usually treat sexual minority students kinder and more accepting than younger students, also fewer students in higher grades experience violence and homophobic comments. Students in more economically advanced districts rarely hear the word "gay" used in hostile situations. It is believed that the more open a school is, the more objectively and comprehensively a student in this school can regard this kind of particular group. Students will be more tolerant and friendlier with sexual minority students. Another education study has found that students who have been taught about homosexuality in the classroom are more accepting than those who have not.

To summarize, the publicity and education on homosexuality, like gay and lesbian, for all the students on campus can also change students' attitudes towards sexual minority students. When an individual has a more comprehensive understanding of the group, it is more conducive to breaking the prejudice and stigma against the LGBT group, and the attitude is more inclusive. Thus, schools need to pay more attention to educating students to have a more accepting view of the sexual minority of students and give more substantial support to this kind of student.

3.3 Schools are the Starting Point for Creating an Excellent Social Atmosphere

In investigating the relationship between teachers and students, students who establish more positive relationships with teachers usually do not suffer negative experiences such as school violence and bullying. In contrast, more students heard negative comments in the classroom with a low teacher-student ratio (which means a higher number of students per teacher). More importantly, it is easier for teachers to intervene or prevent campus violence and bullying when they supervise comparatively lower students. The possible explanation is that when the atmosphere in the classroom is warm and positive between teachers and students, students are easier to muster up the courage to ask for the teacher's help. Also, in such a friendly and positive atmosphere, the teacher could pay more energy and attention to supporting the students.

Also, in studies related to school culture, it was found that the diversity of campus culture reflects the inclusiveness of the school atmosphere, and students usually are not uncomfortable establishing friendships with gay and lesbian students and frequently join different kinds of social activities that

contain sexual minority students. In studies that have co-existed with school systems, school systems play an essential role in school violence, which means that education systems and school policies can directly affect the experiences of other students and teachers toward this particular group. When institutional safeguards are in place, students who are gay or lesbian experience fewer nasty comments and bullying events, and they will feel that the school environment is acceptable and diversified with more help from teachers when bullying occurs in school. Living in a positive school environment means that sexual minority students will experience minor incidents of violence and bullying toward them, so they will have fewer physical and mental puzzles with a higher sense of belonging and self-identity. An interpersonal interaction study found that students who learned about homosexuality through physical attachment, like a face-to-face conversation, had more positive attitudes toward gays and lesbians than students who knew about it through other means. Therefore, schools need to organize more activities and let more sexual minority students join to create a great atmosphere.

4. How could schools help sexual minorities integrate into society

4.1 Internal channels: How Schools can shape the resilience of LGBTQ group

According to Smith and Gray, strength development is influenced by protective interpersonal interactions, supporting circumstances, and internal quality. Social support among young people who identify as sexual minorities are essential at school. More teacher support was connected with higher school affiliation in Murdock and Bolch's model. In contrast, support from family and friends was not found to be related to school affiliation. Therefore, teachers have a crucial role in helping teenagers develop more resilience.

Additionally, having instructors aware of sexual minorities would provide the most accepting atmosphere for LGBTQ pupils, promoting good mental health and reducing bullying at school. Numerous high school counselors are ineffective and fail to fulfill the requirements of LGBTQ students. Professional high school counselors can assist LGBTQ students when confused or need to deal with complex topics to please them for college life.

Additionally, LGBTQ children who attend schools with a Gay-straight alliance (GSA) perform better and have better mental health. Some LGBTQ students might consider the LGBTQ student group when selecting a school. Due to the strong sense of community, self-identification with the identity group, self-affirmation, and supportive relationships may exist. In that way, they feel confident in themselves to come out to the people around them.

LGBTQ-related research specifically prescribed in California can also help LGBTQ students increase their self-identity because by learning about the contributions of the LGBTQ community and the significance of various thermal events, learning about their group's culture, history, and change allows them to form a more profound sense of identity.

4.2 External resources: How to Shape the Living Environment of LGBTQ Groups in school

People, especially those in the LGBTQ community, may strive to demand change when they see discriminatory rules on campus, such as uneven perks, since many students or faculty members will band together to achieve such consensus, and the nondiscrimination policy of the school will also help many individuals. In addition, heterosexual people want equal rights for everyone by raising concerns, advocating for policy reviews, or altering regulations with the LGBTQ community. To make nondiscrimination policies in schools, instructors, staff, and students collaborate with big, regional public institutions that may do research based on particular cultures, regions, and situations to make decisions about the policies of the LGBTQ community. The entire process will last for many years and include several leaders. Advocates also leveraged personal connections with administrators and boards to investigate opportunities for change. Their outreach included various public campus groups to increase awareness and deliver programming through events and the media. As a result, having a campus atmosphere that promotes freedom of speech is crucial. Highly skilled and ethical

staff and students with fundamental planning, motivating, and leading abilities are also essential. While what the U.S. has done in terms of the human rights movement looks good, putting the data into a broader context, the percentage of the human rights movement in the data for higher education institutions is not promising. Some regional schools may organize these changes because of other factors such as policy or religion.

A more inclusive atmosphere for students is being progressively created in some schools in addition to student initiative. Even though at least seven states forbid course content to address LGBTQ issues, California approved the FAIR Act after years of advocacy. As a result, the state's curriculum now includes more information on homosexuality and a course on LGBTQ study. The new curriculum enables students to learn more about individual identity and social diversity among different communities, including the historical contributions of homosexuality. Thanks to the revised curriculum, students now have a firmer grasp of historical characters and events. Many kids' knowledge of diversity has improved significantly due to their education being more equitable and authentic.

Furthermore, some advocates for queer education are attempting to equip both present and aspiring teachers so that they may change teachers' perspectives and be more favorable to the LGBTQ population. Some activities can help faculty members comprehend how heterosexuality affects everyone; sexual and gender norms, relationships, and differences question the gender binary. The extent of systematic oppression of minority groups by influential groups ultimately enables teachers to be part of advocating for LGBTQ policies.

5. Conclusion

This article studied how schools can affect the socialization process of sexual minority youths and conducted deep analyses of schools' roles in shaping resilience, creating an environment, and providing support for LGBTQ students. School, an essential field for students' knowledge and moral cultivation, has positive and negative impacts on LGBTQ youths' socialization process. By analyzing these impacts, this article offers a theoretical basis for schools to improve their climate for the development of LGBTQ students. Also, students who are stigmatized due to their sexual orientation and gender identity are often marginalized or ignored at schools. They generally report higher school bullying than their heterosexual counterparts. This article sought to inform schools about their importance in providing social support and a positive social atmosphere for LGBTQ students. Finally, this article investigated internal channels (shaping the resilience of LGBTQ students) and external media (shaping the living environment in schools) to help LGBTQ students integrate into society.

There are also some shortages of this article. First, this article discusses how schools influence the young sexual minority's socialization in school, but the data and samples gained are only from a few countries. So, the result of the research is not conclusive enough. Moreover, all the conclusions and inferences are based on the data and experiments that already exist in society. Did not set up an investigation by ourselves. In this way, maybe one day can do a related experiment on our own and make a more detailed record in the future. It can improve by incorporating more samples from different countries, grades, regions like rural or urban, or even other kinds of schools such as international or public schools. Thus, this way can get more information about the situation that sexual minority young are experiencing in the global world and try to find a solution to help them.

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