There could be more inclusion of LGBTQ+ students that are also part of racial and ethnic minorities. It is unfortunate that in discussions this is not taken into consideration because minorities are the ones that are targeted the most.

An open-ended question response by a queer Latinx student

What We’ve Started to Learn

• Belongingness is important to student success
  • Students’ sense of belonging differs by racial and sexual identities
  • Students’ sense of institutional commitment to their success and well-being contributes to their ability to academically and socially integrate at their institution
  • LGBTQ+ students rarely have access to programs and role models that affirm their intersecting identities and identity-based centers don’t often focus on engaging multiple identities

• Outness, the degree to which a person discloses their sexuality, can be costly for LGBTQ+ students, and the considerations that are made for disclosure are complex
  • The outness of LGBTQ+ students of color has been investigated qualitatively focusing on specific subgroups within the LGBTQ+ community
  • Much of what we know comes from qualitative stories of the complexity of these students’ experiences and perceptions
  • Large-scale quantitative research has largely failed to do similarly
  • Studies examine racial and sexual identities separately, center whiteness and straightness, treat minority populations as monolithic groups, or conflate issues of sexuality and gender

Framework

• The Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity and critical quantitative influences challenged us in various ways:
  • To focus on the complexity of intertwining identities, namely race and sexuality
  • To consider how these intersections impact their perceptions of their collegiate environment
  • To analyze the data in a way that decentralizes whiteness and straightness
  • To position ourselves as insiders and outsiders of the story we’re about to tell
  • And to use the quantitative tools and data available to us to start conversations needed for positive change

Purpose and Tools

How do various subgroups within the LGBTQ+ community differ in their perceptions of belongingness, institutional commitment, and outness?

• National Survey of Student Engagement 2017
  • 30 institutions received an additional item set asking about LGBTQ+ issues at their institution
  • Over 14,000 students responded to these items as well as demographic questions about their racial/ethnic and sexual identities
  • Descriptives and OLS regression models
  • 1: students racial/ethnic identities were entered into models
  • 2: interaction terms for racial/ethnic subgroups within LGBTQ+ students
  • Effect coding allows comparisons to the average student
Measures

- Sexual orientation, racial/ethnic identification
- Perceptions of feeling physically safe, feeling comfortable being themselves, feeling valued, and feeling part of the campus community
- How much their institution demonstrates a commitment to the overall well-being of LGBTQ+ people
- Frequency of outness to parent/guardian, another student, a faculty member, or a staff member
- Bonus: reflections or experiences regarding LGBTQ+ issues at their institution

Sense of Belonging

- Bisexual (+)
- Hispanic or Latino (+)
- White (+)
- Straight (-)
- Asian (-)
- Other (-)
- LGBTQ+ & Asian (+++)
- LGBTQ+ & White (-)

Institutional Commitment

- Bisexual (+)
- Another sexual orientation (+)
- Hispanic or Latino (+)
- Multiracial (+)
- Queer (-)
- Straight (-)
- Black or African American (-)
- Asian (-)
- None!

Outness

- White (+)
- Multiracial (+)
- Bisexual (+++)
- Lesbian (+++)
- Queer (+++)
- Straight (+)
- Asian (-)
- Black or African American (-)
- Gay (-)
- Questioning (-)
- None!

What More We Know Now

- Intersections of sexual and racial/ethnic identities matter!
- LGBTQ+ Latinx students may have extra challenges with feeling comfortable being out to others
- LGBTQ+ Asian students may feel more sense of belonging on college campuses than in their home communities
- LGBTQ+ White students feel a lesser sense of belonging...hmm. White collegians may have difficulty understanding how their racial privilege intersects with their sexuality
- We have so much more work to do in research and on college campuses to understand and support our complex students (staff and faculty too!)

Thanks so much for joining us!

Find our paper and slides as well as other information about NSSE at nsse.indiana.edu

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