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Abstract

Van Eeden-Moorefield, Few-Demo, Benson, Bible, and Lummer (2018) reviewed the content of seven family social science journals with respect to theory and research methods used in 153 articles featuring LGBT research or reviews of LGBT research. They found less than 3% of 6,832 articles published in those journals between 2000 and 2015 were LGBT-related and that most had not used explicit theory and had used purposive cross-sectional samples consisting mostly of middle-class participants. However, *Marriage & Family Review* and the *Journal of Family Theory & Review* published LGBT research at a higher rate and with perhaps higher quality research.

Introduction

Van Eeden-Moorefield et al. (2018), in a report based on an NCFR presentation, studied the use of LGBT research in what they ranked as the top seven family social science journals. They found that LGBT research was seldom reported and that which was reported was limited in its quality. Likewise, Farr, Tasker, and Goldberg (2016) found that LGBT research was often reported with little theory. We questioned if these limitations applied to a wider range of journals, especially where editors were more supportive of LGBT research, with particular reference to *Marriage & Family Review* and the *Journal of Family Theory and Review*.

Measurement and Procedures

Data from van Eeden-Moorefield et al. (2018) were extracted with respect to the number of LGBT-related articles published per year, the explicit versus implicit use of theory, which theories had been used, the various types of methods used, the sample characteristics, and whether key variables such as outness, discrimination, or HIV/AIDS status had been measured.

Articles from MFR between 2000 and 2017 and from JFTR between 2009 and 2017 were searched for LGBT-related content; each article was coded as either a review/commentary or a research article. MFR dates were broken down into 2000 to 2009 and 2010 to 2017, to capture a change of editorship. Research articles were classified in the same way as had been done by van Eeden-Moorefield et al. (2018).

Sample Description

Between 2010 and 2015, van Eeden-Moorefield et al. (2018) reported 86 articles published on LGBT-related issues out of 3,206 articles, a rate (2.68%) that was significantly lower than the rate in MFR between 2010 and 2017 (14/250, 5.6%), with an odds ratio of 2.15 (95% CI, 1.21 to 3.84, $p = .01$). JFTR published at least 15 articles (of 208) between 2009 and 2017 that concerned LGBT-family research, a rate of 7.2%, higher than the rate for MFR or the top seven family journals. Between 2000 and 2015, less than three percent of the articles published in the top seven family journals involved LGBT-research related issues, out of 6,832 total articles.

It should be noted that several family journals published special issues concerning LGBT research or at least a few articles in 2018, so past rates may not predict future rates of publishing LGBT-related research.

Results

Between 2000 and 2009, MFR published one article that mentioned same-sex marriage; between 2010 and 2017, MFR published 14 articles (reviews, commentaries, research reports), an increase (odds ratio = 18.1, 95% CI, 2.36 to 138.6, $p = .005$). JFTR, as noted, published LGBT-related research at an even higher rate from 2009 to 2017 (and continued to publish LGBT-related research in 2018).

Van Eeden-Moorefield et al. (2018) reported that 44.4% of their LGBT articles used an explicit theory while another 9.8% used an implicit theory. MFR and JFTR had rates of 80% and 100%, respectively, for explicit theory in their empirical articles. Farr et al. (2016) found only a third of their LGBT articles referred to theory explicitly.

While van Eeden-Morefield et al. (2018) found that fewer than 15% of their articles referred to the critical variables of outness, stigma/discrimination, or HIV/AIDS, 100% of the research articles in MFR and JFTR referred to those concepts. In terms of other characteristics, articles in the top seven journals and in MFR and JFTR were roughly similar (cross-sectional designs, online survey methods, comparative methods, etc.)

Discussion

Just because a few of the better known family social science journals did not publish much in the way of LGBT research does not mean that other journals did not publish such research at a higher rate. In addition to higher rates in MFR and JFTR, there have been many journals that exclusively published LGBT research. One possibility is that authors may have found higher acceptance rates in journals that needed regular submissions of LGBT research in order to fulfill their mission statements. With respect to MFR, the editor tried to be more inclusive of LGBT research than had prior editors, although both progressive and conservative viewpoints were considered acceptable as part of a larger belief in the value of scholarly discussion and debate (Knapp, 2009).

NCFR, Poster Session 4, poster # 322-69 RT PO, Noon - 1:15 p.m., Friday, November 9, 2018, Town and Country Resort and Convention Center, San Diego, California.

Selected References

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