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Resilience Building in Biracial and Multiracial, Bisexual Adults: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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Abstract

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MS, Walden University, 2014

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Until recently, society and science often ignored, erased, and avoided bisexual women and men and individuals with biracial and multiracial identities, and rarely considered these identities simultaneously. Prior research has shown that some lesbians and gay people of color exhibit resilience against sexual minority stress due in part to an inoculating effect of exposure to racism earlier in life. However, little is known about the lived experience of thriving, resilient bisexual multiracial individuals. In the tradition of positive psychology and context of intersectionality theory, this qualitative study explored how multiracial bisexual individuals develop and maintain flourishing well-being despite sociocultural factors promoting chronic stressors. In-depth, semistructured interviews were conducted with 6 multiracial bisexual participants. Interpretive phenomenological analysis revealed 6 key themes for developing and maintaining resilience: integration of intersecting social identities, social support, emotional openness, hope and optimism, meaningful life, and life/personal accomplishments. Deeper knowledge about resilience-building in holders of multiple-marginal identities may influence informed stakeholders (bisexual, biracial and multiracial individuals and their families, service providers, researchers, public institutions, and decision makers) to advance development of more effective counseling programs and influence more responsive and affirmative social policies. Subsequent social change involves the advance of sexual health, rights, and behaviors of bisexual, biracial and multiracial citizens.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The focus of this study is on the experiences of biracial or multiracial, bisexual women and men with flourishing well-being. In this study, I explored flourishing well-being and specifically look at how resilience toward stigma-related prejudice develops, as well as the social and personal influences that sustain or hinder resilience (i.e., successful adaptive functioning or related to successful adaptive coping). It is significant to understand the lived experience of these women and men as bisexual sexuality is underexamined, in general, separate from the lesbian and gay (LG) population.

Typically, the bisexual experience is melded into or excluded as an outlier in LG research (Roberts, Horne, & Hoyte, 2015). At the time of my research, no researchers have looked at flourishing well-being of biracial or multiracial, bisexual women and men. I chose to examine these experiences to build the foundation of strengths-based research involving sexual minorities, and to expand the literature on bisexual sexuality.

Recently, contemporary research and field authorities affirmed bisexual sexuality as extant, stable, and distinct from other sexual orientations (see APA, 2012; Diamond, 2008). Also, recently, sexual orientation and behavior questions added to United States population-level estimates proposed that bisexual women and men make up the majority (52%) of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) population (Copen, Chandra, & Febo-Vazquez, 2016; also see Herbenick et al., 2010a; Hill, Sanders, & Reinisch, 2016). These population-level estimates align with seminal and contemporary researchers who asserted that a certain degree of fluidity is a general property of sexuality (e.g., Baumeister, 2000;

Blumstein & Schwartz, 1990; Diamond, 2008; Freud & Strachey, 2000; Katz-Wise, 2012; Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & Gebhard, 1953; Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 1994).

Sexual orientation-related prevalence estimates are a result of a joint effort of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Institute of Medicine ([IOM], 2011). In 2011, the IOM released a report with a call to action that found existing research literature on LGB health sparse but identified numerous existing opportunities to include data collection opportunities to address health disparities of sexual minorities. Specifically, in 2013 the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) included a measure of sexual orientation for the first time in 57 years of data collection (United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013). The NHIS data reported significant differences regarding sexual orientation in health-related behaviors and health status indicators for which bisexual respondents ranked unhealthiest (CDC, 2013). Areas included smoking (bisexual 29%, LG 27%, heterosexual 19%), drinking (bisexual 41%, LG 35%, heterosexual 29%), rates of having a usual place to go for medical care (bisexual 73%, LG 80%, heterosexual 83%), failing to obtain needed medical care due to cost (bisexual 16%, LG 11%, heterosexual 7%), and serious psychological distress (bisexual 11%, LG 5%, heterosexual 3%) (CDC, 2013; Ward, Dahlhamer, Galinsky, & Joestl, 2014).

Also, because of the IOM (2011) report, in 2016 the U.S. DHHS Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) updated the *Healthy People 2020* (2010) framework for public health prevention priorities to include seven objectives

about sexual orientation and gender identity (ODPHP, 2016). One objective involved the

behavioral risk factor surveillance system (BRFSS) questions about sexual orientation

and gender identity (ODPHP Healthy People 2020, 2010; 2016). The separate address of

sexualities in United States population-level surveys is imperative particularly as LGB

individuals experience excess mental distress.

Asexual women and men, heterosexual women and men, lesbians, gay men,

bisexual women, bisexual men, and gender minorities (ABGHLT) each have unique

characteristics. Inclusion of sexuality identifying options in population-based information

collection systems will improve the consistency and reliability of sexuality-related data.

Consistent and reliable data will help psychological and medical service providers better

serve everyone.

Background/Summary of the Literature

In 2014, the American Psychological Association (APA) released two

comprehensive publications of empirical research and theory addressing sexuality, APA

Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity (PSOGD) journal and the APA

Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology. These publications from field authorities

demonstrate human sexuality diversity, and aid framing future sexuality research and

psychological practice (APA, 2014). Special or supplementary editions of the PSOGD

journal focused on positive psychology, resilience, and sexual minority stress (APA,

2013; 2014; 2015). A special section on bisexual issues was published June 2018 (APA,

2018).

With an exclusive focus on the bisexual experience, sexuality researchers and theorists consistently recommended exploration of stress and distress related phenomena, strengths-based perspectives, effects of intersecting social identities, and qualitative research approaches (see, Barker, Richards, Jones, Bowes-Catton, & Plowman, 2012; IOM, 2011; Meyer, 2014, 2015; Movement Advancement Project [MAP], 2016). Other facets of the bisexual experience frequently recommended for further exploration include identity commitment, community involvement, outness, and relationship patterns (Kwon, 2013; Meyer, 2003).

In this study, I explored flourishing well-being by looking at how resilience toward stigma-related prejudice develops and is sustained despite sociocultural factors promoting chronic stressors. Research framed by sexual minority stress (SMS) theory (Meyer, 2003) provided a context for understanding the impact of LGB minority status on psychological and physical health (e.g., Hatzenbuehler, 2009; McCabe, Bostwick, Hughes, West, and Boyd, 2010). However, the focus on the negative psychological effects of minority stress without a balance of the positive provides a limited understanding of the LGB lived experience.

Sexuality researchers suggested application of the PERMA factors (i.e., positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, [Seligman, 2011]) and fostering positive social institutions, positive subjective experiences and character strengths in effort to generate a consistent approach to examining LGB strengths and for incorporation in clinical training and practice (see Elia, 2014, Lytle, Vaughan, Rodriguez & Shmerler, 2014, Vaughan, Miles, Parent, Lee, Tilghman & Prokhorets, 2014; Vaughan

& Rodriquez, 2014). Bisexuality focused strengths-based research and theory receive minimal attention, and expansion of attention in and of itself can benefit individuals, multiple fields, and society (e.g., Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Rostosky, Riggle, Pascale-Hague & McCants, 2010). Intersectionality researcher, Elia (2014), acknowledged the complex but imperative need to explore both oppression and gifts in bisexuals.

Elia (2014) indicated that the intersectional lens reveals the depth and difference of oppression, but it also reveals strengths and gifts of being bisexual. Research with an explicit focus on bisexual women and men is rare but the field is expanding. In research, the overall bisexual experience is often rendered invisible through grouping this orientation with gay male and lesbian samples, or with heterosexual samples (e.g., Roberts, Horne, & Hoyte, 2015). Too frequently research claiming LGB ultimately discarded bisexual data as outlier data or bolstered data until hypothesis conformed to LG data any data reflecting a bisexual experience.

The presence of information indicating nonmonosexuality (i.e., bisexual sexuality) in sexuality research has been described as "inconvenient noise cluttering up the real data" (Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Diamond, 2008, p. 2). In a longitudinal study of 100 women over the course of 10 years, Diamond's (2008) research offered insight into the fluidity of sexuality and the incongruence of self-labeling and actual sexual behavior. Diamond proposed situation-dependent flexibility in sexual responsiveness in motivation to initiate sexual activity (i.e., proceptivity) and capacity to become aroused to sexual stimuli (i.e., arousability).

Replicating Diamond's study with men, Katz-Wise (2012) also found that sexual fluidity is extant, intentional, and predictable. In summary, women and men are equally likely to experience situation-dependent flexibility in sexual responsiveness manifesting in changes in sexual identity over time (Diamond, 2008; Katz-Wise, 2012; Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2014). Framing research with Diamond's (2008) conceptualizations and sexual minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003) revealed that bisexual men and women endure stigma and discrimination from both heterosexual and gay/lesbian communities (Barker et al., 2012; Herek, 2000; Ochs, 1996; Roberts et al., 2015; Rust, 2000a, 2000b).

Bisexual women and men often experience the effects of both homophobia and biphobia. Double stigma, double minority stigma, or double sexual minority stigmatization (DSMS) is found to magnify stigma related health issues (Bradford, 2004; Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Lewis, Derlega, Brown, Rose & Henson, 2009). DSMS is characterized by rejection – prejudice and discrimination – by both homosexual and heterosexual individuals/communities for bisexual sexuality (Barker et al., 2012; Herek, 2000; Ochs, 1996; Roberts et al., 2015; Rust, 2000a, 2000b). DSMS contributes to bisexual adults experiencing between 4% (gay men/lesbians) and 7% (heterosexuals) higher psychological distress than either of those groups (Ward et al., 2014). According to Vaughan and Rodriquez (2014), resilience-successful adaptive functioning can reduce the harmful psychological effects.

Positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and sexuality researchers have suggested that resilience and the development of adaptive coping strategies can reduce the harmful effects of psychological distress (Herrick, Egan,

Coulter, Friedman, & Stall, 2014a; Kwon, 2013; Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014). Empirical

sexuality research has confirmed LGB disparity related to distal and proximal stressors

and has found that stress reduction involved lowering reactivity to and buffering negative

impact of societal prejudice (e.g., initiating coping processes). Research outliers to

coping with distal and proximal stressors exhibit resilience, successful adaptive function,

and the ability to survive and thrive (i.e., flourish) in the face of adversity (Kwon, 2013;

Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). For example, Kwon (2013)

proposed resilience factors of social support, hope and optimism, and emotional openness

as characteristics of LGB individuals who demonstrate thriving wellbeing (Kwon, 2013).

No research reflects the positive health outcomes of bisexual women and men who

increase their capacity for resilience in the face of double sexual minority stigmatization

(Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Herrick, Egan, Coulter, Friedman, & Stall, 2014b;

Kwon, 2013; Lewis, Kholodkov, & Derlega, 2012). Literature that explicitly focuses on

positive traits, such as resilience, within sexual minority populations is sparse; rarer is

research with an explicit focus on bisexual women and men (see Eliason & Elia, 2011).

Within that small body of literature, research with a specific focus on biracial and

multiracial, bisexual individuals is nearly nonexistent (Collins, 2000; King, 2011).

Intersectionality theory is important because it articulates that individuals occupy

multiple structural positions that locate their experience, knowledge, choices, and

practices in particular histories and in specific relationship to dominant culture's

understanding of what is real, normal, acceptable, and even possible (Cole, 2009;

Crenshaw, 1989; IOM, 2011; Lorde, 1984/2007; NIH, 2016; Rich, 1980; Tolman &

Diamond, 2014a). The intersectional perspective acknowledges simultaneous social identities and how they structure an individual's access to social, economic, and political resources and privileges. Further, intersectionality breaks down artificial binary positions allowing bisexuality expression (Eliason & Elia, 2011).

Engaging qualitative research methods was another gap in the study of sexuality that emerged with the IOM (2011) health disparity findings. Qualitative methods reveal how experiences shape and are shaped by social and historical contexts (see Cole, 2009; Frost, McClelland, Clark & Boylan, 2014; Herek, Norton, Allen, & Sims, 2010; IOM, 2011; NIH, 2016). The literature conveys that using qualitative research methodology in the separate address of bisexual sexuality from LG individuals is an empirical imperative (e.g., Balsam & Mohr, 2007; NIH, 2016).

Specifically, qualitative methods consider the consistently high stakes in sexuality research, including applications in clinical, medical, and policy settings (Tolman & Diamond, 2014b). Qualitative methods can advance exploration of bisexuals' experiences with difficult to capture variables including, identity commitment, community involvement, outness, and relationship patterns (NIH, 2016, pp. 9/10). Lastly, qualitative approaches provide a nuanced understanding the meanings of people's subjective experience of sexuality benefiting social and behavioral scientists, and professionals in complementary fields to psychology (e.g., education, social work, public health, and public policy). Understanding leads to identifying possible ways to intervene as well as assisting in developing quantitative instruments for studying sexual and gender minority populations (Binson, Blair, Huebner, & Woods, 2007; IOM, 2011).

The shift in United States leadership in 2016 from a diverse, democratic presidential administration to a conservative, republican administration poses detrimental policy changes for the LGBT community. Administration senior staff and Supreme Court appointments including Vice President Mike Pence, former Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch and Justice Brett Kavanaugh, have long histories of anti-LGBT positions. Also, pressure on the new administration to repeal same-sex marriage and allow subjective discrimination by ordinary citizens based on religious beliefs resulted in the Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty executive order in May 2017 (Gjelton, 2017) . Religious allies indicated that the executive order does not adequately "correct problems of the last administration," because the executive order does not actually repeal same-sex marriage (Gjelton, 2017, n.p.).

Prior to the shift in United States presidential administrations, several events presented opportunities for ameliorating sexual minority status and promoting acceptance of the sexuality diversity among people. Unprecedented and historical events that proactively address the social disadvantage and devalued social capital which placed LGB individuals at minority status included new APA journal and handbook on sexuality publications in 2014, and favorable ruling by the United States Supreme Court on same-sex marriage. The new administration threatens these opportunities and places the LGB community at risk for increased discrimination and hate crime victimization. The atmosphere of threat and risk generates an increased need to explore flourishing well-being by looking at how resilience toward stigma-related prejudice develops and is sustained despite sociocultural factors promoting chronic stressors.

Exploring the experience of biracial and multiracial, bisexual women and men who have flourishing well-being is very significant as it allows for understanding how resilience toward stigma-related prejudice develops, as well as the social and personal influences that sustain or hinder resilience. As more individuals self-identify as sexually fluid, nonmonosexual, or bisexual, the more imperative it is to understand their intersecting identities, resiliencies, and transformative qualities that lead to a flourishing life.

Statement of the Problem

The research problem on which this study is based is multifaceted. Sexual minority research is dominated by a deficit-based perspective as positive psychology frameworks involving flourishing well-being (e.g., Seligman, 2011) are new, and resilience factors (Kwon, 2013) exploration is only recently trending in sexuality research. Unique characteristics of bisexual sexuality is understudied, and biracial and multiracial identities are also underrepresented in the literature. Thus, the compounding effects for which the intersecting marginalized social identities of bisexuality and biracial/multiracial collide is rarely in the literature even though both identities emerge as prominent, prevalent, and growing. Finally, qualitative approaches in sexuality research is much needed.

Meyer (2003) provided a framework to initiate the conversation of sexuality diversity with the (SMS) theory. But sexuality researchers are only recently demanding the balanced representation of strengths-based research. Positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), as a consistent framework, is recognized as a viable

framework by sexuality researchers. Though supported by Meyer (2014), the SMS theory creator cautions putting all the responsibility on the individual because institutionalized prejudice and discrimination must also be ameliorated.

The connection between sexual minority stress and health disparity is well established. There is a wealth of deficit and pathology-based information about lesbian and gay youth and adults, and a modest amount about bisexual youth and adults (see Hatzenbuehler, 2009; IOM, 2011; McCabe et al., 2010; Meyer, 2003). However, there is a gap in the literature about LGB strengths, and particularly about biracial and multiracial, bisexual adults with flourishing well-being (Balsam & Mohr, 2007; Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Collins, 2000; Firestein, 1996; Lewis et al., 2009; Meyer, 2014, 2015; Meyer & Wilson, 2009; King, 2011; Vaughan et al., 2014; Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014). Emphasized in the special edition of the APA PSOGD Journal (APA, 2014) on positive psychology, the focus on the negative psychological effects of minority stress without a balance of the positive provides a limited understanding of the LGB lived experience (Meyer, 2014; Vaughan & Rodriquez, 2014).

Positive psychology and sexuality researchers have suggested that resilience and the development of adaptive coping strategies can reduce the harmful effects of psychological distress (Herrick et al., 2014a; Kwon, 2013; Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014). As noted, bisexual women and men experience significantly more psychological distress than lesbians, gay men, and heterosexual women and men. Theorists also posited that bisexual women and men experience stress related growth ([SRG] see Frankl, 1946/2006; Meyer, 2003). However, no found research reflects the positive health outcomes of

bisexual men and women who increase capacity for resilience because of successfully navigating double sexual minority stigmatization (Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Herrick et al., 2014b; Kwon, 2013; Lewis et al., 2012).

The phenomena of double sexual minority stigmatization are known to magnify stigma-related health issues. The few available health disparity statistics solely for bisexual individuals are quite recent. NIH (2016) reported that 14% of lesbians and 17.6% of bisexual women have reported ever having had any cancer, compared with 11.9% for heterosexual women. According to the NIH bisexual women have the highest rate of breast cancer at 8.4%. Lesbian and bisexual women over age 50 have a higher risk for cardiovascular disease and prevalence of myocardial infarction than heterosexual women over age 50 (NIH, 2016).

Bisexual women have a higher prevalence of diabetes than heterosexual women (NIH, 2016, pp. 2/3). Findings from the NIH (2016) and NHIS (2013) data demonstrated the disparate status of LGB adults (CDC, 2013; Ward et al., 2014). Disparity statistics are important, and more are needed. However, equally important is research reflecting strengths, positive traits, and even ordinary experiences of bisexual women and men, as well as all sexual minorities.

Another underinvestigated facet of sexuality research that my study explored involves intersectionality. Responsible sexuality research considers characteristics such as race, gender, age, geography, culture, socioeconomic status, disability, and education in the experience of bisexuals associated with sexual minority stress and typical daily living stress (see Cole, 2009; Diamond, 2008; IOM, 2011; Lewis et al., 2012). The

concept of intersectionality articulates that individuals occupy multiple structural

positions that locate their experience, knowledge, choices, and practices in particular

histories and in specific relationship to dominant culture's understanding of what is real,

normal, acceptable, and even possible (Tolman & Diamond, 2014a).

Lastly, the need to engage qualitative research methods (e.g., one-on-one

interviews, focus groups, and cognitive interviews) in the study of sexuality emerged

with health disparity findings among the LGB populations (e.g., IOM, 2011). This need is

not exclusive of quantitative methods but instead recommended as complementary

exploring the breadth and depth of a specific phenomenon. For example, detailed account

of individuals' experiences and interpretations of experiences better reveal clinical

concerns for developing possible interventions and quantitative instruments for studying

LGBT populations. Qualitative methods reveal how experiences shape and are shaped by

social and historical contexts (refer to Cole, 2009; Frost et al., 2014; Herek et al., 2010;

IOM, 2011; NIH, 2016).

Tolman and Diamond (2014b) indicated that qualitative methods consider the

consistently high stakes in sexuality research, including applications in clinical, medical,

and policy settings. Specific to experiences of bisexual women and men, qualitative

methods advance exploration with difficult to capture variables including, identity

commitment, community involvement, outness, and relationship patterns (e.g., NIH,

2016). The literature reflects that qualitative approaches provide a nuanced understanding

of people's subjective meanings of their experience of sexuality benefiting social and

behavioral scientists, and professionals in complementary fields to psychology (e.g., education, social work, public health, and public policy).

Since the 1964 civil rights act, the United States is experiencing long overdue shifts in cultural diversity. In illustration, the 2000 U.S. Census was the first allowing selection of more than one race which resulted in 6.8 million respondents choosing more than one race (Jones & Smith, 2001). In 2013, out of 33,785 respondents, 233 or 0.7% identified as bisexual to the sexual orientation questions in the first NHIS survey including a sexuality question (United States DHHS CDC NCHS DHIS, 2013). In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled favorably for same-sex marriage. My study adds to the knowledge about sexuality and racial diversity and may positively influence the reciprocal shifts in science and society in relation to these issues.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological analysis study was to explore the adaptive functioning processes that flourishing biracial and multiracial bisexual adults use to develop resiliency toward sociocultural factors promoting chronic stressors. The central research question driving this study was, How do bisexual, biracial and multiracial people make sense of possible causes for their flourishing well-being? The supporting research questions included:

1. What is the experience of successful adaptive coping with double sexual minority stigmatization in bisexual, biracial or multiracial men and women?

2. What is the experience of resilience with double sexual minority stigmatization in bisexual, biracial and multiracial men and women?

3. How do bisexual, biracial and multiracial men and women flourish in the face of double sexual minority stigmatization?

These phenomena were explored using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), which is a qualitative research method that explores experiential research issues (Smith, 1996; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). IPA is appropriate when, as in this study, understanding what elements of an experience matter (i.e., the phenomenological), the meaning that the experience holds is needed (i.e. hermeneutic perspective), and understanding perspective in a particular context is important (i.e., idiographic commitment) (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2003, 2015). In this study, IPA manifested exposure of the unique factors relevant to biracial and multiracial, bisexual women and men that influenced resilience building and flourishing well-being.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The overarching theoretical framework, an interpretive framework, within the research paradigm of this study is social constructivist theory (see Creswell, 2013). This worldview is applicable to this research because interpretative phenomenological analysis puts central the interpretation of people's meaning-making activities (Creswell, 2013). Specifically, that "people [exist] in a world of objects, relationships, and language, and our being-in-the-world is always perspectival, always temporal, and always in-relation-to something" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 18). Social constructivism allows inquirers to inductively develop a pattern of meaning (or a theory) opposed to starting with a theory.

The major phenomenon in this study is biracial and multiracial, bisexual women and men who have achieved flourishing well-being. Multiple theoretical and conceptual

frameworks were needed to consider the variations in experience of achieving and maintaining flourishing well-being. There are numerous personal and social influences that collide to influence each individual's experiences of successful adaptive functioning (i.e., resilience) to achieve flourishing well-being.

Bisexual individuals often experience prejudice and discrimination from both the homosexual and heterosexual communities, referred to as double sexual minority stigmatization (Lewis et al., 2009). Individuals with biracial or multiracial identities are often limited in or denied access to social, economic, and political resources and privileges. The harmful effects of stress and distress that accompanies stigma-related treatment or anticipated treatment can be reduced by resilience (Herrick et al., 2014a; Kwon, 2013; Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014). Sexuality research is dominated by deficit or pathology-based perspectives. By looking at resilience that leads to flourishing well-being in biracial and multiracial, bisexual adults, this study offers a strengths-based perspective to the sexuality literature.

According to Seligman (2011) flourishing refers to life going well; the experience of a reciprocal cycle of functioning effectively and feeling good. Per Seligman, well-being is measured by positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (i.e., PERMA factors). I followed the PERMA factors to consider flourishing well-being in study participants (see Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

I considered Kwon's (2013) resilience factors (i.e., social support, hope and optimism, and emotional openness) model to explore what it takes for those having

compounding marginalized social identities to achieve flourishing well-being. I also

considered the intersectionality concept (see Cole, 2009) to reflect on how the

simultaneous social/cultural and historical contexts of social dimensions of race and

sexuality are interrelated and how they have shaped and influenced one another relative

to achieving flourishing well-being. Each of these theoretical and conceptual frameworks

were needed to consider the variations in participants' experiences. Combining these

frameworks allowed for a more comprehensive background for exploring the biracial and

multiracial, bisexual women and men of this study who have achieved flourishing well-

being. More detailed explanations of each theoretical and conceptual framework are

described in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study/Significance

The nature of this study is qualitative. Qualitative research is appropriate as it

allows an opportunity to explore and understand the experiences of a homogenous group

who have yet to be examined. When an issue or experience needs exploration and a

complex, detailed understanding is required, a qualitative inquiry is usually necessary

(Creswell, 2013). The unique life experiences of biracial and multiracial, bisexual adults

with flourishing well-being despite stigma-related social stress have yet to be explored.

Qualitative studies allow such individuals to tell their personal stories, affirming

the expression of their experiences and encouraging sharing with others (Creswell, 2013).

One type of qualitative research is IPA, the most appropriate type for the goals of this

study (Smith, 1996; Smith & Osborn, 2015). IPA explores existential matters that often

bring change through reflection, interpretation, and reinterpretation for the individuals

concerned ([a.k.a., transformative qualities] Eatough & Smith, 2008).

Reflection, interpretation and reinterpretation are characteristics consistent with

exposing successful adaptive coping which leads to resiliencies allowing a flourishing

life. The primary focus of this dissertation was to explore lived experiences using in-

depth, face to face, semistructured interviews. Data was collected through 60 to 90-

minute interviews with six biracial and multiracial, bisexual women and men who have

achieved and maintained flourishing well-being.

The philosophical assumption, or paradigm, that guided this study is

epistemological in nature. My epistemological position regarding this study is formulated

as follows: (a) data are contained within the perspectives of flourishing bisexual people

because they must be resilient against inescapable double sexual minority stigmatization;

and (b) because of this I engaged with the participants in collecting the data. I

investigated how these phenomena are experienced and given meaning by the individual.

My study's posited research question and the epistemological underpinnings of

IPA is a match. Per Smith (2004), "[T]hus, if a researcher is interested in exploring

participants' personal and lived experiences, in looking at how they make sense and

meaning from those experiences, and in pursuing a detailed idiographic case study

examination, then IPA is the right research approach" (p. 48). In Chapter 3, I

comprehensively present that, (a) there is a commitment to the sense of detail and

therefore commitment to the depth of analysis; and (b) there is a commitment to

understanding how particular experiential phenomena have been understood from the perspective of particular people in a particular context.

Definition of Terms

Bisexual orientation, identity, and behavior: Sexual attraction to males, females, and gender diverse persons; and/or self-identifying as bisexual; and/or sexually engaging with males, females, and gender-diverse persons (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2016). Terms also applied to mean bisexuality include sexual fluidity (Diamond, 2008) and nonmonosexuality (Stevenson, 2016).

Double Sexual Minority Stigmatization (DSMS): Double sexual minority stigmatization is prejudice and discrimination from both the homosexual and heterosexual communities experienced by bisexual individuals (Firestein, 1996; Herek, 2000; IOM, 2011; Lewis et al., 2009; Mayer, Bradford, Makadon, Stall, Goldhammer, & Landers, 2008; Meyer, 2003).

Flourishing/Flourishing well-being: Flourishing refers to life going well; the experiences of a reciprocal cycle of functioning effectively and feeling good (Seligman, 2011). Operationally, flourishing is positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishments; factors of authentic happiness theory and well-being theory (Seligman, 2011).

Intersectionality: Intersectionality considers the social/cultural and historical contexts of race, gender, sexuality, [dis]ability, class, and other social categories. Intersectional perspective acknowledges these simultaneous social identities and how they structure an individual's access to social, economic, and political resources and

privileges. Intersectionality approaches focuses on understanding how these simultaneous social dimensions are interrelated and how they shape and influence one another (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; IOM, 2011; Lorde, 1984/2007; NIH, 2016; Rich, 1980).

Resilience: Resilience implies positively adapting to negative or adversarial conditions so that negative trajectories are avoided (Masten, 2007; Meyer, 2015). Resilience is different from basic coping in that the former infers adaptation and the latter refers to the effort put into a response to stress (Masten, 2007; Meyer, 2015). Resilience is inherently *inferential* because it means that protection-successful adaptive functioning is present in the face of stress. Coping is the effort to defend not necessarily successfully against the stressor (Masten, 2007; Meyer, 2015).

Sexual behavior is the actual behavior one does or does not engage regardless of their self-identified sexual orientation label (Diamond, 2008; Firestein, 1996; IOM, 2011; Klein, 1978; 1985; Meyer, 2003; NIH 2016; Rust, 2000; Rust, 2002).

Sexual identity refers to the notion of one's sexual self (e.g., gendered sexual interests and attractions, etc.) that is formed within a social context and defines for one's self their relationship to others (e.g., culture, community, and sociopolitical institutions) within that context (Rust, 1993; Miller & Ryan, 2011; van Anders, 2012).

Sexual minorities: A long history of heteronormative bias and social disadvantage and devalued social capital places LGB individuals at minority status (Mink, Lindley, & Weinstein, 2014). Sexual minority is a term often applied to sexual orientation options in sexuality research excluding heterosexual sexuality, such as ABGILT.

Sexual minority stress (SMS): Exposure to excess stress by individuals in stigmatized social categories. Meyer (2003), in minority stress theory, explained that stigma, prejudice, and discrimination create a hostile and stressful social environment that causes mental health problems. Meyer proposed that LGB individuals have a higher prevalence of mental disorders than heterosexuals because of stigma-related stress. Thus, sexuality researchers refer to minority stress theory as SMS theory.

Sexual orientation is the consistent, enduring pattern or predisposition of sexual desire for the same-sex, different-sex, or both sexes (Rust, 1993; Miller & Ryan, 2011; van Anders, 2012).

Strengths-based research approach: Strengths-based research approaches focus on strengths and resources motivated by positive expectations. Strengths involve internal or external qualities or conditions such as courage, optimism or creativity. Phenomena that help people adaptively cope with life or engage a fulfilling life are strengths. An individual's strengths are typically culturally bound and developmental in nature (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014).

Assumptions

I chose to conduct semistructured interviews to elicit the experiences of the study participants who are biracial and multiracial, bisexual adults, and have flourishing well-being. The first assumption I had regarding these women and men is that they would be open and honest when sharing their experiences of achieving flourishing well-being despite having typically stigmatized and marginalized social identities. I assumed they would have minimal initial concerns about privacy or security and what types of

questions will be asked. I minimized their concerns by taking appropriate steps both physically and verbally to inform them of their confidentiality. I shared what types of topics that would be covered in the interview questions.

The next assumption is that I assumed that all participants speak English, would understand the interview questions and would provide me detailed answers to my questions. I also had the assumption that study participant's gender identity is congruent with their biological sex (i.e., cisgender), even if their gender expression is fluid (see Killermann, 2017). I did not show any biases or share personal opinions during the interview process. I remained neutral and professional. My last assumption regarding my study participants was that their bisexual sexuality and sexual identity were stable and fully self-accepted.

These assumptions were necessary to set up the study. Individuals who chose to take part in a study that involves an interview needed to understand that questions would be asked of them and they would be requested to respond. This was a necessary assumption in using an interview format for data collection. The assumption that study participants speak fluent English was also necessary. As participants were able to respond to initial communications in English, it seemed logical that unless otherwise noted, they could communicate in English in person as well. Assuming that participant's gender identity was the same as their biological sex, even if their gender expression is fluid (see Killermann, 2017), was also necessary[1].

I did not attempt to look at transgender individuals as they are a separate gender identity group. It was also important that study participants were stable and accepting of

their bisexual sexuality. The purpose of this study was to explore flourishing well-being and resilience to stigma-related stress. The literature is consistent: identity-acceptance and self-acceptance exist congruently with successful adaptive functioning (e.g., Elia, 2014; Eliason & Elia, 201; Herrick et al., 2014a; Institute of Medicine, 2011; Kwon, 2013; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2010; Pallotta-Chiarolli 2014; Savin-Williams, Joyner & Rieger, 2012).

It was important for me to assume that I would keep all personal biases in check. Minimizing personal bias was necessary during the development of the research design, data collection, and data analysis, but was particularly true during the IPA data interpretation process. It is significant to assume that researchers have personal opinions about certain topics, but it is imperative that they intentionally work to keep biases in check during all stages of the research process

Scope and Delimitations

The focus of this research was to understand the experiences of biracial and multiracial, bisexual women and men who achieved and maintained flourishing well-being and to consider the personal and social factors that played a role in their flourishing life. Bisexual sexuality is only recently recognized empirically as an extant and stable sexual orientation (see APA, 2012, and Diamond, 2008), choosing more than one race on the United States census became an option in 2000 (Jones & Smith, 2001), and deficit and pathology-focused perspective dominates sexuality research (Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014). So, the population with biracial or multiracial and bisexual

identities who have a flourishing life are not well known. Their experiences, however, are invaluable and have yet to be examined in a qualitative fashion.

In-depth understanding of why these women and men overcome multidirectional prejudice and discrimination, how they achieved resilience (i.e., successful adaptive functioning), and what keeps them inspired to maintain flourishing well-being, were key goals of this study. To participate in this study an individual had to fulfill the following criteria: (a) be bisexual, (b) be biracial or multiracial, (c) have flourishing well-being, (d) be able to speak fluent English, (e) be between 18 and 60 years of age and reside in the United States. Anyone who did not fit these criteria were excluded from the study and not eligible to participate. Individuals with emotional and mental disabilities were ineligible to participate in the study. Anyone who was non-English speaker, going through crisis, and over the age of 60 was also excluded from the study. Any individual who was affiliated with my employer or community engagement groups was also ineligible for the study due to potential conflicts of interest.

Three separate frameworks provided lenses for this study. Because of the complexity of the key constructs of my study (i.e., bisexual sexuality, biracial and multiracial identity, resilience, and flourishing well-being), more than one theoretical or conceptual approach was needed. A relevant framework that was not used was Diamond's (2008) dynamical systems approach to sexual orientation. According to Diamond (2008), sexual fluidity is explained in that atypical (i.e., the women in the study diversely self-identified as lesbian, bisexual, straight, and "no label preferred") women do not experience sexuality as a linear process over time (Diamond, 2008).

Though applicable to bisexual women and men (see, Katz-Wise, 2012; Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2014), this model addresses sexual identity development and does not detail life experience following stable and self-accepted bisexual identity. Understanding flourishing well-being of *established* (i.e., 1 year, minimally) bisexual women and men was an important tenet of this study.

Limitations

A researcher limitation potentially included my novice status as a research interviewer. I have experience with professional employment interviews and facilitating fact finding focus groups; however, I suspected that the academic research interviews would be a different experience. This opened the potential for my conduct to influence study participant responses. To address this, I adhered to the study protocol and interview schedule as designed. In addition, I engaged practice interviews prior to interviewing study participants. Also, I established a genuine and comfortable rapport with study participants, and used my prepared probes and prompts for each interview question when clarification was needed.

Another researcher limitation involved my study topic biases. To keep my biases bracketed, I kept questions objective and only appropriately (i.e., rapport maintenance) interjected with personal opinions or perspectives. Also, prior to and after interviews, I used my researcher reflection journal and wrote my thoughts, concerns, and intentions. This ensured exclusion of personal preconceptions.

Interviewing as a data collection method provides the potential for several study limitations. Participant-related issues involve intentional or unintentional response

inaccuracies. Interviews involve reflective recall which induces selective memory, attribution issues, and exaggeration (Patton, 2002). In addition, to meet perceived researcher expectations or to present a positive impression, participants might withhold details. Minimizing potential limitations related to interviewing involved building an authentic rapport and following interview protocols and the interview schedule as designed.

Another potential limitation that is interview-related involves the use of the two-way virtual audio and visual technology platforms. Though face to face, remote engagement via information and communications technology (CTI) might inhibit rapport building. Salmons (2014) suggested that just as interview questions are piloted prior to participant engagement, the mediated communication situation requires rehearsing the interview process using the chosen CTI prior to participant engagement.

The participants of my study are biracial and multiracial, and the exclusion of monoracial participants is a potential limitation in transferability of my study. In IPA, there is theoretical transferability (Smith et al., 2009). Immediate claims are bounded by the group studied but an extension to others can be considered by the reader of the report who assesses the evidence about their existing professional and experiential knowledge (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

Theoretical transferability means similar subsequent studies can be conducted with other groups; thus, gradually, more general claims can be made (Smith & Osborn 2003). However, each study and subsequent general claims are founded on the detailed examination of a set of case studies unique to the originating study (Smith & Osborn 2003). Though an

IPA study is judged for elucidating within this broader context (Smith & Osborn 2003), it is a potential limitation in relation to the standard concept of transferability.

Significance

Because bisexual women and men endure DSMS, they experience significant psychological distress (Ward et al., 2014). Resilience can reduce the harmful effects of psychological distress (Vaughan & Rodriquez, 2014). However, literature that explicitly focuses on positive traits, such as resilience, particularly with biracial and multiracial bisexual individuals is nearly nonexistent.

It is possible that both biracial/multiracial or bisexual individuals can recognize and value all their identities, as well as develop a secure and integrated identity (Collins, 2000, 2004; King, 2011). The intersectionality lens allowed exploration of the reciprocal effects of these two marginalized identities. However, very few empirical studies have been conducted to reflect the depth and difference of oppression and strengths and gifts of bisexual women and men with biracial or multiracial identities. This is an important area of study.

DSMS (Lewis et al., 2009) is a major obstacle that bisexual women and men face. Cultural definitions of social and sexual categories are quite limited and highlighting bisexual women's and men's experiences of flourishing well-being is an empirical imperative. Understanding the resilience processes of bisexual women and men exposed to DSMS and the compounding effects of intersecting social identities is important in understanding their navigation toward and maintaining flourishing well-being.

Two studies and a meta-analysis reflected the interrelatedness of various aspects of the individual identity and the role of sociohistorical context in which bisexual and biracial individuals negotiate their identities. Collins (2000; 2004) and King (2011) acknowledged that both biracial or bisexual individuals can recognize and value all their identities, as well as develop a secure and integrated identity. The achievement of well-being by women and men navigating sexual minority stress (Meyer, 2003) is proposed to be associated with resilience acquired from successful adaptive coping mechanisms.

Resilience factors including social support, hope and optimism, and emotional openness (Kwon, 2013), potentially lower reactivity to and buffer negative impact of societal prejudice; fundamental elements of sexual minority stress. The greater an individual's sense of self-worth, security, and meaning, capacity for acceptance of emotion and insightful processing, and the ability to constructively confront then overcome obstacles, the more likely he or she can achieve positive psychological and physical health (Kwon, 2013).

Just as important, the results of this study will help others understand that a certain degree of fluidity is a general property of sexuality. Bisexual women and men are not transitional to a solely same-sex lifestyle or unwilling to fully commit to homosexuality because of loss of heterosexual privileges. Bisexual sexuality is substantiated as both extant and stable (Diamond, 2008; Freud & Strachey, 2000; Kinsey, 1948; 1953; IOM, 2011; Meyer, 2003). Understanding the adaptive functioning processes biracial and multiracial bisexual adults use to develop flourishing well-being can help society to be more accepting of sexuality and racial diversity among people.

This study contributes to the limited body of research that has been conducted in the areas of bisexual sexuality, intersectionality involving biracial and multiracial identities, and strengths-based research with sexual minorities. Biracial and multiracial, bisexual women and men who achieve and maintain flourishing well-being despite multidirectional prejudice and discrimination contribute to a very limited body of research. Psychologists, educators, therapists and counselors, advocates, clinicians, families, and friends of the women and men who have experienced these phenomena, will benefit from this research. Deeper knowledge of biracial and multiracial, bisexual women and men who experience flourishing well-being will help improve LGB health outcomes, ameliorate sexual minority status, and advance education and acceptance of human sexuality diversity.

Summary

Chapter 1 provided an explanation of the purpose of the study which is to explore the adaptive functioning processes that flourishing biracial and multiracial bisexual adults use to develop resiliency toward sociocultural factors promoting chronic stressors. Chapter 1 also explains the background, the problem statement, and the purpose of my study. It presented the study's research questions, the conceptual frameworks, and the nature of the study. The chapter discussed the assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and the scope of the study. Chapter 1 concluded with a section on the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 is a review of the current literature on theories and concepts related to bisexual sexuality, resilience building, and strengths-based research. It also includes

information on intersectionality perspective, particularly race and sexuality theory.

Chapter 2 also details recent contributions by field authorities to the literature, research,

and practice of the psychology of sexuality, and discusses sexuality diversity affirming

policy and societal shifts

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Because bisexual women and men endure stigma and discrimination from both heterosexual and gay/lesbian communities (i.e., DSMS), they experience between 4% (gay men/lesbians) and 7% (heterosexuals) higher psychological distress than either of those groups (Ward, Dahlhamer, Galinsky, & Joestl, 2014). According to Vaughan and Rodriquez (2014), resilience can reduce the harmful effects of psychological distress. However, literature that explicitly focuses on positive traits such as resilience within sexual minority populations is sparse; rarer is research with an explicit focus on bisexual women and men. Within that small body of literature, research with a specific focus on biracial and multiracial bisexual individuals is nearly non-existent.

Bisexual people embracing their sexual identity were found to foster resiliency and well-being despite stigma-related social stress (Rostosky et al., 2010). Meyer (2010) proposed that biracial and multiracial LGB bypass SMS (i.e., acquire resilience to SMS-related stigma) as a result of their social location as a racial minority (Meyer, 2010). Sociocultural context and factors play a subjective role in determining the conditions that induce stress or the protective factors of resilience processes (see Collins, 2004; Herrick et al., 2014a; King, 2011).

For example, intersectional analysis revealed depth and difference of oppression, and positive traits, such as resilience, in holders of multiple-marginal identities (Cole, 2009; Elia, 2014; IOM, 2011, pp. 21/2). However, there is little research examining how bisexual people comprehend or make sense of their lived experience such that

psychological growth in the face of adversity increases. The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological study was to explore the adaptive functioning processes that flourishing biracial and multiracial bisexual adults use to develop resiliency toward sociocultural factors promoting chronic stressors.

The first part of the chapter provides an overview of the literature search strategy, including unprecedented availability of publications of sexuality research and theory by the APA. The next section presents the framework infrastructures used in this study to explore, from a strengths-based perspective, the resilience factors engaged by biracial and multiracial, bisexual adults who have flourishing well-being. This section also highlights Seligman's (2000) positive psychology model as a framework for strengths-based sexuality research, and its limited application in sexuality research.

An overview of the history of sexual minorities in research and theory, and the impact of a historically heteronormative society follows the theoretical and conceptual framework section. I review literature specific to bisexual sexuality, including prevalence, disparity statistics, reasons for historical exclusion in research, emergent topic coverage, consistent findings in current research, including uniqueness because of DSMS, and recommendations for future research.

In the remainder of the chapter I review literature specific to this study that is underexplored in sexuality research, particularly with bisexual adults, which is consistently recommended for future research. Topics include resilience, intersectionality, and strengths-based sexuality research versus pathology-focused. I conclude the chapter with a section describing the major themes of the literature, a

description on the gaps that this study fills, and the potential impact of the findings of this study.

<div align="center">**Background**</div>

The Pathologization of Homosexuality

From 1952 to 1975 the DSM classified homosexuality as a pathology. For another 13 years, homosexuality was only classified as a pathology if the individual wanted to become heterosexual. In 1987, homosexuality was removed as a pathology diagnosis from the DSM altogether (Herek, 2007). The stigma toward sexual minorities that the DSM facilitated contributed to the dominance of heteronormative bias and the reticence that delayed legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States until 2015 (Drescher, 2015).

Research-based theory from the field of psychology contributed to the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage. Amicus briefs filed by the APA challenging California's Proposition 8 and the federal Defense of Marriage Act reported that there is no valid scientific basis for denying same-sex couples the right to legal marriage, or to deprive them of the institution's considerable benefits (APA, 2013; Meyer, 2003). The amicus briefs included research findings and theory framed by Meyer's (2003) SMS theory, a theoretical framework used in this study.

Meyer (2003), in the minority stress theory, proposed that both actual experiences and perceived stigma merit examination in lesbians', gay men's, and bisexual women's and men's sexual minority stress models. SMS theory provided sexuality researchers an

unprecedented valid and reliable framework to explore lesbians', gay men's, and bisexual women's and men's psychological and physical health.

Since its inception, empirical research using Meyer's (2003) framework conveyed mental and physical health disparity among the LGB population (e.g., Hatzenbuehler, 2009; McCabe et al., 2010). Leading marginalized lives and enduring stress from concealing sexuality due to stigma revealed increased health risks including substance abuse, excess weight and obesity, and tobacco use Hatzenbuehler, 2009; McCabe et al., 2010; Meyer et al., 2008). Also, distress caused by real or anticipated verbal, emotional, and physical abuse from intolerant family and community members disproportionately affect LGB individuals (Mayer et al., 2008).

Though the dominant culture of heteronormativity is shifting, population-based mental and physical health data collection systems that includes sexual minorities is sparse. For example, in 2013 the (NHIS included a measure of sexual orientation -the first time in its 57-year history (CDC, 2013). The NHIS demonstrated responsiveness to the 2011 IOM report on LBGT health. As charged by the NIH in 2010, a multidisciplinary IOM committee researched gaps and opportunities regarding the health status of LGBT populations (IOM, 2011)

As with the response by the CDC, the ODPHP updated the *Healthy People 2020* framework for public health prevention priorities (U.S. DHHS ODPHP Healthy People 2020, 2010; 2016). Originally released in 2010, the 2016 *Healthy People 2020* framework now includes seven objectives about sexual orientation and gender identity (ODPH, 2016). Through consistent survey methodology including clear definitions,

repetition in questions, and annual or on-going data collection, national entities concerned with public health can report sexuality behavior and sexual health figures with previously unattainable accuracy.

The contemporary landscape related to sexuality diversity in the United States implies improved inclusion in population statistics, multiperspective research, and attitudes. However, one population is recognized by sexuality researchers and theorists as a minority among sexual minorities: bisexual people.

Bisexuality

Within SMS-related research and sexuality research overall, the bisexual experience is severely underexplored, or underreported compared to lesbians' and gay male experience (Balsam & Mohr, 2007; Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Firestein, 1996; Lewis et al., 2009; Meyer & Wilson, 2009; Pollitt, Brimhall, Brewster, & Ross, 2018). Sexuality researchers often handled data of the bisexual experience in one of five ways: adjusted until conforming to an existing hypothesis; grouped into LGB; grouped into heterosexual; excluded; or simply ignored. Even conscientious acknowledgement of bisexual sexuality-related data was often referred to as *beyond the scope of this research effort* and *recommended for future research*. Consistently, the prominent choice for handling bisexuality data in sexuality research was grouping with LG, thus rendered invisible (see MAP, 2016).

From Freud to contemporary sexuality researchers and theorists, bisexual sexuality is substantiated as both extant and stable (Diamond, 2008; Freud & Strachey, 2000; IOM, 2011; Kinsey, 1948; 1953; Meyer, 2003; Stevenson, 2016). This

phenomenon is made further significant as researchers claimed that U.S. population-level estimates indicate that bisexual women and men make up the majority (52%) of the LGB population (Copen et al., 2016; also, see GJ Gates, 2011; Herbenick et al., 2010a; Hill et al., 2016). As affirmation emerged that bisexual sexuality is a distinct and unique sexual orientation and identity, researchers noted that bisexuality does not neatly conform to the either/or of monosexual categories.

Sexuality researchers also recognize bisexual orientation and behavior as nonmonosexuality, fluidity of sexuality, and nonexclusive sexuality. For example, a ground-breaking longitudinal study by Diamond (2008) generated a conceptual paradigm shift for nonexclusive sexuality behavior and identity. Diamond found women's sexual fluidity extant, intentional, and predictable. Diamond's study offered unprecedented insight into the fluidity of sexuality of females and the incongruence of self-labeling and actual sexual behavior.

Katz-Wise (2012) expanded on Diamond's work by using the same study approach including cisgender (i.e., people whose self-identified gender and biological sex correspond) males. Findings demonstrated no gender differences in sexual fluidity. The combined implications of these studies indicated that women and men were equally likely to experience changes in attractions and sexual identity over the course of their lives.

The literature review in this chapter covers bisexuality-related phenomena that sexuality research consistently acknowledged as understudied/underexplored and consistently recommends for future research including, well-being, coping and resilience processes, effects of intersecting social identities, and double sexual minority

stigmatization. Bisexual sexuality has unique qualities and is historically difficult to operationalize for research. Separate address of bisexual people from LG individuals, particularly using qualitative research methodology, is an empirical imperative for examining the bisexual lived experience (Balsam & Mohr, 2007; NIH, 2016).

Resilience and Coping, and Stress and Distress

Positive psychology and sexuality researchers and theorists have suggested that resilience and the development of effective coping strategies, particularly adaptive coping strategies, can reduce the harmful effects of psychological distress (Herrick et al., 2014a; Horne, Puckett, Apter, & Levitt, 2014; Kwon, 2013). Exploring achievement and maintenance of flourishing well-being because of resilience against chronic social stressors is the primary purpose of this study.

Resilience implies positively adapting to negative or adversarial conditions so that negative trajectories are avoided (Meyer, 2003). Adversarial conditions can be daily stressors or significant life challenges. Sociocultural context plays a subjective role in determining the conditions that induce stress or the protective factors of resilience processes (Herrick et al., 2014a). SMS theory (Meyer, 2003) asserts that stress and resilience interact in predicting psychological disorder.

Specific to bisexuals, resilience can mean positive adaptation and development in the face of stressors associated with double sexual minority stigmatization (Bradford, 2004). Limited research with sexual minorities ties positive health outcomes to resiliencies against the harmful effects of stressors (see Hill & Gunderson, 2015; Horne et al., 2014; Meyer, 2015). Further, no found research exists that reflects the positive health

outcomes of bisexual men and women who increase capacity for resilience in the face of double sexual minority stigmatization (Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Herrick, Egan, Coulter, Friedman, & Stall, 2014b; Kwon, 2013; Lewis et al., 2012).

Kwon (2013) proposed constructs for stress buffering and lowering reactivity to prejudice; fundamental elements of sexual minority stress (Meyer, 2003). Kwon proposed resilience factors including social support, hope and optimism, and emotional openness as characteristics of LGB individuals who demonstrate thriving (i.e., flourishing) well-being. Kwon asserted that these resilience factors reveal a balanced synthesis of adaptive coping mechanisms and achievement of psychological and physical well-being.

Relative to sexual minority stress, Kwon (2013) provided a theoretical perspective for studying mechanisms that reveal how resilience factors evolve and persist out of social conditions where in sexual minority related stigma is persistent. For this study, the presence of the proposed resilience factors, in total or part, and in consistent or intermittent practice, are indicators of well-being ranging in classification from positive to flourishing.

Weak Racial Diversity of Bisexuals in Existing Sexuality Research

Similar to divergences among bisexual, lesbian, and gay individuals, there are complex divergences between biracial and multiracial individuals, and monoracial individuals. Sexuality research is dominated by the perspective of White college students (see Miller & Ryan, 2011; Weinrich, 2014). When racial diversity is a prominent feature of sexuality research, focus typically concentrates on monoracial sexual minorities (Moradi et al., 2010).

The concept of intersectionality articulates that individuals occupy multiple structural positions that locate their experience, knowledge, choices, and practices in particular histories and in specific relationship to dominant culture's understanding of what is real, normal, acceptable, and even possible (Tolman & Diamond, 2014a). Intersectionality describes analytic approaches that simultaneously consider the meaning and consequences of multiple categories of identity, difference, and disadvantage (IOM, 2011). For example, the 2011 IOM committee of sexuality and health/sciences experts relied on intersectionality theory to organize understanding social inequality (Dill & Zambrana, 2009; Weber, 2010; also see IOM, 2011, pp. 21–22).

Conceptually significant to this study, intersectionality allows fluid sexuality expression and offers a replacement for artificial binary positions/perspectives such as heteronormativity (Eliason & Elia, 2011). Further, intersectionality allows recognition that identities are often formed in the presence of others, are influenced by time and place, and are constantly shifting (King, 2011). This study aims for better understanding how to guide shifts toward flourishing well-being.

Intersectionality as a framework requires examination of the points of cohesion and fracture within, racial/ethnic sexual- and gender-minority groups, as well as those between these groups and the dominant group culture (Mink et al., 2014). Limited literature addressed the intersection of bisexual and biracial/multiracial identities. The literature review in this chapter covers oppression of the dual minority status, the complex realities within an oppressive society, and the need for a more systematic approach for studying biracial/multiracial bisexual individuals. The literature review

supported the emphasis this study places on biracial and multiracial status at the

intersection of sexuality in relation to resilience processes.

Literature Search Strategy

The process of locating relevant, reliable, and peer-reviewed literature involved

use of the Walden University electronic library and a personally owned library of

psychology of sexuality books and journal subscriptions. Access to these sources allowed

me to use a relatively discrete amount of seminal literature as a starting point. Because

one source cites many others, I was able to directly search for and later use the references

cited in my personally owned resources.

Locating additional relevant peer-reviewed journal articles and books involved

use of the Walden University electronic library. The Elton B. Stephens Company

(EBSCO) system allowed for simultaneous searches with multiple databases including

Academic Search Complete, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Life,

PsycBOOKS, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, and SocINDEX. EBSCObooks database and

the ProQuest ebrary supported location of relevant books and handbooks. The drop-down

box search feature of the EBSCO system, EBSCObooks, and ProQuest ebrary allowed

searches specifically for author(s) and titles.

A variety of search terms and keywords were used in the search for peer-reviewed

journal articles for this literature review. These search terms included words, phrases, and

combinations of the two, including *bisexual, bisexuality, fluid sexuality, LGBT,*

nonmonosexual, nonexclusive, sexual fluidity, sexual orientation, sexual identity,

sexuality, sexual minority, sexual minority stress, double minority, double stigmatization,

dual discrimination, biphobia, coping, adaptive coping processes, resilience, well-being, subjective/psychological well-being, positive psychology, strengths, strengths-based, stress-related growth, intersectionality, biracial, multiracial, multiethnic, and *racially mixed*. The EBSCO system features simultaneous database searching, so all the selected databases were searched with all the terms. Use of the Walden University electronic library allowed for an exhaustive literature search and article collection process.

It is important to note that research with the bisexual population is fairly limited. Sexual minority data revealing the bisexual experience was conformed to fit the LG experience or excluded from LGB research for skewing. Also, operationalizing bisexual sexuality orientation and identity challenged the research sample recruitment process. Lastly, much of the extant contemporary research and theory that examined the bisexual experience involved meta-analysis of existing research and theory.

These reasons indicate that more research is needed with this population, especially with those having flourishing well-being despite intersecting social identities that typically exacerbate sexual minority stress. Research used in this literature review is more than 3-5 years old. After doing an extensive literature search, more recent studies were sparse and typically involved meta-analysis or compilation of extant literature. Older research and contemporary meta-analyses were justified because of contextual relevancy to this study.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

This study explored the bisexual experience through a strengths-based lens. Foremost, the present study examined resilience processes in the development and

maintenance of flourishing well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2011). The theoretical and conceptual frameworks of this study included the resilience factors model (Kwon, 2013), intersectionality concept (Cole, 2009), and sexual minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003).

The fundamental philosophy of positive psychology underpins the guiding frameworks of this study, "…psychology is not just the study of pathology, weakness, and damage; it is also the study of strength and virtue. [Psychological] treatment is not just fixing what is broken; it is nurturing what is best" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 7). There is much empirical support emerging for positive psychology approaches as effective treatment approaches. The next section describes concepts of positive psychology, strengths-based research and analysis.

Strengths-Based Sexuality Research

Research framed by Sexual Minority Stress (SMS) theory (Meyer, 2003) exposed the negative impact of LGB minority status on psychological and physical health. However, the focus on the negative psychological effects of minority stress without a balance of the positive provides a limited understanding of the LGB lived experience. A balanced and representative understanding of LGB lives requires that LGB psychology research, theory, and practice include strengths-based perspectives (Meyer, 2014; 2015; Vaughan & Rodriquez, 2014).

Strengths-based approaches focus on positive traits (i.e., strengths) and resources motivated by positive expectations. Strengths involve internal or external qualities or conditions such as courage, optimism, perseverance, or creativity. Phenomena that help

people adaptively cope with life or engage a fulfilling life are strengths. According to SMS theory originator Ilan H. Meyer (2015), intervention to enhance resilience is the most lagging area of SMS-related research.

Balancing deficit knowledge with an understanding of individuals' resiliency approaches to positive, even flourishing, well-being will advance better understanding for the amelioration of health disparity among sexual minorities (Elia, 2014; Meyer, 2014; 2015). Also, strengths-based research approaches will further help to depathologize and affirm LGB persons within psychological research and practice. Principles of positive psychology counter the long-standing deficit-based (i.e., pathology-focused) perspectives and practices generated by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders ([DSM] American Psychiatric Association, n.d.).

Positive psychology. Originating in counseling and personality psychology, positive psychology uses an affirming lens to explore the flourishing life and to encourage nurturance of what is best in an individual. Positive psychology recognizes valued subjective experiences, positive individual traits, and positive communities and institutions "that help individuals and communities, not just to endure and survive [i.e., cope], but also to flourish" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 13).

Combining seminal concepts by Maslow (1954), Erikson (1959), and Rogers (1961), positive psychology explores subjective experiences as well as character strengths and virtue at the individual, group, and institutional levels (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Maslow proposed self-actualization, that people were self-directed and adaptive; Rogers conceptualized healthy coping, fostering authenticity,

fulfilling lives, and that external entities foster strengths through empathy; and Erikson organized life-span theory, as well as minority groups' growth through navigating stress/adversity. Maslow, Erikson, and Rogers all purported that within personality formation is the innate potential for psychological growth and life-long strengths development.

Using a strengths-based lens, this study examined resilience processes used in development and maintenance of flourishing well-being by biracial and multiracial bisexual adults. By focusing on positive traits, this study aimed for better understanding of how to buffer against and better prevent mental and physical illnesses known to accompany sexual minority stress (Meyer, 2003; 2015; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). According to Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) by studying positive human traits, we can learn how to foster the qualities that help individuals and communities flourish.

There is limited empirical literature for positive psychology approaches as treatment approaches with LGB individuals. Recently, sexuality researchers suggested application of the positive psychology principles (e.g., PERMA factors [detailed below]) and fostering positive social institutions, positive subjective experiences and character strengths (Seligman, 2011) in effort to generate a consistent approach to examining LGB strengths and for incorporation in clinical training and practice (Lytle et al., 2014; Vaughan & Rodriquez, 2014). In practice, there is empirical support for positive psychology approaches as treatment approaches with the general population.

For example, in a meta-analysis including 4,266 individual cases of 51 positive

psychology interventions (PPI), Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) found that PPI significantly

enhanced well-being and decreased depressive symptoms (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009).

Study moderators included age (i.e., child/adolescent, young adult, middle adult, and

older adult), treatment engagement (i.e., self-selection vs. no self-selection), depression

status, intervention format (i.e., individual, group, or self-directed), intervention duration,

and comparison group type (i.e., no- treatment control, neutral control, placebo, or

treatment as usual) (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Over all findings indicated that

strengths-based interventions were equally effective in addressing both the abatement of

mental health symptoms and the promotion of positive subjective experiences in therapy

(Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009).

A meta-analysis of strengths-based literature by Vaughan et al. (2014) is included

in the limited empirical research demonstrating positive psychology approaches with

LGB individuals (Vaughan et al., 2014). A content analysis of 339 peer-reviewed,

strengths-based articles in psychology literature published between 1973 and 2011

reflected the meaningful inclusion of seven character strengths. The positive psychology

themes included love, integrity, vitality, citizenship, nonprofit organizations, and LGBT-

affirming laws. Empirical literature for the general population and LGB population

illustrated that application of the positive psychology principles as a research and

treatment framework both reveals and fosters strengths of LGB individuals.

**Flourishing well-being (Seligman, 2011)*.* The present study sample involved

adult bisexual individuals with flourishing well-being. Elementarily, flourishing refers to

life going well. The experience of a reciprocal cycle of functioning effectively and feeling good. In his book, *Flourish*, Martin E. P. Seligman (2011) operationalizes flourishing with the overlapping yet conceptually different, factors of authentic happiness theory (i.e., positive emotion, engagement, and meaning) and well-being theory (i.e., positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishments).

Operationally, per Seligman, life satisfaction is the measurement of authentic happiness theory, but measuring well-being involves life satisfaction and more. well-being is measured by positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (a.k.a., PERMA). According to Seligman (2011), these five factors are present in a flourishing person's life. The PERMA factors supported sample recruitment in the present study.

SMS theory and positive psychology. Sexual Minority Stress theory (Meyer, 2003) facilitated the discovery of LGB health disparity. From inception, the SMS theory creator acknowledged the alignment of minority stress and growth by referring to stress related growth ([SRG] see Frankl, 1946/2006; Meyer, 2003). Recently, effort to reinstitute psychology's inclusion of the positive prompted Meyer to note the need for psychologists to include LGBT concerns in their study of positive psychology and the study of LGBT health include tenets of positive psychology (Meyer, 2014). He promoted LGBT health exploration from a strengths perspective and emphasized research focus on resilience as a stress ameliorating process (Meyer, 2014; 2015).

Additionally, Meyer (2014) conveyed caution for two aspects of positive psychology and the exploration of sexual minorities' health and well-being. First, he

noted the importance of the balanced presence between strengths and deficits, as both are integral and equally important to complete an unbiased understanding and practice. Second, he cautioned about the potential for positive psychology's *Three Pillar Model* (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) to focus on responsibility of the individual and ignore responsibility of institutionalized structures.

SMS theory explained that stigma, prejudice, and discrimination create a hostile and stressful social environment that causes mental health problems. SMS theory emphasized the contribution of social structures and social stressors (e.g., stigma, prejudice, and discrimination) to health disparity in the LGB population. The following section describes the need to simultaneously focus on interventions that attempt to correct the "pathogenic social environment" (Meyer, 2015. p. 211) as well as helping LGB individuals become resilient in coping with the environment.

Sexual Minority Stress Theory

Sexual Minority Stress Theory ([SMS] Meyer, 2003) provided a conceptual framework for understanding the excess in prevalence of disorder in terms of minority stress. SMS theory posits that exposure to stress mediates the association between social status and mental health outcomes in LGB populations. Typically, SMS theory constructs reveal the psychological pathways from stress to psychopathology. For this study, SMS theory constructs revealed at what point on psychological pathways study participants engaged resilience processes.

Meyer (2003) created the term *minority stress* to emphasize exposure to excess stress by individuals in stigmatized social categories. Minority stress theory explains that

stigma, prejudice, and discrimination create a hostile and stressful social environment that causes mental health problems. Meyer proposed that LGB individuals have a higher prevalence of mental disorders than heterosexuals because of stigma-related stress. Thus, sexuality researchers refer to minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003) as sexual minority stress (SMS) theory.

SMS theory: Distal-proximal stressor continuum and disparity. A multifaceted construct, SMS includes distal (i.e., objective events and conditions) and proximal (i.e., subjective, individual perceptions and appraisals) experiences uniquely related to one's sexual minority status in heteronormative societies (Meyer, 1995; Meyer, 2003; Meyer & Dean, 1998). Constructs include concealment of one's sexual orientation and identity; identity confusion/internalized homophobia; internalization of negative social attitudes; chronic and acute external events and conditions including the vigilance anticipation of such events requires; experienced and anticipated rejection; victimization; and discrimination (Meyer, 1995; Meyer & Dean, 1998). For this study, these constructs represent factors against which study participants may develop and maintain resilience.

SMS theory gave sexuality researchers constructs to explore that revealed the psychological pathways from stress to psychopathology (e.g., Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Lewis et al., 2012). Empirical research using Meyer's framework conveyed mental and physical health disparity among the LGB population. For example, research framed by Meyer's 2003 theory revealed that health indicators like substance abuse, excess weight and obesity, and tobacco use disproportionately affect sexual and gender minorities (e.g., Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Mayer et al., 2008; McCabe et al., 2010).

Illustrating the empirical influence of SMS theory in sexuality research, the 2011 Institute of Medicine committee used Meyer's theory as one of only four guiding frameworks in the report on LGBT health status (IOM, 2011). Further conveying the prominence of SMS theory in sexuality-related research and practice, the 2013 *APA Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity* Journal supplementary edition included Meyer's original 2003 article in entirety (Meyer, 2013). Empirical research and the prominent authorities in the field of psychology and health validate SMS theory (Meyer, 2003) as a theoretical framework in the present study. Further validation comes from the SMS theory originator's recent promotion of LGBT health exploration from a strengths perspective and emphasis for research focus on resilience as a stress ameliorating process (Meyer, 2014; 2015).

SMS theory and bisexuality. In his seminal presentation of SMS theory, Meyer (2003) acknowledged that bisexual individuals "*may*" be exposed to more stressors than lesbians and gay men, and acknowledged the failure of his cited literature to distinguish bisexuals from LG individuals (p. 22). Though Meyer cited only one piece of literature, empirical literature confirms that bisexual individuals' SMS experience includes prejudice and discrimination from both the homosexual and heterosexual communities (Barker et al., 2012; Herek, 2000; Roberts, Horne, & Hoyte, 2015; Ochs, 1996; Rust, 2000a; Rust, 2000b). Double stigma, double minority stigma, or double sexual minority stigmatization (DSMS) is found to magnify stigma related health issues per SMS theory.

In other words, bisexual individuals experience both homophobia and biphobia (Firestein, 1996; Herek, 2000; IOM, 2011; Lewis et al., 2009; Meyer, 2003; Mayer et al.,

2008). For example, members of the homosexual community often perceive bisexuality

as either transitional to a solely same-sex lifestyle or as the unwillingness of an individual

to fully commit to homosexuality because of the loss of heterosexual privileges. The

members of the heterosexual community often assume any same-sex sexuality equates to

homosexuality; therefore, bisexuality is perceived basically nonexistent or mythical (see

Firestein, 1996 and Rust, 2000b). In a review of the history of bisexuality, MacDowall

(2009) suggested deliberate social and structural erasure of bisexuality due to its

imposition on cultural order (MacDowall, 2009).

Bisexual sexuality threatens the dichotomy of the heterosexual and homosexual

social order of heteronormative societies. Also, in the fight for marriage rights,

bisexuality disrupts the argument that sexual orientation is not a choice. Double sexual

minority stress (DSMS) is an important construct to this study. Multiple factors of

stigma, prejudice, and discrimination from both the homosexual and heterosexual

communities provide opportunity for bisexual individuals to engage adaptive coping

mechanisms to achieve resilience, which is successful adaptive functioning (Vaughan &

Rodriquez, 2014).

SMS theory and individual and community resilience (Meyer, 2015). Sexual

Minority Stress theory emphasized the harm-causing contributions of social structures

and social stressors (e.g., stigma, prejudice, and discrimination). Yet, research in the

context of minority stress primarily focuses on helping the individual become resilient in

coping with environmental stressors. Meyer (2015) asserted the need to simultaneously

focus on interventions that attempt to correct the "pathogenic social environment" as well as helping LGB individuals become resilient in coping with the environment (p. 211).

Community resilience as minority coping. In the context of minority stress, where individual resilience relies on personal agency, minority coping and community level resilience refer to norms and values, role models, and opportunities for social support (Meyer, 2003). Opportunity structure (Merton, 1968; Meyer, 2015) posits that personal resilience is not always an attribute of the person, as not everyone has the same opportunity for resilience when the underlying social structures are unequal. Racism, homophobia, sexism, socioeconomic inequality, and other social disadvantages limit individual resources in the community (Meyer, 2015, p. 211).

For this study, individual and community interventions were considered as a progression of elements or factors (i.e., continuum perspective). For example, recent LG affirmative laws (e.g., U.S. Supreme Court ruling in favor of same-sex marriage) may shift societal norms, thus decreasing the need for individual resilience while simultaneously increasing individual capacity for resilience. Illustrative of this, sexuality researchers asserted that same-sex sexuality becomes increasingly destigmatized and deemed routine by youth who adopt shifting discursive and societal constructs of sexuality (Elia, 2014; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2010; Pallotta-Chiarolli 2014; Savin-Williams et al., 2008). These simultaneous events represent an ameliorative occurrence of the "pathogenic social environment" (Meyer, 2003, p. 211) which promotes LGB individuals' resilience in coping with the environment.

Resilience Factors Model

Exploring achievement and maintenance of flourishing well-being because of resilience against chronic social stressors is the primary purpose of this study. The Resilience Factors Model proposed by Kwon (2013) guided exploration of bisexual individuals' resilience in successful adaptation to social stressors. The resilience factors framework proposes constructs for stress buffering and lowering reactivity to prejudice; fundamental elements of sexual minority stress (Meyer, 2003).

Resilience is different from basic coping in that the former infers adaptation and the latter refers to the effort put into a response to stress. Resilience is inherently inferential because it means that protection - successful adaptive functioning - is present in the face of stress. Coping is the effort to defend - not necessarily successfully - against the stressor (Masten, 2007; Meyer, 2015). Relative to sexual minority stress, the *Resilience Factors Model* provided a theoretical perspective for studying mechanisms that reveal how resilience factors evolve and persist out of social conditions where sexual minority related stigma is persistent.

Kwon proposed resilience factors including social support, hope and optimism, and emotional openness as characteristics of LGB individuals who demonstrate *thriving* well-being (Kwon, 2013). Social support in the resilience factors model, is sexual orientation affirming interactions with individuals and communities. In a theoretical review, Cohen (2004) argued that social relationships promote health and well-being through two distinct mechanisms: the promotion of social connectedness and stress buffering.

Social support can lead to a sense of connection with the LGB community, contributing to psychological health (Cohen, 2004; also, see *affiliation* in Meyer, 2003). In addition, Kwon (2013) proposed that the stress buffering mechanism of social support lowers reactivity to prejudice. Examples of decreased reactivity to prejudice might include an individual's generating more positive appraisals of stressful events, less self-blame, more positive attributions in discriminatory situations, and increased feelings of empowerment.

Another resilience factor is emotional openness. Emotional openness is accepting and processing emotions during stress and is associated with psychological health. According to Kwon (2013), emotional acceptance and appraisal of emotions must both be engaged to buffer against prejudice. The third and last factor of the *Resilience Factor Model*, is hope and optimism which involve focusing on the future, envisioning a better life, and actively pursuing goals (Kwon, 2013).

Kwon posited that hope is behind an individual's motivation to pursue goals when external obstacles arise. Optimism implies having positive expectations. People with dispositional optimism reported anticipating (i.e., expecting) more positive outcomes than negative outcomes (Kwon, 2013; Scheier & Carver, 1985). In a research review, dispositional optimists were noted as finding the benefits of adversity, a trait mediated by problem focused coping (Scheier & Carver, 2014). In this framework, hope and optimism are proposed to trigger perseverance through sexual minority stress.

Kwon also asserted that these resilience factors reveal a balanced synthesis of adaptive coping mechanisms and achievement of psychological and physical well-being.

For this study, the presence of the proposed resilience factors, in total or part, and in consistent or intermittent practice, were indicators of well-being ranging from positive to flourishing. SMS-related research includes limited exploration of interventions to enhance resilience in LGB individuals (Meyer, 2015). This study explored the resilience processes engaged by bisexual adults and to examine the revealed processes using the resilience factors of Kwon's (2013) model.

   Resilience in the general population. The resilience factors of Kwon's (2013) framework have been applied extensively to the general population, with only social support receiving an empirical application in sexuality research involving bisexual individuals (detailed in LGB resilience section, see Herrick et al., 2014a; Kwon, 2013; Lewis et al., 2012). The principles of social support, emotional openness, and hope and optimism fit the minimal research literature (see Hill & Gunderson, 2015) on resilience in LGB individuals but is grounded in empirical literature examining resilience in the general population, and in the perspective of positive psychology (Kwon, 2013; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

  Research on the general population has identified a number of mechanisms responsible for the benefits of social support, including greater self-worth, security, meaning, and the emulation of positive role models (e.g., Cohen, 2004). Also, buffering the impact of stressful events through formulating positive appraisals like less self-blame for discriminatory events or stigma-related stressors has been explored in association with resilience in the general population (Cohen, 2004; Kwon, 2013). Individuals with emotional openness including both acceptance of emotion (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and insightful

processing (Pennebaker, 1996) in the face of stressful events were found to have more positive psychological and physical health than individuals who suppress emotion and avoid emotional processing (Pennebaker, 1996 and in Kwon, 2013).

An outlet for lowering reactivity to prejudice is important to this framework, whether by accessing social support systems or writing in a personal journal (e.g., insightful emotional processing) as a form of emotional openness. Acknowledging and exploring feelings regarding sexual orientation satisfies this framework factor for my study. Hope and optimism are characteristics that allow people to constructively confront then overcome obstacles. Hope propels determination in goal pursuit including planning both for success and how to overcome barriers to success. Optimism involves positive thinking in times of stress in which these events are challenges with solutions versus barriers by which to abandon goal pursuit (Kwon, 2013; Scheier & Carver, 1985, 2014).

Resilience: Lesbian and gay men vs. bisexual individuals. *Social support* enhances psychological and interpersonal functioning in LGB individuals by providing greater senses of self-worth and belonging. Particularly when social relationships affirm sexual orientation. SMS-related research consistently indicates that LGB people feel invisible or alienated in heteronormative cultures, and that social support from people aware of an LGB person's sexual orientation provides greater satisfaction (Herrick et al., 2014a; Kwon, 2013; Lewis et al., 2012).

Kwon's resilience framework represents a counterpoise (i.e., neutralizing influence) to the distinct vulnerability bisexual individuals experience in association with double sexual minority status/stigmatization (Lewis et al., 2009). Previously noted,

double sexual minority stigmatization (DSMS) is found to magnify stigma related health

issues in bisexual individuals per SMS theory. This study provides insight to the

resilience processes bisexual men and women engage during stressful situations.

Meyer (2015), asserted that the impact of stress on health is determined by the

off-setting effects of disease-causing stress processes and health inducing coping

processes (Meyer, 2015, p. 209). The present study provides insight for SMS-related

research about possible interventions to enhance resilience in bisexual men and women.

Further, this study adds to the literature on health outcomes and resilience reflecting

bisexual women's and men's experience with double sexual minority stigmatization

(Herrick et al., 2014a; Kwon, 2013; Lewis et al., 2012).

Intersectionality Concept

Intersectionality originated from black feminism and the exploration of

oppression via multiple social identities (see Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality considers

the social/cultural and historical contexts of race, gender, sexuality, [dis]ability, class, and

other social categories. Intersectional perspective acknowledges these simultaneous

social identities and how they structure an individual's access to social, economic, and

political resources and privileges. Intersectionality approaches focuses on understanding

how these simultaneous social dimensions are interrelated and how they shape and

influence one another (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; IOM,

2011, National Institutes of Health, 2016; Rich, 1980; Lorde, 1984/2007).

The concept of intersectionality articulates that individuals occupy multiple

structural positions that locate their experience, knowledge, choices, and practices in

particular histories and in specific relationship to dominant culture's understanding of what is real, normal, acceptable, and even possible (Tolman & Diamond, 2014a). Intersectionality describes analytic approaches that simultaneously consider the meaning and consequences of multiple categories of identity, difference, and disadvantage. For example, the experts on the 2011 IOM committee on sexuality and health/sciences relied on *intersectionality theory* to organize understanding social inequality.

Foundational claims and principles guided exploration of LGB marginalized status using the dimensions of race, ethnicity, and social class (IOM, 2011). The IOM committee emphasized that responsible sexuality research weighs social, structural, political, historical, and geographic factors which impact both identity development and health (Institute of Medicine, 2011, pp. 21/2). As with the IOM committee in 2011, the present study recognizes that having intersecting social identities influences the LGB experience and relates to positive and negative well-being in LGB individuals.

Conceptually significant to this study, intersectionality allows fluid sexuality (i.e., bisexuality) expression and offers a replacement for artificial binary positions/perspectives (e.g., heteronormativity) (Eliason & Elia, 2011). Further, intersectionality allows recognition that identities are often formed in the presence of others, are influenced by time and place, and are constantly shifting (King, 2011). This study aimed for better understanding how to guide *shifts* toward flourishing well-being.

Social roles and social categories impact on research. Such attention to commonality and fracture is critical because failure to attend to how social categories depend on one another for meaning and consequences renders knowledge of any one

category both incomplete and biased (Cole, 2009; Diamond, 2008; Lewis et al., 2012). Cole's intersectionality framework reflects "a *paradigm* for theory and research offering new ways of understanding the complex causality that characterizes social phenomena" (Cole, 2009, p. 179). Cole's (2009) analysis, integral to the present study, simply asks three questions: "Who is included within this category? What role does inequality play? Where are there similarities?" (Cole, 2009, pp. 171/6).

Intersectionality as a framework also challenges one to look at the points of cohesion (i.e., commonality) and fracture within, for example, racial/ethnic sexual- and gender-minority groups, as well as those between these groups and the dominant group culture (e.g., Mink et al., 2014, p. 506). This study placed emphasis on biracial and multiracial status at the intersection of sexuality in relation to resilience processes. As the IOM committee (2011) organized around social inequality, Meyer (2010) and Moradi et al. (2010) noted that LGB of color experienced more stress and more resilience (Meyer, 2010; Moradi et al., 2010).

Moradi et al. (2010) tested 178 LGB adults (18 -72 years of age) of which 50% were White and 50% racially diverse (i.e., African American/black, Latina/o, Pacific Islander/Asian, Native American, and multiracial). The study tested whether perceived heterosexist stigma, internalized homophobia, and sexual orientation concealment were higher and whether perceived stigma was more strongly associated with internalized homophobia among LGB people of color (i.e., SMS/stress hypothesis) or among White LGB adults (i.e., resilience hypothesis). The LGB people with racial diversity reported

lower levels of outness but less relation between perceived heterosexist stigma and internalized homophobia than the White study participants (Moradi et al., 2010).

In a review of Moradi et al. (2010) and similar research, Meyer (2010) suggested that individuals with racial diversity have greater resources to guard against sexual minority stress. Meyer proposed that racially diverse LGB women and men had more opportunity to be exposed to stress, and had a community of support strengthened by shared culture and experience than White LGB adults. Further, Meyer (2010) asserted that the stress exposure and social support was to such an extent that these resources defend (i.e., develop resilience) racially diverse LGB women and men against the potential damaging effects of stress related to racism and sexual minority status (Meyer, 2010; Moradi et al., 2010).

Biracial and multiracial identities. Similar to divergences among bisexual, lesbian, and gay individuals, there are complex divergences between biracial (a.k.a., dual race or dual-racial) and multiracial (a.k.a., mixed-race, multicultural or multi-race) individuals, and monoracial individuals. Healthy identity development for individuals with dual or multiracial heritage is burdened by U.S. racial ideology. Artificial and rigid categorizations of people according to physical characteristics constrain legitimate racial identity. Thus, the socialization and developmental processes of biracial and multiracial individuals is more complex, and are frequently more problematic than the development of those in monoracial populations (Anderson, 2011; Daniel, Kina, Dariotis & Fojas, 2014; Nuttgens, 2010; Rockquemore, Brunsma & Delgado, 2009).

Nevertheless, complexity does not solely result in negative outcomes. Experiences of biracial and multiracial individuals can facilitate valuable attributes such as resiliency, adaptability, and creativity (Meyer, 2010; Nuttgens, 2010). More consistently with the changing terrain of race relations, multiracial people are more visible in the media and viewed as a legitimate racial identity. Researchers must consider how racial identity, racial identification, and racial category interact, overlap, and contradict each other when working with dual-race and multi-race individuals (Rockquemore et al., 2009).

In this study, biracial and multiracial identity was considered within the intersectionality context in that identity development is potentially fluid across one's lifespan (Nuttgens, 2010; Daniel et al., 2014). Biraciality and multiraciality were further considered through critical race theory and constructs from critical mixed-race studies. These theories offered additional insight to the compounding effects, both positive and negative, of intersecting social identities.

Critical race theory (CRT). Critical Race Theory originates from critical legal studies with expansion from radical feminism to address post-Civil Rights Act inequities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Critical race theory guides assessment of "the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, pp. 2/3). CRT acknowledges that for the dominant group, racism serves important purposes, both psychic (e.g., perception of superiority) and material (e.g., resource access control) and is the common, everyday experience of most people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Tenets of CRT involve studying how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies, as well as positively transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. The perspective of CRT examines economics, history, context, self/group interest, and unconscious or considered feelings and behavior (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). This study explored the ways bisexual individuals with biracial and multiracial identities are viewed and depicted in society at large and the expectations associated with these depictions. Specifically, this study examined the influence of the integral links between social, structural, political, historical, and geographic factors on psychological and physical well-being.

Critical mixed race studies. The field of critical mixed race studies (CMRS), though nascent (i.e., not yet codified within the academy), merits acknowledgement in the present study. Daniel, Kina, Dariotis and Fojas's (2014) proposed concept of critical mixed race theory included the tenets of critical race theory (CRT) and that are augmented to emphasize the distinct and unique experience of mixed-race (Daniel et al., 2014). Mixed race is at the critical center of CMRS focus, for which *multiracials* become subjects of historical, social, and cultural processes rather than simply objects of analysis (Daniel et al., 2014, p. 6).

Along with multiraciality, CMRS attends racial mixing, interraciality, transracial adoption, and interethnic alliances (Daniel et al., 2014). Like CRT, CMRS includes critical examination of society and culture, in addition to the intersection of race, law, and power as well as racial justice scholarship and legal practice. Unlike CRT, CMRS also interrogates racial essentialism and racial hierarchy related specifically to mixed-race.

Mixed race or multiracial (a.k.a., multiraciality) scholarship has a long history of very sensitive and thought-provoking analyses in the United States. The history of CMRS moves alongside the political initiatives and racial power movements spanning the 1950s – 1970s. Mainstream media attention occurred in the late 80s and 90s, and the election of President Obama generated heightened interest and scholarship on multiraciality. CMRS scholars and theorists suggested that the affirmation/declaration of a multiracial identity is to rescue racial identities from distortion and erasure by incorporating all of a person's racial and ethnic backgrounds (Daniel et al., 2014; Gordon, 1995; Ifekwunigwe, 2015).

An objective of the mixed-race movement has been to question the imposition of, as well as to resist, traditional monoracial categories and boundaries by expanding them to include more multidimensional configurations. Constructs of critical mixed race studies which inform mixed-race experiences and identities that warrant analysis in this study include racial consciousness; understanding the world in which racially mixed people live; and examining the ideological, social, economic, and political forces/policies that impact social location (Daniel et al., 2014). According to Daniel et al. (2014), traditional monoracial categories and boundaries must be expanded, and this study is structured to receive more multidimensional configurations of race/ethnicity.

Bisexual status and racial/cultural identity: Meaning/consequences. Limited literature addresses the intersection of bisexual and biracial/multiracial identities. The existing literature emphasizes oppression of the dual minority status, the complex realities within an oppressive society, and the need for a more systematic approach for studying biracial/multiracial bisexual individuals (e.g., Collins, 2000; Elia, 2014; and

King, 2011). Elia (2014) acknowledged the *messy* but imperative need to explore both oppression and gifts in bisexuals. The intersectional lens reveals the depth and difference of oppression, but it also reveals strengths and gifts of being bisexual (Elia, 2014).

A model by Collins (2000) and a critique of Collins' theory by King (2011) comprehensively illustrate facets of bisexual and biracial/multiracial identity development while further emphasizing the need for a systematic intersectionality framework. Collins (2000, 2004) and King (2011) both proposed researching the interrelatedness of various aspects of the individual identity, and the role of sociohistorical context in which bisexual and biracial individuals negotiate their identities. Both Collins (2000, 2004) and King (2011) also acknowledged that biracial or bisexual individuals can recognize and value all of their identities, as well as develop a secure and integrated identity.

Collins's (2000) findings deviated from King (2011) by positing an absolute end-state void of confusion, stereotypes or self-devaluation in the last phase of identity development. King (2011) instead found each multiracial/biracial–bisexual/pansexual study participant interested in continued growth and evolution of their identities. Collins (2004) combined biracial and bisexual literature to call for a comprehensive model of identity development for those who are marginalized by more than one culture or ethnic group. What has become intersectionality concept that Collins (2004) called *borderlands*, is used to understand individuals who are both bisexual and biracial to illustrate how social categories depend on one another for meaning and consequences.

As previously stated, the theory of intersectionality makes room for fluid sexuality expression and offers a replacement for heteronormativity, which is conceptually significant to this study. Intersectionality also allows recognition that identities are often formed in the presence of others, are influenced by time and place, and are constantly shifting. This study aimed for better understanding biracial and multiracial bisexual adults' navigation toward and maintenance of flourishing well-being.

Sexual Minorities in Research and Theory

It is not the number of lesbian, gay male, and bisexual (LGB) individuals that make them a minority group. Social disadvantage and devalued social capital places LGB individuals at minority status (Mink et al., 2014). This marginalized position influences both social and scientific perceptions. A long history of heteronormative bias sustains societal prejudice toward same-sex sexuality. In sexuality research, bias is present because sexuality has often been approached using comparisons with heteronormative expectations. Recently, however, pivotal events in social policy and social science initiated reconsideration of ideals and assumptions about normative sexuality.

The 2015 United States Supreme Court's favorable ruling on same-sex marriage, 2013 amicus briefs, and publications in 2012 and 2014 by the American Psychological Association (APA) about sexuality diversity all represent changes and opportunity for change in attitudes and practices concerning sexuality. The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling legalizing same-sex marriage acknowledges the constitutional rights of same-sex couples. The ruling makes more than 1000 lawful rights available to same-sex couples that were previously inaccessible to them (Shah & Associate General Counsel, 2004).

Amicus briefs filed by the APA challenging California's proposition 8 and the federal Defense of Marriage Act reported that there is no valid scientific basis for denying same-sex couples the right to legal marriage, or to deprive them of the institution's considerable benefits (APA, 2013). The APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients (2012), *APA Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity* Journal (2014) and the *APA Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology* (2014) advance objective and reliable research, theory, and practices about sexuality and gender orientations. Advanced by the highest authorities of their respective domains, these events set a course for ameliorating sexual minority status and acceptance of the sexuality diversity among people.

Background

A topic of perpetual controversy in society, sexuality diversity has a long history of scientific interest and attention. Seminal research by Sigmund Freud (1905 – 1938), Alfred Kinsey (1948, 1953), and Fritz Klein (1978, 1985) contribute to the foundation on which contemporary sexuality theory is built. Each of these researcher theorists explored sexuality diversity with respective biases, yet each acknowledged the prevalence of same-sex sexuality and fluid sexuality.

For example, Sigmund Freud suggested that human sexual instinct includes the capacity to derive satisfaction with either gender regardless of our own gender (Freud & Strachey, 2000). Alfred Kinsey reported that sexuality behavior existed on a continuum that was often fluid (Kinsey et al., 1948; Kinsey et al., 1953). Fritz Klein explored variability in sexual orientation over time by measuring same-sex and different-sex

activities in one's past, immediate present, and that which is preferred for one's future. Klein looked at fantasy, attraction, and behavior (Klein, Sepekoff, & Wolf, 1985). The following section describes the sexuality diversity research and sexuality theories of Freud, Kinsey, and Klein.

Sigmund Freud based the psychosocial sexuality theory on the assumption that sex between a male and female was the only normal option. Specifically, typical male and female genital contact, labeling "deviations" or activities beyond this proscribed sex aim aberrations or perversions. Aberrations included homosexuality (inversion per Freud), bisexuality, and fetishes (Freud & Strachey, 2000)[2]. According to Freud's theory, aberrations resulted from "conflicts in transferring psychosexual energy" appropriately from one psychosexual stage to the next. Contradictory to what aberrations and perversions appear to imply, Freud's theories were neutral to judgment and condemnation[3].

Freud speculated that there are an infinite number of ways that adult sexuality evolves and by which sexual satisfaction occurs. He proposed that each of us has the capacity for all variations of sexuality because our sexual instinct as children is flexible (polymorphously perverse per Freud). Thus, Freud alluded that human sexual instinct is basically bisexual and that boundary learned from real-world experiences either advanced or repressed it (refer to Freud & Strachey, 2000, p. 57). Two decades after Freud's final publication on sexuality, Alfred Kinsey provided support for Freud's concepts about the prevalence of bisexuality.

In a time when sexual orientation was strongly perceived as a dichotomous phenomenon of heterosexuality or homosexuality, Alfred Kinsey (1948) opened the discussion about sexuality diversity. Following the most comprehensive sexuality research endeavor conducted for the era, The Kinsey Reports (1948; 1953) described the prevalence of same-sex and fluid sexuality behavior (Kinsey et al., 1948; Kinsey et al., 1953).

Kinsey developed a 0 to 6 sexual orientation scale that evaluated sexual behavior from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively homosexual. A rating of 3 on the scale continuum represents sexual behavior inclusive of both same-gender and different-gender partners (Diamond, 2008). Kinsey reported that sexual orientation occurred on a continuum with potential to change over the course of one's lifetime (Kinsey et al., 1948; Kinsey et al., 1953).

Amid accusations about validity, reliability and other disparagements driven by social conservativeness and politics, The Kinsey Reports brought sexuality diversity into public consciousness (Agocha, Asencio, & Decena, 2014; Schick, Calabrese, & Herbenick, 2014). The two books, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male, and Sexual Behavior in the Human Female (a.k.a., The Kinsey Reports) are significant contributions to contemporary sexuality research and societal awareness about sexuality diversity. Alfred Kinsey receives credit for challenging the suppression of the important role sexual expression plays in people's lives (Fox, 1996; Mayer et al., 2008).

The Kinsey scale focused on sexual behavior. Fritz Klein's Sexual Orientation Grid (KSOG) was created to assess variability in sexual orientation (Klein, Sepekoff, &

Wolf, 1985). Klein explored the importance of emotional attachment, sexual identity, life

changes, and external influences. The KSOG measurement considers sexual behavior,

sexual fantasies, sexual attraction, social preference, emotional preference, lifestyle

preference, and self-identity (Klein et al., 1985). Like Kinsey, Klein concurred that

sexual behavior can change throughout the lifespan. Klein also found that sexual identity

may not correspond to sexual behavior.

Freud conveyed that sexuality instinct[2] is present at birth and development occurs

throughout our life. Kinsey recognized that adult sexual behavior exists on a continuum.

Klein indicated that nonmonosexuality is a legitimate orientation and bisexuality is a

stable sexual identity (Diamond, 2008; Galupo, Mitchell, Grynkiewicz, & Davis, 2014;

Stevenson, 2016).

Monosexuality is sexual interest/expression toward only one gender, either

exclusively different gender or exclusively same-gender. The combined works of Freud,

Kinsey, and Klein asserted that 1) sexuality is integrally important to an individual's

life/well-being, and 2) fluid sexuality across the lifespan is a capacity with which all

people are born. While Freud postulated much of his theories, the Kinsey Reports

involved more than 10,000 subjective report interviews, and initial findings of the Klein

grid included 350 survey participants (Gebhard, Johnson & Kinsey, 1979; Klein, 1980,

2014).

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Discounting

Freud and Kinsey, in 1952 the first DSM classified homosexuality as a pathology

(American Psychiatric Association, 1952). Thirty-five years later the American

Psychiatric Association rescinded that classification. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is a set of standard criteria used for the classification of mental disorders.

In 1973, the American Psychological Association's Board of Representatives acknowledged the profession's view of the classification of homosexuality as a "value-laden assumption derived from sexual stigma rather than science" (Herek, 2007, p. 915). This position statement preceded the DSM amendment that homosexuality was not a pathology unless the individual wanted to become heterosexual. In 1987 homosexuality was removed as a pathology diagnosis from the DSM altogether (Herek, 2007).

"Homosexuality per se implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social and vocational capabilities: Further, the American Psychological Association urges all mental health professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientations" (Conger, 1975).

The APA resolution also called for legislation to advance the rights and end discrimination of gay people. Three decades after the APA resolution and DSM revision [1987 – 2015], legislation was affected by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in favor of same-sex marriage. However, sexual minority status persists as conscious clause legislation (i.e., exemption of conscientious objectors on religious grounds) allows lingering stigma to manifest prejudice and discrimination toward LGB people. Empirical research conveys that stigma, prejudice, and discrimination trigger stress in all minorities, but excess mental distress is unique to the LGB population (IOM, 2011).

The preceding sections conveyed that opinion of human sexuality diversity is an ever-present controversy. Prominent sexuality researchers have reported that human sexual instinct is flexible (i.e., bisexual) and dynamic across the lifespan. However, historically, most cultural doctrines impose the judgement that different-sex sexuality is the only acceptable option. One perpetuation of heterosexism involved the American Psychiatric Association's pathology classification of homosexuality in the DSM from 1952 to 1973.

Since 2012, disruption to the dominance of heteronormative bias occurred via social policy and social science. The 2015 U.S. Supreme Court's favorable ruling on same-sex marriage and APA publications (2012, 2014) and amicus briefs (2013) about sexuality diversity represent social change. An era of the devaluation of "sexual minorities" is ending and valuation of sexuality diversity is emerging. Though emerging, lingering stigma toward LGB sexualities will persist and have implications for a time.

For example, marriage equality repeal efforts and the June 2016 Orlando, Florida nightclub shooting (Zambelich & Hurt, 2016) generate real or anticipated distress (APA, 2016). Sexual minority stress theory conveys that stigma, prejudice, and discrimination trigger stress in all minorities, but excess mental distress is unique to the LGB population (Institute of Medicine, 2011). The following section describes Meyer's theory of sexual minority stress (Meyer, 2003).

Sexual minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003; 2013). A theoretical framework that accelerated contemporary sexuality research is Ilan H. Meyer's (2003) minority stress theory. Meyer (2003) created the term *minority stress* to emphasize exposure to

excess stress by individuals in stigmatized social categories. Minority stress theory explains that stigma, prejudice, and discrimination create a hostile and stressful social environment that causes mental health problems. Meyer proposed that LGB individuals have a higher prevalence of mental disorders than heterosexuals because of stigma-related stress.

Meyer proposed that both actual experiences and perceived stigma merit examination in lesbians', gay men's, and bisexual women's and men's sexual minority stress models (Lewis, Derlega, Berndt, Morris & Rose, 2001; Meyer, 1995; Meyer, 2003). Sexuality researchers also refer to minority stress theory as sexual minority stress (SMS) theory. SMS is a multifaceted construct that includes experiences specifically related to one's sexual minority status. SMS theory proposes constructs including, concealment of one's sexual orientation and identity; identity confusion/internalized homophobia; internalization of negative social attitudes; chronic and acute external events and conditions and the vigilance anticipation of such events requires; experienced and anticipated rejection; victimization; and discrimination (Lewis et al., 2001; Meyer, 1995; Meyer, 2003).

These distal and proximal stressors are unique to LGB individuals in heteronormative societies (Meyer, 1995; Meyer, 2003; Meyer & Dean, 1998). SMS theory posits that exposure to stress mediates the association between social status and mental health outcomes in LGB populations (Hatzenbuehler, 2009). Meyer's theory gave sexuality researchers constructs to explore which reveal the psychological pathways from stress to psychopathology (Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Lewis et al., 2012).

Using Meyer's framework, empirical research rapidly conveyed mental and physical health disparity among the LGB population. To convey the prominence of SMS theory, in 2013 the *APA Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity* Journal supplementary edition included the original article in entirety (Meyer, 2013). The following section describes sexual minority disparity indicators and prevalence data from U.S. population surveys[4].

"Sexual minorities" disparity statistics. Research concurring Meyer's 2003 theory also reveal that health indicators like substance abuse, excess weight and obesity, and tobacco use disproportionately affect sexual and gender minorities (e.g., Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Mayer et al., 2008; McCabe et al., 2010). Notably, along with incorporating research findings based on SMS theory, the 2011 IOM report on LGBT health status used Meyer's theory as one of the committee's guiding frameworks (Hequembourg & Brallier, 2009; Herek & Garnets, 2007; IOM, 2011). The IOM report is detailed later in this section.

The disparity of the LGB population includes manifestation of mental health disorders related to social devaluation, stigma-related stress, and enduring verbal, emotional, and physical abuse from intolerant others (Mayer et al., 2008). Other research findings reflect disparity among LGB individuals focused on distress-related discrimination (e.g., Lewis, Derlega, Griffin & Krowinski, 2003; Lewis et al., 2009). For example, difficulty obtaining health insurance and treatment, verbal harassment in public, at school and work, and physical assault (Diamond, 2008; Herrick et al., 2014a; Hill & Gunderson, 2015; Lewis et al., 2001; Lewis et al., 2012; McCabe et al., 2010).

Disparities in the LGB population are addressed in reports commissioned by prominent U.S. health research and science entities. For example, NIH and IOM informed providers about how to influence more responsive and affirmative social policies related to sexual health, sexual rights, and sexual behaviors (IOM, 1999, 2011; NIH, 2011). Still, data on LGB mental and physical health from population-based data collection systems is sparse. But persistent recommendations to examine LGB demographic, social, and psychological patterns prompted unprecedented data collection opportunities in existing population surveys (IOM, 1999, 2011).

In 2013, for the first time in its 57-year history, the NHIS included a measure of sexual orientation (CDC, 2013). The NHIS provides estimates of United States adults regarding indicators of health-related behaviors, health status, health care service utilization, and health care access. The long-standing exclusion of sexual orientation and identity in this CDC commissioned national survey reflects the prominence of stigma associated with LGB sexual orientation and the prevalence of heteronormativity in United States culture. Insertion of sexual orientation and identity in the NHIS indicates the shift of ideals and inclusive commitment to eliminate health disparities in public health.

Overall, findings of the 2013 NHIS data demonstrated the disparate status of LGB adults aged 18 to 64 in the United States. Of more than 34,000 respondents, 1.6% identified as gay or lesbian (LG), and 0.7% identified as bisexual. Slightly over 1% of respondents who 1) opted not to answer the sexual orientation question, 2) selected "something else", and 3) selected "I don't know the answer" were included in the 97% of

adults that identified as heterosexual (CDC, 2013; Ward et al., 2014). The NHIS data reported significant differences with regard to sexual orientation in health-related behaviors including smoking (bisexual 29%, lesbian/gay 27%, heterosexual 19%) and drinking (bisexual 41%, lesbian/gay 35%, heterosexual 29%), but not for aerobic/physical exercise (CDC, 2013; Ward et al., 2014).

Among sexual orientation groups regarding health status indicators, bisexual respondents reported the lowest rates of having a usual place to go for medical care (73%, LG 80%, heterosexual 83%) and most often failed to obtain needed medical care due to cost (16%, LG 11%, heterosexual 7%). Heterosexual men and bisexual women reported the highest rates of obesity. Bisexual women and men reported the highest prevalence (11%, LG 5%, Heterosexual 3%) in serious psychological distress. LG respondents reported the highest rates of getting flu shots and second highest for HIV testing. Bisexual respondents reported next to highest for ever getting HIV testing (CDC, 2013; Ward et al., 2014).

The NHIS reported no significant difference in public health insurance coverage by sexual orientation. LG respondents reported the highest (68.9%) rates of private health insurance coverage while heterosexual (62%) and bisexual (57%) ranked second and third for private health insurance coverage. No differences were reported between LGB and heterosexual respondents regarding public health insurance coverage, however, heterosexual males reported the highest uninsured rate (21.9%). Heterosexual females reported the highest prevalence (63.3%) of excellent or very good overall health status (CDC, 2013; Ward et al., 2014).

One remedy to LGB health status data scarcity is the *Healthy People 2020*
framework for public health prevention priorities and actions (ODPHP, 2010; Healthy
People 2020, n.d.). Revised since the original publication, the *Healthy People 2020*
health promotion and disease prevention agenda now includes seven objectives about
sexual orientation and gender identity (ODPHP, 2016). For example, increasing the
number of population-based data collection systems that identify and monitor LGB
individuals. Also significant are objectives involving the Behavioral Risk Factor
Surveillance System (BRFSS) and BRFSS questions about sexual orientation and gender
identity.

Established in 1984 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Public
Health Surveillance and Informatics Program Office (CDC/PHSIPO), the BRFSS collects
health data of Americans in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam
(ODPHP, 2016; CDC/PHSIPO, 2016). The BRFSS collects information on health risk
behaviors, preventive health practices, and health care access primarily related to chronic
disease and injury. Data collection for the BRFSS occurs monthly via telephone survey.

The BRFSS and other population-based data collection systems offer experts in
multiple fields much-needed insight on LGB health status (refer to IOM, 2011
Introduction, p. 1). For example, the separate address of sexualities is imperative
particularly as LGB individuals experience excess mental distress. Asexual men and
women, heterosexual men and women, lesbians, gay men, bisexual men, bisexual women
and gender minorities each have unique characteristics. This inclusion of sexualities will
help psychological and medical service providers better serve everyone. Detailed later in

this section is the unique characteristics of bisexual individuals who, historically and erroneously, have been grouped with LG research.

To date, the topic of disparity is prominent for LGB for two significant reasons. First, SMS theory gave researchers a reliable and validated framework. The SMS framework focused on health outcomes as health issues were insufficiently understood. Second, gaining policy attention required political attention, and putting a socially controversial item on the political agenda meant an influential perspective was needed. Reported negative health outcomes garnered the needed attention toward LGB citizens. With proactive attention on the LGB population, sexuality theorists and researchers now propose balancing disparity data with research using elements of positive psychology as a framework (Meyer, 2014). Positive psychology about sexuality diversity and SMS theory is detailed in later sections.

The previous sections detail factors of sexual minority status, including the a) erroneous and stigma perpetuating pathology classification of homosexuality in the DSM, b) SMS theory assertion that stress and distress are uniquely experienced by the LGB population from stigma related prejudice and discrimination, and c) health and social disparity statistics of the LGB population captured by SMS theory framed research and population-based data collection surveys (CDC, 2013; Conger, 1975; Meyer, 2003; ODPHP, 2010; Ward et al., 2014). The connection among these concepts aids our understanding about why sexual minority status exists and its harmful effects. Correspondingly, the next sections describe efforts and resources aimed to improve LGB

health outcomes, ameliorate sexual minority status, and advance acceptance of sexuality

diversity among people.

Sexual minority disparity report, Institute of Medicine (IOM, 2011). As

previously mentioned, in 1999 the IOM commissioned the development of a report on the

status of lesbians' health in recognition that most LGB health issues were insufficiently

understood. In 2010, based on results of the 1999 IOM study, the NIH charged an IOM

committee to research gaps and opportunities regarding the health status of LGBT

populations. The IOM committee outlined a research agenda and prepared a report to aid

the NIH in enhancing its LGBT health research efforts using four guiding frameworks.

The four frameworks included:

1. The life-course framework (Cohler & Hammack, 2007; Elder, 1998). This

   lens offered structure for organizing the unique events occurring at each

   stage of life, and the historical context by which subsequent experiences

   are influenced. This perspective supported exploration of differences in

   health issues by age cohorts.

2. The minority stress perspective (Brooks, 1981; Meyer, 1995, 2003).

   Chronic stress resulting from stigma of nonconformity to prevailing sexual

   orientation and gender norms. This model advanced discussion about

   stigma as a common experience of LBGT populations that affects health.

3. Intersectionality (Brooks, Bowleg, & Quina, 2010; Dill & Zambrana,

   2009; Gamson & Moon, 2004; Weber, 2010). This perspective ensured

   consideration of multiple cultural identities and simultaneous dimensions

of inequality. The intersectional perspective supported examination of LGBT health status including simultaneous intersection of multiple social identity characteristics.

4. The social ecology perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler & Glanz, 1988). This model helped to conceptualize that behavior is both affected by the environment and has an effect on it. This perspective guided thinking about the effects of environment on an individual's health, and ways to structure health intervention practices (IOM, 2011, pp. 19-22).

In 2011, the IOM released *The Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding* (IOM, 2011). The committee of sexuality and health/sciences experts found existing research literature on LGB health sparse but identified numerous existing opportunities to include data collection opportunities. Key findings and recommendations for future research included:

- Development of tools which identify valid measures of sexual orientation and gender identity;

- Separation of LGB issues and characteristics because each is a discrete population and are further distinguished by ethnicity, culture, and racial influences;

- Exploring stigma, the frequency LGB individuals experience stigma, and the personal and structural impacts stigma has on health.

The development approach, resulting report, and responsiveness to the "call to action" from the NIH/IOM initiative are unprecedented. The developing committee included experts in the fields of mental health, biostatistics, clinical medicine, adolescent health and development, aging, parenting, behavioral sciences, HIV research, demography, racial and ethnic disparities, and health services (IOM, 2011, p. 1). The findings and recommendations are scientifically reliable and valid (IOM, 2011). Lastly, execution of some IOM recommendations by federal and other public service entities illustrates social policy change. For example, the updated *Healthy People 2020* reflects that the 2011 IOM report led researchers to identify the prevalence of LGBT mental health concerns including anxiety and depression by data related to substance abuse and obesity (ODPHP, 2010, 2016). Now, the *Healthy People 2020* framework for public health prevention and health promotion agenda includes seven objectives about sexual orientation and gender identity (ODPHP, 2016).

The NIH, which called for the 2011 IOM study, gathered additional data for a five-year strategic plan from several key sources before its 2016 release. Along with reviewing the scientific literature spanning the LGBT population conducted in the 2011 IOM report, NIH advanced: 1) An analysis of the NIH Sexual and Gender Minority research portfolio covering the fiscal year 2012; 2) Multiple listening sessions with diverse audiences, including sexual and gender minorities (SGM) health researchers and advocates; and, 3) A Request for Information through which members of the public could share their thoughts, experiences, and recommendations, (NIH, 2016, p. 6).

The *FY 2016-2020 Strategic Plan to Advance Research on the Health and Well-being of Sexual and Gender Minorities* ([SGM] NIH, 2016) promotes and supports the advancement of basic, clinical, and behavioral and social sciences research to improve the health of people whose sexual orientations, gender identities/expressions, and/or reproductive development vary from traditional, societal, cultural, or physiological norms. In each of these areas, NIH intends to coordinate with intramural and extramural NIH program directors and researchers to ensure the advancement of SGM-focused research efforts (NIH, 2016, p. 1). Many prominent organizations were proactively responsive to the IOM committee efforts, including the APA. Publications in 2012 - 2015 of the APA reflect the commitment to ameliorating sexual minority status and the acceptance of the sexuality diversity among people (APA 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015; APA Division 44, 2014).

American Psychological Association (2014) publications on sexuality. The APA has a recent history of supporting sexuality and gender diversity including 14 policy statements and resolutions, and the amicus briefs regarding same-sex couples right to legal marriage (refer to APA Public Interest Directorate Policy Statements on LGBT Concerns, 2011 and APA, 2013). Noted previously is the organization's position providing the foundation for the declaration made by Conger in 1975. On behalf of the APA Board of Representatives, Conger's declaration supported the removal of same-sexuality from the DSM, demanded proactive legislation advancing rights of gay people, and implored mental health professionals to lead removal of the stigma of mental illness associated with homosexual orientations (Conger, 1975).

In 1985, the APA established the Division 44: Society for the Psychological Study of LGBT Issues. In 2012 APA published the *Guidelines for the Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients,* and in 2015 published *the Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People (APA, 2012, 2015).* In 2008, the APA Council of Representatives approved a policy statement and resolution for *Opposing Discriminatory Legislation and Initiatives Aimed at Lesbian, Gay, & Bisexual Persons* (Anton, 2008). These activities promote the APA's values regarding sexuality diversity and the amelioration of sexual minority status. Recent initiatives further promote the APA's commitment to advance objective and unbiased research in areas relevant to LGBT people, and the social impact of such research.

In 2014 the APA released two comprehensive publications of empirical research and theory that demonstrate human sexuality diversity, and which aid framing future sexuality research and psychological practice: the *APA Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity* (PSOGD) journal and the *APA Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology*. The PSOGD is the official journal of the APA Division 44: Society for the Psychological Study of LGBT Issues. The PSOGD journal is peer-reviewed and published quarterly (i.e., March, June, September, and December). The PSOGD journal aims to disseminate empirical psychological scholarship on sexual orientation and gender diversity (Founding Editor, J. C. Gonsiorek, 2013). The Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology is two volumes of literature aiming to convey what is currently known and still to learn in the field of sexuality and the discipline of psychology (D. Tolman & L. Diamond, Editors in Chief, 2014).

The first edition of the PSOGD journal was published in March 2014, ending a two-decade debate about whether the APA Division 44 should or should not publish a journal (refer to Editorial/Introduction by Gonsiorek, March 2014). The PSOGD journal is a source of data from the behavioral sciences for expanding critical thinking, theory and practice in the areas of sexual orientation and gender diversity. The PSOGD journal aspires to be an information source when social policy decisions involve sexual orientation and gender diversity (Gonsiorek, 2013).

As if challenging the impartiality and resilience of the PSOGD journal, relevant national "current events" warranted the inaugural edition's address of psychologist's exemption from training in multiculturalism (i.e., sexuality and gender orientation diversity) via religious beliefs (refer to Hancock, 2014). Each first-year edition of the PSOGD journal balanced representation of objective discourse of the controversial and high-profile issue with research and theory in diverse sexuality topics. Also, the last edition of the first volume of the PSOGD journal was expanded to offer a special section dedicated to positive psychology. Special section articles proposed the reciprocal incorporation of health concerns and flourishing wellbeing in LGB research and theory, and reactions to section articles (Meyer, 2014; Vaughan et al., 2014; Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014).

Following a proficient first year, subsequent publication years of the PSOGD journal experienced no usurping current events, presented diverse and relevant articles, and offered two special sections addressing sexual minority stress resilience and gender minority issues. The PSOGD special sections include both primary articles and reactions

to those articles to provide in-depth exploration of a topic. At least annually, the founding

editor proposes to publish one special edition dedicated to timely issues or progressive

topics. The journal's standard items are rounded out by a section dedicated to

multidisciplinary perspectives via book and media review.

To date, the PSOGD journal demonstrated the APA's commitment to

multiculturally ethical competence in sexuality diversity and the basic human

phenomenon of sexuality. The PSOGD journal consistently offered diverse, objective,

reliable, and relevant sexuality and gender minority literature. The journal is a

dependable resource for researchers, educators, students, service providers, and

policymakers, as well as the populations it represents. Intentions of the organizers of the

Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology were similar to those of the PSOGD journal:

> …[F]rom the beginning, we have been committed to producing a
> handbook that is a state-of-the-art review of current empirical
> research on sexuality and a synthesis of the dominant theoretical
> perspectives that have guided both research and clinical practice.
> We have also been committed to representing sexuality at both a
> person level and a context level (APA, 2014; Editors in Chief,
> Tolman & Diamond, 2014a, p. xx).

The complex range of human experiences encompassed by sexuality has been an

unrelenting challenge to the discipline of psychology (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1977;

Pettit & Hegarty, 2014; Tolman & Diamond, 2014a, 2014b). Essentialist and

constructivist perspectives competed for dominance in defining, explaining, and

understanding human sexuality. Tactically, the discipline of psychology acquiesced that exclusively indicating either biology or environment would generate only partial but profound social, political, and scientific implications. In the discipline's first comprehensive effort to present human sexuality in all of its complexity[5], the Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology does so at multiple analytical levels (APA, 2014; Tolman & Diamond, 2014a, 2014b).

Embodying the complexity of human sexuality while being true to the discipline's tenuous relationship with the topic, Tolman and Diamond (2014a) divide the handbook between Person-based approaches and Contextual approaches. Volume 1 presents Person-based approaches in six sections addressing sexuality theory and place sexuality in the context of history and gender; the methodology of sex research; dimensions of sexuality (i.e., biology of the sexual response to sexual diversity, violence, and sexual well-being); developmental perspective; theories, etiologies, and experiences of same-sex sexuality; and sexuality within the physical body.

Intended as a single volume endeavor, Tolman and Diamond developed a second volume to adequately cover contextual issues (Tolman & Diamond, 2014a). Volume 2 is dedicated to Contextual approaches and addresses sexuality in a broader social context in four sections reflecting the commodification of sex; the treatment of sexual problems; sexual rights and social change (i.e., including an examination of sexuality and culture, marginalized populations, and social movements); and public institutions at various levels of government (i.e., sexual policy, religious institutions, entertainment, and educational systems).

The handbook offers a comprehensively accurate and inclusive perspective of sexuality as a field of study. It targets not only established researchers and practitioners in the field of psychology but others as well. The handbook aims to be a reliable resource for fields such as education, social work, public health, and public policy, as well as for allied social and behavior scientists. Professors and graduate students seeking familiarity with this field of study now have access to wide-ranging and unbiased sexuality research and theory that is systematically organized in a single source, and produced by field authorities.

Every chapter integrates an understanding of the institutionalized social and cultural contexts that fundamentally organize the basic human phenomenon of sexuality. The handbook reflects mindfulness of cultural variation, but likely because the APA's mandate concerns the U.S., most of the represented authors are from North American institutions (Hall, 2015). A book review by Hall (2015) indicated that "…reading all the chapters in the handbook will challenge the reader to reexamine his or her own…limited perspective on sexuality and…begin to think and rethink many long-cherished notions of what sex is all about" (Hall, 2015, p. 558).

Advanced by the prominent authority in the field of psychology, the new APA journal and handbook on sexuality present opportunity for ameliorating sexual minority status and promoting acceptance of the sexuality diversity among people. For example, shortly following the initiation of the APA's publications on sexuality, the United States Supreme Court ruled favorably for same-sex marriage. Each event is unprecedented. Each event is historical. These events proactively address the social disadvantage and

devalued social capital which placed LGB individuals at minority status. Further, these

events convey that sexuality is an important element of the human condition for which

responsible and explicit attention and analysis are imperative (Kinsey, 1948; Tolman and

Diamond, 2014b).

Social and political [dissemination] implications of sexuality research and theory.

Chapter one of the APA Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology (APA, 2014) details the

prominent theoretical perspectives used in sexuality research. The authors of this chapter

present equitable detail of these theories to implore sexuality researchers to take

responsibility for the political implications and impact on people's lives that their

contributions to sexuality knowledge generate (Tolman & Diamond, 2014b). Tolman and

Diamond (2014b) asserted that in Western culture, reverence for scientific knowledge

and regulatory compliances of sexuality have important ideological and ethical

consequences as well as social policy influence. According to Tolman and Diamond,

"Because of the unique status of sexuality as a site of intense resistance, control, stigma,

and straight-forward social political battling," there is onus for sexuality researchers to

engage ethicality responsive to those dynamics (p. 22)**.**

Through in-depth address of essentialist (e.g., governed by basic, biologically

programmed drives and behaviors) and social constructionist (e.g., established through

meaning-making) theory, chapter one of the *APA Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology*

advocates research practices that adequately describe strengths and limitations. Offering

multi-perspective exposure fosters much-needed critical examination of sexuality

research (Tolman & Diamond, 2014b). Equitably presenting competing sexuality

perspectives and their opportunity to set public debate, Tolman and Diamond advocated continued but altered debate among sexuality researchers. For example, more vigorous but reciprocally revered discourse that includes the nature of science and the role of researchers' accountability for real life impact.

Tolman and Diamond (2014b) emphasized that the politics of sexuality research and theory dissemination requires from researchers, precise epistemology and recognition of impact within the larger social context. For example, the debate about sexual orientation being chosen (i.e., social constructivist theory) or innate (i.e., essentialist theory) have definitive social and political implications. Sexuality research is relied upon to reveal what is normal in the domain of sexuality. It is incumbent on sexuality researchers to take responsibility for their perspective and its impact on people's lives (Tolman & Diamond, 2014b, p. 21).

Bold are Tolman and Diamond for abducting chapter one of the handbook to advocate responsibility and explicitness directly to researchers and theorists. Bold, imperative, and maybe effective. Tolman and Diamond have long and impactful careers in sexuality research. Enough experience to unapologetically denounce their own previously advanced perspective. An example of commitment for that which they advocated. Though speculative, the coincidence of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in favor of same-sex marriage just one year after the handbook publication is worthy of contemplation.

The preceding sections described efforts and resources aimed to improve LGB health outcomes, ameliorate sexual minority status, and advance education and

acceptance of human sexuality diversity. The IOM Report (2011), identified research gaps and research opportunities regarding the health status of LGBT populations. The APA journal and handbook on sexual orientation and gender identity (2014) present human sexuality diversity from multiple perspectives.

Finally, the Editors in Chief of the handbook challenge sexuality researchers to unite in recognizing and engaging their responsibility to the lives they impact (Tolman & Diamond, 2014b). Sexuality researchers must independently, collectively, and comprehensively debate "the criteria by which certain ideas are treated as facts, opinions, hypotheses, models, and theories" (Tolman and Diamond, 2014b, p. 6). These contributions to the literature, research, and practice of the psychology of sexuality with endorsement by field authorities are historically unmatched. The unprecedented opportunity now exists for advancements in future research, social policy, and the lives of people regarding sexuality.

Bisexual sexuality is an area of research and theory that can benefit from new opportunities in the field of social science. Although seminal and contemporary research and theory affirmed nonmonosexuality is a legitimate orientation and bisexuality is a stable sexual identity, it is historically less present in both science and society than heterosexuality and homosexuality. The following section describes unique distinctions and the importance of addressing bisexuality in sexuality research. The next section also conveys scientific, social, and political implications of bisexual orientation and behavior (a.k.a., nonmonosexuality, fluidity of sexuality, and nonexclusive sexuality).

Bisexuality in Sexuality Research

Along with Freud and Kinsey, contemporary researchers have proposed that a certain degree of fluidity is a general property of sexuality (Baumeister, 2000; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1990; Diamond, 2008; Katz-Wise, 2012; Weinberg et al., 1994). Contemporary pioneers of research and theory about the bisexual lived experience challenged the heteronormative assumption (i.e., everyone is assumed to be heterosexual) that guided society and the field of psychology. For example, Fritz Klein, the founder of the American Institute of Bisexuality (1998), also authored *The Bisexual Option* (1978), and founded the Journal of Bisexuality (2000). Paula Rodriguez-Rust (2000) compiled early bisexuality research and theory in *Bisexuality in the United States: A Social Science Reader* and included experiential commentary.

Researcher, author, and activist Beth Firestein (1996) emphasized the invisibility of bisexuality. In the book, *Bisexuality: The Psychology and Politics of an Invisible Minority,* Firestein (1996) offered an interdisciplinary compilation of articles detailing the interconnectedness between psychological processes and sociocultural-political realities of the bisexual experience. Twenty years after Firestein's emphasis on the *invisible minority*, the Movement Advancement Project ([MAP], 2016) developed a report titled *Invisible Majority: The Disparities Facing Bisexual People and How to Remedy Them* (MAP, 2016). Relying on Copen, Chandra and Febo-Vazquez (2016) data analysis from the 2011 – 2013 National Survey of Family Growth, the MAP noted that 52% of the LBGT community identified as bisexual (MAP, 2016).

With consistently credible and reliable data and theory, why do bisexual sexuality and the bisexual experience continue to only challenge heteronormativity and the binary sexuality model? In a review of the history of bisexuality, MacDowall (2009) suggested deliberate social and structural erasure of bisexuality because of its imposition on cultural order (i.e., heteronormativity) (MacDowall, 2009). But what about the minimal presence of bisexual sexuality and the bisexual experience in science and research?

The next sections describe factors associated with the challenges and also bias in social science research, theory and practice related to bisexual sexuality. These sections also present prevalence rates, distinguishing qualities of the bisexual lived experience, and associated health disparity. Lastly, the next section describes recommendations for future research and improved practices, including an inclusive sexual orientation model to replace the existing binary model (i.e., heterosexuality and homosexuality).

Definitions

Bisexuality is a form of sexual expression. Elementarily, *bisexuality* is a sexual orientation in which an individual has sexual desire toward both same-sex and different-sex individuals. Operationally, the distinction among sexuality orientation, behavior, and identity challenge researchers of bisexuality. *Sexual orientation* is the consistent, enduring pattern or predisposition of sexual desire for the same-sex, different-sex, or both sexes.

Sexual identity refers to the notion of one's sexual self (gendered sexual interests and attractions, etc.) that is formed within a social context and defines for oneself their relationship to others (i.e., culture, community, and sociopolitical institutions) within that

context (Rust, 1993; Miller & Ryan, 2011; van Anders, 2012). *Sexual behavior* is the actual behavior one does or does not engage regardless of their self-identified sexual orientation label (Diamond, 2008; Firestein, 1996; IOM, 2011; Klein, 1978; 1985; Meyer, 2003; NIH 2016; Rust, 2000; Rust, 2002). These distinctions confound sexuality research often to the exclusion of bisexuality sexuality.

Bisexual orientation, identity, and behavior. A definition of bisexuality inclusive of orientation, identity and behavior follows: "sexual attraction to males, females, and gender diverse persons; and/or self-identifying as bisexual; and/or sexually engaging with males, females, and gender-diverse persons…" (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2016, p. 6). In operationalizing bisexuality, this distinction recognizes the sexuality of individuals whose self-identity does not conform (i.e., transgender) and does conform (i.e., cisgender) with the gender that corresponds to their biological sex. An individual whose gender identity is incongruent with their sex assigned at birth, according to heterosexist societal norms, and is bisexual initiated terms such as *pansexual sexuality* (e.g., Galupo et al., 2014).

Complexity and controversy of sexual desire toward both same-sex and different-sex individuals persist after seminal researchers validated legitimacy and stability. For example, consistently, bisexuality-specific sexuality researchers convey that for bisexuals, gender is not a controlling factor of partner selection. Personal characteristics (Rust, 2000), emotion, and situation-based attraction (Diamond, 2008) are among driving factors of partner selection.

Yet, too often in the gender-based dichotomous sexual classification system (i.e., heterosexuality and homosexuality), "bisexuality is pervasively constructed in terms of the one characteristic that does *not* define it: gender" (Rust, 2000, p. 205). Bisexual people are often assumed to be gay, lesbian, or heterosexual based on the gender of their partner (MAP, 2016; Rust, 2000).

Despite operational complexity and term debate, seminal sexuality research and theory consistently purport sexual attraction and behavior toward more than one gender both extant and stable. A few terms and descriptors used to convey bisexual sexuality include polymorphously perverse, nonmonosexuality, fluidity of sexuality, and nonexclusive sexuality. The following section illustrates seminal variations in the conceptualization of bisexual sexuality across historical and contemporary research and theory.

In chronological order:

- Freud indicated that humans are born polymorphously perverse, meaning with flexible sexual instinct (1905–1938 in Freud & Strachey, 2000, p. 57).

- Kinsey reported that sexuality exists on a continuum that flows throughout some individuals' lifetime. A three on the Kinsey 0 to 6 scale represented sexual behavior with both male and female genders, though 2 through 5 suggested *some* bisexual sexual behavior (1948, 1953).

- Klein created the KSOG to explore nonmonosexual diversity. Findings conveyed that gender of individual chosen for fantasy, attraction, and behavior can change often across one's lifespan (Klein et al., 1985).

- Sexual fluidity has been defined as situation-dependent flexibility in sexual responsiveness, which may manifest in changes in sexual identity over time (Baumeister, 2000; Diamond, 2008).

- Diamond also used the term *nonexclusive*. Detailed later in this section are Diamond's longitudinal research and suggested use of the dynamical system of change framework to explore fluid sexuality (2008).

- The Institute of Medicine (IOM) reported that sexual orientation is often discussed according to three main categories: heterosexuality, bisexuality, and homosexuality, especially when it is defined in terms of identity. The term bisexuality is used for individuals who identify as "bisexual" or whose sexual or romantic attractions and behaviors are directed at members of both sexes to a significant degree (2011, p. 28). The corresponding NIH strategic plan also advanced the IOM definitions for sexual orientation and bisexual (NIH, 2016, p. 119).

- Galupo and colleagues purported that historically, bisexuality/nonmonosexuality has been measured and defined by what it is not, meaning bisexuality is not completely heterosexual and is not completely homosexual (Galupo et al., 2014, p. 427). Galupo et al., also suggested nonmonosexual identities beyond bisexuality. Particularly,

transgender experience calls for conceptualizing pansexual identities where dichotomous conceptualization of sex and gender, and the dichotomous conceptualization of sexual orientation becomes complicated (Elizabeth, 2013; Kuper, Nussbaum, & Mustanski, 2012; Galupo et al., 2014, p. 428).

- Stevenson proposed succinctly that bisexuality is sexual interest or expression toward more than one gender (2016). Stevenson's description is proposed within a comprehensive sexuality orientation and gender model for which bisexuality anchors a three-facet continuum including asexuality, monosexuality, and bisexuality. His model is detailed in a later section.

The preceding conceptualizations of bisexual sexuality demonstrate the complexity of studying a sexuality largely perceived nonexistent in worlds of binary sexualities (i.e., heterosexuality and homosexuality). Applied literally and separately or combined, these terms and definitions contribute to the vigilant practice of contextually operationalizing bisexuality for research. Despite variation in operationalization and required rigor, sexuality researchers acknowledge the need to continue to explore the uniqueness, disparity, and resilience of individuals with sexual desire toward both same-sex, different-sex, and gender diverse individuals.

Soon and for the first time, multiple population-based information collection systems will offer improved, though still imperfect, sexuality-related data (see Footnote 4). Self-reports standardly engender subjective findings, and few topics embody

subjectivity as self-identification of sexual orientation. Improved concepts to communicate sexual orientation and gender diversity will emerge as sexuality diversity is consistently reported.

For now, accurate prevalence of bisexual sexuality is difficult to capture. The next section describes available prevalence estimates and illustrates why, at this point in time, capturing bisexuality prevalence data is a subjective practice. This section also describes research regarding social attitudes toward bisexual sexuality; decreased stigma about bisexuality will likely decrease subjectivity of prevalence estimates.

Reported prevalence of bisexuality. Some researchers claimed that United States population-level estimates report that bisexual women and men make up the majority of the LGB population (Copen et al., 2016; GJ Gates, 2011; Herbenick et al., 2010a, 2010b; Hill et al., 2016; MAP, 2016). However, others propose that estimates of the size of the LGBT population – thus, respective sexual orientations - vary for many reasons. Variations in survey methods, survey question consistency, and characteristics of who is included in the LGBT population all contribute to estimate inconsistencies (GJ Gates, 2011; Miller & Ryan, 2011; Weinrich, 2014). Likely, recently implemented sexuality questions in population-based information collection systems (e.g., NIH, BRFSS, and Healthy people 2020) will improve the consistency and reliability of sexuality-related data.

As previously noted, after 57 years of implementation, the NHIS included a measure of sexual orientation (CDC National Center for Health Statistics Division of Health Interview Statistics [NCHS DHIS], 2013). In 2013, out of 33,785 respondents,

233 or 0.7% identified as bisexual to the sexual orientation questions in the NHIS survey (CDC NCHS DHIS, 2013). Sexual orientation options included: asexual, bisexual, gay, heterosexual, intersex, lesbian, and transgender (ABGHILT). In response to 1.1% of respondents that identified as ''something else'', selected ''I don't know the answer'', or refused to provide an answer, the NHIS released *A Brief Quality Assessment of the* (2013) *NHIS Sexual Orientation Data* (CDC, 2013; Ward et al., 2014).

The 15-page report detailed responses to open-ended questions available to survey participants choosing not to designate a sexual orientation. The NHIS assessment reported that a majority of the undetermined respondents indicated either indecision about or refusal to apply a static label to their sexual orientation. The latter is consistent with empirical research and theory exposing rigid sexuality and gender categories, and the perpetuation of sexual minority stigma (see, for example Diamond, 2008; Harrison, 2009; Lewis et al., 2003; Lewis et al., 2009; and Stevenson, 2016). The assessment by the CDC (2013) conveys that by-passing selection of sexuality orientation on surveys reveals equally important information as option selection.

Bisexual sexuality prevalence estimates have also been gleaned from studies primarily exploring other variables. For example, Gates (GJ Gates, 2011) of The Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Law and Public Policy at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law, assessed data from 11 surveys (five in the U.S. and six international) between 2004 - 2011 that asked sexual orientation or gender identity questions. Out of 9 million respondents who self-identified as LGBT, 1.8 percent self-identified as bisexual (1.7% self-identified as lesbian or gay). Gates

asserted that estimates of those who report *any* lifetime same-sex sexual behavior and attraction in the United States are substantially higher (i.e., 9.3%) than estimates of those who self-identify as LGB (GJ Gates, 2011).

Gates asserted that an estimated 19 million Americans (8.2%) reported that they have engaged in same-sex sexual behavior and nearly 25.6 million Americans (11%) acknowledge at least some same-sex sexual attraction (p. 1). Provided data for the estimates calculated by Gates came from the National Survey of Family Growth ([NSFG] National Center for Health Statistics division of the CDC), the National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior (Center for Sexual Health Promotion at Indiana University in Bloomington), National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol and related conditions (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism), The California Health Interview Survey (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research), and the U.S. General Social Survey ([GSS] NORC, n.d.).

The GSS is the only full-probability, personal-interview survey designed to monitor changes in both social characteristics and attitudes currently being conducted in the United States (NORC, n.d.). Twenge, Sherman, and Wells (2015) reviewed the U.S. GSS 1972–2012 for changes in American Adults' Sexual Behavior and Attitudes. Twenge, Sherman, and Wells (2015) reported that acceptance of sexual activity among two adults of the same sex increased the most after the 1990s. Acceptance hovered between 11 % and 16 % (with few differences among men and women) until 1993, when it increased to 22 % (21 % for men, 23 % for women). It increased steadily after that, reaching 44 % in 2012 (35 % for men, 51 % for women).

Thus, according to GSS data spanning 40 years, women are more accepting of sex between two adults of the same sex in the 2010s (Twenge, Sherman, & Wells, 2015, p. 13). Notably, the National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior (NSSHB) used in the GSS review began implementation in 2009. In 2015, the NSSHB included an on-line survey specifically concerning attitudes toward bisexual men and women. The comprehensiveness of the 2015 NSSHB probability survey offers the first generalizable findings about attitudes toward bisexual sexuality among population-based data collection systems.

The 2015 NSSHB was conducted by sexual health researchers at the Center for Sexual Health Promotion at Indiana University's School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation and included two modified 5-item versions of the *Bisexualities*: *Indiana Attitudes Scale (BIAS)*. These validated sub-scales measure attitudes toward bisexual men and women (Dodge et al., 2016). A nationally representative probability sample of 6079 U.S. adults (5783 [95%] heterosexual, 125 [4%] LG, 72 [1%] other) reported a shift in attitudes toward bisexuals from negative to neutral (i.e., neither agreeing nor disagreeing with a range of sentiments and stereotypes) (Dodge et al., 2016).

One-third of respondents reported positive attitudes, 1/3 reported neutral attitudes, and 1/3 reported negative attitudes toward bisexual people. This means that two-thirds of respondents did not report positive attitudes toward bisexual people, having either general ambivalence or definitive negative attitudes toward bisexual sexuality (Dodge et al., 2016). Per BIAS sub-scale measures, the highest rates of negative attitudes associated with heightened risk for HIV and sexually transmitted infection. According to Dodge et

al. (2016), this implies that stereotypes of promiscuity and sexual riskiness among bisexual individuals are still pervasive, indicative that many people may not understand bisexuality as a sexual orientation/identity (Dodge et al., 2016).

Illustrating that self-identification of sexual orientation by bisexual individuals might also bias data, Hill, Sanders and Reinisch (2016) explored bisexual men's and women's subjective definitions of sex. Data from 1,380 self-identified bisexual women and men age 18 to 70 living in the United States was gleaned from a 2007 Kinsey Institute survey/database of 14,724. The *Had Sex* (i.e., what behaviors constitute having 'had sex,' lifetime experience of those behaviors) survey/database included a spectrum of sexual orientations (Hill et al., 2016). Data indicated that age and gender differences contributed to what the survey respondents considered to be sex. Thus, self-misclassification as lesbian, gay, or bisexual based on what behavioral sex action was engaged distinctly emerged from the *Had Sex* survey data (Hill et al. 2016).

The 2003 National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, referred to commonly as *Add Health report,* collected 12,287 participant responses for which respondents identified as mostly heterosexual and mostly homosexual versus bisexual (Harris, Florey, Tabor, Bearman, Jones & Udry, 2003). In a review of four different studies which combined create the *Add Health* report, the mostly heterosexual category garnered the greatest response of all non-heterosexual categories combined (i.e., lesbian, gay male, and bisexual). Further, responses revealed little evidence that mostly heterosexuality was a transition stage to bisexuality or homosexuality (Savin-Williams et al., 2012).

Historical exclusion from population-based data collection systems contributes to challenges with reporting bisexual sexuality prevalence. Soon, multiple U.S. population-based information collection systems will provide consistent and reliable sexuality-related data (e.g., NIH, BRFSS, and Healthy People 2020). Through consistent survey methodology including clear definitions, repetition in questions, and annual or on-going data collection, entities such as the IOM/NIH, US DHHS, and CDC, can report sexuality behavior and sexual health figures with previously unattainable accuracy (Gates, 2011; Miller & Ryan, 2011; Weinrich, 2014).

Understudied/Underexplored

Contemporary research and field authorities affirm the bisexual experience as extant, unique, and distinct from all other sexual identities and orientations (e.g., AGHILT) (APA, 2012; Diamond, 2008; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2016; Rust, 2000; Stevenson, 2016). However, historically the bisexual experience is severely underexplored or under-reported in sexuality research compared to LG. It is under-reported in that sexuality research often handled nonmonosexuality (a.k.a. bisexual experience) data in one of five ways, including adjusted until conforming to an existing hypothesis; grouped into LGB; grouped into heterosexual; excluded; or simply ignored (Firestein, 1996; Meyer & Wilson, 2009). As recognition emerged, bisexual sexuality-related data was often referred to as "beyond the scope of this research effort" and "recommended for future research." Before affirmation, the prominent choice for handling bisexuality data in sexuality research was grouping with LG (Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013).

Melded with LG or heterosexual, or excluded for results skewing. Bisexual

individuals are a minority within sexual minority communities. In research, the overall

bisexual experience is often rendered invisible through grouping this orientation with gay

male and lesbian samples, or with heterosexual samples (Roberts et al., 2015). Too

frequently research claiming lesbian, gay, and bisexual or LGBT ultimately discarded as

outlier data or bolstered until hypothesis conforming any data reflecting a bisexual

experience.

The presence of information indicating nonmonosexuality in sexuality research

has been described as "inconvenient noise cluttering up the real data" (Bostwick &

Hequembourg, 2013; Diamond, 2008, p. 2). Even as a recognized sexual orientation

category, presence of information indicating the bisexual experience in explored

variables of sexual minority research often resulted in a disclaimer that result exceeds the

scope of present research, article, or researcher's expertise.

Difficult to operationalize. Bisexuality does not neatly conform to the either/or

of monosexual categories. Typically, operationalizing a construct such as bisexuality

occurs after the goals of research are carefully considered (Bostwick & Hequembourg,

2013). Orientation, behavior, and identity lead to many ways of being bisexual, thus

researchers and theorists must allow heterogeneity in sexuality categories, and avoid false

equivalency of grouping LGB (Rust, 2000, 1993; Stevenson, 2016). For example,

according to the IOM report (2011), the term bisexuality is used for individuals who

identify as "bisexual" or whose sexual or romantic attractions and behaviors are directed

at members of both sexes to a significant degree (IOM, 2011, p. 28). The IOM term does not allow for an individual who engages the latter but does not engage the former.

Miller and Ryan (2011) suggested how to develop and test a reliable sexual identity question for the NHIS and Weinrich (2014) expanded on suggestions in support of Miller and Ryan's proposition (Miller & Ryan, 2011; Stevenson, 2016; Weinrich, 2014). Miller and Ryan (2011) investigated eight cognitive testing studies involving 386 in-depth cognitive interviews and 2002 – 2006 data from the National Survey of Family Growth to develop and evaluate sexual identity measures. From that exploration, 139 participants tested two proposed sexual identity questions in the Questionnaire Research Design Laboratory (i.e., cognitive interviewing).

Miller and Ryan's (2011) efforts yielded promising results including a viable, replicable methodology and reliable sexual identity questions that are vernacular-specific (i.e., informal speech) for both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking individuals (Weinrich, 2014). In addition, the suggested methodology advances needed awareness for verbiage separately accessible to college-educated respondents and individuals with high-school education and less (Weinrich, 2014). Developing improved concepts to communicate sexual orientation and gender diversity within psychology and across disciplines will be easier when sexuality diversity is accurately and consistently defined and reported.

Shift with Diamond's longitudinal study. In 2008, a ground-breaking longitudinal study by Diamond (2008) generated a conceptual paradigm shift for nonexclusive sexuality behavior and identity. Over the course of 10 years, Diamond

interviewed 100 females with every type of sexual orientation every two years (i.e., 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10) about their sexual behavior and sexual identity. Diamond found, women's sexual fluidity extant, intentional, and predictable. Diamond's study offered unprecedented insight into the fluidity of sexuality of females and the incongruence of self-labeling and actual sexual behavior.

Diamond's study participants consistently expressed disdain for existing sexuality categories and labels. Casting off the label allows avoiding misrepresentation of the fluid and multidimensional nature of erotic and emotional lives (Diamond, 2008). Diamond proposed situation-dependent flexibility in sexual responsiveness in either *proceptivity or arousability*. Proceptivity is motivation to initiate sexual activity, and arousability is the capacity to become aroused to sexual stimuli.

Gender consistency with sexual fluidity. As Diamond's study focused on cisgender (i.e., gender identity congruent with biological sex) females, a study by Katz-Wise (2012) and a meta-analysis by Katz-Wise & Hyde (2014) expanded on Diamond's work by including cisgender males. The findings demonstrated no gender differences in sexual fluidity (Katz-Wise, 2012; Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2014). The participants in Katz-Wise's (2012) study indicated that women and men were equally likely to experience changes in attractions and sexual identity (Katz-Wise, 2012, p. 52). Both the study and meta-analysis supported Diamond's (2008) claim of situation-dependent flexibility in sexual responsiveness manifesting in changes in sexual identity over time.

Katz-Wise's (2012) study used mixed methods to examine sexual identity development and sexual fluidity in young adult sexual minority women and men (Katz-

Wise, 2012). In her study, the only gender difference was that women's fluidity involved emotional/romantic feelings and men's fluidity indicated sociocultural freedoms or restrictions to act on feelings/attractions (Katz-Wise, 2012). Responsive to Diamond, Katz-Wise, and others (e.g., Baumeister, 2000 and Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2014), Stevenson (2016) proposed that researchers begin to study and theorize the inherent diversity within the sexuality categories, particularly asexuality, monosexuality, and bisexuality categories.

Updating the sexuality orientation model. Stevenson (2016) proposed an inclusive model by which to organize sexuality and gender orientation. Stevenson (2016) suggested that contemporary sexuality research begin to operationalize sexuality, both sexual orientation and gender, on an asexuality ⇔ monosexuality ⇔ bisexuality continuum. Asexuality is no or minimal sexual interest/expression, monosexuality is sexual interest/expression toward only one gender (i.e., exclusively different gender or exclusively same-gender), and bisexuality is sexual interest/expression toward more than one gender.

Stevenson's model (2016) offers clear operational definitions for research design including improved concepts to communicate sexual orientation and gender diversity within psychology and across disciplines. Further, the sexual orientation model is inclusively representative of the variance of sexuality orientation and expression for both sexual and gender minorities in contemporary society. Research efficacy requires an end to increasing the number of identities (e.g., LGBT, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, etc.) (Also see IOM, 2011; NIH, 2016). According to Stevenson, researchers

must begin to study and theorize the inherent diversity *within* the asexuality,

monosexuality, and bisexuality orientation categories.

Significant to the present study, the heterogeneity among bisexual individuals and

its need for further exploration is noted by Lewis et al. (2009) and Herek et al. (2010).

Both researchers noted variance in measures of sexual minority stress. Variables and

measure related to disclosure about sexual orientation openness or outness, commitment

to a sexual-minority identity (i.e., self-perception), community identification and

involvement (i.e., social support), sexual behavior, contributors to bisexuals'

psychological functioning (e.g., depression and self-violence), and exposure to

harassment and discrimination (Herek et al., 2010; Lewis et al., 2009).

That sexual interest/expression toward more than one gender is extant is

consistent in historical and contemporary sexuality theory (i.e., Freud, Kinsey, Meyer,

Diamond, etc.). Seminal and contemporary sexuality research and theory substantiate that

bisexual sexuality is both extant and stable (e.g., Klein, 1973, 1985; Firestein, 1996;

Lewis et al., 2009; Rust, 2000). More recently proposed, situation-dependent sexual

fluidity in sexual responsiveness may manifest in changes in sexual attractions and

identity over time in both men and women (Baumeister, 2000; Diamond, 2008; Katz-

Wise, 2012; Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2014). The next section presents additional

consistencies in research and theory about attraction to more than one gender (i.e.,

bisexuality).

Existing Research Consistency

Until the recent past, the bisexual population was an invisible minority in research and society because of the dichotomous sexuality options of heterosexuality and homosexuality (Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Firestein, 1996). Though Freud and Kinsey acknowledged that bisexual sexuality is an extant and stable orientation, it was fear of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in the 1990's that initiated salience of the bisexuality option. When the HIV/AIDS pandemic began affecting the heterosexual community, it opened the public, political, and scientific discussion about bisexuality. Visibility of bisexuality at that moment in time came with prejudice, discrimination, assumptions and fear (Rust, 2002).

Still, visibility and discussion led to action via research and theory which eliminated the trend of ignoring bisexual sexuality (e.g., Diamond, 2008; Firestein, 1996; Rust, 2000). Prominence for the distinct characteristics of bisexual individuals began earnestly with Meyer's (2003) SMS theory. Meyer (2003) referenced one piece of literature and acknowledged that bisexual individuals "*may"* be exposed to more stressors than lesbians and gay men and indicated failure of cited literature to distinguish bisexuals from LG individuals. Confirmed by multiple seminal sexuality research projects, bisexual individuals' SMS experience includes prejudice and discrimination from both the homosexual and heterosexual communities (Firestein, 1996; Herek, 2000; IOM, 2011; Lewis et al., 2009; Mayer et al., 2008; Meyer, 2003). The phenomena of double sexual minority stigmatization (DSMS) is detailed in this section.

As DSMS is found to magnify stigma-related health issues, disparity statistics of the bisexual population are also presented here. Wrapping up discussion about consistencies in bisexual sexuality research are descriptions of recommendations for future research including ungrouping from LG, well-being, adaptive coping and resilience, intersectionality, and use of qualitative or, minimally, mixed approaches in bisexual sexuality research (Firestein, 1996; Herek, 2000; Institute of Medicine, 2011; Lewis et al., 2009; Mayer, et al., 2008; Meyer, 2003).

Unique qualities of bisexual individuals. A primary distinction of bisexual individuals is contending with the positive and negative aspects of both homosexual and heterosexual communities. Instead of stable membership in either community or both communities, bisexual women and men only partially identify with each community. Another distinction involves disclosure of sexual orientation. Heteronormative cultures require bisexual individuals to "come out" a minimum of two times: first to disclose same-sex interests and a second time to disclose non-exclusivity of sexual orientation.

Likely, disclosure two times is minimum as assumptions of sexual orientation based on the gender of a current relationship partner requires additional disclosure should the current partner change to someone of a different gender. By exploring relationship and identity development patterns, sexuality researchers reported many pathways individuals take on the way to a bisexual identity (Kwon, 2013; Lewis et al., 2009; Rust, 1993, 2000a, 2003). In her qualitative study of the experiences of bisexual men and women, Bradford (2004) found that bisexual men were more strongly affected by gender

role limitations and heterosexism. Men experienced more threats such as AIDS and violence (Bradford, 2004).

Women tended to express greater needs for affiliation with the lesbian community. Bisexual women found rejection from lesbians to be particularly problematic (Bradford, 2004). The following section details double sexual minority stigmatization and its influence and impact on bisexual men and women.

Double sexual minority stigmatization. Research indicates that bisexual women and men often experience both homophobia and biphobia. Double stigma, double minority stigma, or double sexual minority stigmatization (DSMS) is found to magnify stigma related health issues (e.g., Bradford, 2004; Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Lewis et al., 2009). Different from intersectionality where other social identities combine to compound minority stress, DSMS is characterized by rejection – prejudice and discrimination – by both homosexual and heterosexual individuals/communities for bisexual sexuality (Barker et al., 2012; Herek, 2000; Roberts et al., 2015; Ochs, 1996; Rust, 2000a, 2000b). Research findings indicate that the homosexual community perceives bisexuality as either transitional to solely same-sex lifestyle or unwillingness to fully commit to homosexuality because of loss of heterosexual privileges. The heterosexual community assumes any same-sex sexuality equates to homosexuality; therefore, bisexuality is basically nonexistent or mythical (see Firestein, 1996 and Rust, 2000b).

However, it is important to acknowledge that homosexuality is transitioning to an acceptable sexuality. Research by McCormack, Wignall, and Anderson (2015) included

college level U.K. students reporting near-total support for bisexuality attributed to peers having greater understanding of bisexuality, being less affiliated to religious doctrine and other ideologies, and having had contact (e.g., in communities and online) with other sexual minorities (McCormack, Wignall, & Anderson, 2015).

McCormack et al., (2015) interviewed 90 men divided into three age cohorts (i.e., 18 - 24, 25 - 35, and 36 - 42) from London, Los Angeles, and New York. Participants in the older age cohort conveyed denial and not confusion for self-identifying as bisexual as other research suggests, and that initial denial related to psychosocial issues involving homophobia and biphobia. The younger age cohorts acknowledged the ease of coming out, which suggested less attachment/concern about sexual identity label (McCormack et al., 2015).

Bisexuality health disparity statistics. As stated, DSMS is found to magnify stigma related health issues, and the few available health statistics solely for bisexual individuals are quite recent. NIH (2016) reported that fourteen percent of lesbians and 17.6% of bisexual women have reported ever having had any cancer, compared with 11.9% for heterosexual women. Bisexual women have the highest rate of breast cancer at 8.4%. Lesbian and bisexual women over age 50 have a higher risk for cardiovascular disease and prevalence of myocardial infarction than heterosexual women over age 50. Bisexual women have a higher prevalence of diabetes than heterosexual women (NIH, 2016, pp. 2-3).

The 2013 National Health Interview Survey reported that bisexual individuals experience between 4% and 7% higher psychological distress than heterosexuals, lesbian,

and gay men, and are half as likely not to get needed healthcare services (Ward et al., 2014). Previously mentioned, the 2016 Movement Advancement Project (MAP) report focuses solely on disparities of bisexual people. In an overview of current research, the MAP report outlined key areas in which bisexual people face disparities and provided recommendations for policymakers, communities, and service providers (MAP, 2016).

The five key areas emphasized in the MAP report include, mental and physical health disparity, unsafe/unsupportive educational environments (also see Kann, Olsen, McManus, 2016), discrimination in the workplace, immigration relief, and increased violence. Four of the five areas detail distress-causing contributors to the fifth key area. Mental and physical health disparity of bisexual people, the fifth key category of the MAP report, manifests from contributions of the other four key areas (MAP, 2016).

The MAP report presents a summary of research data that conveys higher rates and prevalence for bisexual youth and adults compared to gay males, lesbians, and heterosexual males and females including: 1) mood disorder (depression; anxiety disorders include panic and generalized anxiety disorder); 2) disordered eating; 3) substance use; 4) depression (e.g., feeling sad or helpless, lack of social support, increased dissention with family members); 5) suicide-related issues (e.g., seriously considering suicide; making plans to attempt suicide; ever in lifetime suicide ideation/suicide attempt). Details of the MAP report also align with the NHIS (2013) data for smoking, cardiovascular, STIs, and some cancer (see the Sexual Minorities Disparity section, this study). The conclusive statement of the MAP report is that a lack of

acceptance and the presence of harassment, and discrimination do significant mental and physical harm over the life course of most bisexual people (MAP, 2016).

Recommendations for future sexuality research. Research with bisexual individuals or research findings incidentally revealing bisexual sexuality consistently generate recommendations for future examination of the bisexual experience. Foremost, recommendations emphasize separately addressing bisexual individuals from the LG population (Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013). With an exclusive focus on the bisexual experience, sexuality researchers and theorists consistently recommend exploration of stress and distress related phenomena, strengths-based perspectives, effects of intersecting social identities, and qualitative research approaches. Other facets of the bisexual experience frequently recommended for further exploration include identity commitment, community involvement, outness, and relationship patterns (Kwon, 2013; Meyer, 2003).

Separate exploration. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations are a cultural minority united by the common experience of sexual stigma, but each is a distinct group whose members have different experiences, beliefs, and needs (Herek et al., 2010; MAP, 2016). Addressing bisexual men and women separately from lesbians, gay men, and transgender (LGBT) people in sexuality research is an empirical imperative (Balsam & Mohr, 2007; Herek et al., 2010; Lewis et al., 2009). Particularly, as some studies continue to conflate sexual orientation and gender identity.

Distress and stress. Distress and stress-related health disparity among the bisexual population must be separately and more thoroughly explored. Pervasive bias in families,

communities, and society generates fear (i.e., distress) in bisexual individuals about being open about sexual orientation (MAP, 2016). As previously noted, research findings reflect disparity among LGB individuals focused on distress-related discrimination, and distress has been reported as most prevalent among bisexual individuals (e.g., Lewis et al., 2003; Lewis et al., 2009; Ward et al., 2014). Balsam and Mohr (2007) found higher levels of internalized homophobia in bisexual study participants. This stress exacerbating phenomena is recognized by Meyer (2003) as a health factor which can be ameliorated.

Strengths-based perspective: Wellbeing, coping, and resilience. Intervention to enhance resilience is the most lagging area of SMS-related research, according to Meyer (2015). Balancing understanding of individuals' resiliency approaches to positive, even flourishing, well-being with deficit knowledge will advance better understanding for the amelioration of disparity (Elia, 2014; Meyer, 2015). For example, the resilience concept offers great promise for intervention research but has been underused compared to deficit models, in developing interventions (Herrick et al., 2014a). Also, examination of existing literature and population-based data support sexuality researchers' exploration of resilience counter to SMS research and theory (Herrick et al., 2014b; Hill & Gunderson, 2015).

Intersecting social identities. Sexuality research is only recently considering and reporting the compounding stress effects of multiple social identities. Responsible sexuality research considers characteristics such as race, gender, age, geography, culture, socioeconomic status, disability, and education in the experience of bisexuals associated with sexual minority stress and typical daily living stress (see Cole, 2009; Diamond,

2008; IOM, 2011; Lewis et al., 2012). For example, Katz-Wise (2012) found that sexually fluid females experienced person-based attractions and emotional/romantic feelings where sexually fluid males' gender-based attractions emerged as more socioculturally driven (Katz-Wise, 2012). Also, Meyer (2010) noted that LGB of color experienced more stress *and* more resilience (Meyer, 2010).

   Qualitative research approaches in the study of sexuality. The need to engage qualitative research methods (e.g., one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and cognitive interviews) in the study of sexuality emerged with health disparity findings among the LGB populations (IOM, 2011). This need is not exclusive of quantitative methods but instead recommended as complementary to explore the breadth and depth of a specific phenomenon. For example, detailed accounts of individuals' experiences and interpretations of experiences better reveal clinical concerns for developing possible interventions and quantitative instruments for studying LGBT populations. Qualitative methods reveal how experiences shape and are shaped by social and historical contexts (refer to Cole, 2009; Frost et al., 2014; Herek et al., 2010; IOM, 2011; NIH, 2016).

   Additionally, qualitative methods consider the consistently high stakes in sexuality research, including applications in clinical, medical, and policy settings (Tolman & Diamond, 2014b). Qualitative methods advance exploration of bisexuals' experiences with difficult to capture variables including, identity commitment, community involvement, outness, and relationship patterns (e.g., NIH, 2016, pp. 9-10). Lastly, qualitative approaches provide a nuanced understanding of people's subjective meanings of their experience of sexuality benefiting social and behavioral scientists, and

professionals in complementary fields to psychology (e.g., education, social work, public health, and public policy). Understanding leads to the identification of possible ways to intervene, as well as assisting in developing quantitative instruments for studying sexual and gender minority populations (Binson et al., 2007; IOM, 2011, pp. 121-22).

The progression of bisexual sexuality in research and theory started as nonexistent, manifested as similar enough to LG population to be absorbed by it, was then acknowledged as unique from LG population for heterosexual characteristics triggering exclusion for results skewing, which led to separate exploration for categorical distinctness. Though improved perception has occurred incrementally in the social sciences, common assumptions persist. Bisexual sexuality is still largely perceived by the heterosexual and LG communities as transitional to a lesbian or gay identity or merely typical heterosexual exploration (Rust, 2000). Improved societal acceptance of same-sex sexuality is closing this research and literature gap. Increased bisexual sexuality research and theory will continue to contend with binary or dichotomous categories of sexuality until more consistent and comprehensive data replace outdated notions.

Resilience

This study targeted the need to simultaneously focus on interventions that attempt to correct the "pathogenic social environment" and help LGB individuals become resilient in coping with the environment:

> "The impact of stress on health is determined by the countervailing effects of pathogenic stress processes and salutogenic coping processes" (Meyer, 2015, p. 209).

-Special issue on Resilience, PSOGD Journal

Participants of this study demonstrated resiliencies achieved and maintained for having identities outside dominant social/societal norms. Specifically, chronic and acute experiences of racism and heteronormativity were opportunities for participants to successfully develop adaptive functioning–a key tenet of resilience.

Definition

Resilience implies positively adapting to negative or adversarial conditions so that negative trajectories are avoided. Adversarial conditions can be daily stressors or significant life challenges. Sociocultural context plays a subjective role in determining the conditions that induce stress or the protective factors of resilience processes (Herrick et al., 2014a). SMS theory (Meyer, 2003) asserts that stress and resilience interact in predicting psychological disorder.

Stress, distress, and coping. Stress is the mental or somatic reaction to taxing experiences (i.e., conditions). Stigma, prejudice, and discrimination trigger stress in all minorities, but excess mental/psychological distress is unique to the LGB population (IOM, 2011). Examples of distress-triggering experiences for LGB individuals include actual or anticipated verbal harassment and physical assault in public, at school and work (Meyer, 2003). Coping "refers to the effort mounted by the individual in response to stress—the effort to adapt to or defend against the stressor" (Meyer, 2015, p. 210).

Positive psychology and sexuality researchers have suggested that resilience and the development of adaptive coping strategies can reduce the harmful effects of psychological distress (Herrick et al., 2014a; Kwon, 2013; Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014).

A review of literature about LGB youth revealed that self-acceptance of sexual minority status and integration of sexual identity into an overall self-concept serve as protective factors against societal prejudice toward same-sex sexuality (Herrick et al., 2014a). The positive self-concept epitomizes resilience to SMS.

Resilience in General Population Versus "Sexual Minorities"

The resilience factors of Kwon's (2013) framework have been applied extensively to the general population, with only social support receiving an empirical application in sexuality research involving bisexual individuals. The principles of social support, emotional openness, and hope and optimism fits the minimal research literature on resilience in LGB individuals but are grounded in empirical literature examining resilience in the general population and the perspective of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Empirical sexuality research confirmed LGB disparity related to distal and proximal stressors, and that stress reduction involved lowering reactivity to and buffering negative impact of societal prejudice (e.g., initiating coping processes). SMS research revealed affirmation of sexuality, safe places for disclosure, and community membership as types of social support included in coping processes. Sexuality researchers call for going beyond coping, desiring more than the absence of anxiety, depression, and negative affect. Research outliers to coping with distal and proximal stressors exhibit resilience, successful adaptive function, and the ability to survive *and* thrive (or flourish) in the face of adversity (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Kwon, 2013; Seligman, 2011).

For example, Kwon (2013) proposes resilience factors of social support, hope and optimism, and emotional openness as characteristics of LGB individuals who demonstrate "thriving" well-being (Kwon, 2013). Social support is sexual orientation affirming interactions with individuals and communities, emotional openness is accepting and processing emotions, and hope and optimism involve focusing on the future, envisioning a better life, and active pursuit of goals (Kwon, 2013).

Bisexual sexuality and resilience. Specific to bisexuals, resilience can mean positive adaptation and development in the face of stressors associated with double sexual minority stigmatization. Limited research with sexual minorities ties positive health outcomes to resiliencies against the harmful effects of stressors (see Hill & Gunderson, 2015; Horne et al., 2014; Meyer, 2015). Further, no research exists that reflects the positive health outcomes of bisexual men and women who increase capacity for resilience in the face of double sexual minority stigmatization (Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Herrick et al. 2014b; Kwon, 2013; Lewis et al., 2012).

However, the emerging focus on bisexual youth, as well as recommendations for LGB strengths-based research, implies availability of valid and reliable bisexuality-focused research in the very near future. Pallotta-Chiarolli (2010, 2014) stated that "youth subcultures are adopting shifting discursive and societal constructs of sexuality, characterized by notions of fluidity, ambisexuality, and a reluctance to label their sexuality according to the heterosexual versus homosexual binary" (p. 9). Confirming Pallotta-Chiarolli (2014), Elia (2014) recognized bisexual youth's resilience capacity for

navigating the *sociosexual* world and proposed a model capitalizing on schools'

positioning for positive intervention (Elia, 2014).

Elia (2014) applied the social ecological model as a conceptual framework for

theorizing about how bisexuality can become visible in the schools in the interest of

promoting the health of bisexual students and school community members in general.

Components of the social ecological model are individual (e.g., knowledge, beliefs, and

attitudes one has about bisexuality), interpersonal (e.g., social networks and social

support and how they help influence attitudes about bisexual people), organizational

(e.g., school personnel and students commit to and actively pursue an inclusive culture),

community (e.g., schools develop coordinated relationships with community

organizations), and public policy (e.g., law mandating sexual and gender minority

diversity training for school personnel). Meyer's (2003) SMS theory emphasized the

contribution of social structures and social stressors (e.g., stigma, prejudice, and

discrimination) to health disparity in the LGB population. Elia's model (2014) examples

interventions that attempt to correct the "pathogenic social environment" (Meyer, 2015.

p. 211) as well as help individuals become resilient in coping with the environment.

Relevant to exploring resilience processes, the theory of intersectionality advises that

intersecting social identities be taken into consideration. The following section describes

the origins and importance of the concept intersectionality, its emerging application in

sexuality research, and specific implications related to mixed race and bisexuality (i.e.,

multiple-marginal identities).

Intersectionality Effect

Definition

Intersectionality considers the social/cultural and historical contexts of race, gender, sexuality, [dis]ability, class, and other social categories. An intersectional perspective acknowledges these simultaneous social identities and how they structure an individual's access to social, economic, and political resources and privileges. Intersectionality approaches focuses on understanding how these simultaneous social dimensions are interrelated and how they shape and influence one another (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; IOM, 2011; Lorde, 1984, 2007; NIH 2016; Rich, 1980).

Such attention to commonality and fracture is critical because failure to attend to how social categories depend on one another for meaning and consequences renders knowledge of any one category both incomplete and biased. (Cole, 2009; Diamond, 2008; Lewis et al., 2012). Cole's intersectionality framework reflects "a paradigm for theory and research offering new ways of understanding the complex causality that characterizes social phenomena" (p. 179).

Background. Intersectionality theory was originally conceptualized by Black feminists (see Combahee River Collective, 1986) to describe the various ways in which individuals experience oppression based on several vectors including race, class, sexuality, and gender. Intersectionality theory originates from feminist theory for which the Combahee River Collective statement marks an important moment in feminism because it shifts our attention away from gender as a singular category of feminist analysis to interconnected oppressions of gender, race, class, and sexuality. Kimberle

Crenshaw (1989/1993) is credited with originating the term intersectionality. Adrienne Rich (1980) and Audre Lorde (1984, 2007) argued for inclusion of sexuality (i.e., including homosexuality) (Crenshaw, 1989; Lorde, 1984, 2007; Rich, 1980).

Intersectionality in Sexuality Research/Theory

Intersectionality theory articulates that individuals occupy multiple structural positions that locate their experience, knowledge, choices, and practices in particular histories and in specific relationship to dominant culture's understanding of what is real, normal, acceptable, and even possible (Tolman & Diamond, 2014a). Further posited, intersectionality breaks down artificial binary positions allowing bisexuality expression (Eliason & Elia, 2011).

Perspective, approaches, and frameworks. Intersectionality framework also challenges one to look at the points of cohesion (i.e., commonality) and fracture within racial/ethnic sexual- and gender-minority groups, as well as those between these groups and the dominant group culture (e.g., Mink et al., 2014, p. 506*).* Elia (2014) acknowledged the messy but imperative need to explore both oppression and gifts; the intersectional lens certainly reveals the depth and difference of oppression, but it also reveals strengths and gifts of being bisexual.

Oppression and disparity. The concept of intersectionality describes analytic approaches that simultaneously consider the meaning and consequences of multiple categories of identity, difference, and disadvantage. The IOM (2011) committee relied on intersectionality theory to organize understanding social inequality. Foundational claims and principles guided exploration of LGB marginalized status using the dimensions of

race, ethnicity, and social class (IOM, 2011; NIH, 2016). The 2011 IOM report emphasized that the multiple identities that arise from social constructs interact to determine access to social capital, which in turn impacts health status. Specifically, that intersectionality influences the LGB experience and relates to LGB health in four important ways (IOM, 2011, pp. 21–22):

1) The lived experiences of racial/ethnic groups can be understood only in the context of institutionalized patterns of unequal control over the distribution of a society's valued goods and resources.

2) Understanding the racial and ethnic experiences of sexual- and gender-minority individuals requires taking into account the full range of historical and social experiences both within and between sexual- and gender- minority groups with respect to class, gender, race, ethnicity, and geographical location.

3) The economic and social positioning of groups within society is associated with institutional practices and policies that contribute to unequal treatment.

4) The importance of representation—the ways social groups and individuals are viewed and depicted in the society at large and the expectations associated with these depictions—must be acknowledged. These representations are integrally linked to social, structural, political, historical, and geographic factors (IOM, 2011, pp. 21–22).

***Intersectional ecology model of LGBTQ health*.** Mink, Lindley, and Weinstein (2014) proposed the Intersectional Ecology Model of LGBTQ Health (IEM). The IEM framework incorporates the science of positive psychology into understanding long-standing societal patterns of maintaining social disadvantage and devalued social capital of certain groups. The IEM framework incorporates Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, the Lazarus model of stress and coping (Lazarus, 1981; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), an assets-based, wellness approach to LGBTQ health, and elements of the four conceptual frameworks used in the 2011 IOM effort (Mink et al., 2014).

The Intersectional Ecology Model of LGBTQ Health presupposes multiple-cultural group membership of all sexual minorities. Class, gender, race, ethnicity, and geographical location of sexual and gender minority individuals lend comprehensive understanding to historical and social experiences within and between groups (Mink et al., 2014). Using these perspectives or standpoints in framing and interpreting research is requisite for making diversity meaningful and for meaningfully incorporating social hierarchies into both participants' making sense of those experiences and researchers' interpretations (Tolman & Diamond, 2014a).

Mixed-race and sexuality. The 2000 U.S. Census was the first allowing selection of more than one race, and resulted in 6.8 million respondents choosing more than one race (Jones & Smith, 2001). Intersectionality theory conveys the need for theoretical models that adequately capture the identity development of individuals holding multiple-marginal identities, including biracial and multiracial identities.

Daniel, Kina, Dariotis and Fojas's (2014) essay mapped out the critical turn in mixed race studies. Daniel et al. (2014) discussed whether and to what extent the current field called critical mixed race studies (CMRS) departs from existing theorizing of the topic, and leading to formations of new intellectual terrain (Daniel et al., 2014). Daniel and colleagues' work captured compatible views by researchers/theorists on the development and impact of intersecting mixed-race and sexual minority identity.

Intersections of mixed race and bisexuality. Collins's (2004) meta-analysis of the literature on bisexuality and intersections of ethnicity, race, and culture inferred that society is becoming more multiracial and multiethnic. Collins (2004) further posited that bisexual people of color are finding a much larger reference group with which to compare and identify themselves. In 2000, Collins explored a model which proposed an interrelatedness of various aspects of the individual identity and the role of sociohistorical context in which bisexual and biracial individuals negotiate their identities.

Interviewing fifteen Japanese-American adults Collins (2000) proposed four phases of how bisexual identity development intersects with racial/cultural identity. The four phases included Questioning/Confusion; Refusal/Suppression; Infusion/Exploration; and Resolution/Acceptance. Collins posited that true identity integration of the two intersecting identities (i.e., bisexuality and race) resulted in a multiple identity (Collins, 2000, 2004).

King (2011) applied Collins's (2000) model with six females enrolled in a four-year college (ages 18-22) who were bisexual and either biracial or multiracial. King (2011) found phase order and experiences differed from Collins's assertions. King (2011)

noted that instead of a final integrated multiple identity, her study participants asserted the desire for continued growth and evolution. The common factor of both studies is the importance of exploring intersecting social identities and their impact on identity development for bisexual women and men.

<div align="center">**Strengths-Based Research**</div>

Definition

Strengths-based approaches focus on strengths and resources motivated by positive expectations. Strengths involve internal or external qualities or conditions such as courage, optimism or creativity. Phenomena that help people adaptively cope with life or engage a fulfilling life are strengths. An individual's strengths are typically culturally bound and developmental in nature (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014).

Positive Psychology

Subjectivity operationalizing the intent for strengths-based research produced subjective findings until the emerging field of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) brought together seminal concepts by Erikson (1959), Maslow (1954), and Rogers (1961). Advancing the perspective that within personality formation is the innate potential for psychological growth and life-long development of strengths, Peterson and Seligman (2004) proposed the *Three Pillars of positive psychology* (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Positing consistent language for researchers and practitioners to convey positive psychological phenomena, Peterson and Seligman (2004) developed the Character Strengths and Virtues system

(a.k.a., VIA Classification of Strengths). The strengths-based framework of the Three

Pillars reflects a counterpart to the deficit-based[7] (i.e., pathology focused) DSM.

Originating in counseling and personality psychology, positive psychology uses an

affirming lens to explore the flourishing life. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000)

aimed to remind the field of psychology to look for strengths and virtue. Specifically, the

Three Pillars of positive psychology proposes positive subjective experiences, character

strengths and virtues, and positive institutions or organizations as a systematic

organization of strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi,

2000). In the Three Pillars model, *positive subjective experiences* capture a wide-array of

intrinsically valued experiences, including positive affective/emotional states, aspects of

subjective well-being (i.e., happiness), resilience, and stress related growth ([SRG], i.e.,

developmental crises resulting in strengths) (Erikson, 1959; Frankl*, 1946/2006*; Seligman

& Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The second concept of the model involves 24 specific *character strengths*

embedded within broadly defined *virtues* (i.e., domains) (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Character strengths reference a time stable characteristic with broad-based cultural,

historical, and intrinsic value. Virtues provide an organizing system for the character

strengths and encompass a larger domain.

For example, the virtues of wisdom and knowledge represent cognitive strengths

(i.e., the character strength) related to knowledge. The characteristics of the wisdom and

knowledge virtue include curiosity, creativity, open-mindedness, love of learning and

perspective. The remaining five virtues and their characteristics include courage: bravery,

authenticity and zest; humanity: love and social intelligence; justice: citizenship and fairness; temperance: strengths that protect against excess, and transcendence: strengths that force connections to the universe and provide meaning (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

The third pillar of the model is *positive institutions/organization*, in which membership in physical, social/cultural, and legal institutions/organizations foster and promote the development of positive subjective experiences and/or character strengths. For example, at the individual level schools, community organizations, faith communities, and the institution of marriage foster positive psychological phenomena via access to social support (i.e., the value of love) and belongingness (i.e., citizenship). Specifically, for the LGB population, institution/organization membership buffers minority stress by fostering positive identities (i.e., the virtue of authenticity), advancement of equal rights (i.e., fairness), and positive emotion facilitation (Kwon, 2013; Meyer, 2003; Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014).

Optimal/Thriving Well-being

Subjective and psychological well-being. Subjective well-being (SWB) takes into consideration the affective as well as the cognitive components of one's emotional experience towards life (Ng & Fisher, 2013). Psychological well-being (PWB) is a person's potential to realize a meaningful life and to meet real life challenges. Quality of Life (QOL) is a complex, multidimensional construct, embracing both objective and subjective domains. For the present study, QOL is defined as a person's ability to reach a valued state of well-being.

Finally, incorporating SWB, PWB, and QOL, Keyes, Shmotkin and Ryff (2002) provided information on optimal well-being (i.e., high SWB and high PWB), which they also termed thriving (p. 1007), which includes meaningful goal pursuit, growth and development as a person, and the establishment of quality ties to others. Analyzing data from the 1995 Midlife in the United States (MIDUS) survey from 3,032 Americans (56.5% Female; 43.5% Male), aged 25–74 and predominantly (86%) Caucasian (6.8% African-American; 4% all other races), Keyes, Shmotkin and Ryff (2002) found that optimal well-being increased as age, education, outgoingness, and awareness/attentiveness increased and as pessimism decreased.

Midlife and older adults who had attained higher levels of education reported thriving in life and perceived having a higher quality of life. Between the midlife and older adult cohorts, midlife adults had higher psychological well-being than subjective well-being, had more education, and more extroverted tendencies than older adults (Keyes et al., 2002). This study also reported, as hypothesized, that SWB and PWB represent related but distinct conceptions of well-being.

In practice, there is empirical support for positive psychology approaches as treatment approaches. For example, in a meta-analysis including 4,266 individual cases of 51 positive psychology interventions (PPI), Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) found that PPI significantly enhanced well-being and decreased depressive symptoms (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) operationalized PPI as treatment methods or intentional activities that aim to cultivate positive feelings, behaviors, or cognitions.

Study moderators included age (i.e., child/adolescent, young adult, middle adult, and older adult), treatment engagement (i.e., self-selection vs. no self-selection), depression status, intervention format (i.e., individual, group, or self-directed), intervention duration, and comparison group type (i.e., no- treatment control, neutral control, placebo, or treatment as usual) (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Overall findings indicated that strengths-based interventions were equally as effective in addressing both the abatement of mental health symptoms and the promotion of positive subjective experiences in therapy.

Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) recommended that clinicians: 1) encourage their clients to regularly practice and keep a record of positive strategies, to incorporate these strategies into their everyday lives, and to turn these strategies into habits; 2) assign multiple and different positive activities; and 3) consider a client's cultural background and unique inclinations when implementing PPIs (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Also, in general, Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) advised practitioners to implement PPIs in the treatment of both clinically depressed and nondepressed clients, as both are likely to garner the benefits.

Strengths-Based Sexuality Research

Research framed by SMS theory (Meyer, 2003) provided a context for understanding the impact of LGB minority status on psychological and physical health. However, the focus on the negative psychological effects of minority stress without a balance of the positive provides a limited understanding of the LGB lived experience. A

balanced and representative understanding of LGB lives requires that LGB psychology

research, theory, and practice include strengths-based perspectives.

The field of sexuality psychology is uniquely positioned to develop a more

theoretically and empirically based understanding of LGBT strengths to inform training,

practice, and research settings. An illustration involves the last edition of the first volume

of the PSOGD journal - expanded to offer a special section dedicated to positive

psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Special section articles proposed the

reciprocal incorporation of health concerns and flourishing wellbeing in LGB research

and theory, as well as reactions to special section articles (Vaughan et al., 2014; Vaughan

& Rodriguez, 2014).

Countering the field's long history focused on distress and pathology and

emphasizing the field's need for more LGB strengths-based work, Vaughan et al. (2014)

analyzed LGBT representation in strengths-based literature. Using the three-pillar model

as a framework for a content analysis they examined how strength-based themes were

addressed in peer-reviewed psychology literature that focused on sexual and/or gender

minority populations or related LGBT-affirming institutions/organizations. Published

between 1973 and 2011, 339 articles reflected the meaningful inclusion of seven

character strengths. The positive psychology themes included love, integrity, vitality,

citizenship, nonprofit organizations, and LGBT-affirming laws. The field of positive

psychology has received criticism for discounting culture and the minimal inclusion of

LGBT individuals in the literature on strengths (40% of the articles) conveyed

confirmation (Vaughan et al., 2014).

Benefits of strengths-based perspective in sexuality research. A strengths-based perspective will further help to depathologize and affirm LGB persons within psychological research and practice. Strengths-based perspective reveals the protective factors that promote resilience in the context of minority stress. Strengths-based sexuality research enhances understanding of positive adaptation and psychological health. Understanding the positive advances discussion about how LGB individuals flourish (or thrive) in their lives and enhance the world around them.

SMS theory and positive psychology. Notably, the special positive psychology section of the PSOGD journal included a commentary by SMS theorist, Ilan H. Meyer (2003, 2014). Meyer reinforced alignment of minority stress and growth, and emphasized stress related growth ([SRG] see Frankl, 1946/2006). Meyer also stressed the importance of promoting LGBT health from a strengths perspective (e.g., resilience as stress ameliorating process) and LGB psychology filtering into mainstream psychology. The commentary conveyed caution about the three pillars model placing sole responsibility on the individual (i.e., via the second pillar of virtues and character strengths). Meyer asserted that application of the third pillar also involves pathogenic structural and institutional stressors (Meyer, 2014; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Meyer emphasized health disparity causing social structures and social stressors per SMS theory.

Well-being: Stress related growth (SRG). Erikson (1959) proposed the role of developmental crises in forming basic strengths (also see Frankl, 1946, 2006). LGBT psychological research and theory include experiences of psychological growth and healthy personality development attributed to SMS and adversity. For example, research

findings indicated that sexual minority identity development resulted in gains in authenticity, positive affect, life satisfaction, social intelligence, and social support (Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014).

LGBT people of color are purported to develop higher levels of well-being because of an early and on-going development of stress resilience in that their experiences with racism promoted resilience toward homophobia (Meyer, 2010). Meyer (2010) emphasized individual, and group level resilience resources developed from lifelong disadvantaged group membership as a future research focus to reveal psychological strengths.

Strengths-based practice with LGBT. Increasing strengths-based research represents a unique opportunity for the field of psychology to lead the way in developing a more theoretically and empirically based understanding of LGBT strengths that may be drawn upon in training and practice settings (Lytle et al., 2014). Incorporating positive psychology into the training and practice of professional psychology will advance increased knowledge and awareness of LGBT individuals and the skills needed to provide high quality strength-based LGBT therapy (Lytle et al., 2014).

Strengths-based bisexual sexuality research. Previously noted, compared to LG populations, bisexual sexuality focused research and theory are limited. Also noted is that LGB representation in strengths-based literature is limited. We can deduce then; that bisexuality focused strengths-based research and theory receive minimal attention, and expansion of attention in and of itself can benefit individuals, multiple fields, and society[8].

Bostwick and Hequembourg (2013) asserted that exploring the positive or protective functions acquired through a bisexual or fluid sexuality, and assets (i.e., positive or beneficial aspects) associated with a bisexual identity advance understanding of and reveal the diversity of human sexuality (Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013). Specifically, understanding benefits associated with identity fluidity, comfort with ambiguity, and flexible attitudes toward attraction and desire potentially influence lessening of binary norms.

The Internet-based qualitative study about positive aspects of a bisexual identity by Rostosky et al. (2010) reported positive aspects of bisexual identity that were located at the intrapersonal, interpersonal and community/societal levels of the human ecological system. The positives included living authentically and honestly; cultivating empathy; exploring sexuality and relationships; developing strong connections to others and communities; and engaging in social justice activism. Study participants recognized that their social identity proactively positioned them between LG and heterosexual communities. The unique and critical vantage point enabled navigation and bridging between the two communities (Rostosky et al., 2010).

Additionally, participants conveyed that they valued their bisexual community which provided acceptance and support for a shared unique identity. The sense of belonging generated from membership in the bisexual community promoted attunement to 'otherness' elsewhere. Awareness then promoted understanding and motivation to challenge systematic oppression and privilege.

The self-identified bisexual participants of the Rostosky et al. (2010) research included 157 individuals diverse in ethnicity/race, age (18 – 69; *M*=34), gender identity, and country origin (81 United States; 40 Canada; 30 United Kingdom; 6 New Zealand, Finland, Norway and Tunisia). Though mostly Caucasian (78%) and female (67%) the study included 24% male, 4% transgender participants. The Rostosky et al. (2010) research and Bostwick and Hequembourg (2013) conceptualizing emphasize that bisexuality focused strengths-based research and theory benefits individuals, multiple fields, and society at large.

Summary

In Chapter 2 I reviewed the current pertinent literature related to bisexual women and men who develop and maintain flourishing well-being. The information here highlighted strengths-based research, the various theories of sexuality diversity, the diverse perspectives regarding bisexual sexuality, and the issues surrounding sparsity of bisexual sexuality-focused research.

I also covered the areas that existing bisexuality-focused research consistently recommended for future exploration. I discussed sexual minority disparity, the compounding stress effects of multiple stigmatized social identities and the protective factors of resilience processes against the harmful effects of stressors. Finally, in Chapter 2 I covered issues surrounding pathology focused sexuality research and the merits and risks related to positive psychology models.

Further in-depth exploration is needed to examine the experiences of biracial and multiracial bisexual women and men who experience flourishing well-being.

Understanding the resilience processes of biracial and multiracial bisexual women and men who experience double sexual minority stigmatization have yet to be examined. Research is needed to explore these women's and men's experiences and to deliver data to families of biracial and multiracial, bisexual women and men, therapists, clinicians, and advocates of the LGB community. In Chapter 3, I provide information on how this qualitative study was performed, how participants were identified, what questions were asked to participants, and the specific details of the research design and methodology that was used.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The literature review provided an overview of the lived experiences of biracial and multiracial, bisexual men and women with flourishing well-being. Bisexual men and women often experience DSMS discrimination from both heterosexual and gay/lesbian communities but often fend off detrimental effects of stressors by engaging resilience processes (Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014). This resilience to DSMS is not understood very well, and exploration is often forgone by research focusing on the negative health effects of sexual minority stress. Understanding the resilience processes of flourishing bisexual women and men exposed to DSMS and compounding effects of intersecting social identities is important in understanding their navigation toward and maintaining flourishing well-being.

My focus with this study involved looking at the complexities of adult bisexual sexuality, intersecting social identities, and the influence of resilience processes in their experiences of flourishing well-being. It is important to understand the lived experiences of bisexual women and men as they have historically been excluded from or melded into LG sexuality research (Roberts et al., 2015). Empirical literature consistently recognizes bisexual sexuality as a distinct and stable sexuality with unique characteristics, but only recently have seminal researchers consistently called for its separate exploration (Diamond, 2008; IOM, 2011; Meyer, 2003; Tolman & Diamond, 2014a). Also, sexuality research is dominated by pathology-focused work, and this study's focus on resilience processes of flourishing bisexual adults addressed a research gap with its strengths-based

perspective. It is significant that sexuality research offers a balanced and representative understanding of LGB lives.

I used IPA as the methodology because it prioritizes the study participants' words. IPA allows the life story to unfold in a natural way as the researcher gives deep care and attention to the words. IPA also situates the study participants' perspective in the context of their worlds (Smith et al., 2009). By allowing bisexual men and women to share their experiences of flourishing well-being, those who interact with this population can better understand them and the resilience processes that guide their well-being.

Awareness of bisexual adults' resilience processes that lead to flourishing well-being may influence positive social change by encouraging improved counseling services and more effective programs. Informed providers may influence more responsive and affirmative social policies related to sexual health, sexual rights, and sexual behaviors (Diamond, 2008; IOM, 2011). For bisexual individuals, a better understanding of resilience, access to strategies for building resilience, and affirmation may reduce stress effects of DSMS and increase well-being (Diamond, 2008; Fox, 2006; Kwon, 2013; Lewis et al., 2012). There is currently no research available that has looked at biracial or multiracial adult bisexual women and men with flourishing well-being.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of the research design used in this study, including the rationale for the design. It details my role as the researcher in the study and procedures regarding data collection and analysis. This chapter also includes discussion on the methodology, sampling size and strategy, ethical concerns, and a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

There are gaps in the literature exploring the lived experience of flourishing bisexual adults related to resilience against DSMS and the compounding effects of intersecting social identities. Most work on resilience processes involves the general population (see Kwon, 2013). Although work has been done on resilience processes engaged by LG individuals related to sexual minority stress (Meyer, 2003), there is a gap in looking at resilience processes engaged by flourishing, biracial or multiracial bisexual women and men who experience DSMS.

Since these lived experiences have not been explored, using a predetermined hypothesis to test an assumption was irrelevant, and a quantitative approach was inadequate (see Creswell, 2013). Certain concepts (i.e., bisexual sexuality, resilience, intersectionality, flourishing well-being) need in-depth exploration lending themselves to a qualitative study (Creswell, 2013). Quantitative measures do not address the comprehensive problem; statistical analyses do not allow a researcher to identify the individual differences and uniqueness of these experiences (Creswell, 2013).

The goal of qualitative research can be stated as in-depth understanding (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Qualitative research is the developmental process of doing experiential qualitative psychology (Smith et al., 2009). The main qualitative research approaches currently used include phenomenology, grounded theory, narrative analysis, ethnography, and discourse analysis. Phenomenology reveals the essence(s) to a shared experience, and this dimension differentiates a phenomenological approach from

other qualitative approaches (Patton, 2002; van Manen, 1990), making phenomenology the appropriate tradition for this study.

The focus of phenomenology involves exploring how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness (Patton, 2002). Phenomenological philosophy offers limitless ideas to examine and comprehend lived experience and is a philosophical approach to the study of experience (Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenologists think about the human experience--what matters to us and makes up our lived world (Smith et al., 2009).

The origins of phenomenology lie with Husserl (1900/1970, 1977/1962), with the early advancement of his philosophies/thoughts by Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, and Gadamer (Dowling & Cooney, 2012). Contemporary theorists (e.g., Smith, 1996) continue to expand perspectives and approaches of the seminal originators (refer to Dowling & Cooney, 2012). Husserl's philosophies for literal translations of text created the foundation for phenomenological philosophies.

Merleau-Ponty (1962) perceived that the body shapes the fundamental character of our knowing about the world. Heidegger (1962/2004) was concerned with the ontological question of existence itself, and with the practical activities and relationships which we are caught up in, and through which the world appears to us, and is made meaningful (Smith et al., 2009, p. 321). Gadamer (1991/1960) contributed the importance of acknowledging the socio-history and culture of the person (Dowling & Cooney, 2012).

The notable types of phenomenological approaches used by researchers who use this form of analysis include descriptive phenomenology, interpretive phenomenology,

life world phenomenology, and hermeneutic phenomenology (Dowling & Cooney, 2012).

Descriptive phenomenology, originating from Husserl's (1900/1970, 1977/1962)

descriptive phenomenological philosophy, is focused upon experience itself and

describing it in terms of its particular and essential features (Dowling & Cooney, 2012).

Ultimately, a researcher gets at the content of conscious experience (Dowling & Cooney,

2012). Practically, the essential structure of the experience emerges from a simultaneous

reduction of experience descriptions and adoption of a psychological perspective; the

experience is then described at a level other than that of the original description (Giorgi,

2009). The method is also descriptive in that the analytical process describes

relationships of the key psychological constituents (i.e., essential meanings) (Giorgi

& Giorgi, 2003).

Life world phenomenology attends to the "taken-for-granted" experiences of the

everyday life people lead (Smith et al., 2009, p. 13). To be phenomenological it is

necessary to disengage from the activity and attend to the taken-for-granted experiences

of the everyday life (Smith et al., 2009). Hermeneutic phenomenology applies a

philosophy of interpretation with processing in context of the phenomenon of interest

(Heidegger, 1962/2004). Interpretative phenomenology puts the interpretation of people's

meaning-making activities in the center and beyond the literal translations applied in

hermeneutic phenomenology (Benner, 1994; Heidegger, 1962/2004; Smith et al., 2009).

The most logical of the phenomenological approaches for the focus of this study

is interpretative. The intent of this study was to capture and apply rigorous interpretative

analysis to first-person accounts of a small group of individuals who have experienced

similar social stressors, positively adapted, and achieved flourishing well-being.

Gathering and analyzing the unique, personal, experiential accounts required

considerable time and efforts with each participant and subsequent transcript. To

understand their achievement of well-being, information was also gathered about

sociocultural contexts by which meaning was created and interpreted (Patton, 2002).

Individuals created first-person accounts. These accounts themselves are the data.

IPA allows researchers to recognize and respect peoples accounts of experience as data

that can stand on their own (Smith et al., 2009). The basic premise behind IPA research is

the significance of the account of an experience itself and the meaning it holds with the

conveyor. According to Smith et al. (2009), "rich and reflective data can tell us

something about people's involvement in and orientation towards their personal and

social world and/or about how they make sense of this" (p. 46).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IPA was first developed as an approach during Smith's (1999) doctoral research

addressing the transition to motherhood. IPA is a recently established and still emerging

research approach in clinical and counseling psychology, as well as social and

educational psychology, getting its start in psychology and health psychology (Smith et

al., 2009). IPA is used to address a wide range of experiential research issues (e.g.,

psychology, health, education, management and the humanities).

IPA aims to capture particular experiences as experienced for particular people

(Smith et al., 2009). IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of individual lived

experience and individuals' sense-making of that experience. These two commitments

point to IPA's joint theoretical underpinnings in phenomenology, attention to a particular

experience, and hermeneutics (Eatough & Smith, 2008), an approach to the analysis of

the text of interviews.

The first of the three key areas of the philosophy of knowledge and informing

IPA, phenomenology, focuses on exploring how human beings make sense of experience

and transform experience into consciousness (Patton, 2002). Essential in IPA,

phenomenological philosophy provides an abundance of ideas about how to examine and

comprehend lived experience (Smith et al., 2009). Through analysis, IPA has an active

role for the researcher (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Add summary and synthesis.

The second major theoretical underpinning of IPA, hermeneutics, focuses on

interpretation first, by the participant and second, by the researcher. Hermeneutics is the

theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). The IPA researcher is said to engage in

double hermeneutics (Smith & Osborn, 2003) because both the researcher and participant

are trying to make sense of what is happening to the participant. Hermeneutic theorists

are concerned with the methods and purposes of interpretation; uncovering intent and

original meanings; and the relation between the context of text's production and text's

interpretation (Smith et al., 2009).

The third and final key characteristic of the chosen approach is that IPA is

unwaveringly idiographic (Smith et al., 2009). IPA's idiographic commitment to the

particular operates at two levels: (a) there is a commitment to the sense of detail and

therefore to the depth of analysis, and (b) there is a commitment to understanding how

particular experiential phenomena have been understood from the perspective of particular people in a particular context (Smith et al., 2009).

Idiography is concerned with contexts and personal perspectives which start with a thorough and systematic analysis of a single case before moving to the general, for which rigor continues. In IPA, the ideographic mode of inquiry means that researchers typically present results as a set of convergences and divergence within the accounts of participants (Smith & Osborn, 2003, cited in Smith, 2015, p. 27). According to Harré (1979) "idiography does not eschew generalizations, but rather prescribes a different way of establishing those generalizations. [Idiography] locates contexts and personal perspectives in the particular, and hence develops them more cautiously" (Harré, 1979, cited in Smith et al., 2009, p. 29).

In tenets of ideography, IPA assumes a theoretical commitment to the person as a cognitive, linguistic, affective, and physical being and takes on the complex link between talking, feeling or emotional state, and thinking (Smith & Osborn, 2015). This means the researcher also interprets the study participant's emotional and mental state from what they say (Smith & Osborn, 2015, p. 26).

The preceding section reflects that phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography suit dedication to detailed exploration of personal meaning and lived experience and allow address of a wide range of experiential research issues (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Inductive approaches (i.e., thematic and narrative analysis) as used in IPA seek to expand existing, but sometimes generate new, theories to more adequately attend to the diversity of experiences (Frost et al., 2014). This is especially important in studies

of sexuality, in which traditional ideologies, cultural norms, and policy are often involved in sanctions that influence the development of sexuality theories (Frost et al., 2014). The next section details the benefits of using IPA in sexuality research and describes existing sexuality research using IPA.

IPA and Sexuality Research

The field of sexuality psychology is positioned to better explore and understand LGBT experience to inform training, practice, and research settings:

> Understanding the complexities and subjective lived experiences of
> sexuality-related phenomena is essential not only for improved basic
> social scientific knowledge of human sexuality but for understanding and
> improving people's health and well-being and informing sexuality-related
> social policies (Frost et al., 2014, p. 12)

IPA has become a more popular form of qualitative analysis in sexuality research due to an increased appreciation of subjective stories and desire to learn from the experiences of participants (Frost et al., 2014). IPA attracts a researcher constituency interested in applied psychology (Smith et al., 2009). Particularly, thematic data analysis has two processes: description of emergent themes and interpretative analysis (Frost et al., 2014). These processes allow understanding what elements of an experience matter to study participants and the meaning the experience holds for the study participant (Smith & Osborn, 2003 in Frost et al., 2014 p. 132).

For this study, the idiographic process in IPA manifested exposure of the unique factors relevant to bisexual women and men that influence resilience building distinct

from lesbian and gay men. Social policy generated from present study findings may influence increased visibility of bisexuality sexuality orientation as a distinct identity with unique impact on rights and wellness.

The hermeneutic factor, "that reality (i.e., factical existence/the factical life) for people is an experiential one" (Heidegger, 1962/2004 and in Eatough & Smith, 2008, p. 3), exemplifies that interpretative phenomenological analysis allows getting at 'the something' that an experience is in relation to; in other words, "being-in-the-world is always perspectival, always temporal, and always 'in-relation-to' something" (Heidegger, 1962/2004 and Benner, 1994 in Smith et al., 2009, p. 18). For this study, DSMS is the reality, and maintaining flourishing well-being from successful adaptation to DSMS is the reality to better understand.

Frost et al. (2014) indicated that unlike other research methods which examine frequency or type of sexual behavior, phenomenological research helps researchers to understand the phenomenon of sexuality which is dynamic and part of everyday life (p. 21). Sexuality involves much interpersonal (i.e., within group) and intrapersonal diversity (e.g., sexual behavior, desire, pleasure, orientation, and identity) and phenomenological research allows examination of psychological experiences subjective meanings and diverse motivations (Frost et al., 2014). IPA strategies distinctly advance examination of the social, cultural, historical, and political contexts in which the data emerged. The next section details examples of sexuality research projects using the IPA approach including design features, implementation, analysis results, and future recommendations.

Sexuality research using IPA. Using the IPA approach, sexuality research with three distinct purposes illustrate both the harm and strengths sexual minority individuals experienced related to societal binary paradigms. Studies by Alexander and Clare (2004), Farmer and Byrd (2015), and Flowers and Buston (2001) used IPA to explore distinctly different phenomena in different sexual minority groups from different global locations (i.e., the United Kingdom and the United States), and each included findings of genderism, heterosexism, and homophobia related to compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980). In addition, each study conveyed findings of personal growth and a more positive sense of self by participants.

The primary purpose of these studies was distinctly different. One study explored experiences of genderism within, among, and between members of the LGBTQQIA community by lesbian and bisexual women (Farmer& Byrd, 2015). A second study explored the meaning of women's self-injury within the context of having a lesbian or bisexual identity and the relevance of wider social context in understanding self-injurious behavior (Alexander & Clare, 2004). The third study explored gay identity formation during adolescence and the importance of gay identity for both the participants and the various people (e.g. family members, peers, colleagues) who populate their worlds (Flowers & Buston, 2001).

Study participants represented sexuality minorities including lesbians, bisexual women, gay males, and transgender and intersex individuals. Across these sexuality studies using IPA, representation of a bisexual male can neither be confirmed or discounted. For example, one study describes two participants as

"male/trans-past, heterosexual" and "female/gender non-conforming, bisexual" (Farmer & Byrd, 2015, p. 294). The Flowers and Buston (2001) study included a participant who says he "put[s] an even bigger front up" by marrying a woman (p. 58).

Each study meets the concern in IPA for the detailed account of individual experience of a similar phenomenon by a homogenous sample of people with similar characteristics (Smith et al., 2009; Smith, 2015). Each targeted a subjective experience of a distinct phenomenon experienced by self-identifying sexual minorities. Snowball sampling, purposive sampling, and targeted recruitment garnered 16 female participants (14 lesbian and 2 bisexual women with a mean age of 29) who engaged in self-injurious behavior (Alexander & Clare, 2004), 20 gay men (mean age 27) from a socially and economically conservative small town in South Yorkshire reflect on youthful experiences of heteronormativity (Flowers & Buston, 2001), and 10 sexuality and gender diverse (e.g., LGBT and heterosexual) individuals (mean age 36.9) from different states of the U.S. describe genderism in the LGBTQQIA community (Farmer & Byrd, 2015).

Each of these studies recognized or targeted a component of sexuality identity construction for which coming out and self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender nonconforming (i.e., transgender) was described without exception as an empowering experience. Each study included participant excerpts describing, and analysis confirming feeling different and victimization for being different, including exclusion, bullying, disapproval, hostility, discrimination. Also, each study included excerpts describing, and analysis confirming participants acquiring growth, resilience

(e.g., new ways of dealing with intense emotions), a sense of wholeness and integrity, strength, and pride (Alexander & Clare, 2004; Farmer & Byrd, 2015; Flowers & Buston, 2001).

Interviewing and written accounts are appropriate data collection methods for IPA (Smith et al., 2009), and the studies here used one or a combination of these methods. In the study by Alexander and Clare (2004) most participants preferred face-to-face interviews and also conveyed appreciation for the opportunity to tell their story to someone with genuine interest who valued their views (Alexander & Clare, 2004). All 10 participants in the study by Farmer and Byrd (2015) chose to write when given the option between writing their accounts or Skype face-to-face. These participants reasoned that writing their accounts allowed them an opportunity to organize thoughts and to clearly convey their intent. As the sole option, all 20 participants from South Yorkshire engaged face to face interviews (Flowers & Buston, 2001).

The superordinate themes that emerged from the respective studies are detailed in the next section. Six major themes emerged from the analysis by Alexander and Clare (2004), including: 1) bad experiences; 2) invisibility and invalidation; 3) feeling different; 4) just doing it; 5) it helps me cope; and 6) moving on (Alexander & Clare, 2004). Seven categories of themes emerged across participant response analysis by Farmer and Byrd (2015), including: 1) discrimination based on sexism, racism, and privilege; 2) discrimination based on a binary paradigm; 3) assumptions based on a gender binary presentation; 4) hierarchy or social order; 5) intragroup oppression; 6) need for acceptance and understanding of the gender spectrum; and 7) hope, resilience, and

positive action (Farmer & Byrd, 2015). Flowers and Buston (2001) also identified six superordinate themes including: 1) defined by difference; 2) self-reflection and inner conflict; 3) alienation and isolation; 4) living a lie, 5) telling others; and 6) wholeness and integrity (Flowers & Buston, 2001).

As noted, though each of these sexuality research projects had a distinctly different purpose, the IPA approach elicited descriptions of both the harm and strengths research participants experienced. Processes of social comparison and the hierarchy of heteronormativity related to both gender and sexuality diversity were included in each researcher's participant descriptions and excerpts, data analysis results, and findings. In addition, future recommendations of all three studies speak to "…the homophobia and heterosexism endemic in society [that] needs to be addressed" (Flowers & Buston, 2001, p. 63).

Farmer and Byrd (2015) reported that the LGBTQQIA community exerted the same binary systems dominated by Western society surrounding gender and affectional orientation to oppress and harm. This study pointed to the need for counselors increased awareness and advocacy for clients who embody non-binary identities with the goal of increasing safety and inclusion within the counseling relationship, in the LGBTQQIA community, and in the broader culture (Farmer & Byrd, 2015). Analysis by Flowers and Buston (2001) provided a coherent account of how heterosexism, homophobia, and discrimination operate in distinct locales and directly affect identity construction; they suggested that heterosexism and homophobic behavior be addressed in the secondary education system. Including but not limited

to sexuality education curriculum, as well as exposure to positive sexuality diverse role models, including teachers and faculty (p. 63).

Alexander and Clare (2004) revealed the complex nature of sexual identity as both a source of strength and pride, and as a source of negative feelings due to dominance of heterosexism and homophobia within society. Researchers noted that self-injury is a coping response that arises within a social context and is not a symptom of individual intrapsychic disorder (Alexander & Clare, 2004). Participants conveyed that service providers and individual professionals often contributed to their sense of invalidation and difference. Thus, a recommendation from this research includes looking at the processes by which women move away from self-injury as a coping strategy and the implications that this would have for offering beneficial clinical interventions (Alexander & Clare, 2004).

The preceding section reflects a broad overview of sexuality research engaging the rigors, and conveying the benefit of the IPA approach. Extensive participant excerpts, addressing lower order themes, and researcher interpretative narrative included in the article of origin are conveyed here via superordinate theme descriptors. However, it is the inclusion of details in the lower order themes that situate the study participants' perspective in the context of their particular worlds (Smith et al., 2009). It is this facet of IPA, the comprehensive details that make the summarized findings and recommendations most poignant and compelling, that best serve the target population of my study.

An interpretive phenomenological analysis is the most fitting for this study. The intent was to capture the rich, reflective, first-person accounts of a small group of individuals who have experienced similar social stressors, successfully adapted, and achieved positive well-being. IPA's idiographic characteristic commits the effort to understand the meaning of contingent (e.g., flourishing well-being), unique (e.g., bisexual sexuality and resilience processes/factors), and often cultural (e.g., intersectionality) or subjective phenomena (e.g., DSMS).

The intent of this research was to gather data regarding the perspectives of research participants about the phenomenon of flourishing well-being and the contribution of resiliencies against DSMS in this process. I investigated how these phenomena are experienced and given meaning by the individual. The next section describes the research questions explored in this study and the responsibilities of the researcher during exploration.

Research Questions

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is especially useful when concerned with complexity, process, or novelty. To thoroughly explore a complex area of concern requires an approach that encourages flexibility (Smith & Osborn, 2003). In acquiring a flourishing life, resiliencies emerge as a key organizing principle for which IPA is ideal. According to Holloway (1997), Mason (1996), and Creswell (1994), a researcher's epistemology is one's theory of knowledge which serves to decide how the social phenomena will be studied.

The epistemological position of this study can be formulated as follows: a) data are contained within the perspectives of flourishing bisexual people because they must be resilient against inescapable double sexual minority stigmatization; and b) because of this I engaged with the participants in collecting the data. I investigated how these phenomena are experienced and given meaning by the individual.

This study's posited research question(s) and the epistemological underpinnings of IPA are a match. Per Smith (2004), "[T]hus, if a researcher is interested in exploring participants' personal and lived experiences, in looking at how they make sense and meaning from those experiences, and in pursuing a detailed idiographic case study examination, then IPA is the right research approach" (p. 48). In this chapter, I comprehensively present that 1) there was a commitment to the sense of detail and therefore the depth of analysis; and 2) there was a commitment to understanding how particular experiential phenomena are understood from the perspective of particular people in a particular context. There is one main research question and three secondary research questions.

Primary and secondary research questions. How do bisexual, biracial and multiracial people make sense of possible causes for their flourishing well-being? The secondary research questions include: 1) What is the experience of coping with double sexual minority stigmatization in bisexual, biracial or multiracial men and women; 2) What is the experience of resilience with double sexual minority stigmatization in bisexual, biracial and multiracial men and women; and, 3) How do bisexual, biracial and multiracial men and women flourish in the face of double sexual minority stigmatization?

It was appropriate to use interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to shed light on the resiliency of the women and men of this study and how they perceive their experiences as well as themselves. IPA explores existential matters that often have transformative qualities (i.e., "bringing change and demanding reflection and (re)interpretation") for the individuals concerned (Eatough & Smith, 2008, p. 12). Reflection, interpretation and re-interpretation are characteristics consistent with exposing successful adaptive coping which leads to resiliencies.

Despite increases in multiracial and bisexual populations, the research is underdeveloped. By allowing biracial and multiracial, bisexual women and men to share their experiential stories, a better understanding of influential phenomena was developed. As sexuality- and racially-diverse populations become more prominent in the United States, there will be more inclusionary opportunities for biracial and multiracial, bisexual women and men. Thus, all interview questions were structured to answer all research questions adequately. Interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

Role of Researcher

IPA addresses reflexivity (i.e., reflection or perception) concerning both the participant and the researcher. For the researcher, IPA necessitates reflexivity for balancing the bracketing of researcher preconceptions and using them as a guide to understanding interpretations (Smith et al., 2009). IPA recognizes that the researcher's social-location (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education) profoundly shapes the interaction between researcher and participant. Reflexivity represents the explicit consideration (i.e., understanding the contextual influence) of the

process of transparency for how any aspect of the study (e.g., study design, development of interview questions, interview schedule, analysis of transcript, etc.) is specifically influenced by the researcher (Smith et al., 2009).

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) posited four layers of reflection in IPA: pre-reflective reflectivity, the reflective 'glancing' at pre-reflective experience, attentive reflection on the pre-reflective, and deliberate [methodological] controlled reflection (pp. 188-189). These layers of reflection begin with a natural unconscious reflection on everyday life and end with the meaning/practice of phenomenological reflection. The second and third layers ensure a reciprocal link of methodological reflection with everyday reflection.

Ultimately, the participant engages only the first two layers of reflection, while the researcher engages all four, and is intentionally cognizant/reflexive of the study participants' use of reflective layers. In adherence to the principles of the IPA approach for the present study, my engagement of reflexivity is detailed throughout the data analysis and issues of trustworthiness sections. The generalized role of the researcher is detailed in the following section.

My personal associations with the study topics required vigilant awareness of the biases I may have during study design, data collection, and data analysis. I kept personal opinions to myself and did not let any of my thoughts affect the way I conducted the interview or respond to participants' answers to interview questions. I remained neutral in conduct and thought in all aspects.

During the research process, I was solely responsible for participant recruitment, the collection and analysis of data, and in safeguarding the trustworthiness of data. I am also responsible for proper dissemination of study results. I relied on support from my dissertation committee members to ensure that I made the best possible decisions during the research process, specifically related to monitoring, documenting and evaluating data. In all processes of the research study, I maintained the highest commitment to ethics, rigor, and sense of humanity.

My objective with the interviews was to form formal but warm rapports with the study participants. I did not know any of the study participants before recruiting them. I avoided concern for conflict of interest or power relationships with the participants. I developed warm associations with study participants from the onset to invite truthful and honest responses and information sharing.

I ensured that participants of this study knew that my research is meant to share their experiences so others can better understand. The interview questions were designed to seek personal information with sensitivity and compassion. I asked about sexuality, racial identities, felt stigma, and protective behaviors. Some of the questions were topics participants talked about regularly, and others were material rarely or never discussed or thought about.

Methodology

Population

IPA requires a reasonably homogeneous sample for which the research question is meaningful. In other words, the participants should be as uniform as possible according

to the social factors relevant to the study and according to the theoretical factors (i.e., theoretical transferability) relevant to the study. The population of this study included biracial or multiracial, bisexual women and men, and who were between the ages of 18 and 60 and who indicated flourishing well-being.

Flourishing refers to life going well, the experience of a reciprocal cycle of functioning effectively and feeling good (Seligman, 2011). Seligman (2011) operationalizes (i.e., measures) flourishing well-being by constructs of Authentic Happiness theory and Well-being theory which include positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Seligman (2011) refers to these constructs as PERMA factors. The PERMA factors supported study participant recruitment (refer to Appendix B: Screening Tool).

The PERMA factors were operationalized as follows: 1) positive emotion is optimism, a positive outlook on life; 2) engagement, regularly, with others to socialize, or belonging to organizations, etc.; 3) relationships that are meaningful, including people to go to give and receive support; 4) meaningful life refers to a life of purpose and contribution; and 5) accomplishments - achieved or currently working toward important life accomplishments (i.e., set goals and met or meeting those goals). Eligible sample participants of this study indicated that they believe each of these factors were represented in their life at the time of recruitment screening.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria. All participants were established (i.e., 1 year, minimally) as bisexual in that they were sexually attracted to males, females, and gender diverse persons; and/or self-identified as bisexual; and/or sexually engaged with males,

females, and gender-diverse persons (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2016). Individuals indicating bisexual attractions or behavior without identifying as bisexual or those in the process of grappling with self-definition (Bradford, 2004) were excluded from study participation. There was no 'criteria' required for relationship status - broad relationship status was included as an analyzable variable. Each participant was cisgender (i.e., self-identity conformed with the gender that corresponds to their biological sex, though fluid gender expression was allowable (see Killermann, 2017)).

Transgender persons, individuals who live as a member of a gender other than that assigned at birth based on anatomical sex (Killermann, 2017, Kindle location 3763), were excluded from this study[10]. Each participant spoke fluent English, was between 18 and 60 years of age, and was a resident of the contiguous United States. Individuals who had emotional or mental disabilities, who were in crisis (i.e., victims of natural disaster or those with acute illness) were ineligible to participate in the study.

Individuals who were non-English speaking were also excluded from the study. I am currently an employee with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' Council on Developmental Disabilities. Any individual affiliated with my organization was also ineligible for the study to avoid conflicts of interest.

A letter of an explanation of the study (see Appendix C: Explanation of the Research Study) was given to potential participants. The letter listed eligibility criteria. The intent of the letter was for potential participants to let the researcher know they fit the criteria to proceed further with the study or did not fit criteria and could not proceed with the study.

Sampling strategy. Purposive homogenous sampling was the most appropriate

sampling strategy for this study (Smith et al., 2009). This strategy ensured insight to the

particular experience of being bisexual, and biracial/multiracial, and also, homogeneity of

experiencing the similar situation of flourishing well-being.

Purposive sampling criteria:

- 18 – 60 years old

- English speaking

- Resident of the United States (excluding contiguous United

  States/territories)

- Bisexual-sexuality identity

- Biracial/dual-racial or multiracial identity

- Flourishing well-being - The PERMA factors, positive emotion,

  engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman,

  2011).

Sample size. IPA prioritizes quality and depth over quantity and breadth. The

goal was to produce a sufficiently penetrating analysis. IPA studies are conducted on

relatively small sample sizes, and the aim is to find a reasonably homogeneous sample, so

that within the sample, convergence (i.e., common themes) and divergence (i.e.,

difference or individuality) could be examined in detail. IPA is committed to

understanding how particular experiential phenomena (i.e., an event, process or

relationship) have been understood from the perspective of particular people, in a

particular context. As a consequence, IPA utilizes small, purposively-selected and carefully-situated samples (Smith et al., 2009).

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) discuss sample size (a.k.a., case size) for IPA research related to the academic credential level and experience with IPA of the researcher. Though proponents of even a single case study, IPA creators detail rationale for three to 10 samples. Three cases are the minimum to provide meaningful points of similarity and divergence, and prevents overwhelm for a first-time undergraduate student, where up to six for the Master's study does the same. Smith et al. (2009) discuss up to eight cases for the novice IPA Ph.D. student to produce a sufficiently penetrating analysis, and up to 10 cases for the professional Ph.D. (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2003).

Incorporating concepts from Kelly (1955) and Giorgi (2008), Smith and colleagues (2003, 2009) justify a minimum of three participants because, 1) this represents a sufficient number of variations in order to come up with what Giorgi (2008) terms "typical essence"; and 2) accessing an individual's personal constructs is best if considering three elements at a time. Though IPA does not prescribe a definitive technique, these constructs and concepts supported the intent of the IPA approach (Smith et al., 2009; Smith, 2015). I proposed 5 to 10 cases for this study to accommodate being a novice researcher, to achieve and supplement "typical essence," to provide meaningful points of similarity and divergence, approach saturation, and to produce a sufficiently penetrating analysis.

Relationship between saturation and sample size. That is, how large does the sample need to be to allow for the identification of consistent patterns? Achieving saturation, or exhaustion of new themes, is not a proscribed aspect of IPA. IPA is concerned with the detailed account of individual experience of a similar phenomenon by a homogenous sample of people with similar characteristics (Smith et al., 2009; Smith, 2015). The idiographic tenet of IPA aims to capture the texture and richness of each individual examined with detailed analysis of commonality and nuance (i.e., convergence and divergence).

As the experiential expert, the IPA study participant shares in the direction of the interview. Thus, the IPA researcher anticipates that study participants open up novel and interesting areas of inquiry to be pursued. In this way, saturation may be approached, though not presumed.

Procedures for Recruitment

In order to begin recruitment, I needed to gain Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct research. After I was approved (approval # 09-08-17-0376578), I had permission to contact and recruit prospective participants.

As a student member of the American Psychological Association (APA) Division 44: The Society for Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT), I built a sampling frame by solicitation of and through Division 44 members and subscribers via electronic mailing lists for sharing information (APA, 2011). The APA Division 44 offers members research support including access to resource networks.

Upon contact, I engaged a brief criterion check (Appendix B: Screening Tool). The criteria check is an eligibility screening that confirmed qualifications for this study; conveyed assurance of confidentiality; identified potential participant's preferred communication platform; provided an introduction to the study; explained the study procedure and expectations; and described compensation of participation in the study. Once the interview was over, participants were mailed $20 compensation. The compensation was an easy and inexpensive offering while being reasonably enticing without appearing as a bribe.

Explanation of Research document (Appendix C) was sent via email with directions to contact me if interested in the study. The response email acknowledged that they understood the basic premise of the study and indicated involvement confirmation or decline. Following involvement confirmation, I sent the participant an Informed Consent Form and a brief demographic survey (Appendix D).

Back-up recruitment plan for inadequate sample size. Recruitment solicitation through my primary resource failed to produce five to ten qualified respondents. I engaged the following Division 44 sponsored bisexual and LGBT support/resource organizations: BiNetUSA.org, Bisexual Resource Center, and the Fenway Institute (Boston, MA). These back-up solicitations minimally involved website posting, message board posting, marketing via email notices, U.S. mail, and electronic newsletter distribution.

Snowball recruitment process. Implementation of the snowball recruitment strategy occurred following primary and back-up recruitment efforts failed to procure 5 to

10 participants. The Walden University IRB approved contact and request to distribute

research solicitation information by the participants already interviewed for this study.

Procedures for Data Collection

The entire interview was the unit of analysis that provided information on

meanings and motivations. In-depth semi-structured interviews with a purposive,

homogenous sample were digitally recorded (audio only), entered into the NVivo data

collection system (QSR International, n.d.), and developed into transcripts that were

analyzed using a methodological structure consistent with the IPA approach, detailed

below.

Interview protocol. IPA aims to try to enter, as far as possible, the psychological

and social world of the study participant (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2003). The

interview with an interpretative phenomenological approach is most concerned with the

production of rich data. The IPA interview protocol loosely prescribes that: 1) there is an

attempt to establish rapport with the study participant, 2) the ordering of questions is less

important, [but still needs to be thoughtful], 3) the interviewer is freer to probe

interesting, study relevant areas that arise, and 4) the interview can follow the study

participant's interests or concerns (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

The semi-structured interview format uses a set of questions to guide, not dictate,

the course of the interview (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher brackets out (using

principles of reflexivity, described previously) their preconceived notions, topic

knowledge, and assumptions to provide complete concentration to what the study

participant says. Smith, 2015 explains, "An IPA researcher should be a curious and naïve listener" (p. 29).

Thus, when study participants opened up novel and interesting areas of inquiry they were pursued. As the experiential expert, the study participant shared in the direction the interview. This form of interviewing reduced the control the investigator had over the situation, took longer to carry out, and was harder to analyze (per Smith 2008; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2003). However, despite the aforementioned deficits, and per Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), semi-structured interviews produced rich data which made the rigor and time commitment of IPA an exceptional choice for exploring the experiential research issues of this study.

Interview schedule. Unlike the structured interviews where the same questions are presented in the same order and only predetermined topics are addressed, IPA engages an interview schedule for which a set of questions guide rather than dictate. The interview schedule flow evolves from elements such as saving sensitive questions for last, knowing a broad range of topics to cover, and a logical topic sequence (Smith, 2015; Smith & Osborn, 2015). The IPA interview schedule makes the researcher think explicitly in advance what they want to cover, and to consider any potential difficulties (e.g., question-wording and sensitive areas) that might be encountered. Advanced preparation helps the researcher be thoroughly and confidently 'present' at the time of the interview, giving full attention and concentration to what the participant is saying (Smith, 2015; Smith & Osborn, 2015).

Smith (2004) recommends using a broader general question to warm up, then questions targeting the topic areas I want to cover, with questions about the most sensitive topic later in the interview schedule. Smith (2004) further recommends preparing prompts and probes for each interview question in case a study participant needs more encouragement or does not understand the question. For use with more hesitant study participants, IPA researchers are encouraged to prepare specific level questions to support better understanding of questions by participants and ease of answering (Smith, 2004).

For this study, the broader area for warm up and to build rapport involved flourishing well-being, including asking "As a bisexual person, talk to me about a flourishing life". Another warm up question related to flourishing well-being was "As a biracial/multiracial person, talk to me about a flourishing life" and "How does being both biracial/multiracial and bisexual influence or contribute to your flourishing life?*"*. More sensitive topic areas of this study were prejudice and discrimination toward identities and questions related to resilience processes (i.e., social support, hope/optimism, emotional openness (Kwon, 2013)). Those topic areas were asked later in the interview.

The researcher in IPA is there to guide and facilitate the interview, not dictate. Study participants going into areas that are unpredicted but pertinent to the topic is perceived a gift in IPA. Unexpected topics pertinent to the study were allowed to be expressed and controlled by the study participant.

Interview platform. The interviews for this research were face-to-face using two-way virtual audio and visual technology platforms, for which only the audio was digitally

recorded. Video-calling, video chat, video conferencing (e.g., Skype, Facetime, What's App, Google Hangouts, and Adobe Connect) that facilitate face-to-face interaction is becoming more acceptable among the research community (Salmons, 2014). Remote and free Internet connections allowed both interviewer and interviewee to choose the location of their interaction so privacy and convenience were optimal. Also, accommodating interviewee time preference, regardless of time zone, was at the interviewee's convenience.

Interview frequency and duration. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) indicate that a single interview may last between 45 and 90 minutes. The small homogenous sample and participant control of interview schedule of IPA studies mean the potential for interviewing participants more than once. A crucial aspect of doing IPA is attending to talk and text in a sustained and detailed way. Employing the interview schedule and probing spontaneously is difficult and demanding and requires considerable skill from the researcher, going off script demands a form of personal engagement which requires confidence and experience.

Interview questions. As prescribed by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), between 6 and 10, open-ended interview questions provide an opportunity for study participants to answer the research questions without including the actual research questions. The nine interview questions of this study were designed to provide an opportunity for participants to reveal the answers to the research questions. For example, though the topic is resilience factors as operationalized (i.e., hope and optimism, social support, and emotional openness) by Kwon (2013), the interview question posed "Tell

me about your flourishing life," with probes such as, "Can you tell me more about that?" or, "What does it take to have [that]?" (see Appendix A for Interview questions). The interview questions of this study were designed to address the broader topics of bisexuality identity, biracial/multiracial identity, compounding effects of intersecting social identities, flourishing well-being, double sexual minority stigmatization, and resilience processes/factors framed affirmatively (i.e., strengths-based).

Each interview started and ended with Consent Form details. The contents of the consent form are detailed in the ethical concerns section below. Each interview was taped using two portable digital recorders. The data from the primary recorder was sent to TranscribeMe, Inc. for creation of the preliminary transcript to create the preliminary[11] transcript. Successful data transfer from the primary recorder instigated the deletion of the data from the back-up digital recorder.

Interview debriefs with participants. After all the interview questions were asked, I offered the participant the opportunity to expand on any of the questions and offer additional information. After that, I described next steps including reviewing the consent form again, confirming sharing of study findings, and preference for receiving compensation (i.e., gift card or cash via U.S. mail).

Organizing and Coding Data

Digital data filed in the NVivo (QSR International, n.d.) system was organized by participant numbered identifier and pseudonym which replaced the actual participant name. The data (i.e., the preliminary transcript) was turned into a semantic record (i.e., including the words spoken by everyone present and nonverbal utterances. [Also see,

Footnote 11]), a transcript within the same file and given a numbered identifier. The transcript was reviewed independently no fewer than three times as prescribed by IPA developers, including 1) immediately following the interview, a review of the transcript occurred to ensure recollection of distinct personal characteristics of the study participant and to ensure over-all familiarity with participant; 2) first review for broad category coding; and 3) second review for sub-theme coding (Smith et al., 2009). Transcript review and coding is detailed below in the Data Analysis Plan section.

Data Collection

Data collection was dialogical with the participant taking a significant role in determining what was said (Smith et al., 2009). IPA requires a semantic record of the interview, meaning a transcript showing all the words spoken by everyone present and nonverbal utterances (e.g., laughter, significant pauses, hesitations, etc.). The IPA approach emphasizes reflexivity. Thus, the sematic record contains nuances with potential to reveal significant messages not conveyed in words. Moustakas (1994) explains, "The reflective-interpretative process includes not only a description of the experience as it appears in consciousness but also an analysis and astute interpretation of the underlying conditions, historically and aesthetically, that account for the experience" (p. 13).

<div align="center">

Data Analysis

</div>

The basic premise behind IPA research is the significance of the account of an experience itself and the meaning it holds with the conveyor. These accounts themselves are the data:

Rich and reflective data can tell us something about people's involvement

in and orientation towards their personal and social world and/or about how

they make sense of this. This requires the investigator to identify, describe,

and understand the key objects of concern in the participant's world and the

experiential claims made by the participant in order to develop a

phenomenological account. (Smith et al., 2009, p. 46)

The interpretative analysis of phenomenological data in IPA is the primary

distinguishing characteristic of the approach. An analytic focus is the essence of IPA,

meaning that analytic attention is directed toward the participant's attempts to make sense

of their experience. Initially, it is the study participant who interprets their experiences

and conveys that interpretation during the interview. Then, following immersion in what

the study participant says, via transcript and audio recording review, the investigator

engages interpretation of the interpretations by the study participant; this is the

engagement of hermeneutic circle (Smith et al., 2009).

The analysis in IPA is an iterative and inductive cycle. It is iterative in that the

analyst moves back and forth through a range of different ways of thinking about the

data. Inductive analysis means the aim is to build or expand theoretical understandings of

lived experience within an underexplored area of investigation, and that before analysis

minimal theoretical knowledge and assumptions are involved (Frost et al., 2014, p. 129).

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) indicated that there is "a healthy flexibility in [process

and principles] of IPA analytic development - from the particular to the shared, from the

descriptive to interpretative, and commitment to understanding the study participant's

view and psychological focus on meaning-making in particular context" (p. 79).

A crucial aspect of doing IPA is attending to talk and text in a sustained and

detailed way. A key tenet of IPA is that the process of analysis is iterative, involving fluid

description and engagement with the interview transcript (Smith et al., 2009, p. 28).

Transcripts of interviews were analyzed case by case, through a systematic, qualitative

analysis, with each case reviewed as a single case study. The small homogenous sample

of IPA studies means, at times, participants engage more than one interview session–this

strategy retains IPA's idiographic emphasis while embedding emerging patterns in a rich

and detailed context (see, Clare, 2002, 2003, who interviewed twelve participants - six

couples - twice, resulting in 48 transcripts).

Transcripts are turned into a narrative account where the researcher's analytic

interpretation is presented in detail and is supported with verbatim extracts from

participants. The step-by-step analysis then proceeds to the description of analytic themes

and their interconnections, taking care always to preserve a link back to the original

account. Analysis continues into the writing-up stage and finishes with a narrative of both

participants' and researcher's meaning-making of the topic under investigation. Ideally,

the final narrative should move between rich description through to abstract and more

conceptual interpretations (i.e., levels of interpretation) (see Eatough & Smith, 2008, p.

14).

Data Analysis Plan

The following steps describe strategies for an iterative and inductive cycle of interpretative phenomenological data analysis (Smith et al., 2009).

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the transcript. Here, line by line analysis of the experiential claims, concerns and understandings of the study participant occurs. Also, listening to the audio occurs here to ensure transcript accuracy (i.e., the preliminary transcript becomes the transcript). The analyst must be grounded in what the study participant actually said, as analysis focus is on the study participant. As the investigator bracketing off my thoughts, perceptions, and recollections of the interview at this stage involved recording them separately from the transcript (e.g., in a notebook or journal). Ideas and possible connections can become interfering noise, and keeping record of them elsewhere ensure first impressions can be recalled while focus remains on the data.

Step 2: Initial noting of data. This step permitted me to produce a comprehensive and detailed set of notes and comments on the data, including semantic content and anything of interest with the transcript. Thus, audio-recording listening for placing semantics occurred again during this step. This step ensures growing familiarity with the transcript and allows identifying ways by which the study participant talks about, understands, and thinks about an issue or phenomenon. According to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), the process of engaging, or -staying as close as possible to the participant's explicit meaning- with the data is as important as the outcome of what is revealed in this step (p. 83).

This step requires attention to language, context, and more abstract concepts to reveal the patterns of key objects of concern to the study participant. Engaging alternately and multiple times with linguistic, descriptive, and conceptual comments ensure the text is examined in detail, allows exploration of different avenues of meaning, and advances a more interpretative level of analysis (Smith et al., 2009).

Step 3: Developing emergent themes. This step involves identification of emergent patterns, called themes, in the order of initial noting found in the transcript (i.e., chronologically). Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) note that the comprehensive exploratory commenting in Step 2 increases the amount of data substantially. However, this larger data set is reduced through mapping interrelationships, connections, and patterns between exploratory notes. At this stage, the whole original interview becomes a set of parts, the first manifestation of engagement of the hermeneutic circle (Smith et al., 2009).

Themes are both grounded and conceptual and speak to the psychological essence of the piece of data of focus. With influence of the whole interview, focus is on capturing what is crucial in the particular piece of text. Emergent themes should feel like they captured and reflected understanding. Themes contain the participant's original words and the analyst's interpretations: it is a "synergistic process of description and interpretation" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 92).

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes. During this step, I developed a dialogue between the coded data and my psychological/theoretical knowledge, which leads to an even more interpretative account. Here, I drew together

emergent themes and mapped a structure that reflects all the most important aspects of the study participant's account. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) offer multiple ways for looking for emergent themes. The most appropriate fit for this research included abstraction, polarization, contextualization, and numeration.

Abstraction is organizing like with like to develop superordinate themes. Polarization implies oppositional relationships among emergent themes; focusing on differences. Contextualization involves looking at contextual or narrative elements for connections among emergent themes, attending to temporal, cultural and narrative themes (i.e., key life event or narrative moments). Lastly, numeration is the frequency with which a theme is supported.

Additional means of identifying emergent themes include subsumption and function. Subsumption is when a superordinate theme brings together a series of related themes, and function means emergent themes can be examined for their specific function within the transcript. Also, organizing themes by their positive and negative presentation may be interpreted beyond what the participant presents in terms of their meaning (Smith et al., 2009). Though abstraction, polarization, contextualization, and numeration might be most appropriate methods of identifying emerging themes in this study, additional approaches could still be incorporated.

Before moving to the next case, Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) suggest the analyst create a graphic representation (e.g., table or figure) of the structure of emergent themes. Development of a structure (a.k.a., frame or gestalt) which illustrates the relationship between themes might involve a simple table that reflects the superordinate

theme, the transcript page and line, and a few key words from the participant. This graphic offers a convenient review of a single case that can be compared with others; I incorporated graphic representations in this research (see Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results).

Step 5: Moving to the next case. Treating the next case and subsequent cases on their own terms just as the first case, and repeating the process described in steps 1 through 4 is a key aspect of IPA methodology. It is not until each case has been individually examined and the rigor of the previous four steps is applied that the researcher can begin to compare each of the cases.

Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases. The graphic representation (i.e., table or figure) for each case are reviewed at once to look for connections across them. In this step, a master table of themes for the entire group of cases is developed in yet another graphic representation; this larger table (or figure) presents connections across the whole. The organization of all this material in a master table should be such that the analyzed data can be traced, systematically and efficiently, through the process (Smith et al., 2009; Smith, 2015).

The analytic process of the interpretative phenomenological approach cannot ever achieve a genuinely first-person account--the account is always constructed by participant and researcher, where the IPA researcher considers social, cultural, and theoretical factors in relational context (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006; Smith et al., 2009). As a form of thematic data analysis, IPA allows: 1) an understanding of what elements of an experience matter to participants through a description of emergent themes, and 2) the

meaning of the experience through interpretative analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2003 in Frost et al., 2014, p. 134). These characteristics make IPA appropriate for experiential research issues involving sexuality.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Traditional research concerns for representativeness, generalizability, validity, and reliability are embedded in quantitative traditions. Quantitative research aims to identify predictable causal relationships replicable in various contexts by counting occurrences, volume, and size of associations between events. Qualitative research is more concerned with meaning than the numerical properties (Smith, 2015).

Qualitative researchers investigate individual differences and contextual variation which necessitates reconceptualizing traditional criteria to evaluate research validity. To justify trustworthy, credible, and valid qualitative research requires clearly conveying that research study processes are sound, the rigor engaged in design and implementation, and the effort yields valuable findings (Wilkinson, 2015; Yardley, 2015). For research using an IPA approach, Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) highlight Yardley's (2000) guidelines to assess validity and quality at all stages of implementation.

Yardley (2015) indicated that good qualitative study characteristics include new topic exploration, new phenomena discovery, analyzing subtle interacting effects of context and time, and engaging with study participants to create new understandings. These characteristics, according to Yardley (2015), also demonstrate the validity of quality research (Yardley, 2000; Yardley, 2015). Using Yardley's (2000, 2015) principles, the next section describes reliability, confirmability, transferability, and

dependability in a quality interpretative phenomenological approach focused on experiential phenomena. At the end of the section, I describe additional methods to enhance the validity of this study

Assessing Validity and Quality in IPA

The quantitative criteria of credibility, generalizability, validity, and reliability are re-conceptualized in IPA. Per Yardley (2000), assessing quality in qualitative research involves four principles: sensitivity in context; commitment to rigor; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance (Smith et al., 2009, pp. 180-183; Yardley, 2000; Yardley, 2015). The following section describes the intent of each quality principle along with how this study addresses each.

Sensitivity in context. Context in qualitative research includes sociocultural location (i.e., culture, history, and time) in which the study is situated, that which is related to existing literature on the topic, and material obtained from study participant accounts (Yardley, 2000; Yardley, 2015). Demonstrating sensitivity in context related to sociocultural location must occur at each stage (i.e., design, data collection, analysis, and write-up) of the study.

Theoretical and empirical literature on the topic across multiple disciplines orients the study and the findings related to relevant literature in the discussion. Thus, using existing literature for comparisons and explanations to support mindful data interpretation meets this quality principle. Sensitivity to perspective and the participants' sociocultural context involves engaging ethically, with empathy, and avoiding a power dynamic. To

meet this principle, during study design, I considered the impact of interview location and created open-ended questions that allow free expression by participant.

At the implementation stage in IPA, the interactional nature of data collection must include sensitivity in context related to skill and empathy and compassion toward rapport-building during the interview. During analysis, applying immersive and disciplined attention to the unfolding account of the participant and demonstrating sensitivity to the raw material being worked represents context sensitivity. In support of the rigors of IPA, demonstrating sensitivity of context, Yardley (2015) proposed, includes the difficulty involved with acquiring the purposive sampling required for IPA.

Commitment to rigor. Rigor implies thoroughness. Yardley (2015) indicated overlap between commitment to rigor and sensitivity in context. Commitment to rigor is shown in the degree of attentiveness to the participant during data collection and in the care taken with analysis of each case. These activities commitment and sensitivity are reciprocal. Showing depth and breadth of analysis conveys validity, thus matching sample selection to the research question requires rigor of design, solicitation, and attainment.

A quality interview is intentionally designed, engaged, recorded, transcribed, and reviewed multiple times in IPA. Completeness of analysis through systematic idiography is a key aspect of IPA and demonstrates rigor. In IPA, there is rigor in balancing closeness but separateness, sensitivity and commitment in recognizing ques for probing or prompting, and moving from description of what is there to interpretation of what it means during analysis.

Transparency and coherence. This quality principle of transparency and coherence starts with how clearly and thoroughly the stages of the research process are described in writing by the researcher. The tenets of IPA must be clearly reflected in narrative and it must be unquestionable that the research was conducted according to key IPA tenets. According to Yardley (2000; 2015), coherence is achieved in the degree of fit of the underlying theoretical assumptions of the IPA approach as well as in the research that is done.

Particularly for this study, the phenomenological (i.e., essence of flourishing well-being) and hermeneutic (i.e., making sense of/interpreting flourishing well-being) components are clearly presented in literature, design, and findings sections. Additionally, transparency and coherence include informing the reader of their own position in this IPA approach; the reader must be told that they impose their perspective on the researcher who is making sense of the study participant's experience (Yardley, 2000; 2015). Another facet of transparency involves researcher reflexivity which I detailed in the Role of Researcher section.

The principle of transparency requires the researcher to explicitly consider ways they influence the study, including background and interest. Reflexive analysis of how this might influence study conclusions must be conveyed in the study write up. For example, my sexuality and racial identities mirror the target sample. These features are addressed at each stage of the study as described in Step 1 of the data analysis plan.

Impact and importance. The final principle of a quality qualitative study which supports validity, is impact and importance, meaning the study presents something

interesting, important, and useful (Yardley, 2000; 2015). The gap in literature about the study sample (i.e., bisexual adults), the phenomena of interest (i.e., flourishing well-being), and an even less explored intersecting identity (i.e., biracial and multiracial identities) is indicative of this study's relevance. Extensive sexuality research exists, though little includes a biracial and multiracial, bisexual target sample, and even less uses a strengths-based perspective; in that this study meets the quality principle of impact and importance.

Theoretical Transferability

Unlike empirical generalizability in quantitative research, there is theoretical transferability in IPA. Immediate claims are bounded by the group studied but an extension to others can be considered by the reader of the report who assesses the evidence about their existing professional and experiential knowledge (Smith et al., 2009). *Theoretical transferability* means similar subsequent studies can be conducted with other groups; thus, gradually, more general claims can be made. However, each study and subsequent general claims are founded on the detailed examination of a set of case studies unique to the originating study (Smith & Osborn 2003). It is in this way that the IPA study is judged for elucidating within this broader context (Smith & Osborn 2003).

Validity

In qualitative research the equivalent of reliability is dependability. More specifically, in the IPA approach, the equivalent of reliability and dependability is validity which is woven throughout Yardley's (2000; 2015) quality principles. The most important thing that an IPA researcher can do to conduct a trustworthy and credible study

is to describe the process behind the study in such detail that others may replicate the work or results. This chapter meets that criteria for this study.

Independent audit. Along with engaging practices aligned with Yardley's quality principles, additional practices to enhance validity of this qualitative study include planning for and engaging an independent audit of data, and comparative coding of data by a second researcher (Smith, 2015). The independent audit (a.k.a., audit trail or paper trail) for a qualitative research study incorporates pre-study, during study, and post-study researcher records. The goal of an independent audit is that the chain of argument and research claims could be followed by another.

Thus, the data from the initial documentation to the final report requires organized filing and maintenance through the span of study inception to completion. As suggested by Yardley (2015) and Yin (2015), the data to maintain includes initial notes on the research question, the research proposal, interview schedule, audio tapes, annotated transcripts, graphic representations of themes, draft reports, and the final report (Yardley, 2015; Yin, 1989; Smith, 2015; Smith et al., 2009). Preparatory steps for an independent audit for this study are detailed in the next section.

To prepare for an independent audit of this research study, documentation and materials (e.g., NVivo software system, researcher reflection and creative-thinking journal, and hard copy transcripts) are maintained in a dedicated locked filing cabinet or on a password protected, external hard drive that is kept in the filing cabinet when not in use. I am the only person with a key to the filing cabinet. Material organization in the filing cabinet and on the hard drive correspond with dissertation chapter development.

As this study progressed, materials organization evolved to ensure an efficient audit. Specifically, a "Research Activities Log" was maintained to reflect pertinent audit details and resources. Materials irrelevant to an independent audit but integral to study implementation will remain organized by dissertation chapters and maintained with all research study inventory.

A validity enhancing preference involved the independent audit performed by a researcher entirely uninvolved with the actual study (Yin, 1989; Yardley, 2015). However, Yardley (2015) indicated that an alternative to a comprehensive independent audit is a mini audit with same materials by a supervisor (i.e., dissertation committee member or members). My dissertation committee members closely monitored all of my activities, including data collection and analysis, throughout the dissertation development process.

Validity in qualitative research can only be conveyed by demonstrating rigor at every stage, then having that rigor meticulously validated. The rigor is required because a limitation of qualitative research includes researcher bias. Thus, assurance that study findings are solely the result of the study participants' responses and not preconceived notions, topic knowledge, and assumptions of the researcher must be intentionally demonstrated.

The preceding sections detail how I intended to ensure the trustworthiness of this research study. Described are process planning, process adherence, and researcher bias disclosure. These elements are specifically represented in the data analysis plan,

application of quality principles as well as throughout this methodology chapter (Yardley, 2015), and the independent audit process (Yin, 1989).

The next section describes the engagement of ethical procedures in this study, including formal requirement adherence (see Sales & Folkman, 2000; Walden IRB, n.d.). Also detailed are less formally proscribed practices (e.g., APA, 2012) to which I perceive obligation. Specifically, the following section details the informed consent process and practices associated with maintaining participant privacy and confidentiality.

Ethical Procedures

Walden University Institutional Review Board ([IRB] Walden University, n.d.) approval is required for this study to be conducted. A completed IRB application is required for approval.

Informed Consent

The study was conducted after gaining permission from Walden University's Institutional Review Board. A completed IRB application was required for approval.

Before collecting data, each individual participating in this study read and signed a consent form to ensure they understand all aspects of the study and what to expect from participating. The consent form was brief and used accessible language so that it was simple to read and easy to understand. An overview of the study, including requirements for participation, was given verbally and in writing (refer to Appendix C: Explanation of Research document). The overview conveyed 60 to 90-minute interviews, $20 compensation for participation, the option to end participation at any time without consequence, and the right to refuse answering any question asked.

Also, in case of distress caused by the interview, participants were given the number to an LGBT hotline that is toll-free, 24/7, and endorsed by the American Psychological Association's Division 44: Society for the Psychological Study of LGBT Issues. Participants were invited to ask any questions or convey any concerns before signing the consent form. The consent form also indicated that the participant may accept or decline receipt of a study results summary. Acceptance allows the researcher to maintain participant contact information until the summary is sent. Declining the summary allows the researcher to discard participant contact information immediately following preliminary transcript development. A one to two-page summary of study results will reflect the three research questions and key findings related to main concepts (i.e., resilience factors, intersectionality, and P.E.R.M.A. factors).

Confidentiality

To maintain the confidentiality of study participants, immediately before interviewing (i.e., data collection) I discontinued using personal identification of participants and assigned a number representing the order in which the participant was interviewed (e.g., P1, P2, etc.); additionally, each participant selected pseudonym. As detailed in the Enhancing Validity section, digital data will be maintained on a password protected external hard drive that is kept in key locked filing cabinet to which only I have a key. Hard copy data uses only coded identification number and is also maintained in the locked filing cabinet. All materials, when not needed, are maintained in the locked cabinet. Researcher location during each interview was a private, secluded, and sound-proof area.

Study participants' location during interview met similar privacy parameters as the researcher but was controlled by the participant due to the Internet-based platform of the interview. IRB approval was required prior to participant recruitment and data collection. The Walden University IRB process included an application verifying participant protections including ethical standards/procedures (Walden IRB, n.d.). Protocol for participant safety and protection were vigilantly implemented.

Along with meeting the research standards of Walden University, the APA Code of Ethics Standards and Guidelines for Practices with LGB Clients (2012) was an additional source of ethical guidance in this study (American Psychological Association, 2012). Markedly, Guideline 5: Psychologists strive to recognize the unique experiences of bisexual individuals (APA, 2012), addresses unique qualities of bisexual individuals including the diversity and complexity of experience of bisexual individuals. I relied on these research standards and guidelines to direct my conduct toward affirmative practices in all aspects of this research.

Summary

Chapter 3 reviewed the focus, significance, and rationale for this study. It discussed the research design and rationale for choosing a qualitative study and more specifically for choosing an interpretative phenomenological analysis over other approaches. Research questions were presented as well as a section on the role of the researcher. Address of personal biases was expressed. Inclusion criteria for the sample as well as the sample size and sampling strategy were discussed in detail.

In this chapter, I discussed the use of interviewing as the form of data collection instrumentation as well as the protocols I use during the data collection procedure. I also covered procedures for recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. In this chapter I covered issues of trustworthiness for qualitative studies, including credibility, theoretical transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Finally, in Chapter 3, I discussed ethical practices and procedures that I followed in the study, including keeping participants' names and data anonymous and utilizing Informed Consent Forms.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the setting of the study, the demographics and attributes of the participants and how data were collected and analyzed, with specific information on codes. Evidence of implementing a quality and validated study is detailed. Finally, in Chapter 4, I address each research question and summarize results of the study. Relevant tables (or figures) are also included in this section.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this IPA study was to explore the adaptive functioning processes flourishing biracial and multiracial, bisexual adults use to develop resiliency toward sociocultural factors promoting chronic stressors. Racially diverse, bisexual individuals with flourishing well-being can help identify attributes associated with lowering reactivity to prejudice. Specifically, the study explores how resilience toward stigma-related prejudice develops, as well as the social and personal influences that sustain or hinder resilience. Deeper knowledge about resilience building in holders of multiple-marginal identities may influence informed stakeholders to develop more effective counseling programs and influence more responsive and affirmative social policies.

The central research question driving this study was How do bisexual, biracial and multiracial people make sense of possible causes for their flourishing well-being? The supporting research questions included:

1. What is the experience of successful adaptive coping with double sexual minority stigmatization in bisexual, biracial or multiracial men and women?

2. What is the experience of resilience with double sexual minority stigmatization in bisexual, biracial and multiracial men and women?

3. How do bisexual, biracial and multiracial men and women flourish in the face of double sexual minority stigmatization?

These phenomena were explored using IPA, a qualitative research method that explores experiential research issues (Smith, 1996; Smith et al., 2009). IPA is appropriate when, as in this study, understanding what elements of an experience matter, the meaning that the experience holds is needed, and understanding perspective in a particular context is important (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2003/2015). In this study, IPA assisted me in exposing of the unique factors relevant to biracial and multiracial, bisexual women and men that influence resilience building that supports achievement and maintenance of flourishing well-being.

Organization of this Chapter

In this chapter, I first describe the data collection setting, the influencing factors of participant responses, and influencing factors of researcher analysis of data. Next are details of participant demography including U.S. regional location, education, and employment field, along with the extent to which the participant sample met the demographic match for study intent. Participants identifiers include a number and a self-chosen pseudonym (e.g., Participant #1: Andy). The number represents the order in which the participant interviewed, and the pseudonym ensures participant privacy.

Following the demographic description, I detail the purpose and use of a researcher's journal. The two sections following participant descriptions address the data collection process and the data analysis process. The former includes details of where and how data were collected and recorded, development of the graphic representations, variations in data collection per Chapter 3, and unusual circumstances encountered during

data collection. The latter section details the process used to move inductively from coded units to larger representations of categories and themes.

Specifically, the process is meticulously representative of the six data analysis plan steps described in Chapter 3. The data analysis process section includes tables, example graphic representations of both individual case and cross-case data, and example quotations from participants to demonstrate codes, categories, and themes along with definitions of the latter. Lastly, this section details qualities of discrepant cases and how they were factored into data analysis.

Following description about the practical activities of data collection and analysis is description to convey the reliability and validity of those activities and activities of the entire study. In this section, each stage of research implementation is described in alignment with Yardley's (2000) quality principle guidelines including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Next, in the results section, master themes are presented and defined then exemplified with participant excerpts and coding features of superordinate themes. The results per research questions follow. Results are comprehensively discussed and presented in relationship to research questions using detailed narrative and graphic representation examples from both individual case and cross-case data. Wrapping up the results section of Chapter 4 is discussion about discrepant cases or cases including nonconfirming data.

The final section of Chapter 4 provides a summary of the chapter and transition information about what to expect in Chapter 5, which details study conclusions.

Specifically, Chapter 5 presents findings (i.e., interpretation) of results, generalizations, limitations; and implications of this dissertation research study.

Data Collection Setting

Two-Way Virtual Audio and Visual Technology

The unit of analysis for this study involved in-depth, semistructured interviews with a purposive, homogenous sample. The interviews for this research were conducted face to face using two-way virtual audio and visual technology platforms, for which only the audio was digitally recorded. Five of the six participants used a video conferencing platform including Skype, Adobe Connect, and Google Hangouts. The Skype platform disruption drag required that one participant and I switch to Google Hangouts platform approximately halfway through the interview. One participant preferred telephone conferencing only, emphasizing concern for privacy and deep distrust for the stated secure connection of most video conferencing platform networks.

For all participants, remote and no-cost connection allowed both interviewer and interviewee to choose the location of their interaction, so that privacy and convenience were optimal. The five participants who used video conferencing appeared to engage the interview in either a home-type room sitting on the floor or at a desk in an office-type room with laptop in front. The location of the sixth participant's engagement is unknown. I conducted all six interviews in my home office while sitting with full body exposure facing the camera and a table on my left side for document placement.

Personal or Organizing Situations that Might Influence Participant Responses

The video conferencing platform, as well as the brief time together, might have potentially decreased the level of rapport building between researcher and interviewee causing less than full disclosure of personal information by interviewee. Positive rapport between researcher and participant generates comfortability in sharing personal information and eases flow of questioning (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Spending more time establishing improved rapport might further improve participant response flow.

Video conferencing platform drag caused inaudible participant dialogue for Participant #1 and Participant #3. This technology issue interrupted interview flow and likely the train of thought for participants as well as missing/inaudible words in transcript. Both circumstances resulted in an interruption of participants' full message delivery.

IPA allows semistructured interviewing so that new but relevant topics brought up by the participant may be explored. In some instances, new interview topics were not returned to by the researcher and these messages are excluded from expression. For example, Participant #5: Lola's (pseudonym) strong concern about security and telephone only interview may have influenced participant her response.

The research topics themselves, interview questions, and IPA semistructured interview format influenced participant responses; some towards suspected outcomes and others without directional clues. The first three circumstances influence bias toward the researcher's desired outcomes, and the latter influences participant freedom to speak of what is important to them, thus the absence of topic bias.

The IPA interview protocol loosely prescribes that (a) there is an attempt to establish rapport with the study participant, (b) the ordering of questions is less important, (c) the interviewer is freer to probe interesting, study-relevant areas that arise, and (d) the interview can follow the study participant's interests or concerns (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The semistructured interview format uses a set of questions to guide, not dictate, the course of the interview (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, in IPA research, the researcher has discretion to pursue or not pursue relevant areas that arise. The interview schedule guides participants' focuses around a broad range of topics predetermined for exploration.

There is some bias favoring researcher-desired outcomes that cannot be avoided in this. Excluding one, interview questions followed the interview schedule of a broad range of topics (e.g., flourishing, affirmation, experiences of prejudice and discrimination, etc.), thus participant responses mostly speak to those topics. A single follow-up interview question invited participants to speak to anything/everything of their choice.

Personal or Organizing Situations that Might Influence Researcher Analysis of Data

Researcher social identities, researcher personal interest/application in topic, and a novice researcher using IPA methodology all might influence the researcher's analysis of data. Foremost, the researcher's social identities that mirror participants' and subsequent personal interest in findings must be acknowledged as a potential influence on data analysis. Being a novice researcher is potentially an influencing situation. For example, per Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), "Breaking up the narrative flow of

interview may make analyst uncomfortable fragmenting participant's experience through reorganization of data" (p. 91). This step did, indeed, negatively influence the expediency of my data analysis. As a novice researcher, separating participants' narrative order generated concern for accuracy of participants' representation. Overcoming discomfort is detailed in the Data Analysis section.

Demographics

Participants of this study were required to be bisexual, biracial or multiracial, cisgender and maintain flourishing well-being. Gender expression–femininity and masculinity–for this study participants could be fluid, and include androgyny. Participants of this study were asked to convey their highest level of education completed, employment status and occupation type, and regional location of residence (i.e., Northeast, Southeast, West, Midwest, or Southwest; see Appendix D for U.S. region make up). The following section lists the details of participant demographics; participant listing is based on the order of interview engagement:

Participant #1 was a 23-year-old male. He identified as having been bisexual for between 5 and 10 years. Having descended from the Ashkenazi Jews, he was of Chinese, Jamaican, and Caucasian descent. He resides in the American Southeast and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education. He is currently a full-time master's degree graduate student assistant. He selected the pseudonym Andy.

Participant #2 was a 28-year-old female. She identified as having been bisexual for between 5 and 10 years. She was of Asian (Chinese) and Caucasian (Dutch) descent. She resides in the American West, holds a Master of Social Work degree, and is a Ph.D.

candidate in the field of social work. She currently works full-time with older adults. She selected the pseudonym Anne.

Participant #3 was a 42-year-old female. She identified as having been bisexual for more than 20 years. Having descended from the Ashkenazi Jews, she was of Haitian American and Caucasian descent. She resides in the American Northeast and holds a Master of Arts degree. She currently works as a full-time public health advisor for the U.S. Federal Government. She selected the pseudonym Angie.

Participant #4 was a 28-year-old female. She identified as having been bisexual for between 5 and 10 years. She was of Asian-Filipino, Eastern European and Italian (Caucasian) descent. She resides in the American West, and holds a Master of Science degree in Psychology and is a Ph.D. candidate in Psychology. She is currently a full-time, paid intern. She selected the pseudonym Clarissa.

Participant #5 was a 32-year-old female. She identified as having been bisexual for between 10 and 15 years. She was of African/Black American, Black Caribbean, Cuban, and Cherokee descent. She resides in the American Southeast and holds an Associate degree in Art. She is currently a full-time office assistant in the event industry. She selected the pseudonym Lola.

Participant #6 was a 55-year-old male. He identified as having been bisexual for more than 20 years. He was of Native American and Caucasian descent. He resides in the American Midwest and holds a Ph.D. in Sociology. He is currently a full-time adjunct professor. He selected the pseudonym Mark.

Extent Sample Matched Recruitment Intention

For this study, all six participants matched the purposive sampling criteria that included being 18–60 years old [23 ($n=1$); 28 ($n=2$); 32 ($n=1$); 42 ($n=1$); 55 ($n=1$)]; English speaking; having bisexual-sexuality identity between 1 to 20+ years [5 to 10 years ($n=3$); 10 to 15 years ($n=1$); 20+ years ($n=2$)]; biracial/dual-racial identity ($n=4$) or multiracial identity ($n=2$); and flourishing well-being. Geographically, participants were scattered throughout the United States: Northeast ($n=1$); Southeast ($n=2$); West ($n=2$); and Midwest ($n=1$).

Another met sample criteria revealed variations on bisexual identity label application. Fluid and queer emerged with particularly important distinctions to the participants conveying them. One participant identified as two-spirit which has implications for both gender expression and bisexual label. The meaningfulness of bisexual identity label distinction to participants is covered in Chapter 5.

Lastly, sample match of recruitment intention is discussed. Along with overall match for all participants, this section conveys two participants with polar issues about phenotype presentation – particularly, Participant #5: Lola (pseudonym) described dark skin prejudice and lived experience of being assumed Black, and Participant #6: Mark (pseudonym) described lived experience of light skin privilege for his White-passing phenotype.

Incorporating the Researcher's Journal

My personal associations with the study topics required vigilant awareness of emergent biases during study design, participant recruitment, data collection, and data

analysis. Bracketing preconceptions, ideas, and possible connections included maintaining a researcher's journal during every stage of the research process. During study design, the journal allowed me to keep track of questions and ideas needing to be researched or worked out. Throughout the interview process I recorded feelings, premature data analyzing or theory connecting, and topics I wished to probe further in my journal. Away from the data I worked through parallels and divergences with my own experiences and experiences among the interviewees.

Most prominently, during data analysis/transcript analysis, journaling supported the reflexivity[12]. IPA necessitates that researchers balance the bracketing of preconceptions and use them as a guide to understanding interpretations (Smith et al., 2009). Keeping a record of ideas and possible connections away from transcripts ensured that my first impressions could be recalled without interfering with immediate data focus.

Researcher conduct and responsibility. During the research process, I maintained sole responsibility for recruiting participants, the collection and analysis of data, and in safeguarding the trustworthiness of data. I am also responsible for proper dissemination of study results. With support from my dissertation committee members ensuring that I made the best possible decisions during the research process, I maintained the highest commitment to ethics, rigor, and sense of humanity.

Data Collection

Data collection was dialogical with each of the six participants taking a significant role in determining what was said (see Smith et al., 2009). Semistructured interviewing in IPA allows exploration of new but relevant topics brought up by the participant. For

example, the semistructured interview format resulted in topic exploration including gender expression, phenotype assumption, and absence of mainstream models for bisexual orientation and biraciality/multiraciality during youth. Interview question response and relevant topic exploration are detailed in the data analysis section.

Location, Frequency, and Duration

Previously noted, data collection via audio/video conferencing platforms granted participant control of interview location. Each of the six participants engaged in one interview session. Interview runtimes were between 70-109-minutes, averaging 83.33 minutes. Interview sessions involved review of the consent form and research process at the start and finish and interview questions.

Data Recording Methods

With the entire interview as the primary unit of analysis, data recording involved taping and transcribing participant words and inserting participant nonverbal utterances (e.g., laughter, significant pauses, hesitations) into the transcript. This comprehensive semantic record transcript becomes the instrument of data analysis. No notes were taken during the interview; thus, the semantic record transcript is the instrument from which data analysis depends.

Each interview was taped on two digital recorders: a primary and back-up recorder. One digital recording file (i.e., the data) of each interview was saved to a password protected external hard drive, listened to through entirety and sent to TranscribeMe, Inc. for creation of the preliminary transcript (see Footnote 11). The backup digital recording of each interview was erased when the primary recording was

saved to the external hard drive and the file on the primary recorder was erased following technical review to create the preliminary transcript.

Transcript edits during the technical review solely incorporated misinterpreted or missing verbiage to reflect verbatim (i.e., precise and literal) alignment with the audio recording. A second technical review incorporated the nonverbal utterances including laughter, significant pauses, hesitations, vocal inflection, sighs, etc. IPA requires a semantic record of the interview, meaning each transcript shows all the words spoken by everyone present and nonverbal utterances of the participant (Smith et al., 2009).

The sematic record contains nuances with potential to reveal significant messages not conveyed in words (also see reflexivity/Footnote 12). Per Moustakas (1994), "The reflective-interpretative process includes not only a description of the experience as it appears in consciousness but also an analysis and astute interpretation of the underlying conditions, historically and aesthetically, that account for the experience" (p. 13). As previously noted, the semantic record is the transcript used for data analysis.

Variations of Data Recording and Unusual Circumstances

Variations of data recording per the methods plan described in Chapter 3 included interview questions and the NVivo (QSR International, n.d.) software program. Unusual circumstances included the interview schedule, video conference platform use and performance, and compensation disbursement. Interview questions were not addressed in order–standard with semi-structured interviews and a perk per IPA creators. However, interview questions followed the interview schedule of a broad range of topics per

Chapter 3 and were addressed by all participants either by direct questioning, pre-designed prompts, or natural emergence related to other topics.

The most prominent and unanticipated variation of the data recording method involved the NVivo Software program. Per Chapter 3 plan, I would load data from the primary recorder into the NVivo software program to create the preliminary transcript. NVivo promotes a direct link with TranscribeMe (TranscribeMe, Inc., Auckland, New Zealand) to receive and produce transcripts. However, flaws with NVivo technology made it more efficient to bypass the NVivo system and work directly with the TranscribeMe vendor for transcript production followed by manually importing transcripts into the NVivo software program. This variation had no effect on data collection or analysis outcomes.

An unusual circumstance included one participant exceeding the proffered 90-minute interview time limit by nineteen minutes. The impact involved greater time commitment and transcription expense; however, there was no impact on data analysis outcomes. The same participant preferred conducting the interview via telephone only.

As previously noted, the participant expressed concern for privacy using video conference networks. One participant accessed two (2) video conferencing platforms during the interview. Low quality streaming with Skype network was too disruptive. Switching to Google Hangouts resolved the issue.

All six participants accepted and preferred cash compensation via U.S. mail. However, one participant requested BiNet USA receive their compensation in contribution to advance sexuality-related advocacy. The detailed variations of data

recording per the Chapter 3 plan and unusual circumstances described above impacted

time and convenience of the researcher and participants. The following data analysis

section reflects consistency among process implementation, input atmosphere, and

participant sharing opportunity.

Data Analysis

The interpretative analysis of phenomenological data is the primary distinguishing

characteristic of the IPA approach. A crucial aspect of doing IPA is attending to talk and

text in a sustained and detailed way. The analysis in IPA is an iterative and inductive

cycle. It is iterative in that the analyst moves back and forth through a range of different

ways of thinking about the data. Inductive means the aim is to build or expand theoretical

understandings of lived experience within an underexplored area of investigation, and

that before analysis minimal theoretical knowledge and assumptions are involved.

Transcripts of interviews were analyzed case by case, through a systematic,

qualitative analysis, with each case reviewed as a single case study. IPA analytic

development, which I followed, goes from the particular to the shared, from the

descriptive to interpretative, with vigilant commitment to understanding the study

participant's view and psychological focus on meaning-making in particular context

(Smith et al., 2009, p. 79).

As a quality assurance measure identified in the data analysis plan, I engaged a

technical review of the preliminary transcript produced by TranscribeMe to ensure

transcription accuracy of each participant's original account. The technical review

involved examination of the externally produced transcript while simultaneously listening

to the audio playback. Edits to transcripts during the technical review solely incorporated misinterpreted or missing verbiage to reflect verbatim, both precise and literal, alignment with the audio recording. The preliminary transcript is used in *Step 1* of the data analysis plan which includes a technical semantic review to develop the semantic record transcript which is used for each of the remaining steps of the data analysis plan detailed in the next section.

The Iterative and Inductive Process Description

IPA creators suggest six steps to data analysis without being entirely proscriptive of step implementation (Smith et al., 2009). I engaged each of the suggested steps presented in Chapter 3 per the data analysis plan including incorporating certain recommended approaches within a step as sub-steps. For example, *Step 1* involves line by line analysis for experiential claims, concerns and understandings of the study participant. I treated each perspective as a sub-step approach, reviewing each transcript in entirety line by line for each sub-step.

Another example of incorporating sub-steps is initial noting in *Step 2, which* involves reviewing participant words while considering language, context, descriptive and abstract concepts, and semantic distinction. Again, I treated each perspective as a sub-step approach, reviewing each transcript in entirety line by line for each sub-step. The incorporation of a sub-step strategy exemplifies the iterative and inductive tenets of IPA and ensures the familiarity with data that required to represent understandings of participant lived experience within an underexplored area of investigation.

I wrote data analysis notes on hard copies of the semantic record transcripts and recorded those notes verbatim in an Excel workbook of the preliminary transcripts that tracked participant keywords to match quotes. I also used the NVivo software program to save a third copy of preliminary transcripts and capture full quotes, embedding the keywords. Lending to research activity transparency for reliability, validity, and potential replication, the implementation date of steps and sub-steps of this iterative and inductive process were recorded on a Research Activities, Data Collection, Data Analysis Log.

The iterative and inductive processes implemented in this research study are detailed in the next section in order of the six (6) steps described in Chapter 3. In this section I describe the process used to move inductively from coded units to larger representations including categories and emergent and superordinate themes. In addition, I use participant quotes to exemplify important categories and themes.

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the transcript. Here, line by line analysis for experiential claims, concerns and understandings of the study participant occurred while listening to the audio recording. Aiming to gain familiarity with key objects and patterns of the study participant, I performed multiple reviews of each transcript after developing the semantic record. During the first transcript reviews at *Step 1*, I performed a technical semantic review to note nonverbal utterances including laughter, sighs, pauses, and vocal inflection in development of the semantic record.

In IPA, semantic record notes are the only notes taken during *Step 1*. Thus, prior to moving to *Step 2*, each transcript received a minimum of six reviews including a technical review of the preliminary transcript for accuracy, the technical semantic review

to develop the semantic record, a review of the semantic record, and three (3) reviews of the full semantic record to satisfy objectives of *Step 1*. Each review occurred with audio playback.

Step 2: Initial noting of data (including semantic content). Similar to *Step 1,* this step involved line by line transcript review with audio. Different from the first step, here multiple lines of participants' words and their semantic qualities were considered together and analyzed. Exploration required only that I stay as close as possible to the participant's explicit meaning. *Step 2* produced exploratory notes and comments about anything of interest to gain perspective about how the participant understands an issue or phenomenon.

In *Step 2*, I reviewed each transcript with and without audio multiple times focusing separately on language, context, abstract concepts, descriptive comments and semantic distinction in exploration of different avenues of meaning for patterns of key objects of concern to the study participant. *Step 2* aims for gaining familiarity of what is important to the participant and the participant's pattern of speak. My exploratory noting reflected alignment with the participant's actual words as required in *Step 2*. In the next section I describe the process for getting closer to the psychological essence of what is most important in the particular piece of text; *Step 3* involved interpretation.

Step 3: Developing themes. With influence of the whole interview, focus at *Step 3* is on capturing what is crucial in the particular piece of text and developing themes. Themes contain both the participant's original words and the analyst's interpretations; condensing data from the previous expansiveness. Themes emerged by mapping

interrelationships, connections, and patterns between exploratory notes of *Step 2* and

additional transcript reading during *Step 3*. At this stage, the whole original interview

becomes a set of parts, the first manifestation of engagement of the hermeneutic circle

(Smith et al., 2009).

Emergent themes noted on the semantic record transcript were transferred to an

Excel worksheet in chronological order for each individual case. Key words (i.e., brief

quoted text from the transcript) were recorded next to themes on the Excel worksheet and

numbered to match the emergent theme. As a check step, I also used the digital transcript

in the NVivo software program for emergent themes coding. Considered across the full

interview, each participant's original words and the analyst's interpretations produce the

emergent themes. Emergent themes coded in *Step 3* become an individual case

superordinate theme in *Step 4*.

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes. In this step, dialogue

was engaged between the coded data (i.e., emergent themes) for each individual case and

the researcher's psychological and theoretical knowledge, leading to a comprehensively

interpretative account that is captured in a graphic illustration. For each individual case, I

identified connections among emergent themes of individual cases using the approaches

detailed in Chapter 3 (i.e., abstraction, polarization, contextualization, and numeration).

Table 1 exemplifies the emergent themes of the most important aspects of Participant

#2: Anne's (pseudonym) account that were drawn together including Social Support Network

(i.e., social support), High Emotional Intelligence (i.e., emotional openness),

Learner/Educator/Activist/Historian (i.e., PERMA factors), and Heteronormativity/Social

Normativity (e.g., intersectionality). Here, interpretation of participant words, coded data of

Step 3, and theoretical and conceptual frameworks-based knowledge of this research study

(i.e., hermeneutic circle) supported category assignment.

Table 1

Sample Coding from Interview Excerpts

Raw Data	Codes	Emergent Theme	Superordinate Theme
P2/Anne stated			
"So, I have a great family who's very supportive in a lot of different areas. I'm very close to them. I have a lot of good friends from very diverse communities and that's kind of important to me too." (Timestamp 6:39)	Close and supportive family and friends Diverse people in my life is important	Social Support in diverse areas and comes from diverse people	Social Support/Social Support Networks
"My current partner, I think, for whatever reason, doesn't really have the same stereotypes of bisexuals and I never really had to educate him on it. I've never really asked him where that came from because to me it's, you're treating me like a person who has the same capacity" (Timestamp 40:47)	No bisexual stereotypes Good partner support Implied: Bad partner support Received respect as person without asking	Social Support: Affirmation Implied: Opposite of Affirmation	High Emotional Intelligence

The emergent theme of Social Support Network included descriptions of

individuals and clusters of people who mirrored, affirmed, and supported Anne's social

identities. For example, Anne said: 1) "So I have a great family who's very supportive in

a lot of different areas. I'm very close to them. I have a lot of good friends from very

diverse communities". Corresponding researcher interpretation and notes for Anne's

statements specified here and repeatedly throughout the transcript included: 1) Close

family and diverse friends (few with exact same IDs as Anne); 2) Mentors: Mom, older

bi-females, and lesbians; 3) Family's raciality address; 4) Partner; and 5) No friends both

biracial and bisexual but many biracial or queer/bisexual, and biracial and queer.

Applying knowledge of theoretical and conceptual frameworks of this study during this

step allowed me to connect Anne's prominent messages with, for example, tenets of

Kwon's (2013) Resilience Factors, specifically social support in relation to the central

research question, "How do biracial and multiracial, bisexual people make sense of

possible causes for their flourishing well-being?"

       Graphic representation. IPA requires a structure (a.k.a., frame or gestalt) which

illustrates the relationship between emergent themes, organized in graphic representation

under a superordinate theme best describing the relationship between emergent themes.

The graphic representation includes the emergent theme descriptor, transcript timestamp

and line number, and key words (i.e., quoted words from transcript). Table 2 provides a

sample and Appendix G offers the comprehensive illustrations of the relationship

between themes for each of the six (6) individual cases.

Table 2

Sample* of Individual Cases Graphic Representations

Superordinate theme/ Emergent theme	**Key Word(s)**
Importance of other people	
Andy: Best allies affirm all intersecting IDs	…ideal ally
Clarissa: Primary priority: keeping connected with close others	future … filled with people that I love and that love me.
Mark: Meaningful relationships with affirmation/compersion	best moments that I've had, have been when I've connected with other two-spirit people about…who we are as native people
Emotional Intelligence/Emotional Openness	
Anne: Emotional intelligence expected of self	have a lot of confidence in myself … my own self-value
Lola: Personal development: Getting organized at home; self-improvement	a transition of trying to get really, really organized… I'm on a self-improvement type of…
Angie*:* Emotional maturity/resilience gained from bi-affirming youth	I was 22, … I had the maturity and wherewithal to face the biphobia
Learner and educator	
Andy: Academic Path allowed ID exploring	allow me to focus on my multiply held IDs
Anne: Research/Working to benefit LGBT Community	do research on older LGBT individuals
Clarissa: Altruistic academic interests with similar IDs	
	dissertation was on biracial, bisexual women
Optimism, [Hope], Future	
Clarissa: Future: vocation led by altruism and supporting similar IDs	I'd like to teach classes on diversity, counseling skills, social justice, advocacy, potentially prevention work
Mark: Really, really happy, things going well all areas of life	I'm happy with where I live. I'm happy with who I'm involved with. I'm happy with my family. I've got a great bunch of friends.
Societal Norms/Heteronormativity and Racism	
Angie: Racial mixing is healthier	good for our genes to mix it up … and for things to not get stagnant
Mark: White-passing-light skin privilege-cis/hetero/white/male	I have light skin privilege. I'm male. I'm relatively well spoken
Life with "Privileges"	
Clarissa: Heteronormative-Passing: DSMS minimal	as somebody who is a cis woman and someone who can pass for straight and I also currently have a male partner, I think I also have a kind of passing privilege

.

Individual cases: Emergent themes and superordinate themes. The superordinate themes consistent across all participants makes up and are subsequently detailed in association with the cross-case graphic representation. The following section reflects individual case themes that did not emerge across cases. (Reminder: participant names used in this study are self-selected pseudonyms).

Participant #1: Andy emphasized the importance to him of gender expression exploration. He expands beyond the sexuality and racial identities by expressing that they contribute to his awareness of gender expression, particularly that he is intentionally exploring or considering the fit of masculinity as an applicable description. Andy commented:

> "…in checkboxes I still say I am a man. And I would use cisgender to describe myself... Acknowledging that I am perceived as more feminine in the gay community has forced me to be aware of how I act and am perceived as a man in other contexts. Because I think most men [perceive me] submissive, particularly in the gay community". But the interplay of race and my sexual identity now forced me to question gender and it is going to be an important thing to think about."

Participant #2: Anne is a historian of the bisexual movement, and said about the relevance of the feminist movement:

> And I think having that sense of history of where the distancing between bisexual and lesbian women comes from gives me a better understanding of why it's there. And it lets me know that that distancing serves a purpose at one point… it's not a random impact, it's not a random thing that happened, it served a very specific

purpose for women in the past and it makes me more understanding when I face it today.

Participant #3: Angie spoke about U.S. political culture related to the immediate past and current presidential administration. She related the comparison to what her young children are exposed. Angie also spoke about the current administration presenting as anti-diversity; and though it was awful as is, the conversations about diversity are very much out in the open.

Participant #4: Clarissa consistently acknowledged hers as a life with privilege; that she experienced a lot of resources which buffered her from extreme forms of discrimination compared to others. She also conveyed embracing her own vulnerability and intentionally extending self-compassion; that many experience prejudices and that the problem is within the systems we inhabit.

Participant #5: Lola maintained a passionate perspective about multiracial invisibility, particularly that mainstream stance on multiracial identity is that 'mixed' solely means White and Black. Thus, racial ambiguity equates to many assumptions, but phenotype representation further defines definitively. She emphasized the need to comprehensively educate the distinction of Race vs. Ethnicity and further define exactly what is mixed race.

Participant #6: Mark conveyed gender expression exploration related to the Native American community's two-spirit people (i.e., intersex, androgynous, feminine males and masculine females held in high respect):

So, for me, that's probably one of the next areas of real exploration for me, is fully

embracing, not just my two-spirit identity, that I've had, but what does that mean in

terms of being gender fluid in a more nuanced, more appreciative sort of way.

Mark acknowledged that some of his most fulfilling experiences involve

connecting with other two-spirit individuals: "I don't know if I would have ever been,

what in my people would have been thought of as a Winkte, a person with special

medicine. But I have to think that on some level that that's going on." Mark also

conveyed awareness for real danger in discrimination: "… and I know this is true for

women and people of color in other circumstances, is that you always have to be aware.

You can't ever let your guard down completely."

The proceeding section reflects superordinate individual case themes that did not

emerge across all six cases. The superordinate themes developed from connections of

individual cases in *Step 4* are used to illustrate the relationship between the emergent

themes across all cases in *Step 6*. It is *Step 5,* the next step that allows moving to the next

and subsequent individual case examination.

Step 5: Moving to the next case. Each case was individually examined per *Steps*

1-4 and the rigor of those steps applied to each case. Veering from the original plan, I did

not immediately create the graphic representation of the 1st case--nor subsequent cases--

until all six cases were analyzed through the chronological organization of emergent

themes. Instead, for each case, I recorded (i.e., copied and pasted) emergent themes and

key words on an Excel worksheet separate from my original digital working space.

Next, I digitally reorganized themes by distributing them across columns with preliminary superordinate descriptors. From there I developed more accurate superordinate themes and the actual graphic representation (i.e., keywords, timestamp, and transcript line; refer to Appendix F) for the first then subsequent individual case(s). My reluctance to fragment the data is addressed by IPA creators.

IPA creators describe the analyst experiencing discomfort toward reorganizing the data at *Step 4;* they write, "Because the process of developing emergent themes involves breaking up the narrative flow of the interview, the analyst may feel uncomfortable seeming to fragment the participant's experience" (Smith et al., 2009, p.91). Resolving my discomfort required that I create a separate working space to disarrange the chronological order of identified emergent themes. The solution occurred to me after much contemplation following emergent themes connections of the sixth and final semantic record transcript.

As stated, following development of the preliminary superordinate descriptors worksheet for the first case (i.e., Participant #1: Andy), I completed the graphic representation for that case before moving to the next case (i.e., Participant #2: Anne) and subsequent cases. Each graphic representation includes examples of 3 or 4 emergent themes assigned to a superordinate theme and key words or an abbreviated participant quote with transcript location reference including timestamp and transcript line number. As a reminder, emergent themes were identified via abstraction, polarization, contextualization, and numeration.

Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases. It is at this step that I compared each of the cases. Using the graphic representation for each case, connections were evaluated and turned into a master table of themes. During this step I printed out and placed side by side each of the six individual case graphic representations. Simultaneously I viewed each graphic to compare data across all six illustrations.

Again, at this step I applied abstraction and numeration, and considered polarization and contextualization of themes to explore all possible meanings of a theme and arrive at the most important and consistent themes among participants. Appendix H provides the comprehensive cross-case graphic representation--the master table of theme connections across the entire group of cases. The organization of the master table includes the higher-order concept, superordinate theme, participant quote, and transcript timestamp and text line numbers of quote location. The results section includes additional details about *Step 6* coding along with descriptions, definitions, and participant excerpts contributing to the cross-case graphic representation (see Table 3 in the Results section for a list of the higher-order concepts and superordinate themes).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The quantitative criteria of credibility, generalizability, validity, and reliability are re-conceptualized in IPA. Qualitative research is more concerned with meaning than the numerical properties of quantitative research (Smith, 2015). To justify trustworthy, credible, and valid qualitative research requires clearly conveying that research study processes are sound, the rigor engaged in design and implementation, and the effort yields valuable findings (Wilkinson, 2015; Yardley, 2015). Assessing quality in this

qualitative research study involves four principles per Yardley (2000): sensitivity in context; commitment to rigor; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance (Smith et al., 2009, pp. 180-183; Yardley, 2000; Yardley, 2015).

Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, Confirmability

  Sensitivity in context. Context in qualitative research includes sociocultural location (i.e., culture, history, and time) in which the study is situated, that which is related to existing literature on the topic, and material obtained from study participant accounts (Yardley, 2000; Yardley, 2015). Demonstrating sensitivity in context related to sociocultural location occurred at each stage (i.e., design, data collection, analysis, and write-up) of the study.

  Theoretical and empirical literature on the topic across multiple disciplines orients the study and the findings related to relevant literature in the discussion. This study demonstrates the use of existing literature for comparisons and explanations in support of mindful data interpretation. Sensitivity to perspective and the sociocultural context of participants involved engaging ethically, with empathy, and avoiding a power dynamic. To meet this principle, during study design I considered the impact of interview location and created open-ended questions that allowed free expression by participants.

  During the implementation stage, the interactional nature of data collection included sensitivity in context related to skill and empathy and compassion in rapport-building during the interview. During analysis, I applied immersive and disciplined attention to the unfolding account of the participant, demonstrating sensitivity to the raw material represented context sensitivity. Further demonstrating sensitivity in context, the

difficulty involved with acquiring the purposive sampling for this study also demonstrates the rigors of IPA (Yardley, 2015).

Commitment to rigor. Rigor implies thoroughness. Yardley (2015) indicated overlap between commitment to rigor and sensitivity in context. Commitment to rigor is shown in the degree of attentiveness to the participant during data collection and the care taken with analysis of each case. Both of these characteristics are detailed in the data collection and data analysis process sections.

Transparency and coherence. This quality principle of transparency and coherence starts with how clearly and thoroughly the stages of the research process are described in writing by the researcher. Additionally, transparency and coherence include informing the reader of their own position in this IPA approach; the reader must be told that they impose their perspective on the researcher making sense of the study participants' experiences (Yardley, 2000; 2015 [See the Introduction section in Chapter 5 for message to reader]). Another facet of transparency involves researcher reflexivity at each stage of the study which I detailed in the Incorporating the "Researcher's Journal" section.

According to Yardley (2000; 2015), coherence is achieved in the degree of fit of the underlying theoretical assumptions of the IPA approach as well as in the research that is done. Particularly for this study, the phenomenological (i.e., essence of flourishing well-being) and hermeneutic (i.e., making sense of/interpreting flourishing well-being) components were clearly presented in the literature, design and findings sections. For example, related to intersectionality, findings reflect that participants demonstrated

resiliencies achieved and maintained for having social identities (i.e., biraciality or multiraciality and bisexual sexual orientation) outside dominant social/societal norms and experiencing racism and DSMS.

Resiliencies (i.e., successful adaptive functioning) included contribution to others that generated feeling a sense of purpose and a sense of accomplishment for having met set goals, thus manifesting flourishing well-being. Notably, DSMS appeared to be buffered or bypassed because of participants' racism-related resiliencies cultivated in early life. The absence of stigma-related stress/distress allowed bisexual sexuality orientation expression and subsequent acknowledgement as a facet of participants' flourishing life.

Impact and importance. The final principle of a quality qualitative study which supports validity is impact and importance, meaning the study presents something interesting, important, and useful (Yardley, 2000; 2015). This study is relevant because existing literature that includes bisexual adults is sparse. Literature including individuals with bisexual sexuality orientation who are biracial or multiracial is rare. Further, this research study is important because it is a strengths-based sexuality research study, but the biracial and multiracial, bisexual adult sample are two significantly underrepresented identities in sexuality research, thus elevating importance.

This study provides deeper knowledge about resilience-building in holders of multiple-marginal identities, including attributes associated with lowering reactivity to prejudice. The racially diverse, bisexual individuals of this study with flourishing well-

being provided insight about how resilience toward stigma-related prejudice develops, and the social and personal influences that sustain or hinder resilience.

Theoretical Transferability

Theoretical transferability means similar subsequent studies can be conducted with other groups, thus, gradually, more general claims can be made. However, each study and subsequent general claims are founded on the detailed examination of a set of case studies unique to the originating study (Smith & Osborn 2003). It is in this way that the IPA study is judged for elucidating within this broader context (Smith & Osborn 2003).

Immediate claims are bounded by the group studied but an extension to others can be considered by the reader of the report who assesses the evidence about their existing professional and experiential knowledge (Smith et al., 2009). For example, the purposive sample of biracial and multiracial, bisexual adults here might be extended in future research to single race, non-white individuals, or biracial and multiracial lesbian women and gay men.

Validity

In qualitative research the equivalent of reliability is dependability. In IPA approach, more specifically, the equivalent of reliability and dependability is validity which is woven throughout Yardley's (2000; 2015) quality principles. The most important thing that an IPA researcher can do to conduct a trustworthy and credible study is describe the process behind the study in such detail that others may replicate the work or results. For this study, methodology details in Chapter 3 and the implementation steps

described in the data collection and analysis process sections of Chapter 4 meet the validity criteria.

Independent audit. Along with engaging practices aligned with Yardley's quality principles, additional practices to enhance validity of this qualitative study include planning for and engaging an independent audit of data (Smith, 2015). The independent audit (a.k.a., audit trail or paper trail) for a qualitative research study incorporates pre-study, during study, and post-study researcher records. The goal of an independent audit is that the chain of argument and research claims could be followed by another.

To prepare for an independent audit of this research study, I maintained a digital Research Activities Log that tracked records of data collection and analysis activities steps along with participant recruitment and interaction activities. To maintain privacy and confidentiality, no identifiers in this log provide connection to participant identities. Hard copy documentation and materials, including screening and consent forms, transcripts, and Researcher's Journal are maintained in a dedicated locked filing cabinet.

Digital documentation and materials, including audio files, digital transcripts, Research Activities Log, data analysis excel workbooks, and the NVivo software system are maintained on a password protected, external hard drive. Hard copy materials and the external hard drive are kept in a locked filing cabinet. Both hard copy and digital materials will be maintained for five-years as required by Walden University research records maintenance and management requirements.

Results of Data Analysis

This study explored the adaptive functioning processes flourishing biracial and multiracial, bisexual adults use to develop resiliency toward sociocultural factors promoting chronic stressors. The racially diverse, bisexual individuals of this study demonstrated attributes associated with lowering reactivity to prejudice to have flourishing well-being. Specifically, how resilience toward stigma-related prejudice develops, and the social and personal influences that sustain or hinder resilience. IPA advanced the effort to better understand the meaning of these contingent, unique, cultural and subjective phenomena.

IPA advances exploration of existential matters that have transformative qualities (i.e., "bringing change and demanding reflection and (re)interpretation") for the individuals concerned (Eatough & Smith, 2008, p. 12). Reflection, interpretation and re-interpretation are characteristics consistent with exposing successful adaptive coping which leads to resiliencies of marginalizing experiences. Resilience is inherently *inferential* because it means that protection--successful adaptive functioning--is present in the face of stress. The biracial and multiracial, bisexual adult participants of this study demonstrated adaptive functioning processes in the development of resiliency to achieve a good life and experience flourishing well-being.

The following sections describes, defines, and examples codes, emergent themes, superordinate themes, and higher-order concepts of data analysis for this study. Using participant quotes and leading with higher-order concepts, I define the cross-case superordinate themes developed from the superordinate themes of the six individual

cases. This section includes addressing the central and subsequent research questions using participant quotes related to sexuality and biracial or multiracial identity, both separately or combined.

Higher-Order Concepts and Superordinate Concepts

Six higher-order concepts emerged from 19 superordinate themes through the data analysis process of this research study. These concepts and themes represent the consistencies of the small homogenous sample related to flourishing lives and experiences of and overcoming racial and sexuality-related stigma. Table 3 provides a list of concepts and themes that is followed by descriptions and participant excerpts that exemplify the concept and theme.

Table 3

Higher-Order Concepts and Superordinate Themes

Higher-Order Concepts: Focus on:	Superordinate Themes
Social Support	Affirmation for and validation about identities Belonging/group membership Commonality in identity, interests or values; Sameness

Emotional Openness	Emotional Intelligence
	Academic/Educational pursuits related to dual identity
	    exploration and understanding; Service to others
	Altruistic concern for the well-being of others with same and/or
	    other marginalized IDs
	"Okay-ness" with same and different sex attractions despite
	    known social disapproval for homosexuality
	Role of Social Supports in [Emotional] Processing Practices

Hope and Optimism	Focus towards future: Plans, goals for the future; kids Positive Attributions/Appraisals Motivation behind goal pursuit; Positive expectations

Intersecting Social Identities	Expanded Worldview beyond so-called social norms
	Social/Societal "Norms": Racism (phenotype);
	    Sexism/Heteronormativity
	Biracial ID/Multiracial ID led to openness toward bisexuality as
	    a natural option
	Double Sexual Minority Stigmatization

Meaningful Life	Activism focus on like others & all other minorities,
	    marginalized
	In the service of others-related academic pursuits and
	    work/employment (Note overlap with Emotional Openness
	    concept superordinate theme: Emotional Intelligence)
	Altruistic concern for the well-being of others with same and/or
	    other marginalized IDs (Note overlap with Emotional
	    Openness concept)

Accomplishments	Academic Credentials; Academic Research to fill gaps; Activism gap

Focus on social support. Across participants, social support represented relationships with other people and the characteristics or qualities most important about those relationships. Genuine/authentic relationships with other people -individuals and groups- emerged as the priority theme across all participants related to their flourishing life/well-being (i.e., when asked "what makes yours a good life"). Each participant of this study conveyed that meaningful connection with others contributed to their flourishing well-being (reminder: names used in this study for participants are self-selected pseudonyms):

Andy: "faculty members that I look up to specifically bring up opportunities for me to integrate both of those identities."

Ann: "affirmations definitely come from many different places, depending on their racial or sexual identity."

Angie: "I had my parents as kind of a living example of the truth of attraction being something that can exist outside of the confines that a society might try to place upon it, I already had this idea that race isn't de facto a factor in attraction, despite the fact that I was born in the 70s."

Clarissa: "I've moved around because of graduate school and it's just been nice to feel supported and cared for and loved for who I am in all of these different parts of the country."

Lola: "And the only time I actually kind of felt that way was, like this, I think it's called Afro-Latino [inaudible] website or something with that name in it - and the response I got was like, 'Well, if that's what you are, then that's what you are, and if you

are embracing it late, that's fine. You can't take away from what's in your blood. That's your heritage.'"

Mark: "[Name deleted] and I started talking, we found out that we, personally, individually, had far more in common with each other than either of us sometimes had with him with the gay male community, me with the bi men's community."

The superordinate themes of the higher-order concept social support included identity affirmation, identity commonality or sameness, and a sense of belonging. Each theme is defined and exampled by participant excerpt.

Affirmation for and validation about identities. I coded for affirmation and validation statements that conveyed the message or a sense that exactly who you are, as you are is comprehensively embraced. Participants of this study described affirmation and validation for sexuality and racial identities important to their flourishing well-being. Notable and counter to affirmation, all participants described life experiences involving racism and DSMS; awareness for rejection based on social identity. Clarissa reflects on the meaningfulness and impact of people offering/providing identity affirmation counter to a discriminatory experience:

> …I feel like even if our identities aren't the same, they will, they understand. And if I tell them something that happened, they'll be like, "That's so fucked up. I can't believe that happened. Like What a pig" - they will be there. They will validate my experience. I think that that's been - I think that above all else is what has helped, is just really my support systems that I've created.

Andy describes the impact of validation garnered through music speaking to his personal experience:

> So, I listen to these artists, particularly Asian artists, some of which are Asian or not American [inaudible] English. And a lot of them talk about navigating a world in which, particularly for Asian-American people, a fish out of water identity or acknowledging that as an Asian person or as just a darker-skinned individual walks into a room in which you may or may not be the only Asian person or the only darker-skinned person and that translates those emotions into language and music that I can understand has really informed the last couple of years how I sort of navigate my own life. Because it gives me a specific - they create scenes in their music that are easily accessible and describe what I'm feeling, even if I didn't have the language beforehand.

Belonging/group membership: Cultural heritage, formal and informal social groups. I coded belonging affiliated with larger clusters of people including familial group based on cultural heritage identity, sexuality community description, socializing activities, and engagement in organized activism groups. Anne describes how her cultural heritage means she has historical roots worldwide both practically and metaphysically:

> …[I've] done some kind of informal interviewing with all of my grandparents to find out about my historical roots and that's been a really wonderful experience…I guess it makes me feel like I have roots all over the world and that's something that makes you feel like you're connected to the world. And I don't consider myself a good Buddhist in formal terms, but I do resonate with the idea that we're all

somehow connected as a human race, and I think it gives me a more tangible link

to that.

Angie conveys deep connectedness and belongingness because of the bisexual

community she cultivated intentionally:

I've been fortunate enough to find and develop a bisexual community around

myself so I don't have that feeling of isolation and loneliness that I hear other

bisexual folks talking about. I mean, I say fortunate, but I've also worked hard at

developing that community as well because I feel like it's necessary.

Mark speaks of a bisexual community that is less personally connected yet

maintains a reliable solidarity promising protection and support to members if threatened

by others:

And I quickly found the other bisexuals that were in my social group, and I

wouldn't say that that became my social group, but we always were aware of each

other. There was enough of us that it was something where, if anyone of us had

gotten challenged, there would be a whole bunch of people to back them up.

Commonality in identities, interests or values; Sameness. I coded for the

superordinate theme of commonality in identities, interests or values descriptions of

relationships with other bisexual people, racial minorities – particularly biracial or

multiracial minorities and those with identical raciality. Anne explained how she and her

siblings enjoy a closeness as adults where awareness of the uniqueness of their biracial

identity was not there as youth:

One really nice thing about getting older, and becoming adults together, is that my

siblings and I are going to be able to have these conversations that we never had

as children. And I think they also… realize that our biracial identity is more

complex than they realized as kids.

Angie spoke of the bisexual community she was able to choose after intentionally

attending a high school rumored for being bi-people dominated:

"I was 17 when I went to college. I was able to come out into a community that I

had a lot of things in common with."

Focus on emotional openness. Across participants, emotional openness

represented both emotional acceptance and appraisal of emotions related to sexuality

identity. However, participants consistently conveyed *Emotional Intelligence* and

Emotional Maturity. Appraisal of emotions and emotional acceptance seem an

unconscious characteristic of participant functioning. For which, appear initiated

intentionally and garnered via example by parents then further cultivated by other family

members, mentors, or social support relationships throughout the participants' early life

experiences.

Andy: "that translates those emotions into language and music that I can

understand has really informed the last couple of years how I sort of navigate my own

life."

Anne: "And so now I do research that I feel really contributes to a community and

will not only make people's lives better but will make my life better."

Angie: "What is the need of the largest segment, and what do we need to do to get those people healthy, and well, and thriving, and protected from discrimination?"

Clarissa: "My sister and I talk about this [biracial identity] all the time."

Lola: "'Okay. I kind of have a piece of me figured out.' Then it's like, okay. This is what I am, but where is everybody else [laughter]? And where are they because I didn't know."

Mark: "I wasn't buying into the, sort of, all American boy myth. And then, when I began to understand my two-spirit identity better, I don't know if I would have ever been, what in my people would have been thought of as a Winkte, a person with special medicine. But I have to think that on some level that that's going on."

Five (5) superordinate themes emerged from statements demonstrating participant capacity of emotional intelligence and emotional maturity. The themes include: Emotional Intelligence; Academic/Educational pursuits allowing exploration toward greater understanding own dual identities that also target serving others; Altruistic concern for the well-being of others with same and/or other marginalized identities; "Okay-ness" with bisexuality despite known social disapproval for homosexuality; and Role of Social Supports in [Emotional] Processing Practices. Each of these themes is described and exemplified using participant quotes.

Emotional Intelligence. I coded for emotional intelligence statements that conveyed honesty about emotions and feelings paired with expressions of insight about feelings (i.e., appraisal) and incorporation of that insight to expanded personal practices.

Andy conveys awareness of deeper meaning drawn from life experiences and how that knowledge supported a flourishing life tract:

> But once I sort of started to unpack all of those things [racial and sexual identities], everything else sort of fell into line. I made friends. I met people who shared these other racial-ethnic identities like myself, maybe not my sexual identity. But those experiences helped me sort of share my sexual identity. They helped me integrate those identities together so those are still my - and I still sort of have regular contacts with either people I met in college or people I met during my graduate year, who then, also, sort of continue to support me.

Clarissa conveys the same awareness and deeper perspective: "So, I feel like we can handle complexity because of that and we can handle just dynamic nature of a lot of things even beyond race."

Academic/Educational pursuits related to dual identity exploration and understanding and service to others. Nearly all participants spoke of formal or intentional academic or educational pursuits to better understand their sexuality orientation and raciality. Further, each used their education to advance others' knowledge as well. Four participants have doctoral program experience and each comfortably speak of understanding themselves better and sharing lessons with others like them. Mark is a teacher and also provides supports to his local LGBTQ community: "I provide support for the local bi support group that meets at our LGBTQ community center. Yeah. I teach class in LGBTQ studies."

Anne does research to advance address of disparities of the LGBTQ community which includes herself: "And so now I do research that I feel really contributes to a community and will not only make people's lives better but will make my life better."

Altruistic concern for the well-being of others with same and/or other marginalized IDs. Altruism is the principle and moral practice of concern for happiness of other human beings. Altruistic concern for the well-being of others and the altruistic motivation behind actions and behaviors emerged from all six participants.

Lola describes her indignance regarding other people like her: "The only reason I'm mad is because even though it's not affecting me personally, it's affecting my demographic."

Clarissa conveys and demonstrates commitment to helping others including all social minorities:

> Doing things that I think help other people is really important to me, so all of my work is focused on helping others pretty much…a bunch of other kind of projects but they're usually around these kinds of intersections of race, gender, gender sexual orientation.

Angie, who recognizes that the bisexual faction in the LGBTQ community is the largest of all, expresses concern about getting that faction healthy and away from discrimination by heterosexual and lesbian and gay individuals: "What is the need of the largest segment, and what do we need to do to get those people healthy, and well, and thriving, and protected from discrimination?"

"Okay-ness" with same and different sex attractions despite known social

disapproval for homosexuality. Each participant answered the interview question "Tell

me about a time when you experienced prejudice or discrimination for being

biracial/multiracial or bisexual, or both?" Each participant provided examples for

identities separated and together. Yet each persevered, particularly to pursue their

bisexuality sexuality, when receiving messages of social disapproval about same-sex

relationships early in life. Lola speaks to the conflicting external and internal messages,

along with the necessity of being true to intuitions and values:

> And now, I'm kind of like - it's more of a need-to-know basis. And if I feel like I'm
>
> really close to you or if I feel like you - if I'm close to you, but you have negative
>
> outlook towards it [bisexuality or homosexuality], I won't disclose… I think it's just
>
> the people who matter the most to me should know. And even then, if it's going to
>
> flip their whole world apart, I'm really not going to try.

Mark also speaks to the conflicting external and internal messages during

sexuality discovery and questions the inconsistency: "[I] discovered in adolescence,

that here I was, attracted to guys and to girls, and I could talk about one of those

things, but not the other."

Role of Social Supports in [Emotional] Processing Practices. Coding this theme

included statements conveying processing issues with those whom participants have

relationships and demonstration of how to engage emotional processing. Andy describes

how his friend group supported his emotional and mental health: "The majority of my

friend group knew of sexual and gender identity and whatever form. So that sort of social scene [was] a major player in my sort of mental and emotional health."

Angie speaks of how her different race parents demonstrated and modeled racial pride and educated her on ancestral ability to thrive and produce culture, and art: "How did they [parents] instill that? Well, I mean, they themselves are proud of who they are, and they're both successful people, and they both highly value education."

Focus on hope and optimism. Coding was based on crossover of positive emotion/positive outlook on life and the presence of goals, dreams, and aspiration for the future involves aspects of well-being.

Andy: "The future looks pretty good, beginning that I'm getting a master's degree in December. I have figured out the work-life balance."

Anne: "I feel like plans for the future usually come in the form of academic forms and research agendas."

Angie: "It will never cross their [offspring] minds that families don't come in all shapes and sizes when it comes to gender or race. So that's pretty cool. I'm excited for them about that. I look forward to seeing what they do with that."

Clarissa: "I know that this isn't a problem with myself. That it's more of the systems in which we inhabit."

Lola: "I'm going to have to probably take a lot more business classes. It's not like it really interests me that much, but it's necessary to kind of move you forward."

Mark: "[There] isn't really an urban native community where I am. I have to go places in order to make that happen. I want to do something about that, and in particular, I want to reestablish connections to other native two-spirit people."

Superordinate themes included Focus towards Future: Plans, Goals for the future, kids; Positive Attributions/Positive Appraisals; and Motivation behind goal pursuit/Positive expectations. Each of these themes are described and exampled using participant quotes.

Focus towards future: Plans, goals for the future, kids. Coding statements conveyed attributes of looking forward and features participants know, want, and will strive for in their future. Anne and other participants focused on academic-related goals: "I feel like plans for the future usually come in the form of academic forms and research agendas."

Angie focused on her life with her children and their future: "I have my kids. They are my world, and so just my plans for the future with family is just watching them grow and helping them on their journey."

Positive attributions/appraisals. An individual's generation of more positive appraisals of stressful events, less self-blame and more positive attributions in discriminatory situations, and increased feelings of empowerment were coded for this superordinate theme. The characteristics included decreased reactivity to prejudice. For example, Clarissa commented about protective privileges and personal strengths-traits shielding her from institutional discrimination that could have been much worse:

I really recognize that without all of the privilege that I've had in my life it'd be much different and potentially more difficult as someone who's bisexual and biracial. So, I feel like I should definitely recognize that. I think with that, in terms of flourishing, I just think that I've just had lots of I guess personal characteristics that helps me to feel like I'm good at something that I'm passionate about, that I can move to multiple cities and find community and find things that I like doing, and then to do well in things that are pretty hard. So, I think that just the kind of character that I have, which I think has been influenced by lots of people in my life and lots of things, I think that has also been a big part of my flourishing.

Lola conveyed awareness for others misfortune and extending compassion, while describing behaviors to buffer prejudice against her bisexual identity:

There's someone going through worse things than you're going through. There are people who they can't see you in a sense, so it's harder for them to be outright prejudiced against you being bi without you really just telling them. So, if I don't tell you, you don't really know. And you can't go out there and just try to hurt me because of that thing. So, in a way, I protect myself by choosing who I'm going to tell it to… I was like, "Well, most of my family already knows. So what damage are you going to do?"

Motivation behind goal pursuit/Positive expectations. Coding for this superordinate theme reflects participant adamancy for acting to affect their future. Lola recognizes that the greater good of her future requires engagement in coursework she's not necessarily interested in: "I'm going to have to probably take a lot more business

classes. It's not like it really interests me that much, but it's necessary to kind of move you forward."

Mark conveyed the importance of returning to the native community where he left behind meaningful relationships for which he feels a deep absence:

Back in the 90s, I served on the board of the Minnesota American Indian AIDS Task Force. So, I was working in the Twin Cities with one of the only organizations that was doing anything about HIV in the native community for native people, so yeah. That was tough work, but a lot of really good people that I've ended up missing because I moved away, so I want to do something about that.

Focus on intersecting social identities. Statements that convey the influence of marginalized identities both separate and compounding as well as positive and negative were coded for this higher order concept.

Andy: "Makes me more often aware to think about how I do gender. So, I am more aware of talking over people perceived as women, what we refer to as man-spreading or just simply taking up space."

Anne: "I think of marriage very much as a social and controlling institution at this point."

Angie: "Because I was biracial, being bisexual made a lot of sense."

Clarissa: "I think that both identities have lent knowledge to each other… So yeah, I feel like the intersections have really allowed me to be to give myself more space, more compassion, more room to kind of explore who I am back and forth."

Lola: "When it comes to mixed people I would like to see more centering on people who do not necessarily fit the phenotype of what you're used to seeing."

Mark: "[I've] run into straight people who thought that I was—bisexual was interesting, but that just meant I was gay. And I would occasionally run into, usually, gay men, who were not accepting of the idea of a bisexual identity."

Four superordinate themes emerged including, Expanded Worldview beyond so-called social norms because of intersecting identities; Social/Societal "Norms": Racism (phenotype), Sexism, Heteronormativity; Biracial identity/Multiracial identity led to openness toward bisexuality as a natural Option; and Double Sexual Minority Stigmatization (i.e., rejection/stereotyping by both lesbian and gay, and heterosexual individuals/communities).

Expanded Worldview beyond so-called social norms b/c of Intersecting IDs. Statements conveying support for both marginalized social identities were coded for this superordinate theme. Each of the six (6) participants reflected a strong grasp for social justice in general, and the macro-level institutional discrimination. However, each participant also conveyed the uniqueness and pleasure of being asked to address the intersections of their identities. Andy expanded beyond the sexuality and racial identities by expressing that they contributed to his awareness of gender expression: "But the interplay of race and my sexual identity now forced me to question gender and it is going to be an important thing to think about."

For people with similar identities, Clarissa extended a message of affirmation and encouragement to pursue a sense of wholeness, and discouraged compartmentalizing to fit into a heteronormative and racist culture:

Pearls of wisdom to other people who might inhabit these identities as well for them to have a flourishing life, I think that's something I'd like to share ... I think just … for other people who identify this way to encourage them in whatever way makes their life flourish. I guess my suggestions would be to find people, or things, or places that make them feel whole. That they don't have to compartmentalize themselves in order to fit in. Or that they don't have to ignore pieces of who they are to fit in with certain people or communities or whatever.

Social/Societal "norms". I coded statements for this superordinate theme related to Racism (phenotype), Sexism, and Heteronormativity. Two participants spoke distinctly of the importance of phenotype and overt racism including Lola who described harsh discrimination for having dark skin: "This one is a bit tricky because as far as having a multiracial identity, I identify that, but I'm not recognized by that because I have dark skin."

Mark focused on literature of his youth messaging social disapproval around homosexuality: "I found books that talked about homosexuality, and oh, if you came out, if you acknowledge this, your parents were going to disown you, and your life would change for the worst, and there would be social disapproval, and all of this."

Andy recognized the discrimination he experienced simply for not being of the social norm: "Just targeted for being different."

Anne disparages the institution of marriage: "I think of marriage very much as a social and controlling institution at this point."

Biracial ID/Multiracial ID led to openness toward bisexuality as a natural Option. The coding for this superordinate theme involves statements about the effects of the intersection of sexuality and raciality. For example, Anne, Angie, Clarissa, and Mark convey that lived experience of biracial and multiracial identity contributed to positive appraisal for another and other sexuality option(s):

Anne: "The more I process my biracial identity the more it helps me process my sexuality…they kind of go hand in hand."

Angie: "Because I was biracial, being bisexual made a lot of sense."

Clarissa: "Helpful in kind of exploring my sexuality, and feeling like I don't have to stay in kind of one box or another."

Mark: "But as a biracial person, I've found myself making friends and developing relationships with people, romantic relationships, intimate relationships, across a range of racial identities, and sexual orientations."

Double sexual minority stigmatization. I coded for this concept statements related to rejection or stereotyping by both lesbian and gay, and heterosexual individuals and communities. Each participant conveyed experiencing prejudice and discrimination from both heterosexual and lesbian and gay individuals. Angie describes that biphobia was worse from lesbian and gay individuals than heterosexual people she encountered: "It's possible that the heterosexual people that I have spent time with, maybe they just aren't as brazen as gay and lesbian people are about saying biphobic things in front of me."

Clarissa conveys anti-bisexual messages from lesbians and heterosexual men: "From the self-identified lesbians, in terms of like, 'Oh well, you're not really this,' or 'I don't really believe you.' And then the other side of things, like from the straight men, mostly white, would be like, 'Oh, that's not real.'"

The compounding effects of identities intersecting at sexuality orientation and ethnicity was demonstrated by all participants. In addition, the two male participants (i.e., Andy, 26 and Mark, 55 years of age) of the study spontaneously described gender as a compounding factor, and both expressed the exploratory stages of their considerations.

Focus on meaningful life. Coded statements for this higher order theme conveyed purpose and contribution in the spirit of positive psychology; particularly the PERMA factors used to operationalize flourishing well-being.

Andy: "I've learned to take my own negative experiences and frame them in a way that [inaudible] sort of grounding point or a point for people who simply don't get it."

Anne: "I do research on older LGBT individuals."

Angie: "A large and vocal group of bisexual activists. And so, once I kind of connected with them, I was able to be part of their association."

Clarissa: "Doing things that I think help other people is really important to me, so all of my work is focused on helping others pretty much."

Lola: "And then, we can go from there and have a dialog. And maybe we can kind of - if we can't fix you, we can [laughter] at least educate you some so that you can get help on your own when you feel like you're ready if you feel like you need it."

Mark: "With BiNet USA as a national co-coordinator after that."

The two superordinate themes of the meaningful life higher-order concept include Activism with focus on like others and other minorities (i.e., those marginalized) and In the Service of Others: related to academic pursuits and work/employment. Coding for meaningful life focused on the sense of purpose generated by actions and behaviors of contribution.

Activism focus on like others and all other minorities/those marginalized. Statements and semantics coded for this superordinate theme is how 'in the service of others' has a reciprocal impact on living a life of purpose. Lola speaks to why activism for her was important: "It feels like you're doing something. You are not just sitting at home, just letting things happen around you and you feel like a certain task is getting done."

Mark acknowledged his direct involvement with influencing policy and commented on positions of leadership and long-term activism for the bisexual movement:

> But we got the bill passed, and I went on from there to get involved with BiNet USA as a national co-coordinator after that. And then in the end of the 90s, I went off to graduate school, so. But yeah. So, there was pretty much a 15-year period in there where I was deep in the thick of being a bisexual activist.

In the service of others-related academic pursuits and work/employment. In service of others is a consistent characteristic across each study participant in describing their flourishing life. This superordinate theme overlaps with the higher-order concept Focus on Emotional Openness by representing actions and behaviors where the former

represents motivating intuitions. Andy is a paid research assistant doing research that focuses on minorities: "Now I'm a full-time researcher doing work related to minority individuals. And in a lot of ways that work is a reflection of myself, but I also perceive my academic identity and my personal identity more as a helping profession to support."

Clarissa is pursuing a doctoral degree and the target sample is biracial, bisexual women: "So, my dissertation was on biracial, bisexual women, and just hopefully seeing - and it was qualitative - just basically trying to show that identity formation models, the historic ones, are just really insufficient."

Focus on accomplishments. This higher-order theme has one superordinate theme which overlaps with the higher-order theme Hope and Optimism. Different here, the emphasis is on either met or in process of meeting academic and activism goals. Andy: "So I'm in a PhD program and I know sort of what my expectations are to begin with, right? It's to do as much research as high quality as I can, publish [inaudible], and just generally build a good and successful relationship with my adviser and other researchers. So, although there are miniature goals [inaudible] get this [thing?], launch this new study. I know exactly what I'm getting into in terms of long-term goals for the next several years."

Anne: "[I am] doing a dissertation on older bisexual women."

Angie: "The national LGBT organizations are not really taking a long view…but it seems like our place [bisexual people] in the queue keeps getting pushed back, and in this kind of regressive political environment, I'm just thinking ahead."

Clarissa: "I'd like to teach classes on diversity, counseling skills, social justice, advocacy, potentially prevention work."

Lola: "I would like to go to the school of the Arts Institute of Chicago."

Mark: "I think I want to do more research on bisexual erasure."

Academic Credentials; Academic Research to fill gaps; Activism gap. Coded statements for this superordinate theme involve aspirations for the future related to academic pursuits and activism targets. Andy, Anne, Clarissa, and Mark target social justice pursuits in the world of academia:

Andy: "[I] decided to pursue psychology full-time. So, I'm now in a Ph.D. program."

Anne: "[I am] doing a dissertation on older bisexual women.

Clarissa: "I'd like to teach classes on diversity, counseling skills, social justice, advocacy, potentially prevention work."

Mark: "I think I want to do more research on bisexual erasure."

Angie concentrates on the policy agendas of LGBT organizations: "The national LGBT organizations are not really taking a long view, and are either not cognizant of the magnitude and scope of the bisexual population, or that they just don't care for whatever reason."

Lola targets academics in the field of arts for personal fulfillment: "I would like to go to the school the Arts Institute of Chicago."

Discrepant Cases

One participant of this study potentially qualifies for being recognized as a discrepant case. Lola presented a sort of waning flourishing well-being and perspective of a flourishing life different than the other five participants. However, analysis of her case presented meaningful information and perspective, and is incorporated into analysis no differently than the other five cases. The discrepancies involving Lola and other outlier data are detailed in the Discrepant Cases/Non-Confirming Data section.

Results: Addressing Research Questions

The following section demonstrates how study results address the central and supporting research questions of this study. Participant excerpts exemplify their unique interpretation or demonstration of how resilience toward stigma-related prejudice develops, and the social and personal influences that sustain or hinder resilience. This section concludes with discussion about discrepant cases and cases including non-confirming data. Thus, outlier information is also addressed in relationship to research questions, study-guiding frameworks, and existing literature.

Central Research Question: How do biracial and multiracial, bisexual people make sense of possible causes for their flourishing well-being?

Distinctly, the participants of this study demonstrate flourishing and resilience as they integrate their biracial/multiracial and bisexual identities toward positively compounding outcomes. The central research question of this study is addressed across all higher-order concepts and the superordinate themes that led to the higher-order concepts. Both the higher-order concepts and superordinate themes are presented in the

following section and discussed with participant's own words to demonstrate applicability.

Focus on social support. Across all participants, the response to the first and second interview questions, "(#1) As a bisexual person and (#2) As a biracial or multiracial person—in as much detail as possible—talk to me about a flourishing life," included descriptions of relationships with other people. Relationships with family members, spouse or partner, children, friends, colleague allies, and a sense of community/group membership were consistently mentioned first among all six (6) participants when conveying what makes theirs a good life.

Participants conveyed the importance of both racial and sexuality identities being separately and collectively valued, affirmed, and welcomed. Enthusiasm increased but was not required for identities to be mirrored or reflected in all the people of their social support network, as long as in each participant's life, at least one person or group membership mirrored or reflected either racial or sexuality identity.

Participants described affirmation and validation for sexuality and racial identities important to their flourishing well-being. Clarissa described her partner and friends as persons who embrace universal diversity and her family as cultivators of her emotional and intellectual acceptance of her multiracial identity:

I think the biggest thing that stands out to me is just my relationships. So, my relationship with my partner, my friendships that I've cultivated and maintained throughout the years and then of course with my family as well. I think that's just the biggest piece, I think. I've moved around because of graduate school and it's

just been nice to continue to feel supported and cared for and loved for who I am in all of these different parts of the country. And that's I think has been the biggest part of how I see my life flourishing, and I think I'm most proud of that as well.

Commonality in interests or values was important in relationships with other bisexual people and racial minorities—particularly biracial or multiracial minorities and those with identical raciality. For example, Andy, descended from the Ashkenazi Jews and of Chinese, Jamaican, and Caucasian descent, described the importance to his well-being the expansion of bisexual friends and people who support sexuality, gender and racial diversity. He conveyed during his interview the importance of his diverse friend group following an Asian-artist band and spontaneously and unknowingly providing identity affirmation:

> So, to have many of my friends, before I say anything, criticize a set list or a touring band, to be like, "Okay. Their music is just okay. Why are there no women in this band? Why is everyone white? Why is everyone straight?" So, to hear them [inaudible] is really affirming because I don't necessarily have to mention that those things are important, it just sort of happens. So, I would say those two things certainly help to support me and affirm both of those identities at the same time.

All participants described the meaningfulness of affiliation with larger clusters of people including familial group based on cultural heritage identity, sexuality communities, socializing activities, and engagement in organized activism groups. Anne conveys deep importance of understanding, having more knowledge about, and connecting to familial cultural history:

I've also kind of traced my own family history a lot and done some kind of informal interviewing with all of my grandparents to find out about my historical roots and that's been a really wonderful experience. I guess it makes me feel like I have roots all over the world and that's something that makes you feel like you're connected to the world.

Angie described the pride involved with learning about and knowing about multiple generations of familial roots: "So, growing up, I always heard stories about my grandparents, my great-grandparents, my great-great-great-great grandfather, who was a rabbi, and so I guess they just have always instilled a love of learning about cultures, including their own cultures, and yeah."

Focus on emotional openness. All participants consistently conveyed *Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Maturity* as an intuitively core characteristic. Cultivated by parents, other family members, mentors, or social support relationships throughout their life experiences, participants described emotional insight about stigma distress in the absence of stress. Participants conveyed honesty about emotions and feelings paired with expressions of insight about feelings and incorporation of that insight to expanded personal practices. Clarissa conveys insight to applying life lessons of working through racism and narrow perceptions of her multiracial identity to "handle" the dynamic nature of other life surprises:

And I think that she [sister], as someone who's Asian but looks White in her end and as someone who's Asian and can maybe a pass for full Asian depending upon some things, I think she and I can really talk about these experiences and realize

how fluid it is. And I feel like that's been a really big strength. I feel like-- though there's been experiences that don't feel good, I feel like I can understand uncertainty or kind of, yeah, the gray areas in between things and especially intersections. So, I feel like we can handle complexity because of that and we can handle just dynamic nature of a lot of things even beyond race.

With much formal academic experience in his life, it was music written and performed by bands mirroring Andy's biraciality and sexuality that provided him language to describe his feelings and direction that fit his values and interests:

> … or acknowledging that as an Asian person or as just a darker-skinned individual walks into a room in which you may or may not be the only Asian person or the only darker-skinned person and that translates those emotions into language and music that I can understand has really informed the last couple of years how I sort of navigate my own life. Because it gives me a specific - they create scenes in their music that are easily accessible and describe what I'm feeling, even if I didn't have the language beforehand.

Angie experienced biphobia for the first time after graduating college and moving to a large city. Because of attending a high school with a large out bisexual community and a college which campus she described as a "bi-bubble", Angie possessed a firmly intact resilience to sexuality stigma: "So, I think I had the maturity and wherewithal to face the biphobia that I was experiencing from the larger LGBT population."

Five (5) participants spoke of choosing and engaging formal or intentional academic or educational pursuits to better understand their sexuality orientation and

raciality. Each use that education to advance and support other's knowledge as well. Andy, Anne, Angie, Clarissa, and Mark apply their education as activists, teachers, or research assistants. Here, Andy describes intentionally switching majors to explore his multiple social identities:

> And about halfway through my undergraduate career, I decided to become a psychology major. And I luckily finished with both majors, but following that [inaudible] and decided to pursue psychology full-time. So, I'm now in a Ph.D. program. And I think, incidentally, one of the reasons why I [inaudible] because that [inaudible] so much broader, it did allow me to focus specifically on my sort of multiply held identities.

This trait of altruism emerged from all six (6) participants in varying ways that Anne and others extend their academic research to support marginalized populations: "And so now I do research that I feel really contributes to a community and will not only make people's lives better but will make my life better." Lola, though not experiencing discrimination herself, expresses emotion for those of her demographic that do: "The only reason I'm mad is because even though it's not affecting me personally, it's affecting my demographic." Mark recognizes the limited perspective about two-spirit people and the rigor involved with expanding awareness: "So, two-spirit people like myself have had to work really hard to re-educate people about our own past, about who we are, our own culture."

Each participant answered the interview question: "Tell me about a time when you experienced prejudice or discrimination for being biracial/multiracial or bisexual, or

both? Each participant provided examples for identities separated and together. Each persevered, particularly to pursue their bisexuality sexuality, when receiving messages of social disapproval about same-sex relationships early in life. Angie's parents were a different race couple – her mother is an Ashkenazi Jew, and her family is from Poland and Ukraine while her father is an immigrant from Haiti. With parents as living examples, Angie determined unacceptable the societal confines of who should and shouldn't be together based on race and gender:

> I had my parents as kind of a living example of the truth of attraction being something that can exist outside of the confines that a society might try to place upon it, I already had this idea that race isn't de facto a factor in attraction, despite the fact that I was born in the 70s.

> Angie further stated: "Because I was biracial, being bisexual made a lot of sense".

Processing issues and personal problems with those who participants have relationships with was an important theme across all participants. Family members, spouses or partners, and friends were acknowledged as important cultivators of emotional openness in participants. Andy indicated that fellow college students also with racial-ethnic minority identities contributed to his intentional pursuit of racial-ethnic identity:

> I went to a small liberal arts college which, as you probably know, is by-and-large full of white people [laughter]. But there I met a number of other racial-ethnic minorities, particularly African-American individuals, who really pushed me to sort of discover and unpack [my racial-ethnic] identity.

Angie indicated that her parents demonstrated pride in who they are by being historians about their families' cultures and instilling in her a love of learning about her own familial roots and other cultures: "How did they [parents] instill that [cultural and self-pride]? Well, I mean, they themselves are proud of who they are, and they're both successful people, and they both highly value education."

Clarissa spoke about the meaningful discussions with her siblings involving experiences related to their multiraciality:

My sister and I talk about this [raciality/racism] all the time. She and I, we have the same parents but she looks very different. My phenotype, … but I feel like I look sometimes more mixed or more Asian and my sister, [name deleted], is very white passing. And so we talk about that a lot on how people read us differently and say different things around us.

Mark conveyed that his parents contributed to his perspective, positionality, and activism related to equality:

I mean, I think my attitude was - and this was probably instilled in me by my parents when I was very young - I had a very strong attitude of, "Well, if you can't treat people fairly regardless of what their skin color is or what their sexual orientation is, then you're probably not somebody that I want to spend a lot of time with anyway."

Focus on Hope and Optimism. All participants described goals for the future. Positive expectations for the future involving goals, dreams, and aspiration for the future represented an aspect of well-being for study participants. Five participants described

additional formal education and the sixth focused on making a wonderful life for herself and kids. Four of the five academics plan to do additional research to benefit marginalized populations, including Andy, who said:

> The future looks pretty good, beginning that I'm getting a master's degree in December. I have figured out the work-life balance…I recognize that sexual and gender minorities and racial and ethnic minorities, in general, are marginalized or however you want to talk about it. And that acknowledgment, as well as in my personal life, gives me a sense of urgency with my work and with my life. And that urgency helps propel me onward.

> Participants' messages conveyed more positive appraisals of stressful events, less self-blame and more positive attributions related to discriminatory situations in addition to feelings of empowerment. Andy speaks of biphobic men and conveys an understanding toward their struggle to reconcile their masculinity:

> And I acknowledge that I almost exclusively experienced those sorts of micro-aggressions in the context of other men. So, I've never gotten those comments from a cisgender, or a transgender, or any sort of female-identifying individual. And in a lot of ways, that sort of helps because it certainly comes off as a-- in an individual who hasn't unpacked their masculinity. So that [inaudible] comes across as sort of racist and sort of bi-negative, it's other people.

Mark describes taking discrimination in stride and is more than content with important aspects of his life:

Whenever I've run across any sort of prejudice or discrimination, my general response is, "Oh, you're funny [laughter]." So, between the family that I grew up with, relationships that I've had, and the relationships that I'm in, I find myself happy. Yeah. This is sort of an interesting place to start, because I'm going, "How am I doing? I'm doing good. I'm doing good [laughter]." I've got a - how do you say it? I'm happy with where I live. I'm happy with who I'm involved with. I'm happy with my family. I've got a great bunch of friends. Yeah. So, the things that one might normally think of, or at least I think of about these things, it's pretty good.

Conveying goals for the future involved conveying the inspiration behind goal setting and striving toward goal achievement. Nearly all participants demonstrated a resounding belief in agency to achieve a desired future. Clarissa exudes confidence as she describes the desire to return to and live in a diversity rich city including close relationships and welcoming strangers:

I'm trying to get back to the San Francisco Bay Area. That's where I grew up. It's where my family is.… No one even stops to think of 'is she Asian or is she white', because there's just so many mixed people there that it's a non-issue. It's also such, to me, this gay Mecca.

Focus on intersecting social identities. Intersectionality theory articulates that individuals occupy multiple structural positions that locate their experience, knowledge, choices, and practices in particular histories and in specific relationship to dominant culture's understanding of what is real, normal, acceptable, and even possible (Cole,

2009; Crenshaw, 1989; IOM, 2011; Lorde, 1984/2007; NIH, 2016; Rich, 1980; Tolman & Diamond, 2014a).

Distinction for how participants make sense of possible causes for their flourishing well-being involved the integration of the two primary identities of this study: biracial or multiracial and bisexual sexuality. Participants described the influence of and their experience related to marginalized identities both separately and compounding. This influence is further discussed in the supporting research questions sections.

Having distinctly marginalized social identities, each of the six (6) participants reflected a strong grasp for structural prejudice and discrimination; that U.S. "society is stratified (i.e., divided and unequal) in significant and far-reaching ways along social group lines that include race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012, p. xx), and social justice. For example, Anne reflects on experiencing exoticization in her youth and perceiving, at the time, that her unique biraciality "made her special". As an adult she recognized the pervasive structural racism underpinning exoticization, then discerned that embracing diversity - and expanding beyond socially normative notions on race and sexuality – offers the more universally enriching experience:

> People thought I was interesting, they thought I was worth getting to know because having a biracial identity was really rare where I grew up. So, I grew up thinking, "this actually makes me special [laughter]." …now I kind of look back on it and I think of it similarly to a bi-sexual identity, where I think going both ways, in a sense, opens up this experience to be more diverse, and more culturally rich.

Anne's reference to phenotype is indicative of the basis for all participant's resilience-building (i.e., successful adaptive functioning)—first toward racism, then later toward the stigma experienced for bisexual sexuality orientation. Phenotype is the set of observable characteristics of an individual resulting from the interaction of its genotype (i.e., the genetic constitution of an individual) with the environment. Lola spoke of phenotype, racism, and discrimination:

> As far as having a multiracial identity, I identify that, but I'm not recognized by that because I have dark skin. And so, yes. And I have found that in spaces where there are biracial, multiracial safe spaces, if I'm there, I'm always assumed to not be a part of that.

Both different and similar to Lola's experience, Mark acknowledged dilemma for light skin privilege:

> I have light skin privilege. I'm male. I'm relatively well spoken…I find myself having to say, "Well, no. I'm not like you," in that, I'm not all White. I may have light skin privilege. Sure. Okay. But, yeah, which is interesting too, because when you have light skin privilege, but you're not white, people say all sorts of interesting things to you, that they wouldn't necessarily say if they knew. Yeah.

Clarissa commented about privilege with awareness and compassion for the severe discrimination minorities, like her and different than her, experience:

> [The] socioeconomic privilege that I have and a lot of the other privileges that I have, I think I've been pretty buffered against kind of more severe discrimination. Not to minimize my own experiences, but I just want to put it out there that I think

there's been a lot of reasons why my experiences have looked the way that they do, but there's been things.

The concept of intersectionality *allows* fluid sexuality (i.e., bisexuality) expression and offers a replacement for artificial binary positions/perspectives (e.g., heteronormativity) (Eliason & Elia, 2011). Angie demonstrated how her intersecting identities were formed in the presence of others, and were influenced by time and place, and were constantly shifting, leading to her flourishing well-being:

And so, coming out [as bisexual] was pretty smooth for me. Because I was biracial, being bisexual made a lot of sense. And one thing that I noticed once I started coming out to other people was when I came out to biracial people, even biracial people who were heterosexual, or who were monosexual, I should say, they were like, "Oh, yeah. That makes sense." It was no big deal. When I came out to people who were monoracial, if they were bisexual, then cool, but if they were not bisexual then it was like, "Oh, that's a thing?" and then, "We have to think about it." So, it seemed like the monoracial people were stuck in kind of a monosexual mindset whereas biracial people, regardless of their sexuality, seem to get my bisexuality because they're like, "Okay, what else is going on with you [laughter]?"

Similarly, Clarissa said:

I think that both identities have lent knowledge to each other. I think that race is something that I thought of a lot earlier…And then I feel like that was really helpful in kind of exploring my sexuality, and feeling like I don't have to stay in kind of one box or another and that there's a third box, or now I'm feeling like there's

multiple boxes [laughter], or maybe no boxes at all… But I feel like it's been really helpful in kind of making sense of each, and feeling comfortable and grounded that I don't need to be one or another thing but can be a third, which is, I think, a completely different experience but still encapsulating of the original two.

DSMS is experiences of rejection, stereotyping, and prejudice by both lesbian and gay, and heterosexual individuals/communities toward bisexual participants. Each study participant described anti-bisexual experiences as well as racism. Participants addressed DSMS related to coping and resilience building, in that bad things happened requiring coping, so adaptive coping could occur and resilience to bad things could manifest. Angie conveyed experiences of an intimate partnership that demonstrates how resilience-building occurred and is subsequently maintained; she conveyed empowerment, agency, and emotional intelligence:

The positives did not outweigh the negatives of having to deal with this person's biphobia. And I felt like she was on this quest to have me convince her that it's okay for me to call myself bi, and I just ran out of patience with that being my job. It wasn't really my job to begin with. So, ended that one, and then my next kind of major long-term relationship, I was with someone for over seven years and she was very, very supportive of the bi community. She also did not identify as bi, she identified as lesbian, but by then I was very focused on weeding out the biphobes. I was not having it anymore. I had had several years of dealing with either dating casually or being in that one relationship with my ex-girlfriend. And I was like,

"Nope. That's not my job anymore. If you haven't done your work, then there's nothing for me to do here."

Focus on meaningful life. Each study participant conveyed engaging in activities to bolster others experiencing social disadvantage and devalued social capital. Nearly all participants described these endeavors occurring across their past, present, and future on an individual, group and political action level. Thus, for and on behalf of stigmatized like-others and any marginalized others, purpose and contribution emerged through descriptions of advocacy via academic pursuits, volunteer education, group activism, and employment choices across each participant's life span. Anne described involvement in activism: "The more I get involved in activism, the more I feel like I have a voice to speak back to bisexual stereotypes."

Angie said her activism contributed to a healthy bisexual identity:

And in that large city, it took me a little bit of time to find it, but there was a large and vocal group of bisexual activists. And so, once I kind of connected with them, I was able to be part of their association and put on Pride events and other community events that kind of kept things moving forward in my development of a healthy bisexual identity.

Study participants also conveyed how 'in the service of others' has a reciprocal impact on living a life of purpose. The practical engagement of altruistic tendencies and the moral tendency toward altruism I considered separate and distinct characteristics from practical contributions that make a meaningful life. Still, it is altruistic concern for the well-being of others which influences action, but is not the action/engagement resulting

in practical contribution. The practical contribution leads to feeling one has a purpose, and therefore, a life of meaning. Andy, Anne, Clarissa, and Mark commented on academic-related engagement that involves like-others and diverse others. Marks also spoke of supporting a bisexual community group. Andy and Anne conveyed the reciprocity of their paid research efforts:

Andy: "Now I'm a full-time researcher doing work related to minority individuals."

Anne: "And so now I do research that I feel really contributes to a community and will not only make people's lives better but will make my life better."

Clarissa: "[My] dissertation was on biracial, bisexual women."

Mark: "I provide support for the local bi support group that meets at our LGBTQ community center. Yeah. I teach class in LGBTQ studies."

Focus on accomplishments. In the spirit of positive psychology, flourishing well-being includes achieved or currently working toward important life accomplishments, specifically involving setting goals, met goals or actively striving to meet goals. Participant emphasis is on academic and activism goals. Participants described aspirations for the future related to academic pursuits, social justice activism, and gaps in activist's group agendas:

Andy: "[I] decided to pursue psychology full-time. So, I'm now in a PhD program. And I think, incidentally, one of the reasons why I did this because that field is so much broader, it did allow me to focus specifically on my sort of multiply held identities."

Anne: "Well, being a student, I feel like plans for the future usually come in the form of academic forms and research agendas. So that's what readily comes to mind. So, I'm doing a dissertation on older bisexual women and doing interviews are kind of the goal of figuring out where strength comes from especially for women who were born during more challenging historical moments, and how they came to identify as bisexual anyway."

Angie: "And whether that's marriage, adoption rights, issues relating to health benefits at work, all those millions of things that do impact bisexual people, but I don't know. I just always had this feeling like they've got bigger fish to fry and that the national LGBT organizations are not really taking a long view, and are either not cognizant of the magnitude and scope of the bisexual population, or that they just don't care for whatever reason."

Clarissa: "I'd like to teach classes on diversity, counseling skills, social justice, advocacy, potentially prevention work."

Lola: "I would like to go to the school the Arts Institute of Chicago."

Mark: "I think I want to do more research on bisexual erasure."

The preceding section reflects study results addressing the central research question of this research study. Study participants conveyed six (6) consistent concepts of "*How biracial and multiracial, bisexual people make sense of possible causes for their flourishing well-being.*" Social support, emotional openness, hope and optimism, [integrated and gratitude for] intersecting social identities, meaningful life [of purpose], and [past, present, and future] accomplishments emerged as factors to acquiring and maintaining a flourishing life.

Next, I address the supporting research questions (RQ) of this study. Supporting RQs #1 and #2, coping with and building resilience toward DSMS, focuses on experiences related to participants' bisexual sexuality orientation. RQ #3, flourishing in the face of DSMS, reveals that participants' biracial or multiracial identity/lived experience is not separate and distinct from their bisexual sexuality orientation, but integral to maintaining flourishing well-being when facing DSMS.

Research Question 1: What is the experience of coping with double sexual minority stigmatization in bisexual, biracial or multiracial men and women?

DSMS involves rejection – prejudice and discrimination – by both homosexual and heterosexual individuals/communities (Barker et al., 2012; Herek, 2000; Ochs, 1996; Roberts et al., 2015; Rust, 2000a; Rust, 2000b). DSMS is unique to individuals with bisexual sexual orientation. Each of the six (6) study participants described experiencing anti-bisexual prejudice and discrimination:

Andy: "But I think that my physical violence has largely stemmed from [not being] straight, not necessarily being bi-sexual. And then a good chunk of my verbal harassment, as I got older, was certainly related to bisexuality not really existing, basically."

Anne: "Thinking of bisexual women is kind of … being a traitor in a sense, of not being fully invested in gay rights, because you have the privilege to have a boyfriend at the same time."

Angie: "It's possible that the heterosexual people that I have spent time with, maybe they just aren't as brazen as gay and lesbian people are about saying biphobic things in front of me."

Clarissa: "From the self-identified lesbians, in terms of like, 'Oh well, you're not really this,' or 'I don't really believe you.' And then the other side of things, like from the straight men, mostly white, would be like, 'Oh, that's not real.'"

Lola: "[I] f you don't want to turn away lesbians and scare them off, just say that you're queer."

Mark: "[I have] run into straight people who thought that I was - bisexual was interesting, but that just meant I was gay. And I would occasionally run into, usually, gay men, who were not accepting of the idea of a bisexual identity."

On coping with DSMS. Basic coping refers to the effort put into a response to stress, the effort to defend - not necessarily successfully - against the stressor. Participants conveyed different levels of feeling and coping with anti-bisexuality related experiences. Though thinking about her bisexual sexuality, Clarissa conveyed that the groups she was part of (i.e., Asian and non-heterosexual) projected the message to her that she fell short of 'identity purity': "A kind of feeling like you have one foot in, one foot out, that your kind of in between, that you're not necessarily enough of anything…"

Clarissa further commented on having self-compassion for other's limitations related to diversity; she conveyed understanding pervasive structural racism and heteronormativity: "Well, I think, in all honesty, I still have the insecurity, but I think it's

giving myself compassion that, … I know that other people go through this. I know that

this isn't a problem with myself. That it's more of the systems in which we inhabit."

Angie conveyed assertiveness in severing ties from anti-bisexual people:

And I felt like she was on this quest to have me convince her that it's okay for me

to call myself bi, and I just ran out of patience with that being my job. It wasn't

really my job to begin with. …but by then I was very focused on weeding out the

biphobes. I was not having it anymore. … And I was like, "Nope. That's not my job

anymore. If you haven't done your work, then there's nothing for me to do here."

Lola described weighing the rigor of psychic engage against the impact of the

engagement effort:

As far as being stressed about being bi - I'll see bi erasure Facebook post, "Oh, look

at this and, oh, look at that. This is happening again." Is it worth my time to be

angry about this thing that at this point I can't do anything about or I don't have the

energy to do anything about it? And the only reason I'm mad is because even though

it's not affecting me personally, it's affecting my demographic. And I just kind of

have a pick your battles approach to it. And I just kind of chose that I don't want to

dwell on being sad too much about it.

Mark commented that tempering disclosure of his bisexuality orientation occurred when

it related to personal safety:

I've been in some situations where, at some point - I wouldn't say it's quite this

blatant, but there are overtones of, "It's been lovely, but get me the hell out of here."

Not because anyone has ever said anything to me directly, or they think that there's

anything wrong, or expressed anything wrong to me, I should say. I've ended up

realizing that, yeah, if I were to just be completely out all the time, who I was, that

could be potentially dangerous. So, I'm just like, yeah, you got to pick your battles.

You've got to decide when you're going to fly that flag.

Lifelong adaptive functioning with racism for biracial and multiracial identities

may allow skipping the step of coping with DSMS. Results addressing the second

supporting research question details factors of resilience related to DSMS and touches on

the influence of integrated social identities.

Research Question 2: What is the experience of resilience with double sexual

minority stigmatization in bisexual, biracial and multiracial men and women?

On resilience and DSMS. Resilience implies positively adapting to negative or

adversarial conditions so that negative trajectories are avoided. Resilience is inherently

inferential because it means that protection—successful adaptive functioning (i.e.,

adaptation)—is present in the face of stress (Masten, 2007; Meyer, 2015). This

supporting research question addresses resilience for DSMS, prejudice and discrimination

by both homosexual and heterosexual individuals/communities toward bisexual women

and men.

Resilience in the adult bisexual women and men of this study emerged to be

facilitated by their biracial and multiracial identities, suggesting that they bypass sexual

minority stress (SMS) as a result of their social location as a racial minority. Successful

adaptive functioning was inherent and stress management mechanisms were

demonstrated to be embedded in participants' lived experience. Andy conveyed that he

positively frames his negative experiences in his narrative research work to inform the edification of non-minorities:

> So, in a lot of ways, I've learned to take my own negative experiences and frame them in a way that is positive and a sort of grounding point or a point for people who simply don't get it, either because they're not a sexual gender minority or they're white. So, I often will use examples like that to give them a good [inaudible] for what I experienced. So, all of those help me…

Anne described initial rejection of bisexual as a label because of the inherent stigma and myths associated with the term, and her later acceptance of the label because of the sense of connection it represented:

> And at some point it was part of why I started using queer was because I didn't want to be associated with the sexual stereotypes anymore, but the more I started working in activism, the more I got involved in bisexual research, the more I thought, actually I think I need to commit to myself to this political movement and I need to connect myself to a bisexual community, even if it's not the only word that I can use to describe my sexuality. So, I don't know that it's a word that I will always use. In some ways queer resonates with me more, but bisexual connects me to a community and to a movement and I like that aspect of it.

Angie reflected on moving to large city where the lesbian and gay community members were unwelcoming toward her because of her bisexual sexuality. Persevering, she engaged with a large and active bisexual organization:

I was already 22, and so I think I had the maturity and wherewithal to face the

biphobia that I was experiencing from the larger LGBT population in that town as

I was trying to find out, okay, where are the bisexual people because the gay and

lesbian people are not being very friendly right now… And in that large city, it took

me a little bit of time to find it, but there was a large and vocal group of bisexual

activists. And so, once I kind of connected with them, I was able to be part of their

association and put on Pride events and other community events that kind of kept

things moving forward in my development of a healthy bisexual identity.

Clarissa's anti-bisexual experiences left her with a sense insecurity but also

generated self-compassion and appreciation for her support network while understanding

that societal heteronormativity was at fault:

Well, I think, in all honesty, I still have the insecurity, but I think it's giving myself

compassion that, just as you said, I know that other people go through this. I know

that this isn't a problem with myself. That it's more of the systems in which we

inhabit. So, I can't CBT [cognitive behavior therapy] my way out of it or [laughter]

counsel myself, but I think a lot of the - as I mentioned, I think my privilege still

buffers me, but I think a lot of it is the community that I mentioned. I think just

having people in my life who I can talk about these things with.

Mark commented about turning anger for absence of awareness into an

opportunity to educate through activism and in the classroom:

I'll be honest. I get angry about people who don't get it about these issues, whether

it's racism, or it's sexism, or homophobia, or biphobia. And so, because I'm an

educator, I spend a lot of my time figuring out, okay. Well, how is it that I could educate people about these things in a way that will help them out, right? Truth be told, I think that some of the most important activism that I do these days is in the classroom, because when I can have my students and my race and ethnicity class somewhere about midway through the semester, have their eyes light up, and go like, "I didn't realize this was still going on, and now I see it everywhere." And at that point, my work here is mostly done, because they're going to pick it up and run with it, which is great.

Lola described a unique side of resilience built through adapting to racism and biphobia:

But at the end of the day we're all just animals trying to survive, which is better too. And that's kind of how I do it. I just kind of think, "Okay, well, this works for me. It may not work for you and whatever works for you may not work for me, but I'm not going to judge you for it. And I hope you do not judge me for it. And I might say things that make you uncomfortable, but it's only to make you think. You might say things that might make me uncomfortable, but you know what? I'll be thinking about it because it might've made me mad [laughter]." And I might think about that for a while because I got upset [laughter].

Research Question 3: How do bisexual, biracial and multiracial men and women flourish in the face of double sexual minority stigmatization?

Similar to RQ #2, this supporting research question involves DSMS. Different here than RQ #2 the second factor is flourishing instead of resilience. Detailed in RQ #3, participant flourishing experiences most often involved the compounding effects of

integrated identities, though anti-bisexual/bi-negative experiences (i.e., DSMS) position this research question. Participant comments about flourishing in the face of DSMS typically included multiple higher-order concepts simultaneously. Participant excerpts prioritize the intersection of biracial/multiracial and bisexual social identities (i.e., one of six higher-order concepts) and combine facets of social support, emotional openness, hope and optimism, meaningful life, and accomplishments (i.e., remaining five higher-order concepts).

For example, all participants conveyed that flourishing in the face of DSMS involved affirmation for sexuality identity, and nearly all participants conveyed that flourishing despite DSMS experiences included reciprocity in sharing common values and interests around one or both identities with social support network members. Mark commented on the challenging work of re-educating Native American communities about the concept of two-spirit individuals. He conveyed disappointment, frustration, and positive resolve for this effort while emphasizing that connecting on this issue with other two-spirit people generates significant fulfillment:

> And so, two-spirit people like myself have had to work really hard to re-educate people about our own past, about who we are, our own culture, and that's meant having to talk about - I mean, it's trying to get people to understand that this isn't just gay/lesbian versus straight, this is something where tribes had their own understanding of these issues, and those understandings varied from tribe to tribe. And I would say, probably, some of the best moments that I've had, have been when I've connected with other two-spirit people about this, about who we are as native

people, whatever the rest of our lives are, as well as also, who we are as two-spirit people, and whatever sexual orientations we might use in other circumstances.

Participants demonstrated emotional intelligence and emotional maturity as intuitively core traits. Participants consistently exhibited appraisal and acceptance of positive and negative emotions from desirable and undesirable experiences related to sexuality identity. Angie, for example, commented about relationship interactions and proactively navigating inconsistent between messages received and her own insightful observations:

And I was really kind of annoyed because I felt like it played on the stereotype of bisexual people being duplicitous, and not being honest with their partners. And I was like, "Are you going to" - like if I had asked you, "Oh, does your girlfriend know that you're a lesbian?" You would probably find that pretty offensive…it's just like a little microaggression, but those kind of build-up.

Related to interaction with the same individual, Angie conveyed:

I had another experience… the same woman, at work. She said something else that was biphobic. Came to find out that although she had a female partner, she was very newly out, whereas I had been out for years at that point. And she had, prior to that, only had relationships with men, and she had a child with her ex-boyfriend. And I was kind of like, Okay. So, of the two of us, I'm actually the one who's like [laughter], like I had been going to Pride, and putting on the events, and doing the activism, and been part of the community for, at that point, years in the trenches.

Nearly all participants presented an energized motivation to extend existing information, educate, and support families, friends, students, and their communities in areas related to their identities. All participants commented on contributing to the well-being and growth of others which represented their sense of purpose and therefore, a life of meaning. Factors of contribution and a life of purpose singly demonstrate flourishing despite the chronic stressors of sexuality and racial stigma to which participants of this study described experiencing.

Past, present, and future accomplishments (i.e., met goals, setting goals, and working toward goals) emerged as factors to acquiring and maintaining a flourishing life. With emphasis on academic and activism goals, study participants lived experiences consistently involved setting and striving to meet academic, activism-related, and/or other goals. Clarissa's dissertation research focused on women who mirror her identity and sexuality:

> So, I don't want to list my CV for you, but so most of my - so my dissertation was on biracial, bisexual women, and just … basically trying to show that identity formation models, the historic ones, are just really insufficient. So that was kind of my goal with that. And it was phenomenal being able to do that and feeling really touched by the participants who shared their stories with me, which really overlapped with my own but sometimes were vastly different too, which was so interesting. But anyway, so that was my dissertation.

For Lola, activism provided the strongest sense of contribution, life meaning, and purpose in life for bisexual sexuality issues:

It feels like you're doing something. You are not just sitting at home, just letting things happen around you and you feel like a certain task is getting done. You're checking, bumping off a list, and you're also meeting other people like you because when I kind of - the first time I heard the word bi, I was a teenager. I was maybe 12, I think. I was in junior high. I had a friend over and she told me that she was bi. And I was like, "Okay. Cool. Whatever."

As previously stated, the integration of intersecting sexuality and racial identities is an underpinning contributor to study participants demonstrating flourishing in the face of double sexual minority stigmatization. Nearly all participants commented that their biracial and multiracial identities led to their openness toward bisexuality as a natural sexuality orientation option. Andy spoke about intentionality in taking on a bisexual identity, considering the rights of other minorities, and consciously reconsidering his larger worldview:

So, I would say that I first identified as understanding the history of what it means to be bisexual and then later took on that identity. And slowly began to understand and learn the language. By integrating those identities, I recognized in another way that I simply perceive and live life differently. And I think, similar to other sexual minority people or racial ethnic minority identities' rights to have that marginalized identity, simply forces me to think about and navigate the world in a different way.

Clarissa demonstrated that her lived experiences exceeded societally-defined normativity. She commented that to make sense of her own reality required either

developing more definitions of normativity or, she suggested, no definition of

normativity exist at all:

> I think that both identities have lent knowledge to each other. I think that race is
>
> something that I thought of a lot earlier…And then I feel like that was really helpful
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> in kind of exploring my sexuality, and feeling like I don't have to stay in kind of
>
> one box or another and that there's a third box, or now I'm feeling like there's
>
> multiple boxes [laughter], or maybe no boxes at all… But I feel like it's been really
>
> helpful in kind of making sense of each, and feeling comfortable and grounded that
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> I don't need to be one or another thing but can be a third, which is, I think, a
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> completely different experience but still encapsulating of the original two.

Discrepant Cases and Non-Confirming Data

Noted previously, Lola is the single participant presenting as a potential

discrepant case. Four (4) participants presented unique facets of their lived experience

qualifying for acknowledgement as discrepant, though not as a fully discrepant case.

First, I present Lola's case details. Then I discuss phenotype related to Mark and Lola

and gender exploration of Andy and Mark.

Lola disclosed that her once thriving worldview was presently going through a

disenchantment of sorts. Disclosed causes included a fairly recent anti-bisexual

experience at a LGBT activists conference and anti-diversity antics of the new

presidential administration. However, the data analysis process further revealed that Lola

held strong feelings about the invisibility of her multicultural heritage in that her

phenotype presented as Black, disdain about the invisibility of her bisexual sexuality, and

more concealment of her sexuality identity than disclosure. Lastly, Lola conveyed that affirmation for her sexuality came from a single person, her husband, and next to him she indicated that her mother was tolerant.

Lola presented hindrances to maintaining resilience toward stigma-related prejudice. Though she referenced a recent history of being out and proud, consistent engagement in activism, and qualified for the study per her screening form, Lola presented a waning flourishing life and well-being at the time of her interview. Excerpt examples from the transcript conveyed minimal affirmation and validation for life experiences and in relationships as well as less consistent emotional openness compared to other participants:

A long time ago, I used to be out, especially when I was acting like I'm out, and I'm proud, and you're going to hear about it, and [laughter] I'm in your face. And now, I'm kind of like - it's more of a need-to-know basis. And if I feel like I'm really close to you or if I feel like you - if I'm close to you, but you have negative outlook towards it, I won't disclose.

Lola described selective disclosure which was consistent among participants; however, she differed about disclosing to "people who matter":

The last job I had, I made some friends there, but none of them know that I'm bi. And I can think that I was kind of okay with it because I feel like not everyone needs to know. I think it's just the people who matter the most to me should know. And even then, if it's going to flip their whole world apart, I'm really not going to try [laughter].

Related to her multiracial identity, Lola commented that she was typically not recognized or welcomed as multiracial in spaces advertised as safe for multiracial:

Right. So, this one is a bit tricky because as far as having a multiracial identity, I identify that, but I'm not recognized by that because I have dark skin. And so, yes. And I have found that in spaces where there are biracial, multiracial safe spaces, if I'm there, I'm always assumed to not be a part of that. So even if it's okay, well, an ally is welcome, I'm always seen as the ally versus the person who actually belongs there, who it's about.

Another indicator that Lola's flourishing wellbeing may be waning involved conciliatory comments about her mother's tolerance versus affirmation for Lola's bisexuality:

But she [mother] didn't really give support in that kind of way. She's kind of religious in a sense, so I feel like maybe she doesn't want to go against whatever the Bible is telling her, but at the same time chooses to love me anyway. So, I think, for her, she's like Switzerland, "I'm going to be neutral. I'm not going to be mad. I'm not going to promote it, but I'm not going to disparage it either." For me, that's enough. That's all I need her to do.

Near the end of the interview, Lola proffered a summarizing statement that set her perspective significantly apart from the other five (5) participants. The statement presents a self-evident proposition of diminishing flourishing and an attitude toward basic coping (i.e., the effort to defend): "Because at the end of the day we're all just trying to survive."

Next, discrepant facets about phenotype (i.e., the set of observable characteristics of an individual resulting from the interaction of its genotype [the genetic constitution of an individual organism] with the environment) described by Lola and Mark are unique compared to the combinational phenotypes described by Andy, Anne, Angie, and Clarissa. Lola and Mark described that they present single phenotypes; Lola describes experiences of being assumed Black for dark skin and Mark describes experiences of being assumed White for light skin. Andy, Anne, Angie, and Clarissa used descriptions including exoticized, fetishized, and special in reference to combinational phenotype or ambiguous phenotype. Both Lola and Mark described experiences related to the invisibility of their multiraciality and biraciality. Lola conveyed the need to defend her multiraciality for her future children's sake and because heritage was historically taken away from Black people:

> I don't discount my blackness because it's just too obvious to relate, but at the same time I'm not going to say that I'm not these things [multicultural], and in knowing these things because heritage is so important and because, for black people, they took that from you, it's important for me if I have kids to pass that along.

Lola further commented:

> Most certainly with people who are dark-skinned, and they don't look it [multiracial]. And I just kind of want to emphasize that when it comes to mixed races that they have to kind of reconfigure your minds for people to accept people who don't necessarily look racially ambiguous because that seems to be the indicator.

Commenting about the opposite end of being assumed single race, Mark, who is White passing, acknowledged that disclosing either biraciality or bisexual sexuality in certain company is potentially dangerous:

I was community organizer for a long time. I dealt with people from all sorts of different backgrounds… I can get people to talk a lot about what's in their own minds. It has served me well in my sociological research, but it's also meant that at times, I've been in some situations where, at some point - I wouldn't say it's quite this blatant, but there are overtones of, "It's been lovely, but get me the hell out of here." Not because anyone has ever said anything to me directly, or they think that there's anything wrong, or expressed anything wrong to me, I should say. I've ended up realizing that, yeah, if I were to just be completely out all the time, who I was, that could be potentially dangerous.

Lastly, Andy and Mark present discrepant facets about gender exploration. Comparatively, both of the biological males of this study, described engaging gender exploration where the females did not. Again, this information is factored into analysis no differently than the other cases. Transcript excerpts by Andy exemplifies intentionally thoughtful consideration related to heteronormative bias toward societal construct of masculinity:

So, it is more about performing than identifying. So, I would still say I am, right, in checkboxes I still say I am a man. And I would use cisgender to describe myself …. Acknowledging that I am perceived as more feminine in the gay community has forced me to be aware of how I act and am perceived as a man in other contexts.

Because I think most men [think I'm] submissive, particularly in the gay community. So, to have that acknowledgement … makes me more often aware to think about how I do gender. So, I am more aware of talking over people perceived as women, what we refer to as man-spreading or just simply taking up space.

Andy further commented in a reflective manner about why gender expression exploration was something compelling to engage:

And I acknowledge that I am fetishized as an Asian person and - or predominately perceived as black. The fetishes that they are going to be like powerful and masculine but the Asian stereotype is sort of reversed. So how much of my [racial-ethnic identity] informed my being perceived as extremely feminine in the bisexual and gay community? So, is me no longer wanting to be masculine a product of being perceived as submissive because I'm Asian or a product of questioning my gender as a whole because I have the language to do that? I don't have an answer for you at this point. But the interplay of race and my sexual identity now forced me to question gender and it is going to be an important thing to think about.

Mark's gender expression exploration is connected to Native American traditions:

When I began to understand my two-spirit identity better, I don't know if I would have ever been, what in my people would have been thought of as a Winkte*, a person with special medicine. But I have to think that on some level that that's going on. *[*Winkte is a social category of individuals assigned male at birth who adopt the clothing, work, and mannerisms that Lakota culture usually considers feminine]*.

Mark described being at a party with lesbians where he was the sole male and had an 'aha moment' related to his non-typical gender expression: "A lot of it had to do with the fact that, on the moment, it was more me being comfortable with being me with them [a group of women/lesbians], and not having - I didn't have to be that guy."

Mark commented on literature about gender expression that he now perceives requires expansion as he continues to explore his personal range of gender expression:

John Stoltenberg, back a long time ago wrote a book called Refusing to be a Man, and when I first read it, I was just kind of like, "God, this seems really radical." And now I find myself going back and looking at it and saying, "Yeah. Yeah. Let's start it there. Let's keep going." So, for me, that's probably one of the next areas of real exploration for me, is fully embracing, not just my two-spirit identity, that I've had, but what does that mean in terms of being gender fluid in a more nuanced, more appreciative sort of way.

Tables/Graphic Representations

The full Individual Cases Graphic Representation is found in Appendix F and the full Cross-Case Graphic Representation is found in Appendix H. In *Step 4* of the Data Analysis section Table 2 provides a Sample of Individual Cases Graphic Representations and *Step 6* of the same section, Table 3 provides a list of the higher-order concepts and superordinate themes.

Summary

In this chapter, I first described the data collection setting, the influencing factors of participant responses, and influencing factors of researcher analysis of data. Next, are

details of participants' demography and the extent of demographic match for study's intent. Following the demographic description, I detailed the purpose and utilization of the Researcher's Journal and researcher conduct and responsibility.

The data collection process and the data analysis process sections provided meticulously representative details of practices and structure of data collection, and of the six (6) data analysis plan steps engaged in this study. The data analysis process section included tables, sample graphic representations and example quotations from participants to demonstrate codes, categories, and themes along with definitions of the latter. This section also provided example qualities of discrepant cases and how they were factored into data analysis. Following the practical activities description about data collection and analysis is the reliability and validity section.

The stages of research implementation demonstrated alignment with quality principle guidelines by Yardley (2000). Next, in the results section, study results were comprehensively discussed and presented in alignment with the central and supporting research questions. Higher-order themes and superordinate themes were defined and addressed accompanied with participant quotes study-guiding frameworks and existing literature.

Wrapping up chapter 4 was discussion about a discrepant case and other non-conforming (i.e., unique) data emerging from the data analysis process. Next, in Chapter 5, I present study conclusions. Specifically, Chapter 5 includes findings of results including researcher interpretation, generalizations, limitations; and implications of this dissertation research study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Strengths-based sexuality research is sparse. Reliable research with explicit focus - positive or disparate - on bisexual women and men is rare. Within that small body of literature, research with a specific focus on biracial and multiracial bisexual individuals is nearly nonexistent as the concept of intersectionality is recently emerging as an imperative feature of all research with human subjects. In this study, a small homogenous sample of bisexual, biracial and multiracial women and men share insight about achievement of a good life and flourishing well-being.

Purpose and Nature of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the adaptive functioning processes flourishing bisexual, biracial and multiracial adults use to develop resiliency toward sociocultural factors promoting chronic stressors. IPA (Smith, 1996; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015) advanced exploration of possible causes for flourishing well-being and characteristics of flourishing lives. Study participants conveyed how resilience toward stigma-related prejudice developed as well as the social and personal influences that sustained or hindered resilience. Qualitative inquiry created opportunity to explore and understand the experiences of this homogenous group who have yet to be examined for positive characteristics.

IPA, particularly, allowed exploration of existential matters that often bring change through reflection, interpretation, and reinterpretation for the individuals concerned (Eatough & Smith, 2008). Reflection, interpretation, and reinterpretation are

characteristics consistent with exposing successful adaptive coping leading to resiliencies allowing a flourishing well-being and a good life.

Gaps in Research and Literature

This study targeted multiple areas for which sexuality researchers and theorists consistently recommended exploration with an exclusive focus on the inadequately explored bisexual experience (Balsam & Mohr, 2007; Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Firestein, 1996; Lewis et al., 2009; Meyer & Wilson, 2009; Pollitt et al., 2018). Underexplored or unexplored areas include stress and distress-related phenomena (e.g., DSMS), strengths-based perspectives, effects of intersecting social identities, and qualitative research approaches (see, Barker et al., 2012; IOM, 2011; Meyer, 2003, 2010, 2014, 2015; MAP, 2016). In this study, the lived experience of bisexual, biracial and multiracial women and men was examined from a strengths-based perspective by looking at flourishing well-being.

Here, the lived experience of bisexual, biracial and multiracial women and men was examined from a strengths-based perspective initiated by PERMA factors derived from Seligman's (2011) authentic happiness theory and well-being theory. The operationalized PERMA factors supported recruitment of participants with flourishing well-being. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks of this study included Kwon's (2013) resilience factors model, intersectionality concept (see Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; IOM, 2011; Lorde, 1984/2007; NIH, 2016; Rich, 1980), and sexual minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003). The interpretations of findings

section of this chapter detail the knowledge in the discipline influenced by the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of this study.

Summary: Getting to and maintaining flourishing well-being

To the participants of this study, a good life and flourishing well-being involved multiple reciprocal and meaningful relationships with diverse people/groups involving affirmation and validation for both, biracial or multiracial and bisexual, social identities. These relationships cultivated emotional openness and emotionally intelligent communication about feelings and integrated identity exploration. Participants indicated that ethnic sameness was not de facto for attraction. Participants also showed capacity to set proactive boundaries and disengage when others appeared to have more work to do related to antibisexual assumptions.

Participants conveyed that having a good life involved learning and growing, helping others learn and grow, and helping others feel they belonged. Contribution was also consistent across participants; feeling good involved making the world a better place either one person at a time or one research project at a time, through broad level activism, and formal and informal teaching. In all areas, participant flourishing indicated a healthy integration of the two marginalized identities of this study, including pride for ethnicity and cultural roots, and logicality for bisexual sexuality orientation.

Exploring the flourishing well-being and flourishing lives of biracial and multiracial, bisexual adults offered insight on the development and maintenance of adaptive functioning processes. Six social and personal influences emerged from the lived experiences shared by participants of this study on factors, including intuitive

characteristics that supported development and maintenance of resilience toward stigma-related prejudice.

Intersecting Social Identities

Participants acknowledged the influence of their societally marginalized identities, both separate and compounding, on their flourishing well-being and flourishing lives. Participants described resiliencies achieved and maintained for having identities outside dominant social/societal norms. Chronic and acute experiences of racism and heteronormativity were opportunities to successfully develop adaptive functioning–a key tenet of resilience.

All study participants experienced DSMS, prejudice and rejection by both lesbian and gay and heterosexual individuals and communities. DSMS is an experience unique to bisexual individuals and stress/distress typically generated by DSMS appeared to be buffered or by-passed because of participants' racism-related resiliencies cultivated in early life (Meyer, 2010). Lastly, study participants demonstrated that intersecting marginalized identities positively expanded their worldview beyond dominant societal/social norms in multiple ways. Worldview expansion appears to have begun with participants' biracial or multiracial identity generating openness toward bisexuality as a natural sexuality orientation option.

Social Support

When asked "what makes yours a good life?" relationships with other people, both individuals and groups, was declared first across all participants. A sense of belonging related to group membership, including both formal and informal social groups

emerged as most important. More than half participants also spoke about cultural heritage and familial roots; knowing about from where, and whom, they came was also priority.

Outside of family, friends of the participants consistently had commonality in identities, interests or values – sameness was very much a part of friend and community selection and engagement. Fundamental characteristics of relationships that contributed to participant flourishing well-being involved affirmation for biracial/multiracial and bisexual identities and validation of subsequent experiences, both positive and negative, related to those identities.

Emotional Openness

Emotional openness was represented in both emotional acceptance and appraisal of emotions related to experiences involving participant sexuality identity. Despite known social disapproval for homosexuality, study participants described and established an indomitable "Okay-ness" with same and different sex attractions as youth. More than half of participants indicated that different-ethnicity/race parents and their own racial ambiguity generated open-mindedness about sexuality orientation options.

Participants demonstrated emotional intelligence and emotional maturity by exhibiting intuitive characteristics including altruism. Participants demonstrated altruistic concern for the well-being of others with same and other marginalized identities. Five of the six participants engaged academic and educational pursuits related to dual identity exploration and understanding, and intend to use education in service of others. Lastly, participants with flourishing well-being demonstrated that their social support network played an important role in their emotional processing practices.

Hope and Optimism

The biracial and multiracial, bisexual adult participants of this study described both hope and optimism; hope is behind the motivation in goal pursuit and optimism implies having positive expectations. All participants expressed future plans and goals. Most participants demonstrated positive emotions and conveyed a positive outlook on life including the presence of goals, dreams, and aspirations for the future for themselves; one participant's aspiration involved her children.

Participants consistently made more positive appraisals of stress-causing experiences and found the benefits of adversity, did not engage self-blame for others or systemic or institutionalized prejudice, found more positive attributions and described having increased feelings of empowerment in discriminatory situations. Related to optimism, almost all participants conveyed positive expectations in motivation behind goal pursuit–meaning, individuals of this study anticipated more positive outcomes than negative outcomes.

Meaningful Life

A consistent factor to participant flourishing involved feeling a sense of purpose through contribution to others and a greater good. With focus on like others, other minorities, and others who are marginalized, all participants contributed via activism, academic pursuits, and--with exception of one participant--employment situations. Demonstrating that theirs is a meaningful life involved intentionally engaging contributory activities, but it is important to recognize the intuitive illustration of

altruistic concern for the well-being of others with the same as well as other marginalized identities that is manifested by these participants with flourishing well-being.

Accomplishments

All participants described that they have met previous goals and are in the process of meeting new goals; each has achieved and is currently working toward important life accomplishments. Five of six study participants have advanced academic degrees, including one doctoral degree, three are working toward doctoral credentials which include addressing sexuality and/or minority research gaps. All participants are currently engaged or have been engaged in activism or advocacy for positively influencing the visibility of and issues related to individuals with bisexual identities.

Interpretation of Findings

This section describes in what ways findings confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the discipline of psychology. By comparing study findings with what exists in the peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2, the following sections reflect study participants' lived experience and address of additional research gaps with what is known. Specifically, this section addresses bisexual sexuality orientation, including DSMS; the compounding effects of intersecting marginalized social identities, including racial and sexuality identity; resilience-building features and processes; characteristics of participants' flourishing well-being and flourishing lives; and strengths-based sexuality research, including features of the resilience factors model (see Kwon, 2013) and tenets of positive psychology (see Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Separate Research Exploration: Bisexual Sexuality Orientation

The literature noted that bisexual sexuality orientation is the largest and fastest

growing group of sexual minority people (see Copen et al., 2016; Gates, 2011; Herbenick

et al., 2010a, 2010b; Hill et al., 2016; MAP, 2016). However, bisexual sexuality

orientation-focused research is still underrepresented in the literature. A meta-analysis by

Pollitt and colleagues (2018) emphasized that LGBT research is consistently devoid of

meaningful representation of bisexual issues.

Bisexuality is extant and stable. Participants of this study demonstrated that

bisexual sexuality orientation is extant and stable. The prominent message of this

homogeneous group is that bisexuality is a natural option for them; that bisexual

sexuality orientation "just made sense". This finding supports knowledge of the discipline

(see Diamond, 2008; Freud & Strachey, 2000; Kinsey, 1948, 1953; IOM, 2011; Meyer,

2003).

Operationalizing bisexual sexuality orientation for research. Elementarily,

bisexuality is a sexual orientation in which an individual has sexual desire toward both

same-sex and different-sex individuals. Operationally, the distinction among sexuality

orientation, behavior, and identity challenge researchers of bisexuality. Historically,

operationalizing bisexual sexuality orientation and identity confound sexuality research

often to the exclusion of bisexual sexuality (Roberts et al., 2015).

The purposeful design of this study supports a definition of bisexuality inclusive

of orientation, identity and behavior offered by Pallotta-Chiarolli (2016): sexual

attraction to males, females, and gender diverse persons; and/or self-identifying as

bisexual; and/or sexually engaging with males, females, and gender-diverse persons. This distinction recognizes the sexuality of individuals whose self-identity does not conform (i.e., transgender) and does conform (i.e., cisgender) with the gender that corresponds to their biological sex while allowing the researcher of the present study to place intentionally study-specific parameters on the gender expression of study participants.

DSMS. DSMS involves rejection – prejudice and discrimination – by both homosexual and heterosexual individuals/communities (Barker et al., 2012; Herek, 2000; Ochs, 1996; Roberts et al., 2015; Rust, 2000a, 2000b). DSMS is unique to individuals with bisexual sexual orientation. Each of the six study participants described experiencing antibisexual prejudice and discrimination; supporting knowledge of the discipline.

Labels. Though all participants accept the bisexual label as defined for this study per Pallotta-Chiarolli (2016), terms such as queer, fluid, and two-spirit were also preferred. The meaningfulness of bisexual identity label distinction to participants supports what is known.

Bisexuality-focused strengths-based research. Pollitt and colleagues (2018) determined there is a still a lack of research addressing bisexuality issues. Meta-analysis results indicated that data from bisexual individuals continued to be conformed to fit the LG experience and excluded from LGB research for skewing (Pollitt et al., (2018). My study supports that separate exploration, both disparity-related and strengths-based, of the bisexual lived experience is imperative. However, the literature distinctly identifies the need for more sexuality research engaged from a strengths-based perspective. The

findings of this study extend what is known about positive characteristics of sexual

minorities, and particularly of individuals with bisexual sexuality orientation. In addition,

the findings of this study support researchers' recommendations to use positive

psychology approaches to engage strengths-based sexuality research (see Lytle et al.,

2014; Vaughan & Rodriquez, 2014).

Strengths-Based Sexuality Research

Findings of this study contribute to positive perspectives in sexuality research.

Study participants commented on the opportunity to think about, convey, and be part of

contributing to literature and knowledge on the good things about their identities and

lived experience. I did not find this participant reaction in the literature reviewed for this

study. Further, participants acknowledged the infrequency by which others seek positive

information about, particularly sexuality-related, life occurrences or initiate

compassionate dialogue about negative political rhetoric on sexuality-related topics.

Consistent approach to explore strengths. The purposeful design and the

findings of this study support sexuality researchers' recommendation to generate a

consistent approach to examining LGB strengths (see Lytle et al., 2014; Vaughan &

Rodriquez, 2014). Underpinned by the recommendation of Vaughan et al. (2014) to apply

principles found in tenets of positive psychology, I examined the flourishing lived

experiences of bisexual, biracial and multiracial women and men. Findings reflect

positive psychology tenets including positive social institutions, positive subjective

experiences, and character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2011;

Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In addition, findings reflect tenets of the emotional

openness factor of Kwon's (2013) resilience factors model, a strength excluded from positive psychology tenets.

This study further supports criticism toward the field of positive psychology for minimizing the perspective of culture and failing to consider the perspective of sexuality diversity (see Vaughan et al., 2014). In addition, findings of this study suggest that examining LGB as well as heterosexual, strengths with positive psychology principles requires modification inclusive of intersectionality concept.

Intersectionality: Compounding Effects of Social Identities

The biracial and multiracial, bisexual women and men of this study revealed characteristics unique to existing literature, mirrored others and inconsistently demonstrated still others related to successful adaptive coping leading to resiliencies allowing a flourishing life and well-being. This study supports that responsible research with human subjects must prioritize the compounding influences of multiple marginalized social identities (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; IOM, 2011; Lorde, 1984/2007; NIH, 2016; Rich, 1980; Tolman & Diamond, 2014a). However, findings here emphasize prioritizing exploring identities that society and science have ignored, erased, and avoided--specifically, bisexual sexual orientation and biraciality and multiraciality.

In this study, the compounding effects of these identities indicated a previously unknown reciprocity of character strengths-building and maintenance. Specifically, emotional intelligence, emotional maturity, and altruism. In addition, participants of this study pursued academic fields and employment in the service of others.

Biraciality and multiraciality facilitated bisexual sexual orientation. The findings of this study supported the theory of intersectionality which articulates that individuals occupy multiple structural positions that locate their experience, knowledge, choices, and practices in particular histories and in specific relationship to dominant culture's understanding of what is real, normal, acceptable, and even possible (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; IOM, 2011; Lorde, 1984/2007; NIH, 2016; Rich, 1980; Tolman & Diamond, 2014a). Each of the six participants indicated that their biracial and multiracial identity influenced their rejection of societal binary confines for sexual attraction (e.g., Eliason & Elia, 2011; Meyer, 2010). Participant experience with and acquired resilience toward racism well before puberty, and esteem for their biraciality or multiraciality facilitated comfort with attractions they knew garnered societal disapproval (Eliason & Elia, 2011; Meyer, 2010).

Focus on more than one race. *Race* is a socially constructed system of classifying humans based on particular phenotypical characteristics including skin color, hair texture, and bone structure. *Ethnicity* refers to a group of people bound by a common language, culture, spiritual tradition, and/or ancestry (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Findings of this study exemplify the need to rescue racial identities from distortion and erasure by incorporating all of a person's racial and ethnic backgrounds (Daniel et al., 2014; also see Gordon, 1995; Ifekwunigwe, 2015). In support of Daniel et al. (2014), findings of this study indicated that traditional monoracial categories and boundaries must be expanded, and research, exemplified by this study, must be structured to receive more multidimensional configurations of race/ethnicity.

Healthy identity development for individuals with dual or multiracial heritage is burdened by U.S. racial ideology. Artificial and rigid categorizations of people according to physical characteristics constrain legitimate ethnic/cultural (a.k.a., racial) identity. Findings of this study supported that the socialization and developmental processes of biracial and multiracial individuals is more complex, and effortful compared to monoracial populations (per Anderson, 2011; Daniel et al., 2014; Nuttgens, 2010; Rockquemore et al., 2009; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Findings of this study suggest that the combination of social support and emotional openness, including emotional intelligence, facilitate resilience-building qualities involving positive appraisal and positive attribution. For participants of this study, the latter led to positive expectations. Kwon (2013) posited that positive appraisal is the motivation behind goal pursuit and the expectation that everything will be alright.

Most participants of this study referenced *phenotype*—phenotypical characteristics involve skin color, hair texture, and bone structure, etc.–and the ambiguous appearance presented by study participants' biraciality or multiraciality that generated assumptions by others. All participants experienced assumptions based on racial presentation; most based on racial ambiguity (e.g., Anderson, 2011; Daniel et al., 2014; Nuttgens, 2010; Rockquemore et al., 2009). However, two participants presented a single phenotype, one Black and one White. Though sparse, this study's findings support existing literature of the former, but the latter, related to single phenotype presentation, may extend knowledge in the discipline.

Racial/ethnic identity, resilience-building, and flourishing well-being. LGBT people of color are purported to develop higher levels of well-being because of an early and ongoing development of stress resilience (Meyer, 2010). Participants of this study aligned with this perspective. Meyer (2010) suggested that the experience of racism promoted resilience toward homophobia because LGBT people of color bypass sexual minority stress; findings of this study allow inclusion of biphobia. Meyer emphasized, and study findings supported, that individual and group level resilience resources developed from lifelong disadvantaged group membership reveal psychological strengths (Meyer, 2010). Specifically, findings of this study include emotional intelligence and emotional maturity exhibited by intuitive characteristics such as altruism.

Participants of this study conveyed that adaptive functioning processes and resilience achieved from experiences of racism buffered reactivity and the effects of encounters involving DSMS– a phenomena unique to bisexuals —and demonstrated stress-related growth ([SRG], i.e., developmental crises resulting in strengths) (Erikson, 1959; Frankl*, 1946/2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). For example, participants demonstrated an expanded worldview beyond dominant social norms and engaged academic and work/employment pursuits in the service of others. These findings support Meyer's (2010) premise, and extend application to anti-bisexual prejudice and discrimination (a.k.a., biphobia).

More Than Resilience: Flourishing Well-being

Bisexual adults and DSMS. Study findings aligned with what is known about DSMS—experiences of rejection, stereotyping, and prejudice by both lesbian and gay,

and heterosexual individuals/communities toward individuals with bisexual sexuality orientation (see Bradford, 2004; Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013; Lewis et al., 2009). All six study participants described two or more experiences of DSMS involving past partners, social groups, "friends", co-workers, or in lesser forms (i.e., bisexuality tolerated but not affirmed or vaguely understood with no desire for deeper understanding), family members.

However, findings suggest that experiences of DSMS by this homogenous group manifested emotional intelligence including responses/reactions demonstrating agency, empowerment, and proactive navigation of the experience both internally and practically. The demonstration of emotional maturity manifesting an emotionally intelligent response/reaction may extend what is currently known in the field. Participants described the presence of resilience toward stigma and that resilience is subsequently maintained as indicated by their flourishing lives and well-being. Further, study participants demonstrated emotional and practical behaviors beyond positive reactivity to prejudice and stress (i.e., resilience factors model per Kwon, 2013), and functioning effectively (per authentic happiness and well-being theories [Seligman, 2011]); participants described spontaneous adaptive functioning that is present when flourishing well-being is also present (see Focus on Emotional Openness in Chapter 4 Results section; also refer to Masten, 2007; Meyer, 2015; and Seligman, 2011).

Resilience Factors Model vs. Positive Psychology Principles

Findings of this study may extend what is known about identifying a consistent approach to strengths-based sexuality research. Vaughan et al. (2014) proposed

application of positive psychology frameworks, with certain modifications, for consistency in strengths-based sexuality research. The present study supports tenets of positive psychology principles as a foundation and may extend knowledge of what is known about strengths-based sexuality research approaches (see the recommendations section for further discussion and details).

Positive psychology frameworks (Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and the Resilience Factors Model (Kwon, 2013) guided the present study focus on strengths and resources motivated by positive expectations. Perspectives of these two frameworks/concepts are different; positive psychology is situated toward dominant societal norms, and the framing of resilience factors targets LGBT individuals. Findings of this study showed support for most characteristics of both philosophies.

However, findings here may contribute to what we know about positive psychology principles for use in sexuality research (see Vaughan et al., 2014; Vaughan & Rodriquez, 2014). Findings of this study suggest that consistent strengths-based sexuality research might involve integrating the: 1) sexuality diversity perspective and missing tenets of the Resilience Factors Model (Kwon, 2013) and 2) concept of intersectionality (e.g., Cole, 2009; IOM, 2011; NIH, 2016) into the principles and frameworks of positive psychology (Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Discussion per frameworks is continued in the next section and the recommendations section details modification to the Three Pillars of positive psychology to advance a consistent approach to sexuality research.

Findings Analyzed and Interpreted in the Context of Study-Guiding Frameworks

The findings of this study reflect examination of the flourishing lives and well-being of bisexual, biracial and multiracial women and men. Exploring individuals with marginalized social identities *and* a good life revealed adaptive functioning processes used to achieve and maintain resilience toward sociocultural factors promoting chronic stressors (e.g., minority stress and DSMS). This study was guided by three (3) frameworks, including sexual minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003), Resilience Factors Model (Kwon, 2013), and intersectionality concept (refer to Cole, 2009).

In addition, I executed this study from a strengths-based perspective (see Seligman, 2011; also see Meyer, 2014, 2015; Vaughan & Rodriquez, 2014). The strengths-based perspective of this study was initiated (i.e., a study participant recruitment feature) by PERMA factors - positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishments - derived from M.E.P. Seligman's (2011) authentic happiness theory and well-being theory. The strength-based perspective was fundamentally advanced based on Kwon's (2013) resilience factors model involving social support, emotional openness, and hope and optimism. As an unintended lens, the PERMA factors—positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishments—derived from M.E.P. Seligman's (2011).

Resilience factors (Kwon, 2013) provided a lens to consider conditions, features, or characteristics associated with lowering reactivity to and buffering the negative impact of societal prejudice toward LGBT sexualities. I applied the lens of intersectionality to reveal compounding influences on flourishing well-being in individuals with overlapping

societally marginalized identities (see Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; IOM, 2011; NIH, 2016; Lorde, 1984/2007; Rich, 1980). Lastly, I considered constructs of Meyer's (2003) sexual minority stress (SMS) theory to reveal at what point on psychological pathways sexual minority study participants engage resilience processes (i.e., factors against which study participants may develop and maintain resilience).

Findings indicated that sociocultural context and factors may play a subjective role in determining the conditions that induce stress or the protective factors of resilience processes (see Collins, 2004; Herrick et al., 2014a; and King, 2011). For which, Meyer (2010) proposed, and this study supported, that people of color - including biracial and multiracial - lesbians, gay men, and bisexual men and women (LGB) bypass SMS (i.e., acquire resilience to SMS-related stigma) as a result of their social location as a racial minority (Meyer, 2010). For this study, the findings discussion involving SMS theory includes this perspective.

Six social and personal influences emerged from the lived experiences shared by participants of this study on characteristics, including intuitive qualities, that influenced the development and maintenance of resilience toward stigma-related prejudice. In addition, among characteristics/qualities of resilience are features of flourishing well-being - life going well; the experience of a reciprocal cycle of functioning effectively and feeling good. The emergent characteristics included:

a. Positive/proactive attributes facilitated by intersecting social identities; (e.g., resiliency, adaptability, and altruism [see Meyer, 2010; Nuttgens, 2010]);

b. Social support including facets of reciprocity (refer to Kwon, 2013 and Seligman, 2011);

c. Emotional openness/emotional intelligence exercised with self and others (e.g., Kwon, 2013 and Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000);

d. Hope and optimism involving positive appraisals, and positive expectations of situations, others, and the future (Kwon, 2013; Peterson & Seligman, 2004);

e. A meaningful life of contribution generating a sense of purpose (Seligman, 2011); and,

f. Life accomplishments including working on goals toward accomplishments (refer to Seligman, 2011; and Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The following section analyzes and interprets the above listed study findings (a.k.a. emergent themes) in the context of study-guiding theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Each of the emergent themes is detailed related to resilience-building and flourishing well-being factors.

Intersecting Social Identities

Intersectionality as a framework guided this research study in seeing points of cohesion (i.e., commonality) and fracture within and between racial/ethnic and sexuality orientation identities, and the dominant group culture (per Mink et al., 2014). The concept of intersectionality allows recognition that identities are often formed in the presence of others, are influenced by time and place, and are constantly shifting (see

King, 2011). This study aimed for better understanding how to guide shifts toward flourishing well-being.

Intersectionality concept is important because it articulates that individuals occupy multiple structural positions that locate their experience, knowledge, choices, and practices in particular histories and in specific relationship to dominant culture's understanding of what is real, normal, acceptable, and even possible (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; IOM, 2011; Lorde, 1984/2007; NIH, 2016; Rich, 1980; Tolman & Diamond, 2014a). At the intersection of racial identity and sexuality, study participants demonstrated decreased reactivity to prejudice including generation of more positive appraisals of stressful events, less self-blame, more positive attributions, and increased feelings and expression of empowerment related to discriminatory situations.

Participants' lifetime experience coping with and resilience-building from racism well before experiencing sexuality stigma brings the concept of intersectionality forward across all research questions. Participants demonstrated a link to attributes at the intersection of racial and sexuality identities for each of the other five primary emergent concepts. The following sections detail analysis and interpretation of the other five emergent concepts in the context of the intersectionality study-guiding framework.

Social support. Individuals and groups that make up support networks intentionally included mirrored identities with study participants, signaly or both. Social support networks did not exclude other marginalized identities, but the most flourishing participants have people in their life just like them in ethnicity or sexuality. Further, these social supports are sources which affirm and validate both identities. Expanding from the

individual-level to the macro-level, Meyer (2014) references the Three Pillars model of positive psychology for which the third pillar (i.e., third "system" of organizing strengths) fails to acknowledge pathogenic structural and institutional stressors (Meyer, 2014; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Emotional openness. Participant raciality required accepting and processing emotions during stress as youth resulting in building emotional intelligence. Thus, when exposed to DSMS as young adults/adults, participants of this study intuitively accepted and processed emotions (i.e., buffering and lowering reactivity to prejudice [Kwon, 2013]). All participants conveyed motivation to explore and integrate their dual identities; most via formal academic pursuits and others via informal but intentional practices toward self-understanding.

King (2011) noted that instead of a final integrated multiple identity (see Collins, 2000), her bisexual, biracial/multiracial study participants asserted the desire for continued growth and evolution. Also, this study placed emphasis on biracial and multiracial status at the intersection of sexuality related to resilience processes. However, it is important to note that driven by significance to participants, gender expression exploration emerged for inclusion of intersectionality perspective for the male participants.

Hope/optimism. There is a focus toward the future for all participants, and for 5 out of 6, the future involves using academic achievement to help others with the same identities, or to raise kids to be intuitively diversity inclusive. For participants of this study, positive attributions/appraisals indicated that others' biphobia was the others' issue

to work out; participants adamantly conveyed no ownership for an anti-bisexual perspective. However, the majority of participants conveyed compassion for anti-bisexual others, with one participant specifically attributing fault to "the [racist/heteronormative] systems in which we inhabit."

Meaningful life/life of purpose. Participants of this study demonstrated pursuit of a life of purpose and contribution. Each demonstrated altruism to engage activism and advocacy for those with same identities as well as other marginalized identities. Findings of this study suggest that the altruism embedded in participants comes from a place that indicates "I want to prepare others like me, and marginalized others, for the experiences I've known. I want to cultivate empowerment in marginalized others and support overcoming marginalizing experiences. I want to influence the end of marginalization and embrace of diversity."

Accomplishments. Participants of this study are actively engaged to influence shielding marginalized others from experiencing stigma-related prejudice. All participants are currently engaged or have been engaged in activism or advocacy for positively influencing the visibility of and issues related to individuals with bisexual identities. Five of six study participants have advanced academic degrees, including one doctoral degree in sociology, and three are working toward doctoral credentials which includes addressing sexuality or minority research gaps. It is suggested by study results that people with bisexual and biracial or multiracial identities engage their altruism for positive influence because of the intersection of their raciality and sexuality orientation.

Social Support

Social support is analyzed and interpreted here in the context of guiding theoretical and conceptual frameworks including the resilience factors model by Kwon (2013), tenets of positive psychology (i.e., PERMA factors and Three Pillars model) per Seligman (2011), Peterson and Seligman (2004); Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), respectively, and Meyer's (2003) sexual minority stress theory. The guiding concept of intersectionality for social support was detailed in the prior subsection because the influencing effects of intersecting identities occurs across each of the other primary findings of this study. Including that SMS was bypassed as a result of each participant's social location as a racial minority (Meyer, 2010).

Resilience building and maintenance. Study participants prioritized relationships with other people (i.e., social support), including individuals and groups, when asked what makes theirs a flourishing life. Kwon's (2013) resilience factors model proposes that social support lowers reactivity to and buffers the negative impact of societal prejudice. In other words, social supports first advance building resilience then aide in resilience maintenance. For LGB individuals, Kwon indicated that interactions including receiving affirmation for sexuality orientation and validation for emotional reactions to stigma-related experiences lowers reactivity to and buffers the negative impact of societal prejudice.

Findings of this study indicated that fundamental characteristics of relationships that contributed to participants' flourishing well-being involved affirmation for biracial and multiracial, and bisexual identities, as did validation of subsequent experiences, both

positive and negative, related to those identities. Kwon (2013) recognized that affirming social supports aided in the formulation of positive appraisals of stressful events (also see Cohen, 2004); positive appraisal is detailed in the emotional openness theme. Participants of this study consistently demonstrated agency and empowerment, thus the presence of resilience, by not internalizing or taking responsibility for prejudice-infused others or circumstances.

Participants also conveyed the importance of the sense of belonging acquired from formal and informal social group membership. For example, more than half of participants spoke about cultural heritage and familial roots; knowing about from where and whom they came generated dignity. Participants demonstrated that they drew esteem from knowing that, within, they carried the rich, vibrant, and complex histories of their ancestors.

Family and friends consistently had commonality in identities, interests or values–sameness was very much a part of friend and community selection and engagement for participants of this study. The emulation of positive role models is purported by Kwon (2013) and Cohen (2004) as a component in resilience maintenance associated with social support. Kwon and Cohen also indicate that social support contributes to resilience maintenance in that it enhances greater self-worth, sense of security, and meaning. Building and maintaining resilience is different from the presence of resilience that is flourishing well-being that is demonstrated in the flourishing life.

Flourishing well-being/flourishing life. Participants of this study foremost attributed their flourishing well-being and "what makes theirs a good life" to reciprocally

fulfilling relationships. Interactions with family, friends, and groups reliably involved

mutual and comprehensive understanding for racial and sexuality positioning,

experiences, and feelings. Seligman's (2011) PERMA factors for flourishing includes

meaningful relationships involving support reciprocity and regular engagement with

others to socialize. The people/groups in the social support networks of participants were

intentionally pursued, included, and engaged.

Participants of this study revealed internal or external qualities or conditions such

as optimism, courage, and creativity (see Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Vaughan &

Rodriguez, 2014). According to Kwon (2013), social support enhances psychological and

interpersonal functioning in LGB individuals—some mechanisms responsible for these

benefits conveyed by study participants included, greater self-worth, security, and

meaning (per Cohen, 2004). Kwon (2013) further indicated that social support lowers

anxiety, depression, and loneliness; qualities absent in the participants of this study.

Aspinwall and Staudinger (2003) and Vaughan and Rodriguez (2014) posited that

phenomena that help people adaptively cope with life or engage a fulfilling life are

strengths. They also posited that an individual's strengths are typically culturally bound

and developmental in nature; both are demonstrated in association with the importance

participants placed on heritage and roots. Strengths are positive characteristics and

resources motivated by positive expectations.

Study findings reflect that acquaintances in social networks lacking awareness

about marginalization were identified quickly by participants then avoided or disengaged.

Sometimes distancing occurred to allow realization and growth; but typically, lack of

awareness by acquaintances resulted in disengagement. Study findings suggest and existing literature supports, that the compounding influences of intersectionality initiated these characteristics related to social support and maintaining flourishing well-being.

Application of the concept of intersectionality, per Cole (2009), to the combined factors and perspective of Kwon (2013) and Seligman (2011) models is required to meet the full extent of participants' experiences and the meaning of social support in their flourishing lives. Social support per the Resilience Factors Model is sexual orientation-affirming interactions with individuals and communities predominantly received by individual. Kwon posits, and this study supports, that affirmation, validation, and sense of belonging related to sexuality orientation identity lowers reactivity to and buffers the negative impact of societal prejudice. Seligman (2011) posits, and this study supports, that PERMA factors, meaningful relationships, and engagement to socialize are facets of flourishing well-being.

However, study participants' full meaning and intent of social support involving resilience building and maintenance, and flourishing well-being, definitively involves relationship reciprocity and the compounding influences of marginalized identities. Thus, the combined factors and perspective of Kwon (2013) and Seligman (2011) models as well as application of the concept of intersectionality (Cole, 2009) is required to meet the full extent of participant experience and meaning of social support in their flourishing lives. Kwon and Seligman both exclude the intersection of marginalized social identities.

Kwon's lens is sexuality orientation; Seligman's lens is dominant normativity. Kwon focuses on reactivity and buffering prejudice; Seligman focuses on flourishing.

Seligman infers reciprocity; Kwon's perspective is one-sided receiving by the individual. In the area of social support, participants of this study demonstrated meaningful fit for the guiding frameworks: intersectionality concept, resilience factors model, and PERMA factors.

Emotional Openness

The guiding concept of intersectionality for emotional openness was detailed in the first subsection because the influencing effects of intersecting identities occurs among each of the five other primary findings of this study. Including that SMS was bypassed as a result of participant social location as a racial minority (Meyer, 2010).

Resilience building and maintenance. Resilience is inherently *inferential* because it means that protection - successful adaptive functioning - is present in the face of stress. According to Kwon (2013), emotional acceptance and processing of emotions must both be engaged to buffer against prejudice in the resilience building and maintenance process. Emotional openness was represented in both emotional acceptance and appraisal of emotions related to experiences involving participant sexuality identity.

Participants were honest about emotions/feelings and shared expressions of insight about feelings (i.e., demonstrated of emotional intelligence/emotional maturity) by exhibiting intuitive characteristics such as altruism (i.e., incorporation of insight about feelings in personal practices or expanded personal practices). Emotional openness was demonstrated in participants' developing and maintaining an expanded worldview and altruism-based concerns; then the presence of flourishing well-being was demonstrated in participant behaviors and activities.

Expanded worldview related to emotional openness involved a strong grasp for social justice in general and the macro-level institutional discrimination. For example, despite known social disapproval for homosexuality, study participants described and established an indomitable "Okay-ness" with same- and different-sex attractions as youth. More than half of participants indicated that different-ethnicity/race parents and their own racial "ambiguity" generated open-mindedness about sexuality orientation options. Per the intersectionality subsection, as previously stated, I propose that emotional openness in general and associated with sexuality orientation diversity originated from lifelong resilience-building toward racism; participants' biracial or multiracial identity generated openness toward bisexuality as a natural sexuality orientation option.

Flourishing well-being/flourishing life. Related, participants with flourishing well-being demonstrated that their social support network played an important role in their emotional processing practices by providing affirmation for sexuality and validation for sexuality-related experiences. Honesty about emotions and feelings paired with expressions of insight about feelings and incorporation of that insight to expanded personal practices: In practice, participants' altruistic concern for the well-being of others with same and other marginalized identities involved academic and educational pursuits related to dual identity exploration and understanding, and intent to use education in service of others. service. Five of the six participants demonstrated both practices.

The experience of DSMS called upon existing resiliencies and coping practices further strengthening resilience and determination to educate others. Emotional

intelligence by way of emotional openness is not a facet of positive psychology.

However, in the Three Pillars model, *Pillar 1: Positive subjective experiences* capture a

wide-array of intrinsically valued experiences, including positive affective/emotional

states, aspects of subjective well-being (i.e., happiness), resilience, and stress-related

growth ([SRG], i.e., developmental crises resulting in strengths) (Erikson, 1959; Frankl*,*

1946/2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Hope and Optimism

The guiding concept of intersectionality for hope and optimism was detailed in

the first subsection because the influencing effects of intersecting identities occurred

among each of the five other primary findings of this study, including that 'the full-force'

of SMS was bypassed as a result of each participant's social location as a racial minority

(Meyer, 2010). Particularly, the hope and optimism higher-order concept has relevance at

the intersection of racial identity in that decreased reactivity to sexuality-related prejudice

got a head start from prejudice related to participant's social location as a racial minority

(Meyer, 2010).

Operationally for findings of this study, hope and optimism represent a crossover

of positive emotion/positive outlook on life, and the presence of goals, dreams, and

aspiration for the future (Kwon, 2013; Seligman, 2011). Kwon (2013) posited that hope is

behind the motivation in goal pursuit when external obstacles arise, where Seligman

(2011) does not address hope. Per Kwon, optimism implies having positive expectations,

but per Seligman (2011) positive emotion is optimism involving a positive outlook on

life. Within the broader tenets of positive psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004;

Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), *Pillar 1–positive subjective experiences* (e.g., positive Attributions/Appraisals), *Pillar 2 – character strengths and virtues*, and flourishing well-being capture a wide-array of intrinsically valued experiences similar to Kwon's intent for hope *and* optimism.

Resilience building and maintenance. Participants of this study consistently demonstrated the generation of more positive appraisals (e.g., "this bad experience has redemptive qualities"); less self-blame (i.e., "not a problem with myself, its systems of [heteronormativity]"); more positive attributions (e.g., "I can learn from this"); and increased feelings of empowerment (e.g., "I *can* positively influence…") in discriminatory situations (a.k.a., stressful events), particularly experiences of DSMS. These characteristics exceed Kwon's (2013) intent for the hope and optimism resilience factor because participants engage activities generated out of optimism.

Flourishing well-being/Flourishing Life. Kwon's (2013) and Seligman's (2011) perspective of optimism aligned (i.e., positive expectations and positive outlook on life). For both Kwon (2013) and Seligman (2011), the presence of goals, dreams, and aspirations for the future represent aspects of well-being in the area of hope and optimism. Each of the six (6) participants described goals they have in place that they are already working on, doing strategic planning for, or keeping on a list of other goals to which they aspire.

It is important to note here that hope and optimism are expanded in the Three Pillars model by Peterson & Seligman (2004). Positive subjective experiences (e.g., positive Attributions/Appraisals) capture a wide-array of intrinsically valued experiences,

including positive affective/emotional states, aspects of subjective well-being (i.e., happiness), resilience, and SRG (i.e., developmental crises resulting in strengths) (Erikson, 1959; Frankl, 1946/2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This is detailed later in this section related to flourishing well-being and concepts for improving strengths-based sexuality research.

Next, participants went beyond the intrinsic of feelings, motivation, and having positive expectations of hope and optimism; they engaged activities based on the virtue of optimism. Kwon (2013) concentrates on mechanisms LGB individuals use to overcome goal-related obstacles; his resilience factors do not reflect aftereffects from the success of goal achievement.

Meaningful Life

The guiding concept of intersectionality for meaningful life was included in the first subsection because the influencing effects of intersecting identities occurs among each of the five other primary findings of this study. Including that SMS was bypassed as a result of their social location as a racial minority (Meyer, 2010).

Participants of this study demonstrated the effects of existing resilience and how resilience is minimally maintained and, at most, strengthened. In the spirit of positive psychology, flourishing well-being includes a life of purpose and contribution, operationalized within the PERMA factor "meaningful life" (Seligman, 2011). A consistent factor to participant flourishing involved feeling a sense of purpose through contribution to others and a greater good. With focus on like others, other minorities, and

others who are marginalized, all participants contributed via activism, academic pursuits, and—with exception of one participant—employment situations.

Resilience building and maintenance. Kwon's (2013) resilience factors provided a lens to consider conditions, features, or characteristics associated with lowering reactivity to and buffering negative impact of societal prejudice toward sexuality orientation. Thus, the resilience factors model did not include detailed address of features post successful *reactivity to and buffering negative impact* of societal prejudice. Kwon's primary focus involved successful adaptation to social stressors—features of resilience building. Factors of maintaining resilience was not within the scope of Kwon's work—for which, at the time, almost no literature targeting LGBT individuals existed.

Flourishing well-being/flourishing life. Demonstrating that theirs is a meaningful life, participants of this study were intentionally engaged in contributory activities. Activism, academic pursuits, research, community service, teaching (e.g., sociology and psychology), and employment situations are included in the list of past, present, and planned engagement in activities of contribution. Again, it is important to recognize the intuitive illustration of altruistic concern for the well-being of others with the same as well as other marginalized identities that is manifested by these participants with flourishing well-being.

Accomplishments

   The guiding concept of intersectionality for accomplishments was detailed in the first subsection because the influencing effects of intersecting identities occurs among each of the five other primary findings of this study.

   Flourishing well-being/flourishing life. The PERMA factor "accomplishments" (Seligman, 2011) is operationalized as achieved or currently working toward important life accomplishments (i.e., set goals and met or meeting those goals). In this way the tenets of positive psychology targeting accomplishments extend beyond the optimism resilience factor, defined by Kwon (2013) as having positive expectations. Accomplishments is all about flourishing well-being and features of the flourishing life of participants. Results of this study suggest that accomplishments represent the demonstration of maintained resilience.

   All participants described that they have met previous goals and are in the process of meeting new goals; each has achieved and are currently working toward important life accomplishments. Participants of this study each described academic and activism goals. Five of the six study participants have advanced academic degrees, including one doctoral degree, and three are working toward doctoral credentials which includes addressing sexuality or minority research gaps. All participants are currently engaged or have been engaged in activism or advocacy for positively influencing the visibility of and addressing issues related to individuals with bisexual identities.

   Participants' past, current, and planned future work toward important life accomplishments in social justice-related areas was typically described with qualities of

reciprocity; helping the self which will also benefit similar others. Relying on the PERMA factors (i.e., positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishments) derived from M.E.P. Seligman's (2011) Authentic Happiness theory and Well-being theory, participant accomplishments—achieved or currently working toward important life accomplishments—demonstrated maintained resilience.

The preceding section detailed how study findings align with or may contribute to expanding previous findings. Foremost, by looking at flourishing well-being at the intersection of bisexual sexuality orientation and dual or multi-ethnicity, this study aligns with what we know about how resilience toward stigma-related prejudice may be achieved and maintained. Particularly, that the origin of resilience-building and subsequent stress buffering of sexuality related prejudice may occur at the intersection of marginalized identities.

More specifically, adaptive resilience-building toward stigma began early in life because of participant raciality[13]. Participants subsequently exhibited stress buffering features including a broad and inclusive worldview, manifested and actualized altruism, honed perspectives of positive appraisal and attribution, demonstrated emotional intelligence[14], and pursued informal and formal education to better understand and advocate for themselves, others like them and other marginalized populations.

Limitations of Findings

Limitations to trustworthiness that arose from execution of the study. To justify trustworthy, credible, and valid qualitative research requires clearly conveying that research study processes are sound, the rigor engaged in design and implementation, and

the effort yields valuable findings (Wilkinson, 2015; Yardley, 2015). Assessing quality in

this qualitative research study involved four principles per Yardley (2000) including

sensitivity in context; commitment to rigor; transparency and coherence; and impact and

importance (Smith et al., 2009, pp. 180-183; Yardley, 2000; Yardley, 2015). Careful

implementation of the study protocol and interview schedule as designed restricted

limitations to trustworthiness during execution of this study. Strict adherence to

Yardley's (2000) guidelines as detailed in Chapter 3 (refer to Issues in Trustworthiness

section) allowed assessment of validity and quality at all stages of implementation (refer

to the Evidence of Trustworthiness section in Chapter 4).

The Chapter 3 Limitations section included concerns related to the primary

researcher being a novice in academic research, rapport building with interviewees,

researcher bias, and two-way virtual audio and visual technology use. Strategies to

address these where engaged as proposed and the suspected concerns were non-issues

during study execution. Limitations involving the exclusion of monoracial participants

and transferability (i.e., generalizability) were also identified in Chapter 3.

Participants and recruitment process. Implementation of the snowball

recruitment strategy occurred following primary and back-up recruitment efforts failed to

procure 5 to 10 participants. The Walden University IRB approved contact and request to

distribute research solicitation information by the participants already interviewed for this

study. The study sample of this research was small as IPA is concerned with the detailed

account of individual experience of similar phenomena by a homogenous sample of

people with similar characteristics. Still, the small sample size may contribute to findings' limitations and should be considered related to findings conclusions.

*Theoretical transferability***.** The IPA approach allows theoretical transferability, which means that similar subsequent studies can be conducted with other groups, thus, gradually, more general claims can be made. Immediate claims are bounded by the group studied but an extension to others can be considered by the reader[15] of study findings who assesses the evidence about their existing professional and experiential knowledge (Smith et al., 2009).

The participants of this study reflected the academic and activist entities from which they were recruited. The low quantity and homogeneity of the study sample may be a limitation to applicability of findings with others having bisexual sexuality identity.

*Gender expression of male participants***.** Participants of this study had to be cisgender (i.e., self-identity conforms with the gender that corresponds to their biological sex) though gender expression could be fluid or androgynous (see Killermann, 2017). Processing gender expression was not a facet of this study, and may be a study limitation. Both of the biological males of this study described engaging gender expression exploration where the females did not.

Participant #6: Mark (pseudonym) was Native American and Caucasian descent and identified as two-spirit—intersex, androgynous, feminine males and masculine females held in high respect—and is further contemplating that he might be Winkte, a person with special medicine per certain Native American cultures. Mark conveyed that he wanted to fully embrace his two-spirit identity by exploring what that means in terms

of being gender fluid in "a more nuanced, more appreciative way." Participant #1: Andy (pseudonym) expressed that his sexuality and racial identities contributed to his awareness of gender expression; particularly that he is intentionally exploring or considering the fit of masculinity as an applicable description of "how he does gender."

Mark and Andy demonstrated that the expectation of masculinity in biological males represents a marginalized identity. Their self-awareness indicates emotional openness and emotional intelligence. However, gender exploration was not a feature of this study and is considered a limitation.

Recommendations

The following section details recommendations for areas of further research. In this section I also suggest implementation practices that may advance consistency in sexuality research approaches learned from execution of guiding frameworks and concepts. First, I discuss areas of research targeting bisexual sexuality orientation, mixed race and the compounding influence of those identities where they intersect. Next, I detail recommendations related to data collection and distribution. Lastly, related to consistency in sexuality research practices I propose an operationalization of bisexuality and tenets to explore for advancing a strengths-based perspective tool.

Recommendations for Further Research: Strengths of Study

Recommendation #1: Explore the contributing factors for identity commitment to fluid/non-binary sexuality orientation (a.k.a., bisexual sexuality orientation) despite stigma-related social disapproval. Study participants distinctly accepted their attraction (etc.) to more than one gender, though they conveyed sexuality

identity label variation (i.e., queer, fluid, two-spirit, and bisexual). Participants of this study emphasized that lifelong exposure to positive, healthy perspectives of biraciality and multiraciality, as well as rich cultural familial heritages made same gender attraction as much an option as different gender attraction. Although indications of social disapproval, including DSMS, generated some reflection and isolated concealment occasions (see Meyer, 2010), participants assertively committed to the option of bisexual sexuality orientation.

      Recommendation #2: Through the lens of intersectionality, explore features and characteristics of bisexual, biracial and multiracial individuals who achieve and maintain flourishing well-being. The flourishing bisexual, biracial and multiracial participants of this study asserted that it is imperative to have reciprocally good relationships in your life. Foremost and specifically, prioritizing being with people and groups that affirm and validate sexuality and ethnic identities, have common identities, interests, values, and who generate a sense of belonging. Conversely, participants indicated setting and executing firm boundaries toward non-affirming individuals and groups, including disengaging from those who are anti-bisexual and do not seem to understand how "race/racism works" (e.g., "you look exotic").

      The bisexual, biracial and multiracial participants of this study indicated that different ethnicity and phenotype-presenting parents exemplified/modeled diversity, as did siblings. Familial relationships initiated and sustained affirmation for biracial and multiracial identities, subsequently initiated resilience-building, then supported sustained resilience related to racism which manifested successful adaptive functioning when

experiencing DSMS. The features of familial support should be further researched to reveal its influence on emotional processing skill development related to well-being maintenance by bisexual, biracial and multiracial adults. Additional research is also needed on acquiring and maintaining affirming social support networks when the family does not provide the foundation.

The majority of study participants demonstrated advanced emotional processing skills, including emotional intelligence and emotional maturity that should be further explored. For example, participants demonstrated altruistic concern for the well-being of others with same and other marginalized identities including engaging educational pursuits related to understanding dual identity with intent to use education in service of others. Per the resilience model for sexuality identity, participants were adept at emotional acceptance and appraisal of emotions.

However, beyond the resilience factors model, participants asserted that their open-mindedness about sexuality orientation options is attributed to having different-ethnicity/race parents and experiences emphasizing their own unique ethnicity. Distinguishing whether or not advanced emotional processing is a core feature of flourishing should be further explored. I recommend additional research on emotional processing practices and skill development, including the characteristics and features of social supports that initiate, expand, and sustain.

Again, in the sexuality-focused resilience model, emphasis includes hope and optimism (e.g., positive outlook on life and motivation behind goal pursuit). Study participants exhibited intentionality in their sense of hope and optimism by having future

aspirations with distinct goals and plans in place. Going beyond hope and optimism, participants had distinct accomplishments behind them indicative of the results of their aspirations; goal planning and engagement; and active contribution (i.e., activism, teaching, and supporting) in the service of others with similar identities and other marginalized identities indicative of leading a meaningful life. I recommend research to better understand how the influence of these intersecting identities contribute to the perpetual hope, optimism and motivation to act and engage.

Participants of this study conveyed tools and experiences which helped them embrace and integrate their identities—tools which seemed to directly influence developing an expanded and diverse worldview. I recommend further research comparing individuals with and without intersecting identities to identify factors which generate or hinder an expanded and diverse worldview.

Recommendation #3: Explore ways to improve the quality and increase the amount of data/information collection and distribution systems by providers of counseling and support programs, and in scientific and population-based research (e.g., NHIS, BRFSS, NSSHB, and Healthy people 2020) related to bisexual, biracial and multiracial individuals. To advance the rights, health, and behaviors of bisexual, biracial and multiracial adults requires more responsive and affirmative social policies which rely on more and accurate data about this population. Improving the quality of data collection related to bisexual, biracial and multiracial individuals requires the culturally-competent application of the intersectionality lens, including distinguishing race from ethnicity (see Footnote 13) and using a consistent operationalization of bisexuality (see

Footnote 16). Improved sexuality distinctions, particularly bisexual sexuality but not excluding LGT, is required for better quality data collection.

Along with distinguishing race from ethnicity, data collection must capture more than one ethnic identity. Capturing more than one ethnic identity may be improved with follow-up inquiry related to the influence of phenotype-presentation. The present study demonstrated that a distinction of ethnicity from race is imperative to positive well-being, as racism typically originates based on appearance.

Thus, recommendations include exploration of experiences and effects of *phenotype-presentation*. Specifically, individuals with indistinct/ambiguous, distinct/accurate, and distinct/inaccurate to ethnicities phenotype-presentation. All participants of this study experienced assumptions based on racial presentation; most based on "racial" ambiguity.

Two participants presented a single phenotype, one Black and one White, with invisibility of their multicultural heritage generating acknowledged distress. Findings of this study suggest that *phenotype-presentation* impacts the lived experience of the individual with more than one ethnicity. Thus, recommended improvement to population-based information collection/distribution systems includes opportunity to share phenotype-presentation and subsequent experience.

Improved data/information distribution systems may influence more responsive and affirmative social policies that advance the rights, health, and behaviors of bisexual, biracial and multiracial adults. Thus, decision and policy makers need access to more and accurate data about this population. A potential starting place involves population-based

information distribution systems (e.g., BRFSS; Healthy People, 2020; NHIS, NSSHB).
Decision makers who are aware of sexuality distinctions and the influence of more than
one ethnicity on individuals are positioned to advance informed social policy.

For example, social policy generated from information of this study may
influence increased visibility of bisexuality sexuality orientation as a distinct identity
with unique impact on rights and wellness. Also, social policy generated from findings of
this study might influence increased awareness, visibility, and needs of individuals with
more than one ethnicity. More broadly, social policies could begin to advance the
elimination of misguided categories of sexuality and race (see Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017;
Stevenson, 2016).

Finally, improved data collection and distribution includes a balanced regard for
strengths and disparities. Proactive and positive perspectives are underrepresented and
under-reported, particularly for people "attracted to and sexually engaging males,
females, and gender diverse persons; and/or self-identifying as bisexual".
Recommendation #4 details a suggestion for exploring a consistent approach to
examining LGB strengths and resources[16].

**Recommendation #4: Continue to explore tenets, principles, and concepts of
positive psychology to develop a consistent approach for strengths-based sexuality
research.** Balanced representation of strengths-based and deficit-based sexuality research
is needed for incorporation in clinical training and practice. However, a consistent
approach to examining LGB strengths and resources motivated by positive expectations
is needed first. This strengths-based sexuality research study was guided by tenets of

positive psychology (Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) as recommended by Vaughan et al. (2014), and the resilience factors model (Kwon, 2013). Application of the intersectionality concept (e.g., Cole, 2009 [race, gender, age, geography, culture, socioeconomic status, disability, and education]; IOM, 2011; NIH, 2016) revealed differences, similarities, and possible improvements among tenets of positive psychology and Kwon's (2013) resilience factors in developing a consistent approach to examining strengths of the bisexual, biracial and multiracial adults of this study[17].

Study participants demonstrated altruism, emotional intelligence, emotional maturity, and described active contribution toward a life of purpose as posited in positive psychology's Three Pillars (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and the PERMA factors (see Seligman, 2011). Findings of this study suggest that narrowing the search for a consistent approach to examining strengths across sexuality diversities involves broadening the Three Pillars philosophies of positive psychology to integrate:

- Kwon's (2013) emotional openness concept. Specifically, adding character strength virtue(s) for accepting and processing emotion during stress, and emotional processing *reciprocity* (i.e., giving and receiving) involving social supports. Positive psychology posits that positive emotion means a positive outlook on life, where Kwon's emotional openness factor is broader and takes into account sexual minority stress.

- The concept of Intersectionality. The findings of this study suggest that the origin and maintenance-mechanisms of strengths will more accurately be identified by examining the influencing, compounding effects—both positive and negative (i.e. SRG detailed below) —of marginalized social identities. Per the present study, sensitivity to the influence of ethnic and cultural diversity, and sexuality diversity on lived experience is an imperative.

Regarding stress related growth (SRG) and racism, Meyer (2010) emphasized, and study findings here support, that individual, and group-level resilience resources developed from lifelong disadvantaged group membership reveal psychological strengths (Meyer, 2010). Meyer (2010) and Moradi et al. (2010) noted that LGB of color experienced more stress and more resilience (Meyer, 2010; Moradi et al., 2010). The biracial and multiracial, bisexual participants of this study exemplified this concept.

Responsibility of institutionalized structures. Meyer (2014, 2015) also conveyed caution for aspects of positive psychology and the exploration of sexual minorities' health and well-being. He cautioned about the potential for positive psychology's Three Pillar Model to focus on responsibility of the individual and ignore the responsibility of institutionalized structures (e.g., pervasive structural racism and heteronormative bias). The results of this study concerning SRG from racism and DSMS support Meyer's caution. Thus, narrowing the search for a consistent approach to examining strengths across sexuality diversities may involve broadening the Three Pillars philosophies of positive psychology to integrate:

- The responsibility of institutionalized structures for strengths and resource building, or a critical approach to social justice (e.g., Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). To positively influence institutionalized prejudice, Meyer (2015) suggests the simultaneous focus on interventions that attempt to correct the "pathogenic social environment" as well as helping LGB individuals become resilient in coping with the environment (p. 211). Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) posit that critical social justice recognizes inequality as deeply embedded in the fabric of society (i.e., structural), and actively seeks to change this.

A critical approach to social justice refers to specific theoretical perspectives recognizing that society is stratified (i.e., divided and unequal) in significant and far-reaching ways along social group lines that include race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. Ideally, addressing institutionalized racism and heteronormativity as proposed by Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) would advance experiences for individuals with typically marginalized identities to solely encounter *nurturing what is best*, per philosophies underpinning positive psychology. Participants of this study demonstrated resiliencies achieved and maintained for having identities outside dominant social/societal norms. Specifically, chronic and acute experiences of racism and heteronormativity were opportunities for participants to successfully develop adaptive functioning—a key tenet of resilience.

Increasing the frequency and quality of strengths-based sexuality research inclusive of intersectionality concept may result in, as Vaughan et al., (2014) suggested, incorporation in clinical training and practice. Methodological approaches, findings and

recommendations of this research study promote potential improvements to consistent and higher quality strengths-based sexuality research, that may result in improved and increased portrayal of bisexual sexuality orientation, and biracial and multiracial bisexuals in mainstream media, societal messages, and policy discussion.

Recommendations for Further Research: Limitations of Study

Recommendations for further research related to study limitations involve waning flourishing well-being (i.e., social and personal influences that hinder resilience), quantitative research to achieve generalizability, and expanding the participant research sample beyond the homogeneity of the present study sample. An important note about study limitations includes participant recruitment venues. The internet-based venues used for solicitation of bisexual adults may have contributed to all participants having advanced academic degrees; a recommendation in the next section involves expanding participant solicitation to a myriad of venues.

Recommendation #5: Explore influences of dissipating flourishing well-being in bisexual, biracial and multiracial women and men. One participant of this study qualified as a partially discrepant case (refer to Chapter 4, Discrepant Cases and Non-Confirming Data section). Lola (pseudonym) presented a sort of waning flourishing well-being and perspective of a flourishing life. Though stigma related to ethnicity and sexuality fostered resilience building across her life span, acute social and personal hindrances to positive characteristics and features occurred around the time of interview. Experiences of racism for Black phenotype-presentation in social support communities

and limited affirmation for bisexual sexuality orientation from individual social supports

negatively influenced maintenance of Lola's flourishing well-being.

In addition, Lola—as did other study participants—acknowledged that

discriminatory "messages" from the current U.S. Presidential administration emphasized

the marginalization of her personal intersecting identities. Lola conveyed feeling a

general sense of unsafety because of ethnic and sexuality identities, a pervasive

characteristic noted in deficit-based sexuality research. Recommendations for further

research include exploring bisexual, biracial and multiracial individuals whose

flourishing well-being has dissipated or is dissipating.

Recommendation #6: To achieve generalizability, engage a quantitative

research approach using the higher-order concepts of this study as variables. As

mentioned, methodologically the findings of this study cannot be generalized to a broader

context or population. However, using findings of this study to accommodate getting to

generalizability has implications on multiple levels. The combination of a homogenous

sample, IPA approach, and the consistent findings of this study presents a meaningful

starting point for a quantitative study with a much larger and more diverse sample of

individuals with bisexual sexuality orientation.

Specifically, the major study findings (i.e., higher-order concepts: intersecting

social identities, social support, emotional openness, hope and optimism, meaningful life,

and accomplishments) can easily be developed into multiple questions typical of

quantitative research. To further accommodate generalizability, a quantitative approach

might expand to include more identities in recruitment (i.e., intersecting identities), other

and multiple sexualities (i.e., ABGHILQT), gender expression, mono-ethnicity (i.e., including white and non-white), phenotype distinction, disability, age, and religion.

I further recommend an expansion of recruitment/solicitation venues to engage a more broadly diverse pool of individuals with bisexual sexuality orientation. Participant recruitment venues for this study included internet-based communities promoting bisexual sexuality orientation members. Recruitment for participants was limited to and must expand beyond solicitation of and through the American Psychological Association Division 44: The Society for Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) members and subscribers, and Division 44 sponsored bisexual and LGBT support/resource organizations: BiNetUSA.org, Bisexual Resource Center, and the Fenway Institute (Boston, MA). The participants of this study reflected the academic[18] and activist pools from which they were recruited; solicitation from less specific environments may reveal, for example, altruism in practice beyond activism, settings of academia, and formal psychology-related programming.

Recommendation #7: Other facets of the bisexual experience frequently advised for further exploration. The literature supporting this study indicated common areas of further research targeting people with bisexual sexuality orientation including outness vs. concealment of identity and relationship patterns (e.g., Kwon, 2013; Meyer, 2003). Though this study did not target these topics, outness/disclosing sexuality identity was conveyed by all participants of this study as an imperative. Only relationship patterns did not emerge consistently across participants of the present study.

Implications for Positive Social Change

"…[B]ecause of the unique status of sexuality as a site of intense resistance, control, stigma, and straight-forward social political battling," there is onus for sexuality researchers to engage ethicality responsive to those dynamics (Tolman and Diamond, 2014b, p. 22)**.** Foremost, the intent of this study is to emphasize the prevalence of bisexual sexuality orientation. Participants of this study used the terms bisexual, fluid sexuality, two-spirit, and queer to indicate "sexual attraction to males, females, and gender diverse persons; and/or self-identifying as bisexual; and/or sexually engaging with males, females, and gender-diverse persons" (per Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2016). The prioritized implication for social change of this study is elevating awareness that bisexual sexuality orientation is extant, stable, and more prevalent than any present data source can confirm.

Additional implications for positive social change generated by this study include individuals with bisexual sexuality orientation and more than one ethnicity enjoying affirmation, access to strategies for building resilience, and improved health and well-being. Bisexual, biracial and multiracial individuals and their families, service providers, researchers, public institutions, and decision makers have more information about the influence and importance of recognizing and considering intersecting identities. The implications for social change that come from engaging more strengths-based research, particularly sexuality and intersecting identity research, involve improved consistency and reliability. Lastly, findings of this study have implications for affecting

social policy to advance sexual health, rights, and behaviors of bisexual, biracial and multiracial citizens.

Individual Level

Information about the flourishing lives of participants of this study was indicative of the positive well-being that leads to improved over all health; no study participant conveyed information about acute or chronic physical or psychological health issues. The bisexual, biracial and multiracial adults of this study described that the immediate and direct affirmation from social support networks advanced flourishing.

Participants seemed to have less psychic burden, thus more energy and time to contribute to their own contentment (e.g., goal achievement) and to others' knowledge and well-being enhancement. The literature posits that this results in an increase in lifespan, a decrease in disparity, and decrease in negative health outcomes. The literature noted that for bisexual individuals, better understanding of resilience, access to strategies for building resilience, and affirmation may reduce stress effects of DSMS and increase well-being (see Diamond, 2008; Fox, 2006; Lewis et al., 2012; Kwon, 2013).

Affirmation and declaration of a mixed-race (i.e., more than one race and dual/multiracial) identity is to rescue racial identities from distortion and erasure by incorporating all of a person's racial and ethnic backgrounds (see Daniel et al., 2014; Gordon, 1995 and Ifekwunigwe, 2015). The participants of this study demonstrated that incorporation of their ethnic/cultural backgrounds in entirety is integral to positive well-being; and affirmation for intersecting identities is integral to flourishing well-being.

Family and Support Network Level

Better understanding about bisexual sexuality orientation resulted in improved reciprocal relationships with the bisexual, biracial and multiracial adults of this study. Positive relationships contribute to increased positive well-being for everyone involved. Positively informed family members and support networks may be positioned to educate others in their extended social networks which leads to broader embrace of sexuality diversity. Information from this study affirms families' different ethnic and cultural origins, and emphasizes the impact of familial pride and expression of pride for cultural roots. Informed family members and support networks are positioned to educate others which may influence the amelioration of racism and advance acceptance of ethnic and cultural diversity.

Organizational Level

Informed healthcare providers may become better health care providers and advance improved health care systems. Increased competence by providers means better services on a broader scale including improved counseling services and more effective support programs. Information from this study potentially impacts school programs which may result in, for example, decreasing bullying behavior and suicide and increase student performance (see Elia, 2014). In addition, informed community organizations and faith communities are positioned to foster positive identities, advancement of equal rights, and positive emotion facilitation.

Social Policy

This study focused on flourishing well-being. Flourishing means the absence of negative mental illness which should be central to debate about health-care coverage and costs. Rather than focusing on health-care delivery and insurance, focus is on increasing and protecting the number of individuals who are healthy and driving down the need for health care (per Keyes, 2009). Social policy leading to positive well-being potentially effects a decrease in healthcare system cost strain.

Diversity that is visible in schools, community organizations, and faith communities potentially becomes considered when social policy is developed. Misguided categories of sexuality and "race" in social policy could potentially begin to be eliminated (see Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; Stevenson, 2016). Informed providers advance sexual health, sexual rights, and sexual behaviors. Social policy generated from present study findings may influence increased visibility of bisexuality sexuality orientation as a distinct identity with unique impact on rights and wellness.

Bostwick and Hequembourg (2013) asserted that exploring the positive or protective functions acquired through a bisexual or fluid sexuality, and assets (i.e., positive or beneficial aspects) associated with a bisexual identity advance understanding of and reveal the diversity of human sexuality.

Also, social policy generated from information provided from this study may influence increased awareness about and visibility of individuals with more than one ethnicity. Awareness about the influence and impact of phenotype-presentation may further advance a broader definition of diversity. Single-ethnicity individuals and groups

may acquire a better understanding of and sensitivity toward the impact of identities for individuals with more than one ethnicity and behave more proactively from an informed perspective.

Bisexuality visibility, sexuality research and social change. Bisexual sexuality remains underrepresented, or inaccurately represented, in prominent sexuality literature. For example, a single issue (June 2018) of the *APA Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity* (PSOGD) journal (Founding Editor, J. C. Gonsiorek, 2013) nearly doubled the bisexuality-focused content in the same journal since originating publication (Pollitt et al., 2018). The PSOGD journal is a source of data from the behavioral sciences for expanding critical thinking, theory and practice in the areas of sexual orientation and gender diversity. The PSOGD journal aspires to be an information source when social policy decisions involve sexual orientation and gender diversity (Gonsiorek, 2013).

Raising the visibility of bisexuality effects positive shifts in attitudes and practices concerning sexuality. Raising the visibility of positive functions acquired through a bisexual or fluid sexuality, and positive or beneficial aspects (i.e., assets) associated with a bisexual identity increase positive and proactive attention from meaningful entities. Positively influencing social policy about bisexual sexuality potentially is a contribution to citizens' well-being that leads to improved citizen engagement.

Methodological, theoretical, and/or empirical implications

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) attracts a researcher constituency interested in 'psychology in the real world' (i.e., applied psychology) (Smith et al., 2009). Particularly related to sexuality research, IPA is a form of qualitative analysis with an

increased appreciation of subjective stories and desire to learn from the experiences of participants (Frost et al., 2014). The execution and findings of this study potentially demonstrate improved sexuality research practices and outcomes. Foremost, the present study exemplifies that bisexual sexuality orientation is unique and distinct and offers an improved operationalization for bisexuality.

The empirical implications of this study include advancing greater accuracy in research practices and outcomes for this population. The same implications pertain to applying the lens of intersectionality to all research with human subjects. Though additional rigor is involved, more conscientious research practices include the intersectionality concept. Lastly, application of the intersectionality concept produces more accurate outcomes in experiential research.

Findings of this study take sexuality researchers closer to developing a consistent tool for exploring strengths across sexualities, but particularly historically stigmatized sexualities. A consistent tool for exploring/identifying strengths of LGB individuals supports a balanced representation of disparities and strengths which means more accurate representation of the lived experience, traits and behaviors of the LGB population. Strengths-based perspectives further help to depathologize and affirm LGBTQ persons within psychological research and practice.

For this study, a strengths-based perspective revealed the protective factors that promote resilience in the context of minority stress. Strengths-based sexuality research enhances understanding of positive adaptation and psychological health. Understanding

strengths and positive traits/characteristics potentially advances discussion about how LGB individuals flourish (or thrive) in their lives and enhance the world around them.

Returning to application of the concept of intersectionality, this study advances the potentiality for developing a universal tool (i.e., general population, sexuality-related, and ethnicity inclusive) for strengths-based research. A universal tool may advance comparisons between most of the world's population and cisgender, Caucasian, economically secure, non-disabled, young (i.e., ageism exempt), post-secondary educated, biological males, for which implication specificity exceeds the scope of the present study.

The implementation and findings of this study help us know a little more about the tenets, principles, and models of positive psychology related to the LGB population (see Vaughan et al., 2014). Implications involve broadening tenets, principles, and models to be inclusive of sexuality diversity and ethnic diversity distinctions. The implementation and findings of this study support Cole's (2009) and others' (e.g., Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; IOM, 2011; Lorde, 1984/2007; NIH, 2016; Rich, 1980) recommendations regarding the concept of intersectionality. Implications involve elevating the concept to a theory applicable to most research with human subjects.

Recommendations for Practice

A critical approach to social justice. The present study focused on flourishing well-being in adults with two marginalized social identities: bisexual sexuality orientation and dual-ethnicity or multiraciality. Exploring the positive or protective functions

acquired through a bisexual or fluid sexuality, and assets (i.e., positive or beneficial aspects) associated with a bisexual identity advances understanding of and reveal the diversity of human sexuality (see Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2013). Affirmation and declaration of a mixed-race (i.e., dual/multiracial) identity is to rescue racial identities from distortion and erasure by incorporating all of a person's racial and ethnic backgrounds (Daniel et al., 2014; Gordon, 1995; Ifekwunigwe, 2015).

Providers of counseling and support programs, as well as researchers must fully understand context, constructs, and impact of stigma-related prejudice and discrimination based on socially constructed classification systems. However, providers and researchers must prioritize being culturally responsive and competent in practice; this is the contribution of providers and researchers to ameliorate sexism and racism, and elevate understanding, accepting, and embracing diversity. For example, race is a socially-constructed system of classifying humans based on particular phenotypical characteristics (e.g., skin color, hair texture, and bone structure). Ethnicity refers to a group of people bound by a common language, culture, spiritual tradition, and/or ancestry (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Incorporating critical social justice perspectives into to practice addresses racism, and other social inequities.

A critical approach to social justice refers to specific theoretical perspectives that recognize that society is stratified (i.e., divided and unequal) in significant and far-reaching ways along social group lines that include race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. Critical social justice recognizes inequality as deeply embedded in the fabric of society (i.e., as structural), and actively seeks to change this (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. xx).

Nurturing what is best. Providers of counseling and support programs, and scientific researchers should intentionally approach recognizing, understanding, and fostering an individual's strengths and positive traits/characteristics. Guided by cultural competence, providers and researchers must engage from proactive and positive perspectives, and affirm and validate societally marginalized identities.

Study findings in practice. Providers of counseling and support programs and scientific research must advance emotional processing skills and support emotional processing that target identity exploration, identity integration, resource connection building (e.g., support groups/communities) and engagement. Providers should foster goal setting, pursuit, and accomplishment in areas of contribution that generate hope, optimism, and a sense of purpose in bisexual, biracial and multiracial individuals.

Sexuality researchers have much work to do to match the amount of strengths-based literature with the availability of deficit and disparities information. Particularly involving the dedicated focus on bisexual sexuality orientation issues. Accomplishing the former requires a consistent tool for capturing strengths, and the latter involves both separating L-G-B data and making clear and accurate sexuality distinctions.

Implementation findings in practice. The operationalization for bisexual sexuality promoted per this study is credited to Pallotta-Chiarolli (2016): people attracted to males, females, and gender diverse persons; and/or self-identifying as bisexual; and/or sexually engaging with males, females, and gender-diverse persons (Also see, Footnote 16). The findings and participants of this study demonstrated that sexuality is fluid and not binary (i.e., either gay or straight) per societal heteronormativity. Understanding the

complexities and subjective lived experiences of sexuality and racial and ethnicity-related phenomena is essential for improved basic social scientific knowledge used to inform responsive and affirmative social policies. Responsive and affirmative social policies potentially advance the rights, health, and behaviors of bisexual, biracial and multiracial individuals. Improved population-based information collection and distribution systems that include clear and distinct sexuality identifiers, and the opportunity to accurately represent more than one ethnicity potentially increases visibility of bisexual sexuality orientation, as well as awareness, visibility, and affirmation of dual and multi-ethnicities.

Conclusion

This qualitative study explored the adaptive functioning processes flourishing bisexual, biracial/dual-ethnicity and multiracial/multi-ethnicity women and men use to develop resiliency toward sociocultural factors promoting chronic stressors. Interpretative phenomenological analysis advanced exploration of causes for flourishing well-being and characteristics of flourishing lives. Participants were English speaking from across the United States, ranged in age from 23 years to 55 years of age and maintained their bisexual-sexuality identity between 5 to 20+ years.

Six social and personal influences emerged from the lived experiences shared by participants of this study on factors, including intuitive characteristics, that advanced development and maintenance of resilience toward stigma-related prejudice. All participants intentionally engaged identity exploration and had healthy integration of both marginalized identities, which originated from different ethnicity and phenotype-presenting parents and siblings exampling/modeling diversity. Participants described a

good life including multiple reciprocal and meaningful relationships with diverse people/groups involving affirmation and validation for both identities.

Participants' flourishing well-being involved emotional openness about feelings and capacity to set proactive boundaries or disengage when others made anti-bisexual assumptions. Learning and growing, helping others learn and grow, and helping others feel they belonged was described by all participants. Contribution and making the world a better place were also consistent across participants.

This study emphasizes the prevalence of bisexual sexuality orientation and mixed-ethnicity/race identities to elevate awareness within psychological research and practice. Bisexual sexuality orientation (a.k.a., fluid sexuality) is extant and stable; along with all sexuality diversity, stigma must be ameliorated at all levels and replaced with affirmation. Individuals with more than one ethnicity/racial (a.k.a., mixed-race and dual/multiracial) identity require affirmation of all of their racial and ethnic backgrounds, rescuing racial identities from distortion and erasure on all levels.

This study may contribute to more biracial and multiracial bisexual persons having access to strategies for building resilience, and improved health and well-being. Everyone—bisexual, biracial and multiracial individuals and their families, service providers, researchers, public institutions, and decision makers—may now have more information about the influence and importance of recognizing and considering intersecting identities. The lived experiences shared by participants of this study have implications for affecting social policy to advance sexual health, rights, and behaviors of bisexual, biracial and multiracial citizens.

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Footnotes

[1] Cisgender means that biological sex (i.e., male or female) and gender identity are congruent. Gender *expression* – femininity and masculinity – for my study participants may be fluid, *and* include androgyny (i.e., a gender expression that has elements of both femininity and masculinity). Transgender describes a person who lives as a member of a gender (i.e., their gender identity) other than that assigned at birth based on anatomical sex (Killermann, 2017, Kindle location 3763). Thus, since biological sex and gender identity are incongruent, transgender individuals are excluded from my study.

[2] The three essays on sexuality by Sigmund Freud, were revised over the course of more than 30 years, from 1905 – 1938. These essays have been both translated into English and reproduced to include multiple editor's commentary.

[3] According to Freud, the human sexual instinct is deeply rooted in the desire for sensual body pleasure and has both source (a.k.a., aim) and object. The sexual object is the person toward whom the sexual instinct proceeds. The sexual aim is the act toward which the instinct tends. Per Freud, sexual instinct is entirely about satisfaction while the object is irrelevant.

[4] The Decennial Census and the American Community Survey do not include direct questions regarding sexual orientation information. These are the two prominent U.S. federal population estimate data sources (refer U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau).

[5] Tolman and Diamond specify that this presentation of human sexuality is for this moment in time. "…and to place a marker specifying what we know at this particular historical moment."

[6]Demita Frazier, Beverly Smith, and Barbara Smith were the primary authors of the Combahee River Collective Statement in 1977. Retrieved from: https://www.blackpast.org/aah/combahee-river-collective-1974-1980.

[7] Both the DSM system and the VIA system are criticized for the validity and reliability of diagnostic categories. See Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014 for details.

[8] Bisexual sexuality along with transgender and others (i.e., queer; people of color; those of diverse spiritual, socio-economic, or ability identities) is least represented in LGBT strengths-based literature (See Vaughan et al., 2014 for details).

[9] Focusing on the particular rather than the universal is in contrast to most psychology, which is 'nomothetic', relating to the study or discovery of general scientific laws, and concerned with making claims at the group or population level, and with establishing general laws of human behavior (Smith et al., 2009, p. 29).

[10]Killermann (2017) provided insight to an inclusive, cognitively complex understanding of gender diversity. Along with detail that emphasizes the challenges associated with operationalizing the transgender identity label, he described transgender sexuality. According to Killermann (2017) transgender sexuality can be defined by individuals who *choose* either (a) to self-identify as straight, gay, bi, lesbian, or pansexual (or others, using their gender identity as a basis); or (b) to describe their sexuality using other-focused terms like gynesexual, androsexual, or skoliosexual (Killermann, 2017).

Gynesexual/gynephilic means being *primarily* sexually, romantically and/ or emotionally attracted to *some* woman, females, and/ or femininity. Androsexual/androphilic means being *primarily* sexually, romantically and/ or emotionally attracted to *some* men, males, and/ or masculinity. Skoliosexual refers to being *primarily* sexually, romantically and/ or emotionally attracted to *some* genderqueer, transgender, transsexual, and/ or non-binary people (Killermann, 2017 from glossary [Kindle location 3430/3795] of *A Guide to Gender: The Social Justice Advocate's Handbook* [2nd Edition]). Though a legitimate, and respected, option related to gender, the diversity (a.k.a., fluidity) of transgender sexuality exceeds the scope of the present study.

[11] It is important to emphasize here, that this study will engage a technical review of the preliminary transcript produced by the NVivo program to ensure transcription accuracy of each participant's original account. The technical review involves rigorously examining the digitally produced transcript while simultaneously listening to the audio playback. Edits to NVivo-generated transcripts during this technical review solely incorporate misinterpreted or missing verbiage to reflect verbatim (i.e., precise and literal) alignment with the audio recording.

[12] Reflexivity represents the explicit consideration (i.e., understanding the contextual influence) of the process of transparency for how any aspect of the study (e.g., study design, development of interview questions, interview schedule, analysis of transcript, etc.) is specifically influenced by the researcher (Smith et al., 2009).

[13] Race is a socially constructed system of classifying humans based on particular phenotypical characteristics (skin color, hair texture, and bone structure, etc.). Ethnicity refers to a group of people bound by a common language, culture, spiritual tradition, and/or ancestry (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

[14] Emotional intelligence - the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically.

[15] Note to reader: Reader imposes their perspective on the researcher making sense of the study participant's experience. One of the principles to justifying trustworthy, credible, and valid qualitative research is transparency and coherence. Though transparency and coherence start with how clearly and thoroughly the stages of the research process are described in writing by the researcher, they also require informing the reader of their own position in the IPA approach; the reader must be told that they impose their perspective on the researcher making sense of the study participant's experience (Yardley, 2000; 2015).

[16] Freud, Kinsey, and Klein validated legitimacy and stability of bisexuality. These seminal researchers indicated that a certain degree of fluidity is a general property of sexuality. Current U.S. population-level estimates report that bisexual women and men make up the majority of the LGB population (Copen et al., 2016; Gates, 2011; Herbenick, Reece, Schick, Sanders, Dodge, & Fortenberry, 2010a, 2010b; Hill et al., 2016). The findings and participants of this study demonstrated that their sexuality is fluid and not binary (i.e., either gay or straight) per societal heteronormativity; but more consistent data is imperative to de-stigmatizing fluid/non-binary sexuality orientation.

Operationalizing bisexual orientation, identity, and behavior. People who identify as bisexual are the largest and fastest growing portion of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ) community; 51% of the LGBQ population (Copen et al., 2016). That percentage is suspected to be higher but cannot be proven because, sexuality research lacks a consistent operationalization for bisexuality. Here is an option, used with the present study, defining bisexuality inclusive of orientation, identity and behavior offered by Pallotta-Chiarolli (2016): sexual attraction to males, females, and gender diverse persons; and/or self-identifying as bisexual; and/or sexually engaging with males, females, and gender-diverse persons (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2016). In operationalizing bisexuality, this distinction recognizes the sexuality of individuals whose self-identity does not conform (i.e., transgender) and does conform (i.e., cisgender) with the gender that corresponds to their biological sex.

[17] **Positive Psychology vs. Kwon's Resilience Factors.** Related to sexuality research, perspectives of positive psychology and the Resilience Factors Model are different in that the former presents as positioned in heteronormativity (see Meyer, 2014), and the latter in sexuality diversity (i.e., LG populations with limited inclusion of BT). Implementation and findings of this study suggest that a promising approach to strengths-based sexuality research rely on positive psychology principles (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) as a foundation, per Vaughan et al. (2014), with modification including integration of: 1) a perspective of sexuality diversity; 2) certain tenets of the Resilience Factors Model (Kwon, 2013); and 3) the concept of intersectionality (e.g., Cole, 2009; IOM, 2011; NIH, 2016).

Positive Psychology. The Three Pillars of positive psychology proposes positive subjective experiences, character strengths and virtue, and positive institutions or organizations as a systemic organization of strengths (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Positive psychology recognizes valued subjective experiences, positive individual traits, and positive communities and institutions "…that help individuals and communities, not just to endure and survive [i.e., cope], but also to flourish" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 13). In addition, Martin E. P. Seligman (2011), seminal authority of positive psychology, synthesized flourishing well-being as PERMA factors that include positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishments.

Resilience Factors Model. The resilience factors framework (Kwon, 2013) proposed constructs for stress buffering and lowering reactivity to prejudice to help LG individuals get to thriving. In this study, the Resilience Factors Model guided exploration of resilience in successful adaptation to social stressors correlated to sexuality-related stigma. Based on findings of the present study, only one of the three resilience factors proposed by Kwon are not satisfactorily represented in the tenets of positive psychology along with consideration for sexuality orientation-related adaptive functioning.

[18] *Education.* Five of six study participants have advanced academic degrees, including one doctoral degree, while three participants of this study are working toward doctoral credentials. Advanced education should be explored further to asses correlation among advanced scholarship, bisexual sexuality orientation, and flourishing well-being.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Central Question
How do bisexual, biracial and multiracial people make sense of possible causes for their flourishing well-being?

Research Questions
RQ1: What is the experience of coping with double sexual minority stigmatization in bisexual, biracial or multiracial men and women?
RQ2: What is the experience of resilience with double sexual minority stigmatization in bisexual, biracial and multiracial men and women?
RQ3: How do bisexual, biracial and multiracial men and women flourish in the face of double sexual minority stigmatization?

NOTE: When things are not talked about, that is significant, too. It wasn't important to them.

1. **Interview Q:** As a bisexual person [i.e., person who has attraction to and intimacy with females and males] -in as much detail as possible- talk to me about a flourishing life.
   Probes: What does it take to have that?
   Prompts: Can you tell me more about […]?

2. **Interview Q**: As a biracial/multiracial person, -in as much detail as possible- talk to me about a flourishing life.
   Probes: What does it take to have that?
   Prompts: Can you tell me more about […]?

   Separately, racial and sexual orientation identities can draw prejudice and discrimination, and [you] described many aspects of your flourishing life with your biracial/multiracial and bisexual identities separated,

3. **Interview Q(a)**: Tell me about a time when you experienced prejudice or discrimination for being ***biracial/multiracial or bisexual, or both?***
   Prompts: How did you handle it? How did you react or respond? How did you feel?
   Probe 1: What did you do to maintain or get yourself to a positive frame of mind when you experienced prejudice or discrimination?

4. **Interview Q(b)**: Tell me of another time you experienced prejudice or discrimination for being [*unchosen option*]?
   Probe 1: What did you do to maintain or get yourself to a positive frame of mind when you experienced prejudice or discrimination for [*unchosen option*]?

5. **Interview Q**: How does being both biracial/multiracial and bisexual influence or contribute to your flourishing life?
    Prompts: You described that being both biracial/multiracial and bisexual drew negative attention, yet you indicated 1) …, 2) …, and 3) … about the good life you've achieved; how do you think being both biracial/multiracial and bisexual helped you move beyond the negative experiences?
    Probe 1: How do others convey to you, affirmation for being both biracial/multiracial and bisexual?
    Probe 2: From where do affirmations come?

6. **Interview Q**: Tell me about a time when you felt really supported.
    Prompts: Talk about a time when someone or people in your life helped you feel supported; like "I am not alone in this"?
    Probes: Can you talk more about […]?

7. **Interview Q:** How do you work through difficult feelings/emotions.
    Prompts: When you have stressful experiences, or something distresses you, how do you process the emotions you feel?
    Probes: Can you talk more about […]?

8. **Interview Q:** Talk to me about plans or goals you have for the future.
    Prompts: What next steps do you have for your career, relationships, or family?
    Prompts: What are things you've dreamed about? Places you'd like to go, things you'd like to do?
    Probes: Can you talk more about […]?

9. **Interview Q:** Is there anything more you would like to say about any of the questions I've asked, or is there something you want to share that I have not asked you about?
    Template updated March 2017.

Appendix B: Screening Protocol

Criterion and Flourishing Well-being Check

(Collect this information in initial contact with potential participants)

Age _____ Identifier _____

This is an eligibility screening that will confirm qualifications for this study. As a reminder, this study is interested in the experiences of bisexual, biracial or multiracial people with a good/happy/fulfilling life (a.k.a., flourishing* well-being). If you meet the criteria for inclusion in the study, and you choose to participate, you will receive a $20 as a thank you for your time.

Confidentiality: Any information you provide will be kept confidential and private. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study. Instead, you will be known by a number (i.e. Participant 1, 2, 3, etc.).

Study procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:
1) Contact the researcher back by email, phone call, or text message, who will then send you an explanation of the research, and later an informed consent form and demographic survey.
2) Provide a hand-written or electronic signature on the informed consent form.
3) Schedule a 60 - 90-minute interview with the researcher using an agreed upon video telephone technology in a location of your choosing.
4) Answer interview questions that address the topic at hand (you don't have to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable)

Age: _____

Biological Sex: _____
      □ Female
      □ Male
      □ Intersex

Gender identity: _____
      □ Female
      □ Male
      □ Intersex
      □ Transgender (lives as a member of a gender other than that assigned at birth based on anatomical sex).
      □ Gender Fluid/Gender Queer (best described as a dynamic mix of boy and girl).

Screening protocol: Criterion Check
(Continued)

Age _____ Identifier _____

Gender Expression: _____
□ Female
□ Male
□ Androgyny (gender expression that has elements of both femininity and masculinity)
□ Gender Fluid/Queer a gender identity best described as a dynamic mix of boy and girl.
Sexual Orientation: _____
□ Self-Identifies as bisexual
□ Self-Identifies as fluid sexuality

Timeframe with established bisexual identity:

□ Less than 1 year □ 1 - 5 years □ 5 – 10 years □ 10 – 15 years □ 15 – 20 years

□ More than 20 years

□ Biracial   □ Multiracial

Race 1) _____

Race 2) _____

Race 3) _____ + _____

Check all of the following statements that APPLY to your life at this moment:

□ I have positive emotion (optimism, a positive outlook on life).
□ I regularly engage with others (e.g., socialize, belong to organizations, etc.).
□ I have many meaningful relationships (e.g., people to whom I can go to give and receive support).
□ I have a meaningful life (e.g., I perceive that I have a life of purpose and contribution).
□ I have important accomplishments or am working toward important accomplishments (e.g., set goals and met those goals).

* Flourishing refers to life going well and feeling good. Operationally, per Seligman (2011) flourishing well-being involves positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (a.k.a., PERMA).

Screening protocol: Criterion Check
(Continued)

Age _____ Identifier _____

Will you participate in this study if the interview is conducted via two-way virtual audio and visual communication platform, <u>and</u> with the audio only being recorded?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What is your preferred (two-way virtual audio and visual platform) communication platform?

☐ Skype/Contact Information:
☐ Facetime/ Contact Information:
☐ What's APP/Contact Information:
☐ Adobe Connect/ Contact Information:
☐ Other/ Contact Information:

Appendix C: Explanation of Study

Resilience Building in Biracial and Multiracial, Bisexual Adults: An Interpretative
Phenomenological Analysis
By
Melissa Swartz, MS, A.B.D.
Explanation of the Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study that will examine the experiences of flourishing biracial and multiracial bisexual adults. Specifically, bisexual women and men who develop resiliency toward prejudice and discrimination from homosexual and heterosexual individuals and communities (a.k.a., double sexual minority stigmatization). You were selected as a potential candidate for this research through list serves of the APA Division 44 Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues.

Currently, there is no research that examines the experiences of flourishing biracial and multiracial bisexual adults who develop resiliency toward double sexual minority stigmatization. The purpose of this research study is to gain understanding into the experiences of biracial and multiracial bisexual adults with flourishing well-being despite sociocultural factors promoting chronic stressors. All women and men of this study need to have flourishing well-being, identify as bisexual, and identify as either biracial or multiracial. All participants need to be between the ages of eighteen and sixty and cannot currently have emotional or mental disabilities that would interfere with their ability to participate and answer questions. An individual who is currently in crisis and who is not fluent in English is also ineligible for the study.

I am interested in hearing about your flourishing life. More specifically, I would love to know more about why you successfully overcome the adversity that typically comes with being bisexual. Lastly, I want to know more about how your bisexual and biracial/multiracial identities influence your flourishing life. Your story is significant; as the researcher, I hope that you sharing your story will allow me and those who read my research to understand how diverse bisexual sexuality can be, and the social and personal influences that play a role in the decisions bisexual women and men make in certain circumstances.

All interviews will be confidential and will be kept private by the researcher. I hope you are interested and able to participate in this research study. Please note that participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you are interested, please contact me back as soon as possible so I can provide you with a demographic survey and an Informed Consent form. If after reading this, you find you are ineligible for this study, I ask that you please contact me and leave the study. If you have any questions or concerns about anything, do not hesitate to contact me. My cell phone number is. Thank you for your time.

Regards, Melissa Swartz

Appendix D: Demographic Survey

Demographic Survey
(Collect this information after receiving signed Informed Consent Form from potential
participants)

Identifier

This study is interested in the experiences of bisexual, biracial or multiracial people with a good/happy/fulling life (a.k.a., flourishing well-being). You have met the criteria for inclusion in the study. After the interview, whether or not and you answer all the questions, you will receive a $20 as a thank you for your time. If at any time during the interview you choose not to continue, there is no consequence and you will still receive compensation.

Age:

Biological Sex [aka Gender]:   □ Female   □ Male

□ Self-Identified Bisexual

□ Biracial   □ Multiracial

What is your highest level of education completed?

Are you employed?
□ No
□ Yes. How would you classify the type of job you have?
_____

Residence by Regional Location:

□Northeast   □Southeast   □West   □Midwest   □Southwest

Appendix E: NIH Certificate

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Melissa Swartz** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 06/04/2017.

Certification Number: 2409751.

Appendix F: Graphic Representations: Individual Cases

P1/Andy

Superordinate theme/Emergent theme	Timestamp/Line#	Key Word(s)
Importance of other people		
Racial minority friends encouraged ID exploration	23:50/#4-5	pushed me to discover/unpack…this ID
Best allies affirm all intersecting IDs	52:38/#5	…ideal ally
World of academe affirm intersecting ID	47:24/#1-3	support the integration of both ...IDs and bring up opportunities …to integrate both IDs
Alternative music group affirms intersecting ID	47:24/#14-17	my friends, before I say…criticize [lack of diversity in band]
Emotional Openness		all of my identities needed to sort of be integrated into one
Intentional integration into single complex identity	11:24/#6-7	singular complex identity
		I listen to Asian artists…talk about navigating a world in
Examples of selves significant in self-acceptance	27:33/#1-8	which…a fish out of water
Must fight and work to be sexual minority vs. heterosexual	31:09/#4	…we're going to figure this out
Being asked questions about IDs feels good	74:05/#1-4	we don't often talk about our identities…being asked about the good things is important
Learner/Educator		
Academic and professional commitment reciprocal benefit as servant leader	11:24/#10	perceive my academic identity and my personal identity more as a helping profession to support
Using life experience to help others	39:30/#8-11	take my own … experiences and frame them…grounding point
Academic Path allowed ID exploring	17:37/#5-6	allow me to focus on my multiply held IDs
Gender: Additional compounding Identity		
Self/others feminize [my] race/phenotype & sexuality	61:44/#8-9	my gender informs …my sexual identity
Gender expression exploration	63:49/#28-29	the interplay of race and my sexual identity now forced me to question gender
Performing gender is now in question	69:54/#6	think about how I do gender
Big Picture: Flourish despite Social/Societal Normativity"		
Worldview beyond societal "norms"	43:08/#4-6	minoritized IDs…forces me to think about and navigate the world in a different way
Disclosure in all life areas is required	11:24/#16-17	don't have to closet myself in any of my professional contexts, which I think is … important
Literally fighting to exist	31:09/#2 & 8	getting into a ton of fights…& verbal harassment

Graphic Representations: Individual Cases

P2/Anne

Superordinate theme/Emergent theme	Timestamp/Line#	Key Word(s)
Social Support/Social Support Network		
Close family and diverse friends (few with same IDs as P2)	6:39/# 5-7	Family…very supportive…close … good friends from very diverse communities
Mentors: Mom and Older bi-females (and Lesbians)	9:58/#4 -10	Mom encouraged…elders who taught me
Family's raciality address	19:07/#1-2	feel like I have roots all over the worlds
Partner	40:47/#5-8	My current partner… doesn't really have the same stereotypes of bisexuals … because to me it's, you're treating me like a person
No biracial, bisexual friends but many biracial or queer/bisexual, and biracial and queer	44:58/#2-4	affirmations definitely come from many different places
High Emotional Intelligence/Emotional Openness		
Emotional intelligence expected of self	35:14/#12	have a lot of confidence in myself … my own self-value
Emotional intelligence expected of close others	42:42/#9-10	trust my friends to be …aware of their assumptions and … working on processing them
Motivated to pass on support and knowledge	55:06/#18-19	to find … group of young bisexual… women to follow for a longer term …have a lot to teach us
Foundational disposition: critical social justice perspective	67:24/#5-6	those people who are important to me feel validated and included
Learner, Educator, Activist, Historian		
Dispositional Altruism (Also see 9:58/#3-11)	74:15/#4-5	it gave me a better sense of how my research participants feel
Research/Working to benefit LGBT Community	9:58/#3-5	do research on older LGBT individuals
Research with Older Bisexual Women on coming out in time of invisibility/non-existence	55:06/#9-13	women who came out as bisexual in the 60's and 70's, 80's…community …doesn't exist yet
Influence kids/youth to be more diverse-thinking	64:58/#5-6	a broader vocabulary when it comes to sex and gender
Overt Rejection and Aversion to Heteronormativity/Social Normativity		
Intentionally undermining family's Christian rigidity	64:58/#15-16	undermine those very rigid expectations is empowering for me
Institution of marriage discriminates	61:36/#5	… marriage very much as a social and controlling institution
No perpetuating heteronormativity with own kids	71:18/#1-3	better chance raising kids with those option

Graphic Representations: Individual Cases

P3/Angie

Superordinate theme/Emergent theme	Timestamp/Line#	Key Word(s)
Social Support/Social Support Network		
Strong sense of bisexual community	9:21/#1-2	have a strong sense of bisexual community
Parents as role models, examples, mentors	53:16/#1-2	parents …living example of the truth of attraction … exist[ing] outside of the confines that a society… try to place
Heritage/Family roots pride	22:02/#2-3	both of their cultures … rich … vibrant …and complex histories …
Sexuality Affirmation at young age [also, 15:01/#1-7]	12:58/#10-14	a very out and vocal bi population at that school… I was able to come out into a community that I had a lot of things in common with
Emotional Maturity/Emotional Intelligence		
Emotional maturity/resilience gained from bi-affirming youth	15:59/#2-3	I was 22, … I had the maturity and wherewithal to face the biphobia
Comfortable with sexual attractions and exploring sexuality options at 14	50:07/# 10-11 & 53:16/#13	I was 14 so I thought, "Oh, okay, in-between, in-between, that must be me - & - short little cognitive leap to understanding that attraction should have a relationship to gender was also bullshit
Built, via hard work, own bisexual Community	9:21/#12-13	I've also worked hard at developing that community… We really benefit from building those connections
Other's 'work' is their problem and not doing on *my* time	34:45/#6-12	ran out of patience with that being my job… It wasn't my job
On Diversity, Societal Normativity, Political "Culture"		
Racial mixing is healthier	19:15/#10	good for our genes to mix it up … and for things to not get stagnant
Presidential Administration making a mess	43:31/#5-6	racism and anti-Semitism…[surfacing] in new and horrifying ways
Bisexual community offers universal opportunity LGBT orgs	61:07/#9	national LGBT organizations are not really taking a long view
Optimism, [Hope], Future		
1st time home owner creating ideal home for self and children	74:32/#1-9	my kids. They are my world…my kitchen remodel…I've never owned a house before. It's my first time
Raising diversity aware children	47:04/#11-12	raising them to be good citizens and conscious human beings
Racism, Sexism, heterosexism country-level conversation	44:54/#10-11	silver lining, it's that at least this stuff is getting talked about

Graphic Representations: Individual Cases P4/Clarissa *Superordinate theme*/Emergent theme **Timestamp/Line# /Key Word(s)**

Importance of other people/Social Support		
Most proud of Relationships with partner, family, friends	6:09/#3	my relationship with my partner, my friendships … my family
Affirmed, validated, encouraged, supported	6:09/#6	supported and cared for and loved for who I am
Partner mixed with similar values	9:23/#27-28	Partner mixed…flexible how he sees gender
Primary priority: keeping connected with close others	46:43/#2	future … filled with people that I love and that love me.
Emotional Openness/Embraces own vulnerability		
Positive personal attributions	7:04/#8	I've just had lots of … personal characteristics that helps me
Racial ambiguity cultivated the strength and resilience	12:59/#18-22	We can handle complexity…hand dynamic nature …beyond race
Biraciality, bisexuality are identities that are in-between or not enough of anything	16:04/#12-13	feeling like there's multiple boxes or maybe no boxes at all.
Intentional self-exploration	16:04/#24	to kind of explore who I am back and forth, … in both identities
Self-compassion	26:51/#2-3	giving myself compassion…that it isn't a problem with myself
Self-care involving 'not Sexuality/Race ID self'	30:17/#10	giving myself space to do things that don't involve race and feminism
Learner and educator		
Self-care and helping others important	30:17/1-2	care of myself. Doing things… help other people is important
Altruistic academic interests with similar IDs	36:44/#1-2	dissertation was on biracial, bisexual women
Altruistic message for others with these IDs: Do whatever it takes to feel whole, be your whole self	59:34/#7-8	suggestions would be to find people, or things, or places that make them feel whole
Optimism/Firm-ish ideas for future		
Future: life filled with very close others - existing and new	46:43/#2	future … filled with people that I love and that love me.
Future: vocation led by altruism and supporting similar IDs	41:18/#12-13	I'd like to teach classes on diversity, counseling skills, social justice, advocacy, potentially prevention work
Staying connected with youth for reciprocal learning	48:27/#14	staying connected to youth
Future: residing where IDs affirmed via air breathed	45:07/6-7	many mixed people there that it's a non-issue. It's also…gay Mecca
Life with "Privileges"	**7:04/4-6**	**recognize that without all of the privilege that I've had in my life it'd be much different and potentially more difficult as someone who's bisexual and biracial.**
Financial wealth; Educated/"learned" parents; Less racism	19/21/#1-2	socioeconomic privilege that I have and a lot of the other privileges that I have, I think I've been pretty buffered against kind of more severe discrimination
Heteronormative-Passing: DSMS minimal	9:23/#7-11	as somebody who is a cis woman and someone who can pass for straight and I also currently have a male partner, I think I also have a kind of passing privilege

Graphic Representations: Individual Cases

P5/Lola *Superordinate theme*/Emergent theme	Timestamp/Line#	Key Word(s)
Social supports/Social Network		
Husband primary source of affirmation	8:19/#1-2	My spouse was very, very supportive in everything
Afro-Latino Web-Community (virtual via internet)	43:22/#3	Afro-Latino [inaudible] website or something with that name
Activist Group events (and LGBT Task force 24:51/#1)	38:36/#4	go and be with your people
Mother gives acceptance/tolerance – not quite affirmation	41:42/# 3-5	I'm going to be neutral. … I'm not going to promote it, but I'm not going to disparage it either
Emotional Openness//Emotional 'perspective'		
Processing via humor	53:56/#4-7	My...outlook on something…would sound funnier if I say it this way.
Personal development: Getting organized at home; self improvement	9:55/#1-14	a transition of trying to get really, really organized… I'm on a self-improvement type of…
Adaptive coping focus is on safety/survival	77:30/#17	Because at the end of the day we're all just trying to survive.
[NOTE: Resilience with little flourishing/thriving at this time]		
Educating/Activism	26:45/#1-4	It feels like you're doing something.
Activism provides sense of proactivity/opp to meet like others	23:56/#3-4	it's funny to me to see the reaction…"I'm embarrassed"
Assumption of lesbian or straight	24:51/#3-4	…saying bad things about bi people … and I just ask a question
Depose individuals for assuming	47:29/#4-5	it's affecting my demographic
Altruistic about bisexual demographic;		
Problems/Issues experienced via Social Normativity – Societal Norms	18:17/#4-5	they called him black. And that's just kind of-- he rolled with it
Multiracial grandfather preferred to be assumed black	16:06/#3-4	biracial, multiracial safe spaces… I'm always assumed to not be a part of that
Rejected in bi/multi-race spaces for monoracial phenotype		
Miscellaneous	18:17/#[all]	all
Partially reconciled: Family heritage, roots, family history	29:10/#[all]	all
Limiting term bisexual sexuality; broader than just attraction to two sexes.	98:51[all]	[if they don't know that I'm bi, there's that extra layer of being invisible. And that's kind of the most frustrating thing]
Resents multiracial invisibility and sexuality invisibility		
	89:08/#8	So they have lighter skin. And so people just think he's white
Husband is white passing/Participant is assumed black		

Graphic Representations: Individual Cases

P6/Mark *Superordinate theme*/Emergent theme   **Timestamp/Line#**   **Key Word(s)**

Superordinate theme/Emergent theme	Timestamp/Line#	Key Word(s)
Social Supports/Social Networks		
Family: Parents: Affirming raciality 1st Bisexuality non-issue	5:39/#2-3	I have a loving family…being biracial part of my growing up
Partners	64:42/#3-5	I've always been poly-amorous. Okay. And my long-term partner is female. … I have a heterosexual bi-romantic male sweetie
Long term friends thru participation in activist groups	39:11/#3-18	Speakers Bureau…we …bonded. I mean, to this day, [*name deleted*] is a dear buddy of mine, and this is 20…25 years later
Meaningful relationships with affirmation/compersion	57:54/#6-9	best moments that I've had, have been when I've connected with other two-spirit people about…who we are as native people
Sci-fi Group support/acceptance in youth and as adult DSMS "lite"	28:56/#1-2	one of the places where I found some support, has been through the science fiction community
Emotional Maturity/Emotional Intelligence		
Educated and wise parents- culture/race pride /equanimity	32:54/#4-5	my attitude was… probably instilled in me by my parents
Titrating support network	15:32/#8-9	finding the people that will support you... losing the people that won't
Intelligent confrontation: Compassion received, given;	34:52/#6-7	are you saying that I'm not a legitimate person
Self-Exploration – vast 3 IDs	71:53/#10	I began to understand my two-spirit identity better
Altruistic Nature: Learner/Educator/Activist		
Formal educator	28:56/#7	I teach class in LGBTQ studies
Two-spirit characteristic	75:57/#15-16	fully embracing, not just my two-spirit identity, that I've had, but what does that mean in terms of being gender fluid
Activism in college through present	24:41/#14-15	15-year period …I was deep in the thick of being a bisexual activist
Aware of other's psychic burden	51:30/#8-9	you always have to be aware. You can't ever let your guard down
Positive Disposition/Optimism/Options for Future		
Really, really happy, things going well all areas of life	7:14/#12-13	I'm happy with where I live. I'm happy with who I'm involved with. I'm happy with my family. I've got a great bunch of friends.
Societal Norms/Heteronormativity and Racism		
White-passing-light skin privilege-cis/hetero/white/male	53:07/#1	I have light skin privilege. I'm male. I'm relatively well spoken it
Never experienced any direct social disapproval-Invisibility only	7:14/#4-5	was not the focus of any real social disapproval
Heteronormative culture influence example	75:57/#4	I'm the only guy here [laughter]

Appendix G: Cross Case Graphic Representation

a. Focus on Social Support

Affirmation for and validation about identities

P1/Andy: ideal ally. So she does activist work, and educates people ahead of me, and makes sure that the identities that are important are being supported

2:38.5-7

P1/Andy: to have many of my friends, before I say anything, criticize a set list or a touring band, to be like, "… Why are there no women in this band? Why is everyone white? Why is everyone straight?" So to hear them [inaudible] is really affirming because I don't necessarily have to mention that those things are important, it just sort of happens.

47:24.14-17

P2/Ann: affirmations definitely come from many different places, depending on their racial or sexual identity

44:58.3-4

P3/Angie: I had my parents as kind of a living example of the truth of attraction being something that can exist outside of the confines that a society might try to place upon it, I already had this idea that race isn't de facto a factor in attraction, despite the fact that I was born in the 70s.

53:16.1-2

P4/Clarissa: to feel supported and cared for and loved for who I am in all of these different parts of the country.

6:09.6

P5/Lola: My spouse was very, very supportive in everything. & [Mother] "I'm not going to promote it, but I'm not going to disparage it either." For me, that's enough.

8:19.1-2 & 41:42.3-5

P6/Mark: And I would say, probably, some of the best moments that I've had, have been when I've connected with other two-spirit people about this, about who we are as native people, whatever the rest of our lives are, as well as also, who we are as two-spirit people, and whatever sexual orientations we might use in other circumstances.

57:54.6-9

Belonging/group membership: Cultural Heritage, formal and informal social groups,

P1/Andy: The two major affirmative people are groups that support the integration of both of those identities and not just one, so faculty members I work with and music.

47:24.1-2

P2/Anne: I guess it makes me feel like I have roots all over the world and that's something that makes you feel like you're connected to the world.

19:07.1-2

P3/Angie: Well, as it relates to my bisexuality, I feel that I have a strong sense of bisexual community.

9:21.1

P3/Angie: it all kind of comes together in my body, physically [laughter]. And then there's the cultural aspects, which, I mean, both of their cultures are so rich and have such vibrant histories and complex histories.

22:02.2-3

P4/Clarissa: I just see my future continue to be filled with people that I love and that love me.

46:43.2

P5/Lola: And the only time I actually kind of felt that way was-- … like this, I think it's called Afro-Latino [inaudible] website or something with that name in it - and the response I got was like, "Well, if that's what you are, then that's what you are, and if you are embracing it late, that's fine. You can't take away from what's in your blood. That's your heritage…

43:22.1-6

P6/Mark: And not so much that they [sci-fi community] are fully getting everything that I've ever said, but that for them, "Hey, its human variation. That's neat [laughter]." I know. For them, it's been a much more uncritical kind of acceptance.

58:57.5-8

[NOTE: Excluding P3/Angie, others indicate that a Bisexual Community is not highly accessible, and all indicate not as promoted as LG by LGBT Orgs]

	Transcript Timestamp /Line #

Commonality in ID, interests or values /Sameness

P1/Andy: faculty members that I look up to specifically bring up opportunities for me to integrate both of those identities — 47:24.14-17

P2/Anne: One really nice thing about getting older, and becoming adults together, is that my siblings and I are going to be able to have these conversations that we never had as children. And I think they also… realize that our biracial identity is more complex than they realized as kids — 44:48.5-8

P3/Angie: I was 17 when I went to college. I was able to come out into a community that I had a lot of things in common with. — 12:58.10-14

P4/Clarissa: my partner is also mixed. And though he doesn't identify as bisexual, he's very flexible in how he sees gender. And so it feels like we can talk about things and I feel validated and supported and encouraged to be the way that I am. — 9:23.27-30

P6/Mark: Buzz and I started talking, we found out that we, personally, individually, had far more in common with each other than either of us sometimes had with him with the gay male community, me with the bi men's community. — 39:11.3-18

b. Focus on Emotional Openness (Both emotional acceptance and appraisal of emotions present, Kwon, 2009)

[NOTE: Participants most consistently conveyed *Emotional Intelligence/Maturity* opposed to specific tenets of emotional openness operationalized by Kwon. Appraisal of emotions and emotional acceptance seem an unconscious characteristic of participant functioning, likely initiated intentionally or via example by parents then further cultivated by other family members, mentors, or social support relationships].

Emotional Intelligence

P1/Andy: that translates those emotions into language and music that I can understand has really informed the last couple of years how I sort of navigate my own life — 27:33.5-6

P2/Anne: have a lot of confidence in myself — 35:14.12

P3/Angie: so I think I had the maturity and wherewithal to face the biphobia that I was experiencing from the larger LGBT population — 15:59.2-3

P4/Clarissa: So I feel like we can handle complexity because of that and we can handle just dynamic nature of a lot of things even beyond race. — 12:59.18-21

P5/Lola: Because at the end of the day we're all just trying to survive. [Example of resilience factor as flourishing wanes] — 77:30.17

P6/Mark: I wasn't buying into the, sort of, all American boy myth. And then, when I began to understand my two-spirit identity better — 71:53.9-10

Academic/Educational pursuits related dual ID exploration and understanding/service to others

P1/Andy: now I'm a full-time researcher doing work related to minority individuals. — 11:24.8-9

P2/Anne: And so now I do research that I feel really contributes to a community and will not only make people's lives better but will make my life better — 9:58.19-21

P4/Clarissa: dissertation was on biracial, bisexual women — 36:44.1-2

P6/Mark: I provide support for the local bi support group that meets at our LGBTQ community center. Yeah. I teach class in LGBTQ studies. — 28:56.6-7

Altruistic concern for the well-being of others with same and/or other marginalized IDs	
P1/Andy: I've learned to take my own negative experiences and frame them in a way that [inaudible] sort of grounding point or a point for people who simply don't get it	39:30.8-9
P2/Anne: I do research on older LGBT individuals	9:58.3-5
P3/Angie: what is the need of the largest segment, and what do we need to do to get those people healthy, and well, and thriving, and protected from discrimination?	62:39.7-8
P4/Clarissa: Doing things that I think help other people is really important to me, so all of my work is focused on helping others pretty much.	30:17.2-4
P4/Clarissa: a bunch of other kind of projects but they're usually around these kinds of intersections of race, gender, gender sexual orientation	36:44.18-19
P5/Lola: the only reason I'm mad is because even though it's not affecting me personally, it's affecting my demographic.	47:29.4-5
P6/Mark: so, two-spirit people like myself have had to work really hard to re-educate people about our own past, about who we are, our own culture	57:54. 1-2
"Okay-ness" with same and different sex attractions (i.e., bisexuality) despite known social disapproval for homosexuality	
P2/Anne: now I kind of look back on it and I think of it similarly to a bi-sexual identity, where I think going both ways, in a sense, opens up this experience to be more diverse, and more culturally rich. And being able to blend in, in multiple communities	14:29.15-17
P3/Angie: that part was kind of just no big deal. This was about semantics. I was like, "I need to figure out a way to describe this thing." But the thing itself was like, "Okay, I think that guy is cute and I think she's cute over there."	52:30.1-6
P4/Clarissa: exploring my sexuality and feeling like I don't have to stay in kind of one box or another and that there's a third box, or now I'm feeling like there's multiple boxes [laughter], or maybe no boxes at all.	16:04.11-13
P5/Lola: "Okay. I kind of have a piece of me figured out." Then it's like, okay. This is what I am, but where is everybody else [laughter]? And where are they because I didn't know.	28:15.1-2
P6/Mark: discovered in adolescence, that here I was, attracted to guys and to girls, and I could talk about one of those things, but not the other.	9:15.5-6
Role of Social Supports in [Emotional] Processing Practices	
P1/Andy: the majority of my friend group knew of sexual and gender identity and whatever form. So that sort of social scene [inaudible] at a major player in my sort of mental and emotional health	11:24.3-5
P2/Anne: I think my parents felt the influence of mine and my siblings' biracial identities more so than we did. So in a sense, I think they kind of protected us from thinking about it that much.	13:00.7-3
P3/Angie: How did they instill that? Well, I mean, they themselves are proud of who they are, and they're both successful people, and they both highly value education.	23:48.2-3
P4/Clarissa: My sister and I talk about this all the time.	12:59.1
P6/Mark: my attitude was—and this was probably instilled in me by my parents when I was very young.	32:54.4-5

c. Focus on Hope and Optimism

Focus towards Future: Plans, Goals for the future, kids

P1/Andy: the future looks pretty good, beginning that I'm getting a master's degree in December. I have figured out the work-life balance.	57:36.3-4
P2/Anne: I feel like plans for the future usually come in the form of academic forms and research agendas.	55:06.1-2
P3/Angie: I have my kids. They are my world, and so just my plans for the future with family is just watching them grow and helping them on their journey.	74:32.3-4
P4/Clarissa: I'd like to teach classes on diversity, counseling skills, social justice, advocacy, potentially prevention work	41:18.12-13
P6/Mark: I want to reestablish connections to other native two-spirit people.	61:03.5-6
P6/Mark: I think I want to do more research on bisexual erasure	62:12.1

Positive Attributions/Appraisals

P1/Andy: Like it'll eventually get better	11:24.13
P2/Anne: I've always had a very strong sense of purpose and I appreciate that.	9:58.2
P3/Angie: "Nope. That's not my job anymore. If you haven't done your work, then there's nothing for me to do here."	34:45.11-12
P3/Angie: I'm looking forward to change. I guess that's one way that I stay positive. I mean, my hope is that we can make America sane again.	44:54.1-2
P4/Clarissa: I know that this isn't a problem with myself. That it's more of the systems in which we inhabit.	26:51.3-4
P5/Lola: the outlook I choose to take. There's someone going through worse things than you're going through.	49:38.2-3
P6/Mark: I'm happy with where I live. I'm happy with who I'm involved with. I'm happy with my family. I've got a great bunch of friends.	7:14.12-13

Motivation behind goal pursuit/Positive expectations

P1/Andy: it did allow me to focus specifically on my sort of multiply held identities.	17:37.5-6
P2/Anne: I think we have a lot to learn from that, about facing adversity, of being in your own community even though it doesn't exist yet.	55:06.12-13
P3/Angie: I have my kids. They are my world, and so just my plans for the future with family is just watching them grow and helping them on their journey.	74:32.3-4
P4/Clarissa: I'm trying to get back to the San Francisco Bay Area. That's where I grew up. It's where my family is…. No one even stops to think of is she Asian or is she white, because there's just so many mixed people there that it's a non-issue. It's also such, to me, this gay Mecca.	45:07.1-11
P5/Lola: I'm going to have to probably take a lot more business classes. It's not like it really interests me that much, but it's necessary to kind of move you forward.	67:09.5-6
P6/Mark: isn't really an urban native community where I am. I have to go places in order to make that happen. I want to do something about that, and in particular, I want to reestablish connections to other native two-spirit people.	61:03.3-6

d. Focus on Intersecting Social Identities (Influence of Marginalized Identities Separate/Compounding)

Expanded Worldview beyond so-called social norms b/c of Intersecting IDs:
P1/Andy: But the interplay of race and my sexual identity now forced me to question gender and it is going to be an important thing to think about.
P1/Andy: makes me more often aware to think about how I do gender. So I am more aware of talking over people perceived as women, what we refer to as man-spreading or just simply taking up space.
P2/Anne: now I kind of look back on it and I think of it similarly to a bi-sexual identity, where I think going both ways, in a sense, opens up this experience to be more diverse, and more culturally rich.
P3/Angie: Because I was biracial, being bisexual made a lot of sense.
P4/Clarissa: I think that both identities have lent knowledge to each other… So yeah, I feel like the intersections have really allowed me to be-- to give myself more space, more compassion, more room to kind of explore who I am back and forth
P5/Lola: when it comes to mixed people I would like to see more centering on people who do not necessarily fit the phenotype of what you're used to seeing.
P6/Mark: things in my own makeup, and how I've always led my life, that really, it's taken me a long time to really appreciate, that are not part of that masculine matrix of identity at all.

63:49.28-29

69:54.6-7

14:29.14-18

55:37.1-2

16:04.1-24
93:16.1-2

73:41.6-8

Social/Societal "Norms": Racism (phenotype)/Sexism/Heteronormativity
P1/Andy: Just targeted for being different
P1/Andy: …Music is whitewashed
P2/Anne: I think of marriage very much as a social and controlling institution at this point
P3/Angie: I look forward to administration change…I'm hoping that … they step up to the plate to pull us out of this mess, because I feel like racism and anti-Semitism is just all kind of bubbling to the surface in new and horrifying ways
P4/Clarissa: A kind of feeling like you have one foot in, one foot out, that your kind of in between, that you're not necessarily enough of anything,
P5/Lola: this one is a bit tricky because as far as having a multiracial identity, I identify that, but I'm not recognized by that because I have dark skin.
P6/Mark: I found books that talked about homosexuality, and oh, if you came out, if you acknowledge this, your parents were going to disown you, and your life would change for the worst, and there would be social disapproval, and all of this.

9:23.27-30
47:24.14-17
61:36.5
43:31.1-6

16:04.15-18

16:06.1-2

9:15.13-15

Biracial ID/Multiracial ID led to openness toward bisexuality as a natural Option
P2/Anne: the more I process my biracial identity the more it helps me process my sexuality…they kind of go hand in hand.
P3/Angie: Because I was biracial, being bisexual made a lot of sense.
P4/Clarissa: helpful in kind of exploring my sexuality, and feeling like I don't have to stay in kind of one box or another
P6/Mark: But as a biracial person, I've found myself making friends and developing relationships with people, romantic relationships, intimate relationships, across a range of racial identities, and sexual orientations

27:24.17-19
55:37.1
16:04.11-12
7:14.1-3

Double Sexual Minority Stigmatization (Rejection/stereotyping by both LG and Hetero Individuals/communities)

	Transcript Timestamp/Line #

P1/Andy: So typically speaking, I know that as a bisexual person I am perceived as gay, not bisexual — 63:49.20-21

P2/Anne: thinking of bisexual women is kind of … being a traitor in a sense, of not being fully invested in gay rights, because you have the privilege to have a boyfriend at the same time. — 22:13.18-20

P3/Angie: it's possible that the heterosexual people that I have spent time with, maybe they just aren't as brazen as gay and lesbian people are about saying biphobic things in front of me — 70:02.12-14

P4/Clarissa: from the self-identified lesbians, in terms of like, "Oh well, you're not really this," or "I don't really believe you." And then the other side of things, like from the straight men, mostly white, would be like, "Oh, that's not real," — 19:21.23-26

P5/Lola: if you don't want to turn away lesbians and scare them off, just say that you're queer." — 35:00.5-6

P6/Mark: run into straight people who thought that I was—bisexual was interesting, but that just meant I was gay. And I would occasionally run into, usually, gay men, who were not accepting of the idea of a bisexual identity — 13:38.7-9

e. Focus on Meaningful Life (*Purpose and contribution*)

Activism focus on like others and all other minorities/those marginalized

P2/Anne: - the more I get involved in activism, the more I feel like I have a voice to speak back to bisexual stereotypes. — 24:32.11-12

P3/Angie: a large and vocal group of bisexual activists. And so once I kind of connected with them, I was able to be part of their association — 15:59.8-9

P5/Lola: It feels like you're doing something. You are not just sitting at home, just letting things happen around you and you feel like a certain task is getting done — 26:45.1-2

P6/Mark: with BiNet USA as a national co-coordinator after that — 24:41.12-13

In the service of others-related academic pursuits and work/employment

Refer to Focus b. Emotional Openness; *Emotional Intelligence* and *Altruistic concern for the well-being of others with same and/or other marginalized IDs*

f. Focus on Accomplishments (*Met goals or meeting goals*)/Overlap with Resilience Factor c. Hope and Optimism*

Academic Credentials; Academic Research to fill gaps; Activism gap

P1/Andy: decided to pursue psychology full-time. So I'm now in a PhD program — 17:37.3-4

P2/Anne: doing a dissertation on older bisexual women — 55:06.3

P3/Angie: the national LGBT organizations are not really taking a long view, — 61:07.9

P4/Clarissa: I'd like to teach classes on diversity, counseling skills, social justice, advocacy, potentially prevention work — 41:18.11-13

P5/Lola: I would like to go to the school the Arts Institute of Chicago — 60:28.1

P6/Mark: I think I want to do more research on bisexual erasure — 62:12.1