

A Proposal to Examine the Effects of Same-Sex Parenting

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Abstract

While the supreme court ruled that it was illegal for a state to restrict marriage rights for same-sex couples in 2015, same-sex individuals still face discrimination within our society. This includes being looked down upon as parents. This research proposal is aimed at examining the influence of being raised in a same-sex household compared to a heterosexual household. Using a survey, the participants will be asked to answer questions about their lifestyles and how their parents raised them. Questions will consist of their parent's sexual orientation and how the participant feels this has influenced them. The participants within the study would include college level students, from any given age and gender, at Wright State University. Given the information from these surveys, the researchers can then compare the surveys from the same-sex households to the heterosexual households. We believe the results will show that same-sex households don't have a negative impact on their children.



Predicted Results

This study will use an independent samples t-test to test the hypothesis. This analysis will allow the researchers to see if there is a difference between the two groups (same-sex households and heterosexual households) and their child's developmental outcome (negative or positive). It is expected that the hypothesis will be supported, meaning there will be no negative influence on children's development. The researchers also hope, with the absence of social stigma within their study, it will allow the participants to give fully honest answers that represent the viewpoints of the population. The results could also show that the hypothesis is unsupported and that same-sex households, compared to heterosexual households, could actually have a negative impact on their children's development.

Introduction

The need for a study related to this topic is because of the stereotypes surrounding same-sex rights. Same-sex individuals are sometimes looked down on by other individuals. These individuals claim that these same-sex individuals aren't fit to raise children and that it sends a negative message to the youth to let these individuals raise children. Many related studies consist of children as participants within their studies because the goal of the study is to examine the children's cognitive behavior, attitudes, and personality. The current study goes beyond that to include participants of all ages. The reason for this is so the current study can get broader results compared to other related studies and set a foundation for future research.

One related study which took place in Israel, aimed at measuring children's psychological and social indicators for "non-traditional families" or "non-nuclear families" (Shechner, 2011). The participants were lesbian parents and single parents. Israel is still considered a westernized country and holds the same ideas as the United States on what a traditional "nuclear family" is (Shechner, 2011). The Child Behavior Checklist, perception of peer relations, and perceived self-competence were used to measure the child's psychological and social indicators. The 76 parents filled out questionnaires about their children. The only requirement for these parents was that they had one child from the age of 6-9 years old to be considered within the study. The results showed that children from single parent households showed more signs of aggressiveness and externalizing behavior problems compared to children raised in either same-sex or heterosexual parent families. Lesbian household children showed less loneliness and more prosocial behaviors than children from heterosexual or single parent households. In conclusion, parent's sexual orientation doesn't have a negative effect on their child's development unlike being a single parent. These results help to support the current study's hypothesis because it gives us insight into a child's behavior and shows us there isn't a negative impact on a child that is raised in a same-sex household compared to a single-parent household.

Furthermore, a related study examined parental gender and sexual identity among children and adolescent (teenager) outcomes (Fedewa A. and Black, 2015). While not having a method of their own, this study consists of 33 published and unpublished other studies to support their conclusion. With the information provided by these studies, the researchers were able to conclude that there was a significant difference in parent-child relations and child gender role behavior outcomes in same-sex households compared to heterosexual households. Even though there is a difference, these differences don't negatively impact the children or adolescents from the same-sex households. In fact, children and adolescents raised in same-sex households are more likely to be open-minded than children and adolescents raised by heterosexual households. Heterosexual households are more likely to raise children to be close-minded. This can be understood considering these children have been raised this way, so they don't see a problem with it themselves. These results help to support the current study's hypothesis because it explains that children raised by same-sex parents are more likely to accept other individuals and ideas around them, making them less likely to judge others around them.

In Addition, the third article talks about the effects of same-sex households on children in the Netherlands (Mazrekaj, 2020). While the Netherlands may have different social norms and stereotypes, their idea of the "normal family" or "nuclear family" is the same as both Israel and the United States (Mazrekaj, 2020). Within this study, the majority of children in public schools were involved in this study. This includes 2,971 children with same-sex parents and over a million children with heterosexual parents. The study looked to see how these children in public schools performed. The children's grades were used to measure the results. The results showed that children from same-sex households performed better in school academically compared to heterosexual households. Since it is concluded that children from same-sex households perform better than heterosexual households, it supports the current study's hypothesis that there is no negative impact on children raised in same-sex households. These results of these three studies help to support the hypothesis of the current study because it gives evidence that children raised in same-sex households have no negative effect on their childhood development.

However, there are some studies out there that support the null-hypothesis. One of them states that children that are raised by same-sex parents face many more social challenges than children raised by heterosexual parents (Dyszlewski, 2008). These challenges include social judgement from peers when it comes to their non-traditional families. This negative judgement can have a negative effect on a child's development at a young age.

Methods

Participants

The participants within the study will include individuals consisting of all ages and genders. With a minimum of 50 participants for each group (same-sex households and heterosexual households). The participants will be students that come from Wright State University and receive a ten-dollar gift card to Subway for their involvement within the study.

Materials and Procedure

The survey will consist of questions that ask the participants to look back on their childhood and adolescent lifestyle. For example, one question would be, "do you believe that your parent's sexual orientation has negatively influenced your development within your childhood?". There would be a total of about ten questions similar to the previous one. Other information that will need to be included within the questionnaire is age, gender, and which kind of parental household.

The participants then would have to answer the question using a numerical rating scale from 1 to 5; one being: I strongly agree, two being: I agree, three being: maybe, four being: I disagree, and five being: I strongly disagree. The scores of each question will be added or subtracted depending on whether the question asked is a negative or positive impact on the individual. The end results will then be compared with one another (same-sex households v. heterosexual households). The participants would be recruited using posters which would be hung up around the campus. It would have directions which would lead the participants to an online site which would allow them to enter their student ID and start the questionnaire. Once done with the questionnaire, the participants will be given a code which they can take to their local subway to redeem for a ten-dollar gift card.

Discussion

In conclusion, with the social stigma that surrounds same-sex households, it's important to see the impact of being raised in a same-sex household has on a child's development. Related studies (Shechner, 2011) (Mazrekaj, 2020) (Fedewa and Black, 2015) have found that there is no negative impact on children that are raised in same-sex households. The current study would allow the participants to remain anonymous, which the researchers hope will allow for the results to show what the participants actually think. The predicted results are that the hypothesis will be supported; same-sex households will not have a negative influence on the child's development. This is important to examine because if being raised in a same-sex household does have a negative impact, then the next related study would have to try to answer why this is. If the results supported the researcher's hypothesis, then it would show that social stereotypes surrounding same-sex parents don't represent them and could lay groundwork for new stereotypes to form.

References

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