Modern Homonegativity Scale

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The Modern Homonegativity Scale (MHS; M. A. Morrison & Morrison, 2002) is a brief measure designed to assess contemporary negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbian women. Unlike many measures of homonegativity, items on the MHS do not assess traditional, moral, or religious objections to lesbian women and gay men, but rather objections to members of these social groups based on the following beliefs: (a) gay men and lesbian women are making unnecessary or illegitimate demands for changes to the status quo (e.g., the right to legally wed and to parent an adopted child), (b) discrimination against homosexual men and women is a thing of the past, and (c) gay men and lesbian women exaggerate the importance of their sexual orientation and, in so doing, prevent themselves from assimilating into mainstream culture (i.e., they are responsible for their own marginalization given their participation in events such as “Gay Pride” parades).

Description

The MHS is suitable for use both with students (M. A. Morrison & Morrison, 2002; M. A. Morrison, Morrison, & Franklin, 2009; T. G. Morrison, Kenny, & Harrington, 2005) and with nonstudents (M. A. Morrison & Morrison, 2009). The items were originally developed via input from members of organizations serving sexual minority men and women, members of academic faculty, and gay, lesbian, and heterosexual graduate students. The 50-item version of the MHS was then distributed to both university and college students. Using specific scale item reduction criteria, principal components analysis, and reliability assessments, the number of items was ultimately reduced to a 12-item version (M. A. Morrison & Morrison, 2002). Factor analyses were conducted on the 12-item MHS, with results indicating that the scale was both unidimensional and conceptually distinct from measures of “old-fashioned” homonegativity (e.g., the Homonegativity Scale; T. G. Morrison, Parriag, & Morrison, 1999). There are two parallel forms of the MHS: one focusing on gay men (MHS-G) and the other focusing on lesbian women (MHS-L). Results from M. A. Morrison and Morrison (2002) indicate that both 12-item forms are reliable (alphas exceeded .90), unidimensional, and construct valid (total scale scores correlated in anticipated directions with constructs that are theoretically linked such as modern racism and modern sexism).

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Response Mode and Timing

Study participants report the extent to which they agree or disagree with the written MHS items. Specifically, participants are given instructions that read “After the statement, please circle the number which best represents your opinion.” A 5-point Likert response format is often used in which 1 represents Strongly Disagree, 2 represents Disagree, 3 represents Don’t Know, 4 represents Agree, and 5 represents Strongly Agree. The MHS also has used a 7-point Likert-type scale, with no noticeable differences observed in terms of psychometric properties. Participants take less than 5 minutes to complete the MHS.

Scoring

Total scale scores are calculated by summing participants’ responses across all MHS items. If researchers are using a 5-point Likert response format, for example, the possible range of scores is 12 (a low-scoring participant) to 60 (a high-scoring participant). It should be noted that three scale items require reverse scoring, and calculation of subscale or factor scores are not applicable to the MHS.

Reliability

Using student and nonstudent samples, alpha coefficients for the MHS have been consistently high. Specifically, they have ranged from .81 to .95 (MHS-G) and .84 to .91 (MHS-L; M. A. Morrison & Morrison, 2002; M. A. Morrison et al., 2009).

Validity

Construct validation of the MHS when used with Canadian and American university students has been obtained via confirmation of hypothesized relationships between modern homonegativity and political conservatism, religious behavior, religious self-schema, modern and neosexism, humanitarian-egalitarianism, motivation to control prejudiced reactions, interpersonal contact, anti-fat attitudes, and prejudice toward Aboriginal men and women (M. A. Morrison & Morrison, 2002; M. A. Morrison et al., 2009; M. A. Morrison, Morrison, Harriman, & Jewell, 2008). Further, responses to the MHS do not appear to be contaminated by social desirability bias (M. A. Morrison & Morrison, 2002). Tests of construct validation also were conducted using a sample of Irish university students. Specifically, T. G. Morrison et al. (2005) found participants’ level of modern homonegativity correlated positively with their levels of old-fashioned and modern racism, patriotism, nationalism, religious fundamentalism, social dominance, and perceived political conservatism. The authors also found inverse correlations between scores on the MHS and support for the human rights of gay men and lesbian women. A series of confirmatory factor analyses also provided evidence of divergent validity, with MHS items loading on a different factor than items taken from a popular measure of old-fashioned homonegativity (M. A. Morrison et al., 2009). Fit statistics for this two-factor model were superior to those obtained for a unidimensional model. Finally, behavioral studies (M. A. Morrison & Morrison, 2002, 2009) offered additional construct validation, with significant differences emerging between high- and low-scoring participants on the MHS in terms of the degree to which they socially distanced themselves from a lesbian or gay individual and supported the candidacy of a gay male running for political office.

Other Information

The MHS is available for use by any individual conducting research in accordance with the American Psychological Association’s Ethical Principles for Psychologists. Individuals wishing to use the MHS can do so without obtaining permission from the authors.

References


Exhibit

Modern Homonegativity Scale

Scale Items

**MHS-G**

1. Gay men have all the rights they need.*
2. Gay men have become far too confrontational in their demand for equal rights.*
3. Gay men should stop shoving their lifestyle down other people's throats.*
4. Gay men seem to focus on the ways in which they differ from heterosexuals, and ignore the ways in which they are similar.*
5. Gay men who are "out of the closet" should be admired for their courage.* [R]
6. Many gay men use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special rights and privileges.*
7. Gay men no longer need to protest for equal rights.*
8. In today's tough economic times, Canadians' tax dollars shouldn't be used to support gay men's organizations.*
9. The notion of universities providing degrees in gay and lesbian studies is ridiculous.
10. Gay men should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society, and simply get on with their lives.
11. Celebrations such as "Gay Pride Day" are ridiculous because they assume that an individual's sexual orientation should constitute a source of pride.
12. If gay men want to be treated like everyone else, then they need to stop making such a fuss about their sexuality/culture.

**MHS-L**

1. The notion of universities providing degrees in gay and lesbian studies is ridiculous.*
2. Celebrations such as "Gay Pride Day" are ridiculous because they assume that an individual's sexual orientation should constitute a source of pride.*
3. Lesbian women should stop shoving their lifestyle down other people's throats.*
4. Lesbian women seem to focus on the ways in which they differ from heterosexuals, and ignore the ways in which they are the same.*
5. Many lesbian women use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special rights and privileges.*
6. Lesbian women have become far too confrontational in their demand for equal rights.*
7. Lesbian women who are "out of the closet" should be admired for their courage.* [R]
8. In today's tough economic times, Canadians' tax dollars shouldn't be used to support lesbian organizations.*
9. If lesbians want to be treated like everyone else, then they need to stop making such a fuss about their sexuality/culture.*
10. Lesbian women should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society, and simply get on with their lives.*
11. Lesbian women no longer need to protest for equal rights.
12. Lesbian women have all the rights they need.

Note. [R] = Item requires reverse scoring. If using the invariant items only, standardized scores are recommended (total MHS-L score divided by 10 and total MHS-G score divided by 8).

*Items identified as invariant between Canadian and American samples of university students (M. A. Morrison et al., 2009).