

## Homonegativita, binegativita a transnegativita z aspektu sexuálnej identifikácie a rodu u slovenských adolescentov

## Homonegativity, binegativity and transnegativity in the context of sexual identification and gender among slovak adolescents

DANIEL LENGHART

Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre, Katedra pedagogickej a školskej psychológie, Dražovská 4, 949 74 Nitra, SR,  
danielenghart@gmail.com

MARCELA VEREŠOVÁ

Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre, Katedra pedagogickej a školskej psychológie, Dražovská 4, 949 74 Nitra, SR,  
mveresova@ukf.sk

**Abstrakt:** Primárnym cieľom nášho výskumu je analyzovať rozdiely v zložkách homonegativity, binegativity a transnegativity (HBT) a vybraných faktoroch HBT (charakteristiky rovesníckeho tlaku, nepodložené mýty a tvrdenia o HBT) u slovenských adolescentov vzhľadom na ich sexuálnu identifikáciu a rod. Sekundárnym cieľom je identifikovať vzťah medzi výskumnými premennými. Ako výskumné metódy sme využili nami modifikovanú verziu The Homophobia Scale (Wright, Adams, & Bernat, 1999); modifikovanú verziu The Perceived Peer Pressure Scale (Palani & Mani, 2016) a autorskú škálu Mýty a nepodložené tvrdenia o LGBT+ minorite. Výskumný súbor tvorilo 209 adolescentov slovenskej národnosti; 148 sa identifikovalo ako heterosexuálni/heterosexuálne a 61 sa identifikovalo ako LGBT+. Analýza preukázala signifikantné rozdiely takmer vo všetkých výskumných premenných v smere vyšších hodnôt u heterosexuálne identifikovanej populácie adolescentov, významný rozdiel sme nezaznamenali v rezistencii voči rovesníckemu tlaku. Zaznamenali sme významné štatistické genderové rozdiely u heterosexuálne identifikovaných adolescentov, kde muži dosahovali významne vyššie skóre vo všetkých zložkách homonegativity, binegativity a transnegativity v porovnaní s populáciou žien. Identifikovali sme tiež významný vzťah medzi kognitívnou, emocionálnou a behaviorálnou zložkou homonegativity, binegativity a transnegativity. Zistili sme, že LGBT+ identifikovaní adolescenti významne viac percipujú rovesnícky tlak (vrátane ziskov z členstva v rovesníckych skupinách) v porovnaní s heterosexuálne identifikovanými adolescentmi.

**Kľúčové slová:** adolescenti, homonegativita, binegativita, transnegativita, kognitívna zložka HBT, emocionálna zložka HBT, behaviorálna zložka HBT, rovesnícky tlak, nepodložené mýty a tvrdenia o HBT

**Abstract:** The primary goal of our research is to analyse differences in the components of homonegativity, binegativity and transnegativity (HBT) and selected HBT factors (peer pressure characteristics, unsubstantiated myths and claims about HBT) in Slovak adolescents due to their sexual identification and gender. The secondary goal is to identify the relationship between research variables. As research methods, we used our modified version of The Homophobia Scale (Wright, Adams, & Bernat, 1999); the modified version of The Perceived Peer Pressure Scale (Palani & Mani, 2016) and the author's scale of Myths and Unsubstantiated Claims about the LGBT+ Minority. The research ensemble consisted of 209 adolescents of Slovak nationality; 148 were identified as heterosexual and 61 identified as LGBT+. The analysis showed significant differences in almost all research variables in the direction of higher values in the heterosexually identified adolescent population, and we did not find a significant difference in resistance to peer pressure. We noted significant statistical gender differences in heterosexually identified adolescents, where men achieved significantly higher scores across all components of homonegativity, binegativity and transnegativity compared to the female population. We also identified a significant relationship between cognitive, emotional and behavioural components of homonegativity, binegativity and transnegativity. We found that LGBT+ identified adolescents are significantly more sensitive to peer pressure (including benefits from peer group membership) compared to heterosexual identified adolescents.

**Keywords:** adolescents, homonegativity, binegativity, transnegativity, cognitive component of HBT, emotional component of HBT, behavioural component of HBT, peer pressure, unsubstantiated myths and claims about HBT

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## 1 Introduction

Personal experience, especially at present, is an integral, irreplaceable and the most important mediator in reducing the spread of prejudice or disinformation among people globally (Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Huge & Glynn, 2015, etc.). Disinformation, myths or long-ago refuted unsubstantiated claims are spreading in community on a global scale. Many researchers (Bond & Compton, 2015; Calzo & Ward, 2009; Gonta, et al., 2017; Hearold, 1986; Klapper, 1960; McInroy & Craig, 2015; Nisbet & Myer, 2012; Riggle, et al., 1996; Ward et al., 2013, etc.) agree that media presentation has an unstoppable and profound influence on the formation of attitudes against marginalized groups, via both offline (television, etc.) and online (social networks – Facebook, forums, Twitter, etc.) media. A study by the authors Enli and Rosenberg (2018) shows that using media in higher rates impacts increasing trust for media sources, which results in trusting media's information without critical thinking or without trying to find the primary source of information. This kind of behaviour can lead to actions such as believing disinformation and misleading arguments that can change the view of those who are interiorizing various pieces of information or certain concepts. Kuhan's analysis (2003) of newspapers presentation of the LGBT+ community in Slovenia from 1970 to 2000 showed that the LGBT+ community was strongly stereotyped, sexualized or medicalized in the media, which continues to this day. Similar research in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Organization Q, 2008), Russia (Kochetkov & Kirichenko, 2009) or in the Czech Republic (Government of the Czech Republic – Minister of Human Rights and National Minorities, 2007) shows a strong media influence on the formation of negative attitudes against the LGBT+ community. Paradoxically, research by Gont et al. (2017) has shown that younger people who are exposed to positive LGBT+ role models tend to reconsider their attitudes in a positive direction. Yan (2019) came up with the same result, demonstrating that watching TV series with LGBT+ characters has a positive effect on reducing negative attitudes against this cohort of people. Research conducted by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2020) has shown fake news blaming the LGBTIQ community for spreading the COVID-19 virus throughout society.

Negative media coverage, as mentioned above, greatly affects a person's perception without coming into contact with an object to which he has a negative attitude. Men of heterosexual identity have been found to produce a higher level of prejudice against gay men compared to the female population because they are more influenced by gender-associated norms (Adams et al., 2016; Ciocca et al., 2015; Kite, 1984; Kite & Whitley, 1996; Lingardi et al., 2005). Men judge les-

bian women less negatively compared to gay men and consider them to be a healthier version of adult behaviour (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). In general, men produce a higher level of discriminatory behaviour against gay men compared to the female population (Castromonte & Grijalva, 2017; Cullen et al., 2002; DePalma & Jennett, 2010; Hopwood & Connors, 2002; Oliver & Hyde, 1993; Ondrisova et al., 2002; Polimeni et al., 2000; Wright et al., 1999). Bisexuality faces double discrimination, however, both from the LGBT+ population and from heterosexuals (Barker et al., 2012). Despite the fact that discrimination is found in both heterosexual and homosexual groups, the heterosexual population scores higher in bisexuality discrimination than the homosexual one (Mulick & Wright Jr., 2002). Eliason (1997) in a final sample of 255 students (170 women and 59 men) found that male bisexuality was unacceptable to 61% of heterosexual students. A higher percentage was in the male population, with heterosexual men being more tolerant of bisexuality and homosexuality in women than in men. The fact that the heterosexual population maintains negative attitudes at the cognitive, affective but also behavioural level against bisexuality as well as homosexuality to a greater extent is also documented by other research (Dodge et al., 2016; Eliason, 2001; Herek, 2002; Hertlein et al., 2016; Ondrisová et al., 2002).

Negative attitudes against trans people are on the same level as negative attitudes against gay men and bisexuals. Based on research by Copp and Koehler (2017), however, it is possible to hypothesize that the heterosexual population presents much greater negative attitudes against trans people than against the LGB population. Research by Hill and Willoughby (2005) has shown a high level of transnegative discriminatory behaviour in the male heterosexual population of Canadian adolescents. The same results were obtained by Willoughby et al. in 2010, where a high level of transnegative behaviour was found in a heterosexual population of Canadian and Filipino students. The same results also produce the results e. g. in the American adolescent population (Ceglian & Lyons, 2004; Nagoshi et al., 2008; Tebbe & Moradi, 2012; Walch et al., 2012), in the English student population (Tee & Hegarty, 2006), in the Thai adolescent population (Ngmake et al., 2013) or in the Polish population of university students (Antoszewski et al., 2007).

Different institutions, or even groups such as different subcultures or peer groups, can contribute to the dissemination of these negative attitudes or unsubstantiated claims, as well as positive ones. In their research with children aged 8 to 11, Aboud and Doyle (1996) showed peers having a strong effect on increasing or decreasing the spread of prejudice. Children with a high level of prejudice were paired with children with a lower level of prejudice, discussing the results

of the completed test. This experiment has shown that children who displayed a higher level of prejudice after discussing with children with a lower level began to display the same lower level as children who achieved the minimum score in the test. Poteat's (2007) research has shown that certain behaviours (e.g. aggressive) (Poteat et al., 2007; Rivers, 2001; Russell et al., 2012) in peer groups can be maintained a long time after the individual interacts in the group. He has found that the similarity of attitudes and actions, that occurred in the group of adolescents, remained for 8 months after the individual interacted in the group. It is thus a matter of internalising the norms or perceptions of the group that the individual has to adopt (Brikkett & Espelage, 2015). It was found that if a group focuses on a certain type of action (e.g. sexual prejudices – homonegative, binegative or transnegative action), it is highly likely that an individual who is part of this group will later participate in this action to a greater extent (Poteat, 2007, 2008). In general, heterosexually identified adolescents are most involved in these attacks, as it is the individual's desire to be accepted by friends and the social need to belong, while also maintaining traditional masculinity (Berrill, 1992; Brown et al., 1986; Herek et al., 1997; Franklin, 1998, 2000; Poteat et al., 2015). It is not a general rule, however, that every adolescent is prone to the negative influences of peer groups. Research by Steinberg and Monahan (2007) has shown that a higher level of resistance towards peer pressure occurs most in the period of adolescence between the ages of 15 and 20. Castiglione et al. (2013), in a sample of 93 heterosexuals, showed that friendship with at least one homosexually identified person reduces the susceptibility to intra-group anxiety which is directed against a marginalized group. The same results were obtained by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), who, based on a meta-analysis of 515 scientific studies, found that intergroup contact has a significant positive impact on attitudes towards members outside their group.

Autonomy is another factor that greatly increases resistance and may increase the extent of the prosocial component (Tomé et al., 2012). Adolescents in late adolescence stage have been found to be more willing to remain friends with LGBT+ peers and to be in their circles compared to adolescents in early adolescence (Heinze & Horn, 2009; Hoover & Fishbein, 1999). Heinze and Horn (2009) also obtained the same results, concluding that adolescents with a close relationship with a person from a marginalized group (LGBT+) produce a higher level of positive acceptance and support for them. The fact that peers have an influence on negative behaviour, but also a positive one (e.g. support/encouragement), has also been demonstrated by various other authors (Cooke & Apolloni, 1976; Dhull & Beniwal, 2017; Hendrickson et al., 1982; Maloney et al., 1976; Strain et al.,

1976; Strain et al., 1977). Research by Copp and Koepler (2017) has also shown that heterosexual peers have much more negative attitudes against LGBT+ individuals than LGBT+ peers.

## 2 Method

The selection of respondents was random and voluntary, subject to filling in online questionnaires published in the period of February 2020 – October 2020 on the website [www.surveymonkey.com/sk/](http://www.surveymonkey.com/sk/). In view of the classification of sexual identification – heterosexual and LGBT+ identified, the research group consisted of 148 heterosexually identified adolescents and 61 LGBT+ identified adolescents. The research group consisted overall of 209 adolescents from age 15 to 20. The mean age was 18.1 years ( $SD = 1.578$ ). 148 adolescents identified as heterosexual and 60 identified as LGBT+. LGBT+ identified respondents consisted of: 5.7% who identified as gay men; 3.8% who identified as lesbians; 12.4% who identified as bisexuals; 1.0% who identified as trans; 2.9% who identified as asexuals; 1.0% who identified as pansexuals; 1.0% who were undecided; 0.5% who identified as the questioning type; 0.5% who identified as the abimegender type. The overall research group consisted of 102 men and 107 women.

To identify homonegativity, binegativity and transnegativity (further also as HBT), we used our modified Homonegativity, Binegativity and Transnegativity Scale (from the original The Homophobia Scale by Wright, Adams, & Bernat, 1999; modified by Lenghart, 2019). In order to identify other components of the scale, individual items were also modified to measure binegativity and transnegativity. The scale contains 25 items, which are saturated with 3 factors:

1. Affective component of HBT (further also as ACHBT) – items: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 22.
2. Behavioural component of HBT (further also as BCHBT) – items: 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25.
3. Cognitive component of HBT (further also as CCHBT) – items: 3, 8, 16, 18, 20.

The scale has the character of a Likert scale, on which adolescents evaluate individual statements on a scale: (1) I completely agree; (2) I agree; (3) I agree or disagree; (4) I do not agree; (5) I completely disagree. Overall score range: between 25 and 100, while score 25 presents highly supportive affective, behavioural, and cognitive approaches against homosexuals, bisexuals, and trans people (opposite of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia), and score 100 presents extreme homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia represented by affective, cognitive and behavioural components. A statistical analysis by Cronbach's  $\alpha$  has shown that the internal consistency of the scale is reliable even af-

ter adjustment and translation, and that it measures the above phenomena ( $\alpha=0,956$ ).

To identify selected internal factors of homonegativity, binegativity and transnegativity, specifically unsubstantiated claims and myths about the LGBTI+ community (further also as UCMHBT), we used our own author's scale, based on several professional resources (Family Research Council, 2010; Sloboda, 2016). The scale contains 15 statements that represent unsubstantiated claims against homosexuals, bisexuals and trans people. It can be evaluated through the total score (min. 15 and max. 75) or the score of claims and myths against selected sexual identities:

1. Unsubstantiated claims and myths about homosexuality (further also as UCMH) – items: 1, 4, 7, 10, 13.
2. Unsubstantiated claims and myths about bisexuality (further also as UCMB) – items: 2, 5, 8, 11, 14.
3. Unsubstantiated claims and myths about transsexuality (further also as UCMT) – items: 3, 6, 9, 12, 15.

The scale has the character of a Likert scale, on which adolescents evaluate individual statements on a scale: (1) I completely agree; (2) I agree; (3) I agree or disagree; (4) I do not agree; (5) I completely disagree. Scale of Unsubstantiated Beliefs and Myths about LGBT+, after being analysed by Cronbach's  $\alpha$  showed high internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0,933$ ).

To identify selected external factors of homonegativity, binegativity and transnegativity, specifically yielding to peer pressure, resistance to peer pressure and peer encouragement, we used our modified scale of Perceived Peer Pressure (The Perceived Peer Pressure Scale; Palani & Mani, 2016; modified by Lenghart, 2019). The scale contains 15 statements, which are divided into 3 factors of peer influence:

1. Yielding to peer pressure (further also as YPP) – items: 1, 4, 7, 10, 13.
2. Resistance to peer pressure (further also as RPP) – items: 2, 5, 8, 11, 14.
3. Encouragement in peer group (further also as RPP) – items: 3, 6, 9, 12, 15.

The scale has the character of a Likert scale, on which adolescents evaluate individual statements on a scale: (1) I completely agree; (2) I agree; (3) I agree or disagree; (4) I do not agree; (5) I completely disagree. Statistical analysis by Cronbach's  $\alpha$  has shown, that value of internal consistency of Perceived Peer Pressure Scale is on the level  $\alpha = 0,625$ .

The existing theoretical backgrounds allow us to formulate the following research hypotheses and research questions:

- H1: We assume that there is a difference in the overall score of homonegativity, binegativity and transnegativity (HBT) between heterosexually identified adolescents and LGBT+ identified adolescents in the direction of a higher level of HBT in heterosexually identified adolescents.
- H2: We assume that there is a difference in the cognitive component of HBT between heterosexually identified adolescents and LGBT+ identified adolescents in the direction of more negative cognitive content of experiences towards homosexuals, bisexuals and trans people in heterosexually identified adolescents.
- H3: We assume that there is a difference in the affective component of HBT between heterosexually identified adolescents and LGBT+ identified adolescents in the direction of more negatively oriented affect adolescents of HBT in heterosexually identified adolescents.
- H4: We assume that there is a difference in the behavioural component of HBT between heterosexually identified adolescents and LGBT+ identified adolescents in the direction of more behaviourally oriented tendencies to act against homosexuals, bisexuals, and trans people in heterosexually identified adolescents.
- H5: We assume that there is a gender difference in the overall score of UBM in the direction of a higher score of heterosexually oriented men than heterosexually oriented women.
- H6: We assume that there is a gender difference in the overall score of HBT in the direction of a higher score of heterosexually oriented men than heterosexually oriented women.
- H7: We assume that there are correlations between the components of HBT.
- VO1: Are there differences in unsubstantiated claims and myths about homosexuality; unsubstantiated claims and myths about bisexuality; and unsubstantiated claims and myths about trans people between heterosexually identified adolescents and LGBT+ identified adolescents?
- VO2: Are there differences in yielding to peer pressure; resistance to peer pressure; and encouragement in peer group between heterosexually identified adolescents and LGBT+ identified adolescents?

### 3 Results

In our research following the verification of research hypotheses H1 to H7, we compared heterosexually identified adolescents and LGBT+ identified adolescents, heterosexually identified men and women, and analysed correlations between the cognitive, affective and behavioural component of homonegativity, binegativity and transnegativity.



**Table 1** Differences in overall score of HBT between heterosexual and LGBT+ adolescents

	Identification	N	AM	SD	t
HBT	Heterosexual	148	56,14	21,82	6,793***
	LGBT+	61	35,91	12,37	

Legend: \*\*\* = signification on the level of 0,001; HBT = Homonegativity, Binegativity and Transnegativity

We found that there is a significant difference between heterosexually identified and LGBT+ identified adolescents in an overall score of HBT ( $t = 6,793$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ; Table 1). Heterosexually identified adolescents scored higher ( $M = 56,14$ ) on the overall HBT scale than LGBT+ identified adolescents ( $M = 35,91$ ). The difference in average scoring was 20.23 points. Based on the above statistical analysis, we accepted the hypothesis that there is a difference in the overall score of homonegativity, binegativity and transnegativity (HBT) between heterosexually identified adolescents and LGBT+ identified adolescents in the direction of higher level of HBT in heterosexually identified adolescents.

We found that there is a significant difference between heterosexually identified and LGBT+ identified adolescents in the cognitive component of HBT ( $t = 8,027$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ; Table 2). Heterosexually identified adolescents scored higher ( $M = 2,55$ ) in this subscale than LGBT+ identified adolescents ( $M = 1,29$ ). The difference in average scoring was 0.5 points. Based on the above statistical analysis, we accepted the hypothesis that there is a higher rate level of the cognitive component in the population of heterosexually identified adolescents than in the LGBT+ identified adolescents.

**Table 2** Differences in the cognitive component of HBT between heterosexual and LGBT+ adolescents

	Identification	N	AM	SD	t
CCHBT	Heterosexual	148	2,55	1,187	8,027***
	LGBT+	61	1,29	0,477	

Legend: \*\*\* = significant on the level  $< 0,001$ ; CCHBT = Cognitive component of HBT

**Table 3** Differences in affective component of HBT between heterosexual and LGBT+ adolescents

	Identification	N	AM	SD	t
ACHBT	Heterosexual	148	2,24	0,920	6,460***
	LGBT+	61	1,43	0,533	

Legend: \*\*\* = signification on the level  $< 0,001$  ACHBT = Affective component of HBT

We found that there is a significant difference between heterosexually identified and LGBT+ identified adolescents in the affective component of HBT ( $t = 6,460$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ; Table 3). Heterosexually identified adolescents scored higher ( $M = 2,24$ ) in this subscale than LGBT+ identified adolescents ( $M = 1,43$ ). The difference in average scoring was 0.8 points. Based on the above statistical analysis, we accepted the hypothesis that there is a higher rate level of the affective component in the population of heterosexually identified adolescents than in the LGBT+ identified adolescents.

**Table 4** Differences in the behavioural component of HBT between heterosexual and LGBT+ adolescents

	Identification	N	AM	SD	t
BCHBT	Heterosexual	148	2,08	0,805	5,056***
	LGBT+	61	1,51	0,586	

Legend: \*\*\* = significant on level 0,001; BCHBT = behavioural component of HBT

We found that there is a significant difference between heterosexually identified and LGBT+ identified adolescents in the behavioural component of HBT ( $t = 5,056$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ; Table 4). Heterosexually identified adolescents scored higher ( $M = 2,08$ ) in this subscale than LGBT+ adolescents ( $M = 1,51$ ). The difference in average scoring was 0.6 points. Based on the above statistical analysis, we accepted the hypothesis that there is a difference in the behavioural component of HBT between heterosexually identified adolescents and LGBT+ identified adolescents in the direction of more behaviourally oriented tendencies to act against homosexuals, bisexuals, and trans people in the group of heterosexually identified adolescents.

**Table 5** Gender differences in the overall score in UCMHBT

	Gender	N	AM	SD	t
UCMHBT	Men	102	31,91	12,91	2,230***
	Women	107	28,04	12,14	

Legend: \* = significant on the level 0,05; UCMHBT = Unsubstantiated claims and myths about homosexuality, bisexuality and transsexuality

We found that there is a significant gender difference between heterosexually identified men and heterosexually identified women in the overall score of the UCMHBT scale ( $t = 2,230$ ;  $p = 0,027$ ; Table 5). Men scored higher ( $M = 31,91$ ) in this scale compared to women ( $M = 28,04$ ). The difference in average scoring was 3.87 points. Based on the above statistical analysis, we accepted the hypothesis that men will score higher

in the overall score of UCMHBT scale compared to women.

**Table 6** Gender differences in the overall score in HBT scale

	Gender	N	AM	SD	t
HBT	Men	102	56,12	23,81	3,986***
	Women	107	44,62	17,57	

Legend: \*\*\* = significant on level 0,001; HBT= overall score in Homonegativity, Binegativity and Transnegativity

We found that there is a significant gender difference between men and women in the overall score of HBT ( $t = 3,986$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ; Table 6). Men scored higher ( $M = 2,08$ ) in this scale compared to women ( $M = 1,51$ ). The difference in average scoring was 11.5 points. Based on the above statistical analysis, we accepted the hypothesis that heterosexually identified men will score higher in the overall score of HBT scale compared to heterosexually identified adolescent women.

**Table 7** Correlation of components of HBT

		CCHBT	ACHBT
CCHBT	r	–	
	p		
ACHBT	r	0,854	–
	p	< 0,001	
BCHBT	r	0,755	0,864
	p	< 0,001	< 0,001

Legend: CCHBT = cognitive component of HBT; ACHBT = affective component of HBT; BCHBT = behavioural component of HBT; p = signification; r = Pearson's coefficient of correlation

Based on the statistical analysis by Pearson's r, we found that there is a strong significant correlation between (Table 7): a) affective component and cognitive component of HBT ( $r = 0,854$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ); b) behavioural component and affective component of HBT ( $r = 0,864$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ); c) cognitive component and behavioural component of HBT ( $r = 0,755$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ). Based on the above statistical analysis, we accepted the hypothesis that there are correlations between the components of HBT.

Based on a statistical analysis by Student's t-test for two independent samples, we found that there is a significant difference ( $t = 5,563$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ) in unsubstantiated claims and myths about homosexuality between heterosexually identified adolescents and LGBT+ identified adolescents (Table 8). Heterosexually identified adolescents scored higher ( $M = 2,24$ ) in the UCMH subscale compared to LGBT+ identified adolescents ( $M = 1,47$ ). The difference in average score

was 0.77 points. We identified a significant difference ( $t = 6,964$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ) in unsubstantiated claims and myths about bisexuality between heterosexually identified adolescents and LGBT+ identified adolescents. Heterosexually identified adolescents scored higher ( $M = 2,34$ ) compared to LGBT+ identified adolescents ( $M = 1,43$ ). The difference in average score was 0.91. We identified a significant difference ( $t = 6,010$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ) in unsubstantiated claims and myths about trans people between heterosexually identified and LGBT+ identified adolescents. Heterosexually identified adolescents scored higher ( $M = 2,07$ ) in the subscale of UCMT compared to LGBT+ identified adolescents ( $M = 1,41$ ). The difference in average score was 0.66 points. We also found a significant difference ( $t = 6,715$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ) in the overall score of unsubstantiated claims and myths about HBT between heterosexually identified and LGBT+ identified adolescents. Heterosexually identified adolescents scored higher ( $M = 33,35$ ) compared to LGBT+ identified adolescents ( $M = 21,62$ ). The difference in average score was 11.7 points.

**Table 8** Differences in unsubstantiated claims and myths about HBT between heterosexually identified and LGBT+ identified adolescents

	Identification	N	AM	SD	t
UCMH	Heterosexual	148	2,24	0,990	5,563***
	LGBT+	61	1,47	0,672	
UCMB	Heterosexual	148	2,34	0,935	6,964***
	LGBT+	61	1,43	0,658	
UCMT	Heterosexual	148	2,07	0,759	6,010***
	LGBT+	61	1,41	0,631	
UCMHBT	Heterosexual	148	33,35	12,306	6,715***
	LGBT+	61	21,62	9,173	

Legend: \*\*\* = signification on the level 0,001; UCMH = Unsubstantiated claims and myths about homosexuality; UCMB = Unsubstantiated claims and myths about bisexuality; UCMT = Unsubstantiated claims and myths about trans people

**Table 9** Differences in perceived peer pressure between heterosexually identified and LGBT+ identified adolescents

	Identification	N	AM	SD	t
YPP	Heterosexual	148	1,40	0,444	-4,808***
	LGBT+	61	1,76	0,606	
RPP	Heterosexual	148	3,38	0,616	-0,895
	LGBT+	61	3,29	0,714	
EPG	Heterosexual	148	2,89	1,111	-7,051***
	LGBT+	61	3,99	0,767	
PPP	Heterosexual	148	38,41	6,981	-6,792***
	LGBT+	61	45,27	5,736	

Legend: \*\*\* = signification on the level 0,001; YPP = yielding to peer pressure; RPP = resistance to peer pressure; EPG = encouragement in peer group; PPP = perceived peer pressure

A statistical analysis by Student's t-test for two independent samples has shown significant differences in all subscales (YPP, RPP, EPG) and in the overall score of PPP scale between heterosexually identified and LGBT+ identified adolescents (Table 9). A statistical significant difference was found in YPP subscale ( $t = 4,808$ ) between heterosexually identified and LGBT+ adolescents. LGBT+ identified adolescents scored higher ( $M = 1,76$ ) in this subscale compared to heterosexually identified adolescents ( $M = 1,40$ ). LGBT+ identified adolescents have a higher tendency to yield to peer pressure than heterosexually identified adolescents. A significant difference was found in the EPG subscale ( $t = 7,051$ ) between heterosexually identified and LGBT+ identified adolescents. LGBT+ identified adolescents scored higher ( $M = 3,99$ ) in this subscale compared to heterosexually identified adolescents ( $M = 2,89$ ). LGBT+ identified adolescents show higher encouragement in peer groups compared to heterosexually identified adolescents. A statistically significant difference was also found in the overall score of PPP scale ( $t = 6,792$ ) between heterosexually identified and LGBT+ identified adolescents. LGBT+ identified adolescents scored higher ( $M = 45,27$ ) in the overall score of PPP scale compared to heterosexually identified adolescents ( $M = 38,41$ ). The difference in the average score was 6.86 points.

#### 4 Discussion

Our findings have pointed to several conclusions that need to be addressed. The fact that the heterosexual population shows a much higher level of sexual prejudices against the LGBT + minority is also mentioned in various references (e.g. Cullen, Wright, & Alessandri, 2002; Hopwood & Connors, 2002; Mulick & Wright Jr., 2002; Ondrisová et al., 2002; Ceglie & Lyons, 2004; Antoszewski et al., 2007; DePalma & Jennett, 2010; Castromonte & Grijalva, 2017). At the same time, the results of world surveys published by Poushter and Lent in 2019 indicate that the Slovak Republic holds high levels of homonegativity, binegativity and transnegative behaviour, as evidenced by the percentage results: 46% of Slovaks state that homosexuality should not be socially accepted.

Men are also more influenced by unsubstantiated claims than women. The fact that men trust scientifically unsubstantiated information more can be the source of the high negative perception of LGBT+ identified individuals. Research by Taylor and Dalal (2017) also showed that the female population is much more critical of information they receive. They concretely prefer relevant sources of information (e.g. books from libraries) than the male population, who instead tends to use information from Internet platforms. Approximately the same scoring in the subscale of unsubstantiated

claims and myths indicated that even women hold certain prejudices against bisexuality and are influenced by these myths or scientifically unsubstantiated claims or information about bisexuality. One reason for this may be monosexism, which plants the seed of disrupting the soil of heterosexual partnerships. In this context, it can be stated that it is primarily a matter of distrust of bisexually identified individuals that they are unable to maintain the line of monogamy.

We found that adolescent heterosexually identified men and women differ fundamentally in all components of homonegativity, binegativity and transnegativity. This confirms the conclusions of many authors / research teams (e.g. Červenková, Jójárt, & Bianchi, 2002; Ewing, Stukas, & Sheehan, 2003; Parrot & Teicher, 2006; DePalma & Jennett, 2010; Bosson, Weaver, Caswell, & Burnaford, 2011; Castromonte & Grijalva, 2017) that heterosexually identified adolescents hold markedly negative attitudes toward otherness at all levels. According to many authors and research teams, the reason can be found in strong internalization of gender norms and norms in general in the male population. This internalization of the above-mentioned standards causes markedly negative perceptions not only about homosexually identified individuals, but also concerning LGBT+ individuals in general (e.g. Lingardi et al., 2005; Ciocca et al., 2015 and other). This serves to confirm the strong influence of normatives (heteronormativity, monosexism but also hetero-cis-normativity), especially in the population of adolescent men. This conclusion is also supported by Hertlein et al. (2016), who states that the internalization of these standards results in homonegative, binegative or transnegative behaviour.

Our finding that encouragement is significantly greater in circles other than heterosexually identified adolescents is supported by other authors and has a logical basis. LGBT+ identified peers manifest more support and encouragement for those who represent otherness as much as they do. They represent the so-called "Selected family/Family of choice", which represents an important mediator in the reduction of anxiety, potentially leading to the process of self-acceptance and coming-out, which also confirms research by, for example, Aragon, Poteat, Espelage & Koenig (2014). The fact that we did not observe any significant statistical differences between compliance and resistance suggests compliance in the circles of both groups, which reduces the resistance itself to peer pressure and rather merges with the crowd (e.g. Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991; Poteat, Espelage, & Green, 2007; Smolík, 2010, etc.). In such cases, we can argue that a high peer influence or a sense of belonging somewhere has a high tendency to occur in adolescent circles, regardless of sexual identification.

It is also well known that emotions are the driving force behind every human action and cognition. It also

plays a certain role in human interpersonal connections (Dolan, 2002). As noticed by Ye et al. (2009, p. 2), “the affective experiences govern our attitudes, and provide red and green lights for the different thinking styles”. The other issue that can be associated with well-being can be the so-called effect of mood-congruency (Bower, 2000; In Eich, Kihlstorm, Bower, Forgas, & Niedenthal, p. 90), which implies that “cognitive activity, depending on its nature, can either exacerbate or ameliorate people’s emotions and moods.” This theory argues that emotions in certain situations have a crucial effect on cognition that can lead to a specific kind of perception and decision-making, thus forming attitudes towards an object or situation in a positive or negative way.

It is known that the period of adolescence is a significant milestone in which peer groups play a generally important, irreplaceable role in acquiring new social skills (Smolík, 2010). In light of the results of our research, we can point to the relationships of individual variables, which play an important role in increasing but also decreasing the production of homonegative, binegative or transnegative behaviour. The results support the fact that internalization of scientifically unsubstantiated claims is significantly related to the attitudes of adolescents themselves and their subsequent dissemination or manifestation in peer circles that acquire the normative character of the group itself (primarily reference groups that meet the normative dimension of adolescent behaviour) (eg Palfrey & Urs, 2013; Palermi, Servidio, Bartolo, & Costabile, 2017; Pace, Passanisi, & D’Urso, 2018c; Smith et al., 2018). By being compliant with the group’s opinions, sexual prejudices are expanding and gaining strength, thus reinforcing these myths or empirically unsubstantiated claims and constantly expanding. This statement can be substantiated by the arguments of various authors (eg Brown et al., 1986; Adrianasz, 2002; Berten, 2008; Smolík, 2010), who claim that adolescents can engage in various types of risky behaviour based on a sense of belonging or fitting in (again in the context of the normative dimension of the social reference groups).

This behaviour can lead to the production of a higher degree of sexual prejudice (Ames, 1996; Ondrisová et al., 2002; Herek, 2002; Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, & Meyer, 2008, etc.), but also to the paradox of consistency (Mischel, 1984). In these cases, there is also a lack of critical thinking and the development of adolescent autonomy. If adolescents use critical and logical thinking to a greater extent, however, so-called resistance towards the negative peer influence may occur, which may prevent the further transmission of myths or unsubstantiated claims, and thus also actions associated with them. Dhull and Beniwal (2017) state that adolescents who have, for example, high self-esteem, have good social skills or are good at interacting with people from dif-

ferent social backgrounds, are able to resist the negative influence of peers.

## Conclusion and Implications

Although the strength of negative attitudes towards LGBT+ in adolescent circles is decreasing in the context of intensity, the spread of scientifically unverified claims about LGBT+ people continues in society. Personal experience with this minority and media influence are an important aspects in both positive and negative directions. At the same time, important mediators in reducing negative attitudes towards LGBT+ are parents, educators or other professional school staff, such as school psychologists.

Since we do not register scientific studies in the context of the level of faith of unsubstantiated claims and myths about LGBT+, we believe that this present study will help pedagogical and professional employees on the grounds of educational institutions. School tend to be perceived as the second home of a child and a teenager, and LGBT+ issues are very rarely professionally discussed on school grounds.

The grounds of university, where LGBT+ issues are very little represented in both psychological disciplines and disciplines of teacher training, are a separate category. There is no preparation for working with adolescents who are feeling different in their sexual identification. There is still a kind of taboo concerning this topic in the preparation of experts working in school environments. LGBT+ issues can be justified in topics of differential psychology, gender studies, social psychology, social pathology and more. Plausible information and the readiness of future experts in the humanities or pedagogical/educational sciences are key tools in helping future clients and adolescent pupils.

Within the framework of the work of a school psychologist, it is of use to monitor the climate of classes in the context of peer pressure, but also attitudes towards otherness in general – not only in the circles of pupils/students, but also in the circles of the pedagogical/school employees themselves or the management of the educational institution. Testing the principle of the “Gay-Straight Alliance” method on the grounds of primary schools (especially the 6th–9th grade), secondary schools, but also universities can serve as an experimental choice in the prevention of discriminatory behaviour. The main goal of the Gay-Straight Alliance (or Queer-Straight Alliance) is both to create a safe space for LGBT+ individuals and provide relevant information to heterosexual peers or professional staff, thereby creating a more tolerant and accepting climate and atmosphere on the ground of educational institutions.



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