

**ROLE EXPECTATIONS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS OF MEN WITH
DIFFERENT SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

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Abstract

The article considers the features of role expectations in romantic relationships of men with different sexual orientation. A comparative description of role expectations and claims of these groups is given in this article.

The aim of this work is to study the features of role expectations and claims in heterosexual and homosexual couples. The study involved 80 heterosexual and 80 homosexual men Ukrainian nationality, who were interviewed about their role expectations and claims in a couple.

Role expectations of men were studied by using the method of A. Volkova "Role Expectations and Claims in Marriage", which allows to determine features of role expectations and claims of partners in various spheres of family life (sexual relations, parental responsibilities, household, etc.). In addition, participants were tested by an "Incomplete sentences" method. Descriptive statistics, frequency analysis and Student's t-test were used for data processing.

Obtained data indicate important similarities and differences in the perception of a partner, relationships and role expectations and claims of men of different sexual orientations. It was found that both heterosexuals and homosexuals are neutral to married life and have very positive attitude towards their partner. It was found that among both heterosexual and homosexual men dominate role expectations in the social activity and external attractiveness areas. Moreover, expectations in the external attractiveness area are significantly higher among homosexual men compared to heterosexual men.

It was found that role claims of heterosexual men are identical to their role expectations. Heterosexual men do not expect more from their partners than they are willing to give in their relationship. Role claims of homosexual men demonstrate high importance of social activity, external attractiveness and emotional-psychotherapeutic role in relationships.

Prospects for further research include studying of the features of role expectations and claims among men with homosexual orientation, with the further development of techniques for counseling in such couples.

Keywords: sexual orientation, homosexuality, role expectations, role claims, family settings.

Introduction

Rapid changes taking place in modern society affect all spheres of human life and activity. The institution of marriage and marital partnership is sensitive to such changes. The number of young people who choose alternative forms of marriage and partnerships (guest marriage, civil marriage) is growing, as well as the number of same-sex couples (Yablonska, Bulatevych, Maksymchuk, 2020). It should be noted that significant social

interest that can be observed today to non-traditional sexual relations is accompanied by a small number of studies in this area, in particular Ukrainian (Malenova, Malyuga, 2017). Homosexual couples differ from heterosexual in a number of factors, although when they live together and share their chores, they face the same problems as heterosexuals, but the forms of solving these problems are different (Hruschovskaya, 2019). The question of a current interest is perception of family and partnerships in same-sex couples, their role expectations and its determinations. Additionally, even less data is found about the topics of requests from homosexual couples for psychological assistance, the specifics of counseling. These and other unresolved issues make the topic of homosexual relationships features and their role expectations relevant and well-timed.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the features of role expectations in romantic relationships of men of different sexual orientation.

Methodology

Methodology and organization of the study. The study involved 131 men aged from 18 to 50 years (66 heterosexuals and 65 homosexuals) who were in a romantic relationship at the time of the study.

Role expectations of men were studied using the method of A. Volkova "Role expectations and claims in marriage", which allows to determine the features of ideas about the importance of sexual relations, parental responsibilities, professional interests, chores, moral and emotional support, external attractiveness of the partner (scale of family values), as well as the idea of role distribution between spouses (scale of role expectations and claims).

In addition, method of "Incomplete sentences" was used.

Descriptive statistics, frequency analysis and Student's t-test were used for data processing.

Theoretical background

One of the most important characteristics of a couple is its role structure, which involves the distribution of roles and responsibilities between spouses, as well as the formulation of principles for building role relationships in a couple. Role expectations is a complex structure consisting of expectations about oneself and one's partner (his personality, behavior, character, appearance, age, social status, etc.) (Ageev, 1983). Role expectations reflect each member of the couple's perception of how the partner should behave in emotional and sexual contact, how he or she will perform parental responsibilities, household chores, etc. (Rogers, 2002). According to Alekseeva, role expectations and claims, which appear during interaction in relationships is a central component of marital perception (Alekseeva, 2009). J. Alyoshina, L. Gozman, E. Dubovskaya distinguish seven intrafamily roles that characterize modern family: educator, "psychotherapist", responsible for the financial support of the family, entertainment organizer, host / housewife, sexual partner, organizer of the family subculture. The study also notes that a greater degree of coherence in the ratio of role expectations and role behavior contributes to greater satisfaction of the couple. For example, a study by L. Akopova found that 80 % of men described their role expectations in marriage and notes the desire for wife to work rather than staying at

home, raising children and doing housework. According to the author, the result is rivalry and role confusion, which provoke conflicts within the couple over time (Akopova, 2012).

Role expectations of a partner in heterosexual couples are influenced by perceptions and stereotypes associated with fatherhood and motherhood, as well as perceptions of typical male and female images. In regard, men are expected to provide for the family and protect it, make important decisions, be emotionally stable, women - be caring, soft, tolerant, creating comfort (Ageyev, 1983).

However, role expectations in homosexual couples remain poorly explored. The results of A. Repko and O. Alexandrova's study shows that there are less expressed normative male attitudes towards rigidity, less common gender stereotypes about men and women, including the distribution of roles in the couple among homosexual men. (Repko & Aleksandrova, 2020).

Khrushchevska in her study of role expectations and claims of men and women of heterosexual and homosexual orientation, found that among heterosexual and homosexual men the biggest difference is in a domestic area: homosexual men are not demanding in this area, they may not even think about its importance; more willing to create home comfort than to receive it from a partner. Heterosexual men, on the other hand, have more expectations than demands in this area, prefer the patriarchal division of responsibilities (Khrushchevska, 2019). Expectations and claims in the social area are high in both groups, and homosexuals have higher expectations when heterosexuals have more claims, which is also in line with the patriarchal model. The emotional sphere also has no differences in two groups, with a high level in both groups. The author concludes that these groups have more similarities than differences and there is no significant difference between the groups (Khrushchevska, 2019).

The results of a study and comparison of the distribution of household responsibilities in heterosexual and homosexual couples in Bauer's research show that homosexual partners have the same expectations and claims in domestic area (Bauer, 2016). They are equally involved in household tasks, their distribution of household chores is less separate and the workload of partners is more equally balanced than in heterosexual couples. Comparative advantages, differences in lifestyles and gender roles explain the lower degree of equality in heterosexual relationships compared to homosexual.

Studies and comparisons of the emotional sphere in relationships between heterosexual and homosexual couples living together have shown that homosexuals have higher level of moral attachment to a partner compared to heterosexuals (International Academy of LGBT Psychology and Related Fields, 2014).

In Wierzbinski's study of a partner choice, homosexual men were more interested in marital partners who were both older and higher in socioeconomic status than heterosexual men (Wierzbinski, 2016). This may be partly due to signs of reproduction, as heterosexual men may choose younger female partners because of their higher reproductive capacity. For homosexual men reproductive issues are not problematic and age may not be as important to them. (Wierzbinski, 2016).

Results

Results analysis of the incomplete sentences method made it possible to compare features of the attitude to married life and to the partner among men with different sexual orientations. The results are presented in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Attitudes towards married life and partner of heterosexual men according to the results of the "Incomplete sentences" method (N = 66)

Name of scale	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Married life	60%	15%	25%
Partner	5%	95%	5%

The results of the analysis among heterosexuals showed that in relation to married life neutral attitude prevails, most describe it as boring and worthless. The fourth part of the sample shows negative attitude and only 15% indicate a positive attitude. However, positive attitude dominate in relation to the partner, which is observed in 95% of surveyed men with heterosexual orientation, as can be seen in Table 1. We see similar and different results in some parameters in the sample of homosexual men. Summarized survey data of this group is presented in table 2.

Table 2

Attitude towards married life and partner of homosexual men according to the results of the "Incomplete sentences" method (N = 65)

Name of scale	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Married life	60%	30%	10%
Partner	5%	90%	5%

As well as previous group, respondents noted that they are neutral about married life, but we see that the number of men who have a positive attitude towards their partner is higher than among heterosexuals.

Role expectations and claims of the respondents were studied using the method of A. Volkova "Role expectations and claims." Results of the assessment of the significance of values are presented in table 3.

Table 3

The results of the method of A. Volkova "Role expectations and claims" among men with different sexual orientation (values) (N = 131)

Scale	The severity of the significance of the scale	Heterosexual men (N=66; %)	Homosexual men (N=65; %)
Intimate-sexual	Low	18.2	35.4
	Average	65.2	53.8
	High	16.6	10.8
	Average grade on the scale	4.83	4.43
Personal identification with the spouse	Low	3	1.5
	Average	60.6	46.2
	High	36.4	52.3
	Average grade on the scale	6.06	6.72

As can be seen from Table 3, in the sample of men with heterosexual orientation, the percentage of respondents with average and high significance of the intimate-sexual sphere as a family value is slightly higher compared to the sample of homosexual men. In contrast, among homosexuals there is a slightly higher percentage of respondents for whom the level of expression of the value of personal identification with a partner is high. In general, it can be concluded that for the interviewed men from both groups, intimate and sexual values and identification with a partner are important, shown by the high or average level of their severity for the vast majority of men in both subgroups.

Table 4 presents the results of the assessment of role expectations and claims among heterosexual men. As can be seen from Table 4, most respondents have high or average level expectations from a partner in social activity sphere, in emotional-psychotherapeutic and parental-educational sphere. Also significant is the external attractiveness of the partner, average and high expectations are observed in 90% of respondents.

Less important are expectations from a partner in household functions in the family, as evidenced by the low levels of their expressions in 25% of the respondents. As for role claims of men in this group, role claims, ie the willingness to express themselves in certain roles in the family, are identical to their role expectations. That is, heterosexual men do not expect more from their partners than they are willing to give into their relationships. Only one scale (physical appeal) demonstrate slightly lower role claims in contrast of role expectations.

Table 4

The results of the A. Volkova's "Role Expectations and Claims" method among heterosexual men (N = 66)

Scale	The severity of the significance of the scale	Role expectations	Role claims
Household	Low	25.8	19.7
	Average	56.1	50
	High	18.1	30.3
Social activity	Low	13.6	4.5
	Average	66.7	19.7
	High	19.7	75.8
Emotional-psychotherapeutic	Low	3	7.6
	Average	39.4	54.5
	High	57.6	37.9
Parental-education	Low	9.1	9.1
	Average	59.1	31.8
	High	31.8	59.1
Physical appeal	Low	9.1	24.2
	Average	47	53
	High	43.9	22.8

Table 5 presents the results of the assessment of role expectations and claims among heterosexual men.

Table 5

The results of the method of A. Volkova - "Role expectations and harassment" among homosexuals (N = 65)

Scale	The severity of the significance of the scale	Role expectations	Role claims
Household	Low	6.2	36.9
	Average	63.1	60
	High	30.8	3.1
Social activity	Low	7.7	3.1
	Average	60	36.9
	High	32.3	60
Emotional-psychotherapeutic	Low	1.5	1.5
	Average	20	55.8
	High	78.5	47.7
Parental-education	Low	4.6	47.7
	Average	58.5	46.2
	High	36.9	6.2
Physical appeal	Low	12.3	12.3
	Average	56.9	49.2
	High	30.8	38.5

Data analysis in Table 5 suggests that for homosexual men household function of the partner and emotional-psychotherapeutic function are important. As we can see from the expectations regarding the parental role of the partner are significant too.

As for role claims, homosexual men are ready to show their social activity, and emotional-psychotherapeutic role in relationships. They are less inclined to their role in the household. Such data indicate that men do not ready to actively fulfill household issues, do not attach much importance to household skills and abilities. But they expected it from their partners. The least expressed are claims in parenting, which is combined with quite expressed expectations in this area from the partner, which creates a zone of potential conflicts and misunderstandings.

A comparative analysis of the severity of role expectations and claims among men in both samples is presented in Table 6. The analysis was performed by using Student's t-test, because the distribution of indicators in the two samples corresponds to normal, as confirmed by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

As can be seen from Table 6, emotional-psychotherapeutic function as well as household and the importance of physical appeal expressed are significantly higher in homosexual men compared to heterosexual men.

**Significance of the differences in role expectations and claims between
homosexuals and heterosexuals (N=131)**

Scale	Average indicators of the severity of expectations and claims		Student's t-test
	Homosexual men (n=66)	Heterosexual men (n=65)	
Role expectations			
Household	5.88	4.51	-4.19***
Social activity	5.81	5.24	-1.90
Emotional-psychotherapeutic	7.60	6.86	-2.63**
Parental-education	6.10	5.67	-1.47
Physical appeal	6.33	5.57	2.29**
Role claims			
Household	3.84	5.31	4.44***
Social activity	6.87	7.43	1.79
Emotional-psychotherapeutic	6.49	5.98	-1.59
Parental-education	3.86	6.68	8.24***
Physical appeal	5.92	4.95	-2.94**

* $p < 0,05$, ** $p < 0,01$, *** $p < 0,001$

It is combined with significantly higher role claims on the same scales. Interestingly, the expectations and claims that are traditionally attributed to the female role in a traditional family (being a good homemaker and raising children) are significant among men with homosexual orientation. Instead, as shown above, for heterosexual men, these roles are not paramount in the hierarchy of role expectations.

Discussion

Research shows that nowadays most young people don't consider marriage and other major milestones in social life (such as birth of children) as necessary parts of life and becoming an adult (Nelson, 2005). Modern young people feel a certain distrust to marriage as a social institution and find too many disadvantages in it (Rogers, 2002). This is greatly influenced by parents' example. In general, opinion polls suggest that young people are not ready to start a family (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). For young people, the marital relationship between a man and a woman is important and justifies efforts to continue the only when they contribute to the personal self-improvement and self-realization of each partner. That is why the value of a romantic, happy, close relationships is growing. With the rise of individualism in 1970s and 1980s partners, especially women, began to be encouraged to think about their own self-realization, personal growth, satisfaction with relationships and partners, and now this trend is at its peak (Cherlin, 2010).

Comparing our research with Hrushchevska's (I.Hrushchevska, 2019), which was conducted through the social network "V kontakte" and was devoted to the study of role expectations and claims of young people (boys and girls) with heterosexual and

homosexual orientation, we note similar and somewhat different results on a number of parameters.

Thus, according to the scales of expectations in household, parental education, social activity and attractiveness, the average indicators obtained by us among homosexual respondents are slightly higher than similar indicators in I.Hrushchevska's study. On the other hand, in our sample of men with homosexual orientation, the rates of role claims in the parental and household spheres are lower.

Both in our study and in the study of I. Hrushchevska there are significant differences between homosexuals and heterosexuals on the scale of household. Among our homosexual respondents the role expectations in this sphere are more significant. I. Khrushchevska notes that homosexual respondents in her study show significantly lower results on this scale. The author concludes that they are undemanding to a partner in the sphere of household (I.Hrushchevska, 2019).

We have similar results in comparing two samples in the field of role expectations and role claims related to social and emotional areas. Our study and the study of Russians show no differences in expectations in these areas. However, it is interesting that the average indicators of both expectations and claims in the emotional sphere of both our samples are lower than similar indicators in I. Khrushchevska's study. It can be assumed that such results may be a demonstration of cross-cultural differences between men with different sexual orientations. However, serious conclusions can be drawn only after further more thorough research.

Although there is data from foreign researchers in which male homosexual partnership is perceived as providing greater emotional brightness compared to heterosexual couples (Gorman, 1987).

Conclusion

The study revealed the features of role expectations and demands in romantic relationships of men with different sexual orientations. In general, obtained data indicates important similarities and differences in the perception of the partner, relationships and role expectations and claims. Thus, it was found that both heterosexuals and homosexuals are neutral to married life and have a very positive attitude towards their partner.

It was found that emotional-psychotherapeutic function as well as household and parental-educational function expressed are significantly higher in homosexual men compared to heterosexual men. It is combined with significantly higher role claims on the same scales. So the expectations and claims that are traditionally attributed to the female role in a traditional family (being a good homemaker and raising children) are significant among men with homosexual orientation. It was found that role claims of heterosexual men is identical to their role expectations, ie heterosexual men do not expect more from their partners than they are willing to give in this relationship.

Prospects for further research include the study of the factors of role expectations and claims among men with homosexual orientation, with the further development of techniques for counseling in such couples. After all, understanding personal and family factors that underlie the role expectations and demands of partners is the key to finding mutual understanding and harmonizing relationships.

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