

Exploring the Role of Inner Dialogue and Social Identity Complexity in Tolerance**Towards Homosexuality in Youth**

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the influence of Inner Dialogue (Hermans et al., 2017) on youth tolerance towards homosexuality in the Netherlands, and whether Social Identity Complexity (SIC) (Roccas & Brewer, 2002) moderated this relationship. An online pre-test post-test experimental design was employed with two conditions. A sample of 59 participants (aged 16-30) completed the Scale of Attitudes towards Lesbians and Gay Men (Gato et al., 2012). In between the two administrations participants were randomly assigned to two conditions, either the inner dialogue condition (n=29) or the control condition (n=29). Subsequently, all participants filled out the SIC and the tolerance measure again. An ANCOVA with repeated measures tested whether condition affected tolerance change, with SIC as a covariate for moderation. Results showed no significant effect of condition on tolerance ($F(1, 54) = 0.055, p = 0.818$), nor a significant moderation effect of SIC ($F(1,54) = 0.007, p = 0.934$). The covariates religion and sexuality were included as well, to account for a difference in the composition of the sample for each condition. Religion, had a significant effect on tolerance ($F(24, 14) = 3.708, p = 0.008$), while sexuality did not ($F(16,14) = 1.396, p = 0.269$). These findings contradict previous research, potentially due to limitations such as heteronormativity in the scales and a small sample size. Future research should address these limitations to better explore the effects of inner dialogue and SIC on tolerance.

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Exploring the Role of Inner Dialogue and Social Identity Complexity in Tolerance Towards Homosexuality in Youth

For decades, the Netherlands has been celebrated as an example of tolerance and acceptance, especially regarding its progressive attitudes towards homosexuality. Amsterdam, the capital city, is known globally as an icon of LGBTQ+ liberation, notably marked by milestones like the first legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2001 and hosting the vibrant annual gay pride parade (Buijs et al., 2011). One might expect such a society to stand for inclusivity and respect towards LGBTQ+ individuals, and there is indeed inclusivity and respect. Surveys conducted in the Netherlands reinforce this perception, showing a significant level of acceptance of homosexuality among the Dutch population, accompanied by strong support for equal rights and non-discrimination (Gerhards, 2010). The Netherlands have come a long way in terms of legal protections and societal attitudes towards homosexuality. There has been a noteworthy increase in reported acceptance and tolerance over the past few decades. Notably, the general tolerance of homosexuality saw a significant uprise between 1970 and 1980, and surveys suggest that this has either remained stable or even shown improvement in the years after (Keuzenkamp et al., 2006).

When we look at these numbers in comparison to the broader European picture, again, we see that the Netherlands is doing relatively well. For example, in the Netherlands, 67% of the respondents say they are often or always open about being part of the LGBTQ+ community, which is higher than the European average of 47%. However, it is important to notice that there is still a long way to go. A 38% of the respondents stated that they were harassed in the year before the survey and 57% still avoid holding hands with their same-sex partner in public (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2019).

Despite the image of acceptance that the Netherlands projects, antigay violence remains a pressing issue, especially in buzzing cities like Amsterdam. Despite the more progressive laws and apparent tolerance towards homosexuality, the reality experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals shows a more complex situation. For example, violence against gay men is still distressingly frequent (Beusekom & Kuyper, 2018). These acts of violence are often inflicted by young men between the ages of 15 and 25 (Buijs et al., 2011). The sheer number of these incidents, as documented in police reports, highlights the presence of remaining discriminatory beliefs and the danger that LGBTQ+ individuals still face from physical harm and intimidation. Moreover, lesbian women face challenges of invisibility and marginalization in public discourse and media portrayal (Hekma & Duyvendak, 2012, Beusekom & Kuyper, 2018). Their struggles often go unnoticed in the broader narrative of gay liberation, which results in a lack of acknowledgment of their distinct experiences and identities.

In sum, while these numbers show that the Netherlands is doing well compared to the European average, there is still room for improvement. In particular there is a disparity between the

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law and how people actually feel and what they actually experience. This gap between what the law and numbers say and what people actually feel and experience highlights the need to tackle this intolerance and violence against gay men and lesbian women and look for ways to improve tolerance.

Inner Dialogue and Tolerance

One way to promote tolerance is by using Dialogical Self Theory (DST). In Hermans' DST framework (Hermans, 2012), the self is conceptualised as consisting of multiple "I-positions" representing different versions or modalities of oneself. These "I-positions" are not static, but are dynamically formed and activated in different situations and interactions. They encompass the different perspectives, beliefs and values that individuals have about themselves and the world around them. In essence, "I positions" are enduring and evolving facets of one's self, reflecting the complexity of human identity and experience. As individuals navigate through different contexts and encounters, they may activate different "I-positions", each providing a unique lens through which to perceive and interact with the world. Consequently, similar to societal conflicts, the voices from different "I-positions" may also differ from each other (Hermans, 2012). The voices within oneself are not just personal constructs; they also reflect societal collective voices. These positions emerge and evolve through ongoing dialogues with oneself, interactions with others and broader socio-cultural influences.

DST further proposes that these "I-positions" can engage in dialogue with one another rather than functioning independently, allowing for the expression and exchange of these positions (Hermans, 2012). According to DST (Hermans, 1996), our minds are like lively communities, each voice representing a different aspect of our lives – whether it is culture, family, or friends. These inner voices partake in a constant dialogue, asking questions, providing answers, and sometimes even disagreeing with each other (Hermans, 2003). Inner dialogues consist of the exchange of thoughts between different viewpoints, which helps shape our sense of self and how we understand the world around us (Hermans, 1996). Through these internal dialogues, we not only construct our identities, but we also organise our thoughts and gain deeper insights into ourselves (e.g., Bhatia, 2002; Hermans and Dimaggio, 2007; Batory, 2010).

In recent years, studies regarding DST and related fields have shed light on various types of internal dialogues and their roles in human cognition and behaviour, as not every dialogue contains the potential for growth (Puchalska-Wasyl, 2016). Nir (2012) makes a distinction between contrasting dialogues, where conflicting viewpoints contend until one remains dominant, and integrating dialogues, which aim for a compromise between the opposing perspectives. Imperato and Mancini (2021) further emphasize the role of inner dialogue in activating the self and promoting various levels of inclusion. By engaging in internal conversations, individuals confront their biases and prejudices, thereby reducing the barriers to acceptance and fostering a more inclusive worldview. This process of

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self-interrogation and introspection allows individuals to challenge their preconceived notions and develop empathy towards others (Imperanto & Mancini, 2021).

According to Hermans et al. (2017), these internal conflicts generate tension. For instance, someone who supports LGBTQ rights and is a member of a religious community with conservative views may experience internal conflicts regarding attitudes toward homosexuality. This tension can lead to the emergence of new perspectives, potentially more tolerant ones. Put simply, interactions between contradictory "I-positions" within oneself may result in more tolerant viewpoints. However, for this dialogical connection to occur, competing perspectives must be allowed the freedom to express themselves fully within the internal dialogue. Consequently, the open expression of opposing viewpoints is crucial for the development of new perspectives (Hermans et al., 2017).

Building on these insights, it is worth noting conflicting findings in the literature regarding the effectiveness of inner dialogue interventions in promoting tolerance towards marginalized communities. Wagemans (2022) found no significant effect of inner dialogue on tolerance levels towards transgender people, in contrast to Karkili's (2023) observations. A possible explanation for the discrepancy between these studies could lie in the nature of the inner dialogue interventions employed.

In Karkili's study, participants engaged in an inner dialogue condition where they received the task to write a dialogue between two opposing I-positions within themselves, as conceptualized by DST (Hermans, 2017). This approach emphasized dialogue between contrasting self-positions and resulted in increased tolerance levels in subsequent assessments. On the other hand, Wagemans (2022) employed a different approach in the inner dialogue condition. In this study, participants wrote two dialogues. Firstly, they practiced using the format and were primed for a (self)supporting attitude by recalling a distressing event from their youth and offering support to their younger selves. Then, they were asked to imagine a first conversation with their best friend who had recently started gender transitioning and to write a dialogue representing that interaction. This methodology focused more on self-reflection and empathy-building rather than on dialogue between contrasting self-positions.

The contrast between the inner dialogue interventions used in these studies suggests that the effectiveness of inner dialogue interventions may vary depending on the specific nature of the dialogue prompts and tasks. While Karkili's study emphasized internal dialogue between conflicting self-positions, Wagemans' approach focused more on self-reflection and empathy-building. Given the promising results observed in Karkili's study, particularly regarding the effectiveness of internal dialogue between conflicting self-positions in promoting tolerance, the methodological approach employed in Karkili's study will be adopted in this study. This method aligns with the goal of investigating how inner dialogue interventions can foster tolerance and comprehension of marginalized groups, offering valuable insights into the mechanisms driving attitude shifts.

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In summary, DST offers valuable insights into the dynamics of internal dialogue and its potential to foster tolerance and understanding. Studies, such as Karkili's (2023), show that dialogue between conflicting self-positions can be effective. This study follows a similar path, exploring how inner dialogue can enhance tolerance towards homosexuality.

Social Identity Complexity and Tolerance

In addition to inner dialogue, Social Identity Complexity (SIC) might also enhance tolerance. SIC plays a significant role in how people view and interact with different social groups, especially in face-to-face interactions. Researchers have highlighted the importance of understanding how our sense of self influences our attitudes towards others, with social identity complexity being a key factor in this process (Maloku et al., 2019). When someone has low social identity complexity, meaning they see their various group memberships as closely connected, they often show less openness and acceptance towards people from different groups. This can lead to both explicit and implicit biases against racial or sexual orientation-based groups (Maloku et al., 2019). On the other hand, individuals with high social identity complexity, who see their group memberships as separate and diverse, tend to be more inclusive and tolerant towards others (Maloku et al., 2019).

Maloku and colleagues (2019) propose that when individuals develop a new overarching identity, known as SIC, it plays a vital role in predicting and improving intergroup relations. From the perspective of SIC, merely identifying with multiple social categories, like sexual orientation, ethnicity, and religion, isn't sufficient to promote positive attitudes toward other groups. Instead, it's essential to grasp how individuals perceive the connections and similarities between these different groups that shape their social identity. SIC, as conceptualized by Roccas and Brewer (2002), offers insights into how individuals perceive and navigate their social identities. It operates along a spectrum, ranging from low to high complexity, and consists of two key components: overlap complexity and similarity complexity. Overlap complexity refers to the extent of overlap between different social identities, while similarity complexity relates to the interconnectedness of these identities based on group representations (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012).

Previous studies have shown that having a more complex social identity comes with several benefits. People with higher social identity complexity tend to be more open to others, view them in a positive light, trust them more, and feel less threatened by differences (Brewer & Pierce, 2005; Miller et al., 2009; Xin et al., 2016; Schmid et al., 2009). Additionally, exposure to diverse environments and contact with different social groups can help foster higher social identity complexity (Brewer, 2010; Schmid et al., 2013; Schmid et al., 2009). Moreover, having a less complex social identity is linked to being less open, having a lower tolerance for outgroups, and displaying more bias towards other groups (Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Brewer & Pierce, 2005; Miller et al., 2009; Schmid et al., 2009). This can be explained by the cognitive and motivational factors underlying social identity complexity.

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When individuals belong to multiple overlapping groups, they tend to place greater importance on comparisons between themselves and others, as well as on their belongingness to specific social groups (Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Brewer, 1991; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Like inner dialogue, SIC plays a key role in fostering tolerance. While inner dialogue focuses on internal conversations between different self-positions, SIC examines the complexity and overlap of one's social identities. Both concepts shed light on human cognition and interaction, albeit from different angles. Inner dialogue delves into individual thought processes and self-perceptions, while SIC emphasizes the impact of social context and group membership on attitudes and behaviour (Hermans et al., 2017; Maloku et al., 2019). Individuals with higher SIC levels tend to demonstrate more openness, trust, and acceptance towards others, aligning with findings from inner dialogue studies (Brewer & Pierce, 2005; Miller et al., 2009; Xin et al., 2016; Imperanto & Mancini, 2021). Moreover, it is plausible that individuals with higher SIC levels may naturally generate more "I-positions," given the complexity of their social identities. This suggests a complementary relationship between inner dialogue and SIC in fostering tolerance and harmony among groups, underscoring the need to consider both individual and social factors in understanding tolerance.

In summary, SIC significantly affects attitudes and behaviour towards different social groups. High SIC levels correlate with more inclusiveness and tolerance, while low levels can lead to prejudice. SIC, as proposed by Roccas and Brewer (2002), emphasises the interconnectedness of group memberships. Complementing inner dialogue, SIC sheds light on the complexity of social identity. When both processes are utilised, they promote tolerance and acceptance. Examining the interplay between inner dialogue and SIC helps to understand how they shape attitudes towards marginalised groups, particularly in relation to sexual orientation.

Age

Adolescence is known as a crucial period where individuals begin to join different social groups, thus shaping their social identity (Albarello et al., 2018), laying the foundation for later developments in social cognition, including the emergence of SIC. Adolescence, in particular, serves as a critical time for this process, as individuals navigate the complexities of self-perception and belonging to a group (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007). Moreover, both adolescence and emerging adulthood are important ages for the exploration of identity formation, and therefore also relevant for development in the broader context of societal attitudes and behaviours. Furthermore, when looking at the situation regarding intolerance, research suggests that individuals aged between 16 and 30, especially young men, are often involved in committing violence against marginalised groups, such as gay individuals (Buijs et al., 2011). Understanding the attitudes and beliefs that underlie such behaviour is critical in promoting social inclusiveness and challenging prejudice.

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Aim of this Study

This study aims to examine how inner dialogue and SIC contribute to shaping attitudes towards homosexuality among youth. Grounded in DST, which suggests that individuals possess multiple "I-positions" that interact and evolve in response to different situations, this study seeks to further explore the influence of inner dialogue on tolerance levels. According to DST, inner dialogues involve the exchange of thoughts between these different self-positions, fostering self-reflection and potentially leading to attitude shifts (Hermans, 2012).

Additionally, this study incorporates the concept of SIC. SIC theory suggests that individuals differ in the complexity of their social identities, with higher complexity linked to greater openness and tolerance towards outgroups (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Those with high SIC levels perceive their social identities as diverse and distinct, promoting inclusivity and acceptance of others (Maloku et al., 2019). Thus, understanding how inner dialogue and SIC interact provides insight into the formation and transformation of attitudes towards homosexuality. Therefore, this study aims to test the following hypotheses:

H1.1: *Engaging in inner dialogue between different I-positions will increase the level of tolerance towards homosexuality.*

H1.2: *The increase of tolerance will be higher in the Inner Dialogue condition compared to the control condition*

H2: *The influence of engaging in inner dialogue on participants' tolerance towards homosexuality is moderated by their level of social identity complexity.*

Methods

The current study focused on how tolerance could be promoted among adolescents. To address the research questions, an experimental pretest-posttest-design study with two conditions was conducted.

Participants

An estimated sample size of 179 was calculated using an ANCOVA with repeated measures within-between groups, with a power of 0.80. Participants were selected through convenience sampling, based on their age range between 16 and 30 years old, and their willingness to participate. All participants were invited to take part in the study by a link to the survey in the online platform Qualtrics. Originally 112 participants started the survey, however, some were excluded as they did not fill in the complete survey. The final sample consisted of 58 participants ($M_{age} = 21.9$, $SD_{age} = 2.7$). Among the 58 participants, 29 participants were assigned to the inner dialogue condition and 29

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participants were assigned to the control condition. The Ethics Committee of the Utrecht University approved of the study.

Measures

Tolerance Measure

The Tolerance Measure used in this study was adapted from the Multidimensional Scale of Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men (Gato et al., 2012). This scale assesses several dimensions of attitudes towards homosexuality, including pathologizing homosexuality, rejection of proximity, and modern heterosexism. Pathologizing homosexuality refers to the perception of homosexuality as morally wrong or medically treatable (e.g. Homosexuality is a psychological disease) (Gato et al., 2012). Rejection of proximity involves a form of prejudice characterised by avoiding or being uncomfortable with closeness to lesbians and gay men (e.g. It does not matter to me whether my friends are gay or straight) (Allport, 1954; Pereira et al., 2009;). Modern heterosexism includes modern-day prejudices, such as opposition to same-sex marriage and negative views on same-sex parenthood (e.g. I believe same-sex parents are as capable of being good parents as heterosexual parents). These dimensions offer insights into attitudes toward homosexuality, ranging from traditional perspectives to current prejudices (Biernat et al., 1996; Herek, 2007; Moreno & Bodenhausen, 2001).

In terms of reliability, the scale shows strong internal consistency, indicating that its different components are reliable, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.96 in this study. The correlations between the factors are statistically significant and consistent with what was expected (Gato et al., 2012). Moreover, Gato et al. (2012) conducted a differential study that provided evidence for the validity of the instrument. It is important to note that the items of the scale for this study were translated into Dutch by the researcher. A second researcher independently translated the scale as well, there was agreement on 25 of them, the differences were discussed. This Tolerance Measure is used as an instrument to assess participants' attitudes toward homosexuality before and after engaging in the assigned tasks. See Appendix A for the full measure in Dutch.

Inner Dialogue Measure

The inner dialogue measure asked participants to reflect on their attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community, particularly homosexual individuals, by means of engaging in inner dialogue. Participants were encouraged to recall moments of both high and low tolerance toward the LGBTQ+ community and imagine a conversation between these more and less tolerant selves. Drawing inspiration from Karkili (2023), who employed a similar methodology to explore inner dialogue regarding transgender people, participants were asked to articulate this dialogue by switching between more and less tolerant I-positions. See Appendix A for the full measure in Dutch.

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Control Measure

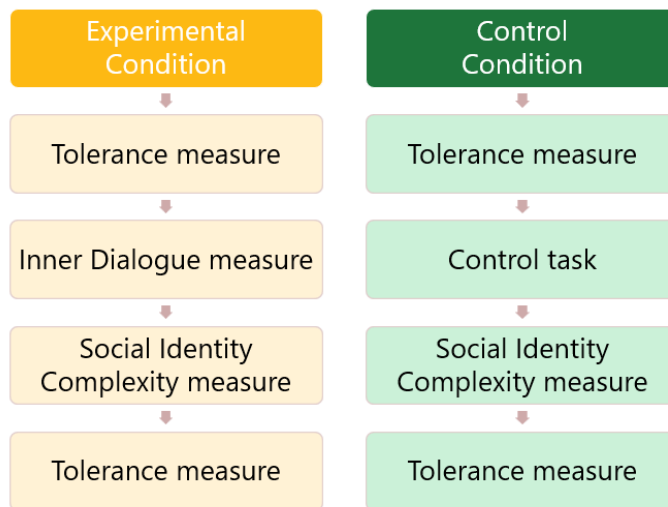
The control measure consisted of an assignment in which the participants were asked to write a short reflection about something positive that happened recently. This decision was made to ensure that the tasks in both the control and experimental conditions involved a writing task. By maintaining consistency in the nature of the tasks across groups, any observed differences in outcomes between the experimental (inner dialogue) and control (reflection) conditions could be more confidently attributed to the specific intervention rather than differences in task format or modality. See Appendix A for the full measure in Dutch

Social Identity Complexity Measure

The social identity complexity measure in this study is adapted from measures used by Maloku et al. (2019), to explore participants' perceptions of the overlap and similarity of attitudes toward homosexuality across different social group memberships. The measure consists of three parts. Firstly, the identification of social groups they associate with, including the categories of religion, educational background, sexuality, and gender. These categories were chosen due to their relevance to tolerance levels. Research has shown that religiosity has an effect on tolerance regarding homosexuality (Spina, 2016). Moreover, it was consistently shown that higher educational levels lead to higher tolerance levels of homosexuality (la Roi & Mandemakers, 2018). Furthermore, gender, and specifically gender roles, were found to have an effect on the level of tolerance towards homosexuality (Stefurak et al., 2010). Secondly, the overlap complexity, in which participants assessed the degree of overlap in attitudes toward homosexuality between these identified groups. Lastly, the similarity complexity, in which participants assessed the internal consistency of attitudes towards homosexuality within each individual group they identified with. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.79 in this study, suggests high reliability. See Appendix A for the full measure in Dutch.

Procedure

Upon opening the link in Qualtrics participants were presented with an introduction to the study and were asked about their consent to partake in the study. All participants were asked to fill out their age first. They then were presented with the Scale of Attitudes towards Lesbians and Gay men. Upon completing the scale participants were randomly assigned to either the inner dialogue condition or the control condition. Once the participants filled out their assigned tasks they were forwarded to the social identity complexity measure. Lastly, they were asked to fill in the Scale of Attitudes towards Lesbians and Gay men once again (Figure 1).

Figure 1*Visualisation of the Design of the Study***Data Analysis**

The final dataset was reviewed to ensure the absence of missing data. Participants who exceeded the age limit or left any questions unanswered were excluded from the analysis. To see whether inner dialogue had an effect on the increase in tolerance, a repeated measures analysis of variance with covariates (ANCOVA) was conducted. This analysis treated the condition (Inner Dialogue vs. Control) as a between-subjects factor and the change in tolerance scores as the dependent variable. To further explore the relationship between inner dialogue and tolerance increase, additional covariates were included. This analysis included social identity complexity (SIC) as a covariate alongside the inner dialogue condition and the control condition. The model tested the main effects of the condition and the covariate SIC, as well as their interaction, on the change in tolerance scores. All analyses were done using RStudio.

Results**Preliminary Analyses**

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the final sample, providing insights into the distribution of gender, sexuality, education level, and religion across the inner dialogue and control conditions. Notably, there are variations observed, particularly in the distribution of participants based on religion and sexuality. While these differences may arise due to random sampling, they hold relevance as literature suggests that factors such as religion and sexuality can influence tolerance levels towards homosexuality (Spina, 2016; Stefurak et al., 2010). Therefore, these factors will be included as covariates in the analysis.

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Table 1*Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Participant Sample*

Characteristics	Inner Dialogue Condition (n=29)	Control Condition (n=29)
Gender		
Woman	16 (55.17%)	15 (51.72%)
Man	11 (37.93%)	10 (34.48%)
Non-binary	2 (6.90%)	4 (13.79%)
Sexuality		
Heterosexual	23 (79.31%)	18 (62.07%)
Homosexual	0 (0.00%)	3 (10.34%)
Bisexual/Pansexual	5 (17.24%)	4 (13.79%)
Asexual	1 (3.45%)	4 (13.79%)
Education level		
University	19 (65.52%)	18 (62.07%)
HBO	4 (13.79%)	5 (17.24%)
MBO	2 (6.90%)	5 (17.24%)
VWO	1 (3.45%)	1 (3.45%)
HAVO	2 (6.90%)	0 (0.00%)
No degree	1 (3.45%)	0 (0.00%)
Religion		
Atheist	14 (48.28%)	20 (68.97%)
Christian	7 (24.14%)	3 (10.34%)
Agnostic	6 (20.69%)	4 (13.79%)
Spiritual	1 (3.45%)	1 (3.45%)

Table 2 summarizes the pre-test, post-test, and change in tolerance scores for both conditions. In the Inner Dialogue condition, there was a minor decrease in tolerance from pre- to post-test, with a mean change score of -0.90. Similar to the Control condition, with a mean change score of -0.72. Notably, in both conditions, some participants exhibited higher post-test scores compared to pre-test scores, indicating reduced tolerance.

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Table 2*Pre-test and Post-test Tolerance Descriptives*

	Pre-test			Post-test			Change in tolerance		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Inner Dialogue	29	60.66	25.75	29	61.55	28.63	29	-0.90	4.89
Control Condition	29	59.10	24.95	29	59.83	25.90	29	-0.72	3.38

ANCOVA

An ANCOVA with repeated measures was conducted to examine the influence of condition (Inner Dialogue vs. Control) on the change in tolerance. The results shown in Table 3 indicated no significant difference between the conditions ($F(1, 54) = 0.055, p = 0.818$), suggesting that neither condition significantly affected the change in tolerance. In addition, the moderation effect of Social Identity Complexity (SIC) on the relationship between condition and change in tolerance was tested, which showed no significant interaction ($F(1,54) = 0.007, p = 0.934$). Thus, SIC did not moderate the influence of condition on tolerance change. When sexuality and religion were included as covariates, religion showed a significant effect ($F(24, 14) = 3.708, p = 0.008$), while sexuality did not ($F(16,14) = 1.396, p = 0.269$). Overall, these findings suggest that neither condition nor interaction with SIC significantly affected the change in tolerance, indicating that neither condition was effective in promoting tolerance. However, religion emerged as a significant factor influencing change in tolerance, indicating its potential relevance in this context.

Table 3*ANCOVA With Repeated Measures Results Including Covariates for Change in Tolerance*

	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F value	p value
Condition	1	0.4	0.43	0.055	0.818
SIC	1	2.6	2.59	0.328	0.576
Condition:SIC	1	0.1	0.06	0.007	0.934
Religion	24	701.5	29.23	3.708	0.008
Sexuality	16	176.0	11.00	1.396	0.269
Residuals	54	110.4	7.88		

Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate the effects of engaging in inner dialogue on tolerance towards homosexuality, with a specific focus on how this relationship might be influenced by participants' level of social identity complexity. Contrary to expectations, the findings did not support the proposed hypotheses. First, although previous research has suggested that inner dialogue can promote tolerance and understanding (Karkili, 2023; Hermans et al., 2017), this study found no evidence to support the hypothesis that engaging in inner dialogue between different I-positions increases tolerance towards homosexuality. Similarly, the hypothesis that there would be a higher increase in tolerance in the Inner Dialogue condition compared to the control condition was not supported by the data. Despite theoretical support for the idea that inner dialogue could lead to more tolerance (Nir, 2012), no significant differences were observed in tolerance increase between the two conditions in this study.

In addition, the hypothesis suggesting that the influence of engaging in inner dialogue on tolerance would be moderated by participants' level of social identity complexity was also not supported. Although previous research has shown that social identity complexity can influence attitudes and behaviour (Maloku et al., 2019), this study found no evidence that it moderated the relationship between inner dialogue and tolerance towards homosexuality. These findings highlight the complexity of the relationship between inner dialogue and tolerance and underscore the need for further research to clarify the underlying mechanisms and preconditions of inner dialogue interventions in promoting tolerance and understanding.

Several factors may explain the discrepancies between the findings of this study and previous research. First, heteronormativity in the questionnaire may have influenced participants' responses, especially those from queer backgrounds. The survey questions, designed with an implicit heterosexual perspective, may not have adequately reflected the nuanced attitudes of queer individuals towards homosexuality. This is particularly relevant given that 29.3% of the participants identified as queer. Furthermore, it is important to note that sexuality as a covariate was not found to be significant in this study. In retrospect, the questionnaire may have unintentionally perpetuated a heterocentric viewpoint, limiting the authenticity of queer participants' responses.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that the initial level of tolerance towards homosexuality was relatively high among participants in both conditions. This pre-existing level of tolerance may have dampened the potential for significant increases in tolerance after involvement in inner dialogue. It is plausible that because of this ceiling effect there was less room for improvement compared to individuals with lower initial levels of tolerance.

In addition, the composition of the sample, which consisted mainly of highly educated individuals, may have contributed to the observed outcomes. Research suggests that education level can influence

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attitudes towards diversity and inclusion (la Roi & Mandemakers, 2018). Therefore, the high educational level of the participants in this study may have predisposed them to have more progressive attitudes towards homosexuality, regardless of the experimental manipulation. Consequently, the lack of variability in educational background within the sample may have limited the generalisability of the findings to broader populations with different levels of education.

Furthermore, the potential effect of a positive control condition should be considered. Although the control task was to write a positive reflection and did not mention homosexuality whatsoever, the act of engaging in a positive reflection may have fostered a generally more accepting mindset, as a positive emotional state can lead to higher tolerance (Tenenbaum et al., 2018). This could have minimized the difference in tolerance levels between the experimental and control groups, thereby affecting the overall results of the study.

Several limitations of the current study require consideration. First, the size and composition of the sample represent important limitations. Although efforts were made to recruit a diverse range of participants, the sample consisted mainly of students, limiting the generalisability of the findings to broader populations. The homogeneity of the sample in terms of educational background may have caused bias, as students often exhibit different attitudes and behaviours than individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds or occupations. Moreover, the size of the sample with 29 participants in each condition was also rather small.

Second, the length and heteronormativity of the survey represent important limitations. The survey instrument used in this study was extensive, which may have led to respondent fatigue and reduced data quality. Participants may have experienced fatigue in the final sections, resulting in hurried or less thoughtful responses. In addition, the heteronormative framework of certain survey items may have influenced participants' interpretations and responses, especially those from queer backgrounds. This limitation highlights the need for the development and use of more inclusive and culturally sensitive measures when examining attitudes towards marginalised groups.

In light of the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for future research. First, efforts should be made to recruit a more diverse group of participants to ensure greater representativeness and generalisability of the findings. By including individuals from different demographic backgrounds, including different education levels and socioeconomic statuses, future studies may provide a more complete understanding of the factors influencing attitudes towards homosexuality.

Second, the development of another control measure that is more neutral is recommended. Although the positive reflection task served as the control measure in this study, alternative control conditions that minimise potential biases and confounding variables should be explored. This could

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include the use of tasks or interventions that do not explicitly target positive emotions, thereby reducing the likelihood of participant bias.

Moreover, there is a need to create a more tolerant and neutral survey instrument before conducting similar research in the future. The heteronormative framework of certain survey items in the current study may have influenced participants' responses, especially those from homosexual backgrounds. By developing survey instruments that are inclusive and culturally sensitive, future research can reduce the likelihood of bias and increase the validity of findings.

Finally, future research should consider including religion as a factor that may influence tolerance towards homosexuality. Given the important role of religion in shaping individuals' beliefs and attitudes, particularly towards LGBTQ+ issues (Spina, 2016), the inclusion of religious affiliation and beliefs could offer valuable insights into the factors underlying attitudes towards homosexuality. By examining the interplay between religion, social identity and views on homosexuality, future studies may offer a more nuanced understanding of tolerance and acceptance within diverse communities.

In conclusion, although this study offers insights into how inner dialogue and social identity complexity influence attitudes towards homosexuality, its limitations are noteworthy. Addressing these limitations and adopting the recommendations given could improve future research. The study highlights the importance of diverse samples and inclusive research instruments in obtaining representative and valid results. In addition, future studies should explore the influence of religion and aim for a more neutral control measure. This study highlights the importance of careful research design to reduce bias, especially in studies on sensitive topics such as attitudes towards homosexuality. Moreover, it highlights how biases can quickly influence research findings, especially in such sensitive areas. Despite the lack of significant findings, this study emphasises the complex nature of these issues and the ongoing need for extensive research to better understand the factors that influence attitudes towards homosexuality and other marginalised groups.

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Appendix A

Measures

Inner dialogue condition

In ons dagelijks leven worden we constant geconfronteerd met allerlei verschillende meningen, van politieke standpunten tot hoe we denken over diverse sociale groepen zoals de LGBTQ+ gemeenschap. Deze meningen kunnen soms tegenstrijdig zijn en komen vanuit verschillende bronnen zoals media, onze vrienden en familie. Volgens Hermans' Dialogical Self Theory zijn onze eigen opvattingen over deze onderwerpen niet vaststaand, maar worden ze beïnvloed door de argumenten die we horen, waardoor ze kunnen veranderen. Ik wil je vragen om eens na te denken over momenten waarop je je heel tolerant of juist minder tolerant voelde ten opzichte van de LGBTQ+ gemeenschap, en specifiek homoseksuele individuen. Wat zou je zelf, op je meest tolerante moment, willen zeggen tegen jezelf wanneer je minder tolerant bent? Hoe zou zo'n gesprek tussen die twee kunnen verlopen? Beschrijf dit gesprek hieronder, en stel je voor hoe je tolerantere en minder tolerante zelf met elkaar in gesprek gaan.

Om het makkelijker te maken kun je de dialoog op de volgende manier formuleren:

...

Meer tolerante zelf:...

Minder tolerante zelf:...

Meer tolerante zelf:...

Minder tolerante zelf:...

...

Control Condition

Ik wil je vragen om een korte reflectie te schrijven over iets positiefs dat recentelijk in je leven is gebeurd. Ik ben benieuwd naar een moment waarop je je gelukkig, tevreden of positief voelde. Neem even de tijd om terug te denken aan dat specifieke moment en beschrijf het kort hieronder.

Social Identity Complexity Condition

In dit deel van het onderzoek vragen we jouw mening over verschillende sociale groepen waar je bij hoort en hoe je denkt dat hun opvattingen over homoseksualiteit met elkaar overeenkomen.

Stap 1: Identificeer belangrijke sociale groepen

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Hieronder zie je een lijst met verschillende sociale groepen. Hoe identificeer jij je gebaseerd op deze groepen. Bijvoorbeeld: Atheïst, HBO student, biseksueel, vrouw.

- Religie (bijvoorbeeld Christelijk, Moslim, Atheïst, etc.)
- Onderwijsniveau (bijvoorbeeld universiteit, HBO, MBO, middelbare school, etc.)
- Seksualiteit (bijvoorbeeld heteroseksueel, homoseksueel, biseksueel, etc.)
- Gender (bijvoorbeeld man, vrouw, non-binair, etc.)

Religie: _____

Onderwijsniveau: _____

Seksualiteit: _____

Gender: _____

Stap 2: Beoordeel de overlap tussen sociale groepen

Voor elke combinatie van de hierboven genoemde sociale groepen, beoordeel je de mate van overlap in opvattingen over homoseksualiteit tussen deze groepen. Geef per stelling aan in hoeverre je denkt dat de opvattingen vergelijkbaar zijn op een schaal van 1 tot 6, waarbij 1 betekent "helemaal niet vergelijkbaar" en 6 "heel vergelijkbaar".

1. In hoeverre denk je dat mensen uit jouw Religie groep vergelijkbare opvattingen hebben over homoseksualiteit als mensen uit jouw Onderwijsniveau groep? 1-2-3-4-5-6-
2. In hoeverre denk je dat mensen uit jouw Religie groep vergelijkbare opvattingen hebben over homoseksualiteit als mensen uit jouw Seksualiteit groep? 1-2-3-4-5-6-
3. In hoeverre denk je dat mensen uit jouw Religie groep vergelijkbare opvattingen hebben over homoseksualiteit als mensen uit jouw Gender groep? 1-2-3-4-5-6-
4. In hoeverre denk je dat mensen uit jouw Onderwijsniveau groep vergelijkbare opvattingen hebben over homoseksualiteit als mensen uit jouw Seksualiteit groep? 1-2-3-4-5-6-
5. In hoeverre denk je dat mensen uit jouw Onderwijsniveau groep vergelijkbare opvattingen hebben over homoseksualiteit als mensen uit jouw Gender groep? 1-2-3-4-5-6-
6. In hoeverre denk je dat mensen uit jouw Seksualiteit groep vergelijkbare opvattingen hebben over homoseksualiteit als mensen uit jouw Gender groep? 1-2-3-4-5-6-

Stap 3: Beoordeel de gelijkheid in opvattingen binnen sociale groepen

Beoordeel voor elke afzonderlijke sociale groep die je hebt geselecteerd hoe vergelijkbaar de opvattingen over homoseksualiteit zijn binnen die groep. Geef per stelling aan in hoeverre je denkt dat de opvattingen binnen elke groep vergelijkbaar zijn op een schaal van 1 tot 6, waarbij 1 "helemaal niet vergelijkbaar" betekent en 6 "heel vergelijkbaar".

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1. In hoeverre vind je dat de opvattingen over homoseksualiteit binnen jouw Religie groep vergelijkbaar zijn met elkaar? 1-2-3-4-5-6-
2. In hoeverre vind je dat de opvattingen over homoseksualiteit binnen jouw Onderwijsniveau groep vergelijkbaar zijn met elkaar? 1-2-3-4-5-6-
3. In hoeverre vind je dat de opvattingen over homoseksualiteit binnen jouw Seksualiteit groep vergelijkbaar zijn met elkaar? 1-2-3-4-5-6-
4. In hoeverre vind je dat de opvattingen over homoseksualiteit binnen jouw Gender groep vergelijkbaar zijn met elkaar? 1-2-3-4-5-6-

Tolerance Measure Translated

The Multidimensional Scale of Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men (Translated by me)

1. Het maakt mij niet uit of mijn vrienden homo, lesbisch of hetero zijn
2. Homoseksualiteit is een psychische ziekte
3. Ik geloof dat ouders van hetzelfde geslacht net zo bekwaam zijn als heteroseksuele ouders om goede ouders te zijn
4. Leraren zouden moeten proberen vooroordelen van hun studenten tegen homoseksualiteit te verminderen
5. Homoseksualiteit is een minderwaardige vorm van seksualiteit
6. Als ik een ouder was, zou ik het accepteren als mijn zoon of dochter homo of lesbisch is
7. Een curriculum voor seksuele voorlichting zou alle seksuele oriëntaties moeten bevatten
8. De groeiende acceptatie van homoseksualiteit in onze samenleving heeft invloed op de verandering van normen en waarden
9. Organisaties die opkomen voor homorechten zijn noodzakelijk
10. Ik zou twijfelen om lesbische en homoseksuele individuen te steunen uit angst om als een van hen gezien te worden
11. Paren van hetzelfde geslacht zouden dezelfde mogelijkheid moeten hebben om kinderen te adopteren als heteroseksuele paren.
12. Lesbische vrouwen en homoseksuele mannen die 'uit de kast zijn', zouden bewonderd moeten worden voor hun moed
13. Twee mensen van hetzelfde geslacht die elkaars hand vasthouden of openbaar genegenheid tonen, vind ik vies

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14. Lesbische vrouwen en homoseksuele mannen moeten nog steeds protesteren voor gelijke rechten.
15. Ik zou me ongemakkelijk voelen als de leraar van mijn kind homoseksueel was
16. Feesten zoals "gay pride day" zijn belachelijk omdat ze ervan uitgaan dat je trots zou moeten zijn op je seksuele voorkeur.
17. Lesbische vrouwen en homoseksuele mannen zouden heteroseksueel kunnen zijn als ze dat echt zouden willen
18. Ik zou me ongemakkelijk voelen als ik ontdekte dat mijn dokter niet heteroseksueel is
19. Lesbische vrouwen en homoseksuele mannen zouden therapie moeten ondergaan om hun seksuele geaardheid te veranderen
20. Ik vind dat je een persoon die homoseksueel is niet kunt vertrouwen
21. Ik zou niet stemmen op een homoseksueel person bij een verkiezing
22. Als ik hoor over een liefdesrelatie, denk ik meestal dat de partners verschillend van geslacht zijn
23. Homoseksuele mannen en lesbische vrouwen zouden moeten ophouden anderen hun levensstijl op te dringen
24. Ik zie de homobeweging als iets positiefs
25. Het zou me niet storen om met een lesbische vrouw of homoseksuele man te werken
26. Homoseksuele mensen maken me nerveus
27. Opgroeien in een homoseksueel gezin is heel anders dan opgroeien in een heteroseksueel gezin
28. Het maakt me niet uit als bedrijven openlijk lesbische/homoseksuele beroemdheden gebruiken om hun producten te adverteren.
29. Ik vind het goed dat homoseksuele individuen meer zichtbaar zijn geworden in de samenleving
30. Het toestaan van huwelijken tussen mensen van hetzelfde geslacht zal de basis van de samenleving verzwakken