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Attitudes towards homosexuality: gender differences among Clark Atlanta University graduate social work students

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ABSTRACT
SOCIAL WORK

SULLIVAN, KIMBERLY R. B.A., SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY, 1991

ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMOSEXUALITY: GENDER DIFFERENCES AMONG CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Advisor: Dr. Gale Horton
Thesis dated May, 1997

The overall objective of this exploratory study was to explore the attitudes that gender plays toward homosexuality among School of Social Work graduate students. A self-administered questionnaire was given to employ results.

A total of forty students participated in this study, 14 of which were male and 26 were females. All participants were enrolled in the Clark Atlanta University School of Social Work. Simple descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

The findings of the study utilized the t-test analysis. The t-test analysis did not note a significant relationship between the two groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.
ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMOSEXUALITY: GENDER DIFFERENCES AMONG CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY
KIMBERLY R. SULLIVAN

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
MAY 1997
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that a minimum of 10 percent of the population are homosexually oriented. Lesbians and gays are members of every race, religion, socioeconomic, and ethnic group in American Society. For each homosexual person, a minimum of three significant others are affected in a meaningful way by that lesbian or gay individual.¹

Throughout history several attempts have been made to define homosexuality. A pamphlet published by the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States states: "Homosexuality refers to emotional attachments involving sexual attraction and/or overt sexual relations between individuals (male or female) of the same sex. The public affairs pamphlet says, "Homosexuality means sexual attraction to persons of the same sex as oneself, whether male or female," which is the same definition as the one above, but a second paragraph seems to sharpen this statement considerably by adding that the term refers to: "persons who are exclusively or primarily attracted to

members of their own sex, and who enter into sexual and
affectional relations with them."

More accurate is Tosser's generic definition that
"sexual orientation refers to adult stable sexual
attractions, desires, fantasies and expressions toward other
adult men and women."

In Lesbian and Gay Issues: A Resource
Manual for Social Workers, homosexuality is defined as a
person who engages in sexual activity with someone of the
same gender.

In the Western World individuals practicing
homosexual behavior have experienced a history of oppression
by a culture that has long regarded the behavior as sinful
and sick. Until 1973, the American Psychiatric Association
included homosexuality in its manual of pathological
behaviors. A year later in 1974, the Board of Trustees of
the American Psychiatric Association voted 5,854 to 3,810 to
remove homosexuality from the DSM-II. However, the subject
of the pathology of homosexuality continues to be hotly

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2 Sex Information and Education Council of the United
States, Homosexuality (New York: Sex Information and
Education Council of the United States, n.d.).

3 Public Affairs Committee, Changing Views of
Homosexuality: No. 563 (New York: Public Affairs Committee,
n.d.).

4 B. R. S. Rosser, "A Scientific Understanding of Sexual
Orientation with Implications for Pastoral Ministry," Word
and World (Summer 1994): 246-257.
debated by psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, and others.⁵

Since 1977, the Gallop poll has surveyed Americans, asking "Do you think homosexual relations between consenting adults should or should not be legal?" In 1977, 1982, and 1985, the public was closely split with no clear majority either way. But, in 1986 and 1987, with the growing linkage of AIDS and homosexuality, public opinion turned negative, 54 percent saying it should not be legal and 33 percent saying it should. In 1989, 47 percent of adults in the United States said homosexual relations between consenting adults should be legal, and 36 percent said they should not. Seventy-one percent said gays should have equal opportunities, compared with 59 percent two years earlier.⁶

Today, perhaps, more than ever, School of Social Work students should be prepared to work with persons who are gay and lesbian that experience discrimination in employment, military, housing, the right to marry, child custody, student organizations, and many other areas. Regardless of one's sexual orientation, gays and lesbians are human beings as well as United States citizens. Therefore, they are entitled to the protection and benefit of the law and are


fully protected in the exercise of their constitutional rights.

This exploratory study will compare and explore the attitudes toward homosexuality among male and female graduate social work students. The plethora of books and articles now available on the topic might suggest that areas have been well explored and even exploited. But will gays and lesbian ever be free of the stigma that is attached to homosexuality? Although they do have rights and laws have been established to protect their rights, will society ever fully accept them? Even though they may be model citizens, neighbors, employees, or friends, will it be disregarded when it is revealed that they love someone of their own sex? It is hoped that this study will shed some light on an often "taboo" topic in the social work profession.

Statement of the Problem

Is there anything wrong with two men or two women choosing to love each other, to express physically their love for each other, to live together, or to raise children together? Should the right to be free from sexual orientation be recognized as a human right? Over the 50 years since the end of World War II in 1945, this question has been raised more and more frequently, in fora ranging from city councils to the United Nations, in an ever increasing number of countries, by representatives of the
millions of gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons around the world who are affected by this kind of discrimination. 

Attitudes toward homosexuals exist in every arena of society. Within corporate America, the military, immigration, housing, the right to marry, and child custody are just a few areas where these attitudes exist against this population. Attitudes that often result in discrimination. Although court battles have been won in various areas to end discrimination against gay and lesbian individuals, their struggle for full equality has been far from realized. As children it is ideal to become heterosexual. The possibility of getting married, and having children is a social ideal that most of society have unconsciously adopted as their own. However, when persons deviate from that pattern, he/she experiences problems with his or her identity, feelings of shame, and having the very low self-esteem that is often a characteristic part of their reactions to the growing awareness of their sexual

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orientation. Most specifically during the early stages and for some a much longer time.\textsuperscript{10}

Persons have the right to define and express their sexuality and to develop their own potential as long as they do not encroach on the rights of others. However, this belief has not been accepted by the larger percentage of our society.

Social work is the profession that advocates for the poor, the disadvantaged, the disenfranchised and the oppressed.\textsuperscript{11} The NASW Code of Ethics, adopted in 1979, by the NASW Delegate Assembly, states: "The Social Worker should not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical handicap, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or status."\textsuperscript{12}

Negative attitudes and/or personal homophobia on the part of social workers can result in inadequate, improper, and harmful services to gay and lesbian clients. Therefore, this study seeks to ascertain graduate social work students

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{11}Ibid., 63.
\end{thebibliography}
attitudes toward homosexuality that are believed to impact or cause homophobia.

**Significance/Purpose of the Study**

The focus of this investigation is to determine attitudes toward homosexuality among graduate social work students. It cannot be overemphasized that social workers must examine their own attitudes prior to working with gay/lesbian clients. It is the researcher's opinion that we all have been socialized in a homophobic society, but it is an ethical imperative that we reassess ourselves when it comes to how we feel about working with homosexuals.

The purpose of this exploratory study is to examine the attitudes toward homosexuality among male and female graduate students to see if there are gender differences or opinions that might affect the therapeutic process in working with this population. It is of great importance that before engaging in working with homosexual individuals, practitioners become more sensitive to the needs of their clients, more skilled in their practice, and less bias to those minority groups (specifically homosexuals) that deviate from what is considered to be the norm. Understanding homosexuality may help those who are experiencing homosexual behaviors to cope with situations which may arise, along with helping social work practitioners to be more effective in helping these individuals confront and resolve conflicts.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Boy meets girl . . . They fall in love . . . Marry, raise a family, and live happily ever after . . . .

This theme embodies the essence of romantic love in American culture. The message is so deeply woven into the fabric of our daily existence that we often may not even realize how enmeshed it is in our thinking, as well as in our expectations of ourselves and others.

Magazines are aimed at teen female audience abound with advertisements for engagement rings, bridal gowns, and various bridal accessories.

The concept of the traditional American dream is an integral part of the American dream; a dream that is reinforced through school texts and media images.¹ Boys and girls together--that is the way it is suppose to be. But that is not the way it is for everyone. Homosexuals--gay and lesbian individuals--are people who feel love and attraction for members of their own sex rather than for those of the opposite sex.

Gay and lesbians are a highly diversified group. Homosexuals are both male and female, young and old, and of all nationalities and races. Many gays and lesbians feel

that being homosexual is not a problem in and of itself. It is being gay or lesbian in a society laden with prejudice against even the slightest hint of homosexuality that can present difficulties.

It is extremely difficult for gay/lesbian adolescents to gain acceptance or support from family or peers for their feelings and emerging identities. Therefore, the adolescent as a minor, is in a very different position. The homophobic nature of school, peers, family, and traditional morality makes it difficult for the adolescent to explore alternative sexualities. Although adolescence is a period during which the young person experiences internal growth and self-development, same-sex feelings are not supported by external societal systems.²

Marsiglio examined heterosexual adolescent males’ negative attitudes toward gays using data from a 1990 national survey of 1,880 male youth (aged 15-19 years). Results indicated that the vast majority of these males, 89%, found sex between two men "disgusting," and 12% felt confident that they could befriend a gay person. Teens with more traditional male role attitudes, a religious fundamentalist orientation, and a parent who had completed

fewer years of education were significantly more likely to express homophobic views.  

Because positive role models are not readily accessible to gay and lesbian children and youth, the experience of being same-sex oriented is often perceived only from a negative viewpoint. While heterosexual young people generally have the approval of family, friends and society, and are encouraged to date and discover themselves, young homosexuals may be afraid to do so.

The one person or persons that gay/lesbians adolescents regret revealing their gay/lesbian lifestyles to are their parents. Landau, 4 expressed that most parents grew up in a society that discriminated against homosexuals. Therefore, when the news is heard about their child being lesbian/gay, all the negative stereotypes accumulated over a lifetime may spring to their minds. Although it might not be the soundest attitude to take, many parents firmly believe that their offspring’s attributes and performance reflect their own success or failures as parents. 5

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5 Ibid.
In interviews with parents of gays and lesbians, Pope expressed that the feeling most commonly shared by parents on first learning of their child's homosexuality was guilt. Often parents will mentally go back over the youngster's entire life trying to understand how they failed as parents.

Agresti and Holtzen investigated parental reaction to knowledge of a child's gay or lesbian sexuality. Fifty-five parents of gay and lesbian children completed several scales to measure homophobia and to examine possible differences and changes in self-esteem and sex-role stereotyping. Parents with high IHP scores differed significantly from parents with low IHP scores with respect to scores on the AWS and TSBI; high and low IHP's also differed as to the amount of time elapsed since their child's disclosure. As expected, IHP scores correlated negatively with all measures. It is important to note that behind the apparent anger, the parent may be experiencing a great deal of pain too.

Often the parent will hurt for both the child and themselves. Having grown up in a society that is extremely antihomosexual, parents have a good idea of what the

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offspring they loved and nurtured all these years will have to endure. The screaming, the accusations, the name calling, and blame-placing that may occur are all often little more than futile attempts at dealing with the painful reality that their child is not going to have an easy time dealing with this scrutiny and, unfortunately, neither are they. 8

Operating with no support systems, lesbian or gay adolescents usually are isolated, whether they disclose same-sex feelings or keep them hidden. This isolation contributes to internalized homophobia that may manifest itself as repressed feeling, withdrawal, depression, and over-compensation. These emotions and actions often result in drug or alcohol abuse, poor school performance, running away and other acting-out behaviors.

As of 1980, a new disease, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), has been recognized. The disease was originally recognized at the Center for Disease Control when clusters of cases of pneumocystis carinii pneumonia suddenly began appearing in otherwise healthy adults who were either male homosexuals or drug users.

Among the illnesses that most commonly afflict AIDS victims is a group known as "opportunistic infections." Some of these opportunistic features are chronic

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cytomegalovirus (CMV), usually severe shingles and herpes simplex, and certain bacteria (including one that cause a form of tuberculosis). Kaposi’s sarcoma, a form of skin cancer, has also been associated with AIDS.9

Because of the AIDS epidemic, attitudes toward homosexuals has turned increasingly negative. Lilling and Friedman10 noted that initially, over 90 percent of the earliest diagnosed AIDS cases were among gay and bisexual men.

As of December 19, 1983, 3,000 AIDS patients had been reported to the Center for Disease Control. A total of 1,283 (43%) of reported patients were known to have died. Of the 3,000 patients, 90% were between 20 and 49 years old. Fifty-nine percent of the cases occurred among white males, 26% among blacks, and 14% among persons of hispanic origin.11 Groups at highest risk of acquiring AIDS continue to be homosexual and bisexual men (71% of cases).

Odasuo Alali assessed how death from AIDS is landscaped in New York Times obituaries by analyzing 100 AIDS obituaries published in the New York Times between July

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9Landau, Different Drummer: Homosexuality in America, 115-125.


1, 1992 and June 30, 1993. Ninety-eight percent of the obituaries depicted males while only 2% depicted females. Ninety-seven percent of the deceased were single and 3% were married. Forty-nine percent of the obituaries listed AIDS-related caused or illness as the cause of death. The construction of AIDS obituaries in the New York Times may be a manifestation of the American sociopolitical structure and a consequence of the bias and prejudice about homosexuality that appears to facilitate the rapid convergence of public fear and attitudes about AIDS.12

Casual intercourse can actually have consequences and these consequences can be life threatening. However, gay/bisexual men are still choosing to have unprotected sex. Myers, Godin, Lambert, and Calzavara13 conducted a country-wide analysis of the characteristics and behaviors of 4,803 gay and bisexual men (aged 16-75 years) living in Canada. A three-level hierarchical logistic regression analysis was used to model two behavior variables: test-seeking (test for the HIV antibody) and unprotected anal intercourse (one or more episodes of unprotected anal intercourse in the previous three months). Results showed that nationally, 22.9% respondents reported at least one episode of


unprotected anal sex in the previous three months, and 63% had been tested.

Vignettes were given to 79 college students about two men who had contracted AIDS (one homosexual, one heterosexual). Forty students read about the gay man with AIDS and 39 read the vignettes about the heterosexual man with AIDS. Gay men were given more personal blame for contracting AIDS than heterosexual men (95%). The more tolerant people were toward gay men and the more fearful they were of contact with AIDS, the more likely they were to blame gay men for contracting AIDS.

In reviewing the literature, the researcher found that bisexual men who were apprehensive about revealing their bisexuality, continued to engage in sexual activity with persons of the opposite sex. Individual interviews with 350 behaviorally bisexual men aged 18-30 years of age revealed that 71% of their female sexual partners had not been aware of their homosexual activity. Of the 145 men who reported a current heterosexual relationship, 59% did not think their steady female partners knew of their homosexual activity. Rates of nondisclosure were higher for African-


American men than for white men. Compared with nondisclosers, men who disclosed to all their female partners were less homophobic. Men who were nondisclosers had more female partners and used condoms less consistently with women.

Does race and/or gender affect attitudes toward homosexuality? Is one race or gender more homophobic or discriminatory toward gay and lesbian individuals? Herek and Capitanio conducted a telephone survey of 391 black heterosexual adults. Negative attitudes toward homosexuality were widespread but more prevalent among blacks than among a comparison sample of whites. Gender differences in black heterosexuals' attitudes (men's attitudes toward gay men were more negative than their attitudes toward lesbians or attitudes toward gay men) appeared to result primarily from men's greater tendency to regard male homosexuality as unnatural.16

A survey was given to 2,006 employees of eight residential mental health facilities in Tennessee, to compare the condemnatory orientation of Blacks and Whites toward homosexuality. Greater relative endorsement was found of the proposition by Blacks confirming the hypothesis

that less social tolerance of homosexuality exists in the Black community, particularly among females.  

A difference in attitude toward homosexuality between Black and White females may stem from the Black female perception that homosexuality exacerbates the developing problem of a decreasing pool of available Black males already affected by integration, racially disproportionate incarceration rates, and relatively high rates of premature death among Black males.

Moreover, Moore investigated the relationship between attitudes towards AIDS and homosexuality among college students who listened to a panel of gay and lesbian speakers. Fifty-two students (20 males and 32 females) completed a questionnaire seeking demographic information, and attitudes toward homosexuals, using an index of homophobia at three administrations. At the third testing, a fear of AIDS scale was administered. The results showed that males were more homophobic than females. Blacks were significantly more homophobic at Test 2, but at no other time.

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Crawford and Robinson examined 69 African-American, 50 Latino, and 140 Caucasian males knowledge and beliefs regarding AIDS and the relationship between attitude toward homosexuals and AIDS knowledge. Results showed African-Americans and Latinos were significantly less homophobic than Caucasians. Level of homophobia was not predictive of AIDS knowledge. African-Americans and Latinos indicated a greater concern than Caucasians about contracting the AIDS virus and desired information about AIDS.¹⁹

There is little question that the mainstream Christian tradition over the centuries has been such as to make homosexuals feel either unwelcome or uncomfortable, or both, in the church.²⁰ Only in recent years have any Christian groups ordained into their ministry persons who were openly known as homosexuals. Some people who are in the church use the Bible as a way of expressing their horror at and anger against homosexuals.

Wagner, Serafini, and Rabkin examined the relationship between internalized homophobia and the integration of religious faith and homosexuality. Levels of internalized homophobia among 101 male participants of


Dignity, an organization of Catholic gay men and lesbians, were compared with levels of internalized homophobia in a community sample of 45 gay men with Catholic backgrounds. Results show no significant differences between the groups with regard to level of IH; there are suggestions that involvement in Dignity fosters positive attitudes toward one’s homosexuality by helping to overcome a delay in the development of a gay orientation.21

Brooke presented both sides of the homosexuality issue from a religious standpoint: opponents of homosexuality vs. supporters of homosexuality. Ten churches in the Raleigh area of North Carolina completed a questionnaire designed to ascertain the church’s position on the issue of homosexuality as well as their level of moral development.22 It appeared from the results that the higher the level of moral development, the more accepting the churches would be of homosexuals.

Fisher, Derison, and Polley in an extensive investigation examined the relationship among religiousness, religious orientation, and prejudice toward gays and lesbians. Study 1 was a survey of 294 people (aged 18-89 years) done for scientific jury selection. Results suggest


that Baptist, Fundamentalists, and Christians display more antigay prejudice than do Catholics, Jews, and many Protestant denominations, but even many supporters of gay-tolerant religions show more antigay prejudice than those claiming no religious preference. Study 2 examined 192 undergraduates' views regarding religiousness, religious orientation, and prejudice toward gays and lesbians. Religiousness and frequency of worship were positively correlated with measures of prejudice toward homosexuals, whereas scores on an interactional scale were negatively correlated. Results of both studies challenge the view that those with intrinsic religious orientation are unprejudiced.  

In all honesty, it has been this researcher's belief that in the church one's emotional reaction against homosexuality is not prompted by the fact that the Bible condemns it. Even if we knew nothing at all about the Bible, we would condemn it. We condemn it because of what has been learned from our society, as well as misconception about persons who are homosexuals. This is not to suggest that if people had accurate information they would inevitably think that homosexuality was perfectly all right. The researcher is simply stating that the conviction that

the intensity of emotional reaction against homosexuality comes from a variety of social learning factors and from personal experiences rather than from the interpretation that the Bible says that it is wrong.

Practitioners who have been trained to work with homosexuals face the need to broaden their knowledge base to include information about lesbians and gay men, their communities, the existing resources available to them, and the discrimination they may face. Therefore, practitioners, counselors, psychiatrists, etc. are further cautioned to do considerable soul-searching to recognize their own biases, perhaps even homophobia, as these may exist in oneself.

These professionals can be a catalyst who can help to educate society about the problems this minority group experiences. Once support is enlisted, programs can be developed that will begin to meet the needs of lesbians and gays.

Geasler and Croteau examined the changes in students' attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals, as a result of attending panel presentations by lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. Two hundred sixty students were analyzed using the Enthrograph program. Results revealed that many of the students acknowledged change, both globally and specifically. Many of their misconceptions and stereotypes about these individuals were dispelled by the
They also reported an increasing recognition of their similarity to lesbians, gays, and bisexuals, and an increased understanding and empathy for the difficulties experienced because of heterosexism.

A classroom demonstration using visual media was designed as a means for decreasing homophobia. Walters examined 31 college students during their first semester, exposing them to lectures on homosexuality and homophobia. During the second semester 34 students were exposed to the same lectures but were also exposed to slides and video scenarios that showed that gay, lesbian, and bisexual characters in films and television are often depicted as stereotyped, suicidal, or pathological. Homophobia and empathy for homosexuals were measured at the beginning and end of the term. Results showed a significant decrease in homophobia and a significant increase in empathy.  

A model program was tested during 1986-1987 and was expanded throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District. Fifty self-identified homosexual students were interviewed to clarify the needs of homosexual teenagers in relation to their school experiences. A questionnaire study of 342

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respondents from the general student population was undertaken to assess positive and negative responses to the program. Findings suggest that negative attitudes toward homosexuals can be altered with education. 26

Several studies have been examined designed to measure the degree to which one is homophobic. In all of these studies it was found (using the Index of Attitudes Toward Homosexuals IAH) that men are more likely to be homophobic than women. These results were cited in the findings from works of Pratte, 27 Fikar, 28 D’Augelli, 29 and O’Hare, Williams, and Ezoviski. 30

Gays and lesbians are entitled to the protection and benefit of the law and are fully protected in the exercise of their constitutional rights. Some early cases of unlawful discrimination against homosexuals that were tried before the courts involved the right of homosexual public

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employees to retain their positions unless and until their homosexuality in some way hampered their ability to perform.

One such case was Morrison vs. State Board of Education. It was decided in 1969 by the California Supreme Court. Morrison, an outstanding school teacher with numerous years of classroom experience had continued in his career successfully until 1964 when it was reported to the district superintendent that he had been involved in a homosexual affair. In May of that year, Morrison resigned. On August 5, 1965, an action was filed with the California State Board of Education to have Morrison's teacher's license revoked. In March of the following year, the board did revoke his license. Subsequently, Morrison took his case to court and was victorious. Being a homosexual was not sufficient cause for dismissal because Morrison had always been thought of as an exemplary teacher.

Another area in which gay/lesbian have taken an important issue to court involved the right of homosexual student groups to be recognized on college and university campuses. When a college/university refuses to recognize a student organization, that group often may be denied the right to use campus facilities available to other groups as

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well as be denied the funding granted to other campus organizations. ³²

When initially applying for recognition as a campus student group, Gay Lib was flatly turned down by the University of Missouri. Homosexuality is generally treated in that state as being a socially repugnant concept. However, after going to court, the court ordered U.M. to grant Gay Lib full recognition as a student campus organization, and also determined that the University pay the legal fees incurred by Gay Lib for having had to bring the case to court.

Court battles have been won as well by gay high school students in pursuit of their rights. The Rhode Island Federal District Court affirmed the right of a gay male student to bring a male as his date to the high school prom. ³³

Some homosexuals trace the birth of the gay rights movement to June 27, 1969, ³⁴ when police in New York City raided the Stonewall Inn, a bar in the heart of New York City’s Greenwich Village gay community. The raid was considered the final straw in a harassment campaign against


³³ Simpson, From the Closet to the Courts, 132-134.

gays and lesbians that had been fervently waged by the New York City police department. Angered patrons of the bar battled police in a riot that lasted several hours.

Today, a national gay lobby and a gay political action committee have offices in Washington, D.C. The Gay Rights National Lobby, whose central purpose is to promote the passage of gay rights legislation, has been extremely successful in helping to obtain congressional approval for $47 million in funding for AIDS research. The group also helped to successfully block several bills introduced into Congress that contained antihomosexual provisions.

Many gays and lesbians find it too much of a personal hardship to take battles to court. Going to court may employ focusing a public spotlight on something as private as one’s sexuality. Therefore, most individuals are not willing to deal with the publicity and consequences that may follow. In instances where justice might be obtained in court, the individual must be prepared and willing to spend money and time, and to bear the invasion of privacy that a legal battle may entail. Unfortunately, the scales of justice do not always balance easily.

Theoretical Framework

In reviewing the literature, the theory that best supports the research under observation is Cognitive Learning Theory, also termed observation learning, social learning, and modeling. This approach is represented by
Albert Bandura. Cognitive Learning Theory represents our learning of new responses without first having the opportunity to make the responses ourselves. Cognitive learning is accomplished by watching other people.

Since the existence of time, beginning with the Bible days (Sodom and Gomorrah), there have been negative attitudes concerning homosexuality. According to Christian doctrine, sex was to exist for the purpose of procreation. Throughout history, thousands of individuals who engaged in homosexual acts were executed. In the minds of the public, the concept of homosexual as a sinner was underscored by the authority of the church. Some individuals still hold this view today.

Most products are marketed to appeal to heterosexual families. For example, often, breakfast cereal or juice commercials feature a mother, father, and children seated around a breakfast table. The subtle background message is that of a typical American family. As yet, there are no commercials featuring two lesbians preparing breakfast or showing a young gay couple purchasing their first home. That has not been seen because gay/lesbian relationships are considered abnormal.

Manufacturers of children’s toys, clothing and baby diapers are just samples of the industries perpetuated by sexual reproduction. Laws, societal standards, and social institutions are centered around heterosexual couples as
well. Our society is so pervasively heterosexual in its outlook that at best the "homosexual" is regarded as someone who will never quite fit into the mainstream, and at worst, as an object of ridicule and scorn.

In the Cognitive Learning Theory, Bandura suggests that by watching other people, we learn new responses without first having the opportunity to make the responses ourselves. Moreover, he suggests that children acquire moral standards in much the same way that they learn any other behavior. This phenomena supports the fact that because most parents grew up in a homophobic society and as parents they were responsible for their children's moral development; subsequently, parents' homophobic views were encroached upon the child.

As a society we condemn homosexuality because of what Bandura speaks about, learned responses. Because of misconceptions about persons who are homosexual and about who they are and what they do, society developed negative attitudes concerning them. This is not to suggest that if people had accurate information they would think that homosexuality was all right; it simply means that the intensity of emotional reactions comes from a variety of social learning factors.

Attitudes toward homosexuality did not originate from one's personal view or opinion, but from attitudes and opinions that were developed from individuals who were here
prior to one’s existence. Thus, as a result we followed the dictates of the majority and formed homophobic attitudes as well.

Hypothesis

There will be a statistically significant difference between the genders toward homosexuality among graduate social work students.
**Definition of Terms**

**Bisexuality:** Sexual attraction, emotion, and/or physical attraction and behavior that are directed to persons of both genders.

**Heterosexuality:** Sexual attraction, emotion, and/or physical attraction and behavior that are primarily directed to persons of the other gender.

**Homophobia:** The fear of being in close quarters with homosexuals.

**Homosexuality:** Sexual attraction, emotion, and/or physical attraction and behavior that are primarily directed to persons of the same gender. Other terms used to describe persons of this sexual orientation include gay and lesbian.

**IAH:** Abbreviation for Index of Attitudes Towards Homosexual.

**IHP:** Abbreviation for Index of Homophobia.

**Social Work Student:** Male or female persons enrolled in a two year masters program of social work at Clark Atlanta University.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory study. It is intended to compare and explore the attitudes toward homosexuals among male and female graduate students at Clark Atlanta University School of Social Work, in Atlanta, Georgia.

Sampling Frame

A non-probability convenience sample was used. This sample consisted of individuals who were convenient to the researcher and were willing to respond to the questionnaire. The sampling population was drawn from first and second year graduate students enrolled in the Clark Atlanta University School of Social Work in Atlanta, Georgia.

A total of forty students were asked to complete the questionnaire. Of the fourteen male and twenty-six female participants, all were between the ages of twenty-one and forty-seven. All subjects were enrolled in the Clark Atlanta University School of Social Work. The racial make up of the participants included African-Americans, Whites, and 5% classified themselves as "Other."

Data Collection

The data for this study were obtained through a self-report questionnaire. Students in the Social Work program were approached by the researcher before and sometimes after class and were asked if they would agree to completing the
questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. Persons were also given the option to refuse to participate in the study.

The questionnaire took approximately five to ten minutes to complete. Expressions of thanks were given to all subjects. The questionnaire was collected from all participants the same day as administration.

The instrument consisted of thirty-two questions. It contained two parts. Part I consisted of seven questions focusing on demographics. Part II consisted of the "Index of Attitudes Toward Homosexuals (IAH)" by Walter W. Hudson and Wendell Ricketts. The IAH is a 25-item instrument designed to measure the degree or magnitude of a problem one may have with homophobia, the fear of being in close quarters with homosexuals.¹

The IAH has a cutting point of 50; scores below 50 reflect an increasingly non-homophobic response and scores over 50 represent increasing degrees of a homophobic response. The IAH has excellent internal consistency, with alphas in excess of .90. The IAH is reported to have excellent content, construct, and factorial validity, with most validity correlations over .60.²


²Ibid.
Data Analysis

The collected data were coded and analyzed using the SPSS Statistical Software System.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, which included frequency distributions and percentages. The t-test was used to determine the statistical significance and the null hypothesis used to determine if there is a difference between the means of two groups.
CHAPTER IV
PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The focus of this chapter will be to summarize the data collected from the participants of this study. The objective of this research was to compare and explore the attitudes toward homosexuality among male and female graduate social work students. Table 1 represents demographics and frequency distributions.

Discussion of the Frequency Distribution

There were a total of forty participants in this study. All of whom were enrolled in Clark Atlanta University School of Social Work. Of the forty participants, 65% were female and 35% were male. The ages of the participants consisted of 40% between the ages of 20-26, 35% were 27-33, 15% were 34-40, and 10% were 41-47. Of the participants, 72.5% were African American, 22.5% were white and 5.0% represented Other. Sixty-five percent were single, 30% were married while 5% were divorced. In reviewing the participants' religious background, 50% were Baptist, 7.5% were Catholic, 10% were Methodist, 5% were Jewish, 10% Islamic and 17.5% were listed Other. As far as academic standing, 47.5% were first year full-time students, 7.5% were first year part-time students, 42.5% were second year full-time students and 2.5% were second year part-time students. When asked if each participant personally knew
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My gender is:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My age is:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 26</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 - 33</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 - 40</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 47</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My racial or ethnic group is:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My religious background:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic standing at Clark Atlanta University:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First year full-time</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First year part-time</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year full-time</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year part-time</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I personally know someone who is homosexual:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
someone who was homosexual, 85% listed yes while the remaining 15% listed no.

The "Index of Attitude Toward Homosexual Scale" was utilized to examine the attitudes of the participants toward homosexuality. The participants were asked to rank each item of the IAH Scale as follows: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree or disagree, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree.

Table 2 represents the frequency distributions and percentages on attitudes toward homosexuality among male participants. This select group of participants are representative of the male population that is currently enrolled in Clark Atlanta University School of Social Work. These scores will be compared to the scores of female students who participated in this study as well.
### TABLE 2

**FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS: ATTITUDES TOWARD HOMOSEXUALITY AMONG MALES**

*(N = 40)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would feel comfortable working closely with a male homosexual.</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I would enjoy attending social functions at which homosexuals were present.</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my neighbor was homosexual.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If a member of my sex made a sexual advance toward me I would feel angry.</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I would feel comfortable knowing that I was attracted to a member of my sex.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. I would feel uncomfortable being seen in a gay bar.</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I would feel comfortable if a member of my sex made an advance toward me.</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I would be comfortable if I found myself attracted to a member of my sex.</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I would feel disappointed if I learned that my child was homosexual.</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I would feel nervous being in a group of homosexuals.</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2 (continued)

11. I would feel comfortable knowing that my clergyman was homosexual.

- 7.1% Strongly agree
- 7.1% Agree
- 42.9% Neither agree or disagree
- 7.1% Disagree
- 35.7% Strongly disagree

12. I would be upset if I learned that my brother or sister was homosexual.

- 28.6% Strongly agree
- 21.4% Agree
- 28.6% Neither agree or disagree
- 14.3% Disagree
- 7.1% Strongly disagree

13. I would feel that I had failed as a parent if I learned that my child was gay.

- 21.4% Strongly agree
- 7.1% Agree
- 21.4% Neither agree or disagree
- 28.6% Disagree
- 21.4% Strongly disagree

14. If I saw two men holding hands in public I would feel disgusted.

- 7.1% Strongly agree
- 21.4% Agree
- 28.6% Neither agree or disagree
- 28.6% Disagree
- 14.3% Strongly disagree

15. If a member of my sex made an advance toward me I would be offended.

- 21.4% Strongly agree
- 35.7% Agree
- 21.4% Neither agree or disagree
- 7.1% Disagree
- 14.3% Strongly disagree
TABLE 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>16. I would feel comfortable if I learned that my daughter's teacher was a lesbian.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>17. I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my spouse or partner was attracted to members of his or her sex.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>18. I would feel at ease talking with a homosexual person at a party.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>19. I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my boss was homosexual.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>20. It would not bother me to walk through a predominantly gay section of town.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>It would disturb me to find out that my doctor was homosexual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.3% Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.7% Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1% Neither agree or disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28.6% Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.3% Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>22.</th>
<th>I would feel comfortable if I learned that my best friend of my sex was homosexual.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0% Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1% Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.4% Neither agree or disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50.0% Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.4% Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>23.</th>
<th>If a member of my sex made an advance toward me I would feel flattered.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0% Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1% Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1% Neither agree or disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.7% Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50.0% Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>24.</th>
<th>I would feel uncomfortable knowing that my son’s male teacher was homosexual.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.3% Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.4% Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.4% Neither agree or disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.4% Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.4% Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>25.</th>
<th>I would feel comfortable working closely with a female homosexual.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28.6% Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28.6% Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.7% Neither agree or disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1% Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0% Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of Table 3 is to examine the female participants' attitudes of homosexuality utilizing the "Index of Attitude Toward Homosexual Scale." This select group of participants are representative of the female population that is currently enrolled in Clark Atlanta University School of Social Work. These scores will be compared to the scores of male students that are participating in this study as well.

**TABLE 3**

**FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS: ATTITUDES TOWARD HOMOSEXUALITY AMONG FEMALES**  
*(N = 40)*

1. I would feel comfortable working closely with a male homosexual.
   - 61.4% Strongly agree
   - 23.1% Agree
   - 15.4% Neither agree or disagree
   - 0.0% Disagree
   - 0.0% Strongly disagree

2. I would enjoy attending social functions at which homosexuals were present.
   - 46.2% Strongly agree
   - 26.9% Agree
   - 11.5% Neither agree or disagree
   - 11.5% Disagree
   - 3.8% Strongly disagree

3. I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my neighbor was homosexual.
   - 7.7% Strongly agree
   - 3.8% Agree
   - 7.7% Neither agree or disagree
   - 34.6% Disagree
   - 46.2% Strongly disagree
4. If a member of my sex made a sexual advance toward me I would feel angry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. I would feel comfortable knowing that I was attracted to a member of my sex.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. I would feel uncomfortable being seen in a gay bar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. I would feel comfortable if a member of my sex made an advance toward me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. I would be comfortable if I found myself attracted to a member of my sex.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 3 (continued)

9. I would feel disappointed if I learned that my child was homosexual.

- 15.4% Strongly agree
- 26.9% Agree
- 7.7% Neither agree or disagree
- 15.4% Disagree
- 34.6% Strongly disagree

10. I would feel nervous being in a group of homosexuals.

- 11.5% Strongly agree
- 0.0% Agree
- 11.5% Neither agree or disagree
- 34.6% Disagree
- 42.3% Strongly disagree

11. I would feel comfortable knowing that my clergyman was homosexual.

- 30.8% Strongly agree
- 15.4% Agree
- 15.4% Neither agree or disagree
- 19.2% Disagree
- 19.2% Strongly disagree

12. I would be upset if I learned that my brother or sister was homosexual.

- 19.2% Strongly agree
- 15.4% Agree
- 11.5% Neither agree or disagree
- 19.2% Disagree
- 34.6% Strongly disagree

13. I would feel that I had failed as a parent if I learned that my child was gay.

- 15.4% Strongly agree
- 15.4% Agree
- 11.5% Neither agree or disagree
- 23.1% Disagree
- 34.6% Strongly disagree
TABLE 3 (continued)

14. If I saw two men holding hands in public I would feel disgusted.

- 3.8% Strongly agree
- 30.8% Agree
- 11.5% Neither agree or disagree
- 26.9% Disagree
- 26.9% Strongly disagree

15. If a member of my sex made an advance toward me I would be offended.

- 15.4% Strongly agree
- 11.5% Agree
- 30.8% Neither agree or disagree
- 26.9% Disagree
- 15.4% Strongly disagree

16. I would feel comfortable if I learned that my daughter’s teacher was a lesbian.

- 23.1% Strongly agree
- 19.2% Agree
- 15.4% Neither agree or disagree
- 34.6% Disagree
- 7.7% Strongly disagree

17. I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my spouse or partner was attracted to members of his or her sex.

- 50.0% Strongly agree
- 23.1% Agree
- 3.8% Neither agree or disagree
- 3.8% Disagree
- 19.2% Strongly disagree

18. I would feel at ease talking with a homosexual person at a party.

- 46.2% Strongly agree
- 42.3% Agree
- 11.5% Neither agree or disagree
- 0.0% Disagree
- 0.0% Strongly disagree
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my boss was homosexual.</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. It would not bother me to walk through a predominantly gay section of town.</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. It would disturb me to find out that my doctor was homosexual.</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I would feel comfortable if I learned that my best friend of my sex was homosexual.</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. If a member of my sex made an advance toward me I would feel flattered.</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 3 (continued)

24. I would feel uncomfortable knowing that my son’s male teacher was homosexual.

11.5% Strongly agree
34.6% Agree
19.2% Neither agree or disagree
15.4% Disagree
19.2% Strongly disagree

25. I would feel comfortable working closely with a female homosexual.

30.8% Strongly agree
30.8% Agree
19.2% Neither agree or disagree
19.2% Disagree
0.0% Strongly disagree

Findings for the Dependent Variable

For Tables 2 and 3, 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree or disagree, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree. The independent variable was gender and the dependent variable was attitudes toward homosexuality. Simple descriptive statistics were used to analyze this data.

For Question 1, of the respondents that answered strongly agree, 21.4% were male and 61.4% were female. For the response agree, 14.3% were male and 23.1% were female. For the neither response, 35.7% were male and 15.4% were female. For the response disagree, 21.4% were male and 0% female. For the response strongly disagree, 7.1% were male while 0% were female.
For Question 2, 7.1% male and 46.2% female responded strongly agree. Of the respondents that answered agree, 21.4% were male and 26.9% were female; 42.9% male and 11.5% female responded neither; 21.4% male and 11.5% female responded disagree; 7.1% male and 3.8% female responded strongly disagree.

For Question 3, none of the male and 7.7% of the females responded strongly agree; 7.1% males and 3.8% females responded agree; 35.7% male and 7.7% females responded neither; 35.7% male and 34.6% female responded disagree; 21.4% male and 46.2% female responded strongly agree.

For Question 4, 21.4% male and 15.4% female responded strongly agree. Both genders responded 35.7% for the response agree. Both genders responded 28.6% for the response neither, 7.1% of males and female responded disagree, and 7.1% for both genders answered with the response of strongly disagree.

For Question 5, none of the males responded strongly agree while 7.7% of females did. None of the males and 19.2% of the females responded agree; 42.9% of the males and 19.2% of the females responded neither; 42.9% of the males and 23.1% of the females responded disagree; 14.3% of the males and 30.8% of the females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 6, 28.6% male and 26.9% female responded strongly agree. Fifty percent male and 11.5% of females
responded agree, while 11.5% of the females and none of the males responded neither. The same percentage (11.5% and 0%, respectively) for the responded disagree, while 21.4% males and 23.1% females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 7, 7.1% males and 15.4% females responded strongly agree; 7.1% males and 19.2% females responded agree; 7.1% males and 19.2% females responded neither; 57.1% males and 19.2% females responded disagree; 21.4% males and 25.6% females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 8, 7.1% males and 15.4% females responded strongly agree. None of the males and 11.5% of the females responded agree. None of the males while 23.1% of the females responded neither; 28.6% of the males and 23.1% of the females responded neither; 28.6% of the males and 23.1% of the females responded disagree; 64.3% of the males and 26.9% of the females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 9, 42.9% males and 15.4% females responded strongly agree; 28.6% males and 26.9% females responded agree; and 7.1% males and 7.7% females responded neither. None of the males while 15.4% of the females responded disagree; 21.4% males and 34.6% females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 10, 7.1% males and 11.5% females responded strongly agree; 42.9% males and none of the females responded agree; 14.3% males and 11.5% females responded neither; 28.6% males and 34.6% females responded
disagree; and 7.1% males and 42.3% females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 11, 7.1% males and 30.8% females responded strongly agree; 7.1% males and 15.4% females responded agree; 42.9% males and 15.4% females responded neither; 7.1% males and 19.2% females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 12, 28.6% males and 19.2% females responded strongly agree; 21.4% males and 15.4% females responded agree; 28.6% males and 11.5% females responded neither; 14.3% males and 19.2% females responded disagree; 7.1% males and 34.6% females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 13, 21.4% males and 15.4% females responded strongly agree; 7.1% males and 15.4% females responded agree; 7.1% males and 15.4% females responded agree; 21.4% males and 11.5% females responded neither; 28.6% males and 23.1% females responded disagree; and 21.4% males and 34.6% females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 14, 7.1% males and 3.8% females responded strongly agree; 21.4% males and 30.8% females responded agree; 28.6% males and 11.5% females responded neither; 28.6% males and 26.9% females responded disagree; 14.3% males and 26.9% females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 15, 21.4% males and 15.4% females responded strongly agree; 35.7% males and 11.5% females responded agree; 21.4% males and 30.8% females responded
neither; 7.1% males and 26.9% females responded disagree; 7.1% males and 7.7% females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 16, none of the males and 23.1% females responded strongly agree; 14.3% males and 19.2% females responded agree; 28.6% males and 15.4% females responded neither; 50% males and 34.6% females responded disagree; 7.1% males and 7.7% females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 17, 50% of the males and females responded strongly agree; 21.4% males and 23.1% females responded agree; 14.3% males and 3.8% females responded neither; 7.1% males and 3.8% females responded disagree; 7.1% males and 19.2% females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 18, 7.1% males and 46.2% females responded strongly agree; 42.9% males and 42.3% females responded agree; 28.6% males and 11.5% females responded neither; 14.3% males and one of the females responded disagree; 7.1% males and none of the females responded strongly agree.

For Question 19, none of the males while 3.8% of the females responded strongly agree; 50% of the males and none of the females responded agree; 28.6% of the males and 19.2% of the females responded neither; 14.3% of the males and 42.3% of the females responded disagree; 7.1% of the males and 34.6% of the females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 20, 14.3% of the males and 30.8% of the females responded strongly agree; 28.6% of the males and 50%
of the females responded agree; 14.3\% of the males and none
of the females responded neither; 28.6\% of the males and
15.4\% of the females responded disagree; 14.3\% of the males
and 3.8\% of the females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 21, 14.3\% of the males and 7.7\% of the
females responded strongly agree; 35.7\% males and 23.1\%
females responded agree; 7.1\% males and 19.2\% females
responded neither; 28.6\% males and 19.2\% females responded
disagree; 14.3\% males and 30.8\% females responded strongly
disagree.

For Question 22, none of the males and 34.6\% of the
females responded strongly agree; 7.1\% males and 38.5\%
females responded agree; 21.4\% males and 3.8\% females
responded neither; 50\% of the males and 19.2\% of the females
responded disagree; 21.4\% males and 3.8\% females responded
strongly disagree.

For Question 23, none of the males and 11.5\% of the
females responded strongly agree; 7.1\% of the males and
11.5\% of the females responded agree; 7.1\% males and 19.2\%
females responded neither; 35.7\% males and 26.9\% females
responded disagree; 50\% of the males and 30.8\% females
responded strongly disagree.

For Question 24, 14.3\% males and 11.5\% females
responded strongly agree; 21.4\% males and 34.6\% females
responded agree; 21.4\% males and 19.2\% females responded
neither; 21.4% males and 15.4% females responded disagree; 21.4% males and 15.4% females responded strongly disagree.

For Question 25, 28.6% males and 30.8% females responded strongly agree; 28.6% males and 30.8% females responded agree; 35.7% males and 19.2% females responded neither; 7.1% males and 19.2% females responded disagree; none of the respondents strongly disagreed.

**T-Test Analysis Findings**

Table 4 represents the t-test analysis that was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference among male and female graduate social work students' attitudes toward homosexuality.

**TABLE 4**

**T-TEST ANALYSIS: GENDER DIFFERENCES TOWARDS HOMOSEXUALITY**

(N = 40)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would feel comfortable working closely with a male homosexual.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I would enjoy attending social functions at which homosexuals were present.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my neighbor was homosexual.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-.99</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variable</td>
<td>DF</td>
<td>T-Value</td>
<td>Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If a member of my sex made a sexual advance toward me I would feel angry.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-1.52</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I would feel comfortable knowing that I was attracted to a member of my sex.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I would feel uncomfortable being seen in a gay bar.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-1.40</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I would feel comfortable if a member of my sex made an advance toward me.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I would be comfortable if I found myself attracted to a member of my sex.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I would feel disappointed if I learned that my child was homosexual.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-1.89</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I would feel nervous being in a group of homosexuals.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-2.68</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I would feel comfortable knowing that my clergyman was homosexual.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I would be upset if I learned that my brother or sister was homosexual.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-1.72</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I would feel that I had failed as a parent if I learned that my child was gay.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variable: Gender</td>
<td>DF</td>
<td>T-Value</td>
<td>Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. If I saw two men holding hands in public I would feel disgusted.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. If a member of my sex made an advance toward me I would be offended.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-1.35</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I would feel comfortable if I learned that my daughter’s teacher was a lesbian.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my spouse or partner was attracted to members of his or her sex.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I would feel at ease talking with a homosexual person at a party.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my boss was homosexual.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-3.92</td>
<td>.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. It would not bother me to walk through a predominantly gay section of town.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. It would disturb me to find out that my doctor was homosexual.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-1.09</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I would feel comfortable if I learned that my best friend of my sex was homosexual.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>.00*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TABLE 4 (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable:</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. If a member of my sex made an advance toward me I would feel flattered.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I would feel uncomfortable knowing that my son’s male teacher was homosexual.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I would feel comfortable working closely with a female homosexual.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p = .05

*Indicates a statistical significant difference.

As illustrated in Table 4, there is no statistical significant difference among genders when examining attitudes toward homosexuality.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was designed to determine whether or not a difference existed among male and female graduate Social Work students' attitudes toward homosexuality. The researcher stated that there would be a statistical significant difference in attitudes toward homosexuality among these genders.

T-test was conducted to determine this statistical significance between the genders. The findings indicate that there was no statistical significant difference among the genders. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. Since there are limitations in the research, it is not certain whether or not the findings are consistent with other research.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the sample population size, the findings cannot be generalized to the total population. Not being more specific in my demographic questions was a limitation to this study. For example, in addition to Question #5, religious background, I could have asked how often do you attend and participate in church functions. A person that attends church regularly would more likely have a different attitude concerning homosexuals than a person that is not active.
An additional limitation may have been the socially desirable responses of the subjects. Because homosexuality is such a sensitive and emotional topic for some individuals, the subjects may have responded to the questionnaire in a way that they thought they should respond in fear that if they were homosexual, the researcher or colleagues sitting around them would have noticed it and they would have been stigmatized.

**Suggested Research Directions**

The topic of attitudes toward homosexuality is an important one especially in regards to social work students. Further research may involve a broadening of the sample population; in number of male participants and in number of students of schools of social work that participate.

**Implications for Social Work Practice**

The empirical research shows that although gays and lesbians have received some rights and have won in various areas to end discrimination, their struggle for full equality has been far from accomplished. In addition, for whatever reason(s), in the vast majority of the research that has been reviewed, it has been revealed that men experience having problems with gay and lesbian individuals far more than women, although in this study there was no significant difference among the two groups. Therefore, it is of particular importance to social work education that
students, particularly men, deal with their feelings of homosexuality so that unresolved issues do not cloud future therapeutic encounters.

In choosing one's own lifestyle, all persons are encouraged to develop their individual potential to the fullest extent as possible as long as they do not impinge upon the rights of others. Therefore, personal homophobia can result in adequate, improper, and harmful services to gay and lesbian clients. When this occurs, the potential for abnormal coping strategies increases. It is of great importance that schools of social work integrate into their curriculum training on issues such as homosexuality so that graduates will be well equipped to deal with this sensitive and oppressed issue.

The social work profession has as its heritage a commitment to work toward the eradication of discrimination in any form. As professionals, Social Work practitioners are committed to a principle which holds that the individual has the right to exercise choice in the manner in which one lives and in one's lifestyle. However, personal homophobia must be resolved prior to working with this population.

When a Social Work practitioner is unbiased in his attitude toward homosexuals, it is indeed important that their special knowledge, coupled with their skills and sensitivity, be employed when working with this population. Pursuing action in research, public education and
discrimination of information, psychological and social supports, community development and civil rights will help homosexuals, as well as prejudiced societies better cope with this minority group.
APPENDICES
Dear Participant:

I would greatly appreciate your assistance in sharing ideas which would help me to relate the differences and commonalities concerning attitudes toward homosexuals. This information would be useful in rendering assistance to the researcher to examine attitudes toward homosexuality among graduate social work students. All questionnaire materials are ensured anonymity and confidentiality.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kimberly R. Sullivan
APPENDIX B

ATTITUDES TOWARD HOMOSEXUALS QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I: Demographics

Answer each of the following questions as accurately as possible.

1. My gender is:
   a. Male
   b. Female

2. My age range is:
   a. 20 - 26
   b. 27 - 33
   c. 34 - 40
   d. 41 - 47

3. The one racial or ethnic group that best describes me is:
   a. African-American
   b. Asian
   c. Hispanic
   d. White
   e. Native American
   f. Other: ________________________________

4. Marital status:
   a. Single
   b. Married
   c. Separated
   d. Divorced
   e. Widowed

5. Religious background:
   a. Baptist
   b. Catholic
   c. Methodist
   d. Jewish
   e. Islamic
   f. Other: ________________________________

6. Academic standing at Clark Atlanta University School of Social Work:
   a. First Year Full-time ____ Part-time ____
   b. Second Year Full-time ____ Part-time ____

7. I personally know someone who is homosexual.
   a. Yes
   b. No
Part II: Index of Attitudes Toward Homosexuals (IAH)

This questionnaire is designed to measure the way you feel about working or associating with homosexuals. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and as accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

1 = Strongly Agree
2 = Agree
3 = Neither Agree or Disagree
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree

1. _____ I would feel comfortable working closely with a male homosexual.

2. _____ I would enjoy attending social functions at which homosexuals were present.

3. _____ I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my neighbor was homosexual.

4. _____ If a member of my sex made a sexual advance toward me I would feel angry.

5. _____ I would feel comfortable knowing that I was attracted to a member of my sex.

6. _____ I would feel uncomfortable being seen in a gay bar.

7. _____ I would feel comfortable if a member of my sex made an advance toward me.

8. _____ I would be comfortable if I found myself attracted to a member of my sex.

9. _____ I would feel disappointed if I learned that my child was homosexual.

10. _____ I would feel nervous being in a group of homosexuals.

11. _____ I would feel comfortable knowing that my clergyman was homosexual.

12. _____ I would be upset if I learned that my brother or sister was homosexual.

13. _____ I would feel that I had failed as a parent if I learned that my child was gay.
14. ____ If I saw two men holding hands in public I would feel disgusted.

15. ____ If a member of my sex made an advance toward me I would be offended.

16. ____ I would feel comfortable if I learned that my daughter’s teacher was a lesbian.

17. ____ I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my spouse or partner was attracted to members of his or her sex.

18. ____ I would feel at ease talking with a homosexual person at a party.

19. ____ I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my boss was homosexual.

20. ____ It would not bother me to walk through a predominantly gay section of town.

21. ____ It would disturb me to find out that my doctor was homosexual.

22. ____ I would feel comfortable if I learned that my best friend of my sex was homosexual.

23. ____ If a member of my sex made an advance toward me I would feel flattered.

24. ____ I would feel uncomfortable knowing that my son’s male teacher was homosexual.

25. ____ I would feel comfortable working closely with a female homosexual.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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