UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

**Heterosexual Students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians:
An Eastern Cape University Survey**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Hilde Barry, declare that this mini-dissertation is my own work and that any work that is not mine has

been rightfully and properly acknowledged. It is furthermore declared that the material contained in this

mini-dissertation has not been submitted to this or any other university in fulfilment or partial fulfilment

of the requirements for another degree. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Social Psychology

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ABSTRACT

While South Africa stands apart from other countries as being more progressive in terms of gay and lesbian rights, attitudes towards this population continue to be intolerant. Attitudes shape people's behaviour and in a university setting young students are vulnerable to discrimination. This is often a time when young people are still shaping their identities. An electronic survey comprising the Attitudes towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale was administered to 401 students taking undergraduate psychology courses at the East London Campus of the University of Fort Hare, to assess their attitudes towards gays and lesbians. The survey measured their attitudes in terms of the biographical variables of gender, age, race, and religiosity, commitment to religious practice, urban or rural upbringing and nationality. The results of the research found that gender, race, religiosity, religious attendance and rural or urban upbringing do influence students' attitudes significantly. However, age did not have an effect on attitudes towards gays and lesbians in the present study. The significance of the differences in attitudes in terms of nationality was not able to be tested due to the small sample size of foreign students. The findings of this study show that there are fairly consistent predictors of students' attitudes concerning gays and lesbians. This information can help us to clarify areas to target for improvement in the campus climate for gay and lesbian communities.

Key words: Heterosexual, Gay Males, Lesbians, Attitudes, Survey, Homophobia

TABLE OF CONTENTS   **Page**

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 5

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The topic of homosexuality and homophobia has attracted considerable interest among social scientists in recent years (Drazenovich, 2012; Herek, 2004; Herek, 1984; Hoad, 2007; Murray & Roscoe, 1998a). This is partly due to the increased visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) communities worldwide. Breaking the silence of lesbian and gay issues has led to significant changes at the macro level to support lesbian and gay rights in South Africa. Despite these advancements, anti-gay attitudes are still pervasive and are a significant source of stress and pain for many LGBTI people.

This f**irst chapter** provides an overview of the research and its aims. The chapter goes on to explain the background and rationale for measuring heterosexual attitudes towards gays and lesbians within the particular context chosen for this study and to provide an indication of the extent of these attitudes. A list of the research questions used for the study is provided at the end of chapter 1.

Chapter 2 conceptualises the constructs of heterosexual, gays and lesbians, as well as attitudes. Some related concepts such as sexual prejudice, homophobia and heterosexism are also explored and the functions, formations and influences of attitudes towards gays and lesbians is discussed.

In **chapter 3**, a historical overview and a discussion of the existing literature pertaining to these attitudes is given from an international, African and South African perspective. The study then goes on to explore universities as settings for forming and maintaining identities and attitudes.

In this chapter an outline of the existing literature that measures attitudes towards gays and lesbians in terms of the specific demographic variables that were highlighted in the research questions are also provided.

Chapter 4 reviews the methodology that was utilised for the study in terms of the research design, sample, procedure, instrumentation, variables and data analysis. Here a brief discussion on the ethical considerations that were employed in the study is also provided.

Chapter 5 provides the measurement and statistical analyses of the prevailing heterosexual student attitudes towards gays and lesbians in terms of the demographic variables chosen for the study.

Chapter 6 describes and discusses the results of the differences in attitudes between the different groups.

Chapter 7 outlines the limitations of the study and makes suggestions of strategies for improving attitudes towards gays and lesbians based on the research outcomes. Recommendations for future research in this field are also made in this chapter.

Chapter 8 closes off the study with a summary and some concluding comments.

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

South Africa as a nation has undergone major social and political changes since 1994, where the Apartheid Government was dismantled in favour of a democratic state. In this process, many South Africans have had to renegotiate their identities in terms of race, class and gender. Sexuality has been placed in the political limelight throughout this period of transition, with South Africa being known to have some of the most progressive laws concerning sexual orientation in the world (Gunkel, 2010).

1.3   RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

This study is important essentially because heterosexuals significantly outnumber homosexuals, and have the weight of many traditions and social institutions supporting any negative attitudes that they may have. Within the context of our country's constitutionally entrenched rights for gays and lesbians, a sizable contingent of South Africans continue to hold restrictive and judgmental attitudes towards these minorities. Attitudes shape people's behaviour and in a university setting young students are vulnerable to discrimination. This is often a time when young people are still shaping their identities (Vare et al, 1998). Negative attitudes towards minority groups such as homosexuals, are likely to have a profoundly negative effect on the people involved. This then begs the question: who sustains unfavourable attitudes towards gay and lesbian populations in South Africa?

The rationale for choosing the specific demographic variables, namely; gender, race, age, religiosity, commitment to religious practice, nationality and urban or rural upbringing, in the research questions of this study, are based on South Africa's unique socio-cultural and political circumstances.

Attitudes in South Africa, particularly towards gays and lesbians, needs to be contextualised in the wider ethos of gender-based violence, racism and homophobia. South Africa stands apart from other African countries in that it is the only country that explicitly incorporates lesbian and gay rights within its Bill of Rights of the constitution. Despite this, Christian and traditional discourses both in South Africa and other African countries proclaim homosexuality un-African. These discourses construct homosexuality as something outside of tradition and culture (Gunkel, 2010).

Despite the fact that research has been extensively conducted on attitudes towards gays and lesbians internationally, there is a dearth of such research in South Africa and an absence in the Eastern Cape universities.

1.4   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The research problem focuses on attitudes of heterosexuals towards gays and lesbians, taking into account factors such as gender, age, religiosity, nationality, race, and urban/rural upbringing. This research aims to determine whether attitudes amongst the University of Fort Hare students are in fact as progressive and accepting as the country's constitution.

Research of this nature has been extensively done in the United States of America and several studies have been done in Europe. These studies have consistently shown that although improving over time, attitudes towards gay men and lesbians have generally tended to be negative. These prejudicial attitudes have been distinct and well documented in studies conducted with college students (e.g. Herek, 1984, 1986a; Woodford et al., 2012) as well as in large scale, representative surveys (e.g. Herek, 1988; Herek & Capitanio, 1999).

Although a few similar studies have been conducted in other South African universities in Gauteng and the Western Cape (Arndt, 2004; Arndt & De Bruin, 2006; Mwaba, 2009), no research of this nature exists on students' attitudes in the Eastern Cape.

Both the positive and the negative attitudes will be explored within the context of the above-mentioned categories. This will be able to create a better picture of the differences between certain groups in their attitudes towards homosexuality which in turn will guide the direction of future interventions.

1.5   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the literature review, research questions were formulated regarding the relationships between the various independent variables and the dependent variable of attitudes towards gay men and lesbians.

The following research questions were formulated:

- Are heterosexual male students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians different to those of females?

- Does age have an effect on heterosexual students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians?

- Do heterosexual students' attitudes differ between different race groups towards gays and lesbians?

- Does the degree of religiosity or lack thereof influence heterosexual students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians?

- Does the degree of commitment to religious practice influence heterosexual students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians?

- Do urban and rural heterosexual students differ in their attitudes towards gays and lesbians?

- Do heterosexual attitudes towards gays and lesbians differ between South African and foreign students?

CHAPTER 2

2.1   DEFINITIONS

Definitions of the relevant terms follow.

2.1.1   Heterosexuals

Recognising oneself as a heterosexual refers to the enduring romantic, emotional or sexual attraction to individuals of the opposite sex (Strickland, 2001).

2.1.2   Gays and Lesbians

Identifying as gay or lesbian relates to a continuing emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to individuals of one's own gender (Strickland, 2001).

The terms gay and homosexual will be used interchangeably in this study and will also be used to refer to both gay/homosexual men and lesbians. The acronyms for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender (LGBT) and lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) will also be used interchangeably within this study.

2.1.3   Attitudes

Attitude as a construct lends itself particularly to social psychology, as it relates to general evaluations that people have of themselves, others, objects or issues. These can be based on a combination of emotions, thoughts, beliefs, knowledge and behaviours (Petty, 1995). In accordance with this definition, attitudes towards gays and lesbians will thus be a general evaluation of feelings of favourableness or unfavourableness regarding gays and lesbians.

Gordon Allport (cited in Stainton Rogers, 2003) formulated the concept of attitudes as "A mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a distinctive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (p.176).

Allport's (cited in Stainton Rogers, 2003) definition suggests that attitudes are ever present in individuals but lie dormant until they are triggered by a stimulus. Once perceived, this elicits either a positive or negative inclination to the attitude object such as gays or lesbians.

2.2   DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTS

In the following section some relevant concepts concerning sexual orientation and attitudes will be discussed, with specific reference to attitudes towards gays and lesbians.

2.2.1   Sexual Orientation Identity

Le Vay (2011) gives the following definition for sexual orientation: "It is the trait that predisposes us to experience sexual attraction to people of the same sex as ourselves (homosexual, gay or lesbian), to persons of the other sex (heterosexual or straight), or to both sexes (bisexual)" (p.1).

A person's sexual orientation identity has in the past been seen as dichotomous in the sense that one is either heterosexual or homosexual. However, extant research shows that these clearly demarcated conceptions are actually less clearly defined. Previous assumptions held that sexual identity and orientation once established remain stable throughout the life cycle, but more recent evidence suggests that sexual orientation may be a more fluid and dynamic

entity (Kelly, 2008). Postmodern studies of sexuality such as Queer Theory offer a critique of universal homogeneous and fixed identity sexual categories. This theory argues that identity is socially constructed and reinforces identity binaries of male/female and heterosexual/homosexual (Beasley, 2005). These either/or categorisations of male and female sexuality appear to be at the root of attitudes that are embedded in a society that tends to construe gender in a binary way. Herek (2004) also attributes heterosexuals' negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians to "the hardening of the boundaries between homosexuality and heterosexuality"

(p.12). According to him, many heterosexuals adopt negative attitudes towards gay and lesbian people based on their out-group status. Negative attitudes are consequently seen as being due to intergroup conflicts rather than intra-psychic conflicts. Within our predominantly heterosexual society, these heterosexist assumptions and worldviews tend to see any other form of sexuality as unacceptable to the norm. For the purposes of this study, the terms heterosexuality and homosexuality will be used as it pertains to attitudes of people that identify as heterosexuals towards people that identify as gay men or lesbians.

2.2.2   Formation and influences of attitudes

According to Stainton Rogers (2003) attitudes can be formed through direct experience with the attitude object which can elicit either an instinctive, cognitive or behavioural response. The source of information is then evaluated according to its value and salience. When attitudes are ambivalent, however, people tend to resolve the inconsistencies in their attitudes towards the particular object by either making social judgements based on more

familiar, credible and attractive sources, or through priming or increased depth of processing information (Stainton Rogers, 2003).

Attitudes can influence people's behaviour directly when people act consciously on the basis of their attitudes, and indirectly when attitudes unconsciously shape how people view and define a situation (Herek, 2004). Negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men, therefore, do not always predict specific behaviours, but in general, negative attitudes towards these minorities are likely to elicit more negative and discriminatory behaviours than in those who have little or no sexual prejudice (Herek, 2004).

2.2.3   Functions of attitudes

Understanding the functions of attitudes can help us to understand why people bother to form and maintain attitudes and in turn identify areas where attitudes can be modified. Stainton Rogers (2003) lists four main attitude functions:

- A knowledge function which helps the person to simplify information processing by categorizing the incoming information in order to respond appropriately;

- An instrumental function which helps to direct one's behaviour in desired ways;

- A social identity function which allows a person to identify with and be identified by others who share similar values;

- Self-esteem function which helps people to distance themselves from people and situations which threaten their self-image and align themselves with those who bolster their self-esteem.

Smith (cited in Olsen & Maio 2003) lists three attitude functions which overlap with the preceding four:

- The object appraisal function which is an energy saving function to make attitude relevant judgments faster and easier;

- The social adjustment function helps us to identify with people who we like and to disassociate with those that we don't like;

- And externalisation which refers to attitude as a defence of the self against internal conflict.

Herek's (1986) neofunctional theory of attitudes also identifies various functions of attitudes, with his research focusing specifically on attitudes towards gays and lesbians. His theory proposes that attitudes are instrumental in fulfilling psychological needs such as an evaluative function (e.g. usefulness of the attitude object), and an expressive function (e.g. serving self-esteem or identity). Evaluative functions are based on past experiences and expectations for future experiences. These types of attitudes therefore develop when thoughts and feelings associated with specific personal interactions with gay men and lesbians are generalised to all gays and lesbians (Herek, 1984; 1986b). If these interactions are positive, the attitude will most likely by favourable, but if the interactions are negative, the attitudes will be unfavourable. He maintains that schematic evaluative attitudes are provoked when interactions bring to mind similar interactions with someone of the same group.

Therefore social contact with gay and lesbian people may invoke evaluative attitude functions and bring about attitude change. Additionally, the consequences of these

interactions tend to dissolve stereotypes and reduce ignorance about gay and lesbian people (Herek, 1984).

Unfortunately, not all attitudes are based on experiences but rather on stereotypical beliefs and emotions. Common stereotypes that heterosexuals hold about gay men are that they are mentally ill, lonely, insecure, promiscuous, sensitive, and likely to be child molesters (Herek, 1984). Lesbians are typically seen as aggressive and hostile towards men (Herek, 1984).

A further function of attitudes that is relevant to the current topic relates to Herek's (1986) expressive function which serves the individual's sense of identity or self-esteem. Here, unconscious conflicts about one's own gender identity, sexual object choice or both may result in attitudes towards gays and lesbians serving a defensive function. The individual projects his or her own unacceptable urges onto homosexual persons to reduce the anxiety that these repressed urges evoke. Consequently, these attitudes are likely to be negative.

Herek (1984) proposes a third functional category of attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. Symbolic sexual attitudes relate to the feeling of cherished values being debased with illicit demands being made to change the existing state of affairs. These attitudes also serve an expressive function in that they enable the individual to establish and affirm his or her identity, and at the same time helps to define one's interpersonal relationships. People with symbolic attitudes are likely to be particularly influenced by certain reference groups such as for example, church groups or growing up in a specific location that may be more tolerant.

2.2.4   Critique of attitude studies

Measuring attitudes of a particular group towards members of another group such as in the present study, unfortunately serves to categorise people into various groups. Categorisation is seen by Devine (1995) as carrying the risk of creating and maintaining perceived differences between members of different groups. Hamilton and Trolier (cited in Devine, 1995) point out that categorising people into groups involves making salient real similarities and differences between the groups and their members. However, Herek (1998b) argues that studying attitudes towards gays and lesbians helps to generate better ways of combatting prejudice as well as increasing the study of intergroup attitudes in general. The purpose of this study is not to categorise or focus on differences or similarities between groups, but rather it aims to gain a better understanding of the various influences on attitudes towards gays and lesbians.

Against this background of attitudes and their functions it may be easier to understand how negative attitudes towards lesbians and gays serve to discriminate against these minorities, particularly within the context of a heterosexual society. Sexual prejudice, homophobia and heterosexism will be discussed in the following section.

2.2.5   Sexual prejudice, homophobia and heterosexism

Herek (2000) referred to sexual prejudice as "all negative attitudes based on sexual orientation, whether the target is homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual" (p.19). Thus, sexual prejudice can be directed at anyone. When the sexual prejudice is specifically directed at homosexual people, it becomes homophobia.

In 1965 George Weinberg (cited in Herek, 2004) first came up with the term homophobia:

I coined the word homophobia to mean it was a phobia about homosexuals... It was a fear of homosexuals which seemed to be associated with a fear of contagion, a fear of reducing the things one fought for—home and family. It was a religious fear and it had led to great brutality as fear always does. (p.7)

Homophobia as a colloquial expression, infers negative, fearful or hateful attitudes and behaviours towards gay men and lesbians. It differs from other phobias in that the fear is not rooted in the person's individual experiences necessarily but rather stems from their culturally, learned prejudices (Herek, 2004).

Herek (2004) defines heterosexism as "the ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatises any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship or community" (p.16).

The constructs of homophobia and heterosexism have been used synonymously, but essentially homophobia describes individual attitudes and actions, whereas heterosexism refers more to a cultural ideology which has been manifested in society's institutions and which Pharr, (cited in Herek, 2004) describes as the "systemic display of homophobia in the institutions of society" (p.16).

Heterosexist societies see heterosexuality as the norm and as the only acceptable model for relationships, which is reinforced by the media, religion, the courts, education and health care, according to Wells and Polders (2006). Same sex relationships are pathologised and viewed as perverse from this perspective.

Homophobia as a common characteristic of a heterosexist society is expressed as avoidance of gays and lesbians, telling bad jokes about them, verbal or physical threats, violence such as gay-bashing and "corrective rape", destruction of private property and murder (Wells and Polders, 2006).

There are many daily instances around the world of the various forms of psychological, physical and political brutality inflicted on homosexuals. For example, in North America, negative attitudes towards homosexuals are prevalent, where in 2005, a study conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, it was found that 14% of all hate motivated crimes targeted sexual minorities (Meaney & Rye, 2010). In an American survey of 129 students (Lambert, Ventura, Hall, & Cluse-Tolar, 2006) almost all had witnessed verbal assaults against gays and lesbians. Most American states do not recognise gay marriage and a national poll in 1997 revealed that only 30% of respondents were in favour of legal marriage between same-sex couples (Lambert et al, 2006).

Negative attitudes towards minority groups such as homosexuals, are likely to have a profoundly negative effect on the people involved. This in turn can lead to depression, anxiety, suicide attempts, loss of self-esteem and fear (Traeen, 2009; Vare, et al, 1998). The effect that homophobia has on gays and lesbians also extends to what is known as internalized homophobia. According to Ralph Roughton (cited in Dreyer, 2007) the process of internalising homophobia can be explained as follows:

My concept of internalized homophobia is that it is not just about sex, but about self-concept. It starts before awareness of sexuality. It begins much earlier with a feeling that you are different, and that this difference is bad and must be kept a secret. This is also a way that internalized homophobia is different from racial, ethnic, or gender stigma. In each of those, you are at least like your family …The typical gay child does not fit the expectations of his family, realizes that he doesn't have the right kind of feelings and interests, and feels the ill-defined shame of inadequacy in his very being, without understanding why or what he has done wrong (p.12).

Within the South African context, the history of institutional discrimination under Apartheid and Colonialism has served to reinforce the concept of "otherness" as an inherent practice of identity construction in our society. These social, political and cultural processes often contribute towards the victimisation of vulnerable groups such as sexual minorities (Nel & Judge, 2008).

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The topic of sexuality has historically been an area of moral and cultural conflict, with homosexuality being particularly contentious. Sexual diversity, however, is a fact of life. Two per cent of the world's population of women (12 million), and four per cent of men (24 million), live exclusively as homosexuals (Baird, 2001). Yet, it continues to be illegal in at least 70 countries worldwide, with it being a capital offense in Afghanistan, Mauritania, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen (Baird, 2001).

In the following section, a brief but comprehensive overview of the development of heterosexual attitudes towards gays and lesbians from an international perspective will be discussed. This will be followed by a commentary on the subject within the African and the South African contexts. Thereafter, universities as settings for forming and maintaining identities and attitudes will be considered, followed by a discussion on the various attributes of tolerance or intolerance towards gays and lesbians.

3.2   HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS GAY MALES AND LESBIANS

3.2.1   A global overview

The concepts of heterosexuality and homosexuality are relatively new inventions in Western culture rather than "natural" human categories. Although same gender sex has been punishable through religious and legal sanctions for hundreds of years, historians of sexuality

such as Michel Foucault, claim that homosexuality as an identity has only been recognised as such since the late nineteenth century (Somerville, 1998).

Renowned sociologist and gay activist, Jeffrey Weeks (cited in Lind, 2005) manages to encapsulate this notion quite eloquently:

Homosexuality has existed throughout history. But what have varied enormously are the ways in which various societies have regarded homosexuality, the meanings they have attached to it, and how those who were engaged in homosexual activity viewed themselves. As a starting point we have to distinguish between homosexual behaviour, which is universal, and a homosexual identity, which is historically specific. (p.337)

The way in which homosexuality has been explained throughout history has had a direct impact on how it has subsequently been viewed. Medical discourse and sexological literature became the breeding ground for the development of sexual categories in the late nineteenth century (Pickett, 2009).

Drazenovich (2012) contends that Western civilization made sexuality into a science, which portrayed homosexuality as a medicalised identity which was embedded in certain people to create an entire pathological population. In the early twentieth century, Havelock Ellis' *Sexual Inversion* became a definitive writing on homosexuality in which he viewed it as a physical abnormality as opposed to the general view of the day of it as a crime or deviance (Somerville, 1998). He assumed that the homosexual body could be anatomically distinguished from the "normal" body.

Baird (2001) argues that several authors in the early twentieth century published books advocating for gay acknowledgement such as Edward Carpenter's *The Intermediate Sex,* and Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*. The once deeply hidden subject of homosexuality was finally being brought to light. The scientific and medical models held great definitional power during this period and with medicine's increased attention to homosexuality, new explanations in the scientific field began to open up. This led to the American Psychiatric Association (A.P.A.) formally classifying homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disturbance in 1952. This classification was revised in 1968 to characterizing homosexuality as a mental disorder. It was only as late as 1973 that the A.P.A. voted to remove homosexuality from the DSM and finally declassified and discarded its diagnosis as a disorder (Murphy, 1997). This was supported by findings made by renowned psychologist Evelyn Hooker, who concluded that there were no differences between gay and heterosexual men's mental health (Martinez, 2011). The World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases (ICD), however, only declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder as late as 1992 (Martinez, 2011).

During and after the Second World War firm actions were taken to control homosexuality. The view at the time of homosexuality as a sickness led to a multitude of treatment attempts aimed at "curing" gay people, which ranged from hypnotherapy and electro-convulsive therapy to emetic aversion therapies and surgery (Baird, 2001). Attempts to link political beliefs with sexual activities in the 1950s in the US also served to further victimise homosexuals. A direct result of this led to a surge of gay liberation activism in the 1960s (Baird, 2001). A key figure involved in the gay civil rights movements in the US during this

time was Frank Kameny, a Harvard PhD in Astronomy who was dismissed from the military in 1957, for being homosexual (Kitzinger & Coyle, 2002).

His was the first civil rights claim made in the US based on sexual orientation. His efforts together with his slogan "Gay is Good" were instrumental in challenging the psychiatric classification of homosexuality as an illness.

The first cases of AIDS reported in the 1980s were initially associated with the lifestyles and behaviours of gay men, which did little to engender positive social attitudes towards homosexuality. Despite these setbacks, solidarity for sexual minorities has increased with continued gay visibility worldwide. Amnesty International has included persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation within its mandate since 1991 and has been accepted as a reason to grant asylum in a number of countries (Baird, 2001). The mobilization of specific international solidarity campaigns by the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (ILGHRC) has contributed towards sexual minority rights being seen as human rights (Baird, 2001).

Richardson (2000), outlines 3 broad categories of sexual rights:

- The right to sexual practice which includes the right to participate in sexual activity, to pleasure and the right to bodily autonomy and integrity;

- The right to identity which includes the rights to self-definition, self-expression and to realise sexual self-identity;

- The right to relationships which refers to consent to sexual practice in relationships, the right to freely choose sexual partners and the right to publicly recognised sexual relationships.

Recent advancements in LGBT rights by common policies of the Council of Europe, judgments issued by the European Court of Human Rights and civil society efforts such as the Yogyakarta principles, have also served to establish the legitimate place of gays and lesbians in modern society (Cviklova, 2012). The Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity aims to address the abuse of the human rights of LGBT people. These principles assert that all people including LGBT people are born free and have the right to human dignity. It was launched as a global charter on 26 March 2007 at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva and again in New York in November 2007. This was an effort to de-criminalise homosexuality in 77 countries that continue to penalize same-sex relationships and to repeal the death penalty in the 7 countries that still impose capital punishment for same-sex practices (Cviklova, 2012).

Educational policies and curriculum development has begun to include content on issues pertaining to homosexuality and the impact of heterosexism in many countries (Martinez, 2011). Today, the majority of Americans no longer view homosexuality as "immoral" with more and more showing a willingness to grant gays and lesbians certain civil freedoms (Whitehead & Baker, 2012). These shifts in public opinion are coinciding with legislative amendments. For example the "Don't ask don't tell" policy was repealed in 2010 allowing for openly gay and lesbian people to serve in the military. Moreover, as time goes by more gay people are being elected to public offices (Martinez, 2011). Despite these changes, there continue to be setbacks, where for instance, after the legalization of same-sex marriage in California in 2009, Proposition 8 was passed, rescinding that right in 2010 (Whitehead & Baker, 2012).

These international efforts at addressing LGBT rights together with the fact that homosexuality is condoned in many nations' public institutions of marriage such as Sweden, Canada, South Africa, and recently France, suggests that social attitudes would coincide with these momentous changes. Unfortunately, gay men and lesbians continue to be viewed with hostility throughout the world.

3.2.2   The (UN) African effect

To raise the topic of homosexuality in present-day African society is to stimulate much controversy. Many African countries still criminalise gay sex. In 2009, Ugandan legislator David Bahati introduced the Anti-Homosexuality Bill No. 18 to amplify the existing anti-homosexuality laws (Semugoma, Beyrer, & Baral, 2012).   The bill included heavier punishments for both direct and indirect support of homosexuality including putting the onus on citizens to report suspected homosexuality and deny them shelter. More recent developments reveal that the current Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni, was to sign the bill into law which will impose a life sentence on people convicted of having gay sex (Reuters, 2014). The implications of this for the health care system in terms of providing services and confidential health care are frightening. In January 2011, Ugandan gay rights activist, David Kato was murdered a few months after a national newspaper published a list of "top homosexuals" together with a banner reading "Hang them". In Tanzania having sex with someone of the same sex gets you imprisoned for 5 years while under Islamic law in Sudan, even kissing someone of the same sex is illegal and same sex practices can result in torture, imprisonment and death (Reddy, 2011).

A common view in many African countries is to view homosexuality as un-African and as a Western import despite much evidence of same sex practices historically throughout the African continent (Gevisser & Cameron, 1994; Murray & Roscoe, 1998). Anthropological research in Africa shows that fairly stable meanings of same sex practices do arise but that they differ from context to context and from tribe to tribe (Lind, 2005). Several authors have documented the existence of homosexual practices in Africa and have developed the argument that homophobia rather than homosexuality is un-African. For example, Gevisser and Cameron (1994) and Murray and Roscoe (1998) provided evidence for pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial same sex practices in African societies. Murray and Roscoe (1998) argue that colonialists introduced intolerance of same sex practices rather than homosexuality itself. This system of suppression served to force colonised Africans to hide or deny such practices, resulting in this part of their culture being forgotten. It seems that only then did homosexuality in Africa become stigmatised. Puar (cited in Gunkel, 2010) refers to this as the "geopolitical mapping of homophobia" (p.19) which is the tendency of Western nations to project their homophobia onto other cultures.

Increasing awareness of homophobia in Africa has led to the establishment of several African gay organisations such as the African LGBTI Human Rights Defenders, GALZ (Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe) and SMUG (Sexual Minorities Uganda). Such organisations have in turn been viewed as a threat to local politics and have led to an influx of homophobic pronouncements by various African leaders (Gunkel, 2010; International Dialogue, 2009). For instance, in 2006, Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, declared homosexuality as "un-Biblical, unnatural and definitely un-African" (Gunkel, 2010, p.18). President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya has described homosexuality as being against African norms and traditions, while

Zambia's premier Fredirick Chiluba has labelled it as being the deepest level of depravity (Baird, 2001). During the 1995 Book Fair in Harare, Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe described gay men and lesbians as "worse than pigs and dogs", and in 2000 he declared homosexuality to be "an abomination, a rottenness of culture" that had been imposed on Africans by Britain's "gay government" (Gunkel, 2010. p.18). Namibia's president, in 2000, Sam Nujoma, publicly announced homosexuality to be "one of the two top enemies of the national government" (Gunkel, 2010, p.18). From a political point of view, it therefore appears that African resistance to gay and lesbian rights is symbolic of a resistance against colonialism (Gunkel, 2010).

3.2.3   The South African historical context

3.2.3.1   From apartheid to democracy

South Africa's legacy of Apartheid contributed towards discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, as well as being significant in bringing about equal rights for gays and lesbians in the new government's constitution. During Apartheid, homosexuals were marginalised, oppressed, discriminated against and stigmatised. The dominant white culture was one of authoritarianism, heterosexism and patriarchy (Nel & Judge, 2008). Ratele (cited in Gunkel, 2010) in his PhD-thesis entitled *The Sexualisation of Apartheid,* illustrates how the government at the time regulated its race regime through heterosexuality and acts such as the *Prohibition of Mixed Marriage Act, no. 55;* the *Immorality Act;* and the *Sexual offences Act.* Gunkel (2010) maintains that the Apartheid government aimed to protect the power of the white race by criminalising interracial heterosexuality. Sexuality accordingly acted as a tool to build a national identity and culture which was normative and conventional, with homosexuality having no legitimate place in this system. Homosexual sex, or "sodomy", as it

was referred to during apartheid, was a punishable offence under these patriarchal laws, but sex between women was not criminalised (Gunkel, 2010). According to Potgieter (2006) this was an indication of women's position in society at the time as not being seen as important enough to warrant any laws, or that a lesbian existence was just a figment of the imagination and embarking on such behaviours was seen as meriting other types of "corrective" actions. This was a time of constant police surveillance and hate crimes against homosexuals (Wells & Polders, 2006). Wells and Polders (2006) contend that since homosexuals were viewed as criminals, exposure of their sexual orientation meant social ostracism and even sometimes loss of employment (Wells & Polders, 2006).

Gay and lesbian organisations became increasingly visible by the 1980s. In the 1990s several black townships in South Africa also established gay and lesbian organisations such as the Gays and Lesbians of the Witwatersrand (GLOW). Gay activism during the anti-apartheid struggle and lobbying efforts by the National Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Equality all played a role in bringing about changes in the law for gays and lesbians in South Africa (Murray, 1998). The struggle for women's rights by the Women's National Coalition of South Africa in 1991 and its eventual inclusion in the constitution was also instrumental in helping to bring about gay and lesbian rights (Gunkell, 2010). This was due to the "indivisibility" of human rights becoming the focus for gender based social movements that included gender and sexual rights in the Constitution (Van Zyl, 2011). Thus, the injustices of Apartheid and the subsequent efforts by various organisations to fight for human rights for all in South Africa has resulted in our Constitution being what it is today.

Today, from a human rights point of view, South Africa stands out amongst other African countries as being much more progressive in terms of sexual diversity.

South Africa was the first country in the world to explicitly entrench protection of equality for homosexual and lesbian citizens in its Constitution. Section 9 of the Bill of Rights stipulates that:

1. Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.

2. The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

3. No person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (2). National legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination (*The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996).

The subsequent achievement of equality is viewed by Cameron (2001) as one of the founding values of the South African Constitution. Protection of sexual orientation illustrates how gay men and lesbians have been included in the concept of South African citizenship. Cameron (2001) argues that this inclusion of sexual orientation in the Constitution stems from the African worldview of ubuntu which embraces a spirit of kinship and cooperation between people of all colours and creeds. The implications of this is that socially vulnerable people also have constitutional protection (Cameron, 2001) as is evidenced by judgments over the past 15 years involving a range of decisions in the High Courts and in the Constitutional

courts involving benefits and privileges such as medical aid or pensions for spouses of same-sex partners (Van Zyl, 2011). Additionally, the crime of sodomy was abolished and the immigrations legislation was amended to recognise same-sex partners as spouses (Van Zyl, 2011). Up until 2006, marriage in South Africa was denied as a right to same sex couples and only recently afforded gay people access to full citizenship in terms of enjoying the benefits of matrimonial inheritance, medical insurance, tax advantages, adoption and child custody (Reddy, 2009). This was legally realised when in November 2006, the South African Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka signed the Civil Union Act of 2006, which was instrumental in changing the political climate with regards to gay and lesbian equality (Hagen, 2007).

3.2.3.2   South African attitudes towards gay men and lesbians

Despite these post-Apartheid constitutional provisions, anti-gay attitudes in the form of heterosexism and homophobia, are still pervasive in South Africa resulting in gay people still being expected to become so-called "normal" in order to put the rest of society at ease (Muholi, 2004).

The South African Social Attitudes Survey is a research project that was undertaken by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) after the country's new democratic dispensation in 1994 (Roberts & Reddy, 2012). The significance of the research was to enable researchers and scholars to make continuous assessments of social attitudes for the purposes of democratic sustainability. Since 2003, the survey has included a question on same-sex relationships asking "Do you think it is wrong or not wrong for two adults of the same sex to have sexual relations?" The results of this attitude survey from 2003 to 2007 consistently

show that more than 80% of the population over aged 16 view same sex relations as "always wrong". Homophobia therefore seems to continue to be a deeply entrenched attitude in South Africa.

Gevisser (cited in Wells & Polders, 2006), found homophobia to be especially prevalent in black communities because of the fact that many black South Africans view homosexuality as "un-African" and as a Western import, which results in harsher judgments by their own communities. Additionally, being gay or lesbian in South Africa is also moderated by distinctions such as gender and socio-economic status. In terms of socio-economic status, several studies found that the availability of resources such as established social spaces for gay men and women and private transport facilities, protects them against discrimination (Wells & Polders, 2006; Nel & Judge, 2008). As a case in point, Smith (cited in Nel & Judge, 2008) found that in South Africa, people from poor African communities are unduly discriminated against. He also made similar findings in terms of race and gender where black lesbian women were also more often targets of discrimination (Nel & Judge, 2008).

3.2.3.3   Hate crimes against gays and lesbians in South Africa

Currently there is no legislation that deals specifically with hate crimes against sexual minorities in South Africa (Mkhiza, Bennet, Reddy & Moletsane, 2010). Lesbians are twice as likely as heterosexual women to be targets of hate motivated crimes (Graham & Kiguwa, 2004). For instance, in February 2006, Zoliswa Nkonyana who was 19 at the time, was stabbed and stoned to death in Kayalitsha, Cape Town for being a lesbian, and in July 2007, Sizakele Sigasa and Salome Massoa were both shot and allegedly raped in Johannesburg because of their lesbian identities (Gunkel, 2010).

Graham and Kiguwa, (2004) explored central issues faced by LGBTI people in peri-urban communities around Johannesburg. They found that many lesbian and bisexual women reported rape or attempted rape as well as gang rape which were most often committed by people known to them. The most common excuse cited was to show the woman that she was in fact a woman. This reasoning points to the misguided belief that lesbians view themselves as men.

In a study conducted by the Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW) (Nel & Judge, 2008) 46 black lesbians were interviewed and it was found that 41% had been raped, 9% were survivors of attempted rape, and 37% were assaulted, whilst 17% were verbally abused, mostly by perpetrators known to them. Gay male rape was also found to occur, though not as frequently as lesbian rape. This could be due to the fact that gay men are very unlikely to report abuse for fear of re-victimisation by police (Graham & Kiguwa, 2004).

73% of a Gauteng study of LGBT people indicated that they had not reported hate crimes against them because they expect not to be taken seriously (Nel & Judge, 2008). Similarly, in their study of anti-gay hate crimes in South Africa, Wells and Polders (2006) found that gay and lesbian abuse is prevalent but that these crimes are under-reported due to fears of secondary victimisation by the police in the form of verbal or physical abuse, blackmail or victim-blaming. Unfortunately this under-reporting tends to exacerbate homophobic violence, since it contributes towards its invisibility.

Another common theme facing LGBT people in the Gauteng study was the fear of backlash to family members if gays and lesbians came out to their communities. They found that the

psychological effects of negative attitudes included depression, substance abuse and suicidal thoughts and attempts.

A study by OUT LGBT Well-Being found that suicidal thoughts occurred amongst 31% of South African LGBTI people whilst 21% had attempted to commit suicide (Graham & Kiguwa, 2004).

As can be seen by the existing research, continual social intolerance against LGBT people is still prevalent in South Africa and can have a profoundly negative effects on the targets of discrimination. This points to a gap in the South African education system to teach students about homophobia and unfair prejudice against sexual orientation. The following section explores universities as settings for forming and maintaining identities as well as settings for forming and maintaining attitudes.

3.3   **UNIVERSITIES AS SETTING FOR FORMING AND MAINTAINING IDENTITIES**

Developing and accepting an alternative sexual orientation requires exiting a learned heterosexual status and embracing a gay or lesbian self (D'Augelli, 1994). Exposure to university settings is a crucial time for sexual identity formation since this is the time when students are more likely to engage with issues of pluralism and diversity (Green, 1998).

Lesbian and gay identity has been shown to develop in early adolescence from aged 13 through to 26, with gay youth typically acting on their feelings at about aged 15 and lesbians at aged 20 (Vare & Norton, 1998). According to Vare and Norton (1998) gay and lesbian adolescents experience the same biological, cognitive and social developmental changes as heterosexual teens, but face a number of major stressors and behaviours that are highly

characteristic of this population. For example, they are more likely to be stigmatised for being homosexual which can result in harassment and violence against them. Gay and lesbian youth who are stigmatised may use various strategies to cope such as denying their gay identities, withdrawing from their peers, developing health and academic difficulties and abusing substances (Vare & Norton, 1998).

Several models of homosexual identity formation have been offered (Cass, 1979; D'Augelli, 1994; Degges-White, Rice & Myers, 2000). Cass (1979) proposed a six stage model of homosexuality identity formation which is seen to progress linearly in the following way: identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride and finally, identity synthesis. Her model rests within the framework of interpersonal congruency theory (Cox & Gallois, 1996) which assumes that stability and change are dependent on the congruency or incongruency that exists in a person's interpersonal environment.

Although subsequent research (D'Augelli, 1994; and Degges-White, Rice, & Myers, 2000) has shown that homosexual identity formation does not necessarily follow such a strict linear pattern as put forth by Cass, but may be more fluid in nature, Cass's theory nevertheless provides a valuable framework for understanding the importance of having a supportive environment within this context of sexual minority identity development. Here, growth and a positive homosexual identity are achieved when the inconsistency between one's perception of the self and others' perceptions is resolved. However, at each stage of the developmental process identity foreclosure may occur, where the individual may choose not to develop any further. Thus, a synthesised identity that integrates the person's homosexual

identity with other aspects of the self is only achieved in an environment of perceived support from the interpersonal environment (Cass, 1979).

The decision to "come out" is linked to social, familial or cultural attitudes towards homosexuality and is not taken by all gay and lesbian people (Rivers, 1997). D'Augelli (1994) proposed a framework of homosexual identity formation that includes the development of a person's self-concept, relationships with family, and connections to peer groups and community. His model suggests a more fluid process at certain times in the life span and sees human growth as connected to the environment and biological factors. Although Cass (1979) and D'Augelli (1994) differ in their conceptualisations of sexual minority identity development, they both highlight the importance of a supportive environment for positive growth to occur.

Since the current study focuses on attitudes within a university setting, it is necessary to also examine the "coming out" process from an intergroup and cultural/societal viewpoint. Tajfel's social identity theory (1981) is based on the premise that social identity, which is an important source of pride and self-esteem, is based on group membership. To increase our self-image we enhance the status of the group to which we belong (in-group) or we hold negative attitudes towards the out-group. This categorisation of "them" and "us" is seen by Tajfel (1981) as a normal cognitive process that serves to exaggerate differences in the in-group and similarities in the out-group. Tajfel (1981) considers "coming out" from a group membership perspective. From this point of view social identity is derived from one's knowledge of membership of a social group and the emotional significance attached to that membership. This theory acknowledges power relations and comparisons with other groups as a determinant of coming out. Therefore, the extent to which gay and lesbian students feel

accepted within their social group, will determine whether or not they will come out to their peers.

As a case in point, a study by Evans and Broido (1999) investigated the coming out process of 20 lesbian, gay and bisexual students in the residence halls of the Pennsylvania State University. The results highlight the important role played by the environment during the coming out process, where perceived support was more conducive to coming out.

Within the South African context, a study by Graziano (2004) at Stellenbosch University, revealed that many gay and lesbian students do not reveal their sexuality because of the "hostile campus environments and for fear of discrimination and victimization" (p.273). From his study he concludes that being homosexual in South Africa today is no different from how it was during the apartheid years. A similar study by Butler and Astbury (2003) that explored the coming out process of a group of 18 young gay and lesbian high school students in South Africa, found that themes of harassment by peers, teachers and administrators, ineffective school counsellors, avoidance, rejection, isolation and lack of LGBT information were common to most participants' experiences.

These findings clearly show that the campus climate has a significant influence on students' willingness to disclose their sexual orientation and on the reactions they receive when they do disclose. This essential time for constructing an identity often results in negative consequences for homosexual and lesbian youth due to overt and covert discrimination by heterosexual peers. Green (1998) lists peer pressure, fear of isolation, societal, and internalised homophobia as factors that may interfere with young people's formation of their sexual identities by forcing them to either choose between denying their sexual desires and

identifying with an identity that is inconsistent with their personal notion of self. Lack of role models and difficulties in finding a peer group also contribute to the challenges that gay and lesbian students experience in forming a positive identity.

3.4   UNIVERSITIES AS SETTINGS FOR FORMING AND MAINTAINING ATTITUDES

In order to uphold our country's democracy, an educated and informed society is essential. A university education not only provides students with knowledge and skills, but also aims to equip them with the ability to deal with societal problems. Universities provide the foundation for students to change, grow and develop in order to equip them with the complexities of living in modern society. According to Gaff (1983) it is in the context of higher education where students develop personal qualities such as tolerance of ambiguity and empathy for people with different values.

Lambert et al. (2006) explain how educational and university settings may influence prejudicial views and discriminatory behavior towards different social groups found in society. Gays and lesbians are an example of such a group.

It is particularly desirable for university students to accept lesbians and gay men since they are likely to come into contact with diverse populations in their professional careers. Research has documented that negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians amongst professionals negatively influences the services and treatment that they deliver to these clients (Black, Ole, & Moore, 1998; Meezan & Martin, 2009).

An understanding of the influence of student attributes associated with homophobia is necessary to guide us in finding ways of overcoming these issues.

Wickens and Sandlin (2010) found that homophobia spans the educational system in North America from elementary school through to higher education, by reinforcing hetero-normative discourses which uphold the existing social structures. In a study of 14 universities on the campus climate for LGBT students, Rankin (2012) as cited in Woodford et al, found that 30% of LGBT respondents reported harassment directly related to their sexual orientation.

Within the South African context a few studies have looked at the effects that negative attitudes towards gay and lesbian populations have on students. For example, in a phenomenological study of 10 homosexual students at the University of Zululand, Ngcobo (2007) found themes of homophobia, discrimination, lack of respect for diversity, difficulties with the coming out process, violation of constitutional rights and labelling. A study by Graziano (2004) of the campus climate at Stellenbosch University, also found discrimination in the forms of verbal harassment, graffiti on dormitory doors, physical abuse, death threats, and lack of support, particularly in male residential dormitories.

Evidence to the contrary emerged from a study conducted in the Western Cape in an institute of higher learning (Tati, 2009). Here 5 black lesbian students' personal narratives revealed that the heterosexual community was not as homophobic as some researchers have suggested. They found the university community to be both open to diverse identities, and non-judgmental.

In South Africa there is a dearth of literature that explores heterosexual students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians. The few that have, found that students predominantly hold negative attitudes towards homosexuals (Arndt, 2004; Arndt & De Bruin, 2006; Mwaba, 2009). A recent survey with student website "Student Village" (Mapumulo & Chabalala, 2013) that interviewed 4500 students, found that South African students are far more conservative and outdated in their attitudes towards homosexuality than might be expected from young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. About half of those interviewed believed that homosexuality was a sin, with 29% describing it as "un-African".

3.5 ATTRIBUTES OF TOLERANCE OR INTOLERANCE

Attitudes toward sexual minorities are multifaceted and need to be understood in the context of various spheres. These include heterosexual group differences as well as societal values. Various studies have examined attitudes towards homosexuality and have found relationships with various psychological, demographic and social variables. These studies have consistently found that heterosexuals with accepting attitudes towards gays and lesbians are more likely to be young, female, white, non-religious, well-educated and have been in close contact with homosexuals (e.g. Herek, 1988; Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Kite & Deaux, 1986). This research replicates aspects of many of the previous studies by examining relationships between each of the following independent variables – gender (male versus female), race (black, white, coloured, Indian/Asian), nationality (South African versus other), age (18-22 versus 23 and older), religiosity, church attendance, and rural/urban upbringing, with attitudes toward gays and lesbians. However, in the present study these attitudes are examined within the context of an Eastern Cape university. In the following section, these factors will be discussed individually.

3.5.1   Gender

Are heterosexual male student attitudes towards gays and lesbians different to those of female students?

A number of international studies have examined gender differences in attitudes towards gays and lesbians, with men consistently being found to have more negative attitudes than women (for example, Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Herek, 1988; Hinrichs & Rosenberg, 2002; Hopwood & Connors, 2002; Lim, 2002; Meaney & Rye, 2010).

A few studies have also been conducted in South African universities (Arndt, 2004; Arndt & De Bruin, 2006) which took gender into account, and showed that male students held more negative attitudes to both lesbians and gay men than did female students. Arndt (2004) found that respondents' gender as well as the gender of the participants in homosexual relationships had differential influences on their attitudes towards homosexuals. She found that male students tend to have more negative attitudes towards gays than towards lesbians. A similar study conducted in the Western Cape by Mwaba (2009) however, found no significant differences in male and female attitudes towards homosexuality.

3.5.2   Age

Does age have an effect on heterosexual students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians?

From a developmental perspective it has been shown that attitudes can change throughout the lifespan (Pillari, 1998). Plummer (cited in Maher, Sever & Pichler, 2008) in his study of heterosexual and gay men, contends that homophobia is part of the Western cultural practice of initiating boys into manhood. Thus, homophobia reaches a peak in late adolescence and is the age where males are most likely to commit homophobic acts.

Age has been linked to varying views towards gays and lesbians. These studies generally show that older people tend to exhibit more intolerance than do younger people (Herek, 1988; Keleher & Smith, 2012). However, several studies have revealed that older people are more tolerant of gays and lesbians. For example, Woodford et al. (2012) in their research done in a large public research university in the Midwest, found that older students had more affirming attitudes towards gays and lesbians than their younger counterparts. A British study measuring psychology students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians found statistically significant differences in age in terms of attitudes and support for gay and lesbian human rights (Ellis, Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 2003). Here, older participants held more positive attitudes and showed greater support than younger participants. Another study of African American attitudes towards homosexuality by Lemelle and Battle (2004) discovered that as women increase in age, their attitudes toward gay men become more favourable. Conversely, Lambert, Ventura, Hall and Cluse-Tolar (2006) found no significant relationship between age and homosexual attitudes in their study of college students.

The existing South African research in university campuses on attitudes towards gays and lesbians have not taken age into account.

3.5.3 Race

Do heterosexual students' attitudes differ between different race groups towards gays and lesbians?

It must be noted that race may hold much more unique meanings for South Africans than for other groups due to our Apartheid heritage. Although this research uses the terms of race

developed by the Apartheid government such as black, white, coloured and Indian/Asian, it is not the intention to separate people into fixed categories. The purpose here is rather to develop an understanding of the different cultural influences on attitudes towards gays and lesbians.

With Apartheid and its subsequent demise, has come an acute awareness of the distinctions between the various races, initially for the purposes of segregation and oppression, and currently for democratic sustainability and a sense of cultural identity. Since many political and religious voices in South Africa denounce homosexuality and label it as "un-African", it stands to reason that conforming to these views could be a way of expressing one's national and ethnic identity.

Results of studies that investigate the influence of ethnicity on attitudes towards gays and lesbians has had mixed results. Schutte and Battle (2004) in their comparison of the relative importance of both ethnicity and religion on attitudes towards gays and lesbians, found that race was only significant when participants also scored highly in religious attendance. Findings by Herek and Capitanio (1995) indicated that negative attitudes toward homosexuality were not more prevalent among black people than white people, whereas Logie, Bridge and Bridge (2007) found that African Americans scored higher on the homophobia scale than did their Caucasian contemporaries. A study by Whitley, Childs and Collins (2011) that compared black and white students' attitudes in a Midwestern university in America, found that black students' attitudes were generally neutral, whereas white students held slightly more positive attitudes. However, the differences were mediated by racial group differences in right-wing authoritarianism.

Within the South African context, the study conducted by Arndt (2004) showed that race did not have a statistically significant effect on attitudes towards lesbians and gay men, while Mwaba (2009) found many students in a predominantly black South African university held negative beliefs and attitudes toward homosexuals and same-sex marriage.

3.5.4   Religiosity

Does the degree of religiosity or lack thereof influence heterosexual students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians?

Does the degree of commitment to religious practice influence heterosexual students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians?

The traditional position of the churches on homosexuality has been one of condemnation, judgment and discrimination. Yet, same-sex relationships were seen as divine in pre-modern Europe, and the ancient Roman and Greek gods and mortals alike engaged in same-sex unions (Cviklova, 2012). Here heterosexual marriages were created for economic and parenting reasons whilst homosexual unions were created for love. It was the advent of religion that had a profound impact on sexual practices and preferences. Christianity, Judaism and Islam have been promoting sex strictly for reproductive reasons with monogamy and sexual fidelity in marriage becoming the order of the day. Homosexuality was seen as dangerous and sodomy was perceived as a sin (Cviklova, 2012).

Today, Christian disagreements about homosexuality are attributed to Biblical passages being interpreted literally. The texts in question are:

Leviticus 18: 22: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination."

Leviticus 20: 13: "If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death."

Romans 1: 27: "The men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due."

Corinthians 6: 9 & 10: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? … Nor homosexuals, nor sodomites… will inherit the kingdom of God."

Timothy 1: 9 & 10: "The law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and the insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners… the profane … for sodomites… any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."

Judges 19: 22: "… suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house and beat on the door … saying, 'Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him carnally!"

(*New King James Version of the Holy Bible*, 1982).

Opinions amongst the main churches of modern Christianity are divided when it comes to same-sex practices. The Catholic Church has traditionally been opposed to homosexuality, where for example The Administrative Committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops requested a constitutional amendment to protect the traditional institution of marriage and the Vatican opened an official website that publishes articles that condemn homosexuality (Cviklova, 2012). The Southern Baptist Church does not allow gay clergy and views homosexuality as an unforgiving sin, whereas the Presbyterian Church in the USA has been much more accepting in that it has allowed for the ordination of gay clergy and accepts homosexuals' civil rights within society (Cviklova, 2012). The Church of England's position has gradually become more tolerant of homosexuality but only insofar as lay people are

concerned; they do not condone gay clergy, which only serves to convey mixed messages to the public (Otto, 2003).

These moral judgments are not confined to the Christian faith. In his study of the influence of fundamentalism and right-wing authoritarianism on attitudes towards homosexuals, Hunsberger (1996) found that such inclined Islamic, Hindu and Jewish groups correlated strongly with fundamentalist Christian communities in terms of anti-homosexual sentiments.

The relationship between religion and state has always been complex. In Islamic countries religion is perceived as the only source of law above international law and human rights where, for example, Iran imposed the death penalty to four thousand homosexuals since the end of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 (Cviklova, 2012).

Anti-homosexual rhetoric is evident in political and Christian discourses throughout Africa. In the Catholic theological journal, African Ecclesial Review (AFER) (Van Klinken & Gunda, 2012), the editor states:

In Africa, homosexuality is a taboo discussed in hushed tones. It is a distortion and a betrayal of marriage worldwide. Homosexual unions do not in any way contribute to the common good of humanity, as they are anti-life, anti-social and anti-Scriptural (p.11).

Another recent African journal article by Uzoma and Okoye (2010) states that "same sex marriage negates divine order of procreation" and that it is "incompatible with the creation of male and female as distinct and yet complementary sexual beings" (p.8).

Extant research shows that anti-gay attitudes have been consistently correlated with religion and religiosity (Adamczyk & Pitt, 2009; Hans, Kersey & Kimberly, 2012; Hopwood & Connors, 2002; Schutte & Battle, 2004; Wolff, Himes, Kwon & Bollinger, 2012). Schutte and Battle (2004) found that religion has a big impact on African American and to lesser degree European American attitudes towards homosexuality. Newmanxy (2002) discovered that respondents with conservative religious affiliations have significantly more negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians and likewise, Ellis et al. (2003) in a study of psychology students in Britain found that those who identified themselves as having some religious affiliation were significantly more negative in their attitudes towards lesbians and gay men than those who identified themselves as having no religious affiliation.

Similarly, research by Hinrichs and Rosenberg (2002) on liberal arts college student attitudes, found that those who belong to more fundamentalist religious groups, who have strong traditional religious beliefs and who attend religious services frequently, tend to have more negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians than their less religious counterparts. Hopwood and Connors (2002) in their Australian study of heterosexual student attitudes, as well as Schlub and Martsolf (1999) found that regular church attendance was associated with higher homophobia. Moreover, Maher, Sever & Pichler (2008) cite research by Dowler that found negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians fall into five main categories: repulsion, fear/discomfort, moral/religious righteousness, abnormality and conditional acceptance. Further findings cited by Maher et al (2008) show that negative comments about homosexuality from students and staff at universities have religious and moral themes and that a major barrier to making gay or lesbian friends among college freshmen was religious commitment.

A South African study of 1817 black first year students' attitudes found that negative attitudes toward homosexuality were significantly associated with high religiosity (Nicholas & Durrheim, 1995). Other South African studies in Gauteng and the Western Cape that took religion into account also established that it had a negative influence on attitudes towards gays and lesbians (Arndt, 2004; Arndt & De Bruin, 2006; Mwaba, 2009). To date, no studies could be found that measured students' attitudes towards homosexuality in terms of religiosity and religious attendance in the Eastern Cape.

3.5.5   Rural and urban upbringing

Do heterosexual attitudes differ between urban and rural students in their attitudes towards gays and lesbians?

Symbolically there is a contrast between rural and urban life that sees the city as artificial, anonymous and as having sexual license. In contrast the country becomes a haven of nature, familiarity and tradition. Generally, researchers have found that life for gays and lesbians living in rural areas continues to be secretive, private and is characterised by an underlying theme of coercion to social norms (Bell & Valentine, 1995). According to D'Augelli and Hart (1987)there are few resources such as help-lines, support groups or other gay people for homosexuals and their families in rural settings, which serves to isolate them from other homosexuals. This results in rural communities believing in myths about homosexuals in the absence of other families to model acceptance and understanding. Additionally, rural community leaders seldom acknowledge or present positive attitudes towards sexual minorities. On the other hand, city life promises room for experimentation, anonymity and sexual possibilities.

Although there are several cities in the Eastern Cape such as Port Elizabeth and East London, the non-urban population amounts to nearly 4,100,000 with high concentrations of rural and peri-urban settlements occurring in the province (Human Science Research Council Report, 2012). According to Pillay, Roberts and Rule (2006) geographic location has an influence on social attitudes towards homosexuality and found that negative attitudes are more prevalent in rural than in formal urban areas. The Eastern Cape is a predominantly rural and traditional province and the results of the South African Social Attitudes survey (Pillay et al., 2006) reflect this in their attitudes towards same sex relations. Geographically it was shown that 88% of the Eastern Cape residents held the view that same sex relations were always wrong. This comprised the second highest percentage of negative attitudes after Limpopo which was 90% (Pillay, Roberts & Rule, 2006). Traditional voices in the Eastern Cape serve to cement these views as is evidenced by the statement made by the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa's (Contralesa), provincial leader, Xolile Ndevu (Feni, 2012). Protests from the Eastern Cape Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Intersex Organisation following the public hearing of the Traditional Court Bill in May 2012, resulted in the following statement being made by Ndevu:

This sexual orientation is uncustomary. It is un-African, ungodly and non-existent…. We apologise if this view makes people misjudge us as not operating in accordance with the constitution but it should be understood we are custodians of customs and culture (p.3).

The existing literature comparing rural and urban attitudes towards gays and lesbians has shown mixed results and appears to be confined to studies outside of South Africa. Cumulative data collected from the General Social Survey (1972-2004) in America explored how rural Americans differ from their urban peers with regards to attitudes, amongst other things,

towards same sex practices (Dillon & Savage, 2006). They found that although attitudes had improved since the 1970s, they continued to be more negative than urban attitudes. However, there was evidence of variations in these attitudes that were influenced by specific circumstances and other factors such as age and religion. Older and highly religious rural and non-rural Americans were much more likely to oppose same sex relations than their younger and less religious counterparts.

In a pilot study by Tate (1991) of a group of 30 rural and 41 urban social workers, the Index of Attitudes towards Homosexuality showed no significant differences between the two groups' attitudes. Conversely, Snively, Kreuger, Stretch, Watt and Chadha (2004) found that social workers with a rural lifestyle were more homophobic and less likely to support gay rights than their urban counterparts. Another study of 748 social work students at 12 universities in America (Swank & Raiz, 2007) also found that students who came from a rural upbringing associated less comfort with homosexuality than those coming from an urban upbringing. Eliason and Hughes (2004) in their comparison of 251 substance abuse counsellors in urban Chicago and rural Iowa, found no significant differences between rural and urban counsellors in their attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered clients.

3.5.6   Nationality

Do heterosexual attitudes towards gays and lesbians differ between South African and foreign students?

There are fundamental differences between different nations in terms of how they regulate sexuality and sexual rights. The country in which you are born can determine whether or not

you will enjoy certain sexual rights and privileges. Binnie (2005) argues that the extent to which a nation tolerates and recognises sexual diversity indicates its level of development. There is ample evidence of the globalisation of sexualities where Western ideas about homosexuality and gay rights have been exported to new areas. Unfortunately this has also led to the globalisation of homophobia in many countries (Binnie, 2005).

Several previous studies have examined the cultural differences between separate nationalities with regards to their attitudes towards homosexuality. Furnham and Saito (2009) in their comparison of British and Japanese attitudes towards gays and lesbians, found that Japanese participants were more likely to show stereotypical ideas and more reluctance to engage in close personal contact with gays than British participants. They were also more inclined to regard homosexuality as something that can be "cured".

A field experiment conducted in Germany by Gabriel and Banse (2006) to unobtrusively assess attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, compared their results with similar studies from Switzerland, Great Britain and the United States. They found intercultural differences in social behaviour against lesbians and gay men, with Switzerland having the highest tolerance, followed by Germany, Great Britain and with the United States exhibiting the lowest tolerance.

The existing South African literature on attitudes towards gays and lesbians in terms of nationality is scant and only one other study could be found (Arndt, 2004) that compared South African students' attitudes with foreign students' attitudes in terms of the ATLG scale. However, this previous study only compared a sample of South African students' attitudes with an American sample.

This study found that South African male students held more negative attitudes than their American counterparts, whereas the female South African students were more accepting than the American females. Another study of the differences in attitude between South African, Cuban and Norwegian students by Traeen and Martinussen (2008) revealed that culture shapes attitudes towards sexuality. They found that the South African sample held more restrictive attitudes than those from Cuba and Norway.

The University of Fort Hare has predominantly South African students but is also renowned for attracting students from other African countries. The fact that many African countries still criminalise homosexual practices, as opposed to South Africa's constitutional policy of human dignity, equality and freedom for sexual orientation, makes the notion of comparing attitudes on the basis of nationality exigent.

3.6   SUMMARY

In this chapter literature pertaining to heterosexual attitudes towards gays and lesbians from an international perspective was discussed, followed by an overview of the African and South African literature. The research has revealed that major changes in the way homosexuality has been conceptualised, as well as advancements in legislative policies that promote gay and lesbian rights, has occurred in many countries worldwide. However, negative attitudes towards this minority group still prevail.

Universities as settings for forming and maintaining identities and attitudes were explored. A review of the literature relating to attributes of tolerance or intolerance towards gays and lesbians was also discussed in terms of the specific demographic

variables of gender, age, race, religiosity, commitment to religious practice, rural or urban upbringing and nationality.

The rationale for measuring attitudes towards gays and lesbians in South Africa is therefore contextualised against the broader ethos of gender-based violence, racism and homophobia that has been characteristic of this nation.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Attitudes are characteristically researched quantitatively, using surveys and questionnaires to collect data (Oppenheim, 1978). Biographical variables are thereafter used to describe the data obtained. This chapter will discuss the research design used for this study as well as the sample, procedure, instrumentation, variables and data analysis that was used. Ethical considerations will also be briefly overviewed.

4.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design used in this study was a quantitative survey. A descriptive method with quantitative procedures of data analysis was used for this research. Descriptive studies aim to describe phenomena accurately through measuring relationships between variables and makes use of surveys to gather data and to interpret certain aspects of the research in a quantitative manner (Durrheim, 2008). Essentially, this study was both descriptive and explorative as it described and explored the prevailing attitudes towards gays and lesbians according to the biographical dimensions that were investigated.

4.3   RESEARCH SAMPLE

According to Durrheim and Painter (2008) probability sampling is generally viewed as the preferred method of sampling since it allows for generalisation to populations. However, nonprobability sampling is commonly used with undergraduate students in university settings since these studies can be replicated in other universities over time to produce reliable results.

A convenience sample of first year Psychology students from the University of Fort Hare in East London was used for the study. Initially, the intention was to include all the first year psychology students from both the East London and the Alice campuses in the sample (N = about 1000) through the university's communication network known as "Blackboard". Blackboard is an online resource which has been implemented by the university's "Teaching and Learning Centre" (TLC). Its purpose is to provide virtual announcements, discussions, course content, learning modules, and assignments amongst other things to students. However, it soon became apparent that the Alice students were not yet using Blackboard for assignments, making it impractical to obtain responses from them. Thus, only the East London students were included in the sample. The total sample of this study consisted of 472 students attending the East London campus of the University of Fort Hare. Only one of the students failed to complete the questionnaire and a further 67 surveys were excluded from the final sample on the basis of them indicating that they were either gay, lesbian or bisexual. A further 3 were excluded due to the fact that their responses were incomplete. The final sample consequently consisted of 401 heterosexual students. Consistent with the typical composition of psychology classes, 288 comprised female participants and 113 were male. The sample comprised predominantly black students (N =328); however a number of white students (N = 45) and coloured students (N = 27) were also represented. Only 1 participant (N = 1) specified their ethnic origin as Indian/Asian. Most participants identified themselves as being between the ages of 18 and 22 (N = 271), with the remaining specifying themselves as 23 or older (N = 129). In terms of nationality, a large majority identified themselves as South African (N = 396) with only a small number comprising foreign students (N = 4).

Most of the participants rated themselves as very religious (N = 195), with many identifying as somewhat religious (N = 179) and the remaining participants (N = 26) identifying themselves as not at all religious.

4.4   PROCEDURE AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The decision to use an electronic survey was based on weighing up the costs and benefits of this method from an ethical point of view. In considering possible psychological harm to participants such as embarrassment or anxiety, this method of presenting the survey on a private network ensured confidentiality and anonymity for the participants. Lecturers would only be able to see if students had submitted the answers but only the researcher had access to the actual answers to the survey without being given the students' names.

To avoid secondary discrimination against homosexuals and lesbians, all the first year psychology students were asked to participate in the survey. However, in the analysis of the data, those returned questionnaires that indicated their sexual orientation as homosexual or lesbian were excluded from the data to be analysed.

Before commencing with the survey, institutional ethical clearance was obtained after which the relevant gate-keepers were asked for permission to conduct the research. The course coordinator for the first year Psychology students was asked for permission to administer the survey to the students as a tutorial for which they could receive course credits if they answered all the questions. However, it was clearly stated that the survey was voluntary. In considering whether or not this would constitute undue influence the benefits of the research were also considered.

It was determined that participants may benefit from the survey in that they may gain new insights into attitudes towards gay and lesbian populations. Furthermore, their contribution would aid in gathering new information about heterosexual student attitudes in the Eastern Cape so as to add to existing literature and research. It was also anticipated that the research would open doors to future areas of research and that the study would form the basis for future interventions in helping to change social attitudes.

An invitation to participate in the survey was initially posted as a link labelled "Help Wanted" on the Blackboard notice board. This was posted onto the notice board in English as this is the language of instruction at the university and was made available to the students until the end of the second semester.

Additionally, a biographical questionnaire was included to obtain relevant information to allow for the examining of the research questions of the proposed study (see Appendix I). This information included the following: sexual orientation (heterosexual versus gay/lesbian/bisexual), gender, age, religiosity and degree of commitment to a religious group measured by how often they attend church, race, nationality, and rural or urban upbringing. As this was a quantitative study, the data was collected in numerical format. The assessment of the participants' attitudes was operationalised by their scores on the questionnaire.

4.5   INSTRUMENTATION

Using scales to measure constructs such as attitudes is a common and useful procedure in the social sciences (Durrheim & Painter, 2008). Scales are used to measure a construct that consists of one or more indicators of the construct.

These are then summed into a score which indicates the intensity, level, direction or strength of the variable being measured (Durrheim & Painter, 2008).

Numerous scales have been developed in the past to measure attitudes towards homosexuality, such as the Homosexuality Attitude Scale (Kite & Deaux, 1986), Heterosexuals' Attitudes towards Homosexuality (Larsen, Reed & Hoffman, 1980) and the global assessment on attitudes towards homosexuality by Haddock, Mark and Esses (1993). However, Herek (1988) was the first to develop a scale that measures attitudes towards lesbians and gays separately. His Attitudes towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG) was developed in the 1970s specifically for student populations to measure attitudes in terms of moral beliefs, affective reactions and social policy towards gay men and lesbians. The scale aimed at identifying a single factor labelled the "Condemnation-tolerance" factor (Rosik, 2007).

In the present study, Herek's "Attitude towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale" (ATLG) (Herek, 1988) was presented to the respondents in the form of an electronic survey. This scale has been shown to be appropriate for administration to adult heterosexual student populations (Fisher, Davis, Yarber & Davis, 2010). The ATLG consists of 20 statements, the first 10 assesses heterosexual attitudes towards lesbians (ATL subscale) and the following 10 assess heterosexual attitudes towards gay men (ATG subscale) to which respondents indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree. This study uses a 5 point Lickert-type scale with anchor points of 1 as strongly agree and 5 as strongly disagree. Items 2, 7, 11, 15, 17 and 20 have been reversed scored.

Scoring is accomplished by summing scores across items for each subscale. Total scale scores can range from 20 (extremely negative attitudes) to 100 (extremely positive attitudes). Question 6 has been slightly adapted for the South African context – "North American morals" has been replaced with "South African morals". Similarly question 4 was reworded to fit the South African context of legalised gay marriage as opposed to certain American state laws prohibiting it. In the original version question 4 was reversed scored. However, due to rewording, the meaning changed in the present version, resulting in this question no longer being reversed scored (see Appendix II).

Evidence for the validity of the scale has been demonstrated in several studies (Herek, 1988; Herek & Capitanio, 1995). The ATLG has dependably shown to have high levels of internal consistency, especially with longer versions of the scale (Fisher et al., 2010). Herek (cited in Rosik, 2007) also reported that the ATLG and its subscales have shown high levels of internal consistency with alpha levels of .90 for the full scale among samples of college students. Test-retest reliability of the scale has been demonstrated with alternate forms where respondents completed the original ATLG and 3 weeks later a reworded ATG and ATL to refer to lesbians and gay men respectively was administered. Correlations showed r = .90 for the ATLG and its alternate forms (Herek, 1988). Herek's ATLG scale is freely available for use without having to obtain permission, provided that the research is not conducted for profit making purposes, and is consistent with the American Psychological Association's *Ethical Principles of Psychology* (Fisher et al., 2010).

4.6   VARIABLES

Howell (2011) identifies several types of variables but for the aim of this research only two will be described. The dependent variable is the one being measured and cannot be manipulated by the experimenter, while the independent variable is manipulated to determine its effects on the dependent variable. In this study the dependent variable comprised attitudes towards gays and lesbians in terms of the ATLG, while biographical dimensions of gender (male/female), age (18-22 versus 23 or older), religiosity (very, somewhat or not at all) and degree of commitment to a religious group in terms of church attendance (often, sometimes, never), race (black, white, coloured or Indian/Asian participants), nationality (South African versus other), and rural or urban upbringing encompassed the independent variables.

4.7   DATA ANALYSIS

The computer software, Statistics Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used to analyse the data. It is one of the most widely used programs for statistical analysis in the social sciences as it allows ordinary researchers to do their own statistical analysis. SPSS was used in this study to acquire descriptive statistics and bivariate statistics. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the scale. Mean scores were calculated on the students' responses as well as their standard deviations in order to determine the variability of scores for the total sample and for each of the independent variables.

In order to make inferences on the results, t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were carried out on the data. A two-sample t-test for independent groups was used to compare and ascertain the significant differences between the following groups:

- mean scores of male and female responses

- two different age groups' responses

- South African and other nationalities

- Rural and urban students' responses

Furthermore, a one way ANOVA was performed to test for significant differences between the following groups:

- Race (black, white, coloured and Indian/Asian participants)

- Religiosity

- Commitment to religious practice

4.8   SUMMARY AND PREVIEW

In this chapter the research procedure, sampling technique and measurements were discussed. The ethical considerations applicable to the study were also reviewed. The results will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

Overall, the means for each rating tended toward acceptance. However, significant differences in attitudes towards lesbians and gays were found for gender, race, religious affiliation and commitment, and for urban versus rural students, but not for age. The results for each independent variable will be discussed separately.

5.2   RELIABILITY

The ATLG obtained an overall Cronbach Alpha of 0.923. It can accordingly be concluded that the results obtained from this research are reliable.

5.3   GENDER

Are heterosexual male student attitudes towards gays and lesbians different to those of female students?

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Male and Female Students Responses on the ATLG

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Male	113	56.0177	16.22387
Female	288	64.7396	16.05538

The means and standard deviations of the male and female students' responses to the lesbian and gay men scores of the ATLG are reported in Table 1.

The differences in the attitudes of male and female students towards lesbians and gay men were tested by means of a t-test for independent samples, where the lesbian and gay men scales of the ATLG served as the dependent variable and gender served as the independent variable.

Table 2: Independent samples test:

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Total ATLG final Equal variances assumed Equal variances not assumed	.002	.963	-4.879 -4.857	399 202.918	.000 .000	-8.72188 -8.72188	1.78747 1.79566	-12.23593 -12.26242	-5.20784 -5.18135

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

The Levine's Test for equality of variances as shown in table 2, showed a significance level of 0.963 which allowed for the continuation of the statistical analysis.

The t-test showed a statistically significant difference between the male (M = 56.0177, SD = 16.22387), and female students' scores (M = 64.7396, SD = 16.05538) t (399) = -4.879, p = 0.000 (two-tailed), (CI: -12.2 to -5.2) illustrating that males expressed elevated negative attitudes compared to female respondents. The magnitude of the differences in the means was moderate (eta squared = 0.05).

These results suggest that gender does have an effect on the University of Fort Hare students' attitudes towards gay men and lesbians with males being more likely to hold negative attitudes than females.

5.4 AGE

Does age have an effect on heterosexual attitudes towards gays and lesbians?

The means and standard deviations for the two different age groups' responses to the lesbian and gay men scores of the ATLG are reported in Table 3.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations for the two different age groups on the ATLG

Age	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
18-22	271	62.1255	1.01399
23 or older	129	62.6357	1.44274

The means and standard deviations for the two age groups are reported in table 3. The significance of the differences between the two age groups was calculated by means of a t-test for independent groups where the lesbian and gay men scales of the ATLG served as the dependent variable and age served as the independent variable.

Table 4: Independent samples t-test:

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Total ATLG final Equal variances assumed Equal variances not assumed	.019	.891	-.287 -.289	398 256.065	.774 .773	-.5102 -.5102	1.77508 1.76343	3.99990 3.98287	2.97950 2.96248

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

The Levine's Test for equality of variances as shown in table 4, showed a significance level of 0.891 which allowed for the continuation of the statistical analysis . The results, however, showed no significant differences between the younger and the older groups' scores (t = -.287, df = 398, p = 0.774).

According to these results, age does not have an effect on the University of Fort Hare students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians.

5.5   **RACE**

Do heterosexual students' attitudes differ between different race groups towards gays and lesbians?

The analysis that follows will aim to determine the significant differences between three race groups and employ a one-way ANOVA to conduct the analysis.

The sample included black, white, Indian/Asian and coloured respondents. However, there was only one Indian/Asian respondent and for statistical purposes it was not tenable to include this respondent in the analysis. The means and standard deviations of the 3 different race groups are shown in table 5.

Table 5: Means and standard Deviations for Race Groups on the ATLG

Race group	*N*	Mean	Standard Deviation
Black	328	60.5872	16.12540
White	45	66.7391	15.86251
Coloured	27	75.3333	16.50175

At a glance the means of the three race groups' scores are different with coloured respondents having the most positive attitudes, followed by white and black respondents respectively. A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of race on attitudes towards gays and lesbians, as measured by the ATLG scale. Race served as the independent variable and the lesbian and gay men scales of the ATLG served as the dependent variable. The results showed that race had a statistically significant relation with attitudes towards lesbians and gay men as shown in table 6.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance

Total ATLG	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6452.224	2	322.112	12.414	.000
Within Groups	103172.136	397	259.879		
Total	109624.360	399			

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

The results show that there was a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in ATLG scores between the three race groups F (2.39) = 12.414, p = 0.000. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was 0.06, indicating a moderate effect size.

Table 7: Multiple Comparisons

Dependent variable: total ATLG final

Race		Mean difference	Standard Error	Significance	95% confidence interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Black	White	-6.15197*	2.53856	.042	-12.1240	-.1799
	Coloured	-14.74618*	3.22799	.000	-22.3401	-7.1522
White	Black	6.15197*	2.53856	.042	.1799	12.1240
	Coloured	-8.59420	3.90829	.073	-17.7886	.6002
Coloured	Black	14.74618*	3.22799	.000	7.1522	22.3401
	White	8.59420	3.90829	.073	-.6002	17.7886

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the black respondents (M = 60.5872, SD = 16.1254) was significantly different from the mean score for the white respondents (M = 66.7391, SD = 15.86251), with the black respondents attitudes being more negative than those of the white respondents (p = 0.042).

Similarly the difference between black participants' scores (M = 60.5872, SD = 16.1254) and coloured participants' scores (M = 75.3333, SD = 16.50175) was also significant in that black participants were more negative in their attitudes towards gays and lesbians than the coloured participants (p =0.000) However, there was no significant difference between the white (M = 66.7391, SD = 15.86251), and coloured (M = 75.3333, SD = 16.50175) respondents' scores, (p =0.073).

Taken together, these results suggest that race does have an effect on attitudes towards gays and lesbians. Specifically, these results suggest that black students at the University of Fort Hare are likely to have more negative attitudes than their white and coloured peers and coloured students at this university are more likely to have more positive attitudes towards gays and lesbians than their black peers but not necessarily more positive than their white peers.

5.6   RELIGIOSITY

Does the degree of religiosity or lack thereof influence heterosexual attitudes towards gays and lesbians?

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the degree of religiosity on students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians. Religiosity served as the independent variable and the lesbian and gay men scales on the ATLG served as the dependent variable.

The results are shown in table 8.

Table 8: Means and Standard deviations for religiosity (very, somewhat, not at all religious)

Religiosity	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Very religious	195	57.6615	15.72896
Somewhat religious	180	66.9441	15.34975
Not at all religious	26	64.9615	21.39996

The results show that there was a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in ATLG

scores between the three different degrees of religiosity, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Analysis of Variance

Total ATLG final	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	8240.296	2	4120.148	16.134	.000
Within groups	101384.064	397	255.375		
Total	109624.360	399			

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 9 shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the very religious,

somewhat religious and not at all religious groups as determined by one-way ANOVA, F (2.39)

= 16.134, p = 0.000. The effect size or actual difference between the mean scores of the 3

groups in terms of religiosity was calculated using eta squared. This was 0.07 which indicates a

moderate difference between the groups.

In this sample the group sizes were unequal which resulted in there not being a normal

distribution. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated as it assumes

that all groups have the same or similar variance and utilises the *F* statistic if the group sizes

are equal. It was subsequently necessary to use non-parametric statistics. Post-hoc

comparisons using Games Howell non-parametric tests were conducted to calculate the

significance of the differences between the three groups in terms of religiosity. The results are

shown in table 10.

Table 10: Multiple Comparisons

Religiosity		Mean difference	Standard error	Significance	95% confidence interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Very	Somewhat	-9.28260*	1.60779	.000	-13.0660	-5.4992
	Not at all	-7.30000	4.34540	.230	-18.0373	3.4373
Somewhat	Very	9.28260*	1.60779	.000	5.4992	13.0660
	Not at all	1.98260	4.35087	.892	-8.7654	12.7306
Not at all	Very	7.30000	4.34540	.230	-3.4373	18.0373
	Somewhat	-1.98260	4.35087	.892	-12.7306	8.7654

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

The results showed a significant difference between the very religious group (M = 57.6615, SD = 15.72896) and the somewhat religious group (M = 66.9441, SD = 15.34975), with the very religious group having more negative attitudes than the somewhat religious group (p = 0.000). However, there was no significant difference found between the very religious (M = 57.6615, SD = 15.72896) and not at all religious groups (M = 64.9615, SD = 21.39996), (p =0.230); or between the somewhat religious (M = 66.9441, SD = 15.34975), and not at all religious groups (M = 64.9615, SD = 21.39996), (p = 0.892).

It can therefore be concluded that students from the University of Fort Hare who rate themselves as very religious have more negative attitudes toward gays and lesbians than do students who rate themselves as somewhat religious.

5.7   COMMITMENT TO RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Does the degree of commitment to religious practice influence heterosexual attitudes towards gays and lesbians?

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of commitment to religious practice on the University of Fort Hare students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians. The means and standard deviations of commitment to religious practice/church attendance (always, sometimes, never) are reported in table 11.

Table 11: Means and standard deviations of commitment to religious practice

Commitment to religious practice (church attendance)	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Always	129	56.3566	16.68073
Sometimes	241	64.2333	15.05540
Never	31	71.9355	19.58220

At a glance the mean scores of the three groups are different. To establish the significance of the differences, a one-way ANOVA was performed with the scores on the ATLG serving as the dependent variable and religious attendance serving as the independent variable.

Table 12: An Analysis of Variance

Total ATLG final	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	8331.959	2	4165.979	16.328	.000
Within groups	101292.401	397	255.145		
Total	109624.360	399			

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 12 shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the three groups in terms of commitment to religious practice as determined by one-way ANOVA, $F_{(2,39)}$ = 16.328, p = 0.000.

Post-hoc comparisons using Games Howell non-parametric tests showed a significant difference between the 3 groups and the results are shown in table 13. Additionally, the actual difference between the groups was also calculated by means of eta squared which was 0.08 which indicates a moderate difference between the three groups.

Table 13: Multiple Comparisons

Games Howell

Commitment to religious practice/church attendance		Mean difference	Standard error	Significance	95% confidence interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper bound
Always	Sometimes	-7.87674*	1.76108	.000	-12.0300	-3.7235
	Never	-15.57889*	3.81139	.001	-24.8463	-6.3116
Sometimes	Always	7.87674*	1.76108	.000	3.7235	12.0300
	Never	-7.70215	3.64886	.102	-16.6350	1.2307
Never	Always	15.57889*	3.81139	.000	6.3116	24.8462
	Sometimes	7.70215	3.64886	.102	-1.2307	16.6350

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

The results showed statistical significant differences between the groups with attitudes being more negative for those participants who always attended church (M = 56.3566, SD = 16.68073) compared to those who sometimes attended church (M = 64.2333, SD = 15.05540), (p = 0.000).

There was also a significant difference between those who always attend church (M = 56.3566, SD = 16.68073), compared to those who never attend church (M = 71.9355, SD = 19.58220), with those who always attend having more negative attitudes (p = 0.001).

Taken together, these results suggest that the more often the University of Fort Hare students attend religious services, the more likely they are to hold negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians.

5.8 URBAN OR RURAL UPBRINGING

Do heterosexual attitudes towards gays and lesbians differ between urban and rural students' upbringing?

The means and standard deviations of the urban and rural students' responses are reported in table 14.

Table 14: Means and standard deviations for rural and urban students' responses on the ATLG

Urban or Rural Upbringing	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Urban	197	58.3878	15.32629
Rural	204	66.0392	16.89838

The significance of the difference between the urban and rural students' responses is reported in table 15.

Table 15: Independent samples t-test:

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Total ATLG final Equal variances assumed Equal variances not assumed	1.300	.255	-4.738 -4.747	398 396.693	.000 .000	-7.65146 -7.65146	1.61505 1.61190	10.82656 10.82040	4.47637 4.48252

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

The significance of the difference in responses to the ATLG was calculated using a t-test for independent samples with the scores on the ATLG serving as the dependent variable and rural or urban upbringing serving as the independent variable. A significant difference was found between urban and rural students' attitudes with rural students (M = 58.3878, SD = 15.32629) having more positive attitudes towards gays and lesbians than urban students (M = 66.0392, SD = 16.89838), (t = -4.738, df = 398, p = 0.000).

The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -7.65146; CI: -10.82 to -4.47) was moderate (eta squared = 0.04).

5.9   NATIONALITY

Do heterosexual attitudes towards gays and lesbians differ between South African and foreign students?

Table 16: Means and standard deviations for South African and Other student responses on the ATLG

Nationality	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
South African	397	62.2197	16.46999
Other	4	69.2500	27.57263

The means and standard deviations of the South African and other responses are reported in Table 16.

Due to the small sample size of non-South African participants (N = 4), and despite the fact that there is no minimum group size for a t-test, the homogeneity of variance assumption was violated. Consequently it was decided that it would be untenable to proceed with the t-test and as a result, this variable could not be tested for its significance.

5.10   SUMMARY

In sum, the results of the research revealed that Fort Hare students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians are influenced by specific variables. In terms of the attributes of tolerance or intolerance that were measured, it was found that gender, race, religiosity, religious attendance and rural or urban upbringing do influence these students' attitudes significantly.

However, age did not have an effect on attitudes towards gays and lesbians in the present study. The significance of the differences in attitudes in terms of nationality was not able to be tested due to the small sample size of foreign students.

The following chapter provides a discussion of these results in respect of the variables that were measured.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

6.1   **INTRODUCTION**

As gay and lesbian issues are being brought into the open with research increasingly focusing on sexual minorities, as well as gay and lesbian rights being recognised in many countries, public attitudes appear to be growing more accepting. Despite these changes, continual social intolerance against LGBT people is still prevalent in South Africa and can have profoundly negative effects on the targets of discrimination (Graziano, 2004; Muholi, 2004; Wells & Polders, 2006). This highlights a need for the South African education system to teach students about homophobia and unfair prejudice against sexual orientation. Specifically, the demographic variables of gender, religiosity, religious attendance, race, and urban and rural upbringing which have been shown to influence attitudes in this study, need to be considered as areas to target.

The present study expands on previous research that was discussed in the literature review. The results of the study will be discussed in view of these previous findings in terms of the biographical variables that were measured.

The overall means for the students' attitudes tended towards acceptance of lesbians and gay men, but the different groups showed varying degrees of acceptance or non-acceptance

In terms of the biographical variables measured, the results showed significant differences in the students' attitude scores on the ATLG for gender, race, religiosity, commitment to religious

practice, and urban versus rural upbringing. However, there was no significant difference between the two age groups of the students' attitudes. The influence of nationality on attitudes towards gays and lesbians could not be measured. A detailed discussion of these results follows.

6.2   **GENDER**

Although the present study showed that the overall means for both males and females tended towards acceptance, the male scores were significantly more negative than the female scores. These findings are consistent with those of previous studies that examined gender differences in attitudes toward gays and lesbians (e.g. Herek, 2004; Herek & Capitanio, 1999; Herek, 1986a; Hopwood & Connors, 2002; Lim, 2002; Meaney & Rye, 2010). Several authors have put forth their explanations for gender differences in attitudes towards homosexuality.

A few studies have compared the relationship between the process of informal socialisation and the development of attitudes towards homosexuality (e.g. Calzo & Ward, 2009). These studies have examined the messages that young people are given about homosexuality during their formative years. A person's gender is seen as a central feature of adolescent identity, bringing with it the societal expectations related to sex roles. In this regard, Calzo and Ward (2009) found that men received less positive messages from informal sources than did women about homosexuality.

Woodford et al. (2012) suggest that male students' negative attitudes may be a reflection of their privileged status in society. They speculate that females, on the other hand, are likely to be more accepting and supportive of gays and lesbians since they are also more likely to face

the types of oppression and prejudices that these minorities experience. Herek's (1986a) theory on homophobia describes this privileged status of masculinity as an achieved but insecure one. Heterosexuality is seen from this perspective as a culturally constructed identity which has been affected and threatened by the emergence of gay identity. Homophobia, thus, serves as a defence against losing this privileged status.

Bem's (1981) Gender Schema Theory explains how society has sex-typed individuals into strict heterosexual prototypes of male and female attributes and behaviours. Violations of these heterosexual gender schemas are enough to call into question the individual's adequacy as a man or a woman.

According to social role theory (Bem, 1981) inferences about presumed homosexuality are influenced by beliefs associated with gender. Research has shown that respondents associate men who are described as having female traits or who occupy female roles, with homosexuality. On the other hand, women who are described as having male characteristics are not as likely to be viewed as lesbians (Lim, 2002). This tendency to view males more harshly for violating gender roles than women can explain the existence of gender differences in attitudes towards gays and lesbians.

These gender based attitudes towards homosexuality can also be explained in terms of gender-role violations. Gender-role beliefs cannot be separated from attitudes toward homosexuality, according to Kite (cited in Meaney & Rye, 2010). Kite theorises that extreme gender-role rigidity comprises part of a more complex personality trait known as the authoritarian personality (cited in Meaney & Rye, 2010). People with authoritarian

personalities are more likely to hold prejudicial attitudes. Rejection of homosexuality can thus be seen as a result of rigid constructions of gender which manifest as a defence of this highly valued gender-role identity. On the other hand, maintenance of gender identity appears to be less vital for women.

These gender-role beliefs become more complex against the wider racial and post-colonial context of South African culture. During Apartheid, authoritarianism, sexism and patriarchy were characteristic of the dominant culture, and these values are to a great extent, still held in much of South African society today (Leatt & Hendricks, 2005). Apartheid served to oppress marginalised groups such as non-whites, women and homosexuals. Today, in post-colonial South Africa, a return to traditional and cultural values serves to reinforce this gender regime that constitutes heterosexuality as normative and thereby strengthening the existing male hegemony (Gunkel, 2010).

6.3   AGE

The present study found no significant differences between the two age groups (18-22; versus 23 and older) in terms of their attitudes towards gays and lesbians. The fact that the sample comprised of first year psychology students, implies that the majority were relatively young. Therefore, the lack of significant differences in the two groups could be due to the sample comprising students mostly in the under 30 age group. Previous studies generally show that older people tend to exhibit more intolerance than do younger people (Herek, 1988; Keleher & Smith, 2012). Had the biographical question pertaining to age divided the group into a more distinct age category such as under 30 and over 30, the present study may have yielded more significant results.

However, since it can generally be assumed that the majority of first year students are relatively young, and the fact that the results indicated that most of the participants held comparatively positive attitudes, it appears that younger students do in fact have more positive attitudes towards gays and lesbians. This assumption must however, be viewed with caution, since the statistical results were not significant.

6.4   RACE

As with gender, race or ethnicity have also been shown to influence heterosexuals' attitudes towards gays and lesbians. In the present study, black participants exhibited more negative attitudes toward gays and lesbians than their white and coloured peers.

Several studies have shown that attitudes towards gays and lesbians may develop from an early age (Bos, Picavet & Sandfort, 2012; Calzo & Ward, 2009). Bos, et al (2012) collected data from children in eight Dutch elementary schools and found that those from non-Western ethnic backgrounds reported more negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. These results were found to be partly due to perceived pressure from parents to behave in accordance with their gender. In their study on the influence of informal socialisation practices on 745 undergraduates at a large Midwestern university in the United States of America, Calzo and Ward (2009) found that black participants were less likely to receive positive messages than other races about homosexuality. Childhood therefore seems to be a critical period for the development of prejudice and appears to be related to gender-role beliefs. Children from ethnic minorities tend to feel more pressured to conform to traditional gender norms (Bos et al., 2012). Corby, Hodges, and Perry (2007) explain this in terms of culture.

In non-Western, collectivistic cultures, group conformity is stronger than in Western, individualistic cultures. Triandis (1990) summarises the differences as follows:

In individualist cultures, most people's social behavior is largely determined by personal goals that overlap only slightly with the goals of collectives such as the family, the work group, the tribe, political allies, co-religionists, fellow countrymen and the state. When a conflict arises between personal and group goals, it is considered acceptable for the individual to place personal goals ahead of collective goals. By contrast, in collectivist cultures social behavior is determined largely by goals shared with some collective, and if there is a conflict between personal and collective goals, it is considered socially desirable to place collective goals ahead of personal goals (p.42)

Whitley, Childs and Collins (2011) explain a racial difference in attitudes in terms of social identity which relates to the belief that homosexuality is incompatible with a black ethnic identity. From this perspective, same sex attractions are seen as a "white man's disease" (p.300). Whitley et al cite a study by Negy and Eisenman (2011) that found that increased socialisation in black American culture resulted in increased intolerance toward gay and lesbian people among black college students.

Given the unique history and circumstances surrounding race in South Africa, the explanation of why black participants have more negative attitudes appears to be more complex. In South Africa race is framed by our Apartheid heritage in terms of categorising and stigmatising certain groups.

Against the background of segregation and discrimination towards black people, these results appear to be the reactions of a previous societal out-group towards members of another out-group.

Possible explanations within the South African context are proposed by Gunkel (2010) and Leatt and Hendricks (2005). According to Gunkel (2010) black peoples' negative attitudes are the result of an emergence of a decolonised, heterosexual African identity as a means of protecting the postcolonial community from Western influences (2010). Leatt and Hendricks (2005) argue that African homophobic claims to tradition are seeking to reaffirm the virility of African culture, in particular its masculinity.

This still begs the question as to why the coloured participants in the study held significantly positive attitudes towards gays and lesbians. Coloured populations were also subjected to racial exclusion during Apartheid, but occupied an ambiguous position within the racial hierarchy of Apartheid. This in-between position has traditionally resulted in coloured people subverting the racial and sexual boundaries in various ways (Gevisser & Cameron, 1995). A salient example of this is the history of "moffie life" in the Western Cape during apartheid and may explain why homosexuality was and still is tolerated among coloured communities. Chetty (cited in Gevisser & Cameron, 1995) discusses how an openly gay homosexual commonly known as a "moffie" led the renowned Coon Carnival every year by "mocking and subverting the conventions of gender and sexuality" (p.28). Gevisser and Cameron (1995) suggest that alternate sexualities are likely to be more tolerated in a "hybrid, Creole society like that of the Coloureds than in supposedly coherent societies with strong patriarchal mythologies and traditions like those constructed by the African and Afrikaner nationalist movements in South Africa" (p.28).

6.5   RELIGIOSITY AND COMMITMENT TO RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Throughout the world, studies measuring heterosexual attitudes towards gays and lesbians in terms of religion have consistently shown that participants who are more religious are more likely to hold negative attitudes. This has been shown in Australia (Hopwood & Connors, 2002); America (Newmanxy, 2002; Schutte & Battle, 2004; Wolff et al., 2012); Great Britain (Ellis et al., 2003); and South Africa (Arndt & De Bruin, 2006; Mwaba, 2009; Nicholas & Durrheim, 1995). The findings from the present investigation are consistent with those of the previous studies. Regular church attendance has also been previously associated with homophobia (Hopwood & Connors, 2002; Schlub & Martsolf, 1999).

From these and previous studies, it appears therefore that religious people are more likely to be homophobic. Whilst South Africa's constitution has been instrumental in many organisations becoming more accepting and supportive of gay and lesbian rights, religions and religious institutions have largely been unsupportive. This poses the question as to why this may be so. Does religion make people homophobic, or does religion attract people who are more fundamental or right wing authoritarian which has been shown to be connected to homophobia (Hunsberger, 1996)?

These findings can be partially explained by earlier research on discrimination in general (Allport & Ross, 1967; Batson, 1971). Allport and Ross (1967) classify religious orientation as either extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic religious orientation is where religion is used to gain security, comfort, social standing and support. In other words, it serves a purpose for the individual. Intrinsic religious orientation refers to an individual who uses religion for personal and individual reasons.

Batson's (1971) three factor model of discrimination also classifies religious orientation according to its function for the individual. His three factors include Religion as Means, where the person will use religion as a means to a particular end. Religion as End refers to religion as being seen as an end in itself, whereas Religion as Quest is where the individual will view religion as a way to reach truth.

More recent studies (Besen & Zicklen, 2007; Tsang, 2007) have focused on gay and lesbian discrimination in terms of Batson (1971) and Allport and Ross' (1967) models. Tsang (2007) found that intrinsic religious orientation was found to be related to implicit sexual prejudice towards gays and lesbians; whereas quest and extrinsic religious orientation was shown to be connected to more positive attitudes. Both right wing authoritarianism and intrinsic religious orientation was linked to negative attitudes towards homosexuality. Right wing authoritarianism was found to be related to self-report of prejudice whereas intrinsic religious orientation was related to more automatic negative attitudes. Tsang (2007) ascribed these findings to intrinsic orientation possibly being linked to greater involvement with religious institutions where the individual has internalised teachings by churches that may denounce homosexuality. She suggests that quest and extrinsic religious orientation are more associated with independence from religious doctrine.

This is consistent with the current findings that showed that those participants who described themselves as very religious and always attending church had more negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians than their less religious peers or those who did not attend church or attended less often. Thus negative attitudes may be explained in terms of internalised religious

doctrine due to frequent church attendance, particularly with regards to an intrinsic religious orientation.

A vast majority (86 per cent) of South Africans consider themselves to be religious, with 93 per cent of these being Christians (Pillay et al, 2006). Christians generally view homosexuality to be a sin (Pillay et al, 2006). Developing countries such as South Africa have also been shown to be more negative in their attitudes towards same-sex practices in terms of religion according to the findings of the 1998 International Social Survey Programme module on religion (Pillay et al, 2006). Here, 78 per cent of South Africans rated same-sex practices as "always wrong".

Moreover, in recent years, conservative, evangelical Christianity has prospered in Southern Africa, with these religious leaders being very outspoken in denouncing homosexuality (Pickett, 2009). This climate of intolerance by many churches may also have influenced the more religious participants' negative attitudes.

6.6   RURAL AND URBAN UPBRINGING

The results of the South African Social Attitudes Survey (Pillay et al., 2006) found that the predominantly rural Eastern Cape population reflected negative attitudes towards same sex practices. It was therefore expected that the results of the present study would be similar to these findings. However, this was not so, in that the rural students had significantly more positive attitudes towards gays and lesbians than their urban peers.

These findings can be partially explained by Alden and Parker's (2005) study of gender role ideology, homophobia and hate crimes. Here negative attitudes and hate crimes against

homosexuals were shown to be more likely to occur in urban areas where there is more gender equality, since this context makes proving one's masculinity more important when other avenues to the hegemonic ideal may be blocked. Green, Strolovitch, Wong, and Bailey (2001), proposed a strong link between anti-gay hate crimes and the population density of gay households. Thus, the higher the concentration of gay and lesbian households in a geographical area, the higher the incidence of homophobia and homosexual victimisation is likely to be. Alden and Parker (2005) found that geographical distribution of hate incidents towards homosexuality coincided with areas that were more densely populated by gay and lesbian households as well as areas that supported gay civil rights. This finding could explain the current results in terms of urban student attitudes being more negative than rural attitudes. Urban students are more likely to encounter gay and lesbian populations due to higher numbers of gay people living in urban areas. This together with current gay and lesbian constitutionally entrenched equal rights serves to make this population more visible and thus more vulnerable. This notion may seem to contradict the findings by Herek and Glunt (1993) that exposure to homosexuals has a positive effect on attitudes. However, Gunkel (2010) proposes that implementation of gay and lesbian rights serves to increase gay visibility and reinforces the homosexual/heterosexual binary divisions which inadvertently marginalises sexual minorities.

6.7   NATIONALITY

Due to the small sample size of foreign students (N = 4) as opposed to the South African students (N = 397), calculating the significance of the difference between the groups was found to be untenable.

6.8   SUMMARY

Although it appears that societal attitudes towards gays and lesbians are slowly becoming more accepting, certain demographic characteristics continue to exert a negative influence on heterosexuals' attitudes in this regard. The biographical variables that showed significant influences on heterosexual student attitudes were gender, race, religiosity, commitment to religious practice, and urban or rural upbringing.

CHAPTER 7

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1   INTRODUCTION

It is necessary to understand the results of the present study in the light of its limitations and to suggest directions for further research and interventions.

7.2   LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, the limitations will be discussed in terms of the sample. The sample comprised first year psychology students from the University of Fort Hare East London Campus. The results are thus, more specific to this particular population and do not include attitudes of students studying other courses or from other universities. Caution must therefore be used in generalising the results of this study to the general population. However, further research on psychology students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians would be of benefit since this population will be likely to provide mental health services to sexual minorities.

Additionally, due to practical constraints, only students from the East London campus were used in the sample. Initially, it was hoped that students from the Alice campus could be included in the sample since it is renowned for attracting many students from other African countries. This had a detrimental impact on the expectations of the research and the results in terms of nationality, where the small sample size of foreign students inhibited any significant interpretations. In the light of the literature review with specific reference to nationality, the current trend of seeing homosexuality as un-African, warrants more research to be conducted in this field.

Specifically, South African attitudes should be measured against other African attitudes. These findings may show what the impact of legislation, promoting gay and lesbian rights and those criminalising homosexuality, have on societal attitudes towards gays and lesbians in African countries.

In terms of race, the present study only succeeded in measuring the attitudes of black, white and coloured respondents. Future research should aim to include more Indian/Asian respondents in their samples so as to establish the attitudes of all the ethnic groups in South Africa. Since coloured people are also historically disadvantaged but showed more positive attitudes in this study, it would be of value to further investigate their higher levels of acceptance than their black contemporaries. Research of this nature may assist us in recognising differing social supports and in understanding the social structures of the different groups.

As already mentioned previously, the two age groups used in this sample were possibly too similar to yield significant results. Further studies that compare different age groups may be of value for the South African context.

A further limitation inherent in the current study is that the sample only included undergraduate students. Research by Lambert et al (2006) has shown that higher education is related to more positive views towards gays and lesbians. Future studies can include postgraduate and doctoral students in order to test for this variable.

It is interesting to note that of the original sample of 472 students, 67 indicated that they were gay, lesbian or bisexual. Findings by Herek and Glunt (1993) show strong support for the idea that exposure to homosexual individuals has a positive effect on heterosexuals' attitudes. The tendency towards acceptance in this study may be due to the fact that these students are in daily contact with gay, lesbian and bisexual peers. Future studies should focus on contact between heterosexual and gay students as an influencing factor on attitudes.

A second point of critique of the present study lies in its quantitative nature. Whilst the results were able to indicate in which way attitudes towards gays and lesbians are influenced, and were able to use a large sample, it must be noted that the research relates to human qualities. This method of measuring attitudes, accordingly, fails to take into account the subjective nuances of human attitudes. It is therefore recommended that further research should focus on personal narratives of heterosexual students' attitudes in a more qualitative manner. Personal accounts from heterosexual students would provide rich data into the influence of the various attributes of intolerance highlighted in this study.

Despite the limitations of this study, it has made some contributions and opened up possibilities for future research in the field. The current study has emphasised how certain biographical characteristics and personal values may influence students' attitudes towards their gay and lesbian peers. Moreover, while the present research contributed towards breaking the silence of gay and lesbian issues within an Eastern Cape university setting, it is recommended that more initiatives be implemented to continue to generate pro-gay discourses within these contexts. Attitude change is a cumulative process that results in repeated exposure to consistent and credible information about gays and lesbians (Tucker & Potocky-Tripodi, 2006).

Findings by Meaney and Rye (2009) highlight the importance of structured intervention programmes to address attitudes towards homosexuality in university settings. Compared to a control group of introductory psychology students, they found participants to be less homophobic and erotophobic after the homonegativity awareness workshop. Similar workshops could be implemented into the university curriculum in order to help reduce prejudice and discrimination towards homosexuals.

Interventions that openly promote contact between sexual minorities and heterosexual students are also recommended within the university setting. This has been shown to be effective as evidenced by a meta-analysis conducted by Pettigrew and Tropp (cited in Meaney & Rye, 2009) where face-to-face contact with lesbian, gay or bisexual out-groups created positive change in heterosexual students' attitudes. Research by Sakalh and Ugurlu (2002) also revealed that exposure to and contact with homosexuals resulted in more positive attitudes.

Woodford et al. (2012) make the following recommendations in terms of improving attitudes towards gay males and lesbians:

- Educational programmes that can be included into first year seminars that help to give factual information and dispel myths about homosexuality. Butler and Astbury (2003) add that these programmes should be inclusive of the existing curriculum to engender as sense of equality for gay and lesbian students;
- Intergroup dialogue programmes between heterosexual and LGB students;
- Since faculty and staff play a pivotal role in socialising students, the onus rests on them to create a co-operative learning environment that takes sexual diversity into account;

- Educational institutions should support initiatives that will enable gay and lesbian students to develop friendships with their heterosexual peers; and

- Speaker panels and guest presentations by gays and lesbians

Butler and Astbury (2003) propose several interventions within the South African school context which can be extended to the university environment. These include normalising gay and lesbian issues within the educational setting, establishing support groups for sexual minorities, and adopting a zero tolerance stance towards homophobia and prejudice where appropriate actions should be taken against perpetrators.

To summarise, it is suggested that the University of Fort Hare incorporate into their curriculum awareness and educational programmes that help to increase contact, communication and sensitivity to sexual diversity. These programmes should be aimed at putting particular emphasis on dispelling myths related to homosexuality in terms of the demographic variables explored in this study. For example, the belief that homosexuality is un-African can be challenged through including information into the curriculum that provides historical evidence of same sex practices in Africa. Likewise, addressing stereotypes related to race, religion and gender as influencing attitudes towards sexual minorities also need to be included in these programmes. Additionally, the university should be transparent about their support for gay and lesbian populations by providing support groups and openly taking a stand against homophobia.

Lastly, it is recommended that this type of research be expanded beyond the university context to include a variety of populations and education levels. For example, future studies could focus on the classroom setting so as to assess and address attitudes towards gay males and lesbians as a form of early intervention and prevention of homophobia.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 **SUMMARY**

This research investigated heterosexual students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians in an Eastern Cape university. The study was conducted as a survey that was presented to undergraduate Psychology students at the East London Campus of the University of Fort Hare. A final sample of 401 heterosexual students completed the survey. Although similar studies have been piloted in other South African educational institutions, no such studies could be found in the Eastern Cape.

The findings of the present study found the University of Fort Hare climate to be somewhat positive towards gays and lesbians. Despite the fact that attitudes were generally positive, many students still held negative attitudes, with the results revealing that specific demographic groups were found to be less tolerant than others. The results of this study suggest that certain biographical characteristics in heterosexual students are useful in predicting negative attitudes towards homosexuals. Male participants were found to be more negative in their attitudes than female participants; black students were more negative than white and coloured students; and students who were more religious and attended church more often were also more likely to have negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians. Additionally, urban students held more negative attitudes than their rural peers, but age was not found to be a predictor of attitudes in the present study. Due to the fact that the number of respondents from other countries was disproportionately low, the influence of nationality could not be ascertained in terms of attitudes towards gays and lesbians.

8.2   CONCLUSIONS

Societal views about marginalised minorities are usually slow to evolve. In spite of South Africa's progressive politics, gay and lesbian rights are generally not supported by most members of our society and negative attitudes have persisted. Simply changing a country's legislation does not guarantee immediate attitudinal changes in society. Kok (2010) argues that the impact of legislation is limited and takes time to reach all of its stated or ostensible goals. Rosenberg (cited in Kok, 2010) has the following to say about the influence of law on societal attitudes:

As anyone who has ever debated issues of racial or gender equality can attest, opinions on such issues are often deeply held. It is naïve to expect an institution seen as distant and unfamiliar, shrouded in mystery, and using arcane language and procedures to change people's views (p.73).

South Africa's socio-cultural and political history provides some insights into the underlying attitudes related to sexual minorities in our country. Within the history of racial and sexual inequalities, and despite changes in legislation, the social context continues to leave gays and lesbians disadvantaged (Graziano, 2004; Mkhize, Reddy & Moletsane, 2010; Muholi, 2004; Wells & Polders, 2006). This study presents a challenge to expand empirical investigation into prejudice and discrimination against sexual minorities so as to find solutions to reconciling societal attitudes with current legislation.

The findings of this study show that there are fairly consistent predictors of students' attitudes concerning gays and lesbians. This information can help us to clarify areas to target

for improvement in the campus climate for gay and lesbian communities. The task of transforming the campus climate to a more accepting one is an on-going institutional goal. Addressing the recommendations outlined in this study, will undoubtedly help to achieve this result.

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APPENDIX I

Biographical questionnaire

Biographical questionnaire

Kindly answer all the questions by indicating the relevant number in the square provided.

1. Please indicate your sex:

Male	Female
1	2

2. Please indicate your sexual orientation:

Heterosexual	Lesbian/homosexual	bisexual
1	2	3

3. Please indicate your race:

Black	white	Indian/Asian	Coloured
1	2	3	4

4. Please indicate your nationality:

South African	Other
1	2

5. Please indicate your age:

18 – 22	23 and older
1	2

6. How religious are you?

Very	Somewhat	Not at all
1	2	3

7. How often do you attend church?

Always	Sometimes	Never
1	2	3

8. Please indicate where you grew up:

Urban area	Rural Area
1	2

APPENDIX II

Biographical questionnaire

Attitudes towards Lesbians and Gay

Men Scale (ATLG)

Appendix II

THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS LESBIANS AND GAY MEN SCALE

1. Lesbians just can't fit into our society.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

2. A woman's homosexuality should not be a cause for job discrimination in any situation.*

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

3. Female homosexuality is detrimental to society because it breaks down the natural divisions

    between the sexes.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

4. Legislation should prohibit lesbian behaviour.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

5. Female homosexuality is a sin.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

6. The growing number of lesbians indicates a decline in South African morals.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

7. Female homosexuality in itself is no problem, but what society makes of it can be a problem.*

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

8. Female homosexuality is a threat to many of our basic social institutions.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

9. Female homosexuality is an inferior form of sexuality.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

10. Lesbians are sick.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

11. Male homosexual couples should be allowed to adopt children the same as heterosexual couples.*

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

12. I think male homosexuals are disgusting.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

13. Male homosexuals should not be allowed to teach school.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

14. Male homosexuality is a perversion.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

15. Just as in other species, male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in human men.*

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

16. If a man has homosexual feelings, he should do everything he can to overcome them.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

17. I would not be too upset if I learned that my son was a homosexual.*

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

18. Homosexual behaviour between two men is just plain wrong.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

19. The idea of male homosexual marriages seems ridiculous to me.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

20. Male homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned.*

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

A 5-point response scale is used. The first 10 items make up the attitudes towards lesbians (ATL) subscale and the following 10 items make up the attitudes toward gay men (ATG) subscale. The total ATLG score is calculated by adding the scores on the two subscales. Scoring is done by adding numerical values (1= strongly agree, 5= strongly disagree). Items 2, 7, 11, 15, 17 and 20 are reversed scored. Total scale scores can range from 20 (extremely negative attitudes) to 100 (extremely positive attitudes).