

**ATTITUDES OF FIRST ENTERING STUDENTS TOWARDS SAME-SEX
RELATIONSHIPS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the mini-dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Masters in Clinical psychology and the attitudes of first entering students towards same-sex relationships at the University of Limpopo, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University: that is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Malatji LC

Date

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ABSTRACT

The South African constitution makes provision for the rights of gays and lesbians, and has legalized same-sex relationships. However, many people, including students in same-sex relationships continue to be harassed and maltreated. The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of first entering students towards same-sex relationships at the University of Limpopo. A sample of 100 students (first entering students= 50, final level students = 50; with ages ranging from eighteen to forty five years), with a total number of twenty five (25) students drawn each of the four faculties at the university were selected using a convenience sampling method. Data was collected using the Homophobia Scale comprising of 25 close-ended questions which focus on behavioural, affective and cognitive attitudes towards gays and lesbians. Data were analysed using nominal data analysis and interpreted using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software. The study results revealed that fifty two percent (52%) of first entering students at the University of Limpopo have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships with seventy four percent (74%) of first-entering students having no knowledge regarding same-sex relationships. Seventy three percent (73%) of participants behave negatively towards people in same-sex relationships. The study is concluded by recommending that more similar studies that include larger sample of students from different universities and different racial backgrounds be conducted. The results of the study have implications for the University of Limpopo in when it comes to understanding and promoting knowledge about same-sex relationships.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The subject of same-sex or non-heterosexual relationships and the practice thereof seem to evoke a variety of reactions from different people. Despite South Africa being a society that is thought to be progressing in the acceptance of differences regarding sexual preferences, many young people seem to maintain uncomfortable and confused attitudes towards non-heterosexual lifestyles (Johnson & Greeley, 2007). These attitudes lead to discrimination and maltreatment against people in same-sex relationships. In South Africa, people in same-sex relationships are often harassed and discriminated against on daily basis. Prejudice and discrimination against people engaged in same-sex relationships are often assumed to stem from religious teaching, as some institutionalised religions reject full acceptance of same-sex relationships (Das & Horton, 2012). This negative treatment causes people in same-sex relationships to struggle socially, and to suffer emotionally, especially within the tertiary academic institution.

First entering students come to the campus with views and judgment of what is appropriate or inappropriate sexuality. It is assumed that first entering students' attitudes are a reflection of the larger society's stereotypical ideas on sexuality. Attitudes of students towards same-sex relationships vary greatly and are often shaped by their backgrounds and limited life exposure (Johnson & Greeley, 2007). It therefore, appears that attending a higher institution gives students an opportunity to be exposed and to experience life differently. Societal values, especially as determined by religion, are important factors related to the formation of attitudes and stereotypes about specific groups (Gray, Kramer, McGeheen, Thomas & Greiner, 1996). Gray et al., (1996), further state that specifically, homophobic attitudes may result from societal values and religious factors. The social stigma attached to same-sex relationships may give rise to discrimination and maltreatment of gays and lesbians in the form of homophobia.

Some challenges faced by people in same-sex relationships at the university include among others, problems such as performing poorly academically, and suicide attempts (Gladding, 2000).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Even though the South African constitution gives way for rights of gays and lesbians, and has legalised same-sex relationships, many students in same-sex relationships continue to be harassed and maltreated. The attitude of first-entering students of the University of Limpopo towards same-sex relationships is not known. It is hypothesised that many first entering students at the University of Limpopo are unfamiliar with the diverse community and lifestyle of the campus. Therefore, the question that needs to be addressed is the following: What are the attitudes of first-entering students of the University of Limpopo towards same-sex relationships? The current study sought to help in addressing this question by examining the attitudes of first entering students towards same-sex relationships at the University of Limpopo.

1.3 Operational definition of concepts

- **Attitude:** Attitude can be regarded as a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event (Ajzen, 2005). Attitude can also refer to a summary evaluation of an object of thought, which encompasses affective, behavioural and cognitive responses (Bohner Wanke, 2002). Affective responses involves a person's feelings / emotions about the attitude object, behavioural responses- refers to the way the attitude we have influences how we act or behave. On the other hand, cognitive responses entail a person's belief/ knowledge about an attitude object.
- **First entering students:** First entering students refer to students who have completed high school and are doing their first year at a tertiary institution.

- **Same-sex relationship:** Same-sex relationship refers to romantic relationship between people of the same-sex. The term is normally associated with homosexual people. In their essential psychological respect, these relationships are regarded as equivalent to opposite-sex relationships (Von Krafft-ebing, 1983).

1.4 Purpose of the study

1.4.1 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to explore attitudes of first entering students towards same-sex relationships.

1.4.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

- To examine the attitudes of first entering students toward same-sex relationships
- To determine the level of knowledge of first entering students towards same-sex relationships
- To examine the behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships

1.4.3 Hypotheses

- First entering students have negative attitudes toward same-sex relationships
- First entering students have little knowledge about same-sex relationships
- First entering students behave negatively towards people in same-sex relationships

1.4.4 Research questions

The study explored the following research questions:

- What are the attitudes of first entering students towards same-sex relationships?
- What is the level of knowledge of first entering students towards same-sex relationship?
- What is the behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships?

1.5 Significance of the study

It is important to bring into awareness the existing prejudice and discrimination towards people in same-sex relationships at the University of Limpopo. It seems that the stereotypes and stigmas still exist and exacerbate negative attitudes, making life difficult and unbearable for gay and lesbian students on campus.

Emerging findings from this study may assist to refine the university policy into protecting gays and lesbians and also bring rise to same-sex relationship awareness campaign such as the gay pride parade.

1.6 Organisation of the dissertation

In Chapter 1, the background to the study and the statement of the problem, together with operational definition of concepts were presented. The purpose of the study and the hypotheses as well as the significance of the study were also presented. In Chapter 2, literature review pertaining to same-sex relationships is provided. The impact of attitudes, common reactions and attitudes people have towards same-sex relationships as well as coping mechanisms employed by people in same-sex relationships are discussed. The theoretical framework that was employed in this study is also presented. Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology employed in this study. In this regard, the chapter covers a presentation on the relevant aspects that include the research design, sampling, data collection and data analysis. The ethical considerations that guided the researcher are also highlighted. In Chapter 4, the findings of the study are presented. In Chapter 5, the results of the study are discussed in context of existing literature and the purpose of the study. In Chapter 6, the summary, recommendations, as well as the limitations of the study, are presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a review of the literature on same-sex relationships, with special focus on attitudes towards same-sex relationships will be presented. In this regard, the impact of attitudes, common reactions and attitudes people have towards same-sex relationships as well as coping mechanisms employed by people in same-sex relationships will be discussed. The theoretical framework employed in this study will also be discussed.

2.1.1 What is a same-sex relationship?

A same-sex relation is a relationship between persons of the same sex and can take many forms, ranging from romantic and sexual, to non-romantic homosocially-close relationships. The term same-sex relationship is not strictly related to the sexual orientation of the participants, as people in the bisexual, homosexual or heterosexual spectra may participate in same-sex relationships ('Same-Sex Relationships', n.d.). The types of relationships vary from one couple to the next. As in heterosexual relationships, some same-sex relationships are meant to be temporary, casual or anonymous sex. Other relationships are more permanent, being in committed relationship with one another and not having sexual relationships with anyone else. Some are open relationships, while committed to each other, allow themselves and their partner to have relationships with others. Other couples may be in secret, whether because of family upbringing, religion, pressure from friends/family, and other reasons ('Same-Sex Relationships', n.d.).

The concept of a permanent "sexual orientation" is a major reason for today's widespread acceptance of same-sex relationships. There is no test, no procedure, experimental or otherwise, that can determine one's sexual orientation. The only means of understanding sexual orientation is through self-declaration. But, being gay, lesbian, or bisexual means different things to different people. Some define their sexual orientation by their behavior or attractions or fantasies, or some combination

of each dimension. To most people, sexual orientation is a stable part of themselves and central to their identity, while others find their sexual orientation to be “a more fluid identity” (Lehrman, 2005). Sexual orientation is a person’s underlying sexual preference. It is a consistent pattern of sexual arousal towards a person of the same sex/ opposite gender, which encompasses fantasy, conscious attractions, emotional and romantic feelings as well as sexual behaviour (Ngcobo, 2007).

Sexual orientation consists of three components: namely, desire, behaviour and identity, which may or may not be congruent in an individual. The presence of erotic desire for someone of the same or other biological sex does not imply the concurrent existence of any other characteristics in that individual. Thus, for example, a woman may engage in homosexual behaviour, demonstrate typical feminine gender roles characteristics, be married to a man, and experience a heterosexual identity, or a man may have homosexual desires, have sex only with women and show gender role nonconformity (Herek, 2000).

Homosexuality encompasses a variety of phenomena related to same-sex sexual orientation. Although definitions of the term often focus mainly on sexual acts and attractions between persons of the same biological sex, homosexuality also refers to patterns of same-sex romantic and emotional bonding, identities and communities based on same-sex desires and relationships, and shared culture created by those communities (Herek, 2000).

Another aspect of homosexuality is the development of an identity or sense of self that is defined in terms of one’s homosexual attractions, behaviour, and relationships. People who have developed such as identity typically refer to themselves as gay or lesbian. People arrive at a homosexual identity through various developmental routes. Many first become aware of their homosexual attractions in early adolescence, have a sexual experience with someone of the same-gender, and subsequently enter an on going romantic relationship and develop a gay or lesbian identity. Others, however, form such as identity without ever engaging in homosexual behaviours or having a same-sex romantic relationship (Herek, 2000).

A lot of psychologists claim that the causation of sexual orientation has significant implications for the social status of homosexuality. Social psychology research on

attribution theory has demonstrated that people tend to evaluate the acceptability of a person's behavior based on the controllability of that behavior. Because individuals have no control over the biological inheritance, according to this approach, they should not be held responsible for being gay or lesbian if it is biologically determined (Barnecka, Karp, & Lollie, 2015). Those who believe homosexuality to be genetic or biological rather than learned or freely chosen are more likely to have positive attitudes towards same-sex relationships and be more supportive of gay and lesbian civil rights (Mason & Barr, 2006).

2.2 Legalisation on same-sex relationships in South Africa

In South Africa, same-sex relationships have been legalised since the year 2006. However, it appears that people in same-sex relationships are still experiencing one or other form of discrimination. Women who are perceived to be lesbian in South Africa are in danger of being physically and emotionally violated using the so-called 'corrective rape' (Mkhize, Bennet, Reddy & Moletsane, 2010).

In many African communities, same-sex relationships are frowned upon as these are perceived as un-African (Brown, 2012). Machirori (2009) states that same-sex relationships in Africa are commonly regarded as an unnatural disease, imported to the continent by the colonialists. A common line of thinking in some of the African communities (South Africa included), is that same-sex relationships, bisexuality and any deviation from heterosexuality is "un-African". This belief is based on the idea that same-sex relationships were imported by whites (Brown, 2012). This belief is however contradicted by another view that seems to suggest that same-sex relationships in Africa are as old as African culture itself. Those with who hold this view present as evidence the fact that various African languages have words for "gay" and "lesbian", which points to a historical and traditional knowledge of the existence of these sexual orientations (Machirori, 2009). According to Divani (2011), colonialism did not introduce same-sex relationships to Africa. Pre-colonial Africa contained a range of approaches to sexual behaviour, including many which permitted same-sex relationships to exist without violating social norms. What colonialism introduced was a binary model of sexuality, and systems of

jurisprudence that identified and regulated sexual behaviour to conform to the norms of the coloniser.

Same-sex relationships (gays and lesbians) were classified as a type of mental disorder in the first Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (1952). It was designated, along with the other conditions labelled as sexual deviations, as a type of sociopathic personality disturbance, defined by the existence of certain behaviours and not by the presence of distress or dysfunction (Smelser&Balters, 2001). In the subsequent DSMs, things have since changed, as same-sex relationships are no longer classified as a disorder.

Today, South Africa is one of the few countries in the world to have embraced same-sex relationships in the legislation. According to Pickett (2009), in 1986, activists formed the Organisation for Lesbian and Gay Action (OLGA). This occurred in the same year in which same-sex relationships were removed entirely from the Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental disorders by the American Psychiatry Association. In 1994, leaders of more than two-dozen gay and lesbian groups in South Africa agreed to form the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE). This group worked to ensure that South Africa's post-apartheid constitution include sexual orientation as a protected status in its bill of rights. Acceptance of same-sex relationships in South Africa brought with it a number of movements such as the gay pride parade, which is a positive stance against discrimination and violence towards gays and lesbians, to promote their self-affirmation, dignity, equality, increase their visibility as a social group, build community, and celebrate sexual diversity and gender variance.

2.3 Attitudes towards same-sex relationships in the United States of America

A study by Schellenberg, Hirt and Sears (1999), found that attitudes toward gays and lesbians among college students vary as a function of faculty of enrolment and number of years spent at college. The results further suggest that these effects are more consistent for attitudes toward gay men than they are for attitudes toward lesbians. Although attitudes toward lesbians improved over time spent at college, they did not vary reliably as a function of students' faculty or gender. The study also

found that, by contrast, attitudes toward gay men were more positive among students registered in the faculties of arts or social sciences than they were for students in science or business. The reason for these differences in attitudes related to faculty affiliation were attributed to views held about traditional sex roles, with students who value traditional sex roles more likely to select programs in faculties of business or sciences, where political attitudes in general are likely to be relatively conservative (Schellenberg, Hirt & Sears, 1999). Moreover, improvements in attitudes toward gay men as a function of time spent at college were evident among male students but not among females. Attitudes toward gay men also differed as a function of students' gender, with male students having more negative attitudes than their female counterparts. Finally, attitudes toward gay men were more negative than attitudes toward lesbians.

Hate crimes against people in same-sex relationships is said to affect about 20% of gays and lesbians residing in the United States of America (USA) in a Sacramento area. Interestingly, more adult men (25%) than adult women (20%) had experienced discrimination because of their sexual orientation. A study conducted in a university community in the USA found that of the gay men questioned, 76% had experienced verbal abuse, 26% had been threatened with violence, 17% had their personal property damaged, most concealed their sexual orientation, and 42% had made specific life changes to avoid discrimination and harassment (Nel, 2008).

2.4 Attitudes towards same-sex relationships in Africa

In 2007, the International Gay and Lesbian Association (IGLA) conducted a global survey on the legal status of same-sex relationships and found that 40 of Africa's 53 countries had legislation that deemed same-sex relationships to be an illegal act. Also in countries such as Sudan, some parts of Nigeria and Somalia, gays and lesbians were said to be punished with death (Machirori, 2009).

One element of the prevalent discourse about same-sex desire in Africa is the idea that this is a Western import. African leaders seem intent on freeing Africa from what they tend to perceive as a dreadful Western disease. These sentiments have been legitimised by political leaders of countries such as Namibia, Zambia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Uganda. For example, President Robert Mugabe has

described individuals who engage in same-sex relations as worse than pigs and dogs (Machirori, 2009). In Uganda, the Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2014 outlaws same-sex relationships and makes provision for those found guilty to be convicted and imprisoned for up to seven years (Uganda, 2014).

2.5 Attitude towards same-sex relationships in South Africa

Despite the significant changes in contemporary South Africa, the lesbian youth is still faced with numerous challenges that affect their daily lives. They suffer at the hands of a homophobic society which believes that women have stepped out of line through challenging the hegemonic discourses stipulating that they have specific and distinct roles to play – that of wives, mothers, home makers and sexual partners to men. Because lesbians do not fit into this construct, their behaviour is socially and legally condemned for diverting from the “natural order” (Tati, 2009).

In a study by Tati (2009), it was found that the heterosexual community in South African institutions of higher learning is not as homophobic as some researchers have suggested. The personal narratives that were shared by the participants who were students at the University of the Western Cape suggested that they open to diverse identities and were non-judgemental. In most residences there are students who are out about their sexual identity and this kind of openness gave the participants a supportive social context and a social group that they can identify with. Due to the openness that the students in same-sex relationships have, they are even eager to understand and make sense of homosexual behaviours and interactions from the homosexual students' perspective (Tati, 2009). The students in same-sex relationships display a lot of understanding with regard to lesbianism as a phenomenon despite its perception as a deviation from heterosexual norms, roles and expectations. However, the participants indicated that coming out to their roommates was awkward and challenging, irrespective of the roommates' sexual identity.

According to Nel (2008), gays and lesbians are targets of general violence and crime. However, because they are stigmatised for their perceived sexual and/or gender 'deviance', gays and lesbians are also frequently discriminated against, through criminal acts, because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Sexual orientation-based hate crimes are extreme expressions of homophobia through criminal acts (such as rape, assault, or damage to property) committed against people, their property, or organisations because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. Violence against gays and lesbians motivated by sexual orientation-related bias is not an individual injury alone, but can be classified as a 'hate crime' that is part of a larger system of domination against gays and lesbians. With a South African study conducted in 1992 found that, while South Africans were less likely to experience verbal abuse and threats of violence than their American counterparts, they were more prone to be physically assaulted and substantially more often sexually assaulted (Nel, 2008).

In a study conducted by Mwaba (2006), it was found that many students hold negative beliefs and attitudes toward gays and lesbians and same-sex marriage. Up to 44% of the students were opposed to the idea that same-sex relationships should be socially acceptable in South Africa, as they considered it to be immoral. Only 41% believed that the government was right in granting equal rights to gays and lesbians. Up to 37% of the students did not believe that it was wrong to discriminate against gays and lesbians, with 46% indicating that people in same-sex relationships should be denied the right to adopt children. The idea of same-sex marriage seemed puzzling to most of the students, with up to 71% indicating that it was strange for people of the same-sex to get married.

2.6 Common attitudes and reactions towards same-sex relationships

2.6.1 Corrective rape

The term "corrective rape" stems from the prevalence of the crime in South Africa, where it is used to describe rape perpetrated by straight men against lesbian women in order to "correct" or "cure" their "unnatural" sexual orientation. The term is beginning to be used more broadly to include the rape of any member of a sexual minority in an effort to "correct" them. It is a reflection of South African social and cultural mores that gays and lesbians are viewed as unnatural, and in need of "curing." This is evidenced by the fact that the perpetrators of corrective rape are not the only ones who believe in its intended purpose. Other men, not involved in the crime, have said they understand why someone would commit corrective rape, while police often do not act in response to reports of corrective rape, threats or other

discriminatory acts against gays and lesbians (Brown, 2012). To many heterosexual males in South Africa lesbianism is an affront to their masculinity, their power, this belief results in widespread corrective rape.

Thorpe (2013) stated that the myth that lesbianism is wrong, or that violence is a legitimate means of indicating belief in this myth, has its roots in patriarchy and hetero-normativity. Patriarchy demarcates women's bodies and sexuality as male property, and hetero-normativity demarcates lesbianism as wrong. This myth may also have some grounds in the criminalisation of same-sex relationships under Apartheid. Lesbians in particular challenge hetero-normative male authority, and corrective rape is a response to this challenge.

Eudy Simelane was a footballer who played for the South Africa women's national football team and an LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and transgender) rights activist. She was raped and murdered in her hometown of KwaThema, Springs, Gauteng. Simelane's partially clothed body was found in a creek in KwaThema. She had been gang raped, beaten, and stabbed 25 times in the face, chest, and legs. She had been one of the first women to live openly as a lesbian in KwaThema. It was suggested that her murder was a hate crime committed against her because of her sexual orientation (The guardian, 2009). 24-year-old mother-of-two, Noxolo Nogwaza was murdered in KwaThema, Ekurhuleni. Nogwaza was found dead due to stoning and stabbing in an alley behind a grocery store. Friends believed she had been targeted because of her sexual orientation, making her a victim of so-called corrective rape (The star, 2012). Seeing corrective rape as merely a criminal act ignores the prejudice that is involved in the perpetration of these crimes. These crimes are committed with a particular motive – prejudice or hatred towards lesbian women on the grounds of their sexual orientation. Statements like “we will teach you a lesson”, or “show you how to be a real woman” indicate that these crimes are committed on this basis (Thorpe 2013).

2.6.2 Same-sex relationships viewed as a curse and a taboo

In a study conducted by Masase (2009), he found that the majority of Venda people believe that same-sex relationships are a taboo and will not speak about them in public. He also found that traditional leaders and church leaders do not tolerate gays

and lesbians in their churches or villages, as they believe it goes against Venda customs, morals, norms and values. They also believed that same-sex relationships are a curse and a taboo and they have no room in the Venda culture. Many people still hold the view that same-sex relationships are unnatural, perverse, a sin, or an import from the depraved western culture (Masase, 2009). In her study Cora (2011) state that God had a design for human sexuality, a specific intention that is the propagation of the species in a lifelong monogamous union between a man and a woman, it is only within this monogamous life union that sexual expression is legitimate, any form of sexual activity outside of this context is sin.

2.7 Factors causing negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships

Negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships frequently have an institutional origin. Members of religious organisations that perceive same-sex relationships to be sinful are more likely to show prejudice and to discriminate against same-sex relationships. Similarly, nations that outlaw same-sex relationships or stigmatise them are far more likely to have a homophobic population. Negative media stereotypes of gays and lesbians may also perpetuate negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships (Good Therapy, 2016).

Negative attitudes against same-sex relationships may correlate strongly with age, political affiliation, religion and education level. Young people with higher level of education, who are non-religious, who belong to liberal congregations with left-leaning political orientations are less likely to display negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships (Good Therapy, 2016).

2.7.1 Cultural beliefs

According to Blumeld (1992), negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships that stem from cultural beliefs include social standards and norms which dictate that being heterosexual is better than being lesbian, gay or bisexual and that everyone should be heterosexual. It has been assumed that being repulsed by the idea of intimate contact with a member of the same sex is instinctive. Societal censure of same-sex relationships is due to the feelings of aversion or disgust (Herek, 2000)

2.7.2 Religion

According to the Merriam-Webster's dictionary (1996), religion refers to a belief in and worship of God or the supernatural system of religions beliefs, attitudes and practices. According to Lipp (2016), religion as an institution has, in general, played a key role in the fuelling of negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships throughout society. Religious institutions propagate certain social norms and values concerning homosexuality, and many religions have negativity towards homosexuality to a certain degree, thus, religious people are expected to be less tolerant towards same-sex relationships than non-religious people. Hence, religion seems to suppress the gender gap between men and women, as women are integrated more within religious institutions, affecting their attitudes towards homosexuality negatively. Therefore, it is hypothesised that religion suppresses gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex relationships (Stoof, 2014).

The Christian tradition of condemning homosexuality can be displayed directly or indirectly. The first one consists of critique of morality. The second one involves different covert types of the moral condemnation like treating as unnatural someone's masculinity or femininity. Besides, this indirect way of condemnation appears also in non-believers who are often unaware of religious sources of their own attitudes (Barnecka, Karp, & Lollike, 2015).

People who are born into certain religious environments and grow up hearing unfavourable anti-gay messages may develop negative views about same-sex relationships. Young people and impressionable minds can internalise the notion that same-sex relationships are inferior, unnatural and deviant (Lipp, 2016).

According to Mason & Barr (2006), those attending church regularly might be more intolerant because they are more frequently exposed to antigay messages, and also because they tend to have more authoritarian personalities. People in an "intrinsic" religious orientation, that is, those who consider their faith to be an end in itself, and who try to live by it, are more prejudice towards same-sex relationships than those with an "extrinsic" orientation, that is, those who use religion as a means to an end (Mason & Barr 2006).

2.7.3 Education

Education has a socializing function and can contribute to the development of attitudes and values of students. It is suggested that educational systems enhance liberal attitudes, thus increasing support for equal rights. Higher tolerance could be the result of education teaching support for nonconformity. Education also enhances cognitive capabilities to evaluate new beliefs better (Stoof, 2014).

2.7.4 Gender

According to Mason and Barr (2006), gender is by far the most researched demographic variable influencing attitudes towards same-sex relationships. Gender can affect attitudes in two respects. First, there may be a difference in the attitudes of male and female heterosexuals towards same-sex relationships (differences related to the gender of the respondent). Second, there may be differences in the attitudes of the heterosexuals towards gay men and lesbians (differences related to the gender of the target).

In a study conducted by Arndt and DeBruin (2006), at the University of Johannesburg, both a respondent's gender as well as perceptions of the gender of participants in same-sex relationships was differential predictor of attitudes concerning same-sex relationships. From a gender-role belief system perspective, men hold more negative attitudes towards lesbians and especially gay men as they place higher values on female dependence, gender differentiation and heterosexuality. Because same-sex relationships are seen, in part, as rejection of traditional gender roles, homosexuality would present a stronger threat to the self-concept of individuals who are highly invested in traditional gender roles (Arndt & DeBruin, 2006).

Women have been found to have more positive attitudes towards same-sex relationships. This has been attributed to the fact that women are more empathetic, have a greater care-giving role, as well as their subjective experience of sexism (Arndt & DeBruin, 2006). Male and female heterosexuals with non-traditional gender role attitudes (for example, those who support the equal division of labour in the home) tend to exhibit more positive attitudes towards same-sex relationships (Mason & Barr, 2006).

2.8 Ways in which people in same-sex relationships cope with attitudes and reactions

2.8.1 Negative ways of coping

2.8.1.1 Substance abuse

Heterosexism can affect gays and lesbians by causing internalised homophobia, shame, and a negative self-concept. Some gays and lesbians may resort to substance abuse to cope with the negative feelings. The origins of this vulnerability lie in the negative messages lesbians and gays internalise, especially when they are young and during adolescence when many become aware of their stigmatised identity. The coming out period, for lesbians and gays of all ages, is a particularly vulnerable time. Substance use often begins in early adolescence when youth first experience conflict around their sexual orientation. It initially serves the functional purposes of (1) reducing the pain and anxiety of external conflicts and (2) reducing the internal inhibitions of same-sex feelings and behaviour. Prolonged substance abuse, however, only contributes to the youth's problems and magnifies suicidal feelings (Jordan, 2000).

Having got into the habit of using alcohol or drugs to cope during adolescence, some lesbians and gays continue to use it to deal with the pain and effects of everyday discrimination whilst those who are in the closet at work, or with their families or friends, use alcohol or drugs to deal with the mental stress this causes. After pretending to be heterosexual at work all day, many lesbians and gays drink to help them relax when they get home (Jordan, 2000). Sexual minority adolescents have the additional stress of coping with their sexual orientation in a society that is often homophobic and heterosexist. Thus, the origins of substance use and abuse in sexual minority teens may be linked with feeling marginalised by society, seeking relief for feelings of depression and isolation, or desiring alleviation of the chronic stress associated with being stigmatised both interpersonally and intrapersonally. Sexual minority adolescents may be the most vulnerable to gay-related stressors because that may be the time of life when people first begin to question their sexual orientation, and youth may be ill-equipped developmentally to handle the strain of being different (Jordan, 2000).

2.8.1.2 Hiding

Paradoxically, concealing one's stigma is often used as a coping strategy, aimed at avoiding negative consequences of stigma, but it is a coping strategy that can backfire and become stressful (Meyer, 2003). Gays and lesbians may conceal their sexual orientation in an effort to either protect themselves from real hurt (for example, being attacked, getting fired from a job) or from shame and guilt. Concealment of one's same-sex feelings is an important source of stress for gay men and lesbians. Gays and lesbians in such a position must constantly monitor their behaviour in all circumstances: how one dresses, speaks, walks and talks become constant source of possible discovery (Meyer, 2003).

One must limit one's friends, one's interests, and one's expression, for fear that one might be found guilty by association. The individual who must hide of necessity learns to interact on the basis of deceit governed by fear of discovery. Each successive act of deception, each moment of monitoring which is unconscious and automatic for others, serves to reinforce the belief in one's difference and inferiority (Meyer, 2003).

2.8.1.3 Denial

When gay children finally reach an age where sexual feelings begin to manifest themselves, and they realise their inherent desires differ from everyone else, denial also begins to grow (Steve, 2010). The impulses may be suppressed altogether as they age, or, if socially "inappropriate" physical contacts are made, the actions are stuffed to the back of the brain, as if nothing out of the ordinary had occurred. The person knows on some level that same-sex feelings and behaviour is present, but it is denied consciously by the ego to protect the person from believing he or she could be so culturally abhorrent (Steve, 2010). Some gays and lesbians simply deny that they are gay, try to lead a straight life, and may even get married and have a family. Many of the gays and lesbians who are in denial lead secret gay lives, or possibly worse, spend their lives feeling unfulfilled, lonely and unknown to everyone they love. Other gays and lesbians feel so strongly that they should not be gay, that they will repress their feelings and desires and eventually hate all gays and lesbians (Steve, 2010).

According to Drescher (2004), individuals in denial frequently can not acknowledge to themselves, let alone to others, their homoerotic feelings, attractions and fantasies. He further states that these individual's sexual orientation is so unacceptable that they keep it out of conscious awareness and it can not be integrated into their public persona. Consequently, these feelings must be dissociated from the self and hidden from other.

2.8.2 Positive ways of coping

Coping mechanisms are ways people use to cope, it is finding ways to help them safely let go of the stress that the experience of gain a greater understanding of the situation, in this case, their sexuality.

Lesbians and gays, who have come out and announced their sexual preferences, have usually challenged some of their internalised oppression and developed positive identities, this enables them to develop healthier methods of coping with homophobia.

2.8.2.1 Coming out

The phrase "coming out" is used to refer to several aspects of lesbian and gay persons' experiences: self-awareness of same-sex attractions; the telling of one or a few people about these attractions; widespread disclosure of same-sex attractions; and identification with the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community. Coming out represents more than just the disclosure of one's same-sex desire to others, it is a process of internal experience in which an individual's entire sense of identity is challenged, reformulated, and crystallised (Stein, 2001). Many people hesitate to come out because of the risks of meeting prejudice and discrimination. Some choose to keep their identity a secret; some choose to come out in limited circumstances; some decide to come out in very public ways (American Psychological Association, 2008).

Coming out is often an important psychological step for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. Research has shown that feeling positively about one's sexual orientation and integrating it into one's life fosters greater well-being and mental health. This integration often involves disclosing one's identity to others; it may also entail participating in the gay community. Being able to discuss one's sexual orientation

with others also increases the availability of social support, which is crucial to mental health and psychological well-being.

Like heterosexuals, lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people benefit from being able to share their lives with and receive support from family, friends, and acquaintances. Thus, it is not surprising that lesbians and gay men who feel they must conceal their sexual orientation report more frequent mental health concerns than do lesbians and gay men who are more open; they may even have more physical health problems (American Psychology Associations, 2008).

2.8.2.2 Forming support groups

Social support is a very important factor in helping gays and lesbians to cope. There is no clear causal direction in the relationship between social support and health. It is possible that "good social support promotes psychological well-being which in turn promotes good health", but it is also possible that those with good health find psychological adaptation easier, which then attracts a wider support. Some evidence exists that lack of good support precedes the onset of depression, although depression may then lead to changes in the quality of support. In sum, cyclical relationships may be operative (Whitcomb, 2013).

Socializing with other gays and lesbians provides the experience that the person is not alone in the world, and there are other people like him or her. A positive sense of self, indeed pride develops, and is strengthened by acceptance, validation, and support. Contact with positive gay or lesbian role models can play a big role in this stage. Support groups for gays and lesbians are designed to provide a safe environment for gay and lesbian students who wish to receive more information, support, and fellowship about their own sexual orientation. Such groups do not serve as a counselling or dating service; rather, they function as a support and education resource. They also provide safety and confidentiality to students who are struggling with their identity as gay, lesbian, or questioning or those who are experiencing harassment at school because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. These groups often provide one of the few safe spaces for students to express themselves. They provide a sense of community and a space for gay and lesbian students to build a social network where their identity is respected (Whitcomb, 2013).

2.8.2.3 Self-acceptance

Identity Acceptance means the person accepts themselves. The person attaches a positive connotation to their gay or lesbian identity and accepts rather than tolerates it. There is continuing and increased contact with the gay and lesbian culture. The task is to deal with inner tension of no longer subscribing to society's norm, attempt to bring congruence between private and public view of self (Helminiak, 2006). Gays and lesbians must accept same-sex erotic feelings as part of their own selves before they can be comfortable with themselves. Seemingly, before such self-acceptance is achieved, gays and lesbians are at some variance with themselves, so their self-esteem is debilitated. Routinely, men and women just beginning to deal with their sexual orientation say that they do not like themselves. Accordingly, self-acceptance must bring them an increased satisfaction and an increased self-esteem (Helminiak, 2006).

2.9 Effects of attitudes

Negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians include all kinds of abuse such as teasing, threats, harassment and assault. These victimization results in a number of effects, according to Aguinaldo (2008), gay men internalise fear or shame of their own sexuality, Internalised society's negative stigmas and stereotypes, and internalise feelings of rejection and shame. Gays and lesbians become stuck with these irrational fears and suffer from a perceived need to conceal important aspects of self, and a fear of prejudicial events and rejection. The notion of internalised homophobia, then suggests that gay men are psychologically damaged by a negative social environment. Internalised homophobia refers to the negative feelings that gays and lesbians have towards themselves as a result of prejudice and discrimination by heterosexuals. Internalised homophobia may include feelings of denial, shame or hatred of other gays and lesbians. Gay and lesbian adolescents are particularly prone to internalised homophobia and may, as a result, suffer from severe emotional problems.

Same-sex relationships are conceived as an impediment to achieving adolescent identity. In the absence of positive role models, many gays and lesbians find it difficult to develop a positive self-identity. For gays and lesbians, same-sex

relationship identity is a long and straining process and can create confusion, inner turmoil, and stress. Internalization of negative stereotypes of gays and lesbians creates a negative self-image and makes it difficult for youth to envision the future as healthy adults. As a result, gays and lesbians suffer from a range of health consequences. The stress caused by society compels gays and lesbians either to engage in unhealthy behaviours as a coping strategy or to succumb to the stress, which results in greater risk of diseases. Internalised homophobia may result in self-compromising behaviours such as depression and suicidality, drug and alcohol use, risky sexual practices, violence and victimization, homelessness and abandonment of educational goals.

A study by Swearer-Napolitano, Espelage & Vaillancourt(2008), revealed that students who were sexually questioning and those who identified as gays and lesbians, reported being teased about their sexual orientation, in comparison to heterosexual individuals. They also found greater drug and alcohol use among youth questioning and those attracted to their same-sex peers.

2.10 Theoretical framework: Gordon Allport's Contact Theory

The Contact Theory was proposed by Gordon Allport (1954). The theory maintains that majority group members' prejudice toward a minority group is reduced through interaction with members of the minority group. The contact theory assumes that under appropriate conditions, interpersonal contact is one of the most effective ways to reduce prejudice between majority and minority group member. If one has the opportunity to communicate with others, they are able to understand and appreciate different points of views involving their way of life. As a result of new appreciation and understanding, prejudice should diminish.

Allport specified four conditions for optimal intergroup contact, which are: equal group status within the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation and authority support. The first condition, which is equal status, implies that the members of the group should have similar backgrounds, qualities and characteristics. It further implies that differences in academic backgrounds, wealth, skills, or experiences should be minimised if these qualities will influence perceptions of prestige and rank

in the group. Equal status minimises the possibility of one group having advantage over the other, in order to balance the power (Forsyth, 2009).

The second condition is common goals. This condition implies that both groups must work together on a problem/ task and share this as a common goal, sometimes called a super ordinate goal, a goal that can be attained if the members of the groups work together by pooling their efforts and resources (Forsyth, 2009).

Intergroup cooperation is the third condition. This condition requires that both groups work together for their common goals, without competition. The final condition is authority support. This condition implies that both groups must acknowledge some authority that supports the contact and interactions between the groups. The contact should encourage.

The Contact Theory relates to the present study as the study aims to determine whether there would be a difference in attitudes towards same-sex relationships between first entering students and final year students. The contact theory assisted in formulating the hypothesis that contact between students in same-sex relationships and heterosexuals students will lead to a decreased in the prejudice against the gay and lesbian students, resulting in a new understanding and appreciation of their sexual orientation.

According to Mason & Barr (2006), contact increases acceptance of gay and lesbian people because interactions with gays and lesbians can challenge stereotypes and encourage the heterosexual person to think of gays and lesbians in a more individualised and personal way.

The Contact Theory has however been found to have some weakness. Social psychologists have argued that the optimal conditions required for prejudice reduction make the contact hypothesis inapplicable to the real world (Dixon, Durrheim&Tredoux, 2005). They further argued that even under ideal conditions, (that is, equal group status within the situation, common goals, inter-group cooperation, and the support of authorities, law or custom), contact might not result in the majority group making positive generalisations towards the minority group.

Contact fails to cure conflict when contact situations create anxiety for those who take part. Contact situations need to be long enough to allow this anxiety to

decrease and for members of the conflicting groups to feel comfortable with one another. Additionally, if the members of the two groups use this contact situation to trade insults, argue with each other, resort to physical violence, and discriminate against each other, then contact should not be expected to reduce conflict between groups.

Another weakness of the theory is the causal order. It is not clear whether those who have had prior contact with people from the prejudiced groups then have more positive attitudes or whether those who have more positive attitudes then have more contacts with group member (Essays, 2013).

2.11 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, a review of literature on same-sex relationships was presented. The impact of attitudes, common reactions and attitudes people have towards same-sex relationships as well as coping mechanisms employed by people in same-sex relationships were also discussed. The theoretical framework employed in this study was explained. In the next chapter, the research methodology that was followed in the present study will be presented.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with how the research was conducted. The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes of students towards same-sex relationships. The study will help bring awareness into attitudes experienced by students at the University of Limpopo.

3.2 Research design

The proposed research is quantitative in nature. Quantitative research gathers data in numerical form that can be put into categories or in rank order. The two variables that were measured in the study are the dependent as well as the independent variable. The independent variable is the variable that is varied or manipulated by the researcher. It is the presumed causes. In this study, the independent variables were first entering students. The dependent variable is the response that is measured. It is the presumed effect. In this study, the dependent variable was attitudes towards same-sex relationships.

3.3 Sampling

The sample of the research was 100 students, 50 were first entering students, and the other 50 were final level students. All participants were drawn from the University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus) with ages ranging from eighteen to forty five years. The University of Limpopo (Turfloop campus) has four faculties, namely Humanities, Management & Law, Sciences & Agriculture and Health Sciences. From each, faculty a sample of 25 participants was drawn.

The researcher used convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. Given the geographical parameters of the study (University of Limpopo), it was easier to conduct the study with groups from different faculties in order to get variety in the study.

3.4 Data collection

3.4.1 Data collection tools

Data was collected using the Homophobia Scale developed and validated by Wright, Adams and Bernat (1999), and comprising of 25 close-ended questions which focus on behavioural, affective and cognitive attitudes towards gays and lesbians. The scale was adopted to suit the purpose of the study. The Scale also comprised a section that contained basic demographic details consisting of age, gender, sexual orientation, level of study and faculty.

3.4.2 Data collection procedures

Permission was obtained from relevant University of Limpopo's authorities and the ethics committees. Permission was also sought from participating students. Students were randomly approached at their residences and asked to fill in the questionnaire. The reason for the study was explained to the participants who met the criteria. The participants were given an opportunity to ask any questions they had and these were all clarified. Confidentiality was also guaranteed to the participants. Thereafter, the participants signed the consent forms and were given the questionnaires to complete. Respondents were required to answer on a 5-point Likert scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The questionnaires were checked for accuracy by the researcher.

3.5 Data analysis

The researcher used nominal data analysis to analyse the data. Nominal scales are used for labelling variables, without any quantitative values. They are used to “name”, or label a series of values. Data was summarised and presented by making use of descriptive statistics. The results were presented using frequency tables and figures as they give a clear and coherent overall picture of the data. According to Bryman and Cramer (2009) the chi square (X^2) statistic is used to investigate whether distributions of categories variables differ from one another. In this study the statistical inference was used whereby the chi square test was employed to determine first entering students’ attitudes, knowledge and behaviour towards same-sex relationships against final year students. The data were interpreted using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software in order to manipulate the data collected and eventually prove or disprove then hypothesis using correlation in interpreting results.

3.6 Reliability of the scale

Reliability is concerned with the consistency of measures. An instrument that produces different scores every time it is used to measure an unchanging value has low reliability. It can not be depended upon to produce an accurate measure. On the other hand, an instrument that has high reliability is an instrument that always gives the same score when used to measure an unchanging value and can be trusted to give an accurate measure (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013).

Internal reliability is assured as internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) is reported for the measures used under table 1 and table 2. Each component was examined for internal reliability using the Cronbach Alpha. Values higher than 0.7 indicate good reliability. The results of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient were found to be higher than 0.7. This implies that the Homophobia Scale (Wright, Adams & Bernatt, 1999) has a good internal reliability.

3.7 Ethical considerations

3.7.1 Permission of the study

The researcher sought and obtained ethical clearance from the University of Limpopo's Research Ethics Committee before the study was undertaken.

3.7.2 Informed consent

The participants were be informed about the aim of the study and asked to give written consent before they could participate in the study (see Appendix C).

3.7.3 Confidentiality and privacy

Before participants agreed to partake in the study, they were assured that the data would be treated with confidentiality. The researcher also informed the participants that information from the questionnaire would not be disclosed to anyone except the supervisors.

3.7.4 Anonymity

Participants were assured that no names would be used when interpreting the data and that data would be published only in anonymised form.

3.7.5 Voluntary participation

The participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any stage they wish.

3.7.6 Respect for person's rights

The participants were assured of their right to dignity and integrity and that their rights would not be violated in any way.

3.8 Concluding remarks

This chapter discussed the research methodology used in the study. It explained the research design that was selected for the purpose of the study. It also clarified the

data collection and analysis procedures. The survey tools used to collect the information were described. Ethical considerations related to the study were also highlighted. The findings of the study are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on the attitudes of first entering students towards same-sex relationships.

4.2 Demographic factors

Demographic factors such as the representation of the respondents according to their age, gender and faculty is presented below using tables and figures.

4.2.1 Age of respondents

The researcher must know their respondents' age. In order to specify the topic of the research problem, we need to develop a research to which express the relationship between two or more variables.

Figure 1: Age of respondents

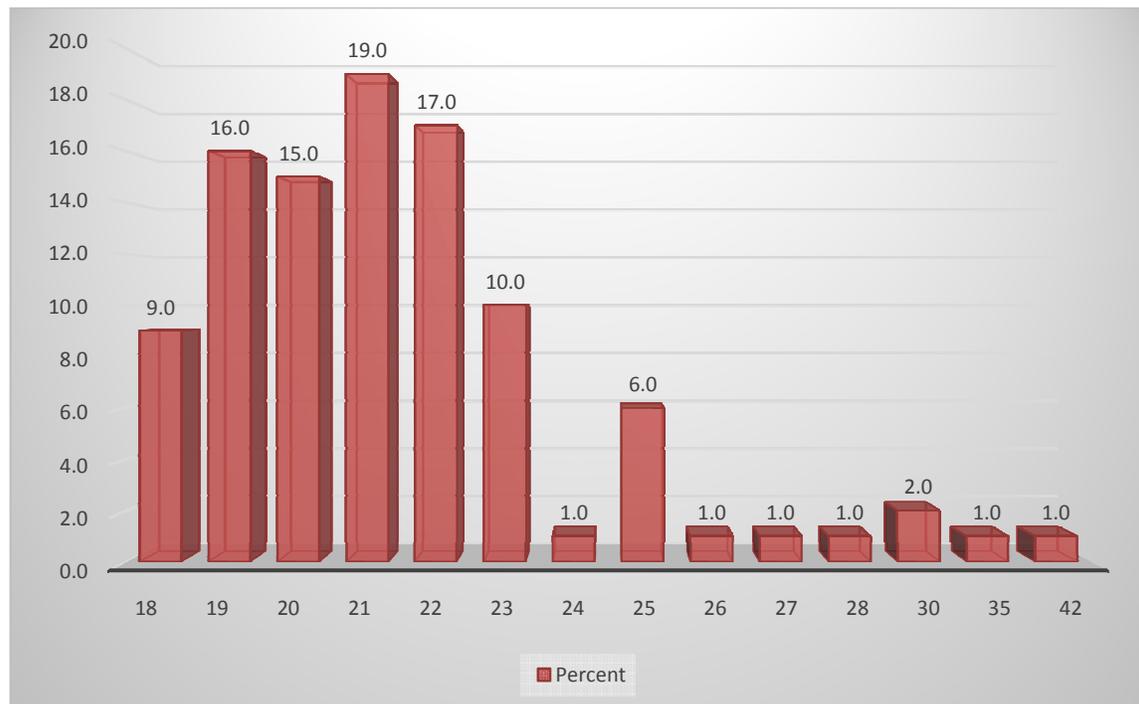


Figure 1 illustrates that the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 42 years, with a majority of respondents between ages 18 and 23 years. 86 % of the respondents were between ages 18 and 23, and 14% of the respondents were between ages 24 to 42. This made a total of 100 participants.

4.2.2 Gender

Gender refers to both sexes. In terms of sampling 'gender cannot be considered a variable – it is held constant – and “male” or “female” is the unit of analysis. It is very important for the researcher to know if their respondents are male or female (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005).

Figure 2: Gender

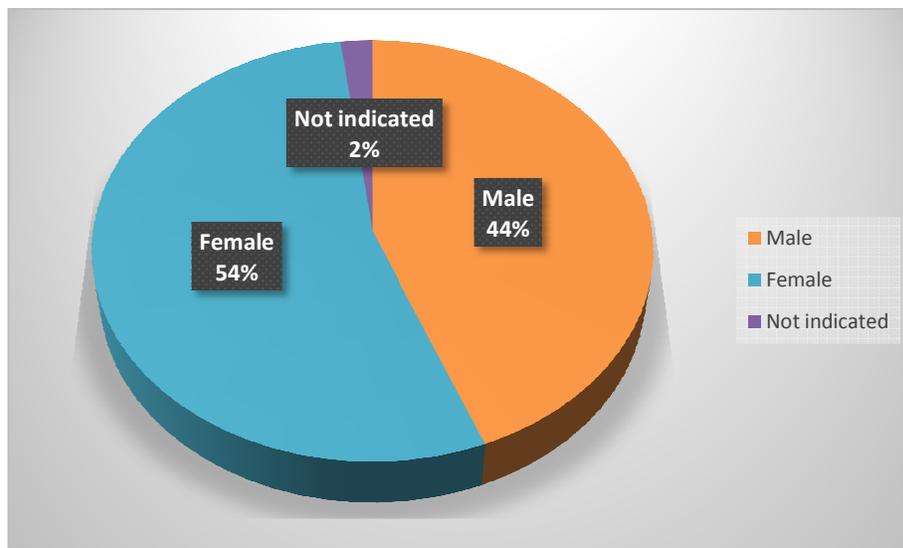


Figure 2 indicates that 44% of the participants were males and 54% were females, 2% of the participants did not indicate their gender.

4.2.3 Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation refers to the sex of those to whom one is sexually and romantically attracted. Categories of sexual orientation typically included attraction to members of one's own sex (gays and lesbians), attraction to members of the other

sex (heterosexual) and attraction to members of both sexes (American Psychology Association, 2011).

Figure 3: Sexual Orientation

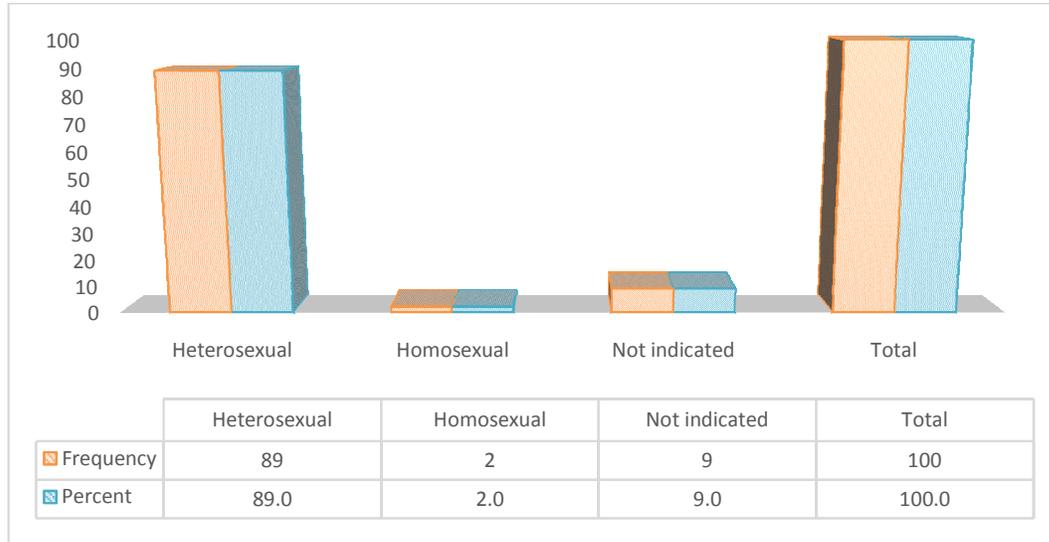


Figure 3 illustrates that 89% of the participants were of heterosexual sexual orientation, 2% were gays and lesbians and 9% did not indicate their sexual orientation.

4.2.4 Faculty

Faculty refers to a group of University departments concerned with a major division of knowledge. Having participants representative of the different faculties was important for the researcher in order to compare attitudes of the different faculties. It was important for the researcher to know the faculty of the participants in order to compare the attitudes of the students from the different faculties.

Figure 4: Faculty

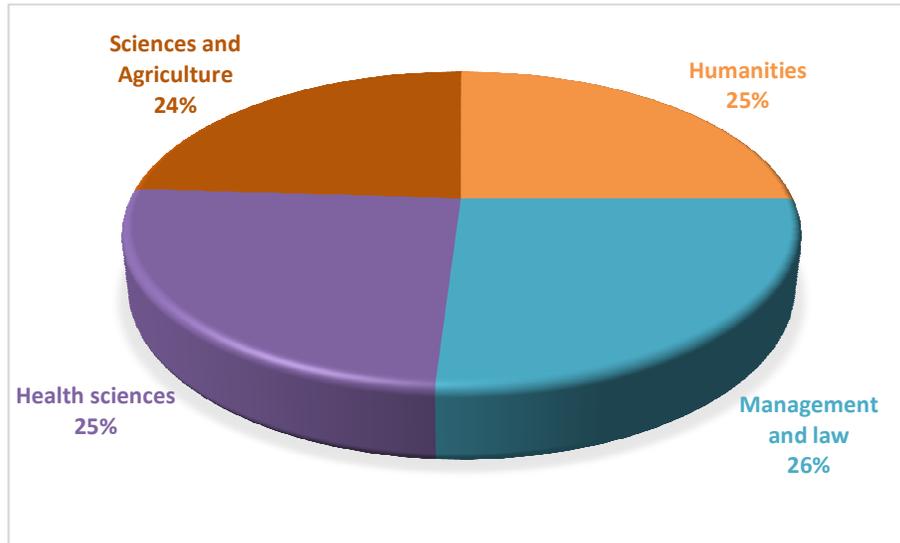


Figure 4 indicate that 25% of the participants were from the faculty of humanities, 26% from management and law, 25% from health sciences and 24% from science and agriculture.

4.3 Reliability of individual components

Reliability is concerned with the consistency of measures. An instrument that produces different scores every time it is used to measure an unchanging value has low reliability. It can not be dependent upon to produce an accurate measure. On the other hand, an instrument that always gives the same score when used to measure an unchanging value can be trusted to give an accurate measure and is said to have high reliability (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013).

4.3.1 Reliability test

The Cronbach's alpha indicator that was used to test for reliability indicates the overall reliability of a questionnaire. According to Field (2009:675), the values around 0.7 and 0.8 are good for reliability tests. Reliability tests performed yielded the results that are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Reliability test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.759	25

Each component (as categorised by documentation provided) was examined for internal reliability using the Cronbach Alpha. Values higher than 0.7 indicate good reliability.

Table 2: Cronbach alpha with deleted items

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Gay people make me nervous	61.90	172.908	.468	.740
Gay people deserve what they get	61.80	183.229	.211	.756
If I discover a friend was gay, I would end the friendship	61.84	172.160	.446	.741
I think homosexual people should not work with children	61.87	171.716	.500	.738
I make derogatory remarks about gay people	62.07	174.553	.516	.739
I enjoy the company of gay people	61.18	208.919	-.374	.794
I make derogatory remarks like "faggot" or "queer" to people I suspect are gay	62.26	170.011	.699	.730
It does not matter to me whether my friends are gay or straight	61.08	207.959	-.369	.792
It would upset me if I learned	61.69	172.217	.478	.739

that a close friend was homosexual				
It bothers me to see two homosexual people together in public	61.49	168.276	.574	.732
Homosexuality is immoral	61.18	171.454	.581	.735
I tease and make jokes about gay people	62.34	176.601	.453	.743
I feel that you can not trust a person who is homosexual	61.93	166.484	.668	.727
I fear homosexual persons will make advances towards me	61.93	176.693	.409	.745
I sometimes feel like damaging property of a homosexual person	62.79	177.608	.538	.741
I would hit a homosexual for coming on to me	62.10	172.885	.493	.739
I avoid gay individuals	61.56	163.784	.681	.724
When I see a gay person I think, "what a waste"	61.79	169.957	.567	.734
When I meet someone I try to find out if he/she is gay	62.32	174.616	.493	.740
I have rocky relationships with people that I suspect are gay	62.03	182.987	.266	.753
Homosexuality is acceptable to me	61.23	207.086	-.358	.790
Marriage between homosexual individuals is acceptable	61.26	208.360	-.389	.791
Organizations which promote gay rights are not necessary	61.68	181.081	.263	.753
I would feel uncomfortable	60.84	173.671	.413	.743

having a gay roommate				
Homosexual behaviour should not be against the law	60.97	205.685	-.348	.786

The results of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient were found to be higher than 0.7. This implies that the homophobia scale (Wright, Adams & Bernatt, 1999) has a good internal reliability.

4.3.2 The Homophobia Scale (Wright, Adams & Bernatt, 1999)

Table 3: The Homophobia scale with population distribution of answers in the study

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Gay people make me nervous	41	18	16	6	19
Gay people deserve what they get	37	18	20	9	16
If I discover a friend was gay, I would end the friendship	46	10	12	14	18
I think homosexual people should not work with children	40	17	16	9	18
I make derogatory remarks about gay people	34	25	25	7	9
I enjoy the company of gay people	29	9	17	11	34
I make derogatory remarks like "faggot" or "queer" to people I suspect are gay	45	21	23	5	6
It does not matter to me whether my friends are gay or straight	23	15	14	16	32
It would upset me if I learned that a close friend was homosexual	33	21	15	12	19

It bothers me to see two homosexual people together in public	29	19	18	12	22
Homosexuality is immoral	19	14	31	13	23
I tease and make jokes about gay people	52	17	13	10	8
I feel that you can not trust a person who is homosexual	39	20	19	8	14
I fear homosexual persons will make advances towards me	35	26	18	7	14
I sometimes feel like damaging property of a homosexual person	70	19	4	1	6
I would hit a homosexual for coming on to me	45	18	16	10	11
I avoid gay individuals	32	17	16	12	23
When I see a gay person I think, "what a waste"	35	20	17	12	16
When I meet someone I try to find out if he/she is gay	50	24	12	3	11
I have rocky relationships with people that I suspect are gay	35	28	19	9	9
Homosexuality is acceptable to me	25	15	22	15	23
Marriage between homosexual individuals is acceptable	28	8	23	18	23
Organizations which promote gay rights are not necessary	30	17	23	10	20
I would feel uncomfortable having a gay roommate	22	9	12	16	41
Homosexual behaviour should not be against the law	18	5	33	19	25

4.4 Attitude of the first entering students

The first objective of the study was to examine the attitudes of first entering students towards same-sex relationships; the graph below illustrates the results.

Figure 5: Attitude of the first entering students

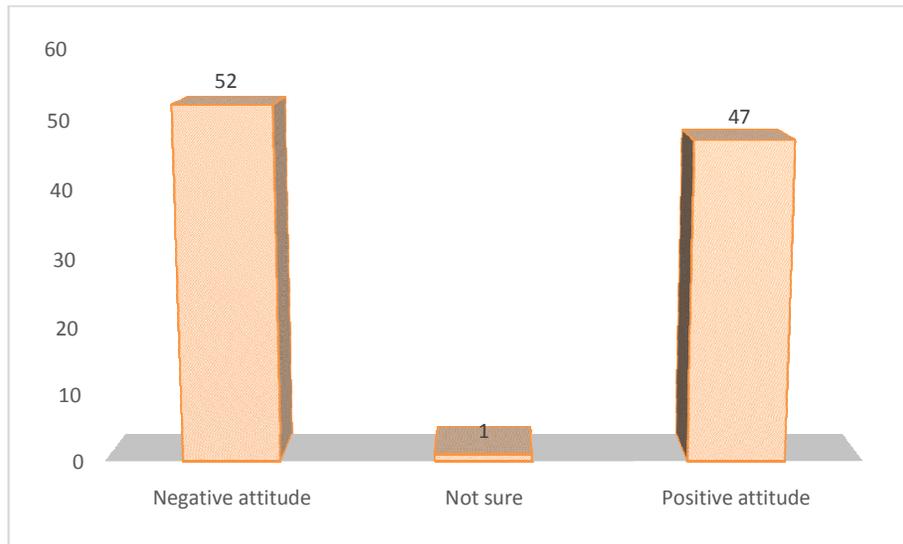


Figure 5 illustrates that 52% of first entering students at the University of Limpopo have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships, 47% have positive attitudes and 1% revealed that they are not sure.

4.4.1 Knowledge of the first entering students towards same-sex relationships

The second objective of the study was to determine the level of knowledge of first entering students towards same-sex relationships the graph below illustrates the results.

Figure 6: Knowledge of the first entering students towards same-sex relationships

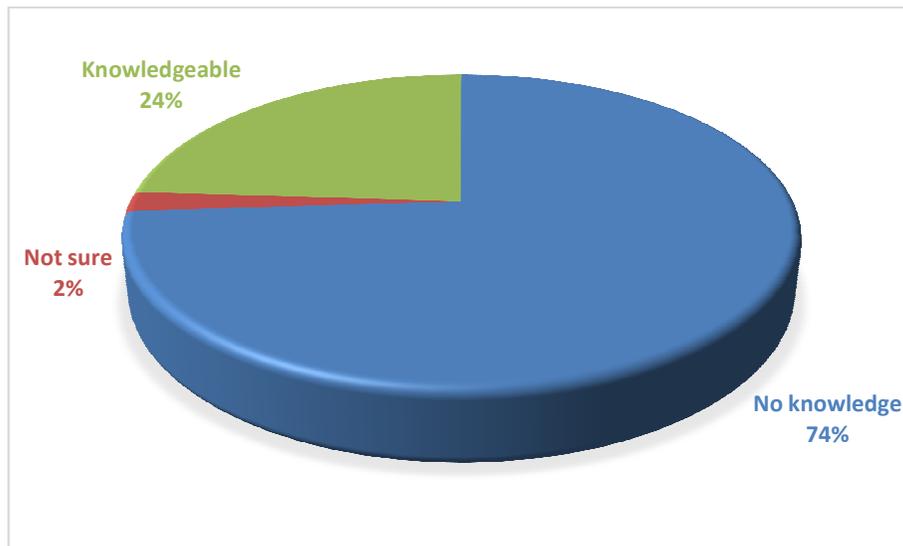


Figure 6 indicates that 74% of first-entering students have no knowledge regarding same-sex relationships, 24% indicated that they are knowledgeable and 2% indicated that they are not sure.

4.4.2 Behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships

The third objective of the study was to examine behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships; the graph below illustrates the results.

Figure 7: Behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships

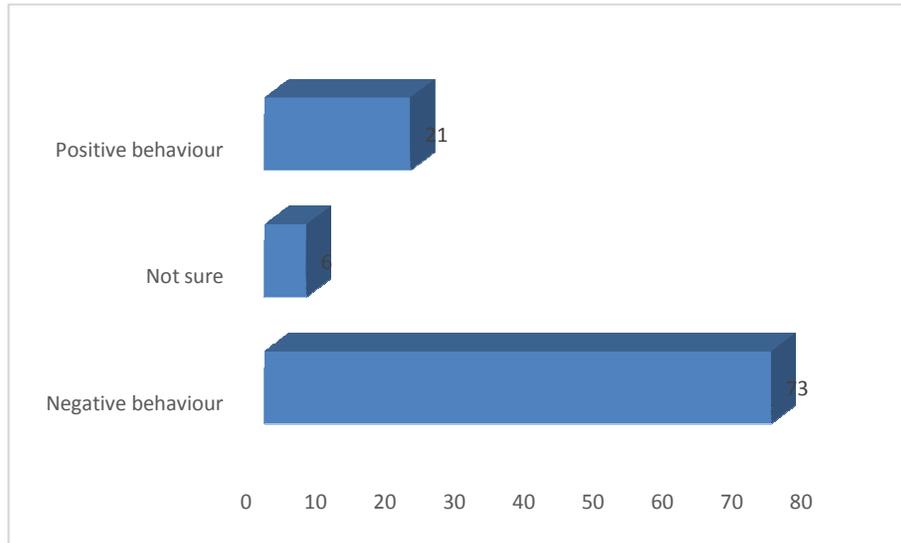


Figure 7 illustrate that 73% of participants behave negatively towards people in same-sex relationships, 21% behave positively and 6% are not sure.

4.5 Hypotheses

4.5.1 First entering students have negative attitudes toward same-sex relationships

Figure 8: First entering students have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships

		First entering students have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships			Total
		Negative attitude	Not sure	Positive attitude	
Level of study	Level 1	31 31.0%	0 0.0%	18 18.0%	49 49.0%
	Level 3	9 9.0%	0 0.0%	9 9.0%	18 18.0%

Level	12	1	20	33
4	12.0%	1.0%	20.0%	33.0%
Total	52	1	47	100
	52.0%	1.0%	47.0%	100.0%

The above figure 8 indicates that (31) 31% of first entering participants have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships, 9 (9%) of third level and 12 % of fourth level also indicated that they have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships. Figure 8 also illustrates that 18 (18%) of first entering participants have positive attitudes towards same-sex relationships, while 9 (9%) of third level and 20 (20%) of fourth level also indicated that they have positive attitudes towards same-sex relationships. Therefore, the first hypothesis proposing that first entering students have negative attitudes toward same-sex relationships was confirmed.

Figure 9: Chi- squared test for First entering students 'attitudes toward same-sex relationships

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.225 ^a	4	.124
Likelihood Ratio	7.497	4	.112
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.076	1	.024
N of Valid Cases	100		

Figure 9 indicates that P-value is equal to 0.124 using chi-squared test. This implies that level of study has impact on attitude towards same-sex relationships.

Figure 10: Attitudes of first entering students toward same-sex relationships

		Attitudes of first entering students toward same-sex relationships			Total
		Negative attitude	Not sure	Positive attitude	
Gender	Male	14	0	30	44
		14.3%	0.0%	30.6%	44.9%
	Female	37	1	16	54
		37.8%	1.0%	16.3%	55.1%
Total		51	1	46	98
		52.0%	1.0%	46.9%	100.0%

The above figure 10 indicates that out of 44 (44.9%) male participants, 14 (14.3%) have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships, while 30 (30.6%) participants had positive attitudes. It is further illustrated that out of 54 (55.1%) female participants, 37 (37.8%) have negative attitudes and 16 (16.3%) have positive attitudes towards same-sex relationships.

Figure 11: Chi- squared test for First entering students 'attitudes toward same-sex relationships

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.767 ^a	2	.001
Likelihood Ratio	15.450	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.766	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	98		

Figure 11 shows Chi- squared test for First entering students 'attitudes toward same-sex relationships. P=0.001 which is less than required P value 0.05 (5%) implies that there is no association between gender and attitude.

Figure 12: Attitudes of first entering students toward same-sex relationships

			Attitudes of first entering students toward same-sex relationships			Total
			Negative attitude	Not sure	Positive attitude	
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual		48	1	40	89
			52.7%	1.1%	44.0%	97.8%
	Gay/ Lesbian		2	0	0	2
			2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%
Total			50	1	40	91
			54.9%	1.1%	44.0%	100.0%

The above figure 12 indicates that out of 89 (97.8%) heterosexual participants, 48 (52.7%) indicated that they have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships, and 40 (44%) participants have positive attitudes. It also illustrates that the 2 (2.2%) gay/ lesbian participants both indicated that they have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships.

Figure 13: Chi-squared test for first entering students 'attitudes towards same-sex relationships

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.677 ^a	2	.432
Likelihood Ratio	2.432	2	.296
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.640	1	.200
N of Valid Cases	91		

Figure 13: Chi-squared test indicates that $P=0.432$ which is more than required P value 0.05 (5%). This implies that there is an association between a person's sexual orientation and their attitudes towards same-sex relationships.

Figure 14: Attitudes of first entering students toward same-sex relationships

			Attitudes of first entering students toward same-sex relationships			Total	
			Negative attitude	Not sure	Positive attitude		
Faculty	Humanities	Count	10	1	14	25	
		% of Total	10.0%	1.0%	14.0%	25.0%	
	Management and law	Count	16	0	10	26	
		% of Total	16.0%	0.0%	10.0%	26.0%	
	Health sciences	Count	11	0	14	25	
		% of Total	11.0%	0.0%	14.0%	25.0%	
	Sciences and Agriculture	Count	15	0	9	24	
		% of Total	15.0%	0.0%	9.0%	24.0%	
	Total		Count	52	1	47	100
			% of Total	52.0%	1.0%	47.0%	100.0%

Figure 14 indicates that out of 25 (25.0%) participants from faculty of humanities, 10 (10.0%) have negative attitudes and 14 (14.0%) have positive attitudes towards same-sex relationships. Out of 26 (26.0%) participants from faculty of management and law, 16 (16.0%) have negative attitudes and 10 (10.0%) have positive attitudes. 25 (25.0%) students were from faculty of health sciences and 11(11.0%) have negative attitudes, while 14 (14.0%) have positive attitudes. Lastly 24 (24.0%) were from the faculty of sciences and agriculture and 15 (15.0%) have negative attitudes, while 9 (9.0%) have positive attitudes.

Figure 15: Chi-squared test for first entering students 'attitudes towards same-sex relationships

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.690 ^a	6	.351
Likelihood Ratio	6.494	6	.370
Linear-by-Linear Association	.916	1	.338
N of Valid Cases	100		

Figure 15 indicates that P=0.351 which is more than required P value 0.05 (5%). This implies that there is an association between a person's faculty and their attitudes towards same-sex relationships.

4.5.2 First entering students have little knowledge about same-sex relationships

Figure 16: Knowledge of first entering students towards same-sex relationships

		Knowledge of first entering students towards same-sex relationships			Total
		No knowledge	Not sure	Knowledgeable	
Level of study	Level 1	35 35.0%	2 2.0%	12 12.0%	49 49.0%
	Level 3	14 14.0%	0 0.0%	4 4.0%	18 18.0%
	Level 4	25 25.0%	0 0.0%	8 8.0%	33 33.0%
Total		74 74.0%	2 2.0%	24 24.0%	100 100.0%

Figure 16 indicates that 35 (35%) of first entering participants have no knowledge of same-sex relationships, 14 (14%) of third level and 25 (25%) of fourth level also indicated that they have no knowledge towards same-sex relationships. Figure 16

further illustrates that 12 (12%) of first entering participants are knowledgeable about same-sex relationships, 4 (4%) of third level and 8 (8%) of fourth level are also knowledgeable about same-sex relationships. Therefore the second hypothesis suggesting that first entering students have little knowledge about same-sex relationships was confirmed.

Figure 17: Chi- squared test for First entering students 'knowledge toward same-sex relationships

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.203 ^a	4	.698
Likelihood Ratio	2.975	4	.562
Linear-by-Linear Association	.089	1	.766
N of Valid Cases	100		

Figure 17 indicates that P=0.698 which is more than required P value 0.05 (5%). This implies that there is an association between a person's level of study and their knowledge towards same-sex relationships.

Figure 18: Knowledge of first entering students towards same-sex relationships

		Knowledge of first entering students towards same-sex relationships			Total
		No knowledge	Not sure	Knowledgeable	
Gender	Male	28	2	14	44
		28.6%	2.0%	14.3%	44.9%
	Female	44	0	10	54
		44.9%	0.0%	10.2%	55.1%
Total		72	2	24	98
		73.5%	2.0%	24.5%	100.0%

Figure 18 indicates that of 44 (44.9%) male participants, 28 (28.6) have no knowledge about same-sex relationships, while 14 (14.3%) are knowledgeable. Of 54 (55.1%) female participants, 44 (44.9%) indicated that they have no knowledge about same-sex relationships, while 10 (10.2%) are knowledgeable.

Figure 19: Chi-squared test for first entering students 'knowledge towards same-sex relationships

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.257 ^a	2	.072
Likelihood Ratio	6.006	2	.050
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.147	1	.076
N of Valid Cases	98		

Using chi-squared test shows that $P=0.072$ which is greater than required P value 0.05 (5%) implies that there is an association between gender and knowledge.

Figure 20: Knowledge of first entering students towards same-sex relationships

			Knowledge of first entering students towards same-sex relationships			Total
			No knowledge	Not sure	Knowledgeable	
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	Count	65	2	22	89
		% of Total	71.4%	2.2%	24.2%	97.8%
	Gay/Lesbian	Count	2	0	0	2
		% of Total	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%

Total	Count	67	2	22	91
	% of Total	73.6%	2.2%	24.2%	100.0%

Figure 20 indicates that out of 89 (98.8%) heterosexual participants, 65 (71.4%) have no knowledge about same-sex relationships, while 22 (24.2%) are knowledgeable. The 2 (2.2%) gay/ lesbian participants indicated that they have no knowledge about same-sex relationships.

Figure 21: Chi- squared test for First entering students 'knowledge toward same-sex relationships

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.733 ^a	2	.693
Likelihood Ratio	1.241	2	.538
Linear-by-Linear Association	.705	1	.401
N of Valid Cases	91		

Figure 21 indicates that P=0.693 which is more than required P value 0.05 (5%). This implies that there is an association between a person's sexual orientation and their knowledge towards same-sex relationships.

Figure 22: Knowledge of first entering students towards same-sex relationships

		Knowledge of first entering students towards same-sex relationships			Total
		No knowledge	Not sure	Knowledgeable	
Faculty	Humanities	17	0	8	25
		17.0%	0.0%	8.0%	25.0%
	Management and law	16	1	9	26
		16.0%	1.0%	9.0%	26.0%
	Health sciences	19	1	5	25
		19.0%	1.0%	5.0%	25.0%

	Sciences and Agriculture	22	0	2	24
		22.0%	0.0%	2.0%	24.0%
Total		74	2	24	100
		74.0%	2.0%	24.0%	100.0%

Figure 22 illustrates that out of 25 (25.0%) participants from faculty of humanities, 17 (17.0%) have no knowledge about same-sex relationships and 8 (8.0%) are knowledgeable. Out of 26 (26.0%) participants from faculty of management and law, 16 (16.0%) indicated that they have no knowledge about same-sex relationships, while 9 (9.0%) indicated that they are knowledgeable. 25 (25.0%) students were from faculty of health sciences and 19 (19.0%) indicate that they have no knowledge about same-sex relationships, while 5 (5.0%) reported that they are knowledgeable. Out of 24 (24.0%) participants from the faculty of sciences and agriculture 22 (22.0%) indicated that they have no knowledge about same-sex relationships, while 2 (2.0%) indicated that they are knowledgeable.

Figure 23: Chi- squared test for First entering students 'knowledge toward same-sex relationships

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.125 ^a	6	.229
Likelihood Ratio	9.493	6	.148
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.864	1	.027
N of Valid Cases	100		

Figure 23 indicates that $P=0.229$ which is more than required P value 0.05 (5%). This implies that there is an association between a person's faculty and their knowledge towards same-sex relationships.

4.5.3 First entering students behave negatively towards people in same-sex relationships

Figure 24: Behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships

		Behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships			Total
		Negative behaviour	Not sure	Positive behaviour	
Level of study	Level 1	34 34.0%	3 3.0%	12 12.0%	49 49.0%
	Level 3	14 14.0%	1 1.0%	3 3.0%	18 18.0%
	Level 4	25 25.0%	2 2.0%	6 6.0%	33 33.0%
Total		73 73.0%	6 6.0%	21 21.0%	100 100.0%

Figure 24 illustrates that 34 (34%) of first entering participants behave negatively towards same-sex relationships, 14 (14%) third level and 25 (25%) fourth level also indicated that they behave negatively towards same-sex relationships. Figure 24 further illustrated that 12 (12%) of first entering participants behave positively towards same-sex relationships, while 3 (3%) of third level and 6 (6%) of fourth level also behave positively towards same-sex relationships. Therefore this illustrates that hypothesis 3, which states that first entering students behave negatively towards people in same-sex relationships, was confirmed.

Figure 25: Chi- squared test for First entering students 'behaviour toward same-sex relationships

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.756 ^a	4	.944
Likelihood Ratio	.759	4	.944
Linear-by-Linear Association	.613	1	.434
N of Valid Cases	100		

Figure 25 indicates that P=0.944 which is more than required P value 0.05 (5%). This implies that there is an association between a person's level of study and their behaviour towards same-sex relationships.

Figure 26: Behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships

		Behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships			Total
		Negative behaviour	Not sure	Positive behaviour	
Gender	Male	4	3	37	44
		4.1%	3.1%	37.8%	44.9%
	Female	17	3	34	54
		17.3%	3.1%	34.7%	55.1%
Total		21	6	71	98
		21.4%	6.1%	72.4%	100.0%

Figure 26 indicates that of 44 (44.9%) male participants, 4 (4.1%) behave negatively towards same-sex relationships, while 37 (37.8%) indicated that they behave positively. Out of 54 (55.1%) female participants, 17 (17.3%) indicated that they behave negatively towards same-sex relationships, while 34 (34.7%) behave positively.

Figure 27: Chi- squared test for First entering students 'behaviour toward same-sex relationships

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.229 ^a	2	.027
Likelihood Ratio	7.766	2	.021
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.699	1	.010
N of Valid Cases	98		

In figure 27, using chi-squared test shows that P=0.027 which is less than required P value 0.05 (5%) implies that there is no association between gender and behaviour.

Figure 28: Behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships

		Behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships			Total
		Negative behaviour	Not sure	Positive behaviour	
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	18	6	65	89
		19.8%	6.6%	71.4%	97.8%
	Gay/ Lesbian	1	0	1	2
		1.1%	0.0%	1.1%	2.2%
Total		19	6	66	91
		20.9%	6.6%	72.5%	100.0%

Figure 28 illustrates that of 89 (97.8%) heterosexual participants, 18 (19.8%) behave negatively towards same-sex relationships, while 65 (71.4%) behave positively. Out of 2 (2.2%) gay/ lesbian participants, 1 (1.1%) behave negatively towards same-sex relationships, while the other 1 (1.1%) reported behaving positively.

Figure 29: Chi- squared test for First entering students 'behaviour toward same-sex relationships

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.108 ^a	2	.575
Likelihood Ratio	1.027	2	.598
Linear-by-Linear Association	.808	1	.369
N of Valid Cases	91		

Figure 29 indicates that $P=0.575$ which is more than required P value 0.05 (5%). This implies that there is an association between a person's sexual orientation and their behaviour towards same-sex relationships.

Figure 30: Behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships

		Behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships			Total
		Negative behaviour	Not sure	Positive behaviour	
Faculty	Humanities	7	1	17	25
		7.0%	1.0%	17.0%	25.0%
	Management and law	5	2	19	26
		5.0%	2.0%	19.0%	26.0%
	Health sciences	6	0	19	25
		6.0%	0.0%	19.0%	25.0%
	Sciences and Agriculture	3	3	18	24
		3.0%	3.0%	18.0%	24.0%
Total		21	6	73	100
		21.0%	6.0%	73.0%	100.0%

Figure 30 illustrated that out of 25 (25.0%) participants from faculty of humanities, 7 (7.0%) behave negatively towards same-sex relationships and 17 (17.0%) behave positively. Out of 26 (26.0%) participants from faculty of management and law, 5 (5.0%) behave negatively towards same-sex relationships and 19 (19.0%) behave positively. 25 (25.0%) students were from faculty of health sciences and 6 (6.0%) indicated that they behave negatively towards same-sex relationships, while 19 (19.0%) have positive behaviour. Lastly 24 (24.0%) were from the faculty of sciences and agriculture and 3 (3.0%) reported negative behaviour, while 18 (18.0%) have positive behaviour.

Figure 31: Chi- squared test for First entering students 'behaviour toward same-sex relationships

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.165 ^a	6	.523
Likelihood Ratio	6.355	6	.385
Linear-by-Linear Association	.777	1	.378
N of Valid Cases	100		

In figure 31, using Chi-squared test indicated that $P=0.523$ which is more than required P value 0.05 (5%). This implies that there is an association between a person's faculty and their behaviour towards same-sex relationships.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of findings

5.1.1 Demographic details

The respondents provided demographic information that evaluated four socio-demographic characteristics, which were: age, gender, sexual orientation and faculty. The findings of the demographic information are presented in graphs and pie charts (See Figures 1 to 4). The respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 42 years. Eighty six percent (86%) of the respondents identified themselves as between the ages of 18 and 23, while the remaining fourteen percent (14%) identified themselves as between the ages 24 to 42. Fifty four percent (54%) of the respondents identified themselves as females, while forty four percent (44%) identified themselves as males. The remaining two percent (2%) did not indicate their gender. With regard to sexual orientation, eighty nine percent (89%) identified themselves as heterosexual, while two percent (2%) identified themselves as gay or lesbian. The remaining nine percent (9%) did not indicate their sexual orientation.

All four faculties of the University of Limpopo were represented in the study. Twenty five percent (25%) of the respondents identified themselves students in the Faculty of Humanities, whilst another twenty five percent (25%) came from the Faculty of Health Sciences. Faculty of Management and Law was represented by twenty six percent (26%) of the respondents, while the Faculty of Science and Agriculture respondents made up twenty four percent (24%) of the sample.

5.1.2 Findings on the attitudes of the students

The study aimed at investigating attitudes of first entering students towards same-sex relationships. This was broken down into three objectives using the Homophobic Scale that assesses the three aspects of attitude, knowledge and behaviour.

The first objective of the study was to examine the attitudes of first entering students toward same-sex relationships. The study revealed that fifty two percent (52%) of first entering students at the University of Limpopo have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships, with forty seven percent (47%) showing positive attitudes whilst one percent (1%) of the respondents indicated that they are not sure.

The second objective of the study was to determine the level of knowledge of first entering students towards same-sex relationships. The study revealed that seventy four percent (74%) of first-entering students have no knowledge regarding same-sex relationships, with twenty four percent (24%) indicating that they are knowledgeable, and two percent (2%) indicating that they are not sure.

The last objective of the study was to examine the behaviour of first entering students towards same-sex relationships. The results of the study revealed that seventy three percent (73%) of participants behave negatively towards people in same-sex relationships, with twenty one percent (21%) behaving positively and a further six percent (6%) indicating that they are not sure.

5.1.3 Findings with regard to hypotheses and demographic variables

The first hypothesis of the study was that first entering students have negative attitudes toward same-sex relationships. The results of the study supported the hypothesis as it revealed that first entering students have negative attitudes. It however revealed no association between gender and attitude. This implies that both males and female participants have similar negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships. A participant's faculty seemed to be a factor in their attitudes towards same-sex relationships. Participants from the Faculty of Management and Law were found to be more negative in terms of attitudes towards same-sex relationships, when compared to participants in other faculties.

Furthermore the study explored the difference in attitudes between first entering students and final level students. The results of the study revealed that final level students have more positive attitudes towards same-sex relationships when compared to first entering students. These results supported the contact theory which was the theoretical framework for the present study which states that direct

contact with a minority group (in this case, same-sex relationships) decreases stereotypes and negative feelings held against that group.

The second hypothesis of the research states that first entering students have little knowledge about same-sex relationships. The findings of the study supported this hypothesis. The study also revealed that there is no significant difference in a person's gender and their level of knowledge about same-sex relationships. The study also revealed an association between a participant's knowledge about same-sex relationships and their faculty. Participants from the Faculty of Sciences and Agriculture were found to have the least knowledge about same-sex relationships compared to participants from the other faculties.

The study also revealed that there is an impact on a person's knowledge regarding same-sex relationships and their level of study. It revealed that students in the final level of study have more knowledge about same-sex relationships, compared to first entering students.

The last hypothesis was that first entering students behave negatively towards same-sex relationships. The results of the study supported the hypothesis, it furthermore found that there was no correlation between the participant's gender and their behaviour towards same-sex relationships. An association between behaviour and faculty was also revealed from the study. Participant from the Faculty of Humanities were found to behave negatively towards same-sex relationships compared to participants from other faculties.

5.2 Discussion of results

The first hypothesis of the study was that first entering students have negative attitudes toward same-sex relationships. The results of the current study supported the hypothesis as it revealed that first entering students at the University of Limpopo have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships. The findings of this study corroborates the findings of Arndt and DeBruin (2006), that heterosexual students at the University of Gauteng have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships. Ncanana and Ige (2014) from University of Zululand had similar findings.

The second hypothesis of the research states that first entering students have little knowledge about same-sex relationships. The findings of the study supported this hypothesis. Student in the final year of University were found to have positive attitudes towards same-sex relationships. The impact that education has on attitudes towards same-sex relationships has been emphasised in many studies. According to Mason and Barr (2006), in general, education increases acceptance of same-sex relationships, that is, attitudes improve as a function of time spent in education. This study further states that education fosters liberal attitudes, gives individuals the ability to think critically, the opportunity to interact with a diverse range of people and a greater awareness of the negative effects of prejudice.

In a study conducted by Lambert, Ventura, Hall and Tolar (2006), they found that final year students were more open-minded in their attitudes towards same-sex relationships when compared to first year students. More education was linked with more positive views of, a willingness to extend rights to, and a willingness to interact with gay and lesbian individuals. According to Ben-Ari (1998), one of the ways to combat homophobia is education and socialization. This view would explain the reason why final year students were found to be more tolerant of same-sex relationships. In other words higher level education leads to more open-mindedness, empathic and tolerant towards other people. Socialization also lead to more tolerance of same-sex relationships as students in final year have spent more time at the University and have had the opportunity to interact with different cultures and lifestyles.

The last hypothesis was that first entering students behave negatively towards same-sex relationships. The results of the study supported the hypothesis. According to Herek (1984), anti-gay hate crimes (words or actions that are intended to harm or intimidate individuals because they are gay or lesbian), constitute a serious national problem. In national surveys, as many as 92% of lesbians and gay men reported that they have been the target of antigay verbal abuse or threats, and as many as 24% reported physical attacks because of their sexual orientation.

A study by Schoott-Ceccacci, Holland and Matthews (2009), found that there is a significant relationship between level of study and condemnation-tolerance attitudes towards LGBT community. The study results revealed that upper-level students

show evidence of more LGBT support than first or second year students. In a longitudinal study conducted by Lottes and Kuriloff (1994) between 1987 and 1991, participants scored 25% higher on measures of same-sex relationships tolerance (as well as other liberalism measures) in their senior college year than they had as first year students.

The current study findings noted that there is no correlation between a person's gender and their attitudes towards same-sex relationships. This was supported by Roberts and Reddy (2008), who stated that although a number of international studies have shown that men tend exhibit significantly more negative attitudes than women towards same-sex relationships, an examination of gender differences in South Africa data suggest that, in total, there is not a pronounced divergence.

Oti-Boadi, Agbakpe, and Dziwornu, (2014) conducted a study that was aimed to determine Ghanaian students' attitudes towards same-sex relationships from students in a private University. The study sought to determine differences in gender. The results were that one's gender does not determine their attitudes towards same-sex relationships. The overall findings supported those of the current study in regard to gender and attitudes.

5.3 Limitations

The following are some of the limitations that are associated with the present study:

- Even though the sample of the research was large, it was drawn from a single university, this making it difficult to generalise the results to other institutions of higher learning in South Africa and elsewhere, It is possible that data from multiple institutions might yield different results.
- There was no racial diversity in the sample as all the respondents were drawn from a university that almost exclusively attracts students from the African communities in Limpopo Province. It is possible that students drawn from other racial groups could respond differently to the set of questions that were posed.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- A larger study be conducted using samples drawn from students in different universities coming from different racial backgrounds.
- Results of the present study could be made available to the University of Limpopo to help in policy development and intervention.
- The study could help deepen our understanding of the attitudes held by first entering students towards same-sex relationships at the University of Limpopo.
- The results could be used to promote knowledge and more positive attitudes of students in an effort to neutralise any discrimination based on sexual orientation.

5.5 Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to explore attitudes of first entering students towards same-sex relationships at the University of Limpopo. The results show that first entering students have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships, they have little knowledge about them and they also behave negatively towards people in same-sex relationships. The results of the present study lend support to previous studies in South Africa that have found that first entering students have negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships. Similar findings have been reported in some international studies. Whilst the results of the study contribute to our understanding of the attitudes of first entering students towards same-sex relationships, the researcher also acknowledges the limitations associated with a study of this nature. In this regard, recommendations are made for future studies to, among others, include larger samples drawn from students in different universities coming from different racial backgrounds.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Demographic details

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Age

Gender

Male	Female
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Sexual orientation

Heterosexual	homosexual
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Level of study

Faculty

Appendix B

The Homophobia Scale (Wright, Adams & Bernat, 1999)

Instructions: Circle your choice according to the scale provided below

1= Strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= Neutral

4= Agree

5= Strongly agree

#	Questions	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Gay people make me nervous	1	2	3	4	5
2	Gay people deserve what they get	1	2	3	4	5
3	If I discover a friend was gay, I would end the friendship	1	2	3	4	5
4	I think homosexual people should not work with children	1	2	3	4	5
5	I make derogatory remarks about gay people	1	2	3	4	5
6	I enjoy the company of gay people	1	2	3	4	5
7	I make derogatory remarks like “faggot” or “queer” to people I suspect are gay	1	2	3	4	5
8	It does not matter to me whether my friends are gay or straight	1	2	3	4	5
9	It would upset me if I learned that a close friend was homosexual	1	2	3	4	5

10	It bothers me to see two homosexual people together in public	1	2	3	4	5
11	Homosexuality is immoral	1	2	3	4	5
12	I tease and make jokes about gay people	1	2	3	4	5
13	I feel that you can not trust a person who is homosexual	1	2	3	4	5
14	I fear homosexual persons will make advances towards me	1	2	3	4	5
15	I sometimes feel like damaging property of a homosexual person	1	2	3	4	5
16	I would hit a homosexual for coming on to me	1	2	3	4	5
17	I avoid gay individuals	1	2	3	4	5
18	When I see a gay person I think, "what a waste"	1	2	3	4	5
19	When I meet someone I try to find out if he/she is gay	1	2	3	4	5
20	I have rocky relationships with people that I suspect are gay	1	2	3	4	5
21	Homosexuality is acceptable to me	1	2	3	4	5
22	Marriage between homosexual individuals is acceptable	1	2	3	4	5
23	Organizations which promote gay rights are not necessary	1	2	3	4	5
24	I would feel uncomfortable having a gay roommate	1	2	3	4	5
25	Homosexual behaviour should not be against the law	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C

University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus)

Investigator: **Malatji L.C**

Supervisor: **Dr Ramokgopa I.M**

CONSENT FORM

Topic; Attitudes of first entering students towards same-sex relationships at the University of Limpopo

You are being asked to participate in this research study because you comply with the research sample population.

The purpose of the study is to explore attitudes of first entering students towards same-sex relationships. As a participant, you will be enrolled in the study and asked to fill in the provided questionnaire as honestly as possible and submit it to the investigator.

Every attempt will be made by the investigator to keep all information collected in the study strictly confidential. If any publication should result from this research, you will not be identified by name.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are free to refuse participation. You may discontinue your participation at anytime without prejudice. If you discontinue participation in the project, you may request that we not use the information already given to us. You are encouraged to ask questions concerning the study at any time.

By signing below, you are indicating that you have read and understood the consent form and that you agree to participate in this research study.

Participant's signature

Date