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ATTITUDES REGARDING BISEXUALITY
AMONG UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

by

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Attitudes Regarding Bisexuality among Undergraduate University Students

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Master of Arts in the Program of Psychology 2010

Attitudes regarding bisexuality are examined using an experimental design; the relationships between these attitudes and two common predictors of negative attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men (i.e., authoritarianism and social dominance) are also investigated. Participants were asked to read a vignette describing either a gay or bisexual man and provide reactions to this man via a 25-item questionnaire. The questionnaire contained items pertaining to five *attitude* dimensions: *stability, tolerance, likeability, sexuality, and morality*. When reading a vignette describing a bisexual man, participants rated him as being less stable in terms of his sexual identity than a gay man. Additionally, a relationship was found between levels of both political authoritarianism and social dominance and participants' attitudes regarding bisexuality. These findings are examined in light of current theories and research examining bisexuality and attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men. Limitations and considerations for future research are also discussed.

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This project is dedicated to my loving husband.

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Introduction

Until very recently, the predominant assumption in research, theory and clinical practice with non-heterosexual populations has been that the experiences of bisexuals are analogous to those of lesbians and gay men (Barker, 2007). There is now emerging evidence that this assumption, implicit or explicit, does not reflect either social or clinical reality. According to Ochs (1996), attitudes regarding bisexuality are related to, but not identical to, prejudicial attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. The failure to distinguish between the experiences of bisexuals and the experiences of lesbians and gay men has impeded the development of research regarding bisexuality (Dodge, Reece, & Gebhard, 2008). Individuals who identify as bisexual are often the target of prejudicial attitudes in ways that are distinct from those who identify as lesbian or gay (Mohr, Israel, & Sedlacek, 2001). The erroneous view that sexuality is a dichotomous variable (i.e., monosexism) effectively erases all points on the continuum between heterosexuality and homosexuality (Eliason, 1997). Living in a society that is based on oppositional identity categories influences how one experiences and evaluates the world. Although recent empirical and theoretical work has begun to address the limitations of such a framework, the empirical base is virtually restricted to qualitative or survey-based samples.

Masculinity and femininity are often constructed as opposite categories (e.g., Leszczynski & Strough, 2007; Wright, 2008). According to Rust (2000), the common belief that men and women are 'opposite' genders has made it difficult for people to conceptualize bisexuality as a valid sexual identity. Rust states that if men and women are considered opposites, then attractions to men and women must therefore be opposite attractions. She poses the question as such: "If one is attracted to a man, how can one simultaneously be attracted to a woman who is

everything a man is not and nothing that he is?" (Rust, 2000, p. 206). Other theorists have noted the inaccurate belief that people who report sexual interest in both men and women are simply misinterpreting their feelings and labeling themselves as bisexual in an attempt to avoid the stigma associated with labeling themselves as homosexual (Firestein, 1996). Firestein also identifies the fallacious view that bisexuality is no more than a transitional stage between being heterosexual and accepting one's true identity (lesbian or gay). These misconceptions, among others, have limited the development of research in the area. In fact, sexual orientation researchers often ignore bisexuality either by including bisexual participants among samples of lesbians and gay men or excluding them from research altogether (Rust, 2000).

Conceptualizing (Bi?)Sexuality

Bisexuality is conceptually disruptive because it calls into question the very core of typical understandings of sexuality: the hetero-homo binary. That is, heterosexuality and homosexuality are typically positioned as dichotomous variables. Bisexuality disrupts current ideals regarding sex and gender categories by refusing to settle on any one side of the sexual axis (Gurevich, Bailey, & Bower, 2009). The question then becomes: Where does bisexuality fit into this two dimensional world? Broad conceptualizations of bisexuality view it as flexible and dependent on social interactions and situational variables (Baumeister, 2000; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1990; Rust, 1992, 1993). Gurevich and her colleagues (in press) argue that that the answer to this question is an epistemic one. They outline the theoretical difficulties presented by the conceptualization of bisexuality and argue that rather than disrupting opposing sides of the gender and sexuality axes, bisexuality acts as a key to understanding sexuality as a whole

(Gurevich et al., 2009). In other words, bisexuality strengthens our understandings of gender and sexuality by the very fact that it fails to fall into this either/or framework.

A common misconception, reflected in the literature on bisexuality, is that heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality exist completely independently of one another. However, according to Angelides (2001; 2006) and others (e.g., Ault, 1999; Hemmings, 1997; 2000), bisexuality is more accurately located *within* the heterosexual/homosexual framework of sexuality. In other words, these categories are not mutually exclusive but rather they depend on each other for both their existence and their understanding. For instance, Young (1997) emphasizes the utility of bisexuality as a probative tool which emphasizes the negative effects of the hetero-homo binary of sexualities (as cited in, Gurevich et al., 2009). Some theorists have gone as far as positioning bisexuality as transcending the binary logic of gay/straight altogether (e.g., Garber, 1995; Rust, 2000; Udis-Kessler, 1991), with bisexuality being conceptualized as 'fluid' while lesbian, gay and straight identities are framed as 'static' (Hemmings, 2002). For instance, while an individual may feel attraction to a woman at one point in his/her life, this does not mean that he/she will never feel attraction to a man at a different point in his/her life. Diamond (2008a) constructs this as an individual's "capacity for sexual fluidity" (p. 5). In fact, according to Diamond and Butterworth (2008), current research and theories regarding patterns of same and other gender desires demonstrate far more fluidity and complexity than previously thought.

According to Blumstein and Schwartz (1999), the idea that sexual identities are variable has never been fully explored. They note that even the term *bisexuality* implies a sense of fixedness that can be (and often is) easily misinterpreted (p. 61). Specifically, the term

bisexuality suggests that the bi-identified person is divided evenly between lesbian/gay and heterosexual and equally attracted to both genders (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1999).

Among females, Diamond (2008a) argues that the difference between bisexuality and *lesbianism* is one of degree rather than distinction. Diamond (2008a) proposes that (at least female) bisexuality be conceptualized as fluid. In other words, bisexuality represents an increased capacity to experience love/affection/attraction to both genders. To verify this supposition, Diamond conducted a longitudinal study in which she interviewed 79 non-heterosexual women once every two years over a 10-year period (p.7). Her goal was to examine evidence for three different theories about bisexuality. These theories were as follows: 1) Bisexuality is a transitional stage, 2) Bisexuality is a third sexual orientation, and 3) Bisexuality is an increased capacity for fluidity (Diamond, 2008a, p. 7). Based on her initial interviews and follow-up data, Diamond found evidence of sexual fluidity in the attractions, behaviours, and identities of lesbian, bisexual, and unlabeled women. Over the 10-year period, a number of women in the sample held relationships with both men and women. Additionally, women who identified as bisexual in the initial interview typically maintained that label throughout the follow-up period. This finding suggests that, given the right circumstances, some women have the capacity to experience desires for both sexes (Diamond, 2008a). Currently, Diamond (2008) only applies this theory to female bisexuality and there is no equivalent research exploring male bisexuality. However, it does provide some insight into current conceptualizations of bisexuality.

Qualitative research exploring the experiences of bisexuals reveals that they commonly describe themselves using words such as flexible and open (Bower, Gurevich, & Mathiason, 2002). In fact, when Rust (2001) asked respondents what identifying as bisexual meant to them,

responses typically portrayed sexual attractions toward, and the capacity to fall in love with, both/either men and women. However, respondents typically stated that their bisexual identity was not contingent on whether their attractions were evenly distributed between men and women or whether they were acted on through sexual behaviours. One respondent described her identity as such: “I call myself bisexual because I am emotionally, sexually, psychologically, and spiritually attracted to women as well as to men” (Rust, 2001, p. 42). Statements like these remind us of the intricacies of the feelings and considerations that arise from the conceptualization of bisexual identities.

There are a number of misconceptions and issues that commonly appear in the literature on bisexuality. For example, Hutchins (1996) identifies the common misconception that a person’s current partner defines his/her sexual orientation. More realistically, a person’s current sexual partner is only one aspect of an their sexual identity. Hutchins (1996) also points out that although bisexuals experience discrimination and prejudice based on their same-gendered relationships, they also experience discrimination and prejudice solely for identifying as bisexual. Before we can understand attitudes regarding bisexuality, we must first understand the terms used to describe these attitudes. The following section will outline and define the terms used to describe attitudes regarding sexual minority groups.

Defining Monosexism and Heterosexism

Homophobia is defined as negative attitudes and behaviours toward homosexuality and/or directed at people who identify as gay or lesbian (Eliason, 1997; Herek, 2002; Mohr, Israel, & Sedlacek, 2001). Similarly, heterosexism is the discriminatory belief in the superiority of one pattern of love (opposite-sex partners) over another (same-sex partners) (Israel & Mohr,

2004). Biphobia is defined as negative attitudes about bisexuality and/or bisexual people and the fallacious attitude that sexuality is dichotomous and includes only two possible choices (Eliason, 1997; Herek, 2002). Finally, monosexism is the discriminatory belief that only one pattern of love (either opposite-sex partners or same-sex partners) is possible (Bennett, 1992).

Monosexism stems from the reality that we live in a society that thinks according to binary categories wherein each category is composed of “mutually exclusive opposites” (Ochs, 1996, p. 224). As such, bisexuality becomes an impossible alternative. Until recently, bisexual men and women have been an invisible segment of the population. This has had a profound impact on research concerning sexuality. They have been effectively erased from theory and society as a result of erroneous conceptualizations of sexual orientation. According to Eliason (1997), as lesbians and gay men started to become more visible in college and other populations, research concerning heterosexism began to appear in the literature. However, individuals who identified as bisexual were not as visible, or were sometimes thought of as not having a valid sexual identity. As a result, studies concerning heterosexism rarely addressed (and still rarely address) bisexuality or monosexism.

Lesbian and gay activists have noted that there are some similarities between negative attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men and negative attitudes regarding bisexuals (e.g., Ochs, 1996). In fact, qualitative research focusing on the experiences of bisexual men (e.g., Ochs, 1996; Ochs & Deihl, 1992) and women (e.g., Bower et al., 2002; Bennet, 1992; Gurevich, Bower, Mathieson, & Dhayanandhan, 2007; Rust, 1993) has found that some bisexuals feel that heterosexuals often mistake them for lesbians or gay men, resulting in them becoming the victims of homophobic attitudes as well. This anecdotal evidence suggests that some of the

hostility directed towards bisexuals is rooted in heterosexist attitudes. Other theorists (e.g., Rust, 2000; Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 1994) have also noted this overlap. However, because many lesbians and gay men also hold negative attitudes about bisexuality it is likely that there is a difference between heterosexism and monosexism (Rust, 1995). According to Herek (2002), in order to understand the experiences of bisexual men and women, their experiences must first be differentiated from the experiences of lesbians and gay men. The goal of the present study is to expand the literature exploring these differences.

Attitudes Regarding Bisexuality: Current Research

Attractions to men and women are commonly viewed as opposite attractions. As a result, people who identify themselves as bisexual, as having attractions to both men and women, are often viewed as being “internally conflicted, emotionally or psychologically immature, or otherwise unstable” (Rust, 2000, p. 207). Eliason (1997) found that undergraduate students tended to rate bisexuals more negatively on a number of different dimensions compared to their ratings of lesbians and gay men. Additionally, Spalding and Peplau (1997) reported that undergraduate students tended to perceive bisexuals as more likely to carry sexually transmitted infections (STIs) than lesbians, gay men or heterosexuals. Stokes, Taywaditep, Venable, and Mckirnan (1996), have also noted the erroneous view that bisexuals are carriers of HIV/AIDS and responsible for the spread of HIV/AIDS from homosexual populations to heterosexual populations and vice versa. However, the majority of the research in this area is limited to qualitative and survey-based data, as well as a growing theoretical base. As such, there is considerable need for more experimental evidence to broaden our understanding of attitudes toward lesbians and gay men and attitudes toward bisexuals.

Heterosexuals' Attitudes Toward Bisexuals

Eliason (1997) examined the prevalence and nature of monosexism in 229 male and female heterosexual undergraduate students (p. 146). Detailed information was collected regarding the students' attitudes about bisexuality and homosexuality. Eliason's goal was to determine the degree of overlap between the two. Additionally, she wanted to decipher whether similar or different demographic variables (e.g., gender, religion, and age) predicted both monosexism and heterosexism. Using the Beliefs about Sexual Minorities Scale (BSM; Eliason & Raheim, 1996), she collected data pertaining to attitudes about, and experiences with, bisexuals, lesbians and gay men. The BSM asked participants to agree or disagree with a set of positive and negative statements depicting common stereotypes about bisexuality and homosexuality. Sample statements were as follows: "Bisexuals tend to have more sexual partners than heterosexuals," "Bisexuals have more flexible attitudes about sex than gays/lesbians," "Bisexuals are confused about their sexuality" (Eliason, 1996, p. 322).

When asked how acceptable it was to be a bisexual man or woman, students tended to rate bisexual women more favourably than bisexual men (Eliason, 1997). In fact, bisexual men were rated as the least acceptable group, followed by gay men, then lesbians, and finally, bisexual women. Additionally, when students were asked whether they would be willing to have a relationship with a person they were interested in if that person turned out to be bisexual, the majority said no (Eliason, 1997). Finally, although heterosexism and monosexism have similar roots, and people who have prejudicial attitudes toward lesbians and gay men often display prejudicial attitudes toward bisexuals, Eliason found some differences in the underlying beliefs.

For example, bisexuals were thought to be more preoccupied with sex compared to heterosexuals and lesbian and gay men and were also viewed as having more flexible attitudes about sex.

The demographic variable analyses indicated that predictors of negative attitudes toward bisexual men and women among the respondents included younger age, lack of bisexual friends, conservative religious beliefs and homophobic views (Eliason, 1997). Male respondents tended to respond more negatively toward bisexual men than female respondents and male respondents tended to hold more negative attitudes toward bisexual men compared to their attitudes toward bisexual women (Eliason, 1997). Eliason suggested that the difference between men's and woman's reactions to bisexuality might stem from the fact that heterosexual male-oriented pornography often depicts two or more women involved in sexual activities as a prelude to heterosexual sex or for male erotic pleasure. In fact, Eliason reported that some of the men in her study made qualitative remarks regarding the likelihood that a bisexual woman would be more likely to allow them to experience a threesome than a heterosexual woman.

Herek (2002) published another study examining heterosexual's attitudes toward bisexual men and women. In his research, 666 participants were asked to rate their attitudes toward bisexual men and women on a 101-point feeling thermometer (where lower ratings indicated more negative attitudes) (p. 264). Participants also rated their attitudes toward, and affiliations with, other population groups (e.g., religious groups, pro-life and pro-choice advocates, other sexual minority groups, and racial groups; Herek, 2002, p. 266). Correlation analyses revealed significant relationships between attitudes toward bisexuals and attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, more conservative political affiliations and higher religious affiliations. That is, people who expressed negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men also expressed negative attitudes

toward bisexuals and people who reported stronger affiliations with conservative politics and religious groups tended to react more negatively to bisexuality than their less conservative and religious counterparts.

Spalding and Peplau (1997) used an experimental design to examine the attitudes of 366 heterosexual undergraduate students to bisexual men and women in serious relationships. Participants were asked to read a passage describing a couple where one of the partners was identified as bisexual, both of the partners were identified as either lesbian or gay, or both partners were identified as heterosexual. Attitudes in the domains of monogamy, sexual risk taking, trust worthiness, sexual prowess and relationship quality were assessed and comparisons were made between reactions to the bisexual couples, gay/lesbian couples and heterosexual couples (Spalding & Peplau, 1997). Their results indicated that participants tended to rate bisexuals as being more sexually talented, more likely to cheat on their partner and more likely to transmit STIs than their lesbian/gay/heterosexual counterparts.

Therapy with Bisexual Clients

In stark contrast to the increasing body of literature regarding therapy with lesbians and gay men (e.g., Hayes & Gelso, 1993; Hayes & Erkis, 2000; Rudolph, 1998), literature regarding therapy with bisexual clients is very limited. Some evidence indicates that counsellors who hold high levels of prejudicial attitudes toward lesbians and gay men also hold prejudicial attitudes toward bisexuals (Queen, 1996). However, because the literature investigating reactions toward bisexual clients is so limited, very little is known about the impact and prevalence of this phenomenon. Mohr and colleagues (2001) used an analogue design to examine the influence of attitudes regarding bisexuality on the clinical judgement of 97 counsellors in training (p. 213).

To do so, they presented counsellors in training with a fictitious intake report (analogous to one they might encounter in their practice) about a bisexual woman who was seeking counselling services for several psychological concerns. There was no indication in the scenario that the client was having trouble accepting her sexual identity. Following presentation of the intake report, counsellors in training were asked to complete several clinical assessment measures, as well as measures of attitudes regarding sexual minority groups. Counsellors in training who had positive attitudes regarding bisexuality were more likely than others to view work with the bisexual client in a positive light, believe they would avoid imposing their values on the client, and rate the client as having high levels of psychosocial functioning. Additionally, although there was no indication in the intake report regarding difficulty with her bisexual identity, counsellors in training who held negative attitudes toward bisexuality were more likely than others to indicate that the client suffered from difficulties in areas related to stereotypes associated with bisexuality. For example, counsellors in training who endorsed items indicating high levels of prejudice toward bisexuality tended to assess the client as suffering from indecision regarding her sexual orientation (Mohr et al., 2001).

Recently, Mohr, Weiner, Chopp and Wong (2009) conducted another study to investigate the impact of client bisexuality on the clinical judgement of 108 practicing psychologists (p. 106), using an analogue design similar to the one used by Mohr et al. (2001). Specifically, they presented participants with a fictitious intake report analogous to one that they might see in clinical practice. However, Mohr and his colleagues (2009) included three experimental conditions utilizing three different vignettes describing three target men (gay, bisexual, heterosexual). Participants were randomly assigned to read one of the three vignettes. This

manipulation allowed Mohr et al. (2009) to compare psychologists' reactions to bisexual clients to reactions to gay and heterosexual clients. Additionally, their participants were practising psychologists rather than counsellors in training (Mohr et al., 2009). Their results indicated that psychologists who held negative attitudes regarding bisexuality were more likely to endorse items that reinforced bisexual stereotypes. These included confusion about one's sexual orientation, sexual promiscuity and difficulties with identity development. However, Mohr et al. (2009) found no differences between the groups in terms of their rating of the client's overall functioning, intimacy issues, and other issues unrelated to sexual orientation. Unfortunately, because these are the only studies of their kind to date, prevalence and comparison data regarding how likely it is that clinicians will allow their positive or negative attitudes regarding bisexuality to influence their clinical judgements are unavailable.

Lesbian and Gay Men's Attitudes Regarding Bisexuality

The development of lesbian and gay identity theories around the middle of the last century gave way to heated debate between people who held antigay and gay-affirmative perspectives of sexual orientation (Dodge et al., 2008). This debate, among other things, has meant that lesbians and gay men have had to struggle with oppression from heterosexual communities (Eliason & Raheim, 1996). According to Ochs (1996), this sense of external oppression may lead some lesbians and gay men to feel that they are not safe outside of their own community and lead them to build a strong boundary between *us* and *them*. People who identify themselves as bisexual can pose a difficulty for lesbians and gay men because by definition they blur the lines between "insider and outsider" (Ochs, 1996, p. 228). As a result, many lesbians and gay men may be uncomfortable with the bisexual men and women's sexual

orientation. Some may even believe that bisexuals are not as committed to the gay community as they (i.e., lesbians and gay men) are. According to Young (1992), some lesbians and gay men view bisexuality as a “cop-out” and describe it as a label adopted by people who are really gay (meaning that they sleep with same-gendered partners) but want to maintain the “heterosexual privilege” (p. 80). Unfortunately, very few studies have undertaken the task of examining lesbian and gay men’s attitudes regarding bisexuality.

This is a significant gap in the literature. The only information we do have regarding this relationship has been conducted using measures designed to compare heterosexuals’ attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men to their attitudes regarding bisexuals. For example, Mulick and Wright (2002) asked 192 heterosexual and 32 non-heterosexual participants to complete both a homophobia scale and an author created *biphobia* scale. Heterosexual participants scored significantly higher on both of the scales than the non-heterosexual participants, meaning that they held more negative attitudes regarding lesbians, gay men and bisexuals (p. 57). Not surprisingly, they found a strong correlation between the two scales among the heterosexual participants and little correlation between the two scales among the non-heterosexual participants (p. 59). They concluded that heterosexual and non-heterosexual participants think about bisexuality and homosexuality differently.

Predictors of Prejudicial Attitudes Regarding Sexual Minorities

There have been a number of studies to examine predictors of prejudicial attitudes toward lesbians and gay men (see reviews by Herek, 1988; Kite & Whitley, 1996; Whitley & Lee, 2000; Haslam & Levy, 2006). Findings typically report that people who hold such attitudes tend to be more traditional in their gender-role attitudes, less well educated, and exhibit more negative

responses toward other minority groups than their less prejudiced counterparts. Two of the most well documented characteristics of people high in prejudicial attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men include: (a) social dominance orientation (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) and (b) right-wing authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer, 1981).

Right-wing authoritarianism has received a lot of attention in the study of correlates with attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men (e.g., Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Greendlinger, 1985; Hunsberger, 1996; Whitley & Lee, 2000). According to Altemeyer (2004), people who are high in RWA are relatively submissive to established authorities, aggressive towards minority groups when they believe that authorities sanction the aggression, and conventional about established norms. Whitley and Lee (2000) report that people who are high in authoritarianism exhibit high degrees of compliance to established authority figures, aggression toward minority groups and support for traditional values.

Levels of social dominance have also received a lot of attention in the investigation of correlates with attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men (e.g., Haslam & Levy, 2006; Pratto et al., 1994; Whitley & Lee, 2000). Pratto and his colleagues state that SDO refers to a person's desire that their "in-group" (the social group to which they belong) dominate and be superior to their "out-groups" (other social groups to which they do not belong). They also note that SDO refers to an attitude toward intergroup relations that reflects the degree to which a person prefers for such relationships to be equal. According to Pratto et al. (1994), people who are oriented towards social-dominance, tend to favour hierarchy-enhancing ideologies and policies, while people who are less oriented towards social-dominance tend to favour hierarchy-attenuating ideologies and policies.

Whitley and Lee (2000) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the relationships between RWA and SDO and attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men. Their meta-analysis included 36 studies, was comprised of a total of 16, 218 research participants, and resulted in 51 effect sizes (p. 148). Their analyses revealed a moderate negative relationship between authoritarianism and social dominance and attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men. That is, higher rates of authoritarianism and social dominance were correlated with negative attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men. Whitley and Lee (2000) also conducted their own study to evaluate the relationships between RWA and SDO and attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. In their study, 316 undergraduate students were asked to complete the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men-Scale (ATLG-S; Herek, 1988) in addition to the RWA (Altemeyer, 1988) and the SDO (Pratto et al., 1994) scales (p. 154). Their results supported their findings from the meta-analysis; that is, they also found a negative correlation between RWA and SDO and scores on the ATLG-S. Specifically, participants who exhibited higher levels of social dominance and authoritarianism tended to react more negatively to lesbians and gay men (Whitley & Lee, 2000).

A Gap in the Literature

Despite the emergence of new studies in the area of attitudes regarding bisexuality, gaps in the literature continue to exist. Specifically, the fact that there is an immense inequality in the literature evaluating attitudes toward lesbians and gay men versus the literature evaluating attitudes toward bisexuals suggests that more research is needed. Moreover, given that the experiences of bisexuals seem to be qualitatively different from those of lesbians and gay men, further investigation of these experiences is vital. In fact, given that there is still some debate among researchers and theorists regarding the very definition of monosexism (e.g., monosexism

includes negative attitudes about bisexuality and/or bisexual people, Eliason, 1997; monosexism involves the complete denial of bisexuality, Ochs, 1996), more thorough investigation of the construct is necessary. Bisexuals are the subject of negative attitudes that can come from both lesbians and gay men (e.g., Mulick & Wright, 2002; Rust, 1995) and heterosexual men and women (e.g., Eliason, 1997; Herek, 2002). These attitudes need to be evaluated more thoroughly. Particularly, empirical demonstrations of these attitudes are necessary in order to confirm their existence and ultimately understand their roots. Furthermore, evaluations of whether the same characteristics that typically predict negative attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men (SDO, Pratto et al., 1994; and RWA, Altemeyer, 1981) also predict negative attitudes regarding bisexuals are warranted. Thus, the present study has two goals: 1) to use an empirical design to explore attitudes regarding bisexuality among undergraduate university students, and 2) to evaluate whether RWA and SDO are predictors of negative attitudes regarding bisexuality.

The Present Study

The first goal of the present study was to examine undergraduate students' attitudes toward males of differing sexual orientations. To do this, the present study used an analogue design similar to the one used by Spalding and Peplau (1997) to examine students' reactions to a male target (see Knight & Giuliano, 2003; Mohr et al., 2001 for more examples of analogue designs). Specifically, two fictitious scenarios describing individuals who identify with one of two sexual identities were used. The first scenario described an individual who identified as a gay man and the second an individual who identified as a bisexual man. Participants read one of the two possible scenarios and were asked to rate their reactions on a number of variables using a 7-point Likert scale. These variables were comprised of several documented stereotypes

regarding bisexuality (e.g., bisexuals are: “confused about their sexual identity;” “afraid to come out as gay/lesbian;” Mohr & Rochlen, 1999, p. 355). This design permits an exploration of whether reactions to bisexuality differ from reactions to homosexuality.

Because the vignettes focused on male targets, the present study does not include data on undergraduates’ attitudes regarding female bisexuals or lesbians. The decision to focus the present study on a male target rather than a female target was made for several reasons. Specifically, although previous research in the area of monosexism is limited, the studies that have been conducted have focused on female bisexuality (see Mohr et al., 2001 for an example). Additionally, a number of theoretical papers (e.g., Gammon & Isgro, 2006; Rust, 1995; Rust, 2000) have proposed that female bisexuality is becoming more accepted (or more visible) in society than male bisexuality. Eliason (1997) also reported that undergraduate students tended to rate bisexual males more negatively than bisexual females.

The second goal of the present study was to examine correlates of attitudes regarding bisexuality. Previous research examining correlates of anti-gay beliefs has found that SDO and RWA are predictors of anti-gay attitudes (e.g., Haslam & Levi, 2006). Thus, the present study investigated whether these correlates are also predictors of attitudes regarding bisexuality. To do this, participants were asked to complete the Social Dominance Orientation scale (SDO; Pratto et al., 1994) and the Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale (RWA; Altemeyer, 1988), in addition to the Attitudes Regarding Bisexuality scale (ARBS; Mohr & Rochlen, 1999) and the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men scale (ATLG-S; Herek, 1994). Correlational analyses were conducted to evaluate the relationship between participants’ scores on the ARBS and the ATLG-S and their scores on the SDO and the RWA scales.

The hypotheses for the present study were as follows: 1) participants who read the vignette describing a bisexual man would react more negatively to the target than those who read the vignette describing a gay man; and 2) the relationship between attitudes regarding bisexuality and both social dominance and political authoritarianism would resemble the relationship between attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men and these variable.

Method

Participants

Participants were undergraduate students recruited from introductory psychology classes at Ryerson University through the Sona computer system. All participants completed the study online and received class credit for their participation.

Design and Materials

Participants were asked to read a vignette describing one of two possible target males and provide their reactions to that target male by responding to a number of questions. Participants also completed a demographic questionnaire, the ARBS (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999), the ATLG-S (Herek, 1994), the RWA scale (Pratto et al., 1994), the SDO scale (Altemeyer, 1988) and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MC-SDS; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

Demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire was developed by the author and assessed age, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation and exposure to sexual minority groups. The demographic questionnaire can be found in Appendix I.

Vignettes. Participants were asked to read a vignette describing a target male and provide their reactions to the target. One of the passages described a man who identified as gay and the other described a man who identified as bisexual. The sexual orientation of the target (gay or bisexual) was varied among the participants and participants were randomly assigned to read one of the two passages. Half of the participants read the vignette describing a gay man while the other half read the vignette describing a bisexual man. The passages were developed by the author and can be found in Appendix II.

Attitude measures. Participants' reactions to the target male were provided via a 25-item author developed reaction questionnaire. Participants were asked to rate their reactions using a 7-point Likert scale response system (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). After reverse scoring negatively skewed questions, high scores on the reaction questionnaire indicated more negative reactions to the target and low scores indicated more positive reactions. These questions were derived based on items appearing in the ARBS and the ATLG-S and can be found in Appendix III.

The 25 items on the reaction questionnaire were divided evenly into five dimensions. The five dimensions were: stability, tolerance, general likeability, sexual characteristics, and moral attributes. The dimensions were selected based on past research. The first two dimensions were included in accordance with the precedent set by Mohr and colleagues (2001) who included tolerance and stability as subscales in their measure of attitudes regarding bisexuality. Similarly, sexual characteristics and moral attributes were included because there is some qualitative evidence to support the notion that people tend to assume that bisexuals are sexually promiscuous and untrustworthy (see Bower et al., 2002 and Gurevich et al., 2007 for some examples). Finally, general likeability was included in order to assess whether the participants would be willing to associate with the target and whether this would vary depending on the sexual identity of the target. General likeability was included specifically to evaluate whether, in a global sense, participants would react in a positive (or negative) way to the person described in the vignette. The 25 items were each assigned a random number and sorted by that random number so that all of the participants completed the reaction questions in the same default order.

Participants also completed the ARBS (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999). The ARBS is a measure designed to assess attitudes regarding bisexual men and women. The ARBS consists of 18 items divided into two subscales measuring attitudes within two different domains including items assessing tolerance, and items assessing stability (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999). The tolerance subscale is used to assess the degree to which bisexuality is viewed as a tolerable and moral sexual orientation and the stability subscale is used to assess the degree to which bisexuality is viewed as a stable and legitimate sexual orientation (Mohr et al., 2001). Examples of items on the stability subscale include: "Most men who claim to be bisexual are in denial about their true sexual orientation;" and "Most women who call themselves bisexual are temporarily experimenting with their sexuality," (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999, p. 358). Examples of items on the tolerance subscale include: "The growing acceptance of female bisexuality indicates a decline in American values;" and "Female bisexuality is harmful to society because it breaks down the natural divisions between the sexes," (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999, p. 358). Mohr and colleagues report an internal consistency of 0.94 for scores on the tolerance questions and 0.89 for scores on the stability questions.

Participants also completed the ATLG-S (Herek, 1994). The ATLG-S is a measure designed to assess attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men and consists of 10 items designed to assess attitudes regarding lesbians and 10 items regarding gay men. An example of an item on the ATLG-S includes: "Female homosexuality is a threat to many of our basic social institutions," (Rosik, 2007, p. 135). Mohr and colleagues (2001) report an internal consistency of 0.93 for scores on the ATLG-S.

Social dominance orientation. SDO was measured using Pratto et al.'s (1994) measure of social dominance (Chronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$). The SDO includes 16 items and asks participants to rate the degree to which they agree with a number of statements on a 7-point Likert scale response system. Examples of the items include: "Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups;" and "Inferior groups should stay in their place" (Pratto et al., 2004, p. 763).

Right-wing authoritarianism. RWA was measured using Altemeyer's (1988) 22-item RWA scale (Chronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$). The RWA scale asks participants to rate their degree of agreement with a number of statements on a 7-point Likert scale response system. Examples of items include: "Our country desperately needs a mighty leader who will do what has to be done to destroy the radical new ways and sinfulness that are ruining us;" and "The 'old-fashioned ways' and 'old-fashioned values' still show the best way to live," (Altemeyer, 2004, p. 426).

Self-presentation bias. The study also employed the MC-SDS (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) to assess the degree to which participants were likely to respond to items according to what they consider to be socially desirable. The MC-SDS consists of 33 items that are either extremely socially desirable but untrue for most people (e.g., "Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates") or very socially undesirable but true for most people (e.g., "I like to gossip at times") (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960, p. 351). Crowne and Marlowe (1960) report the internal consistency for the MC-SDS as 0.88 and the test-retest correlation as 0.89.

Procedure and Planned Analyses

Participants signed up for, and completed, the study online using the Sona website administered by the department of Psychology at Ryerson University. Once they consented to

take part in the study, they were presented with one of two possible vignettes. The instructions asked participants to read the passage thoroughly in order to be able to provide their reactions to the passage following presentation. Once they had read the passage, participants were presented with 25 questions to measure their reactions to the previously presented vignette. All participants, regardless of experimental condition, were presented with the same 25 questions in the same default order. The instructions for the questionnaire asked participants to read the statements and rate them according to how accurately they described their attitudes and beliefs about the man described in the vignette. Reactions were to be rated on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 meant that they “Strongly Disagree” with the statement and 7 meant that they “Strongly Agree” with the statement. Participants were then asked to complete the demographic questionnaire, the SDO scale (Pratto et al., 1994), the RWA scale (Altemeyer, 1988), the ARBS (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999), the ATLG-S (Herek, 1994), and the MC-SDS (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

The analyses are divided into three parts: 1) descriptive analyses to examine the sample and scale characteristics, and the presence of self-presentation bias; 2) experimental analyses to compare the reactions of participants who read the vignette describing a bisexual man to those who read the vignette describing a gay man; and 3) correlational analyses to examine the relationships between participants’ attitudes regarding lesbians/gays/bisexuals and measures of political authoritarianism and social dominance respectively.

Results

Descriptive Analyses

Sample characteristics. The participants were 142 undergraduate psychology students (103 females, 36 males, and 3 participants who declined to reveal their gender). Participants ranged in age between 18 and 54 ($M = 23.06$, $SD = 7.37$); there was no difference between the mean ages of female and male participants. The majority of the sample identified as heterosexual (89.4%) and stated that they had at least one friend who identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual (78.2%). The majority of the participants identified their cultural background as European (41.1%), with the remaining identifying as Middle Eastern (28.4%) or Asian (19.9%). In terms of religious affiliation, the breakdown was as follows: 45.3% were Christian, 23.7% were Jewish, 15.8% were Atheist, 7.2% were Muslim, 5.8% were Hindu, and 2.2% were Buddhist. Finally, 46.5% of the participants reported being single while 39.4% reported being partnered but living separately from their partner.

Scale characteristics. Reliability analyses were conducted to establish the internal consistency of the scales used in the present study. These analyses revealed Cronbach's alpha levels for each of the scales as follows: ARBS = .95, ATLG-S = .95, SDO = .90, and RWA = .92.

Self-presentation bias. Self-presentation bias was measured using the MC-SDS (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). Items were scored dichotomously with one point being awarded for each of the socially desirable answers and zero points being awarded for each of the socially undesirable responses. Using this scoring method, the scores could have ranged between 0 (all responses were socially undesirable) and 33 (all responses were socially desirable). In the current

experiment, participants' scores on the MC-SDS ranged between 1 and 30 ($M = 14.77$, $SD = 5.623$). This mean is consistent with those typically reported in the literature using the MC-SDS as a measure of self-presentation bias (e.g., $M = 17.4$, $SD = 5.7$, Yunsheng et al., 2009, p. 555; $M = 13.72$, $SD = 5.78$, Crowne & Marlowe, 1960, p. 352). To confirm that the results of the present experiment were not a result of self presentation bias, all participants who scored outside of the MC-SDS mean plus or minus two standard deviations were removed. The analyses were run twice, once with all of the participants included and once with the MC-SDS outliers removed. The results of the analyses were the same with and without the outliers. Thus, the following results are reported with all of the participants included.

Experimental Analyses

A three-way mixed design ANOVA (Cohen, 2008) with two between and one within subjects variables was used to examine the participants' reactions to the vignettes as measured by the five dimensions of the reaction measure. The between subjects' variables were gender, with two levels (male and female) and vignette, with two levels (bisexual and gay). The within subjects variable was reaction dimension with five levels (stability, tolerance, general likeability, sexual characteristics, and moral attributes). The dependent variable was the participants' reaction to the target man described in the vignette. Scores on the reaction measure for each dimension could have ranged between 5 (the most positive reaction) and 35 (the most negative reaction).

The three-way mixed design ANOVA results indicated that both of the two-way interactions were significant. Specifically, the interaction between gender and dimension was significant, $F(4, 512) = 4.827$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .036$; and the interaction between vignette

and dimension was significant, $F(4, 512) = 3.979, p = .003$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. Additionally, the main effect of dimension was significant, $F(4, 512) = 62.297, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .327$. Follow-up analyses were conducted to explore these effects more thoroughly.

Overall differences. The means, standard deviations, and ranges for the entire sample are displayed in Table 1 and Figure 1 for each of the five dimensions of the reaction questionnaire. Each dimension of the questionnaire was comprised of five questions and possible scores could have ranged between 5 and 35. Lower scores indicated lower levels of each dimension. Post-hoc comparisons between each of the five dimensions were not run due to the increase in type I error rate that would be caused by running ten comparisons. However, based on the means in Table 1 and the visual depiction in Figure 1, scores on the sexual characteristics dimension were higher than the other four scales. That is, regardless of whether participants read a vignette describing a bisexual or a gay man, they rated that man higher on the sexual characteristics dimension of the questionnaire.

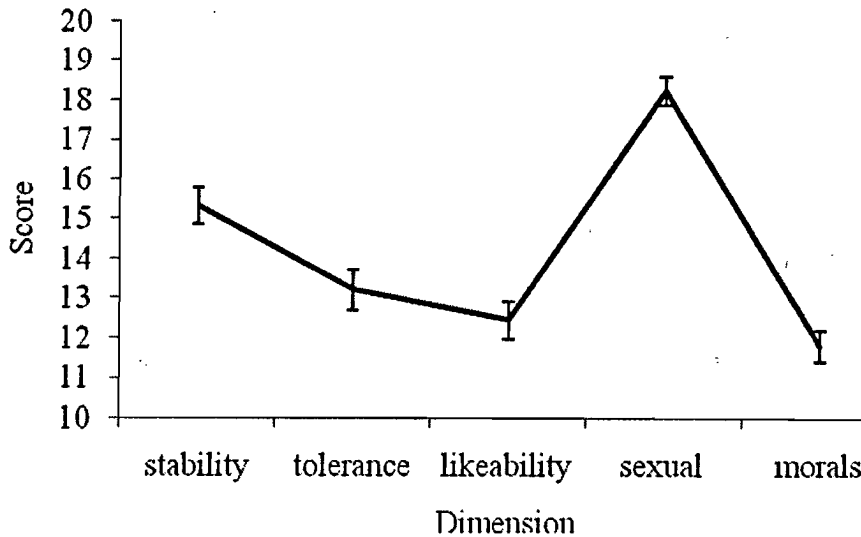
Table 1.

Overall Scores on the Five Dimensions of the Reaction Questionnaire

Subscale	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>Range</i>
Stability	15.34 (5.34)	6-30
Tolerance	13.22 (6.01)	5-28
Likeability	12.47 (5.71)	5-35
Sexual characteristics	18.23 (4.15)	9-30
Moral attributes	11.82 (4.6)	5-27

Figure 1.

Overall Scores on the Five Dimensions of the Reaction Questionnaire



Note. Error bars = Standard error scores

Gender differences. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore the significant two-way interaction between gender and dimension. The means and standard deviations for men and women for each of the dimensions are displayed in Table 2 and Figure 2. The one-way ANOVA revealed that the male and female participants differed in terms of their ratings of likeability of the target man ($F(1, 140) = 19.722, p < .001$). Specifically, male participants tended to rate the target (regardless of their sexual orientation) as less likeable than the female participants in the study. This result remained significant after applying a general Bonferroni correction to correct for familywise type I error ($.05/5 = .01$). Gender differences in the present study need to be viewed with great caution due to the large difference between the number of female and male participants.

Table 2.

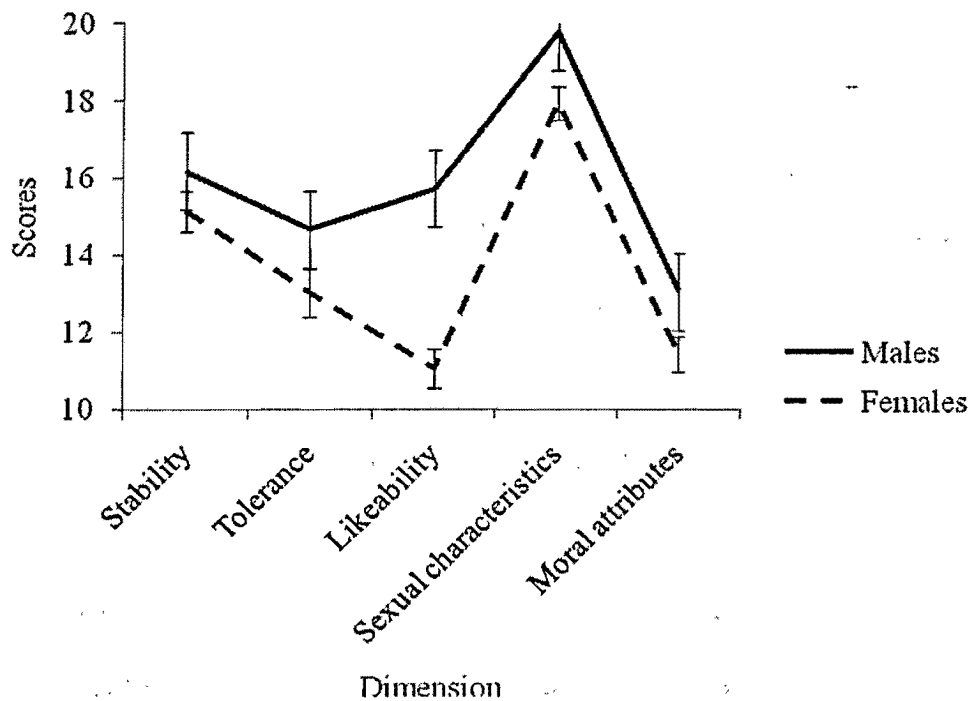
Scores on the Five Dimensions of the Reaction Questionnaire for Male and Female Participants

Dimension	Males ($n = 37$)	Females ($n = 105$)
	$M(SD)$	$M(SD)$
Stability	15.25 (5.32)	15.26 (5.32)
Tolerance	14.31 (6.25)	12.84 (5.9)
Likeability***	15.83 (6.07)	11.29 (5.09)
Sexual characteristics	19.43 (3.78)	17.88 (4.21)
Moral attributes	12.94 (4.8)	11.42 (4.48)

*** $p < .001$.

Figure 2.

Scores on the Five Dimensions of the Reaction Questionnaire for Male and Female Participants



Note. Error bars = Standard error scores

Group differences. A one-way ANOVA was also conducted to explore the significant two-way interaction between vignette and dimension. The means and standard deviations for each of the reaction measure dimensions for the participants who read the bisexual vignette and those who read the gay vignette are displayed in Table 3 and Figure 3. The one-way ANOVA revealed that the participants who read the bisexual vignette scored higher on the stability dimension than the participants who read the gay vignette ($F(1, 140) = 7.726, p = .006$). Specifically, participants who read the bisexual vignette tended to rate the target as less stable than those who read the gay vignette. This result remained significant after applying a general Bonferroni correction to correct for familywise type I error ($.05/5 = .01$).

Table 3.

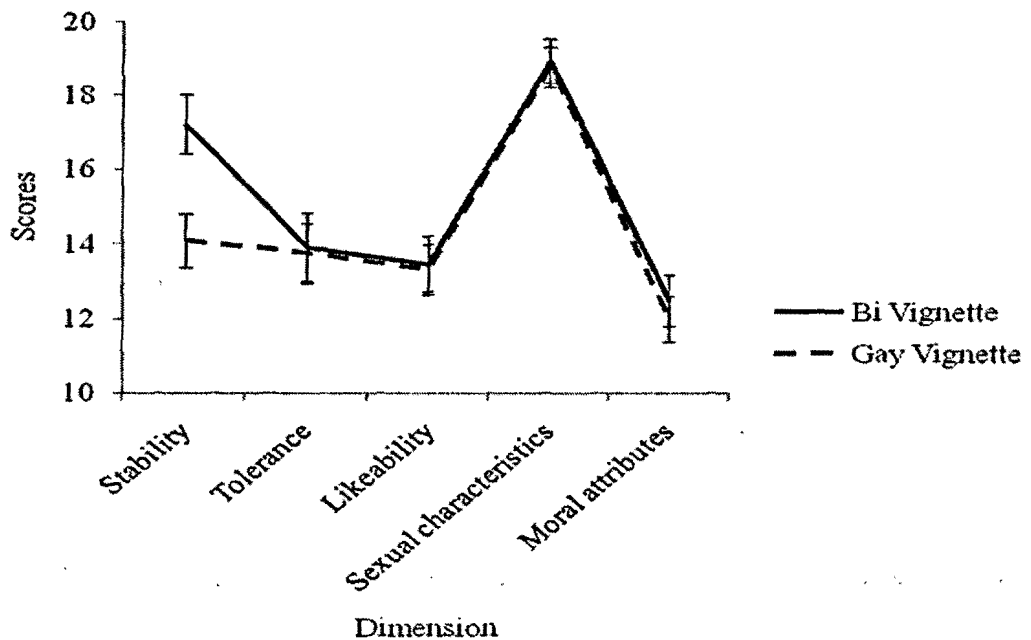
Scores on the Five Dimensions of the Reaction Questionnaire for Participants who Read the Bisexual and Gay Vignettes

Dimension	Bisexual ($n = 70$) $M(SD)$	Gay ($n = 72$) $M(SD)$
Stability**	16.57 (5.54)	14.14 (4.87)
Tolerance	12.94 (6.22)	13.51 (5.82)
Likeability	11.81 (4.67)	13.11 (6.53)
Sexual characteristics	17.97 (4.67)	18.59 (3.55)
Moral attributes	11.79 (4.45)	11.86 (4.77)

** $p < .01$.

Figure 3.

Scores on the Five Dimensions of the Reaction Questionnaire for Participants who Read the Bisexual and Gay Vignettes



Note. Error bars = Standard error scores

Correlational Analyses

The means and standard deviations for the attitude measures and the RWA and SDO scales for the entire sample and separately for males and females can be found in Table 4. The results of the correlational analyses can be found in Table 5.

Table 4.

Scores on the Attitudes Regarding Bisexuality Scale (ARBS), the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG-S), the Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) and the Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) scales

	Males (n=35)	Females (n=100)	Overall (n=135)
Measure	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
ARBS-Stability	34.2 (10.54)	34.2 (12.5)	34.2 (11.99)
ARBS-Tolerance	23 (10.73)	19.05 (10.85)	20.07 (10.92)
ATLG-S*	57.97 (24.61)	47.54 (24.02)	50.24 (24.51)
RWA	61.29 (21.16)	56.25 (19.93)	57.56 (20.3)
SDO	38.31 (14.96)	36.01 (15.59)	36.61 (15.4)

* $p < .05$

Gender differences. Independent sample t-tests were conducted to check for gender differences on the attitudes measures as well as the RWA and the SDO scales. According to these analyses, the male and female participants differed in terms of their scores on the ATLG-S, $t(133) = -2.197, p = .03$. By examining the means and standard deviations presented in Table 3, one can see that the male participants scored higher on the ATLG-S than the female participants. No other significant differences were found between the male and the female participants on the attitude measures and the RWA and SDO scales. These results should be viewed with caution given the large difference between the number of females who completed the study and the number of males.

Table 5.

Pearson's r correlations between the Attitudes Regarding Bisexuality Scale (ARBS), the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG-S), the Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) and the Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) scales

Measures	RWA	SDO
ARBS-Stability	.514***	.467***
ARBS-Tolerance	.809***	.465***
ATLG-S	.787***	.502***

*** $p < .001$.

Right-wing authoritarianism. A Pearson's r correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between the measures of attitudes regarding sexual minority groups and the RWA scale. As can be seen in Table 5, scores on the RWA scale were positively correlated with scores on the ARBS and the ATLG-S. Specifically, as scores on the RWA scale increased, participants' scores on the ARBS and the ATLG-S also increased; as authoritarianism increased, attitudes regarding lesbians/gays/bisexuals became less favourable.

Social dominance orientation. A Pearson's r correlation analysis was also used to examine the relationships between the measures of attitudes regarding sexual minority groups and the SDO scale. As can be seen in Table 5, scores on the SDO scale were also positively correlated with scores on the ARBS and the ATLG-S. Specifically, as scores on the SDO scale increased, participants' scores on the ARBS and the ATLG-S also increased; as social dominance increased, attitudes regarding lesbians/gays/bisexuals became less favourable.

Discussion

The first goal of this research was to examine attitudes regarding bisexuality by comparing undergraduate students' reactions toward a gay man to their reactions toward a bisexual man. Reactions were measured using a five dimensional reaction questionnaire and it was hypothesized that participants reading the bisexual vignette would rate the target more negatively on all dimensions of the reaction questionnaire. This prediction was only partially supported by the results. Specifically, participants who read the vignette describing a bisexual man tended to rate him as being less stable in terms of his sexual identity than those who read the vignette describing a gay man. Contrary to the initial hypothesis, both groups rated the target males equally in terms of tolerance, how much they liked the target and would be willing to associate with him, his sexual characteristics and his moral attributes. However, these results are consistent with other research using the ARBS as a measure of participants' attitudes regarding bisexuality in that researchers tend to find that participants respond more negatively on the stability subscale compared to the tolerance subscale (e.g., Mohr et al., 2001; Mohr & Rochlen, 1999).

Diamond (2008a) lists three common misconceptions about bisexuality: 1) bisexuals are sexually promiscuous and incapable of monogamy, 2) they are actually repressed lesbians/(gay men), and 3) they are actually "curious" heterosexuals (p. 114). Based on the results of the present study, I would add that the most common reactions to bisexuality revolve specifically around perceived stability. For example, when asked if bisexuals are in denial about their sexual identity or whether they are just experimenting with their sexuality, participants tend to agree with both of these statements. Similar responses are found when participants are asked whether

they believe the bisexual is afraid to commit to one lifestyle, or simply going through a sexual phase. In some instances, the term *stability* could be interpreted as being very similar to *fluidity*. That is, a person who is open to the possibility of being in a relationship with either a man or woman could be described as having unstable or fluid attractions. However, in the present study, the five questions used to assess the stability dimension refer very specifically to negative stereotypes found in the literature concerning negative attitudes regarding bisexuality (see Diamond, 2008a; Eliason, 1997; Mohr et al., 2001; Mohr & Rochlen, 1999; Spalding & Peplau, 1997).

The present study did not find support for the common misconception that bisexuals are more sexually promiscuous or more likely to transmit STIs than gay men. In fact, participants tended to rate both the bisexual and the gay men as equally likely to transmit STIs and have multiple sexual partners. This is somewhat inconsistent with what is typically reported in the literature discussing attitudes regarding bisexuality (e.g., Diamond, 2008a; Rust, 2001; Spalding & Peplau, 1997). However, the present study included two experimental groups allowing a direct comparison between participants' reactions to a bisexual man and their reactions to a gay man. Most of the existing literature examining these misconceptions has been survey-based or qualitative in nature.

Another possibility for the different ratings of stability between the groups could be related to the number of lesbians and gay men who sometimes call themselves bisexual while transitioning to their true identities. However, previous qualitative research conducted by Diamond (2008b) suggests that while some lesbians and gay men may refer to themselves as bisexual, most bisexuals do not alter their self-identified bisexuality regardless of the gender of

their current partner. This is also supported by Rust (2001) who reported that bisexual women tend to conceptualize their bisexuality in terms of their capacity to love men and women regardless of whether they act on this capacity or not. The present study adds to the current body of literature by examining attitudes regarding bisexuality using an experimental design. That is, while survey-based and qualitative studies typically report themes related to sexual promiscuity and level of trustworthiness in addition to issues regarding stability among bisexuals, the present study provides empirical evidence that themes related to stability may be more common.

The second goal of the research was to examine correlates of attitudes regarding bisexuality and to determine whether correlates that are typically related to attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men are also related to attitudes regarding bisexuals. Two common correlates of attitudes regarding lesbian and gay men were selected: political authoritarianism and social dominance. The results of the present study show a negative correlation between attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men and levels of political authoritarianism and social dominance. This finding is consistent with previous studies examining this relationship (e.g., Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Greendlinger, 1985; Haslam & Levy, 2006; Hunsberger, 1996; Pratto et al., 1994; Whitley & Lee, 2000). That is, as levels of political authoritarianism and social dominance increase, attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men become more negative. The present study builds on this body of literature by also evaluating the relationship between these variables and attitudes regarding bisexuality. A negative correlation between RWA and SDO and attitudes regarding bisexuality was found. That is, as levels of RWA and SDO increase, attitudes regarding bisexuality become more negative. This finding is consistent with the initial hypothesis. Specifically, the relationship between political authoritarianism and social

dominance, respectively, and attitudes regarding bisexuality was predicted to resemble the relationship between these variables and attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men. Given the fact that research examining attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men have reported positive correlations between these attitudes and attitudes regarding other minority groups (e.g., Herek, 1988; Whitley & Lee, 2000) one might expect that there would be similar relationships between authoritarianism and social dominance and attitudes regarding lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study recruited participants through introductory psychology classes at Ryerson University. It is possible that this sample of participants is not representative of the population in general and this may influence the generalizability of the results. Specifically, it is possible that undergraduate students hold fewer (or more) negative attitudes regarding sexual minority groups. Future research could endeavour to replicate the present study with a community sample. All participants in the present study completed the experiment online. There are both benefits and disadvantages to online administration. Benefits include the fact that participants may feel more comfortable answering questions regarding their attitudes about sexual minority groups in the privacy of their own home and online administration can yield much higher rates of participation (Hyde, DeLamater, & Byers, 2009). However, participants may also be more likely to rush through the experiment online without reading the questions or vignette carefully or more likely to provide response set answers (Hyde et al., 2009).

The present study only included two groups: a group who read a vignette describing a bisexual man and a group who read a vignette describing a gay man. It is possible that if there had been a control condition in which participants read a vignette describing a heterosexual man,

more differences among the dimensions of the reaction questionnaire may have been found. That is, it is possible that in addition to stability, participants may have reported lower levels of tolerance, sexual characteristics, moral attributes and general likeability compared to their levels on these dimensions when responding to a heterosexual target man. The possibility of including a control condition was considered but ultimately the decision to use only two conditions was made due to the increased sample size that would be necessary with the inclusion of a third group and the time necessary to gather this data. Additionally, differences between attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men and attitudes regarding heterosexuals have already been well established (e.g., Haslam & Levy, 2006; Herek, 1988; Whitley & Lee, 2000). Future research could explore the possibility of replicating the results found in the present study and adding a third group to evaluate the differences in reactions to a heterosexual man versus a bisexual and gay man. The possibility exists that although there are no differences between participant's reactions to a gay man and their reactions to a bisexual man in the dimensions of the reaction questionnaire other than stability, these differences may exist when comparing participants' reactions to a heterosexual male to their reactions toward a bisexual male.

This research focused on examining reactions to either a homosexual or a bisexual man on five different dimensions: Stability, tolerance, general likeability, sexual characteristics, and moral attributes. These dimensions were selected based on previous research (Eliason, 1997; Mohr et al., 2001; Mohr & Rochlen, 1999; Spalding & Peplau, 1997) and theory (Diamond, 2008a; Rust, 2001) investigating attitudes regarding bisexuality. Other dimensions that could have been selected include level of maturity, emotional/psychological stability, social/relationship characteristics. The reaction questionnaire in the present experiment focused

very heavily on negative assumptions regarding bisexuality. Future research could include dimensions intended to measure positive characteristics such as social awareness or openness to experiences (or fluidity).

The present study does not include information regarding reactions to lesbians or bisexual women. This decision was made for a number of reasons. Specifically, the studies that have already been conducted to evaluate monosexism have focused on female bisexuality (see Mohr et al., 2001, and Israel & Mohr, 2004 for some examples). Additionally, a number of theoretical papers (e.g., Gammon & Isgro, 2006; Rust, 1995; Rust, 2000) have proposed that female bisexuality is becoming more accepted than male bisexuality. Eliason (1997) also reported that undergraduate students tended to rate bisexual men more negatively than bisexual women. For all of these reasons, the present study focused on examining attitudes regarding male bisexuality rather than female bisexuality. Future research could endeavour to replicate these findings using female targets rather than male targets to see whether similar results are found. Additionally, future research could include conditions with female and male bisexuality to discern whether there are differences in reactions to female versus male bisexuality.

The results of the present study could have been influenced by participants' tendency to respond according to what they believe to be socially desirable. However, given that the present study included the MC-SDS (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) as a measure of self-presentation bias, and that results were not influenced by the removal of participants who scored at the extreme ends of the scale, suggests that the results are not due to participants' concerns regarding the social desirability of their responses. Additionally, the present study did not include a check at the end to verify that participants picked up on the sexual orientation of the person described in

the vignette. As such, it is possible that participants were responding to the reaction questionnaire based on other information provided without noticing the sexual orientation. Future research could replicate the present experiment with the addition of a question regarding the sexual orientation with which the target male identifies. The addition of this question may or may not influence the results.

The present study focused on the relationships between RWA and SDO and attitudes regarding lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. Although these variables are the most commonly reported correlates with attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men, they are not the only correlates. Other correlates of attitudes regarding lesbians and gay men which may also be related to attitudes regarding bisexuality include: religiosity, attitudes regarding gender roles (e.g., masculinity/femininity norms), levels of traditional family values (e.g., Herek, 1988), and dogmatism (e.g., Whitely & Lee, 2000). Future research should expand on the results of the present study by including measures of these other variables to examine whether they are also related to attitudes regarding bisexuality.

More research regarding issues surrounding our understanding of bisexuality, the different types of attitudes regarding bisexuality and the influences of these attitudes on the lives of bisexuals need to be explored. Although the present research focuses on the reactions of undergraduate university students to bisexuality, it does provide some evidence for the fact that negative reactions exist. More knowledge is vital regarding the existence of these attitudes among different population (e.g., clinicians or adolescents) and influences of these negative attitudes within other domains. For example, according to Queen (1996), counsellors who hold high levels of prejudicial attitudes regarding bisexuality may engage in biased practice with

bisexual clients. Additionally, the fact that Mohr et al. (2001) found that counsellors in training tended to allow their negative attitudes regarding bisexuality influence their reaction to a bisexual client in more areas than Mohr and his colleague (2009) found among practicing psychologists, suggests that more training regarding work with bisexual clients may be beneficial for counsellors in training.

The present research made use of an experimental design in order to be able to directly compare participants' reactions to either a bisexual or homosexual man. However, this type of design does not provide information regarding the bisexual's experiences of being marginalized, ways of changing negative attitudes, how (or if) attitudes translate into behaviour, or the origins of these negative attitudes regarding bisexuality. Further research intended to ascertain this information is vital to our understanding of the issues surrounding bisexuality. For example, qualitative research involving interviewing bisexuals could further our understanding of their experiences of being marginalized and evaluated based on their bisexuality (e.g., female bisexuals: Bower et al., 2002). Qualitative research could also increase our understanding of the origins of stereotypes regarding bisexuality and people who identify as bisexual by conducting thorough qualitative interviews about attitudes regarding bisexuality. Social psychology research paradigms (e.g., media exposure: Want, Vickers, & Amos, 2009) could be applied to the investigation into ways of changing negative attitudes regarding bisexuality. For example, an experiment involving pre and post evaluation of negative attitudes regarding bisexuality with exposure to accurate information regarding bisexuality and people who identify as bisexual in between could aid significantly in the development of strategies for changing negative attitudes. Bisexuals, like all minorities, have unique experiences and concerns that merit investigation.

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Appendix I

Demographic Questionnaire

1. How old are you? Age: _____
2. Gender: Male / Female
3. How would you identify your sexual orientation?
 - a. Heterosexual
 - b. Gay/Lesbian
 - c. Bisexual
 - d. Undecided
 - e. Other: _____
4. Do you have friends who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender? Yes / No
5. How would you label your religious affiliation?
 - a. Atheist
 - b. Buddhist
 - c. Christian
 - d. Hindu
 - e. Jewish
 - f. Muslim
 - g. Other: _____
6. What is your cultural background?
 - a. Aboriginal
 - b. Afro/Caribbean
 - c. Asian
 - d. European
 - e. Middle Eastern
 - f. Other
7. What is your relationship status?
 - a. Single
 - b. Partnered and living separately
 - c. Partnered and living together
 - d. Married

Appendix II

Vingette #1 –Bisexual Male Target

Jason is a 22-year-old university student who is currently looking for a new roommate for the following school year. Jason identifies as bisexual and has dated both men and women in the past. He is currently single and open to finding someone special. He is a History major and Sociology minor and hopes to pursue a teaching career following university. Jason enjoys playing soccer, painting and writing. Jason also writes for the campus newspaper and is a member of a number of local art galleries. On the weekends, Jason frequently visits art exhibits during the day and enjoys clubbing with his friends in the evenings. Jason is very passionate about a number of diversity issues and socializes with people from a variety of different backgrounds.

Vingette #2 – Gay Male Target

Jason is a 22-year-old university student who is currently looking for a new roommate for the following school year. Jason identifies as gay and has dated only men in the past. He is currently single and open to finding someone special. He is a History major and Sociology minor and hopes to pursue a teaching career following university. Jason enjoys playing soccer, painting and writing. Jason also writes for the campus newspaper and is a member of a number of local art galleries. On the weekends, Jason frequently visits art exhibits during the day and enjoys clubbing with his friends in the evenings. Jason is very passionate about a number of diversity issues and socializes with people from a variety of different backgrounds.

Appendix III

Reaction Questionnaire

Please read each of the statements below and rate them according to how accurately they describe your attitudes and beliefs about the vignette you have just finished reading. Please respond honestly and answer every question according to the following rating scale:

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

STABILITY

Jason is in denial about his true sexual orientation.

Jason is temporarily experimenting with his sexuality.

Jason is afraid to commit to one lifestyle.

Jason has a clear sense of his sexual orientation.

Jason's sexual orientation is NOT likely to be a phase, but rather it is a stable sexual orientation.

TOLERANCE

Jason is a sick person.

Jason's sexual orientation is unnatural.

Jason's sexuality is NOT a perversion.

I think Jason's sexuality is a natural expression of male sexuality.

People like Jason should keep to themselves.

GENERAL LIKEABILITY

I would be very willing to have Jason as my university roommate.

I would be happy to have Jason on my soccer team.

I think I would get along well with Jason.

I do NOT think I would like Jason.

I would be upset if I was assigned to work with Jason on a group project.

SEXUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Anyone who dates Jason is likely to be very sexually satisfied.

Jason is likely very sexually experienced.

I would NOT be willing to get sexually involved with Jason.

People like Jason are more likely than others to contract STIs.

It is people like Jason who increase the spread of AIDS.

MORAL ATTRIBUTES

People like Jason cannot be trusted.

Jason should NOT be allowed to teach children in public schools.

If I were to date Jason, I would be afraid that he would be unfaithful.

People like Jason are incapable of remaining monogamous.

Jason's sexuality is immoral.