



Investigating the Discrepancy between British Heterosexuals Attitudes and Behaviours towards Homosexuals.

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ABSTRACT

British statistics have shown discrepancies between the increase in positive attitudes people are reporting holding towards homosexuals, and the increase in negative behaviours people are displaying towards them. Very little research, if any, has been conducted addressing this incongruity. The current research aimed to investigate heterosexuals' behavioural responses using chair placement whilst anticipating an interaction with a same gendered individual who is either homosexual or heterosexual. In addition, the study examined whether this behavioural response reflects their self-reported attitudes towards homosexuality using the Modern Homonegativity Scale. This was carried out in a laboratory experiment including 17 participants with a mean age of 26.12. The participants were split into either the homosexual anticipated interaction (HOAI) group or heterosexual anticipated interaction (HEAI) group and the chair distances they set out for themselves and their anticipated interaction partner was measured in inches. The participants also completed the MHS. Both testing their attitudes towards homosexuals. The results showed that the participants in the HOAI group put a significantly larger distance between themselves and their interaction partner than the HEAI group. They also showed that the HOAI groups MHS scores did not reflect the negative behaviours they exhibited. This would suggest that people do treat homosexuals differently to heterosexuals even if their reported attitudes towards them do not differ.

KEY WORDS:	HOMOPHOBIA	IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT ATTITUDES	CHAIR DISTANCES	SAME SEX MARRIAGE	BEHAVIOUR RESPONCES
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Introduction

Attitudes towards homosexuality have significantly changed in the last 50 years since its decriminalisation in 1967 (Clements & Field, 2014). Before this period, it was considered revolting, incomprehensible and criminal (Stanley, 1995). However, due to the decriminalisation of homosexuality attitudes began to liberalise. From this point onwards the large amount of negativity towards homosexuality steadily dwindled. Between 1967 and 1977 the amount of the British population that described homosexuality as being a very serious social problem reduced by 13% (Clements & Field, 2014). However, in the mid 1980's large media coverage of the AIDS epidemic emerged. Along with it came growing hostilities towards homosexuals due to its connotations to same gendered sex (McCormack & Anderson, 2014). This can be observed as between 1983 and 1987 the amount of the British population reporting homosexuality as being "always wrong" increased by 14% (Clements & Field, 2014). As the fear of AIDS began to diminish in the 1990's as did negative attitudes towards homosexuals (Clements & Field, 2014). This shows that social and legislative changes have an impact on people's perceptions and attitudes towards homosexuals. The most recent legislative change has been the legalisation of same-sex marriage through the Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act in 2013 (Legislation.Gov.UK, 2013). The British Social Attitudes Survey (2017) exhibited that from 1983 the largest spike in acceptance towards homosexuality arose around 2013, this being during the introduction of same-sex marriage. Therefore, it is incredibly important for research to focus on attitudes towards homosexuality since the Marriage Act as it is the most recent and seemingly most influential social change in the 36 years the survey has been carried out.

Assuming that tolerance and positive attitudes towards homosexuality predicts positive interactions between homosexuals and heterosexuals (Kite & Day, 1986), it seems likely that behaviours towards homosexuals will have become increasingly more positive since the introduction of the Marriage (Same-Sex couples) Act 2013. This is because as previously stated following the legalisation of same-sex marriage there have been overwhelmingly large increases in positive attitudes towards homosexuality, which have been increasing year on year (British Social Attitudes, 2017). For example, the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey announced that only 9% of the Scottish population reported homosexuality as being "always wrong" in 2015, having gone down by 11% since 2010. This is the largest drop in the 15 years the survey has been carried out (GOV.SCOT, 2015). However, since the introduction of same-sex marriage there have also been large rises in hate crimes motivated by a perpetrator's hatred or prejudice towards the victim's sexual orientation. For example, between 2013 and 2017 there was an increase in nearly 5000 incidents of sexual orientation motivated hate crimes in England and Wales (GOV.UK, 2018).

While these statistics are startling, this increase could be attributable to improvements in police reporting of hate crimes towards the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) community, rather than an actual increase in the number of hate crimes. For example, over the years there have been various barriers to reporting of sexual orientation motivated hate crimes. Primarily because LGB victims have not felt as though they would be taken seriously (Chakraborti & Hardy, 2015). Resulting in only one in ten LGB victims being likely to share their experiences with the police (Chakraborti & Hardy, 2015). Many LGB individuals report being verbally abused due

to their sexual orientation as being something one simply has to “put up with”, thus normalising these behaviours and making these incidents seem less like hate crimes. Additionally, many believe reporting to the police would be a waste of time and would not lead to the results they would wish to achieve, due to having little confidence in the police (Chakraborti & Hardy, 2015). However, the legalisation of same-sex marriage has resulted in increases in feelings of social inclusion in LGB communities around the world (Fingerhut, Riggle & Rostosky, 2011). This could then increase their confidence in coming forward following being the victim of a hate crime as they may no longer feel they should have to “put up with” such behaviours as they are no longer “others” and therefore may be the key explanation for the large increases in reported hate crimes.

Alternatively, the discrepancy between reported hate crimes towards homosexuals and reported attitudes towards them could be attributable to the self-report measures used to assess these attitudes. Self-reported social attitudes are not always strong predictors of behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005, as cited in Albarracín, Johnson & Zanna, 2005). These measures only allow for an individual to disclose their explicit attitudes which often differ from the implicit attitudes they hold beyond their consciousness (Payne, Burkley & Stokes, 2008). Evidenced by Steffens’ (2008) study which found that attitudes towards homosexuality measured by explicit scales were significantly more positive than the results found in the implicit associations test. Indicating that the participants may not have been fully aware of the attitudes they held towards homosexuality resulting in true attitudes not being portrayed in the explicit test. Suggesting the methods used to measure attitudes towards homosexuality in Britain are in fact floored and are unable to explain the behaviours reported. Especially since implicit attitudes are stronger predictors of behaviour which are not susceptible to the influence of explicit attitudes (Carruthers, 2018). Due to these statistical discrepancies it is important for research to be conducted in Britain since the legalisation of same-sex marriage to explore the reasoning behind the inconsistencies found.

Recent research since the legalisation of same-sex marriage has been conducted addressing heterosexual’s attitudes towards homosexuality (Banwari, Mistry, Soni, Parikh & Gandhi, 2015; Hayes & Nagle, 2015; Kwok & Wu, 2015; Roder & Lubbers, 2015; Beck et al, 2016; Mucherah, Owino & McCoy, 2016). These studies have found that that homosexuals experience sexual prejudice in their everyday interactions with heterosexual individuals as well as from educators and healthcare professionals despite government policies being put in place to protect them (Banwari, Mistry, Soni, Parikh & Gandhi, 2015; Hayes & Nagle, 2015). It also shows that hyper-masculinity and compulsory heterosexuality leads to large stigma and reluctance to interact with homosexuals, especially homosexual males (Kwok & Wu, 2015; Roder & Lubbers, 2015; Beck et al, 2016). And finally, positive attitudes towards homosexuality are strongly correlated with knowledge about homosexuality with poorly educated individuals possessing more homophobic attitudes. These findings do not coincide with the trends that were previously discussed, all research was conducted outside of Britain in countries that typically uphold negative attitudes towards homosexuality, do not have same-sex marriage rights and have very limited LGBT rights in general. Such as India, Northern Ireland, China, Poland, Kenya and The Caribbean. This distinctly different standpoint is due to their strong religiosity which is not mirrored in modern Britain which is becoming increasingly secular (Hayes, 1995; Rivers, 2012). Therefore, these studies are unable to reflect and

explain the changes in attitudes towards homosexuality occurring in Britain or the statistical discrepancies found since the legalisation of same-sex marriage.

Having said that, there have been a few studies looking at attitudes towards homosexuality since the legalisation of same-sex marriage that have taken place in Britain (Einarsdóttir, Howell & Lewis, 2015; Magrath, Anderson & Roberts, 2015; Kenny & Patel, 2017; Janmaat & Keating, 2019). These studies have shown that heterosexuals are rarely exhibiting explicit derogatory remarks or behaviours towards homosexuals in the UK, instead more discreet forms of discrimination such as standoffish behaviour and ignorant comments are more prevalent (Einarsdóttir, Howell & Lewis, 2015). Indicating that people are suppressing their homophobic attitudes, which are still subtly appearing in the interactions they are having with homosexuals. Research has also shown that there is now unanimous support for homosexuality and gay team members from professional footballers (Magrath, Anderson & Roberts, 2015), a group in which was typically a bastion for homophobia (Krovel, 2016). Suggesting that Britain has become increasingly less homophobic considering that a group which was originally associated with strong homophobia no longer endorses it. It has also been found that people have become much more “tolerant, open-minded and inclusive” towards homosexuality in the UK (Janmaat & Keating, 2019). There have also been links between reductions in prejudices towards homosexuality and the introduction of same-sex marriage in Western Europe (Kenny & Patel, 2017).

Of all research discussed addressing attitudes towards homosexuality in Britain since the legalisation of same-sex marriage very few, if any, have observed genuine behaviour and have instead used purely self-report methods. These being semi-structured interviews and surveys Banwari, Mistry, Soni, Parikh & Gandhi, 2015; Einarsdóttir, Howell & Lewis, 2015; Hayes & Nagle, 2015; Kwok & Wu, 2015; Magrath, Anderson & Roberts, 2015; Roder & Lubbers, 2015; Beck et al, 2016; Mucherah, Owino & McCoy, 2016; Kenny & Patel, 2017; Janmaat & Keating, 2019). Fazio and Olson’s (2014, as cited in Sherman, Gawronski & Trope, 2014) motivation and opportunity as determinants model posits that an individual will only avoid acting on their negative prejudices if they have a motivation to act otherwise. Since surveys do not include a personal interaction it leaves people without motivation to suppress such negative attitudes due to the lack of opportunity for judgement (Bamber, Ajzen & Schmidt, 2003).

However, the use of purely self-report measures is still problematic because researchers have found self-reporting of anti-gay sentiment to be severely underreported (Coffman, Coffman & Ericson, 2013). People are much more likely to express socially desirable answers when disclosing attitudes towards homosexuality regardless of the anonymity and confidentiality the measures entail (Coffman, Coffman & Ericson, 2013). This may be attributable to the overwhelming avoidance of possible negative consequences associated with truth-telling, such as judgement due to the stigma attached to holding such views in today’s society (Pridemore, Damphousse & Moore, 2005). Due to the measures used in each of these studies, the results obtained are unlikely to be accurate representations of the participants, and the wider population’s, attitudes towards homosexuality. Nor are they able to explain the inconsistencies between British hate crime and attitude statistics due to the lack of genuine behaviour. Resulting in much of the research conducted since the legalisation of same sex marriage being limited.

Additionally, the use of purely self-report measures to assess attitudes towards homosexuality is an issue due to “attitudes” being a psychological construct.

Making them difficult to measure with complete accuracy (Fried, 2017). Because of this it is important to use multiple methods in order to establish the convergent validity of the methods and in turn ensure the measures are truly measuring the attitudes of the participants. Therefore, using the combination of a self-report measure and a behavioural measure may increase the accuracy (Cyders & Coskunpinar, 2011).

Herek's (1988) Attitudes towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLGS) has been widely used in research assessing attitudes towards homosexuality (Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Cooley & Burkholder, 2011; Helms & Waters, 2016; Yilmaz, Degirmenci, Surmeli, Benli & Suadiye, 2017; Janmaat & Keating, 2019). This scale has been found to be highly reliable in measuring homonegativity, however it is substantially based on old-fashioned objections towards homosexuality such as religion and morals making it largely outdated (Morrison, Morrison & Franklin, 2009). Since the release of Herek's (1988) scale, Britain has become much more liberal in its attitudes towards homosexuals and other marginalised groups (Brooks, 2000), it has also become increasingly secular (Voas & Crockett, 2005). Since religiosity is significantly linked to possessing homonegative attitudes and a moral rejection of homosexuality (Doebler, 2015), it means people are less likely to reject homosexuality from a religious and moral standpoint. Therefore, the questions from Herek's (1988) ATLGS are no longer applicable and a more modern scale should instead be utilised. Morrison and Morrison (2003) introduced the Modern Homonegativity Scale (MHS) which aimed to measure homonegative attitudes that otherwise wouldn't be picked up on in older scales such as the ATLGS which makes it less susceptible to floor effects (Morrison, Morrison & Franklin, 2009). The MHS is also very reliable as it scores consistently highly on alpha coefficients indicating strong internal consistency between the items in the scale (Morrison, Morrison & Franklin, 2009). Therefore, recent research using Herek's (1988) scale are using outdated measures to assess recent attitudinal changes towards homosexuality likely resulting in inaccuracy.

Previous studies have managed to look at attitudes towards homosexuality using both behavioural and self-report measures (Wolfgang & Wolfgang, 1971; Morin, Taylor & Kielman, 1975, as cited in Morin & Garfinkle, 1978; Karr 1978; Ceunot & Fugita; Gray, Russel & Blockley, 1991). The general findings from these studies have shown that heterosexual participants were speaking significantly more rapidly to homosexual individuals than heterosexual individuals. This indicates an avoidance reaction to the interaction in which the participants found discomfort (Ceunot & Fugita, 1982). Since the only difference between the two interactions is the sexual orientation of the communicator this discomfort is likely to stem from homonegative attitudes. Additionally, Gray, Russell & Blockley's (1991) research showed that heterosexuals were less likely to help a perceived pro-gay individual than an individual whose standpoint was unclear. This reluctance to help indicated hostility towards homosexuals due to the only difference in the individual's behaviour being whether they wore a pro-gay slogan t-shirt or a plain one.

Finally, these studies found that people place a larger proximal distance between themselves and a perceived homosexual individual than a perceived heterosexual individual (Wolfgang & Wolfgang, 1971; Morin, Taylor & Kielman, 1975, as cited in Morin and Garfinkle, 1978). This can be seen as negative because everyone holds implicit physical distance norms. If the proximal distance between

two communicators exceeds or is less than an individual's norms, negative attitudes and implications can be assumed (Hall 1990). Additionally, physical proximity is a direct behavioural measure of an individual's feelings. If a smaller physical distance is maintained the individual is more likely to like and feel comfortable with their interaction partner (Gifford & O'Conner, 1986). Using chair distances as a behavioural/ observational measure for studying attitudes towards marginalised groups has been prevalent over time (Mehrabian, 1968; Wolfgang & Wolfgang, 1971); Word, Zanna & Cooper, 1974; Barrios, Corbitt, Estes & Topping, 1976; Karr, 1978; Morin, Taylor & Kileman, 1975, as cited in Morin & Garfinkle, 1978; Goff, Steele & Davies, 2008; Norman et al 2010; Turner & West, 2011). Such measurements reduce risk of observer bias as the measure is not open to interpretation. Chair distances can be measured objectively in inches allowing for quantifiable data that the researcher cannot interpret incorrectly.

However, there are several issues with the research. Firstly, three of the five studies measuring attitudes towards homosexuality with behavioural measures used an entirely male sample with only gay male targets (Wolfgang & Wolfgang, 1971; Karr, 1978; Gray, Russell & Blockley, 1991). This is problematic because males typically are more associated with homophobic beliefs and homonegative behaviours (Lim, 2002; Rampullo, Castiglione, Licciardello & Scolla, 2013). Homophobia has been largely associated with gender role ideology in which people believe that male and female behaviour should be shaped by biological sex and that they are completely bipolar (Alden & Parker, 2005). Since homosexuality does not tend to fit in well with gender role ideals strong belief in these ideals, which men tend to have, can lead to homophobia (Liao & Tu, 2005; Drach-Zahavy & Somech, 2007). Whereas women tend to hold a more egalitarian view (Liao & Tu, 2005). This means the behavioural research only using male participant's results in more negative beliefs being displayed than the population as a whole may actually hold. Resulting in poor generalisability due to only portraying male attitudes (Ganguli & Kukull, 2012).

In addition, only using gay male targets is an issue as people display differing attitudes towards gay men and lesbian women. Typically, both males and females have less intense prejudices towards lesbians than they do gay men (Rampullo, Castiglione, Licciardello & Scolla, 2013). Hereck (1988), for example, found that heterosexuals reported having more negative attitudes towards gay men than they do lesbian women. Furthermore, gay men experience more physical assaults and other forms of hate crime than lesbians (Stotzer, 2012). Therefore, the previous literature that only focussed on attitudes towards gay men have low internal validity as they are not measuring attitudes towards homosexuality which they claim to be and are in fact measuring attitudes towards gay men only (Mohajan, 2017). Therefore, more behavioural research needs to be conducted that is inclusive to all homosexuals not just gay males as previous research doing so is limited.

A further limitation of previous research is that some research relies solely on the researcher's selection and interpretation of the behaviour they believe to be important to the research. Such as in Ceunot & Fugita's (1982) study assessing heterosexual's non-verbal behaviour whilst interacting with a perceived homosexual. This then makes the measurements somewhat subjective as researchers may interpret what they observe differently and could also ignore certain behaviours which are relevant and display the participants attitudes towards the topic (Given,

2008). Ceunot & Fugita (1982) coded the behaviours they were planning on observing prior to the observation which could have led to biases as all other behaviours are ignored. This may result in important behaviours being skipped over, limiting the findings from the study due to the lack of freedom in the categories of behaviour (Hawes, Dadds & Pasalik, 2013). It could also result in observer bias as the researcher could consciously or unconsciously pick only the behaviour that would confirm their hypotheses therefore reducing the validity of the study (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao, 2008). Additionally, there is inconsistency in the way that people interpret non-verbal behaviour. An individual's facial expression or body movement could be interpreted differently by different researchers, or as something that it is not (Solokolov, Kruger, Enck, Krageloh-Mann & Pavlova, 2011). For example, a frown of confusion could be interpreted as an indication of anger. This again reduces the internal validity (Mohojan, 2017) as it means the researchers are interpreting information wrongfully.

Finally, previous research focussing on using chair distance behaviours to display their participants attitudes towards homosexuals have shown inconsistencies (Wolfgang & Wolfgang, 1971; Morin, Taylor & Kielman, 1975, as cited in Morin & Garfinkle, 1978; Karr, 1978). Wolfgang and Wolfgang's (1971) study as well as Karr's (1978) found that participants with high homophobia placed a significantly larger distance between themselves and a perceived homosexual individual than those with low or no homophobia. This would suggest that the implicit attitudes displayed in their chair distance behaviours reflects the explicit attitudes displayed in questionnaires. However, Morin, Taylor and Kielman (1975, as cited in Morin & Garfinkle, 1978) found contrary results. Their participants reported possessing significantly more positive attitudes towards homosexuality than their chair distance behaviours would suggest. This would instead illustrate that people hold differing attitudes towards homosexuality with implicit behaviour measures and explicit self-report measures finding different results. This discrepancy reflects the recent inconsistencies found in British hate crimes towards homosexuals and British reported attitudes towards them. Therefore, recent research needs to establish whether there is a difference in the attitudes and behaviours towards homosexuals like Morin, Taylor and Kielman (1975, as cited in Morin & Garfinkle, 1978) suggest or if the behaviours and attitudes are concordant which Wolfgang and Wolfgang (1971) and Karr (1978) propose.

Overall, the causes behind the inconsistencies found between Britain's self-reported positive attitudes towards homosexuality and the influx of hate crimes motivated by the victim's sexual orientation since the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 are unclear. They could stem from improvements of police reporting but could also show inaccuracy in using self-report methods to test true attitudes towards homosexuality. Because of this quantifiable behavioural research needs to be conducted in order to establish whether individual's behaviours reflect the results of the British hate crime statistics (indicating that people are in fact becoming more hostile and self-reported attitudes are inaccurate) or those of the British Social Attitudes Survey (suggesting that people do possess positive attitudes towards homosexuality and the increases in hate crimes are in fact down to improvements in reporting).

In sum, the current study aims to investigate heterosexuals' behavioural responses using chair placement whilst anticipating an interaction with a same

gendered individual who is either homosexual or heterosexual. In addition, the study examines whether this behavioural response reflects their self-reported attitudes towards homosexuality using the Modern Homonegativity Scale. It is hypothesised that the participants in the homosexual interaction condition will place their chairs further away than the heterosexual interaction condition. Furthermore, it is hypothesised that these behaviours will not be reflected in the MHS scores implying that their behaviours will indicate more negative attitudes than their MHS scores suggest.

Method

Design

This study employed an experimental independent measures design with one independent variable which had two levels: an anticipated interaction with either a homosexual or heterosexual individual. The participants were randomly allocated to each group using Excel's random allocation tool. The two dependent variables were the chair distance and the MHS score.

Participants

Participants were recruited through opportunity sampling using Teesside University's SONA recruitment system which is accessible to Teesside University psychology undergraduates. Participants received 30 SONA credits for their participation. All individuals that volunteered were able to take part provided that they were over the age of eighteen. Any participants that reported being homosexual in the demographic questionnaire had their data removed before the data analysis due to the researcher only having interest in the attitudes and behaviours of heterosexual individuals. The sample included seventeen participants with a mean age of 26.12 and a standard deviation of 11.41, three being males and 14 being females. The participants were randomly split into two groups. Nine participants were in the homosexual interaction group with three males and six females with a mean age of 29.33 and a standard deviation of 13.66 and eight in the heterosexual interaction group with no males and eight females with a mean age of 22.50 and a standard deviation of 7.48.

Materials

Participants reported their age, gender and sexual orientation in a demographic questionnaire (See Appendix, 1). Filler questions about their student status and political views were also asked to try and prevent the participants from guessing the aim of the study which could have led to demand characteristics or social desirability bias being displayed in the answers provided for the MHS (King & Briner, 2000; McCambridge, Bruin & Witton, 2012).

The *Modern Homonegativity Scale* was used to assess homonegative attitudes towards homosexuality. There were two versions: attitudes towards gay men (Appendix, 2) which was answered by the male participants; and attitudes towards lesbians (Appendix, 3) which was answered by the female participants. Each scale presented 12 items, for example, "Gay men/ Lesbians should stop shoving their lifestyle down other people's throats." and a five-point Likert scale with 1= strongly agree and 5= strongly disagree. Relevant items were reverse scored before analysis. The possible total score is 12-60 with lower scores indicating positive attitudes towards homosexuality and higher scores indicating negative attitudes towards homosexuality. Additionally, a tape measure was used to measure the chair distance in the seats the participants set out for themselves and the anticipated person which was measured in inches. Ethical forms were also used such as an information sheet, consent form and debrief sheet. (See Appendix 4, 5 & 6)

Procedure

The researcher's gained approval from Teesside University's Ethics Committee which ensured the research adhered to BPS ethical guidelines (BPS, 2014). The study then entailed the participants meeting with the researcher individually in a room with a stack of chairs in the corner. They were greeted by the researcher and asked to read, sign and complete the information sheet, consent form and demographic questionnaire. Once this was completed the participants were informed that they were meeting another individual matched to them by gender to discuss their recent marriage. Females were told they were meeting 'Amanda' and males were told they were meeting 'Andy'. The females in the HEAI group were told that 'Amanda' would be discussing her recent marriage to her husband 'Michael' while the females in the HOAI were told that 'Amanda' would be discussing her recent marriage to her wife 'Michelle'. The males in the HEAI group were told that 'Andy' would be discussing his recent marriage to his wife 'Michelle', while the males in the HOAI group were told that 'Andy' who would be discussing his recent marriage to his husband 'Michael'. Following this the researcher asked the participants to place two of the stacked chairs where they wanted them for the anticipated person and themselves to sit whilst the researcher went and collected 'Andy'/'Amanda'. However, the participants did not really meet 'Amanda' or 'Andy', they were told this in order for the researcher to measure the distance in the placement of the chairs the participant set out. After five minutes the researcher came back stating that the anticipated communicator was on a personal call and requested that the participants completed the MHS in the meantime. This was to ensure the participants set out their chairs before realising the study was surrounding homosexuality which may have led to demand characteristics (Mummolo & Peterson, 2017). Once the participants had completed the MHS they were informed that the study was complete and that they were not actually meeting 'Amanda'/'Andy'. The participants were then thoroughly debriefed, and the research was finished.

Results

A One-way independent measures MANOVA was conducted to compare the two groups (homosexual interaction vs. heterosexual interaction) on the two dependent variables (chair distance and MHS). Parametric assumptions of the chair distance measure were met as Levene's test was non-significant ($p = .838$) and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was non-significant also ($p = .20$). The Levene's statistic for the MHS was also non-significant ($p = .061$) and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was ($p = .20$) so the parametric assumptions were also met.

The univariate ANOVA revealed a significant difference between the conditions for the chair distance dependent variable $F(1,15) = 10.88, p = .01$. The homosexual interaction group ($M = 26.44, SD = 5.90$) placed their chairs further away than participants in the heterosexual interaction group ($M = 17.13, SD = 5.71$). However, there was no significant difference between the conditions in the MHS dependent variable $F(1, 15) = 3.10, p = .10$. The homosexual interaction group gained similar scores in the MHS ($M = 26.56, SD = 6.60$) to the heterosexual interaction group ($M = 21.75, SD = 24.27$).

Discussion

To consolidate, the results of this study indicate that there is a difference between the two groups in the behaviours displayed towards the anticipated interaction partners due to their perceived sexuality. The participants in the HOAI group exhibited more negative behaviours. This is due to them being significantly more likely to place a larger distance between themselves and their interaction partner than those in the heterosexual interaction group. These results verify the initial experimental hypothesis that the participants in the HOAI group will place their chairs further away than the HEAI group. Additionally, the results show that there was no significant difference between the MHS scores between the two groups with both having mean scores on the lower end of the 12-60 scale. This also confirms the second experimental hypothesis that the scores gained in the MHS will not reflect the chair distance behaviours, with the behaviours being more negative.

Previous literature that researched how attitudes towards homosexuality could be displayed through proximal distance showed that individuals were more likely to place a larger distance between themselves and a perceived homosexual individual than they were a perceived heterosexual individual (Wolfgang & Wolfgang, 1971; Morin, Taylor & Kielman, 1975, as cited in Morin & Garfinkle, 1978; Karr, 1978). The same was found in the current study therefore it coincides with what has previously been found. These results may indicate that people are in fact still harbouring homonegative attitudes due to the link between large proximal distance and discomfort with the interaction (Gifford & O'Conner, 1986). Especially since research shows heterosexuals have larger discomfort around homosexuals especially if they report having homophobic attitudes towards them (Eldridge, Mack & Swank, 2006).

However, both Wolfgang and Wolfgang (1971) and Karr (1978) found that the distance behaviours displayed by their participants reflected the attitudes they reported having towards homosexuality. This would suggest that people who claim to hold more positive and accepting attitudes towards homosexuality will display more positive behaviour towards them also (Kite & Day, 1896). This was not verified by the current study that found all participants reported having largely positive attitudes towards homosexuals regardless of the condition they were in. Yet only the participants in the homosexual interaction condition put large distances between themselves and the anticipated interaction partner. This coincided with Morin, Taylor and Kielman's (1975, as cited in Morin & Garfinkle, 1978) study which found that participants put a larger distance between themselves and the interviewer if the interviewer was wearing a gay and proud badge. These results suggest that people hold both implicit and explicit attitudes towards homosexuality that are measured in different ways. Due to explicit attitudes being held within one's consciousness making them easy to report (Nosek, 2007), the MHS was able to measure these attitudes. Contrastingly the participants implicit attitudes were not measurable by the MHS and instead were measured by the chair distance dependent variable. Implicit attitudes exist within the unconscious and are exhibited subtly in our behaviour without our knowledge (Quillian, 2008). This would explain why the participants were not able to report prejudice attitudes in the MHS. This also suggests that the British Social Attitudes Survey may not be accurately measuring the full extent to people's attitudes towards homosexuality due to its reliance on measuring explicit attitudes only.

Additionally, these results may show how homophobic behaviour is simply changing as opposed to eradicating. Wolfgang and Wolfgang (1971) and Karr's (1978) studies took place not long after homosexuality was decriminalised when attitudes towards homosexuality were still largely negative (Clements & Field, 2014). Disclosing and displaying negative attitudes towards homosexuality was socially acceptable so the participants would have felt comfortable to do so (Wickberg, 2000). However, this is no longer the case in today's society. Einarsdóttir, Howell and Lewis (2015) found that heterosexuals now rarely display blatantly homophobic behaviour however they are susceptible to displaying discreet homophobia. Due to the growing cultural and political support for LGBT rights, people feel pressured to conceal their true feelings towards the topic should their opinions oppose this support (Lax, Phillips & Stollwerk, 2016). Since overt homophobia could lead to societal backlash (Coffman, Coffman & Ericson, 2013), individuals possessing homonegative attitudes may have found new, more discreet, ways of displaying these attitudes instead. This is evidenced in the current study as the participants in the homosexual anticipated interaction group did not overtly report possessing homophobia, instead they subtly behaved in a prejudice way. In turn contradicting the idea that homophobia is diminishing in Britain. Which would explain why the current study wasn't able to find that participants who placed a larger distance between themselves and their homosexual interaction partner reported homonegative attitudes.

Although, the study is not without its limitations that may have impacted the results. Due to the researcher's recruitment tool only being accessible by psychology undergraduates it resulted in a non-varied sample. Firstly, because more females than males enrol onto social science degrees (HESA, 2018) Teesside University's SONA recruitment system would be more accessible to females. This was found to be the case in the current research as of the seventeen participants that took part, only three were males and the rest were females. This is problematic because as previously discussed males and females typically hold differing views on homosexuality (Lim, 2002). A meta-analysis on gender differences in attitudes towards sexual behaviour between 1993 and 2007 revealed that females consistently reported more permissive attitudes towards homosexuality, LGBT rights and same-sex marriage (Petersen & Hyde, 2010). Additionally, hate crime statistics have shown that more males than females exhibit prejudice behaviours towards homosexuals. Herek, Cogan and Gillis (1989) found that of 302 sexual orientation motivated hate crime victims 99% of men and 90% of women had a male perpetrator. Denoting that males and females also behave differently towards homosexuals as males are more likely to exhibit homophobic behaviours. Although the study was still able to establish a significant difference between the heterosexual and homosexual anticipated interaction group the lack of consensus between the two genders means the behaviours and attitudes displayed by the mainly female sample are not largely generalisable to the wider British population (Ganguli and Kukull, 2012).

However, the behaviour of the females that took part was not too dissimilar to the typically more negative behaviour males display towards homosexuals. This is because as previously stated there was a significant difference between the chair distances of the two groups with the homosexual interaction group placing their chairs further away. Therefore, the sample obtained was still somewhat generalisable.

The age differences in the study were also not varied. The average age of the participants was 26.12, this is a fairly young sample. This is an issue as different age groups have contrasting attitudes towards homosexuality, with younger people being associated with more positive attitudes towards homosexuality (Hicks & Lee, 2006). This is because people born between the early 1980's and early 2000's are typically characterised by holding liberal and open-minded views towards different ways of living that have not always been socially acceptable (Milkman, 2017). This difference may be accountable to the increased education levels and decreased religiosity this generation has compared to older generations (Pew Research Centre, 2013). As high education levels and low religiosity are strongly associated an increased likelihood to question and reject tradition (Gerhards, 2010). The lack of variety thus makes the sample less generalisable as it may only apply to younger British people.

However, the inclusion of a younger sample is useful as most, if not all, behavioural research conducted on attitudes towards homosexuality were conducted between the 1970's and the 1990's (Wolfgang & Wolfgang, 1971; Morin, Taylor & Kielman, 1975, as cited in Morin & Garfinkle, 1978; Karr, 1978; Cuenot & Fugita, 1982; Gray, Russel & Blockley, 1991) with individuals in this era holding differing attitudes towards homosexuality. Meaning little known about the present younger generation's genuine behavioural responses to homosexual individuals.

Due to the issues that may have arisen due to the sample obtained by the current study future research should aim to include a more varied sample that can be generalised to more of the British population. Not only should the future research ensure their overall sample is varied but that each condition is varied also. The current random allocation method used to allocate the participants into either the homosexual or heterosexual anticipated interaction groups was somewhat flawed. Although the use of random allocation reduces the likelihood of sampling biases and limiting the effects of participant variables (Dettori, 2010), this doesn't seem to have been the case. Participant variables such as age and gender were unequally distributed between the two groups with all three male participants being placed in the homosexual interaction group as well as the mean age of the participants in this group being higher. These individual differences may have resulted have impacted the findings which resulted in a significant difference being found between the two groups in the chair distance measure due to reasons previously discussed. Because of this future research should aim to clarify whether the findings of the current study are truly a result of people holding negative attitudes towards homosexuality or due to the inclusion of more individuals associated with homonegative attitudes in the homosexual anticipated interaction group than the heterosexual anticipated interaction group.

A further limitation of the study is that the chair distance behaviour may have actually reflected the participants discomfort in discussing a sensitive topic or interacting with a stranger. As previously discussed, placing a further proximal distance between yourself and another individual is an indication of discomfort in interacting with them (Gifford & O'Conner, 1986). Although the chair distance behaviours exhibited by the two groups were found to be significantly different, suggesting that the anticipated interaction partner was the casual factor, other factors may have caused the discomfort. Individual personal space preferences may have affected how the participants placed the chairs. Since the current study used an independent measures design it meant different participants were taking part in

each condition, making the study more susceptible to errors due to individual differences (Charness, Gneezy & Kuhn, 2012). Personal space is very permeable and subjective (Hayduk, 1981), because of this, individual's perceptions of ideal and appropriate personal space differ. Since people become uncomfortable when their personal space ideals are violated (Hayduk, 1981), the participants may have placed a larger distance between themselves and their anticipated interaction partner due to having larger personal space ideals. Especially since individuals prefer larger personal space when they are interacting with a stranger than an individual that is known to them (Felipe & Sommer, 2017). Due to the independent measures design people in the homosexual anticipated interaction group may have had larger personal space ideals which would have explained their larger chair distance behaviours. Had a repeated measures design been used the individual's personal space preferences would not have been able to affect the chair distances.

Despite this, the use of an independent measures design was still necessary to maintain the deception involved. This was to reduce the likelihood of social desirability bias from affecting the results which is a prevalent extraneous variable found in research addressing attitudes towards homosexuality (Coffman, Coffman & Ericson, 2013). It also meant since the participants were made to believe they were meeting their anticipated interaction partner their chair distances behaviours were genuine rather than intended behaviours. This is important as intended behaviours are not strong predictors of behaviour, cognitive dissonance may result in people acting differently in a real-life situation than they initially expect to (Harmon-Jones, Harmon-Jones & Levy, 2015). Using a repeated measured design would not allow for the deception in both conditions making the study more susceptible to social desirability bias (Van De Mortel, 2008). This would have prevented the researchers from measuring what they aimed to resulting in less internal validity (Druckman, Green, Kuklinski & Lupia, 2011).

Future research should include an implicit associations test to measure the implicit attitudes the participants have towards homosexuality. This would allow researchers to establish whether the chair distance measure was measuring the participants implicit attitudes towards homosexuality or individual differences in personal space preferences. This is because implicit associations tests are found to be incredibly reliable and valid measurements of attitudes towards homosexuality which are much more successful than many self-report measures (Banse, Seise & Zerbes, 2001). If future research is able to find that the results of the implicit associations test coincide with the chair distance behaviours this would indicate that the chair distance measure is in fact measuring implicit attitudes towards homosexuality. Thus, improving the internal validity by ensuring the researchers are measuring what they claimed to be (Druckman, Green, Kuklinski & Lupia, 2011).

Usefully the current research has a multitude of real-world applications that may improve the experiences of homosexuals in Britain. Firstly, the findings have shown that questionnaires that require individuals to explicitly disclose their attitudes are not accurate as their answers do not concur with their behaviour. Self-reported homonegativity in surveys is at an all-time low (British Social Attitudes, 2017), this has given homosexuals a false sense of security in believing they are now fully accepted by society (Pew Research Centre, 2017). This is because the current research has shown that self-report questionnaires addressing attitudes towards homosexuality are susceptible to floor effects, resulting in attitudes being displayed

that may not be genuine (Smith, Son & Kim, 2014). This false sense of security is problematic because it may lead to homosexuals not being as on guard as they may need to be in order to protect themselves. Since 20% of LGBT individuals reported being a victim of verbal or physical prejudice in 2017 (GOV.UK, 2019), being aware of the need to protect themselves is incredibly important. Because of this the current research has acknowledged the need for using a more accurate measure to assess British attitudes towards homosexuality, possibly a more implicit test, in order to prevent this false sense of security.

Furthermore, the current research also addresses the fact that individuals may possess homonegative attitudes that they are not aware of. This is because the research confirmed that peoples implicit and explicit attitudes towards homosexuality differ with more negative attitudes being displayed in implicit tests (Inbar, Pizarro & Bloom, 2012; Carruthers, 2018). Because of this the current research may lead to heterosexuals understanding the importance of ensuring they are fully aware of their true attitudes towards homosexuality and aim to address any negativity they may uncover. This can be done in a variety of ways due to the malleable nature of implicit attitudes, increasing interactions with a homosexual individual, exposing oneself to positive media representations of them and placing oneself in an environment in which counterstereotypes of homosexuals are present (Dasgupta & Rivera, 2008). In doing this it is likely to improve the experiences of homosexuals in Britain who are experiencing subtle homophobia at the hands of heterosexuals who may not be conscious of their prejudice.

Finally, the usefulness of the current study can also be applied to a clinical setting. Research has shown that health care professionals are likely to treat homosexuals differently to heterosexuals with research showing that 36% of nurses would refrain from treating a homosexual patient if given the chance (Rondahl, Innala & Carlsson, 2004); that psychotherapists assessed homosexuals more harshly and were more likely to diagnose them with a disorder than heterosexual patients (Garfinkle & Morin, 1978) and LGB individuals report experiencing discrimination in the options of treatment they were provided with compared to homosexuals (Willging, Salvador & Kano, 2006). This is an issue as homosexual individuals are more likely to suffer from mental illnesses, this would mean they are a group in which is in the most need for mental health services (Chakraborty, McManus, Brugha, Bebbington, King, 2011). However, due to the discrimination many homosexuals experience many report feeling dissatisfied with health services making them less likely to seek help (GOV.UK, 2016). The current research displays how implicit attitudes towards homosexuality need to be addressed and tackled in order to ensure discrimination is not present within in healthcare in order to ensure homosexuals are accessing the help they need. This can be done by ensuring health care practitioners are trained in providing appropriate treatment to homosexual patients prior to practising which is not currently widely done (Hinchliff, Gott & Galena, 2004).

To conclude, the current research was able to show how people are not always conscious of the prejudice attitudes they may hold towards homosexuals however their behaviour is able to convey it. These findings contradict the increasingly positive attitudes that British surveys have displayed over the years, especially since the legalisation of same-sex marriage. They also indicate why homosexuals are still reporting hate crimes and subtle homophobia at the hands of

heterosexuals. Due to such negative implications catalysed by unaddressed implicit homonegativity, homosexuals can never hold an equal position in society until these implicit attitudes are acknowledged and tackled. The current research was able to display this and provide possible interventions which may result in further acceptance and inclusion of homosexuals into society.

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