

## Component Measure of Attitudes Toward Homosexuality

Mary E. Kite

Ball State University

Research has demonstrated that attitudes toward gay men and lesbians are multidimensional and that to fully understand anti-gay prejudice, these different aspects of people's attitudes and perceptions should be considered (see LaMar & Kite, 1998, Kite & Whitley, 1996). Because attitudes toward homosexuality can serve different functions for different people (Herek, 1986), anti-gay prejudice can best be understood by considering these differing perspectives. One attitude component reflects the general belief that homosexuality violates traditional values, for example, whereas another component reflects the possibility that people fear contact with gays and lesbians in general or sexual advances from a same-sex other specifically. These attitudes are separate from the stereotypic beliefs people hold about gay men and women and from people's tendency to support or deny gay men and lesbians civil rights.

### Description of Measure

*Scale Development.* To construct this measure, established measures of attitudes toward homosexuality, summarized in Beere (1990), were reviewed. Initially, 174 items were selected that conceptually representing four components of attitudes toward homosexuality: Civil Rights, Condemnation/Tolerance, Contact, Morality, and Stereotypes. These items were categorized by component and overlapping items were eliminated. For those categories not well-represented by previous measures, new items were written.

A sample of 270 college students completed the measure and their responses were factor analyzed using a varimax factor analysis. Results revealed five factors that accounted for 56.8% of the variance. Most parallel items for lesbians and gay men loaded on the same factor; the exception was that the gay male and lesbian contact items emerged as separate factors. Contrary to expectations, civil rights did not emerge as a separate factor. Those items loaded on the Condemnation/Tolerance factor. This measure was developed using a college student sample; however, it can be used with any population.

*Instrument.* The final measure consists of 92 items assessing attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. Of these, 42 items address attitudes toward gay men and 42 parallel items address attitudes toward lesbians. An additional eight items refer to homosexuality or same-sex interactions (and do not vary by sex of target). Number of items per subscale and Cronbach's alpha, based on LaMar and Kite (1998) are as follows: Gay Male Condemnation/Tolerance (11 items; alpha = .92); Lesbian Condemnation/Tolerance (11 items; alpha = .89); Gay Male Morality (10 items; alpha = .92); Lesbian Morality (10 items; alpha = .93); Neutral Morality (3 items; alpha = .80); Gay Male Contact (14 items; alpha = .96); Lesbian Contact (14 items; alpha = .95); Neutral Contact (4 items; alpha = .75); Gay Male Stereotypes (7 items; alpha = .78); Lesbian Stereotypes (7 items; alpha = .75).

*Response Mode and Timing.* Participants evaluate these items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 *strongly agree* to 5 *strongly disagree*. It is recommended that the item order be randomized and parallel items not appear contiguously on the measure. At administration, items from the four components can be intermixed. However, each component can be used as a stand-alone instrument to assess a specific component of attitudes toward homosexuality. The instrument takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

*Scoring.* Subscales are created for each of the 10 factors by first reverse scoring items that are worded negatively. Items which are reverse scored are marked on the instrument (see Table 1). Subscale scores are then created by averaging participants' ratings on the items. LaMar and Kite (1998) report correlations among the subscales. Correlations between the gay male and lesbian versions of the subscales are high for the Condemnation/Tolerance factor ( $r=.90$ ) and Morality factor ( $r=.91$ ) and smaller for the Contact and Stereotype factors (see Table 2).

*Scale Validity.* LaMar and Kite (1996) compared mean subscale scores for each target sex for male and female respondents. Results showed that men evaluated gay men more negatively than they evaluated lesbians on both the Condemnation/Tolerance and Morality subscales. On these two subscales, women respondents evaluated gay men and lesbians similarly. For the contact subscale, men rated contact with gay men more negatively than contact with lesbians and women rated contact with lesbians more negatively than contact with gay men. There were no sex of respondent differences on the Stereotype subscale, but gay men were evaluated more negatively than lesbians on that subscale. These results provide support for the idea that attitudes toward homosexuality are multidimensional.

Whitley (1999) found that, averaged across two samples, the Stereotype subscale (for gay men and lesbians combined) was correlated with Right Wing Authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1988;  $r=.44$ ) and Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto,  $r=.37$ ) but was unrelated to affective responses to gays and lesbians ( $r= -.14$ ). Wilkinson (2006) reported correlations between subscales assessing attitudes toward lesbians and attitudes toward gender roles. Specifically, he found the Attitude Toward Women Scale (AWS; Spence & Hahn, 1997) was correlated with the Contact Subscale ( $r=.41$ ), the Morality subscale ( $r=.47$ ), and the Stereotype Subscale ( $r=.43$ ). He also reported that Hostile Sexism (HS), as assessed by the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996), was correlated with the Contact ( $r=.26$ ), Morality ( $r=.30$ ), and Stereotype ( $r=.44$ ) subscales. Benevolent Sexism (BS), as assessed by the ASI, was correlated with the Contact ( $r=.35$ ), Morality ( $r=.37$ ), and Stereotype ( $r=.43$ ) subscales. Finally, he reported that the Benevolence Toward Men (BM) subscale of the Ambivalence toward Men Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1999) correlated with the Contact ( $r=.47$ ), Morality ( $r=.47$ ), and Stereotype ( $r=.54$ ) subscales. Similar relationships between HS and BM are reported in Wilkinson (2008). As would be expected, then, scores on the component measure are related to attitudes toward gender roles and to individual differences measures of prejudice.

## References

Altemeyer, B. (1988). *Enemies of freedom: Understanding right-wing authoritarianism*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Beere, C. A. (1990). *Sex and gender issues: A handbook of test and measures*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Glick, P. & Fiske, S. T. (1996). The ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating hostile and benevolent sexism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *127*, 199-208.
- Glick, P. & Fiske, S. T. (1999). The Ambivalence toward Men Inventory: Differentiating hostile and benevolent sexism toward men. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *23*, 519-536.
- Herek, G. M. (1986). The instrumentality of attitudes: Toward a neofunctional theory. *Journal of Social Issues*, *42*(2), 99-114.
- Kite, M. E., & Whitley, B. E., Jr. (1996). Sex differences in attitudes toward homosexual persons, behavior, and civil rights. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *22*, 336-353.
- LaMar, L., & Kite, M. E. (1996). Sex differences in attitudes toward gay men and lesbians: A multi-dimensional perspective. *Journal of Sex Research*, *35*, 189-196.
- Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L. M., & Malle, B. F. (1994). Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *67*, 741-763.
- Spence, J. T. & Hahn, E. D. (1997). The Attitudes toward Women Scale and attitude change in college students. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *21*, 17-34.
- Whitley, B. E., Jr. (1999). Right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *77*, 126-134.
- Wilkinson, W. W. (2006). Exploring heterosexual women's anti-lesbian attitudes. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *51*(2), 139-155.
- Wilkinson, W. W. (2008). Threatening the patriarchy: Testing an explanatory paradigm of anti-lesbian attitudes. *Sex Roles*, *59*, 512-520. Table 1

**Table 1**

**Component Measure of Attitudes Toward Homosexuality**

Record your responses to each item using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree

**Condemnation/Tolerance**

1. Apartment complexes should not accept lesbians (gay men) as renters.
2. Lesbians (gay men) should be required to register with the police department where they live.
3. Lesbians (gay men) should not be allowed to hold responsible positions.
- \*4. Job discrimination against lesbians (gay men) is wrong.
5. Lesbians (gay men) are a danger to young people.
6. Lesbians (gay men) are more likely to commit deviant acts such as child molestation, rape, voyeurism (peeping Toms) than are heterosexuals.
7. Lesbians (gay men) dislike members of the opposite sex.
- \*8. Finding out an artist was a gay man (lesbian) would have no effect on my appreciation of her (his) work.
- \*9. Lesbians (gay men) should be allowed to serve in the military.
- \*10. Lesbians (gay men) should not be discriminated against because of their sexual preference.
11. Lesbians (gay men) should not be allowed to work with children.

**Gay Male/Lesbian Social Norms/Morality**

1. The increasing acceptance of gay men (lesbians) in our society is aiding in the deterioration of morals.
2. Gay men (lesbians) endanger the institution of the family.
- \*3. Many gay men (lesbians) are very moral and ethical people.

- \*4. Gay male (lesbian) couples should be able to adopt children the same as heterosexual couples.
- 5. The idea of marriages between gay men (lesbians) seems ridiculous to me.
- \*6. State laws regulating private, consenting behavior between gay men (lesbians) should be loosened.
- 7. Gay men (lesbians) just can't fit into our society.
- 8. Gay men (lesbians) do need psychological treatment.
- \*9. Gay men (lesbians) are a viable part of our society.
- 10. Homosexual behavior between two men (women) is just plain wrong.

### **Neutral Morality**

- \*1. Homosexuality, as far as I am concerned, is not sinful.
- 2. Homosexuality is a perversion.
- 3. I find the thought of homosexual acts disgusting.

### **Gay Male/Lesbian Contact**

- \*1. I enjoy the company of gay men (lesbians).
- 2. It would be upsetting to me to find out I was alone with a gay man (lesbian).
- 3. I avoid gay men (lesbians) whenever possible.
- 4. I would feel nervous being in a group of gay men (lesbians).
- 5. I think gay men (lesbians) are disgusting.
- \*6. I would enjoy attending social functions at which gay men (lesbians) were present.
- 7. Bars that cater solely to gay men (lesbians) should be placed in a specific and known part of town.
- \*8. I would feel comfortable working closely with a gay man (lesbian).
- 9. If a gay man (lesbian) approached me in a public restroom, I would be disgusted.
- 10. I would not want a gay man (lesbian) to live in the house next to mine.

11. Two gay men (lesbians) holding hands or displaying affection in public is revolting.
12. I would be nervous if a gay man (lesbian) sat next to me on a bus.
13. I would decline membership in an organization if I found out it had gay male (lesbian) members.
- \*14. If I knew someone was a gay male (lesbian), I would go ahead and form a friendship with that individual.

### **Neutral Contact**

1. If a member of my sex made advances toward me, I would feel angry.
- \*2. I would feel comfortable knowing I was attractive to members of my sex.
- \*3. I would be comfortable if I found myself attracted to a member of my sex.
4. I would feel uncomfortable if a member of my sex made an advance toward me.

### **Gay Male/Lesbian Stereotypes**

1. Lesbians (gay men) prefer to take roles (passive or aggressive) in their sexual behavior.
2. The love between two lesbians (gay men) is quite different from the love between two persons of the opposite sex.
3. Lesbians (gay men) have weaker sex drives than heterosexuals.
4. A lesbian's (gay man's) mother is probably very domineering.
5. Most lesbians (gay men) have a life of one night stands.
6. Most lesbians (gay men) like to dress in opposite-sex clothing.
7. Most lesbians (gay men) have identifiable masculine (feminine) characteristics.

Items marked with a \* are reverse scored

**Table 2****Correlations Among Subscales of Component Measure of Attitudes Toward Homosexuality**

	Gay Condemnation - Tolerance	Lesbian Condemnation - Tolerance	Gay Morality	Lesbian Morality	Gay Contact	Lesbian Contact	Neutral Contact	Gay Stereotypes	Lesbian Stereotypes
Gay Condemnation - Tolerance		.90	.83	.75	.83	.55	.46	.62	.61
Lesbian Condemnation - Tolerance			.79	.79	.78	.67	.50	.62	.63
Gay Morality				.91	.85	.64	.58	.63	.61
Lesbian Morality					.76	.75	.59	.62	.63
Gay Contact						.61	.67	.60	.56
Lesbian Contact							.63	.54	.54
Neutral Contact								.42	.42
Gay Stereotypes									.79
<i>N</i>	263	264	264	264	263	263	264	264	264

*Note.* All correlations are significant at  $p < .001$ .

Reprinted from LaMar & Kite (1998), Table 2 with permission from Taylor and Francis.