

INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN RIVERS STATE

¹Obindah, Fortune (Ph.D) and ²Gloria Matthews (Ph.D)

^{1&2}Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of Education. Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Email: obindahfortune2018@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigated Influence of Demographic Variables on Students' Perception of Homosexuality in Public Universities in Rivers State. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. Eight research questions and eight null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consisted of all the students of 2021/2022 academic session in the three public universities in Rivers State with a population of forty thousand nine hundred and sixty nine. A sample of 388 students was drawn from the population. The sample was obtained through multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled: Students' Homosexuality Perception Questionnaire (UHPQ). The instrument was validated by one expert in psychology and one expert in measurement and evaluation. The instrument produced a reliability of coefficient of 0.89. Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation for research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using independent sample t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that students had a negative perception towards homosexuality irrespective of gender, age, level of study and course of study. It was concluded that there is no significant influence of students' perception of homosexuality based on gender, age, level of study and course of study. Based on these results, it was recommended that the government should put in place agency to monitor the practice of same-sex to ensure compliance with the existence Same-sex Marriage Prohibition Law.

Keywords: Homosexuality, Sex, Age, Students

INTRODUCTION

In Africa and particularly in Nigeria, homosexuality, which was once known as a taboo, has started gaining undue attention in some quarters such as secondary schools, universities and even religious circles. It is sad to state that both adults and adolescents are involved in this societal evil. In recent past, the mention of homosexuality made the ears of Nigerians to tingle but that is definitely not the case today. Also, in the past in Nigeria, homosexuality if at all in practice before now was done in the secret, the number of indulgent was scanty and its practice was rare in our secondary schools and universities. Conversely today, it seems that the rate of indulgence is going high, the characteristic secrecy is gradually vanishing and it is almost rampantly and publicly practiced. Above all, God condemns homosexuality (Romans 1:18-28), meaning that homosexuality is an abnormal behaviour.

In this vein, homosexuality is acknowledged as a reality, an abnormality and should be sublimated for the benefit of the society; since the drive may be normal but the behaviour is pathological (Freud 1905 in Drescher et al., 2013). Again, the rate at which the practice of gay is gradually increasing and the corresponding acceptance it has gained among students that are at various levels of education (primary schools, secondary schools, polytechnics, colleges of education and universities) demand immediate intervention so as to save not only our educational system but also the future of our nation. More so, there is no doubt the fact that there are gay activities going on in some families in Nigeria. It is also possible that some marriages suffer because of partners that are involved in homosexuality. Similarly, there could be certain children that are helplessly molested by parents of same-sex and house helps of same-sex.

Supposedly too, no adequate awareness regarding homosexuality hazards has been created. It is not also impossible to think that, probably the Federal Government of Nigeria has not provided for the training of Nigerian counsellors among other professionals that will enable them assist people that are addicted to homosexuality with a view to rehabilitating, re-orienting, re-educating and modifying their behaviours. In addition, it looks like the Government has not provided special rehabilitating centres for sexual minorities. Indisputably, technology has contributed in no small measure to our educational system and nation building; however, it is appalling to note that the advent of technology, being a foreign influence, has equally promoted homosexual activities and practices among students in Nigeria. This is evident in students' misuse of the available social networks such as: face book, twitter, whatsapp, instagram, messenger, vibe, imo, wechat. They find their ways to these social networks and most times become negatively influenced by films relating to the issue under discussion.

Recently, it has become boring for people that are into homosexuality as they see themselves helplessly messed up in their trousers not minding where they find themselves. It is no longer news that there is underwear that looks like a child's pampers that is sold in the market today to homosexual persons. This underwear is worn by adults who are homosexuals to protect their anal region from being messed up. The essence of using it is to protect themselves from being messed up, since in their gay practice the male organ is inserted into the anus, the linings or tissues around the anus get loosed due to penile penetration so that fluids (like excreta) leak from that part of the body. This has raised a great concern even among homosexuals today in the society. So, they equally need help since the momentary pleasures derived from homosexuality can no longer measure up with the consequences, frustration and cost of treatment.

This is even aside from the fact that many homosexual people who are equally heterosexuals might afflict their fellow homosexuals with the terminal disease called HIV/AIDS sexual intercourse. The point is, since they are bisexual; they contract HIV/AIDS from the female carriers and transfer it to their fellow homosexuality. The other aspect of it is that these bisexuals that are married also might contract HIV/AIDS from their fellow homosexuals and come to infect their marriage partners. This in itself possesses a great threat to life and requires creating awareness to dissuade people that might want to develop interest. The irony is that homosexuals argue that the reason why they go into homosexuality while avoiding heterosexuality is to prevent contracting sexually transmitted diseases; including, HIV/AIDS.

Thus, the study investigates demographic variables and students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine the influence of demographic variables on students' perception of homosexuality in public universities in Rivers State. In specific terms, the objectives of the study include to:

1. Determine students' perception of homosexuality in selected three public universities in Rivers State based on gender.
2. Determine students' perception of homosexuality in selected three public universities in Rivers State based on age.
3. Determine students' perception of homosexuality in selected three public universities in Rivers State based on level of study.
4. Determine students' perception of homosexuality in selected three public universities in Rivers State based on course of study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the mean rating on students' perception of homosexuality in selected three public universities in Rivers State based on gender?
2. What is the mean rating on students' perception of homosexuality in selected three public universities in Rivers State based on age?
3. What is the mean rating on students' perception of homosexuality in selected three public universities in Rivers State based on level of study?
4. What is the mean rating on students' perception of homosexuality in selected three public universities in Rivers State based on course of study?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on age.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on level of study.
4. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on course of study.

Literature Review

Homosexuality

The term "gender minority" refers to a larger category that includes homosexuality. A construct called gender is made up of biological, psychological, and cultural elements that are typically used to categorize people as male or female. People who have gender identities, expressions, or behaviors that are not typically linked with their biological sex are referred to as transgender. Individuals who recognize as transsexual may unequivocally relate to one orientation over another (e.g., natal females who distinguish as men, natal guys who recognize as ladies) or with a variety that strays from the paired orientation builds that are normal in Western social orders (e.g., people who feel they have both or neither orientation). Transsexual individuals are acknowledged as individuals from traditional society in certain societies, like Native American and various in Asia. The phrase is generally used to describe LGB persons, particularly homosexual people. Gender and sexual minorities, gender, sexual, and romantic minorities, and gender and sexual diversity have all been offered more recently as catch-all names. The phrase "sexual minority" was probably first used in the late 1960s, possibly as a result of Lars Ullerstam's groundbreaking book "The Erotic Minorities: A Swedish View," which advocated for tolerance and compassion for unusual sexual expressions including paedophilia and "sex criminals." The phrase was used as an ethnic minority analogy.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) used to classify homosexuality as a mental disorder, but clinical research has since shown that it is actually a normal, healthy, and positive aspect of human sexuality. Sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) are still offered by certain specialists and looked for by certain people who have an awkward outlook on their sexual direction, notwithstanding the psychological wellness local areas well established support of every sexual direction. The American Mental Affiliation and the American Mental Affiliation are two associations that go against reparative treatment, additionally alluded to as transformation treatment, and many states have either banned it or are thinking about regulation to do as such, particularly for minors.

What's more, advisors are expected by the morals of the callings of social work, brain research, psychiatry, and marriage and family mentoring to similarly treat everybody. Cass (1979) portrays

six phases that numerous gay people go through while managing their own sexual direction. These stages have been generally recognized by specialists and gay people the same. They incorporate; Identity Consciousness: At this stage, the kid or teenager starts to understand that his or her feelings are unique from those of others and from what they have been taught. The thinking and behavior of the person are inundated with shock and curiosity.

Identity comparison: At this stage, the person starts to investigate his or her emotions independently and contrasts them with societal, familial, and peer norms. The person is really concerned and may even feel anxious at this point in the comparing process. People contrast the values and behaviors ingrained in their hearts.

Identity Tolerance: This stage is marked by resistance and resentment toward what has been taught. In this phase, the person frequently struggles with their emotions and tries to deny them. No one needs to be gay in a world that is prevalently hetero. Character Acknowledgment: At this stage, subsequent to understanding that their sexuality is a piece of what their identity is, they begin to embrace it, research their sentiments, and search for a local area where they can fit in and feel invited.

Personality Pride: This is some of the time joined by rage at guardians, society, religion, or different components of the world that let them know they are mischievous, off-base, corrupt, or intellectually debilitated on the grounds that their warm gestures are for a similar sex. They investigate their newfound sexuality and embrace the "gay way of life." The gay or lesbian individual might start to oppose what society has shown them as of now. Identity Synthesis: The moment where homosexuality no longer serves as an identifying characteristic but rather becomes a part of who they are. They start to perceive themselves as parents, workers, leaders, instructors, supervisors, coaches, and volunteers who happen to be homosexual rather than as gay men or lesbians. Instead of perceiving their sexuality as apart from the rest of who they are, they are able to accept themselves more fully in the final stage. Concerns such as censure, the existence of homosexuality for a long period, and its unnaturalness have been emphasized (Kunyahop, 2018; Young in Boswell 2017, Egan, 2018).

Perception of Homosexuality

Tshilongo (2014) reveals that the concept of homosexuality is still viewed as a problematic topic where many have varying views of its practices and its players, even in what one could label a more liberal and enlightened current culture, both locally and globally. ASRs are generally disliked in Africa since they are outlawed in the majority of the continent's nations. While there is a wealth of general literature on whether or not ASRs are accepted, there are few studies that examine this topic from the perspective of an eager and explorative young demographic among undergraduate students in Nigeria. According to Omodara and Idowu (2020), homosexuality and other non-normative or alternative sexual behaviors are very little tolerated in African society due to the high level of societal rejection of non-normative sexual identities. There is no denying the reality that homosexuality and other ASRs have become into topics of extensive research and discussion both internationally and in Nigeria. As a result, these connections have emerged from the shadows to become talked-about topics.

Therefore, according to Johnson and Greeley (2016), there is a need for further empirical investigation of the issue. Despite the progress society has made in accepting diversity, many young people still have uneasy and unclear attitudes on non-heterosexual lives (Sharpe, 2012). These beliefs contribute to the marginalization and persecution of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) population. According to Burn (2010)'s survey, 77% of homosexual and lesbian college students had endured verbal taunts because of their sexual orientation. In addition, 27% reported receiving physical assault threats, and 22% said they had been pursued or followed. Almost 80% of the college students in this survey have come across offensive statements towards LGBTIQ people on campus.

The literature on heterosexual views toward LGBT problems was reviewed. Following the literature studies, we conducted a survey of undergraduate UWS tout students majoring in Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS), Applied Science, Art, Engineering Technology, and Hospitality and Tourism to ascertain their viewpoints in these areas (HT).

It is clear from the public conversation on homosexuality that most Nigerians have a negative view of homosexuality, contending that it is immoral, in violation of religious law, and contrary to our culture. Induced abortion, bribery/corruption, commercial sex work, incest, and extramarital relationships, to name a few, are other behaviors that might be regarded to be as immoral and against religious laws and Nigerian culture.

The majority of faiths forbid them and call on its adherents to abstain from them. Additionally, none of them have ever sparked such a strong backlash from the general population. Granted, there was a lot of talk about commercial sex labor a few years ago, but not to the degree of declarations by public figures or religious authorities being extremely impassioned about it. Daily stories of rape or murder, incest, adolescent pregnancies, bribery/corruption scandals, etc., may be found in the news. However, these are simply mentioned in passing on radio and television, and only reach the headlines.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Homosexuality

Three theories of homosexuality are considered; namely, attribution theory, basis for contact hypothesis and Symbolic Interactionism. Personal commitment to a certain group tends Few research that used sociological theory to examine how attitudes toward homosexuality are impacted were found in the survey of related literature. Attribution theory was the first recognized theory. As a means of elucidating the concept that conduct may be understood as either controlled or uncontrollable, Whitehead (2010) examined attribution theory. People who ascribe to perceive people more poorly if their conduct is stigmatized in any manner believe that the individual is personally responsible for those actions that are deemed controllable. The attribution of choice to sexual orientation, according to Whitehead's (2010) research, is one of the best predictors of views about homosexuality. According to research by Herek and Glunt (2013) and Whitehead (2010), which was framed by the theory of attribution, those who believe that homosexuality is the result of natural or biological forces have more favorable attitudes toward gay rights and same-sex unions, while those who believe that homosexuality is the result of a choice have more unfavorable attitudes. This idea connects to the current study by arguing that natural or societal variables might account for how people attribute their sexual preferences, including homosexuality.

The contact hypothesis was based on the second identified idea (Herek & Glunt 2013; Hans et al. 2012). The contact hypothesis was explored in order to investigate the attitudes about homosexuality that intergroup interaction fosters and how frequently coming into touch with gay people affects these sentiments. Hans et al. (2012) discovered that social interaction with gay people fosters more accepting views about homosexuality. Positive views towards homosexuality will develop the more one interacts with homosexuals (Herek & Glunt 2013; Hans et al (2012). Herek and Glunt (2013) employed the contact hypothesis to examine the effects of interpersonal contact with homosexuals on views about gay Interpersonal interaction with homosexuals has been demonstrated to have a greater beneficial impact on men's opinions about lesbians than gay men. This study supports the premise that people, in this case students, are more likely to exhibit a positive attitude when they engage with more homosexuals.

Demographic Variables and Perception of Homosexuality

Tshilongo (2014) looked at how NWU student groups felt about the presence of LGBT students on campus. Surveying a population made up of students was the method utilized. The goal of the study is to show if gender role views and beliefs, personal contact with a gay man, lesbian, or bisexual person, and perceptions of homosexual students among university students are significantly influenced by these factors. The study also shows if having a

personal relationship with a gay man, lesbian, or bisexual person is or will be a predictor of more accepting and tolerant attitudes toward homosexuals, as in a classroom situation. South Africa's democracy is under risk if segregation, defamation, and maltreatment of gay and lesbian individuals proceed. Subsequently, colleges and different foundations of higher learning should go to forceful lengths to battle homophobia and heterosexism. This might be achieved by growing more far reaching, relevantly mindful projects that recognize the meaning of distinguishing heterosexism as an issue that influences this country's all's inhabitants. Age and academic level were not thought to be significant factors in the study.

Omodara and Idowu (2020) looked at how Obafemi Awolowo University students felt about homosexual men and lesbians. The research used a descriptive survey approach. Data were gathered using a self-structured questionnaire. Utilizing both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, data were examined. The findings showed that students' backgrounds did not affect how they saw or felt towards homosexual people or lesbians. According to the report, OAU students do not support homosexuality and reject it. All of the background factors examined for this study have $P > z$ values larger than 0.05 for students' perceptions of ASRs, supporting the first hypothesis. This suggests that elements influencing students' perceptions of ASRs, such as background traits like respondents' ages, are not present. Therefore, it is agreed that this theory is accurate.

According to Omodara and Idowu (2020), OAU students' academic standing has little bearing on how they view and feel about ASRs. This suggests that variables impacting students' perceptions of attitudes toward ASRs have little to do with respondents' levels of education. This hypothesis analyzes using logistic regression the views and attitudes of OAU students about ASRs. The presumption is that the variable is significant when the p-value ($P > z$) is less than 0.05 and not significant when it is more than 0.05. This demonstrates that for both students' perceptions of and attitudes about ASRs, all background factors examined for this study have $P > z$ values larger than 0.05. This suggests that respondents' backgrounds do not represent important variables impacting how they view and feel about ASRs.

Ofori (2014) looked on the prevalence of homosexual behavior in educational settings. In particular, the study sought to determine whether homosexuality is practiced in classrooms in the city of Cape Coast and whether it is seen favorably or adversely. In the Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central Region of Ghana, 351 participants—203 men and 148 women—from Form 3 and 4 pupils from three schools made up the sample. Data gathering involved the use of a questionnaire. Three schools—two of which were female and one of which was male—were specifically chosen. The schools were chosen using the purposeful sampling approach, which enables the researcher to pick respondents who are qualified to reply to the study's questions while yet being true to the study's goals. Data analysis techniques used descriptive statistics. According to the survey, homosexual acts are practiced in senior high schools. According to the results, 82.6% of participants say homosexuality is practiced at their schools, compared to 17.4% who think it is not. Additionally, 26.5% of respondents claimed they know a friend who is involved in the activity.

METHODOLOGY

The design of the study was the descriptive survey. The study was a descriptive survey; because the researcher collected data from a large sample of students from three universities in Rivers State and describe their perception of homosexuality. The population of the study was 40,969 students in the three public universities in Rivers State in the 2021/2022 academic session.

388 students constituted the sample size which was obtained by means of Taro Yamene formular. Proportionate sampling was used to allocate sample to the three public universities involved in the survey. The study adopted simple random sapling to choose subjects in each of the university.

Table 1 Population and Sample Distribution

S/N	Name of University	Population Size	Sample Size
1	University of Port Harcourt	17588	166
2	Rivers State University	12854	122
3	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education	10527	100
	Total	40969	388

The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled: Students' Homosexuality Perception Questionnaire (UHPQ). The instrument consisted of two sections: A, and B. Section A was designed to elicit personal information from students such as gender, age, level of study and course of study among others. Section B contained 15 items which focused on Perception of Homosexuality. The items of the instruments were measured on a 4 point scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) which were scored as 4, 3, 2, and 1 points respectively.

Face and content validity of the instrument was determined by an expert in Psychology and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni. After the correction and modification the final draft served as the questionnaire for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined through Cronbach alpha method for a measure of its internal consistency. Pilot copies were administered on 40 students in Elech Amadi Polytechnic Port Harcourt who were not part of the study. The instrument yielded reliability coefficient of 0.89.

The research questions were answered using mean, standard deviation, frequency counts and percentages, while the hypotheses were tested using independent samples t-test at 0.05 level of significant with statistical package for social sciences.

Result

RQ1: What is the mean rating on students' perception of homosexuality in selected three public universities in Rivers State based on gender?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of perception of homosexuality based on gender

S/N		Male		Female		Mean Set	Std. Dev.	Remarks
		\bar{X}	ST D	\bar{X}	STD			
1	I think that same sex marriage is a choice and should be allowed	1.75	0.72	1.78	0.77	1.77	0.89	Disagree
2	If I am a judge I will not condemn any man that chooses to have sex with his fellow man	1.68	0.70	1.96	0.86	1.82	0.78	Disagree
3	If I become president tomorrow, I will sign same sex legalization bill into law	1.89	0.93	2.14	0.72	2.02	0.83	Disagree
4	I feel homosexuality is a natural thing	2.70	1.00	2.18	0.80	2.44	0.90	Disagree
5	I don't mind being in a gay/lesbian relationship	2.11	0.79	1.37	0.74	1.74	0.76	Disagree
6	Some of my friends are gay/lesbian and it's okay by me	1.87	1.05	2.17	0.75	2.02	0.9	Disagree
7	Homosexuality should not be seen as sin	2.28	0.82	2.22	0.84	2.25	0.83	Disagree
8	I hate it when people talk ill of homosexuality	1.82	0.79	2.36	0.66	2.09	0.73	Disagree
9	Churches should allow homosexual marriages	1.91	0.86	2.15	0.91	2.03	0.88	Disagree

10	Homosexual people should be allowed to live their lives like other people	1.80	0.77	2.25	0.87	2.05	0.82	Disagree
Grand Mean/SD		1.98	0.84	2.06	0.79	2.02	0.82	

Based on the results displayed in Table 2 on the perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on gender, it was shown that male students had a mean value of 1.98 (SD = 0.84) while female students had a mean value of 2.06 (SD = 0.82). Since the mean value of both male and female students were less than 2.50 which is the criterion mean guiding the study, it therefore implies that male and female students had a negative perception towards homosexuality. However, since the mean of male students was lesser than female students, it therefore implies that male students had a more negative perception than female students. Furthermore, based on the results that a grand mean of 2.02 was obtained which was lesser than the criterion mean, it therefore implies that there is a negative perception of homosexuality among both male and female students in selected universities in Rivers State

RQ2: What is the mean rating on students' perception of homosexuality in selected three public universities in Rivers State based on age?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of perception of homosexuality based on age

S/ N		18-30		Above 30		Mea n Set	Std. Dev.	Remarks
		\bar{X}	STD	\bar{X}	STD			
1	I think that same sex marriage is a choice and should be allowed	1.68	0.60	1.90	0.63	1.79	0.62	Disagree
2	If I am a judge I will not condemn any man that chooses to have sex with his fellow man	1.62	0.68	1.83	0.73	1.73	0.71	Disagree
3	If I become president tomorrow, I will sign same sex legalization bill into law	1.71	0.74	1.98	0.80	1.85	0.77	Disagree
4	I feel homosexuality is a natural thing	2.34	0.78	2.25	0.80	2.30	0.79	Disagree
5	I don't mind being in a gay/lesbian relationship	2.28	0.72	1.93	0.73	2.11	0.73	Disagree
6	Some of my friends are gay/lesbian and it's okay by me	1.97	0.67	2.07	0.70	2.02	0.69	Disagree
7	Homosexuality should not be seen as sin	2.15	0.83	2.18	0.82	2.17	0.83	Disagree
8	I hate it when people talk ill of homosexuality	1.88	0.70	2.27	0.63	2.08	0.67	Disagree
9	Churches should allow homosexual marriages	1.70	0.81	2.15	0.64	1.93	0.73	Disagree
10	Homosexual people should be allowed to live their lives like other people	1.87	0.56	2.05	0.87	1.96	0.72	Disagree
Grand Mean/SD		1.92	0.71	2.06	0.74	1.99	0.72	

Based on the results displayed in Table 3 on the perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on age, it was shown that younger students between the ages of 18-30 years had a mean value of 1.92 (SD = 0.71) while older students above 30 years had a mean value of 2.06 (SD = 0.76). Since the mean value of both younger and older students were less than 2.50 which is the criterion mean guiding the study, it therefore implies that younger and older students had a negative perception towards homosexuality. However, since the mean of younger students was lesser than older students, it therefore implies that younger students had a

more negative perception than older students. Furthermore, based on the results that a grand mean of 1.99 was obtained which was lesser than the criterion mean, it therefore implies that there is a negative perception of homosexuality among both young and older students in selected universities in Rivers State.

RQ3: What is the mean rating on students' perception of homosexuality in selected three public universities in Rivers State based on level of study?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of perception of homosexuality based on level of study

S/N		Fresh		Returning		Mean Set	Std. Dev.	Remarks
		\bar{X}	STD	\bar{X}	STD			
1	I think that same sex marriage is a choice and should be allowed	1.61	0.65	1.98	0.67	1.80	0.66	Disagree
2	If I am a judge I will not condemn any man that chooses to have sex with his fellow man	1.57	0.61	2.11	0.81	1.84	0.71	Disagree
3	If I become president tomorrow, I will sign same sex legalization bill into law	1.81	0.65	2.31	0.72	2.06	0.69	Disagree
4	I feel homosexuality is a natural thing	2.02	0.75	2.31	0.73	2.17	0.74	Disagree
5	I don't mind being in a gay/lesbian relationship	2.08	0.79	2.93	0.91	2.51	0.85	Disagree
6	Some of my friends are gay/lesbian and it's okay by me	1.81	0.75	2.07	0.70	1.94	0.73	Disagree
7	Homosexuality should not be seen as sin	2.21	0.83	2.20	0.82	2.21	0.83	Disagree
8	I hate it when people talk ill of homosexuality	1.66	0.72	2.37	0.67	2.02	0.70	Disagree
9	Churches should allow homosexual marriages	1.77	0.89	2.27	0.66	2.02	0.78	Disagree
10	Homosexual people should be allowed to live their lives like other people	1.20	0.61	2.31	0.80	1.76	0.71	Disagree
Grand Mean/SD		1.77	0.73	2.29	0.75	2.03	0.74	

Based on the results displayed in Table 4 on the perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on level of study, it was shown that fresh students had a mean value of 1.77 (SD = 0.73) while returning students had a mean value of 2.06 (SD = 0.76). Since the mean value of both fresh and returning students were less than 2.50 which is the criterion mean guiding the study, it therefore implies that both fresh and returning students had a negative perception towards homosexuality. However, since the mean of fresh students was lesser than returning students, it therefore implies that fresh students had a more negative perception than returning students. Furthermore, based on the results that a grand mean of 1.99 was obtained which was lesser than the criterion mean, it therefore implies that there is a negative perception of homosexuality among both fresh and returning students in selected universities in Rivers State.

RQ4 What is the mean rating on students' perception of homosexuality in selected three public universities in Rivers State based on course of study?

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation of perception of homosexuality based on course of study

S/N		Science		Non-Science		Mean Set	Std. Dev.	Remarks
		\bar{X}	STD	\bar{X}	STD			
1	I think that same sex marriage is a choice and should be allowed	1.91	0.60	1.96	0.63	1.94	0.62	Disagree

2	If I am a judge I will not condemn any man that chooses to have sex with his fellow man	1.62	0.68	1.83	0.73	1.73	0.71	Disagree
3	If I become president tomorrow, I will sign same sex legalization bill into law	1.71	0.74	1.97	0.80	1.84	0.77	Disagree
4	I feel homosexuality is a natural thing	1.67	0.78	2.18	0.80	1.93	0.79	Disagree
5	I don't mind being in a gay/lesbian relationship	2.28	0.72	1.93	0.73	2.11	0.73	Disagree
6	Some of my friends are gay/lesbian and it's okay by me	1.97	0.67	2.15	0.70	2.06	0.69	Disagree
7	Homosexuality should not be seen as sin	2.28	0.83	2.20	0.82	2.24	0.83	Disagree
8	I hate it when people talk ill of homosexuality	1.88	0.70	2.26	0.63	2.07	0.67	Disagree
9	Churches should allow homosexual marriages	1.70	0.81	1.75	0.64	1.73	0.73	Disagree
10	Homosexual people should be allowed to live their lives like other people	1.87	0.56	1.25	0.87	1.56	0.72	Disagree
Grand Mean/SD		1.89	0.71	1.95	0.74	1.92	0.72	

From the results shown in Table 5 on the perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on course of study, it was shown that students in science related discipline had a mean value of 1.89 (SD = 0.71) while students in non-science related disciplines had a mean value of 1.95 (SD = 0.74). Since the mean value of both students in science and non-science disciplines were less than 2.50 which is the criterion mean guiding the study, it therefore implies that both students in science and non-science course of study had a negative perception towards homosexuality. However, since the mean of science students was lesser than students in non-science related disciplines, it therefore implies that science students had a more negative perception than non-science students. Furthermore, based on the results that a grand mean of 1.92 was obtained which was lesser than the criterion mean, it therefore implies that there is a negative perception of homosexuality among both science and non-science students in selected universities in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

HO1: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on gender.

Table 6: Independent samples t-test of the influence of gender on students' perception of homosexuality

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male	185	1.98	0.84	587	1.185	0.234	Retain
Female	203	2.06	0.79				

From the result shown in Table 6 on the independent samples t-test conduct to ascertain the influence of gender on students' perception of homosexuality, it was shown that male students had a mean value of 1.98 (SD = 0.84), while female students had a mean rating of 2.06 (SD = 0.79). When these values were analyzed, a calculated t-value of 1.185 was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.234 which was greater than 0.05, the chosen alpha guiding the study. Since the p-value obtained (0.234) was greater than the chosen alpha (0.05), it therefore suggests that there is no significant difference in students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on gender. The null hypothesis was therefore retained and accepted

HO2: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on age.

Table 7: Independent samples t-test of the influence of age on students' perception of homosexuality

Age	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
18-30	225	1.92	0.71	587	2.23	0.03	Reject Ho
Above	163	2.06	0.74				

From the result shown in Table 7 on the independent samples t-test conduct to ascertain the influence of age on students' perception of homosexuality, it was shown that younger students between the ages of 18-30 years had a mean value of 1.92 (SD = 0.71), while older students above 30 years had a mean rating of 2.06 (SD = 0.74). When these values were analyzed, a calculated t-value of 2.23 was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.03 which was less than 0.05, the chosen alpha guiding the study. Since the p-value obtained (0.03) was lesser than the chosen alpha (0.05), it therefore suggests that there is a significant difference in students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on age. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

HO3: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on level of study.

Table 8: Independent samples t-test of the influence of level of study on students' perception of homosexuality

LOS	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Fresher	106	1.77	0.73	587	7.88	0.0001	Reject
Returning	282	2.29	0.75				

From the result shown in Table 7 on the independent samples t-test conduct to ascertain the influence of level of study on students' perception of homosexuality, it was shown that fresh students had a mean value of 1.77 (SD = 0.73), while returning students had a mean rating of 2.29 (SD = 0.75). When these values were analyzed, a calculated t-value of 7.88 was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.0001 which was less than 0.05, the chosen alpha guiding the study. Since the p-value obtained (0.0001) was lesser than the chosen alpha (0.05), it therefore suggests that there is a significant difference in students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on level of study. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

HO4: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on course of study.

Table 4.9: Independent samples t-test of the influence of course of study on students' perception of homosexuality

COS	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Science	175	1.89	0.71	587	1.001	0.316	Retain
Non-Science	213	1.95	0.74				

From the result shown in Table 9 on the independent samples t-test conduct to ascertain the influence of course of study on students' perception of homosexuality, it was shown that science students had a mean value of 1.89 (SD = 0.71), while non-science students had a mean rating of 1.89 (SD = 0.74). When these values were analyzed, a calculated t-value of 1.001 was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.316 which was greater than 0.05, the chosen alpha guiding the

study. Since the p-value obtained (0.316) was greater than the chosen alpha (0.05), it therefore suggests that there is no significant difference in students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on course of study. The null hypothesis was therefore retained.

Discussion of Findings

From the answer to research question and the testing of the corresponding null hypothesis, it was shown that male students had a significantly lesser perception towards homosexuality women in selected public universities in Rivers State than their female counterparts. From the result, it therefore implies that male students considered homosexuality as being negative than female students. This result is not surprising to this research because it was the researcher's belief that male students do not engage more in homosexuality as much as female students. This result is in agreement with that obtained by Herek (2013) who found that male students had greater prejudice towards gay and lesbian women in the United States of America. On the contrary, the result from Egbockukwu and Ekanem (2018) confirms the result from this study that male students had a significantly negative perception compared to female students. As their study showed, male students showed greater inclination towards premarital sex more than female students. The difference in the result by Egbochukwu and Ekanem (2018) can be attributed to fact that their study was focused on premarital sexual practices, while the present study is focused on homosexual students.

According to the result obtained from research question two and the corresponding null hypothesis which investigated the perception of students' towards homosexuality based on age, it was shown that older students had a significantly negative perception than their younger counterparts. This result might be attributed to the fact that older students are more exposed on sexual matters than their younger counterparts. Furthermore, younger students are more likely to be living with their parents and might not have been exposed to sexual information, either for normal intercourse or homosexuality. This result is in tandem with the findings of Hofferth (1987) on the influence of age on the initiation of sexual intercourse. According to his finding, it was revealed that when older students engage in sexual intercourse, they are more equip with recent information which informs a more protective sexual behaviour than those who are younger. Also Outside its effect on fertility, too early sexual behavior in or outside of marriage may not be pleasant for the young involved. This is why understanding the beginning of sexual activity is crucial. This is a significant problem. What age is "too early" is a crucial topic since practically everyone develops sexual activity at some point, but it is one that is always being redefined by changes in sexual activity patterns and "too early" means different things to different people. Finally, on the analysis of the results based on level of study and course of study, it was shown that there is a negative perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State among students both in science and non-science course of study. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on course of study. Also, there is a negative perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State among both in science and non-science course of study. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in students' perception of homosexuality in selected public universities in Rivers State based on course of study. This result might be attributed to the fact that both students reside in the same school environment and might be exposed to similar cultural beliefs which are the framework for sexual behaviour

CONCLUSION

Demographic variables (including gender, age, level of study and course of study) have been factors that influence students' perception of homosexuality. In the higher institutions which include universities, these are also major factors that determine, with respect to influence, students' perception of homosexuality. Although result from this study shows that male students

had a significantly negative perception compared to female students yet there is no significant influence on students' perception of homosexuality and homosexuality in selected universities in Rivers State based on gender. Again, from the result of the study there is no significant influence on students' perception of homosexuality and homosexuality based on age even though it was shown that older students had a significantly negative perception than their younger counterparts. More so, from the results of the study it was revealed that there is no significant influence based on level of study and course of study of students' perception of homosexual females and homosexual males.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should make laws and the school management in universities in Rivers State should formulate policies that will not favour any form of same-sex activities by students that are undergoing studies.
2. Government and even university school management should set up monitoring team that will ensure compliance off the already existing anti-gay law in the Nigeria.
3. The school management should enshrine, in the students' handbook, the prohibition of same-sex practices in university campuses in Rivers State with capital measures.
4. Counselling activities should be intensified in university campuses in Rivers State. This should incorporate coming out campaigns and campaigns against indulgence in sexual minorities.

REFERENCES

- Adanczyk A. & Pitt C. (2019). *Shaping attitudes about homosexuality: The role of religion and cultural context*. Elsevier Inc.
- Akinade, E.A. (2015). *Dictionary of guidance and counselling (counselling psychology)*. Bright Way Printers.
- Arndt, M., Park, A., & Bruin, G. D. (2016). *Attitudes toward lesbians and gay men: Relations with gender, race and religion among university students*. Corpus ID: 20337568. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/attitudes-toward-lesbians-and-gay-men%3a-relations-Arndt-Park/98445ae878c6b02a0ba6c4ab4c19d8a9aee1ad87>
- Besen, Y. and Zicklin, G. (2017). Young men, religion and attitudes towards homosexuality. *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality*, 1(3), 253.
- Blaauw, J. (2012). *Attitudes towards homosexuality: A study on contextual explanations of general and specific homo-negativity among Dutch secondary school students*. Nijmegen Press.
- Boswell, J. (1984). *Same-sex unions in pre-modern Europe*. Villard Books.
- Brown, R.D., Clarke, B., Gortmaker, V. & Robinson-Keilig, R. (2014). Accessing the campus climate for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) students using a multiple perspective approach. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45(1), 8-26.
- Burn, S. (2010). Heterosexuals' use of "fag" and "queer" to deride one another: A contributor to heterosexism and stigma. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 40(2), 1-11.
- Casper, L. and Bianchi, S. (2012). *Continuity and change in the America family*. Thousand Oaks, CA.

- Chucks, S. (2011). *Homosexuality and the law: A dictionary*. ABC-CLIO, Inc.
- Collins, G. R. (2017). *Christian counselling: A comprehensive guide, Third edition*. Thomas Nelson Press.
- Habib, S. (2010). *Islam and homosexuality*. Santa Barloz Publishers Inc.
- Haraloambos, M., Holborn, M. & Heald, R. (2018). *Sociology: Themes and perspectives, Seventh edition*. Harper Collins Publishers Limited.
- Herek, G. M. (2012). Heterosexuals' attitudes toward bisexual men and women in the United States. *Journal of Sex, 39*(4), 264-274.
- Herek, G. M. and Capitano, J. P. (2015). Black heterosexuals' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men in United States. *The Journal of Sex Research, 32*, 95-105.
- Kane, E.W. and Sanchez, L. (2014). Family status and criticism of gender inequality at home and work. *Social Forces, 72*, 1079-1102.
- Kinanee, J. B. & Gilbert O. (2015). Anti-gay law and sexual minorities in Nigeria: A psycho-educational perspectives. *International Journal of Educational Development*. Hedum Press.
- Kunhiyop, S. W. (2018). *African Christian ethics*. Hippo Books.
- Miller, J. (2015). Shandong University students' views on homosexuality. *Honors Projects, 1*(6), 16-25. <https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/honorsprojects/165>.
- Nwankwo, O. C. (2011). *Principles and applications of behaviour modification*. Pam Unique Publishers Coy Ltd.
- Ofori, E. (2014). Perception of students on the practices homosexuality among students in the Cape Coast Metropolis. *International Journal of Research In Social Sciences, 4*(2), 117 – 122.
- Steffens, M. C. and Wagner, W. C. (2014). Attitudes towards lesbians, gay men, bisexual men in Germany. *The Journal of Sex Research, 137*-149.
- Sue, D.W. and Sue, D. (2018). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice* (5th Edition). John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Tshilongo, T. (2014). Exploring NWU student groups attitudes towards homosexual students on campus. Experiences of homosexual students on campus. [Unpublished PhD Dissertation]. North West University, Potchefstro.
- Watkins, M. G., Watkins, L. I., Johnson, M. & Mees, J. (2012). *All Nations English Dictionary*. Thousand Oaks Press