AN EXAMINATION OF THE PREDICTORS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

DISSEPTION

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ABSTRACT

Because of the dominant societal paradigm of gender as a binary construct, the emerging visibility of the transgender population (including transsexuals and cross-dressers) remains a politically and emotionally charged social issue. Unchecked negative attitudes toward transgender persons may result in transphobia as well as discriminatory treatment of transgender individuals. Few studies have examined predictors and correlates of attitudes toward transgender persons. The purpose of the present study was to better understand attitudes toward transgender individuals through an identification of some of the variables that predict these attitudes, namely religiosity, gender role beliefs, homophobia, contact experiences, and causal attribution. Measures of religiosity, attitudes toward transgender individuals, attitudes toward women, attitudes toward gays and lesbians, contact experience, causal attribution, and social desirability were administered to 153 undergraduate students at a large Midwestern university. A hierarchical regression analysis revealed that high levels of religiosity, traditional beliefs about the roles of women, homophobic attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, and a lack of exposure to transgender individuals appeared to predict negative attitudes toward transgender people. Furthermore, contact with transgender people and attribution of the cause of transgender identities to biological rather than social factors were both related to more positive attitudes.
Dedicated to Grace Fletcher, Chad Corbley, and Matthew Creamer.

Your love and support both tacit and overt has been immeasurable.
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An increasingly visible community of self-identified transgender individuals has helped to heighten the awareness of the societal marginalization and hostility that this population faces (Feinberg, 1996). The transgender population is comprised of a multitude of identities and forms of self-expression that transgress the established gender categories of “male” and “female.” The term “transgender” includes transsexuals (individuals who identify with a gender different from that which is biologically assigned). Transsexual individuals may or may not opt to pursue surgical or hormonal interventions to change their physical appearance. Also included in the “transgender” category are cross dressers (individuals who prefer to dress in clothing traditionally worn by the opposite gender; this term is preferred to “transvestites”). Additionally, drag kings and drag queens, and individuals who identify as “genderqueer” fall within the category of “transgender” (Beemyn, 2003).

Although these specific conceptualizations of gender variance and their corresponding nomenclature are modern, the challenge of gender norms has existed across many different cultures and time periods (Cole, Denny, Eyler, & Samons, 2000;
Norton, 1997). However, current political activism and awareness have resulted in an emergent consciousness surrounding transgender issues. Consequently, an increasing visibility of individuals who transgress traditional notions of gender now exists.

This growing awareness of transgender issues is evident in a number of aspects of American culture, most visibly so in popular culture, the media and the political realm. Examples of mainstream attention to transgender concerns include recent films (e.g., *Boys Don’t Cry, Transamerica*) and television programs (e.g., *TransGeneration, Nip/Tuck, Ugly Betty, Boston Legal*) that have portrayed transsexual and cross-dressing characters, oftentimes in sensitive and realistic ways. Furthermore, mainstream media sources have covered transgender issues in an increasingly positive manner. For example, the May 21, 2007 issue of *Newsweek* magazine featured a seven-page article, entitled *Rethinking Gender*, which featured personal accounts of transgender individuals and addressed a number of current societal issues surrounding the transgression of gender norms, including biological and historical aspects of transgender identity, as well as religious and political opposition to transgender rights.

Moreover, a growing number of individuals are choosing to vociferously proclaim their identities as transgender. A recent instance was the April 2007 announcement of *Los Angeles Times* sportswriter Mike Penner that he would return to his job as a woman following his vacation. Major advances have recently occurred in the political arena as well: A May 2007 landmark vote in the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that would extend hate-crime protection to individuals victimized because of gender identity.

These examples indeed illustrate an evolution in the modern conceptualization of gender. However, because of the dominant societal paradigm of gender as a binary
construct, the transgression of the male-female dichotomy has historically, and continues to engender considerable social controversy. The emerging visibility of the transgender community is a politically and emotionally charged issue, the polemics of which have often resulted in transphobia as well as unchecked discriminatory treatment of transgender individuals (Norton, 1997).

Although a paucity of systematic research on discrimination against transgender individuals exists, much de facto evidence is apparent that negative attitudes about transgender issues are prevalent among the general population. Anecdotal evidence of discrimination ranges from overt incidents such as numerous attacks and murders of transgender women (individuals who are born male, but identify as female) in the United States and Canada, to more covert examples of discrimination of transgender individuals in the arenas of housing, public accommodations, and access to health care (Hill & Willoughby, 2005).

The sparse literature that addresses transgender concerns provides rather mixed data on the nature of the attitudes toward the transgender community, and the discrimination that transgender persons face. While many studies seem to be consistent with the notion that the transgender community is a target of much prejudice and discrimination (Gagné, Tewksbury & McGaughey, 1996; Moulton & Adams-Price, 1997), other research has suggested a surprising acceptance of transgender individuals within non-transgender society (Harvey, 2002; Leitenberg & Slavin, 1983; Rye & Elmslie, 2001). Such inconsistent results may be due to a number of issues, including differential acceptance of the diverse range of identities subsumed under the umbrella of “transgender,” or the existence of a small, albeit vociferous force of people extremely
negative toward transgender persons. Moreover, a number of methodological issues seem to pervade the extant research on this subject (Hill & Willoughby, 2005).

Knowledge of the sociopolitical context that transgender people face is requisite for effective counseling with this population (Carroll & Gilroy, 2002), yet little is known about the pervasive nature of negative attitudes toward transgender people, the origins and expressions of such attitudes, or the effects they have on the identity development process of transgender individuals. More in-depth examination of attitudes has the potential to inform the design of effective interventions, and to reduce the negative attitudes and stereotyping of transgender people. Furthermore, research in this area can help in the understanding and measurement of attitudes among therapists and the effects of those attitudes on the treatment of transgender clients. Such research may be especially important given evidence that some mental health care professionals continue to lack the knowledge and self-awareness to work effectively with gender identity issues (Carroll & Gilroy, 2002; Hill & Willoughby, 2005; Rachlin, 2002).

In better understanding the nature of the attitudes that fuel the societal marginalization that transgender individuals face, it may be useful to determine the variables that predict such attitudes. Because there has been so little research in this area, determining appropriate predictor variables requires an examination of the literature on predictors of attitudes toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. Based on this research, it appears that authoritarianism, religiosity, exposure to gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons, genetic causation attribution, as well as gender role attitudes and gender role orientation are useful variables to examine in predicting attitudes towards gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (Cotton-Husten & Waite, 2000; Herek & Glunt, 1993;
Schwartz & Lindley, 2005; Tygart, 2000; Whitley & Ágisdóttir, 2000). Moreover, a number of demographic variables, such as age, race, gender, political affiliation, religious identification, and sexual orientation seem to have some predictive value.

Because of the overlapping histories of medical pathologization, and the common stereotyping and prejudice that members of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual population and members of the transgender population have experienced, it would seem logical to examine these predictors as they relate to attitudes toward transgender individuals. To that end, the purpose of the present study is to identify some of the variables that predict attitudes toward transgender people. More specifically this study is designed to examine the variables of religiosity, gender role beliefs, homophobia, contact experiences, and genetic causal attribution in their prediction of attitudes toward transgender individuals.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

While copious literature exists on gay, lesbian, and bisexual concerns, very little research has been devoted specifically to transgender issues, particularly in the area of attitudes and discrimination. Most of the transgender research that does exist is very broad in scope, with little continuity from study to study with regard to theory and methodology.

This section will review the extant literature on transgender issues, specifically on the topics of transgender identity and transphobia. Because very little empirical research exists that specifically addresses attitudes toward transgender individuals, studies examining the predictors of attitudes toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals will be reviewed, thereby elucidating the conceptual and methodological underpinnings of the current study. Finally, the purposes and the hypotheses of the present study will be presented.

2.1 Transgender Identity and Identity Formation

In order to best understand the nature of attitudes toward transgender individuals it is first important to define and describe the components of the transgender identity, and
to understand some of the complexities of identity formation. For the purposes of this study, “transgender” is defined as an umbrella term for individuals whose self-identification transgresses established gender categories of male and female. This term includes transsexuals, cross-dressers, drag kings and queens, and gender queers. First, transsexuals are individuals whose internal sense of gender differs from their biological sex. Transsexuals may or may not pursue medical or hormonal treatment in order to change their outward appearance to match their internal identity. Second, cross-dressers are individuals who, for a wide variety of reasons, dress in clothing typically worn by the opposite gender. Third, drag queens and drag kings are individuals who, for the purpose of entertainment dress as the other gender. Fourth, gender queers, are individuals who may not identify as male or female, as they feel their gender transcends the gender binary (Beemyn, 2003; Lev, 2004).

Given the diversity of identities encompassed by “transgender,” it is impossible to develop a monolithic model of identity formation that would be appropriate for all transgender individuals. However, some attempts have been made to better understand some of the factors influencing transgender identity. For instance, Gagné, Tewksbury, and McGaughey (1997) examined the social pressures that influence transgender identity formation through exploration of the coming-out experiences of transgender individuals. In an empirical extension of this study, Gagné and Tewksbury (1998) explored the social context in which transgender individuals resist the normative expectations of sex and gender. The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which transgender people challenge the assumption that gender is associated with sex while simultaneously reinforcing gender as an institution. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted
with 65 masculine-to-feminine individuals from various identities within the transgender spectrum. The sample included 27 pre-operative individuals, 10 post-operative individuals, 4 non-operative individuals, and 24 cross-dressers and was conducted over a one-year period.

Findings indicated that among the participants, social pressures to conform to the gender binary were experienced as desires for relationship maintenance and self-preservation. This study identified the paradox that, in coming out as the opposite gender, transgender individuals reinforce and reify the very binary system of gender they hope to change. This conceptualization of the struggle experienced by transgender individuals is helpful in understanding the power dynamics of gender, and challenging the traditional notions of sex and gender (Gagné, Tewksbury, & McGaughey, 1997; Gagné & Tewksbury, 1998).

Much of the research on the identities and experiences of transgender individuals has been done through case studies of individuals. In a chapter entitled *Gender Variance and Formation of the Self*, Ettner (1999) explored the similarities between experiences of identity formation among transgender individuals. Using a case study of a male-to-female transsexual (an individual born male, but who identifies as female) as an example, she identified common struggles that most transgender individuals face in their development, finding three themes of hiding, guilt and shame. Hiding describes transgender individuals’ rejection of their true feelings of gender difference because of the need for acceptance and the desire to appear “normal.” Because of these forces, many transgender individuals may deny their feelings of difference, and often assume traditional gender roles to hide these feelings. Guilt arises from the perceived notion of
hurting others by being different, and shame is the affective manifestation of that guilt (Ettner, 1999). The shame and guilt that many transgender individuals experience is often at the core of their psychological distress (Schaefer & Wheeler, 1995).

Although little research exists on transgender identity and its formation, it is reasonable to state that transgender individuals comprise a complex group of individuals who have unique needs. Much of the psychic distress for transgender individuals seems to stem from societal pressures to conform to the gender binary. In developing sensitivity toward transgender individuals, it is paramount for individuals to be aware of both the individual factors and societal context that influences transgender identity formation and the distress that many transgender individuals experience (Rachlin, 2001; Gagné & Tewksbury, 1998; Lev, 2004, Ettner, 1999).

2.2 Transphobia

The concept of anti-transgender attitudes is conceptualized by Hill and Willoughby (2005) as having three distinct constructs: transphobia, genderism, and gender-bashing. Transphobia is defined as an emotional disgust toward individuals who do not conform to society’s expectations of gender. Akin to homophobia, the fear or aversion of gays and lesbians, transphobia involves the feeling of revulsion to masculine women, feminine men, cross-dressers, and transsexuals.

Genderism is an ideology that reinforces the negative evaluation of gender nonconformity. It is the cultural belief system that perpetuates the notion of the gender binary and promulgates negative judgments toward those who do not present as stereotypical men and women. Those who are genderist believe that individuals who do not conform to societal gender expectations are pathological. The concept of genderism
is similar to that of heterosexism in that it is both a source of social oppression and psychological shame. Like heterosexism, genderism can be both imposed upon others and internalized. Gender-bashing refers to the physical and verbal assault and harassment of those who do not conform to gender norms (Hill & Willoughby, 2005).

A series of three studies by Hill and Willoughby (2005) sought to develop and validate a scale to measure the above constructs of anti-transgender attitudes. The purpose of the first study was to develop the Genderism and Transphobia Scale (GTS), a short psychometric questionnaire designed to assess affective, cognitive, and behavioral expressions of negative attitudes toward transgender persons. The authors generated 106 statements intended to reflect cognitive, behavioral, and affective dimensions of genderism, transphobia, and gender-bashing. Items were written to refer to both male-to-female and female-to-male gender nonconformists. These items were administered to 227 volunteer undergraduate psychology students (87 men and 140 women) at a university in Montréal, Canada. Participants responded to items using a 7-point Likert scale.

After the elimination of poorly worded or otherwise flawed items, 32 items remained. Internal consistency reliability analyses yielded high coefficient $\alpha$s for each of the subscales: $\alpha=.83$ for the Genderism subscale, $\alpha=.94$ for the Transphobia subscale, and $\alpha=.79$ for the Gender-bashing subscale. The coefficient $\alpha$ for all of the 32 items was .95.

The second study attempted to determine the internal consistency reliability, the convergent validity, and the predictive validity of the GTS. In order to test these psychometric properties, the following measures were administered: the GTS, 1 of 4 variations of a 250-word vignette describing a young child, the Vignette Assessment
Questionnaire (VAQ; a 6-item instrument designed by the authors to assess the mental health of the child portrayed in the vignette; $\alpha=.88$), the 25-item Homophobia Scale (Wright, Adams & Bernat, 1999, $\alpha=.91$), and the 20-item Gender Role Belief Scales (Kerr & Holden, 1996). These measures were administered to 34 men and 18 women from two community centers in Montréal.

Results from this study indicated high internal consistency reliability of the GTS ($\alpha=.80$ for the Genderism scale, $\alpha=.94$ for the Transphobia Scale, $\alpha=.82$ for the Gender Bashing scales, and $\alpha=.88$ overall). In addition, the GTS appeared to reasonably predict the VAQ ratings ($R^2=.50$, $\beta=.71$, $F(1,27)=26.9$, $p=.001$). Moreover the GTS significantly correlated with the HS ($r(52)=.87$, $p=.001$), and the GRBS ($r(52)=.65$, $p=.001$). Thus the GTS seems to be highly related to homophobia and beliefs about gender roles.

The third study by Hill and Willoughby was designed to establish norms on the GTS for a broad university student population. Furthermore, this study retested subscale correlations, estimates of internal consistency reliability, and involved a confirmatory factor analysis of the subscale structures. Moreover, the researchers examined whether or not prior exposure to a transgender individual would predict scores on the GTS. The following measures were administered: the GTS, the HS, and the GRBS (all previously described). In addition, to measure the construct of self-esteem the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965, $\alpha=.80$) was used, to measure participants’ sense of masculinity and femininity the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974; $\alpha=.85$ for the masculinity scale and $\alpha=.78$ for the femininity scale) was used. Participants were 81 male and 98 female undergraduate and graduate students from a wide range of disciplines at a university in Montréal.
Findings once again indicated that the subscales of the GTS were internally consistent, with strong coefficient $\alpha$s. The factor analysis indicated that a two-factor solution was more reasonable than the original three-factor model, where genderism/transphobia was the first factor, and gender-bashing was the second factor. The results from the other scales administered supported adequate discriminative validity, establishing that the GTS was not simply measuring self-esteem, gender role orientation, or positive self-presentation. Moreover, findings indicated that exposure to transgender persons appears to predict lower scores on the GTS, a further testament to the validity of the scale.

2.3 **Predictors of Attitudes Toward Sexual Minority Individuals**

Because of the lack of research on attitudes toward transgender people, it is necessary to turn to related bodies of literature in order to explore possible predictors of attitude to investigate. One area in which many studies on attitudes have been done is in the domain of gay, lesbian, and bisexual research.

While gay and lesbian identities describe sexual orientation, and transgender identities describe gender identity, it is logical to believe that a connection may exist between the two domains. First, both sexual orientation minorities and gender identity minorities share a history of oppression by mainstream society. The prejudice that both groups face often manifests similarly, as physical or verbal violence, or in more covert forms such as housing or job discrimination.

Second, both sexual orientation and gender identity are commonly assumed to be mutable facets of identity-- that is a matter of choice-- despite a growing body of evidence to support that both are, in part, genetically or biologically determined (Tygart,
This presumed choice is often perceived as a threat to the social order of relationships and families.

Third, both sexual orientation and gender identity are generally invisible aspects of identity, inasmuch as neither identity is necessarily visible to others, thus self-disclosure is necessary to reveal these facets of identity. Thus, gays and lesbians, and transgender people often undergo a parallel process of identity formation and coming out to friends, family and peers (Gagné & Tewksbury, 1998). Finally, often a conflation of sexual orientation and gender identities occurs, where people often assume that transgender individuals identify as gay or lesbian, or it is assumed that gay and lesbians desire to change their gender (Ellis & Mitchell, 2000). Because of these similarities between sexual orientation and gender identities, it can be hypothesized that factors contributing to social attitudes toward gays and lesbians may apply to attitudes toward transgender individuals.

A number of studies have sought to isolate the variables that predict negative attitudes toward gays, lesbians and bisexuals. The predictor variables highlighted here include religiosity (i.e., Schwartz & Lindley, 2005; Herek, 1987), gender belief system (i.e., Cotton-Husten & White, 2000; Whitley & Ægisdóttir, 2000), homophobia, (Herek, 1994), contact or exposure to transgender individuals (Herek & Glunt, 1993; Tee & Hegarty, 2006), and genetic causal attribution (Tygart, 2000; Herek & Capitanio, 1995).

### 2.3.1 Empirical Support for Religiosity

Religiosity is a multidimensional construct that generally describes religious belief, religious practice, and spirituality (Hill & Hood, 1999). Religiosity is conceptualized by Allport and Ross (1967) as having two distinct orientations: extrinsic
and intrinsic. Extrinsic religiosity describes a self-serving, instrumental approach conforming to societal conventions. Individuals who are extrinsically religious tend to be religious primarily in order to enjoy social acceptance and integration. In contrast, an intrinsic religious orientation describes a more spiritual and integrative approach to religion in which religious teachings are used to inform everyday interactions with others and religion provides a meaning-endowing framework in which all life is understood (Allport & Ross, 1967).

One’s religious orientation has been shown to be related to one’s level of prejudice, where an extrinsic orientation tends to be more positively associated with prejudice and an intrinsic orientation tends to be negatively correlated with prejudice.

A study by Schwartz and Lindley (2005) examined the connection between religiosity and attitudes toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. The construct of religiosity was measured using the 20-item Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; $\alpha=.90$), whereas attitudes toward GLB individuals were measured using the 25-item Homophobia Scale (Wright, Adams & Bernat, 1999, $\alpha=.91$). In addition, the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale was used to detect socially desirable responding among participants (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964; $\alpha=.76$). The sample was composed of 122 women and 96 men enrolled in a psychology class at a mid-sized Southern university. 180 students identified as Christian, two as Buddhist, one as Muslim, and 13 identified as “other.”

The results of the study indicated that religiosity strongly predicted negative attitudes toward GLB individuals ($\beta=.44, p<.001$). One limitation of this study was the limited sample. The participants were enrolled at a primarily White, Southern university,
thus it may be difficult to generalize these findings to other populations. In addition, the scale used in this study measured religious fundamentalism, which represents only one aspect of religiosity. The authors suggest that future research utilize a more diverse sample, and identify other variables that predict attitudes toward GLB individuals.

Using the intrinsic-extrinsic conceptualization of religiosity, Herek (1987) examined the relationship between religious orientation and prejudice. His research was premised on a number of studies that has suggested that a greater tendency toward racist attitudes has exists among persons with an extrinsic religious orientation (e.g. Allport & Ross, 1967; Donahue, 1985). The purpose of the study was to determine whether intrinsically or extrinsically religiously motivated people tend to hold more negative views toward gay, lesbian and bisexual persons. The construct of religiosity was measured using the Religious Orientation Scale (Allport & Ross, 1967), whereas attitudes toward lesbians and gay men were measured using the Attitudes Toward Lesbian Scale (ATL) and the Attitudes Toward Gay Men Scale (ATG) (Herek, 1987; $\alpha=.86$ and .91, respectively). The sample was composed of 46 males and 80 females from four universities across the United States.

Findings suggested that an intrinsic religious orientation was positively related with higher levels of prejudice against gay men (main effect for intrinsic orientation: $F(5,125)=3.45$, $p<.07$, for the ATG; $F(5,125)=1.54$, n.s., for the ATL). These findings were not consistent with previous studies examining the relationship between religious orientation and racial prejudice, (Herek, 1987). There were a number of limitations to this study, including the use of the Allport and Ross (1967) Religious Orientation Scale, which has limited reliability and validity (Gorsuch & Venable, 1983). Moreover, the
sample used in this study was only White, thus was not representative of social, racial or religious diversity.

2.3.2 **Empirical Support for Gender Belief System**

A gender belief system is defined as the attitudes people hold toward the roles of men and women in society. Moreover, a gender belief system describes one’s views on what is appropriate behavior for each sex (Bem, 1994). Deaux and Kite (1987) defined the gender belief system as “a set of beliefs and opinions about males and females and about the purported qualities of masculinity and femininity” (p.97). In general, people expect others to fit into a relatively stable set of gender roles, traits and physical attributes (Whitley & Ágisdóttir, 2000). People who engage in role behaviors associated with the other gender, or who possess characteristics associated with the other gender, are not viewed positively (e.g., Laner & Laner, 1979).

Evidence that this belief system is related to attitudes toward gay and lesbian individuals comes from a number of studies that have demonstrated that heterosexuals tend to infer that gay men have the gender-associated characteristics of heterosexual women, and that lesbians have the gender-associated characteristics of heterosexual men (e.g., Kite & Deaux, 1987). The gender belief system perspective posits that heterosexuals’ attitudes toward gays and lesbians are linked to their beliefs about the characteristics that men and women should exhibit. Individuals who hold traditional attitudes about gender tend to hold more negative attitudes toward homosexuality (Kite & Whitley, 1996).

A study by Whitley and Ágisdóttir (2000) sought to examine the relationship between the gender belief system and attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. The
construct of gender belief system was measured by the short form (25-item) of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS; Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1973; $\alpha=.86$), whereas attitudes toward lesbians and gay men were measured using the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (Herek, 1988; $\alpha=.93$ for the lesbian subscale, and $\alpha=.96$ for the gay men subscale). Participants were 122 men and 131 women enrolled in an introductory psychology class at a public Midwestern university which draws its students primarily from rural areas and smaller towns and cities.

Results indicated a significant correlation between the AWS and attitudes toward lesbians and gay men ($r^2=-.51$ for the lesbian subscale, and -.60 for the gay men subscale). Moreover, gender-role beliefs appeared to partially mediate the relationship between gender differences in gender-role beliefs ($F(1,252)=22.56, p<.001$). These results provide support that gender-role orientation indeed contributes to the understanding of attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. This study had some limitations with respect to its measure of gender-role beliefs. As mentioned above, the sample used in the study was not racially and ethnically diverse, thus was not representative of the population. Additionally, a potential methodological limitation was the use of the AWS, given its age. However, a psychometric evaluation of the measure revealed that it was an appropriate measure for use in the study (Whitley & Ágisdóttir, 2000).

Cotten-Huston and Waite (2000) also explored the role of gender role orientation and gender role attitudes in predicting attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. The construct of gender role orientation was measured using the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974; masculinity $\alpha=.86$, femininity $\alpha=.82$), and the construct of gender role attitudes was measured using the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS; Spence,
Helmreich & Stapp, 1973; \( \alpha = .86 \)). Attitudes toward lesbians and gay men were measured using the 25-item Index of Attitudes toward Homosexuals (IAH; Hudson & Ricketts, 1980; \( \alpha = .90 \)). Participants were 47 women and 30 men enrolled in undergraduate business and psychology classes.

Results indicated that anti-gay/lesbian attitudes were significantly correlated with the AWS \((r^2 = .432, p < .0001)\). Neither significant correlations were found with the BSRI, nor did BSRI scores make a significant contribution to the prediction of anti-gay/lesbian attitudes. The authors did not explain this anomalous finding. Overall, however, findings for this study provide further evidence that one’s attitudes toward gender role expectations appears to affect their attitudes toward non-heterosexual people. Limitations to this study include the use of a non-representative sample, as well as the use of the IAH, which does not distinguish between gay men and lesbians (Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000).

2.3.3 **Empirical Support for Contact**

The notion that interaction with transgender people would affect individuals’ attitudes toward the transgender population as a whole is consistent with the contact hypothesis, which posits that stereotypes and prejudice against members of a minority group is diminished by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit if a common goal (Allport, 1954).

Herek and Glunt (1993) explored the contact hypothesis as it relates to attitudes toward gay men. They examined the association between heterosexuals’ attitudes toward gay men and their interpersonal contact experience with a lesbian or gay person. To measure participants’ attitudes toward gay men they used a 5-item short form of the
Attitudes Toward Gay Men scale, which has shown to be a reliable ($\alpha=.85$) and valid measure of attitudes (Herek, 1988). Personal contact was assessed by the question “Have any of your female or male friends, relatives, or close acquaintances let you know that they were homosexual?” The sample for this study was 1,078 English-speaking American adults, of which 937 interviews were complete. The sample was 60% female and 82% White (9% were African-American, and the remainder were from other racial groups).

The authors found that respondents with contact experiences expressed more favorable attitudes toward gay men than those without such contact ($F(1, 935) = 152.89, p<.001$). Moreover they found that the relationship between contact and attitudes would be consistent across demographic and social subgroups. In addition, they found that personal contact with a gay man or lesbian was a powerful predictor of heterosexuals’ attitudes toward gay men, accounting for a significant proportion of the variance in attitude scores ($\beta= -.2366, p<.001$). Finally, using a stepwise logistic regression analysis, the authors assessed whether some respondents were more likely than others to report contact experiences. They found that respondents were more likely to report contact to the extent that they were highly educated, politically liberal, young and female (for goodness of fit, chi-square = 803.71, p=.617) (Herek & Glunt, 1993).

Although these findings seem to indicate that the experience of interpersonal contact with gay men or lesbians causes heterosexuals to adopt more favorable attitudes toward gay men generally, the cross-sectional design of the study does not permit such conclusions. However the findings demonstrate a strong relationship between
interpersonal contact and heterosexuals’ attitudes toward gay men, and seem to be in support of the contact hypothesis.

This study had several methodological limitations, including low response rate. Moreover, the use of a single item to assess contact yielded limited data about the nature of the respondents’ contact experiences. The authors suggest exploring such questions as whether the relationship was of equal status (which is an important variable with respect to the contact hypothesis), what the nature of the relationship is, whether attitudes become more favorable as individuals report contact experiences with several different individuals, and whether attitudes are affected by the gender of the respondent and the gay person (Herek & Glunt, 1993).

In their research on the civil rights of transgender individuals in the United Kingdom, Tee & Hegarty (2006) explored the effect of contact experiences on individuals’ attitudes toward the civil rights of transgender individuals. Attitudes toward transgender rights were measured using a 20-item scale created by the authors (α=.77) and attitudes toward gays and lesbians were measured using the short form of the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men scale (ATLG; Herek, 1993; α=.92). Contact with members of sexual and gender minorities were assessed with five separate items relating to lesbians and gay men, bisexuals, transexuals, transvestites, and transgender persons. Each item asked if the participant knew a person with that identity and presented the following forced choice responses: yes, no, not sure, and do not understand. The sample was composed of 87 women, 58 men, and 6 participants who did not identify their gender who were enrolled in psychology and engineering classes at a university in the United Kingdom.
Results indicated that participants who knew either lesbians and gay men or bisexual women and men had more positive attitudes as measured by the ATLG than participants who reported no familiarity with sexual minorities ($t(142) = 1.96, p<.05$). Opposition to transgender people’s rights were equivalent among these two groups. Far fewer participants knew transsexual, transvestite, or transgender persons. Participants who reported familiarity with at least one gender minority had lower opposition to transgender rights than participants who did not ($t(143)=2.12, p<.05$) (Tee & Hegarty, 2006).

These results indicate that contact with sexual minorities is related to more positive attitudes toward those minorities. However, results from this study must be interpreted with caution, given the study’s limitations. One such limitation is the small sample size used. Additionally, the items developed for the authors’ scale measuring attitudes toward transgender rights pertained largely to transsexuals, thus did not reflect the diversity of transgender identities.

In testing the predictive validity of their Genderism and Transphobia Scale, Hill and Willoughby (2005) examined the ability of the scale to detect differences in attitudes between those who were personally acquainted with a transgender individual and those who were not. To measure attitudes, the authors used the GTS, and to measure contact the authors asked participants to report whether or not they had personally met a transgender person. Participants were 180 undergraduate and graduate students from a wide range of disciplines at a university in Montréal.
The authors found that those who had personally met a transsexual scored lower on the GTS, indicating more positive attitudes than those who indicated no personal contact ($t(176) = 3.3, p < .01$). Those who had personally met a cross-dresser scored lower on the GTS than those who had not ($t(175) = 3.5, p = .001$). Similarly those who were personally acquainted with “transgenderists” scored significantly less on the GTS scale than those who had not ($t(175) = 4.5, p < .01$) (Hill & Willoughby, 2005).

These results indicate that there are significant differences in attitudes toward transgender people when there has been contact with people from the transgender community. Furthermore, these findings testify to the ability of the GTS to detect these kinds of differences. Limitations to these findings stem from a small and homogeneous sample.

2.3.4 Empirical Support for Causal Attribution

Causal attribution is defined as the causes people indicate for the behavior of individuals (Tygart, 2000). Heider (1958) in his classic attribution theory asserts that people tend to ascribe the behavior of others as resulting from internal or external causes. External factors are defined as those beyond the individual’s control, including the context of the behavior. Internal factors are seen as within the individual’s control, including skills, and personality factors. Extending this theory, Rotter (1966) addresses the idea of locus of control. Individuals are usually viewed as less responsible for their behavior in cases of external rather than internal attribution (Tygart, 2000). In other words, stigmatized individuals are more likely to be regarded negatively when their stigma is perceived as controllable and when they are perceived as responsible for having it (Herek & Capitanio, 1995).
Underlying people’s attitudes toward transgender issues may be the ways people tend to attribute the cause of transgender identities. Research on attitudes toward gays and lesbians has revealed such differences (e.g., Tygart, 2000; Wood Herek & Capitanio, 1995). These studies have been predicated on the notion that there are two main causes to which people tend to attribute homosexuality: choice and genetics (Wood & Bartkowski, 2004). Those who attribute homosexuality to choice tend to view it as unnatural, and contend that gay men and women have weighed the costs and benefits associated with being gay or lesbian, and voluntarily opted to deviate from the norm. Those who see homosexuality as having genetic or biological underpinnings assert that being gay and lesbian is determined by biological factors beyond an individual’s control (Wood & Bartkowski, 2004).

Herek and Capitanio (1995) examined the causal attribution of homosexuality, among other variables, in a study of Blacks’ attitudes toward gays and lesbians. The construct of attitudes, was measured with a six-item short form of the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men (ATLG) scale, which has been shown to be a reliable and valid measure of heterosexuals' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men (Herek, 1988, 1994). Three items in the scale referred to lesbians (Attitudes Toward Lesbians subscale, or ATL), and three other items were identically worded except that they referred to gay men (Attitudes Toward Gay Men subscale, or ATG). When scored separately, the two subscales were highly correlated ($r = .73$). For each item, respondents were provided with four response alternatives (agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, disagree strongly), which were scored on a 4-point scale. Item responses were reversed as
necessary and summed to yield a scale score that could range from 6 to 24, with higher scale scores indicating more unfavorable attitudes.

To examine the attribution of choice respondents were asked whether they believed that "homosexuality is something people choose for themselves" or that homosexuality "is something over which people do not have any control."

The data were collected using a two-wave telephone survey with a national probability sample of 391 Black heterosexual adults. Results indicated that respondents who felt that homosexuality is a choice manifested more negative attitudes than did those who regarded it as something beyond an individual's control \( F(1,362) = 68.45, p < .001 \). Limitations inherent in this study include the homogeneity of the sample, and the fact that the sample may have included gay, lesbian, or bisexual respondents.

In a national telephone survey, Tygart (2000) examined genetic causation attribution as it affected the public support of gay rights. To measure people’s support of gay rights he asked participants to respond using one of five alternatives ranging from very opposed to very supportive for the topics of gay marriages \( \alpha = .84 \) and domestic partnerships \( \alpha = .83 \). To measure causal attribution, the author used the following question “A lot of human behavior probably will never be fully understood. Scientists as well as people in general disagree about how much influence that individuals’ genetic inheritance has on homosexuality. Which one of the following categories most neatly fits your views?” \( \alpha = .81 \); Tygart, 2000).

Telephone interviews of 600 English-speaking respondents 18 years of age or older were conducted over a month. The author found that the majority of participants believed that genetics contributed to at least half of the causation of homosexuality.
Moreover, the more that genetics was attributed as a cause of homosexuality, the greater the support for gay rights \((r = .77; \text{Tygart, 2000})\). One limitation to this study is its use of single-item scales to assess both the independent and dependent variables.

### 2.4 Purposes of the Present Study

The above studies provide confirmatory support that religiosity, gender belief systems, genetic causal attribution, and exposure to gay and lesbian individuals are significant predictors of attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. Because of the similarities between sexual orientation and gender identities, it can be hypothesized that factors contributing to social attitudes toward gays and lesbians may apply to attitudes toward transgender individuals. Using this rationale, the present study examined whether religiosity, gender role beliefs, attitudes toward gays and lesbians, causal attribution and exposure to transgender individuals predicted attitudes toward transgender people.

### 2.5 Hypotheses

This study investigated the relationship between the variables of demographic differences, religiosity, gender belief systems, attitudes toward gays and lesbians, genetic causal attribution, exposure to transgender individuals, and attitudes toward transgender individuals. Thus, the hypotheses of this study were as follows:

1. It was hypothesized that high levels of religiosity, traditional gender role beliefs, negative attitudes toward gays and lesbians, and less exposure to transgender people would be uniquely predictive of negative attitudes toward transgender individuals.
2. It was hypothesized that attribution of transgender orientation to a genetic cause would be related to more positive attitudes toward transgender individuals, and attribution of transgender orientation to an environmental cause would be related to more negative attitudes toward transgender individuals.

3. It was hypothesized that individuals who have had exposure to transgender individuals would hold more positive attitudes toward transgender individuals than those who have had no exposure to transgender individuals.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

3.1 Participants and Procedure

Prior to recruitment of participants, the study was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board for research with human subjects. Following this approval, all instruments were placed in an online survey, hosted by SurveyMonkey, an Internet survey software company. SurveyMonkey provided the URL and server space for the data to be stored temporarily until administration was completed.

A number of researchers have discussed the benefits of using online data collection (e.g., Birnbaum, 2004; Schmidt, 1997). Advantages to this method include the ability to test large numbers of participants very quickly, and recruit large heterogeneous samples. Moreover this method is more cost-effective in time, space, and labor in comparison with lab research (Birnbaum, 2004).

However, there are some disadvantages inherent in online data collection, such as higher rates of dropout and of repeated participation (Birnbaum, 2004; Schmidt, 1997). Therefore, several strategies were incorporated to reduce the likelihood of obtaining
duplicate, invalid, and incomplete surveys. As recommended by Birnbaum (2004),
individuals were told to participate only once. Furthermore, surveys were screened for
duplicates by examining assigned code numbers. No duplicate surveys were found.

Participants were 155 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory
psychology course at The Ohio State University. All participants completed this study in
partial fulfillment of a course requirement. Participants were recruited through a course
website that displayed all available experiments for students to choose from.
Requirements for participation were access to a computer with internet capabilities and
being 18 years of age or older.

Once students enrolled for this experiment, they received an email that briefly
described the nature of the experiment, and provided a link for accessing the online
survey (Appendix A). Those who received the email and chose to access the link to the
study were first directed to a webpage introducing the study and the requirements for
participation (Appendix B). Following that, they were directed to a page with explicit
information about the nature of the study and their rights as participants. On this page
participants were asked to indicate their informed consent to participate in the study.
Indicating informed consent was necessary in order to proceed in the survey program
(Appendix C).

Embedded within the survey were three items were that instructed the participants
to choose a specific response choice (e.g., “Please choose ‘Never’ for this question”).
This measure was taken in order to ensure that participants were attending to the
questions to which they were responding, rather than responding randomly.
Measures were presented on separate pages of the survey program such that as each scale was completed, participants were directed to the subsequent page until they finished the last measure. After completion of the final measure of this study, participants were directed to a debriefing page that explained the nature of the study and offered some frequently asked questions about transgender issues, as well as answers to those common questions (Appendix L). Completion of the survey took participants approximately 15-25 minutes.

Of the 155 responses, one was incomplete, and one failed to meet the validity criteria placed within the survey. The remaining 153 participants (76 male [49.7%], and 77 female [50.3%]) comprised the data set used for analysis. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 32 years old ($M=19.67$, $SD=2.159$); the majority of participants (90.1%) were 18-21 years of age. A vast majority of the participants identified as heterosexual (147; 96.1%). Six identified as gay (3.9%), and none of the participants identified as lesbian.

The majority of participants identified as White/Caucasian (116; 75.8%). The remainder of participants identified as Black/African-American (11; 7.2%), Asian/Asian-American (15; 9.8%), Latino/Latina (5; 3.3%), Native American (1; 0.7%), and other (5; 3.3%). Participants were from a variety of religions, with 32 identifying as Non-Denominational Christian (20.9%), 29 identifying as Protestant Christian (19.0%), 42 identifying as Catholic (27.5%), 5 identifying as Jewish (3.3%), 5 identifying as Muslim (3.3%), 2 identifying as Buddhist (1.3%), 1 identifying as Hindu (0.7%), and 37 indicating no religious affiliation (24.2%).

In response to the demographic item on political orientation, 38 participants described their political views as conservative (24.8%), 41 indicated liberal political
affiliation (26.8%), 14 considered themselves independent (9.2%), 15 indicated that they
do not vote (9.8%), and 44 indicated that their political orientation is dependent on the
issues (28.8%).

3.2 **Instruments**

Because there was no randomization function with the online survey program
used, instruments were presented in a fixed order. Six instruments were administered in
the following order: a demographic questionnaire, the Intrinsic-Extrinsic Religiosity
Scale (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989), the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS; Spence
et al., 1973), the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (Herek, 1988), the
Genderism and Transphobia Scale (GTS; Hill & Willoughby, 2005), and the Marlowe-
Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS; Crowne & Marlowe, 1964). In addition,
participants were asked to indicate their beliefs on the cause of transgender orientation.
Participants also indicated whether or not they have had personal contact of exposure to a
transsexual or cross-dresser. This particular order of presentation was chosen in order to
reduce the chances that the transgender items would influence participants’ responses to
the items on the other measures.

3.2.1 **Demographics**

A brief questionnaire was administered to all participants to collect data on
gender, age, sexual orientation, race, religion, and political affiliation (Appendix D).

3.2.2 **Religious Orientation**

Religious orientation was measured using the 14-item Intrinsic/Extrinsic
Religiosity Scale (I/E-R; Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). This measure was adapted from
the scale developed by Gorsuch and Venable (1983) as an extension of the original scale
created by Allport and Ross (1967) to assess individuals’ motives for being religious. More specifically, this instrument measures Intrinsic and Extrinsic religious orientations. An intrinsic religious orientation describes a focus on personal convictions and a commitment to religious beliefs motivated by a connection to the belief system itself. An extrinsic religious orientation describes persons who pursue self-focused goals and use religion to gain social standing and endorsement. For the extrinsically religious, motives for being religious rest on social or external values and beliefs.

In a factor analytical study of the I/E-R Gorsuch and McPherson (1989) found that the Extrinsic subscale of the instrument may fall into two factors: Extrinsic-Social (Es) and Extrinsic-Personal (Ep). Each of these subscales included only three items. While the internal consistency reliability of the I/E-R is adequate for the Intrinsic Scale ($\alpha = .83$), the reduction in the number of items leads to lower coefficient $\alpha$ reliabilities ($\alpha_{(Es)} = .63; \alpha_{(Ep)} = .64$). Although some suggestions have been made to add additional items to each of the subscales in order to increase reliability (e.g., Trimble, 1997), Kirkpatrick and Hood (1990) advocated abandoning the two Extrinsic factors altogether. Recent studies using the I/E-R tend to combine the Es and Ep factors into a single Extrinsic scale (e.g., Steger, Frazier, Oishi & Kaler, 2006). This was the practice in the present study. Despite some of its criticisms, the Intrinsic/Extrinsic Religiosity Scale has been recommended as the best available instrument for research in religion (Trimble, 1997; Van Wicklin, 1990).

Eight items assess intrinsic religiosity on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and six items assess extrinsic religiosity on the same scale. A sample item from the Intrinsic subscale is, “It is important for me to spend time in private
thought and prayer.” A sample item from the Extrinsic subscale is, “I pray mainly to gain relief and protection.” Higher scores on the Intrinsic/Extrinsic Religiosity Scale indicate higher levels of religiosity. Consistent with other researchers interested in avoiding the potential Christian bias in some items (e.g., Steger, et al. 2006) the term “church” was replaced with “religious services.”

In the present study the Intrinsic subscale scores, Extrinsic subscale scores, as well as the composite score of the scale were used in data analyses.

3.2.3 Gender-role Beliefs

Gender-role beliefs were measured using the 15-item version of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS; Spence & Helmreich, 1978), which assesses respondents’ endorsement of traditional gender-role behavior. Each item is accompanied by a 4-point response scale, ranging from agree strongly to disagree strongly. Approximately half of the items represent an egalitarian point of view, and the remainder of the items represents a more traditional point of view. The egalitarian items are reverse-scored. The item scores, which range from 0-3, are summed to obtain a total scale score for each participant. Thus possible total scores may range from 0-45, with lower scores indicating endorsement of more traditional gender role beliefs.

Sample items of the AWS include, “Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man” and “A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage.” Investigations of the 15-item version of the AWS have revealed that, for both males and females, the measure has a unifactorial structure, coefficient alphas at .85 and higher, and satisfactory test-retest reliability (Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Validation studies support the continued use of the AWS with younger populations, with the caution
that attention should be given to possible ceiling effects. However, such studies have suggested that, even with samples of college women, there is likely sufficient within-group variability for the scale to retain its utility (Spence & Hahn, 1997).

3.2.4 **Attitudes toward Gays and Lesbians**

Attitudes toward lesbians and gay men were assessed using Herek’s (1988) Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men (ATLG) Scale which assesses the affective component of these attitudes often referred to as *condemnation/tolerance* (Herek, 1994; Whitley & Æegisdóttir, 2000). The ATLG scale consists of 20 items, and contains two 10-item subscales: The Attitudes Toward Lesbians (ATL) subscale, the Attitudes Toward Gay Men (ATG). These subscales provide separate attitude scores for each group. Sample items for the ATL subscale include “Female homosexuality in itself is no problem, but what society can make of it can be a problem.” and for the ATG subscale, “Homosexual behavior between two men is just plain wrong.” For both scales, higher scores indicate more negative attitudes (Herek, 1988).

A preliminary assessment of the ATLG, indicated that the instrument was reliable ($\alpha = .90$ for the combined scale, $\alpha = .89$ for the ATG, and $\alpha = .77$ for the ATL). Likewise, a construct validity analysis, in which respondents completed a battery of measures conceptually related to the ATLG, demonstrated that the ATL and ATG scores correlated significantly with the construct validity measures. More specifically, higher scores on the ATLG correlated with traditional sex role attitudes, belief in a traditional family ideology, high levels of dogmatism, the perception that one’s friends agreed with one’s own attitudes toward homosexuality, and the absence of positive interactions with lesbians and gay men (Herek, 1994).
In addition to the preliminary analyses, several subsequent studies have been performed that have assessed the reliability and validity of the ATLG. To test discriminant validity the instrument was administered to members of gay and lesbian organizations. As expected, their scores were at the positive end of the range (Herek, 1988). In another assessment of the ATLG’s reliability, the measure was given to 405 participants at six universities. Reliability analyses yielded $\alpha = .95$ for the combined scale, $\alpha = .91$ for the ATG, and $\alpha = .90$ for the ATL, again indicating a high degree of internal consistency (Herek, 1994).

In the present study, the total combined ATLG scores was used as a general measure of homophobia.

3.2.5 **Attitudes toward Transgender Individuals**

The Genderism and Transphobia Scale (GTS; Hill & Willoughby, 2005) was used to measure attitudes toward transgender people. This measure has two factors: Transphobia/Genderism, and Gender-bashing, and consists of 32 items with a 7-point Likert response scale, ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. An example of an item measuring the Transphobia/Genderism factor is “Sex change operations are morally wrong.” An example of an item measuring the Gender-bashing factor is, “I have teased a man because of his feminine appearance or behavior.” Higher scores on the GTS indicate higher levels of transphobia, genderism and gender-bashing.

Investigations of the reliability of the GTS have revealed a high overall coefficient alpha (.96), and high alphas for each of the subscales (ranging from .79 to .83 for the Genderism subscale, .94 to .95 for the Transphobia subscale, and .79 to .87 for the Gender-bashing subscale.)
3.2.6 Social Desirability

The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964) measures the extent to which one wishes to present the self favorably, whether or not it is accurate. It contains 33 items with a dichotomized choice of response (true-false). Scores range from 0-33 with higher scores indicating greater need for approval. A sample item is, “I am always careful about my manner of dress.” Internal consistency alphas have ranged from .73 to .88, and adequate construct validity has been reported.

In the present study, subscale scores as well as the total GTS score were used in data analysis.

3.2.7 Attributions of Choice

In assessing participants’ beliefs about the causes of transgender orientation, three questions were used, adapted from the single item used in Tygart’s (2000) study examining the influence of genetic causal attribution in the public support of gay rights. Before the questions were presented, participants were given an explanation of transgender orientation and the identities included within that term. Then, participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* the extent to which they agree that transgender orientation results from primarily biological factors, such as genetics. Next, participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* the extent to which they believed that transgender orientation results primarily from environmental factors, such as parents, peers, school and the media. Finally, participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* the extent to which they believed that transgender orientation was a result of a combination
of genetics and environment (Appendix E).

3.2.8 **Contact Experiences**

In order to investigate the degree to which exposure to transgender persons influences attitudes, participants were asked to indicate whether they have personally met 1) a transsexual individual or 2) a cross-dresser (Appendix F). Although these questions were presented as two separate items, “yes” responses, indicating contact with either transsexuals or cross-dressers, were dummy coded as ‘1’. and no responses were dummy coded as ‘0’.

3.3 **Analysis of Data**

Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the frequencies, means and standard deviations for all of the demographic variables. Then internal reliability consistency analyses were performed to calculate the coefficient alphas for each of the scales and subscales. Next, correlational analyses were performed in order to assess the relationships of the scales and demographic variables with one another, as well as the relationship between causal attribution and attitudes toward transgender individuals.

Separate univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used to calculate differences in GTS scores on the dimensions of gender, political orientation, religious identification, and whether or not participants had exposure to transsexuals or cross-dressers. In order to assess the predictive values of demographic variables, religious orientation, gender-role beliefs, homophobia, and exposure, multiple hierarchical linear regressions were performed with the GTS composite score as the dependent variable.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Reliability Analysis

In order to evaluate the internal consistency reliability for each of the measures in this study, Cronbach alphas were calculated for each scale and subscale. According to Walsh and Betz (2001), an internal consistency reliability of at least .70 is preferred for scales in research use. Therefore when it was necessary, attempts were made to increase the internal consistency reliability to achieve this number.

An analysis of the 6-item Extrinsic subscale of Intrinsic/Extrinsic-Revised scale (I/E-R) revealed an internal consistency reliability of $\alpha = .81$. However, the 8-item Intrinsic subscale had an internal consistency reliability of $\alpha = .69$. In order to increase the internal consistency reliability of this subscale two items were removed (“Although I believe in my religion, many other things are more important in life;” and “Although I am religious I don’t let it affect my daily life”). When these two items were removed, the Intrinsic subscales internal consistency increased to $\alpha = .86$. This 6-item subscale was used for subsequent data analysis. An analysis of the total I/E-R scale revealed a coefficient of $\alpha = .90$ for the revised total 12-item scale.
An adequate internal consistency reliability of $\alpha=.85$ was found for the 15-item Attitudes Toward Women scale (AWS). A reliability analysis of the Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gays (ATLG) scale revealed an internal consistency reliability of $\alpha=.97$ for the total 20-item scale, $\alpha=.93$ for the 10-item Attitudes Toward Lesbians (ATL) subscale, and $\alpha=.96$ for the 10-item Attitudes Toward Gay Men (ATG) subscale.

The Genderism and Transphobia Scale (GTS) had an internal consistency reliability of $\alpha=.97$ for the total 32-item scale, and $\alpha=.97$ and $\alpha=.85$ for the 25-item Genderism/Transphobia subscale and the 7-item Gender-Bashing subscale, respectively. Finally, the internal consistency reliability of the 33-item Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS) was calculated to be $\alpha=.78$.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Scores on the total 32-item GTS ranged from 32-201 points, with higher scores indicating more negative attitudes toward transgender persons. The mean score was 108.28, and the standard deviation was 41.61. Although the scores were normally distributed, the entire distribution was shifted negatively, indicating that participants do not tend to hold extremely negative attitudes, as measured by this scale.

Scores on the 25-Genderism/Transphobia subscale ranged from 25-168 points, with a mean score of 92.00 and a standard deviation of 36.29. Scores on the 7-item Gender-Bashing scale ranged from 7-43, with a mean score of 16.25 and a standard deviation of 7.79, indicating low endorsement of gender-bashing attitudes.

For the total revised 12-item I/E-R, scores ranged from 12-53 with lower scores indicating lower levels of religiosity. The mean score for the total scale was 33.98 with a
standard deviation of 9.37, indicating the majority of participants falling within the midrange of religiosity.

Scores on the total 20-item ATLG ranged from 20-95, with higher scores indicating more negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. The mean score for the total scale was 48.31 and the standard deviation was 21.65. On the 15-item AWS, scores ranged from 31-60, with lower scores indicating endorsement of traditional gender role beliefs and higher scores indicating endorsement of more liberal beliefs about the roles of women. The scale had a mean score of 48.05 and a standard deviation of 7.16. In general, scores for this scale appeared to be shifted positively such that no one endorsed maximally traditional beliefs about women.

4.2 1 Correlation Analysis

Table 4.1 provides the intercorrelation matrix between the measures of religiosity, attitudes toward women, attitudes toward gays and lesbians, attitudes toward transgender individuals and socially desirable responding. As shown in the table, the measure of attitudes toward transgender individuals and its subscales were positively correlated with one another at the .01 and .05 alpha levels. Furthermore, attitudes toward transgender individuals were positively associated with intrinsic religiosity (r=.37, p<.01), extrinsic religiosity (r=.34, p<.01) attitudes toward gays (r=.82, p<.01), and attitudes toward lesbians (r=.75, p<.01), indicating that individuals who have more negative attitudes toward transgender individuals tend to have higher levels of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity and more negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men.

Attitudes toward transgender individuals were negatively correlated with attitudes toward women (r=-.70, p<.01), suggesting that more negative opinions of transgender
individuals are associated with more traditional gender role beliefs. Both intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity were negatively correlated with the measure of socially desirable responding ($r=-.31$ and $-.36$, $p<.01$, respectively), indicating that as one’s level of religiosity increases, their tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner decreases. Likewise, measures of attitudes toward lesbians and attitudes toward gay men were negatively associated with the social desirability ($r=-.20$, $p<.05$, for both subscales), suggesting that lower scores on the ATLG (indicating more positive attitudes toward gays and lesbians) were related to a higher level of socially desirable responding. No significant relationships were found for attitudes toward transgender individuals or attitudes toward women and socially desirable responding.

A separate analysis examined the relationship between the degree to which an individual attributes transgender identity to either a biological or environmental cause and their attitudes toward transgender individuals. In general, participants were more likely to endorse environmental causes than biological causes. However, the majority of people believed that transgender orientation likely results from a combination of biological and environmental causes,

Findings revealed a negative relationship between the attribution of transgender identity to a biological cause and attitudes toward transgender individuals ($r=-.37$, $p<.01$). In other words, the more strongly people believe that transgender identity is primarily because of biological factors such as genetics, the more positive their attitudes are toward transgender individuals,

Additionally, results from this analysis indicated a positive relationship between the attribution of transgender orientation to environmental factors and attitudes toward
transgender individuals \((r=.32, p<.01)\). This finding suggests that the more strongly people believe that transgender identity is a result of environmental factors, such as peers and the media, the more negative their attitudes were toward transgender individuals. Walsh and Betz (2001) suggested that \(r\) values at or above .20 might indicate practical significance, thus the above findings appear to be practically as well as statistically significant.

4.3 Univariate Analyses of Variance

In order to assess the impact of the demographic variables of gender, political affiliation, and religious identification on attitudes toward transgender individuals, univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA) were performed. These analyses were run separately for each of the variables due to the disparate \(n_s\) in each cell (e.g., for religious identification there were 32 Christian/Nondenominational, 29 Christian Protestant, 42 Catholic, 5 Jewish, 5 Muslim, 2 Buddhist and 1 Hindu).

For the first one-way ANOVA, which examined differences in attitudes toward transgender issues for males and females, results indicated that gender appeared to have a significant impact on attitudes toward transgender individuals such that males \((M=119.9, SD=43.2)\) held significantly more negative attitudes than females \((M=96.2, SD=36.8)\), \(F(1, 152) =12.67, p<.01\).

A second one-way ANOVA examined differences in transgender attitudes across political affiliation. Significant differences in attitudes were found among those who identified as conservative \((M=139.0, SD=29.33)\), liberal \((M=84.57, SD=35.93)\), independent \((M=84.86, SD=40.01)\), those who stated that how they vote tends to depend on the issues \((M=103.07, SD=36.35)\) and those who reportedly do not vote \((M=133.83, SD=41.39)\), \(F\)}
A Tukey’s Honestly Significant Difference post-hoc analysis indicated that the difference was significant between conservatives and liberals, conservatives and independents as well as conservatives and those who vote according to the issue, where the attitudes of conservatives were significantly more negative than the attitudes of the other groups.

A third one-way ANOVA assessing differences in attitudes toward transgender individuals among religious identifications revealed a significant difference in attitudes among those who identified with a Christian religion (non-denominational, Protestant or Catholic; $M=116.89, SD=39.44$) and those who identified as non-Christian (Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and those who do not identify with a religion; $M=90.54, SD=40.67$), $F(1, 152)=14.73, p<.01, d=.63$. This finding indicates that individuals who identify with a Christian religion tend to hold more negative values than individuals who identify as non-Christian.

Lastly, a one-way ANOVA was performed to examine the differences in attitudes toward transgender individuals among those who reported having at least one exposure or experience with transgender people and those who have had no exposure. Of the sample, 54 participants (35.29%) reported having contact with a transgender individual. An ANOVA revealed that individuals who reported having some exposure to transgender persons ($M= 91.93, SD=43.40$) seemed to have significantly more positive attitudes than those who reported no exposure ($M=117.2, SD=37.93$), $F(1, 152)=13.99, p<.01, d=.61$.

Based on Cohen’s (1988) criteria effect sizes for all of these differences were medium (.50 -.80), suggesting that, in addition to each of these comparisons being
statistically significant, it is reasonable to consider these difference to be of practical significance as well.

4.4 Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses

In order to assess the degree to which the independent variables of religiosity, attitudes toward women, attitudes toward gays and lesbians, and exposure to transgender individuals predicted attitudes toward transgender individuals, four separate hierarchical regression analyses were performed. These analyses were conducted using the total scores of the each of the predictor variables

For each analysis, demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, political orientation, religious identification and sexual orientation) and social desirability were entered at Step 1 of the hierarchical regression. This order of entry was chosen in order to determine the predictive value of each variable beyond that of the demographic differences. Moreover, it was assumed that the predictor variables would account for the largest proportion of variance in transgender attitude scores.

Religiosity, attitudes toward women, attitudes toward gays and lesbians, and exposure were entered at Step 2 in four separate analyses. To control for experiment-wise error a Bonferroni correction was employed and an alpha of $p < .013 (.05/4)$ was used to detect a statistically significant regression result (Schaffer, 1995).

Table 4.2 provides the results of the following hierarchical multiple regression analysis. It was found that Step 1 of the multiple regression equation for transgender attitudes was significant, $F (7, 143) = 8.02, p<.01$ for demographic variables and social desirability. These findings indicated that together these variables accounted for 28.2% of the variance in transgender attitude, meaning that a significant amount of the
variability in individuals’ attitudes toward transgender individuals is related to their
gender, sexual orientation and religious affiliation.

When the total religiosity score was entered at Step 2 of the multiple regression
equation the result was significant, $F(1, 142) = 14.38, p < .01$. As hypothesized,
religiosity significantly positively predicted transgender attitudes, accounting for 6.6% of
the variance in transgender attitudes beyond the variance accounted for by demographic
variables and social desirability. ($\Delta R^2$ of Step 2_{IE-R} = .066). In other words, higher levels
of both intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity predicted higher scores on the GTS (i.e., more
negative attitudes toward transgender individuals).

When the total attitudes toward gays and lesbians score was entered at Step 2 of
the multiple regression, the result was also significant, $F(1,142) = 261.63, p < .01$. As
hypothesized, attitudes toward lesbians and gays significantly positively predicted
transgender attitudes, accounting for 46.5% of the variance beyond the variance
accounted for in Step 1. ($\Delta R^2$ of Step 2_{ATLG} = .465). In other words, negative attitudes
toward lesbians and gay men were predictive of negative attitudes toward transgender
individuals.

Attitudes toward women also appeared to be a significant negative predictor when
entered in Step 2 of the multiple regression, $F(1, 142) = 91.08, p < .01$, meaning that more
traditional gender role beliefs were predictive of more negative attitudes toward
transgender individuals. This variable accounted for 28.1% of the variance in attitudes
toward transgender individuals, beyond that predicted in Step 1. ($\Delta R^2$ of Step 2_{AWS} = .28).

Finally, exposure to transgender persons appeared to be a significant negative
predictor when entered in Step 2 of the multiple regression, $F(1,142) = 9.53, p < .01$. The
exposure variable accounted for 3.7\% of the variance in attitudes toward transgender individuals, beyond the variance accounted for in step 1. ($\Delta R^2$ of Step 2$_{EXP} = .037$). In other words, a lack of exposure to transgender individuals is predictive of negative attitudes toward the transgender population.
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* *p<.05.
** **p<.01

Table 4.1

Overall Correlations Between Measures of Religious Orientation, Attitudes Toward Gays and Lesbians, Attitudes Toward Women, Attitudes Toward Transgender Individuals, and Socially Desirable Responding
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<th>$SE,\beta$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
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Note. MCSDS= Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. I/E-R=Intrinsic/Extrinsic-Revised Scale. ATLG=Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gays Scale. AWS=Attitudes Toward Women Scale.

*p<.013

Table 4.2
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Attitudes Toward Transgender Individuals From Religious Orientation, Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gays, Attitudes Toward Women, and Exposure to Transgender Persons.
The purpose of the present study was to gain a better understanding of individuals’ attitudes toward the transgender population, as well as factors that influence these attitudes. Because of the scant research that addresses this specific issue, it was necessary to extrapolate from a parallel body of research—that is, gay, lesbian and bisexual (GLB) research, in order to select variables of interest.

While GLB identities describe sexual orientation, and transgender identities describe gender identity, there are many similarities in the way these populations are perceived and understood by the general public that make GLB literature a logical domain from which to draw. First, both GLB and transgender populations share a history of oppression. Second, both sexual orientation and gender identity are often misperceived to be mutable facets of identity (Tygart, 2000). Third, both sexual orientation and gender identity are generally invisible aspects of identity. Finally, it is common for a conflation of sexual orientation and gender identities to occur, where people often assume that transgender individuals identify as gay or lesbian, that gay and lesbians desire to change their gender (Ellis & Mitchell, 2000). Because of these similarities between sexual orientation and gender identities, it can be hypothesized that
factors contributing to social attitudes toward gays and lesbians may similarly apply to
to attitudes toward transgender individuals.

Through a review of research on attitudes toward GLB persons it was evident that
religiosity, attitudes toward women, exposure to GLB persons, and opinions about the
cause of sexual orientation were among the most commonly supported variables in
predicting attitudes. In general, findings of many of these studies suggested that higher
levels of religiosity (e.g., Schwartz & Lindley, 2005), traditional beliefs about the roles of
women in society (e.g., Herek, 1988), a lack of exposure to GLB persons (e.g., Herek &
Capitanio, 1995) and a belief that sexual orientation is the result of genetics (e.g., Tygart,
2000) have been found to positively predict negative attitudes toward GLB persons.

Because of the aforementioned parallels between public perception of GLB and
transgender populations, it was an assumption of the present study that these predictors
may be helpful in understanding attitudes toward transgender persons as well. Thus, these
variables were selected for this examination. In addition, demographic variables, such as
race, gender, sexual orientation, and political affiliation were considered in order to
understand how demographic differences may influence attitudes toward transgender
issues.

First, it was hypothesized that religiosity, attitudes toward women, attitudes
toward lesbians and gay men, and exposure to transgender persons were individually
significant predictors of attitudes toward transgender individuals. More specifically, it
was thought that higher levels of religiosity, more traditional attitudes toward the role of
women in society, higher levels of homophobia, and a lack of exposure to transgender
persons would all positively predict negative attitudes toward transgender individuals.
A multiple hierarchical linear regression analysis revealed the predictive value of all of these variables. More explicitly, high levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, traditional beliefs about the roles of women, homophobic attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, and a lack of exposure to transgender individuals appeared to predict negative attitudes toward transgender people. Conversely, lower levels of religiosity, liberal beliefs about the roles of women in society, positive attitudes toward lesbians and gay men and some degree of contact with transgender persons appeared to predict positive attitudes toward transgender individuals.

Second, it was hypothesized that attribution of transgender orientation to a biological cause, such as genetics, would be related to more positive attitudes toward transgender persons, whereas attribution of transgender orientation to an environmental cause would be related to more negative attitudes toward transgender people. In general, participants were more likely to endorse environmental causes than biological causes. However, the majority of people believed that transgender orientation likely results from a combination of biological and environmental causes.

A correlational analysis supported the second hypothesis, showing that the more strongly individuals believed that being transgender was due to one’s immutable biology the more they endorsed positive attitudes toward transgender individuals. Furthermore, the more strongly people held the opinion that transgender identity was due to the influence of environmental factors such as peers, parents, and the media, the more negative their attitudes were toward transgender individuals.

Third, it was hypothesized that individuals who had at least one experience in which they were exposed to a transgender individual (i.e., transsexual or cross-dresser)
would have more positive attitudes toward the transgender population than individuals who had no such exposure. Approximately 35% of the sample reported having contact with a transgender individual. An analysis of variance showed that those who had known contact with a transgender person tended to have more positive attitudes than those who had not had contact. This finding is congruent with studies on both GLB attitudes (e.g., Cotton-Huson & Waite, 2000; Herek, 1988) and transgender attitudes (e.g., Hill & Willougby, 2005) that have shown exposure to be related to more positive attitudes. Moreover, the notion that positive, cooperative contact with members from one’s social out-group (in this case transgender individuals) may help to increase positive attitudes has been well supported in the social psychological literature (e.g., Allport, 1954; Aronson, 1995).

In addition to the above results, a number of adventitious findings arose when attitudes toward transgender individuals were examined across the demographic variables. One notable difference was related to sex: men tended to hold more negative attitudes toward transgender individuals than women. While average attitudes for both genders were in the mid-range of the scale, men’s attitudes generally fell in the lower-middle range, and women’s attitudes generally fell in the higher end of the middle range. This finding is consistent with many studies that have reported men to have higher levels of homophobia (e.g., Herek, 1988) and transphobia (e.g., Landén & Innala, 2000).

Another difference was among political affiliation: individuals who identified as politically conservative appeared to hold more negative attitudes than people who identified as liberal or independent as well as those whose voting tendencies were issue-dependent. Tygart (2000) reported a similar trend in his study of public acceptance of gay
rights— liberals and conservative libertarians tended to be more supportive of gay rights than conservatives.

Because of unequal sample sizes among the religious identifications, it was not possible to determine differences in attitude based on specific religious identification. However, when the sample was split into those who identified with a Christian religion (i.e., non-denominational, Protestant or Catholic) and those who did not identify with a Christian religion (Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam or no affiliation), it was found that Christians seem to held more negative attitudes than non-Christians.

5.1 Implications

These findings seem to support the hypotheses of this study and provide some valuable insight into the current status of attitudes toward transgender individuals and some of the variables that may affect these attitudes. Having a more thorough understanding social factors affecting anti-transgender sentiment may be useful in increasing positive awareness of transgender issues for the general public.

In addition, it may be particularly important for professionals such as psychologists, social workers, and other counseling and medical practitioners who may be working with transgender individuals to examine their attitudes in order to provide competent care. Competency in working with any cross-cultural group requires professionals who possess an awareness of “their negative emotional reactions” toward and stereotypes and preconceived notions of culturally different groups (Sue & Sue, 1992). Although sparse, research on the experiences of transgender individuals in counseling points to the need for practitioners who are both knowledgeable and open-minded about transgender issues (Carroll & Gilroy, 2002; Mallon, 1999; Rachlin, 2002). This may be especially relevant
given the estimation that most mental health practitioners will encounter at least one transgender client in the course of their professional careers (Ettner, 1999). Understanding trends and predictors of attitudes may elucidate how counseling professionals can be best prepared to competently serve the needs of transgender clients.

In general, it appears that, among the sample tested, there is a wide range of attitudes toward transgender individuals, with some scores indicating maximally positive attitudes, and the majority of scores falling in the mid-range of the scale. The distribution of these attitudes is generally normal, but is shifted such that no one endorsed maximally negative attitudes. This distribution was similar to Hill and Willoughby’s (2005) finding when the instrument was used on a university population. Because this study used a college population, this distribution of attitudes is not necessarily generalizable to the entire population; however this finding suggests that there currently is some degree of awareness and acceptance of transgender people.

The fact that a higher degree of religiosity seems to predict more negative attitudes toward transgender individuals may reflect the adherence to traditional gender roles and the consequent admonition against gender role transgression inherent in some religious doctrine. There was no major difference between intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations as measured in this study: high levels of both were strongly positively correlated with negative attitudes toward transgender issues. This finding is consistent with Herek’s (1987) study that showed both intrinsic and extrinsic orientations to be positively correlated with racism and homophobia.

Religion reflects a rather intractable factor in transphobia; however, appreciating the impact of religion on these attitudes may be important in understanding how to best
reach those with the most negative attitudes. In addition, the role of religion in attitudes may be an important factor in internalized transphobia (that is, transphobia toward oneself), which may arise for highly religious individuals who are questioning their gender identity.

Intuitively, it makes sense that attitudes toward women would be strongly related to attitudes toward transgender people. Because transgender identities represent a transgression, or crossing of gender norms, it is logical that those who hold firm traditional beliefs about the roles of women in society would hold negative attitudes toward a population that, by definition, crosses such boundaries. Understanding this may have important implications for attitude change. For instance, it may be important for individuals learning about transgender issues and persons to examine their own attitudes and biases about gender roles (Sue & Sue, 1992)

The strong relationship between homophobic attitudes and transphobic attitudes is not surprising. This correlation may be due to the common conflation of sexual orientation and gender identity. Alternatively it may be reflective of a general negativity toward any person who defies social standards of heteronormativity. In educating people about transgender issues, it may be important to clearly distinguish sexual orientation from gender identity. In addition, it may be helpful for individuals to have an awareness of their own heterosexism (McIntosh, 1998; Sue & Sue, 1992).

Another factor in attitudes toward transgender individuals seems to be the causes to which people ascribe transgender identity. Consistent with similar research about attitudes toward the GLB population (e.g., Herek & Capatanio, 1995; Tygart, 2000), individuals who attributed gender identity to a biological cause, tended to endorse more
positive attitudes than individuals who attributed gender identity to an exogenous cause, such as peers or the media. This finding may have to do with individuals’ perception of locus of control (Rotter, 1966). That is, when individuals perceive gender identity arising from biological factors, they may be more accepting of transgender identity because they see these factors as being beyond one’s control (i.e., an external locus of control).

Conversely, individuals who believe that gender identity is a function of environmental circumstances may perceive transgender identity as a deliberate choice that is made (i.e., an internal locus of control). This perception of transgender individuals having made a conscious choice that has led them to defy the gender dichotomy may be related to the endorsement of less favorable attitudes.

This finding has a number of interesting ramifications and implications. On the positive side, biological causal attributions may allow for a greater acceptance of transgender individuals within society. The general public may conclude that transgender individuals are not being deliberately disrespectful of typical gender structure and are rather acting on an immutable biological orientation. On the negative side, however, transgender individuals may become considered flawed or genetically inferior. Further, genetic differences might be used as justification for discriminatory treatment of transgender individuals.

Currently there is no biological research identifying a definite biological or genetic cause of transgender identity. As science progresses such a linkage may be discovered. However in a matter so complex and involving so many extrascientific components, even if a genetic cause is identified it will only provide a small part of the cultural framework. Even in the present, the implication of this finding may be important.
As public awareness increases about gender identity and transgender orientation, it may be important to include in the discourse the possibility that biology is involved, rather than it being simply a matter of choice.

As predicted, exposure to transgender individuals seems to predict more positive attitudes. This finding is consistent with a number of other studies examining the effect of exposure (e.g., Herek & Glunt, 1993; Hill & Willoughby, 2006). Moreover, it is congruent with the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954). It is possible that encountering a transgender individual may have helped people to demystify the notion of transgender and gain a more accurate understanding of what transgender people are truly like. Conversely, this finding may reflect the possibility that people who tend to hold more positive attitudes toward transgender may be more likely to have transgender friends or acquaintances.

Overall, it seems that positive contact with transgender individuals may be an important factor in increasing positive attitudes toward transgender concerns. Such contact may be important in helping to increase awareness and positive attitudes toward transgender persons. As a larger number of transgender individuals reveal their transgender identities, the likelihood for contact will increase. This may, in turn, provide opportunities for increasing positive attitudes.

5.2 Limitations

Caution should be taken when considering the implications of these results. The results of this study are cross-sectional, thus, the causal direction of the relationships can not be confirmed. In addition, this study involved a convenience sample of undergraduate students from a Midwestern university. Because of the limited age range
of the participants, as well as the lack of racial, ethnic and sexual orientation diversity, this sample is not fully representative of the larger community. There may also be important regional differences that were not reflected in this sample. Consequently, readers are cautioned about making generalizations to the community as a whole.

Another limitation of this study may be related to the instrumentation. While all measures used have demonstrated adequate reliability and validity in past studies, some of the instruments may have had decreased sensitivity with the sample used in the present study. First, the Genderism/Transphobia Scale (GTS) is a new instrument, and because of this, little research exists that provides psychometric data on this measure. While this instrument demonstrated good reliability in the current study, further research on the GTS may be necessary to ensure validity. Second, while the Intrinsic/Extrinsic-Revised (I/E-R) scale demonstrated adequate reliability for this study, because of the age of the instrument it may not be sensitive to all religious groups. Similarly, while the Attitudes Toward Women scale (AWS) demonstrated high reliability in this study, a number of the questions use dated language that may have affected the sensitivity of the instrument.

The questions assessing exposure in the present study only asked about direct contact with cross-dressers and transsexual persons. Given the increased attention to transgender issues in popular television programs and films, as well as the recent rise of transgender awareness within the political realm, it may have been interesting to assess for vicarious contact as well. Furthermore, these questions did not require participants to specify the amount of contact. This data may be useful in further understanding the role of contact on attitudes.
Lastly, all measures utilized in the present study were self-report. Thus, participants’ responses were based on their memory of events and their individual perceptions of their attitudes and experiences. Results from the measure of social desirability indicated that some of the participants may have been responding in ways that presented them favorably. Therefore, these findings should be interpreted with caution in this respect as well.

5.3 **Future Directions**

While this research provides some insight into attitudes toward transgender individuals and factors related to these attitudes, more empirical research on transgender concerns is needed. Research on nearly all aspects of transgender issues remains in its early stages. Future studies should further examine some of the predictors of transgender attitudes found in this study with specific focus on cultural variables such as race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. For example, given the common misconception that transgender persons are readily welcomed within the GLB population, it may be interesting to compare attitude differences toward transgender persons between GLB and heterosexual groups.

Furthermore, given the importance of exposure to transgender issues in predicting attitudes, more empirical research exploring this variable may elucidate the nature and amount of contact that would be helpful in improving attitudes. For instance, a study measuring attitudes before and after exposure to a transgender individual may provide insight about the potency of contact in attitude change for this population. Further, research examining the effect of vicarious versus direct contact with a transgender persons may be interesting.
A more thorough understanding of attitudes toward transgender individuals may lead to development of educational programs designed to increase the positive awareness of transgender issues. Such programs may be especially beneficial to practitioners in a variety of fields, such as psychology, social work, nursing and medicine, who will likely encounter transgender individuals in their practice.

5.4 Conclusion

While there is much more work to be done in fully understanding social attitudes toward transgender issues, the present study has identified some significant predictors of these attitudes. As the transgender population continues to gain visibility in society, it will become increasingly important to understand these attitudes in order to address transphobia in an informed and effective manner.
LIST OF REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS
Hello,

You have signed up for the on-line survey about social issues. You actually can do the survey at home. BELOW ARE THE DIRECTIONS FOR GETTING TO THE SURVEY AND THE CODE YOU NEED. In order to get the credit you must complete the survey by the end of the hour you signed up for by 5pm. Thanks for signing up and please read all the directions

My name is Erica Claman, and I am a graduate student in the Counseling Psychology Ph.D. Program in the Department of Psychology at The Ohio State University. Along with my advisor, Pamela Highlen, I am conducting a research study exploring people’s attitudes to a number of social issues. The only requirement for participation is that you are 18 years of age or older.

The survey will take approximately 15-25 minutes to complete. You may complete the survey now, or at any time prior to the end of the section for which you enrolled on the REP website. YOU WILL NEED TO ENTER A CODE NUMBER WHEN PROMPTED TO DO SO ON THE SURVEY. YOUR CODE NUMBER IS: . Please note that in order to receive REP credit you must enter the code number when prompted on the survey.

If you have read this email and would like to take the survey, please click on the URL below or copy and paste the link into your web browser:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=971232365196

Due to the nature of Internet research, the security of the survey data during transmission cannot be guaranteed; however, no identifying information is required. Security is guaranteed once the researchers receive the data. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. If you would like further information about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at claman.3@osu.edu. You may also contact my advisor Dr. Pamela Highlen at highlen.1@osu.edu.

The methods of this research and the plan for protection of rights of participants have been reviewed and approved by the Office of Responsible Research Practices (http://www.orrp.ohio-state.edu/), which oversees all research activities conducted at The Ohio State University. This plan received Institutional Review Board approval in February 2007.

Thank you very much for your time and participation!

Sincerely,

Erica E. Claman, M.A.
APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY
Introduction

Hello and welcome to this study! The following questionnaires ask you questions about your views and opinions about a number of social issues.

Although the confidentiality of on-line responses cannot be guaranteed, no identifying information is required. Furthermore, your responses will be kept strictly confidential once the researchers receive the data.

***Please try to answer all items in the survey, as a complete survey would benefit this research.

***Please answer all items honestly

By responding to this survey completely and honestly you will be contributing to much needed knowledge about the many important social issues on this campus and in society as a whole.

Thank you for your participation!
APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT
This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate.

Your participation is voluntary. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to check a box to indicate that you have consented.

**Purpose**
The following study focuses on exploring attitudes toward transgender individuals. The purpose of the study is to explore students’ perspectives on transgender issues. By participating and sharing your experiences, you will provide valuable information that will supply counselors and those in the helping profession with a better understanding of the needs of the transgender community.

**Procedures/Tasks**
The entire survey will be completed on-line. This study contains a few questionnaires that ask a variety of questions regarding transgender issues and attitudes toward other social issues. Additionally you will be asked to provide some demographic information, such as age, sexual orientation, race and gender. Please note that your name in no way will be attached to the information you provide. Overall, the study contains approximately 130 items to respond to, which altogether should take around 15 to 25 minutes of your time.

**Duration**
This survey will take approximately 15-25 minutes. You may discontinue the study at any time by simply closing your internet browser. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with The Ohio State University.

**Risks and Benefits**
Due to the nature of Internet research, the security of the survey data during transmission cannot be guaranteed; however no identifying information is required. Security is guaranteed once the researchers receive the data.

**Confidentiality**
Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, personal information regarding your participation in this study may be disclosed if required by state law. Also, your records may be reviewed by the following groups (as applicable to the research):
- Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies
- The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board or Office of Responsible Research Practices
**Participant Rights**
You may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you are a student or employee at Ohio State, your decision will not affect your grades or employment status.
If you choose to participate in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you may have as a participant in this study.
An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The Ohio State University reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

**Contacts and Questions**
For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact claman.3@osu.edu or highlen.1@osu.edu
For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
I am not giving up any legal rights by consenting to take part in this study.
In order to continue with the survey, you must indicate your agreement here. If you agree with the above, please indicate your agreement by clicking "yes" below.

[ ] yes   [ ] no
APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE
1. I am currently enrolled in Psychology 100 at The Ohio State University and am completing this study for course credit.

[ ] yes   [ ] no

2. If you answered "Yes" to the above question please enter your code number (provided to you by the researcher) below. You MUST enter your code number in order to receive credit for participation. If you answered "No" to the above question you may simply move on to the next question.

3. Please enter your age.

4. Gender
   I identify as…
   [ ] Male   [ ] Female   [ ] Transgender

5. Sexual Orientation
   I identify as...
   [ ] Heterosexual/Straight   [ ] Gay   [ ] Lesbian   [ ] Bisexual   [ ] Other (please specify below)

6. How do you tend to vote on political issues?
   I typically vote...
   [ ] Conservative   [ ] Liberal   [ ] Independent   [ ] I do not vote   [ ] It depends on the issue

7. Ethnic/Racial Identification
   I identify as...
   [ ] Black/African American   [ ] Asian American/Asian   [ ] Latino/Latina
   [ ] White/Caucasian   [ ] Native American   [ ] Other

8. Religious Identification
   I identify as... (Please select as many as apply to you.)
   [ ] Christian/Non-Denominational   [ ] Christian/Protestant (e.g. Lutheran, Methodist)   [ ] Catholic   [ ] Jewish   [ ] Muslim   [ ] Buddhist   [ ] Hindu
   [ ] Unitarian   [ ] I do not identify with a religion   [ ] Other
APPENDIX E

ATTRIBUTION OF TRANSGENDER ORIENTATION CAUSALITY
Transgender orientation is a term that describes a number of identities, including cross-dressers, transsexuals (some of whom get surgery to alter their appearance) drag queens and kings. What all transgender individuals have in common is an identification with the sex opposite of their biological sex.

A lot of human behavior probably will never be fully understood. Scientists as well as people in general disagree how much influence that individuals' genetic inheritance has on transgender orientation. Please indicate how well the following statements reflect your view on the causes of transgender orientation.

1. **Transgender orientation probably results mostly from biological factors (i.e. genetics).**

   - strongly disagree
   - disagree
   - neither agree nor disagree
   - agree
   - strongly agree

2. **Transgender orientation is probably entirely due to environmental factors, such as society, parents, peers, and media.**

   - strongly disagree
   - disagree
   - neither agree nor disagree
   - agree
   - strongly agree

3. **Transgender identity is probably due to a combination of genetics and environment.**

   - strongly disagree
   - disagree
   - neither agree nor disagree
   - agree
   - strongly agree
APPENDIX F

EXPOSURE TO TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS
1. By definition, transsexuals are individuals who identify with a gender different from that which they were born. For instance, a person who was born as a male, but on the inside identifies as a female is transsexual. Transsexuals may have surgery or hormone treatments to make their appearance more congruent with their internal feelings, but this is not always the case.

To your knowledge have you ever personally met a transsexual individual?

[ ] yes  [ ] no

2. Crossdressers (sometimes referred to as transvestites) are people who prefer to dress in clothing traditionally worn by the opposite gender. They may dress like this all the time, or only a portion of the time.

To your knowledge, have you ever personally met a crossdresser?

[ ] yes  [ ] no
Understanding Transgender Issues

The study you just participated in focused on some of the attitudes students have about transgender individuals. Very little research to date has explored this specific issue, yet transgender issues are gaining increasing visibility in society. We feel that understanding the current attitudes toward transgender issues is very important.

One of the premises of the study is that one’s attitudes toward transgender issues are likely related to their attitudes toward other social issues such as gender roles and religious orientation. Moreover, research has supported the notion that exposure to transgender issues may influence attitudes. Accordingly, some of the questions presented assessed these other issues. In line with increasing the education on transgender issues, we feel it is important to provide you with information about some commonly asked questions about transgender issues. We hope you find this information helpful in increasing your awareness of these issues.

Please feel free to ask any questions about the study or the concepts presented. If you have any questions or want to hear about the results, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Pam Highlen at highlen.1@osu.edu; or the Co-Investigator, Erica Claman at claman.3@osu.edu.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Some Commonly Asked Questions about Transgender Issues

What does the term “transgender” mean?
The term “transgender” describes a multitude of identities and forms of self-expression that transgress established gender categories. “Transgender” includes transsexuals (individuals who identify with a gender different from that which is biologically assigned), cross-dressers (individuals who prefer to dress in clothing traditionally worn by the opposite gender; this term is preferred to “transvestite”), as well as drag kings and drag queens.

Do most transgender people identify as lesbians or gay men?
No. Transgender is a matter of gender identity (how people perceive their own gender), whereas “lesbian” and “gay” are terms that describe sexual orientation (the focus of people’s attractions). Transgender people may identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or straight, but this is independent of their transgender identity.

How does one correctly refer to the gender of transgender individuals?
It is correct to refer to people based on the gender with which they identify. If someone identifies as a woman, it is correct to refer to her as a woman, regardless of what gender she was born.
Why would someone cross-dress?
Cross-dressers do not necessarily identify with the opposite gender, and their cross-gendered expression is typically limited to attire. There are multiple reasons people cross-dress. A small fraction are entertainers, some are young people demonstrating rebellion. A few cross-dress as a sexual fetish while others cross-dress to be outrageous. But the overwhelming majority of cross-dressers do so for as a form of self-expression.

Do most transgender individuals seek gender reassignment surgery?
No. While some transsexuals take hormones, have electrolysis (for transgender women), or mastectomies (for transgender men), and undergo genital reconstruction surgeries, others choose only some of these procedures, because of the tremendous cost of the surgeries, the mixed results, and lack of access to medical care in general. Other transgender people decide not to alter their bodies permanently, but seek to express their gender identities in other ways, such as through cross-dressing.

Are transgender people who were born female, but identify as male rare?
No. This is a common misconception, perhaps due to the fact that transgender men may be more visible than transgender women. It is estimated that there are approximately equal numbers of transgender women and transgender men.

Are transgender legal rights protected in the majority of states?
No. The legal and political rights of transgender people are quite limited, and vary from state to state, city to city, and among institutions. Currently, only four states ban discrimination based on gender identity or expression in housing, public accommodation and employment.

Are transgender people fully accepted in the gay, lesbian and bisexual (GLB) community?
Although transgender issues are often included with GLB issues, the political, developmental, legal and medical needs and concerns of transgender people are not always the same as those of GLB. Although, transgender issues are becoming increasingly included in the GLB community, there is still not necessarily full acceptance.