

Out on the Playing Field: Providing Quality Physical Education and Recreational Opportunities for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth

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Abstract

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth may be at a higher risk for depression, suicide, and negative risk-taking (Bontempo & D'Augelli, 2002; DuRant, Krowchuk, & Senal, 1998; Garofalo, Wolf, Kessel, Palfrey, & DuRant, 1998; Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1995; Moon et al., 2000; Rosario, Hunter, & Gwadz, 1997; Rotherum-Borus, Rosario, Van Rossem, Reid, & Gillis, 1995) and could benefit from positive risk-taking associated with physical activity; however, negative attitudes of physical activity professionals may impact the participation of LGB youth. Herek's (1984) Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG-S) was administered to 446 undergraduate students enrolled in child and adolescent health courses at two universities in Texas. Results indicate kinesiology majors reported more negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men than other students. As a result, the authors recommend pre-professional education programs include information about LGB youth, values clarification, and ways to reduce homonegative attitudes.

Keywords: physical activity, homosexuality, youth, sexual orientation

In order to improve the current health of children and adolescents and ensure healthy adulthood, it is critical that quality physical activity and recreational programs are readily available for all youth. High quality programs

include planned, sequential instruction that promotes lifelong physical activity and are designed to: a) develop basic movement skills and sports skills, and physical fitness; and b) enhance mental, social and emotional abilities (Marx, Wooley, & Northrup, 1998). Physical activity and recreational programs reduce levels of anxiety and stress, and participation in such programs often results in higher levels of self-esteem (Calfas & Taylor, 1994). Participation in physical activity relates to positive improvements in academic performance (Dwyer, Blizzard, & Dean, 1996) and improved concentration; better writing, math, and reading test scores; and reduced disruptive behaviors (Kolbe et al., 1986). With current trends and emphasis on academic testing, some have worried that less time spent on academics and more on physical and recreation activities may have a negative impact on test scores. On the contrary, evidence suggests that students who participated in physical education programs did not experience negative effects on standardized test scores. In fact, when a substantial amount of curricular time (14-26%) is spent engaging in physical activity, learning seems to proceed more rapidly per unit of classroom time when compared to those who do not participate in physical activity (Shephard, 1997).

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth

Not all youth have equal opportunity to engage in physical activities; this lack of opportunity

could have detrimental effects on the health of these students. Studies have shown that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) youth are more susceptible to certain health risks, such as victimization and mental health problems, and more likely to engage in health risk behaviors, such as substance abuse and sexual risk-taking (Bontempo & D'Augelli, 2002; DuRant, Krowchuk, & Senal, 1998; Garofalo, Wolf, Kessel, Palfrey, & DuRant, 1998; Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1995; Moon et al., 2000; Rosario, Hunter, & Gwadz, 1997; Rotherum-Borus, Rosario, Van Rossem, Reid, & Gillis, 1995). Physical education classes offer the possibility for positive risk-taking opportunities, as opposed to negative risk-taking behaviors, provided the youth feel comfortable and accepted in these classes.

Adolescents and adults take risks for adventure, boredom dissolution, excitement, as well as the opportunity to experience success and novelty. Positive risk-taking or "healthy risk promotion" refers to the encouragement of participation in adventurous, thrill-seeking, sensation-seeking, exhilarating experiences that fulfill one's needs, relieve stress, and are healthy and legal. Physical education classes can offer the opportunity for LGB and straight youth to engage together in physical experiences that are enjoyable and challenging and provoke positive changes in mood, self esteem, and self efficacy. Specific physical education experiences could include opportunities to participate in new fitness-related activities such as learning new lifetime sport skills (tennis, golf), team sports (softball, soccer, basketball), strength training, aerobic walking, ROPES (Reality Oriented Physical Experience Session), rock-climbing, and other experiential activities that are challenging, adventuresome, enjoyable, and encourage positive interaction, cooperation, and respect between people (Wyatt & Peterson, 2005).

School Climate and Teacher Support

While all environments have an impact, understanding the school environment where students

spend eight or more hours a day and interact with their peers the most is especially critical. In their recent report on school climate, the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006) reported that 64.1% of surveyed LGB youth report being verbally harassed (name-calling, threats) and over a third (37.8%) experienced physical harassment at school because of their sexual orientation. In addition, three-quarters of those surveyed heard homophobic remarks such as "fag" or "dyke," and almost 89.2% heard "that's so gay" or "you're so gay" frequently at school. Few youths (only 16.5%) reported that faculty or staff who heard such remarks intervened frequently and most students reported that staff members were less likely to intervene for negative remarks about sexual orientation than sexist or racist remarks.

Numerous researchers have examined the role of the student-teacher relationship on student success (Klem & Connell, 2004; McNeely & Falci, 2004). Findings suggest that teacher support (Klem & Connell, 2004) as well as other adult support (Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004) is integral to healthy student development and reductions in negative risk-behaviors (Leffert, Benson, Scales, Sharma, Drake, & Blyth, 1998; McNeely & Falci, 2004; Scales, 1999). Young people who perceive their teachers are fair and care about them are less likely to initiate negative risk behaviors (McNeely & Falci, 2004). Students' perceived levels of support by their classroom and physical education teachers/coaches can serve as a catalyst toward healthy or unhealthy development, to include positive self-esteem and respect for others.

Educators should be morally obligated to ground their pedagogical decisions and philosophy in the context of broad social/cultural and economic issues, evidence-based best practices, and the underlying needs, abilities, and experiences of their students. How issues and content are addressed in the classroom communicates powerful messages about what is valued and devalued (Anderson, 1999). Having an open

communication style, being an active listener, and respecting individual differences facilitate a positive student-teacher relationship and build acceptance and a sense of trust for students (Torrey & Ashy, 1997). Torrey & Ashy (1997) suggest incorporating language-based multicultural activities within the physical education classroom as well as modeling culturally-sensitive behaviors. This pedagogical philosophy should be extended to include other cultural areas like the experiences of gay and lesbian individuals.

LGB Youth in Physical Education and Recreational Programs

Morrow and Gill (2003) examined the perceptions of homophobia and heterosexism in physical education classes by surveying physical education teachers and young adults about their experiences. Students and teachers reported heterosexist and homophobic behaviors in secondary schools. Teachers often intended to create safe environments but usually failed to intervene and confront those homophobic behaviors. A review of the literature revealed no other studies examining the experiences of LGB students in physical education courses and recreational settings.

Physical education courses and recreational activities may create unique challenges to those who teach or supervise them. These types of activities often involve large numbers of youth, so close supervision and individual instruction may be an issue. In addition, the locker room, which is often a necessary part of physical education and recreational activities, is one of the few places outside of the home where various stages of undress occur. During childhood and adolescence, the locker room could potentially be a “minefield” of problems ranging from self-esteem issues to harassment to physical and sexual abuse. Considering the positive effects associated with physical activity, it is important that all youth are encouraged to participate in physical education and recreational activities and the environments in which those activities take place are safe and nurturing for all students, including LGB youth.

This study examined attitudes towards lesbians and gay men of undergraduate college students who were enrolled in a child and adolescent health course, thus having a high likelihood of working with youth.

Purpose

The purpose of this exploratory study was to assess the attitudes toward gay men and lesbians of undergraduate college students who were studying child and adolescent health. Underlying biases related to sexual orientation may be detrimental to the psychological and social development of all youth, regardless of sexual orientation. Physical education offers a unique opportunity for students to engage in positive risk-taking; however, a heterosexist and homo-negative environment created by or allowed by physical education teachers may negate those benefits for LGB youth. By examining the attitudes of these students on sexuality issues, education programs can better address such issues and thus positively influence future teacher-student interactions.

Method

Participants

Participants, who were attending one of two large universities in south central Texas, were recruited from a child and adolescent development course directed toward individuals who will be working with youth (e.g., teaching, coaching, working in youth/community settings). A total of 485 students completed all or part of a 147 item survey designed to examine the training and education these pre-professionals receive for dealing with sexuality issues related to children and adolescents. Of the 485, 442 individuals were undergraduate students who completed all items of a 10-item scale related to attitudes about gay and lesbian individuals. Participant description is based on this group of 442.

More respondents were female (78.7%, $n = 348$) than male (21.0%, $n = 93$), with one participant not answering this question. The

majority were White (59.5%, $n = 263$) with 21.9% ($n = 97$) identifying as Hispanic/Latino/a, 7.0% ($n = 31$) identifying as Asian/Pacific Islander, 5.7% ($n = 25$) identifying as African American and 5.2% ($n = 23$) identifying as other. Three individuals did not identify a race/ethnicity.

Most of the students were upperclassmen; 48.4% ($n = 214$) identified themselves as juniors, 31.0% ($n = 137$) as seniors. Underclassmen made up slightly more than 20% of the participant group with 7.7% ($n = 34$) freshmen and 12.9% ($n = 57$) sophomores.

The students were primarily from two different academic majors: interdisciplinary studies with teaching certification (58.8%, $n = 260$) and kinesiology (24.2%, $n = 107$). Participants also identified special education (2.5%, $n = 11$), health (2.5%, $n = 11$), and other (8.6%, $n = 38$) as majors. Fifteen individuals (3.4%) did not identify a major. Of those identifying a major, almost all of the participants, 91.1% ($n = 389$), identified a major within the College of Education at one of these two institutions.

Procedure

Within the first three weeks of a child and adolescent development course, participants were solicited to complete the 147-item questionnaire. Participants signed consent forms and were informed that they could discontinue participation at any time and/or omit any item on the questionnaire without penalty. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained prior to administration of the survey. This process began during the spring semester of 2004 and was repeated during the summer 2004, fall 2004, and spring 2005 semesters. A coded questionnaire was developed and the data from each questionnaire were coded accordingly and entered by hand into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), which was used to analyze the data.

Instrumentation

The comprehensive survey included 147 items; only 14 items were related to this study and

included in this article. The short 10-item version of the Attitudes Toward Lesbian and Gay Men (ATLG-S) Scale (Herek, 1984), in combination with four self-reported demographic descriptors were used to examine college students' attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. The four descriptors were: gender, race/ethnicity, year in college, and major area of study.

The ATLG-S Scale is a brief 10-item scale that measures one's attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. The original scale has 20 items and given that the survey was already quite long, this shortened version was more appropriate for this study. A 6-item version was also created for telephone interviews; however, the reliability of the subscales is low [$\alpha < .55$; Herek & Capitano, 1995]; subsequently, the authors chose the 10-item ATLG-S scale.

For the ATLG-S scale, individuals responded to items on 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Adding the scores for each of the items determines the individual's score on the total scale; individuals with lower scores reported more positive attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. The survey has two subscales of 5 items each; one assessing attitudes toward gay males (ATG-S5) and one assessing attitudes toward lesbians (ATL-S5).

Previous research revealed the original scale has high test-retest reliability after a three-week period (Herek, 1988, 1994) and this shorter scale and its subscales are highly correlated with its longer original counterpart [$r = .97$ for ATLG-S with ATLG, $r = .96$ for ATG-S5 with ATG, and $r = .95$ for ATL-S5 with ATL (Herek, 1988)]. For this administration of the ATLG-S, the alpha coefficient for the entire scale was .91. For the ATG-S5, the alpha coefficient was .88, and for the ATL-S5, the alpha coefficient was .77.

Data Analyses

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) techniques were used to examine differences in responses among demographic categories for the total scale and the two subscales. Normality was assumed for

each of the variables and Levene's test of homogeneity of variance was examined for all analyses. All except two models were not significant; and as a result, for the majority analyses, the null hypothesis that the groups have equal variances was accepted. The two models where equal variance was not assumed are identified in the results section and because these analyses also included unequal sample size groups, Welch test statistic was used instead of the ANOVA F value. The three dependent variables for all analyses were the scores on ATL-S5, ATG-S5 and ATLG-S. The P -values for this study were set at less than or equal to .05.

Results

Overall, the participants indicated an uncertain attitude toward gay and lesbian individuals. The mean score for the ATLG-S was 25.13 ($SD = 9.42$) and the median was 24.0 with a possible range from 10 to 50. For the subscales, similar mid-range results were found. With possible scores ranging from 5 to 25; for the ATL-S5, the mean was 12.08 ($SD = 4.41$) and the median was 12.0. For the ATG-S5, the mean was 13.05 ($SD = 5.43$) with a median of 13.0. Descriptive statistics for each of the ten items were examined; frequencies and means are reported in Table 1.

Attitudes towards gays and lesbians were examined by major. There were no significant differences by academic major for the subscale for lesbians [ATL-S5; $F(4, 422) = 0.98, p > .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$], but there were significant differences in the subscale for gay males [ATG-S5; $F(4, 422) = 3.73, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .03$] and the total scale [ATLG-S; $F(4, 422) = 2.43, p = .05, \eta_p^2 = .02$]. Post-hoc analysis using Tukey HSD revealed that the only significant difference for both dependent variables was between kinesiology and interdisciplinary studies majors. For ATG-S5, the mean difference was 2.24 ($p < .01$) with the 95% confidence interval ranging from .55 to 3.94. For ATLG-S, the mean difference was 3.09 ($p < .05$) with the 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.13 to 6.04.

Regarding gender, there was no significant difference between genders for the ATL-S5 [$F(1, 439) = 1.58, p > .05, \eta_p^2 = .004$]; however, there were significant differences for the ATLG-S [$F(1, 439) = 11.41, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .03$] and ATG-S5 scale [$F(1, 439) = 23.91, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$]. For both scales, males had a more negative attitude. The mean score for males on ATLG-S was 28.05 compared to 24.39 for females. For ATG-S5, the mean score for males was 15.45, while the mean score for females was 12.43.

Regarding ethnicity, there were significant differences between responses for ATG-S5 [$F(4, 434) = 2.86, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$]. Post hoc analyses revealed that African-Americans had statistically significant more negative responses than all other race/ethnic groups, except for Asian. For both ATL-S5 and ATLG-S, with regards to ethnicity, the tests for homogeneity of variances were significant. As a result, the Welch test was used. For both dependent variables it revealed significant differences between the groups ATL-S5 [$F(4, 73.44) = 3.19, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .02$] and ATLG-S [$F(4, 73.71) = 3.92, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .03$]. For all three scales, post-hoc analyses revealed that African Americans were significantly different in their responses when compared to some, but not all, of the other groups. Table 2 shows the Tukey HSD for all three scales: ATG-S5, ATL-S5 and ATLG-S.

Discussion

The majority (79.4%) of students in this study identified themselves as upperclassmen, juniors or seniors, indicating they were towards the end of their academic training, and exhibited an overall moderate attitude toward gay men and lesbians, which is indicative of the need for more training in this area. Due to their enrollment in a child and adolescent health course and the majority of participants were majors within the College of Education, the assumption was made that these students were planning for careers in which they would interact with children and adolescents, most likely in a teaching or supervisory capacity.

Table 1. Responses to the items on the ATLG-S Scale

	Strongly		Uncertain	Strongly		Mean
	Agree	Agree		Disagree	Disagree	
Lesbians just can't fit into our society.*	2.5% (11)	5.4% (24)	12.2% (54)	42.3% (187)	37.6% (166)	4.07
State laws against private sexual behavior between consenting adult women should be abolished.	22.2% (98)	18.8% (83)	30.8% (136)	16.3% (72)	12.0% (53)	2.77
Female homosexuality is a sin.*	17.4% (77)	18.3% (81)	16.3% (72)	23.8% (105)	24.2% (107)	3.19
Female homosexuality in itself is no problem unless society makes it a problem.	22.6% (100)	30.5% (135)	19.2% (85)	18.3% (81)	9.3% (41)	2.61
Lesbians are sick.*	4.1% (18)	6.1% (27)	12.4% (55)	36.0% (159)	41.4% (183)	4.05
I think male homosexuals are disgusting.*	8.8% (39)	10.4% (46)	12.9% (57)	31.0% (137)	36.9% (163)	3.77
Male homosexuality is a perversion.*	10.2% (45)	12.4% (55)	21.9% (97)	24.7% (109)	30.8% (136)	3.53
Male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in men.	13.6% (60)	20.8% (92)	32.1% (142)	17.9% (79)	15.6% (69)	3.01
Sex between men is just plain wrong.*	18.6% (82)	15.8% (70)	18.1% (80)	23.1% (102)	24.4% (108)	3.19
Male homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned.	28.5% (126)	26.9% (119)	19.2% (85)	13.3% (59)	12.0% (53)	2.53

* These items were reverse coded for the scale.

Table 2. Tukey HSD Results for Significant Response Differences for ATG-S5, ATL-S5 and ATLG-S

			Mean Difference	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
ATG-S5	African American	Caucasian	3.30*	1.13	0.22	6.39
		Hispanic/Latino	3.32*	1.21	0.02	6.63
		Asian American	3.01	1.45	-0.96	6.97
		Other	4.94*	1.55	0.68	9.20
ATL-S5	African American	Caucasian	2.55*	0.92	0.04	5.06
		Hispanic/Latino	2.30	0.98	-0.38	4.99
		Asian American	2.58	1.18	-0.65	5.80
		Other	3.70*	1.26	0.23	7.16
ATLG-S	African American	Caucasian	5.85*	1.96	0.50	11.21
		Hispanic/Latino	5.63	2.10	-0.11	11.37
		Asian American	5.58	2.51	-1.30	12.46
		Other	8.64*	2.70	1.24	16.03

* $p < .05$

Previous studies have shown that the role of all teachers is critical to enhancing successful school experiences among sexual minority students (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006; Russell, Seif, & Truong, 2001); this may be particularly important in the unique environment of physical education with large classes, low student/teacher ratios, and locker rooms which are often unsupervised and may involve nudity.

The finding that males exhibited a more negative attitude towards gay men and lesbians than females is consistent with previous findings (Herek, 1994; 2002). However, while this statistical difference was significant, the finding is limited by a low eta squared value. Similar study findings indicate that heterosexual men frequently use “fag” and “queer” as “put downs” for one another and that anti-homosexual prejudice was predictive of anti-gay behaviors. However, some men who used these words as “put downs” did not express anti-homosexual attitudes and the author suggested that reminding individuals of the harm caused by the derisive usage of these terms may curb the incidence (Burn, 2000).

With respect to ethnicity, African Americans were found to have significantly more negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians than other ethnic groups. It is important to note that other researchers (Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Schulte & Battle, 2004) found that ethnic differences in predicting attitudes toward gay and lesbian individuals were a function of religious beliefs rather than ethnicity itself. This study did not measure religiosity, so it is not possible to determine whether this is the case with this population, but given the low eta squared values in this study, this connection warrants further study.

The difference between majors was also an interesting finding. While significant differences were found between academic majors, further investigation is recommended due to the low eta squared values. Considering the increased health risks for LGB youth (Bontempo & D’Augelli, 2002; DuRant et al., 1998; Garofalo et al., 1998;

Hershberger & D’Augelli, 1995; Rosario et al., 1997; Rotherum-Borus et al., 1995), physical education classes have the potential for reducing those health risks and providing opportunities for positive risk-taking for all students. These findings suggest that individuals most likely to provide those opportunities in school or after school settings, i.e., kinesiology majors in a child and adolescent health course, may be the ones most likely to create or be unable to prevent the creation of a heterosexist, homo-negative, and hostile environment. The result of this could be a decrease in participation of LGB-identifying youth, students who may need this opportunity for positive risk-taking even more than other students. Offering positive risk-taking opportunities in physical education is an intervention for reducing destructive risk behavior and increasing constructive risk-taking, positive mood, self esteem, self efficacy, and fitness. It may also provide a venue for encouraging cooperation and positive interaction between diverse youth.

Practical Implications

Given that kinesiology majors within this study exhibit more negative attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals, students intending to work with youth in physical activity and recreational settings should be encouraged to take a sexuality education course to increase their knowledge of sexual health issues facing today’s youth and to develop a better understanding of issues specific to sexual minority youth. Current professionals, those already working with youth in these settings, may also be in need of training specific to sexual orientation and sexual minority issues to ensure a greater appreciation for the challenges that lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth face (McCaughtry, Dillon, Jones & Smigell, 2005).

When looking at teacher preparation programs, evidence suggests that most teachers are not being trained to meet the needs of LGB youth (Mathison, 1998). While issues facing LGB youth may be included in a multicultural course,

often this inclusion is at the discretion of the course instructor and as a result, the depth of the content will vary greatly. In addition, future educators must be aware of any personal prejudices and biases and how those biases may emerge in practice (Smith & Drake, 2001). Values clarification strategies should be incorporated into preparation programs to increase future educators' awareness of their potential biases. Awareness of attitudes can help one overcome unconscious or subtle ways they create an unsupportive environment for LGB youth. Moreover, preparation programs can help future educators understand why violence (including bullying and suicide) and substance abuse prevention programs need to incorporate issues concerning LGB youth.

When training is included as part of a teacher preparation program, some students reported that the topic was irrelevant and many assumed a "compulsory heterosexuality" in the schools, pathologizing lesbian and gay identities (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2001). Other studies have demonstrated that teacher education programs focusing on LGB youth experiences in schools has a positive impact on how teachers respond to homonegative attitudes, remarks, and behaviors. While some participants voiced concerns because of their personal religious beliefs and others expressed concerns about classroom applicability, the majority of the teachers felt that they had a greater appreciation for the challenges facing LGB youth and reported plans to advocate for those students in their schools following completion of the training program (Athanasios & Larabee, 2003). Additionally, teachers who participated in an HIV/AIDS training program, in which issues facing LGB individuals were addressed, were more likely to teach about homosexuality and refer LGB youth to community services (Remafedi, 1993).

Specific ways for those working with youth to address homonegativity and heterosexism in physical education courses and recreational settings include: stopping the use of homophobic

slurs, not making assumptions that all students and teachers are heterosexual, not laughing at jokes about gay people, and educating themselves about issues affecting LGB youth (Griffin & Genasci, 1990). Other effective methods could include focusing on behaviors rather than attitudes; examining the link between heterosexism and sex-role stereotyping, especially in relation to physical activity, strength and sports; recognizing that all students are vulnerable to homophobic name-calling, as well as assessing the current situations at schools and addressing problems through changes in policies and procedures (Sattel, Keyes, & Tupper, 1997).

Conclusion

Sufficient evidence exists to support the benefits of quality physical activity for all students; participation in such activities has shown improved test scores and academic performance as well as better physical health. LGB youth may benefit even further when opportunities for quality physical activity are available because of their increased risk of other physical and mental health problems and the possibility of positive risk-taking. In order to increase the quality of physical education and recreational activities, professionals who work with youth in these areas need strategies to create a safe and productive environment, particularly areas such as locker rooms, playing fields, and gymnasiums (McCaughy et al., 2005). Recreation specialists and teachers must understand several basic tenets in order to create such an environment. These include knowing that homosexuality and bisexuality are normal variations in both sexual identity and sexual behavior; adolescent homosexuality and bisexuality are not phases that will lead to adult heterosexuality; sexual orientation is established early in childhood and attempts to change it are unscientific, unjust and unethical; and homophobia is a dangerous and devastating prejudice (Grossman, 1992). By being aware of and understanding these ideas, professionals who work with youth in recreational and physical

activity settings can provide all students with opportunities to increase positive feelings of self-worth, self-respect, self-esteem, and integrity.

There were several limitations of this study. As previous findings connect ethnicity and religion to attitudes toward gay men and lesbians (Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Schulte & Battle, 2004), it is important to consider whether or not these factors could account for the difference in ethnic groups in this study. This study did not assess what, if any, religious affiliation and/or beliefs of the participants and the low eta squared values indicate that other factors affected these results as well. Additionally, sexual identity of the participants was not assessed. Those who identify as a sexual minority may report less negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians thus impacting the level of negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians of the sample. Likewise, this scale does not address attitudes toward bisexual individuals who often experience discrimination from both the heterosexual and homosexual communities (Ochs, 1996). Youth who consider themselves bisexual or who are exploring their sexuality may be even more at risk for discrimination and prejudice. Additionally, while significant differences between academic major, gender, and ethnicity were found, the researchers recommend further investigation and replication due to the low eta squared values. Lastly, the findings are based on self-reported data; therefore, participants may have responded to the items in a socially desirable manner, which may have biased the results.

Research with current elementary and secondary students, regardless of sexual orientation, would provide valuable insight into the climate regarding homonegativity and heterosexism in physical education and recreational activities. Additionally, future studies should retrospectively examine the experiences of LGB-identifying adults in these types of settings. Finally, it is important to study the attitudes and environmental responses of other professionals working with youth to ensure that all environments in

which youth work and play are safe and nurturing.

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