

Gender and Personality Differences  
in  
Attitudes towards  
Same-sex Parenting amongst  
Dublin Business School students

Kevin Brussels - 1324770

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Supervisor: Dr. Bernadette Quinn

Head of Department: Dr. Bernadette Quinn

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Department of Social Science  
DBS School of Arts

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## **Abstract**

CONTEXT: The primary purpose of this research was to investigate attitudes towards same-sex parenting in an Irish context and to focus on gender and personality differences in participant's attitudes. In reviewing the current literature in the area there was none to be found within an Irish context, this void creates an opportunity to investigate attitudes towards same-sex parenting in an Irish context. Camilleri and Ryan (2006) believed that attitudes towards homosexual parenting need to be investigated because these attitudes impact on law and policy changes in relation to homosexual issues. METHOD: Quantitative analysis was used. The research design was quasi-experimental design, the independent variables (IV) were personality and gender and the dependent variable (DV) was attitudes towards same-sex parenting. 161 participants completed a questionnaire booklet. RESULTS: Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data collected. It was found that male participants had more negative attitudes than females towards same-sex parenting. CONCLUSION: The main finding of the current research has been that there are gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting. It was found that male participants have more negative attitudes towards same-sex parenting. The researcher believes that through education of homosexual parenting negative attitudes can be dealt with.

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## **Introduction**

‘Gender and Personality differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting amongst DBS students’. The primary purpose of this research was to investigate attitudes towards same-sex parenting in an Irish context and to focus on gender and personality differences in participant’s attitudes. It would be beneficial when developing policies in the area of same-sex parenting to have an understanding of the attitudes that exist and how/if attitudes differ based on personality and gender differences. Such information would also help organisations in their efforts to promote equality for same-sex parents and their families. Camilleri and Ryan (2006) believed that attitudes towards homosexual parenting need to be investigated because these attitudes impact on law and policy changes in relation to homosexual issues. Families and parenting have changed greatly over the last 50 years, as Golombok discussed the idea of a traditional family made up of a married couple with their naturally conceived children is no longer the only family unit that exists across societies (Golombok 2001). Today there are single parent families, divorced or separated families, families who have adopted or fostered their children, stepfamilies, parents who have had their children by using IVF, donor insemination or surrogacy and same-sex parents.

Indeed, since the birth of the first ‘test-tube’ baby, Louise Brown, in 1978 it has become possible for a child to have five parents – an egg donor, a sperm donor, a surrogate mother who hosts the pregnancy, and the two social parents who are the child’s mum and dad (Golombok, 2001, p.99).

**Definition of a 'parent'**

The 'Guardianship of Infants Act 1964' defines a parent as a father or mother of a child, it also includes a guardian and any person who is legally liable to care for a child or entitled to custody of the child.

**Same-sex parents**

Same-sex parents are two people of the same-sex who want to legally act as a child's parents together. A study into LGBT parents in Ireland carried out by Dr Jane Pillinger and Paula Fagan found that though many LGBT parents are legal guardians to the children they raise, 16% have no legal status as parents. This means that 51 of the 272 children involved in the study are being raised by a person with whom they have no legal relationship (Pillinger & Fagan 2013).

There are a number of ways that homosexuals can become parents. For instance, one partner may have children from a previous heterosexual relationship and the children live with their biological parent and the parent's same-sex partner, in such cases current legislation does not allow for a same-sex partner to apply to become a guardian of the other partners children. Additionally, one of the partners in a same-sex relationship can adopt a child. In order to jointly adopt a child a couple must be married in Ireland. The 'Civil Partnership Bill 2009' does not allow for same-sex couples that have registered their partnership to jointly adopt a child (Civil Partnership Bill, 2009). However, same-sex couples can foster children together in Ireland. The marriage equality group state on their website that children of same-sex parents in Ireland are in legal limbo because the Civil Partnership Act does not allow for the adoption or guardianship of children who are

being parented by same-sex couples. Other options available to homosexual couples that want to become parents include artificial insemination and surrogacy.

## Literature Review

### **Attitudes towards homosexuality**

Attitudes in Ireland towards homosexuals have improved immensely in the last twenty years. Homosexuality was deemed criminal under Irish law until 1993 when it was decriminalised, up until then homosexual acts between consenting men and women were illegal.

It also boasted what was, on paper at least, the worst legal regime in Western Europe for lesbians and gay men. There was no recognition or protection of any sort, and gay men faced a total ban on any type of sexual activity. If these laws were almost never enforced (largely because of effective action by David Norris and others in the 1970s) they still insulted and marginalized tens of thousands of gay men and, by association, lesbians as well (Robson, 1995, cited in O'Carroll & Collins, 1995, p.47).

Ireland has come a long way since then with the introduction of the Civil Partnership Act, but there are still many areas where homosexuals experience inequality today for example the areas of marriage and adoption. In general attitudes towards homosexuals are more open and receptive than they once were but many homosexuals do still experience elements of homophobia on occasions. At this stage it is important to define homophobia. Homophobia is the term used to describe negative attitudes that people have towards gay men and women. Homophobia is a fear that heterosexuals have of being near or involved with homosexuals because it may result in them being labelled homosexual themselves or becoming homosexual even though homosexuality is not contagious, peoples attitudes can be irrational and extreme. Such attitudes are found more often amongst men, the less educated, older people and religious people (Baird, 2007).

In 1972, George Weinberg's book *Society and the Healthy Homosexual* defined it as 'the dread of being at close quarters with homosexuals'. Mark Freedman

added to the definition a description of homophobia as 'extreme rage and fear reaction to homosexuals' (Baird, 2007, p.60).

Camilleri and Ryan (2006) investigated social work students' attitudes in Australia towards homosexuality and homosexual parenting; they also examined student's knowledge of homosexual parenting. To measure participant's attitudes towards homosexuality they used Hudson and Ricketts' (1980) Index of Homophobia (IHP) scale. 91.6% of respondent's scores were in the non-homophobic range; meaning students had a high-level of non-homophobic attitudes. It can be concluded from this that the social work students involved in the study in most cases had an accepting attitude towards homosexuality (Camilleri & Ryan, 2006).

Whitley (1988) carried out a study looking at heterosexuals' attitudes towards homosexuals; his main aim was to look at the possible relationship between sex of the respondent and the type of question asked. The study involved 124 heterosexual women and 98 heterosexual men; participants completed a questionnaire containing a number of scales measuring attitudes towards homosexuals. The results showed that participants held more negative attitudes towards homosexuals of their own sex in relation to contact with homosexuals and men held more negative attitudes toward the social roles of homosexuals (Whitley, 1998).

Similarly LaMar and Kite (1998) conducted a study of 270 students, 133 women and 137 men, their aim was to investigate four components of attitudes towards gay men and lesbians, they hypothesized that attitudes would differ by component and sex of the participant. The four components were condemnation/tolerance, morality, contact and stereotypes. Participants completed a questionnaire booklet. The results showed that male participants had more negative attitudes towards homosexuals than female

participants on all components except stereotypes. Male participants rated gay men more negatively than they did lesbians, females rated gay men and lesbians similarly but on the contact component they rate lesbians more negatively than gay men. The results highlight the necessity to consider both attitude component and sex of participants when investigating attitudes towards gay men and lesbians (LaMar & Kite, 1998). This study is supported by the findings of Whitley's (1988) study that found that participants hold more negative attitudes towards homosexuals of their own sex.

### **Attitudes towards same-sex parents**

Camilleri and Ryan (2006) constructed three case vignettes for their study the case vignettes described three couples wanting to adopt a child. All three couples were similar except for their sexual orientation. The case vignettes were used in conjunction with a questionnaire to gather students' attitudes on heterosexual and homosexual couples and what the students believed was appropriate parenting. The results from the questionnaire showed that students were most favourable of lesbian parents, followed by gay parents and then heterosexual parents. Further analysis of the results showed that students were generally in favour of all three couples adopting regardless of sexual orientation (Camilleri & Ryan, 2006).

The researchers also used the Knowledge of Homosexual Parenting (KHP) scale to collect students' knowledge of homosexual parenting. This scale was developed by one of the researchers for this study. The results from the scale were in the moderate to high levels of knowledge about homosexual parenting bracket. The results from both the questionnaire based on the vignettes and the KHP scale used in this study show that

students who had knowledge of homosexual parenting were in favour of same-sex parenting (Camilleri & Ryan, 2006).

In comparison Marchesani, McLaren and McLachlan (2003) carried out a study of Australian heterosexual's attitudes towards gay, lesbian and heterosexual parents. The results showed that Australian heterosexuals had unfavourable attitudes towards same-sex parents in comparison to heterosexual parents. The study found levels of homophobia that lead to the negative attitudes towards same-sex parents and their children. The study concluded that education in the areas of homosexuality and homosexual parenting were required if attitudes towards same-sex parents and their children were to improve. This conclusion is supported by the results of Camilleri and Ryan (2006) study where students believed they had a moderate to high-level knowledge of homosexual parenting and as a result were in favour of same-sex parents. When people are educated and informed they feel less threatened and are more favourable towards same-sex parenting (Camilleri and Ryan, 2006).

Hollekim, Slaatten and Anderssen (2012) carried out a study in Norway a country where lesbians, gays and heterosexuals have equal marriage and parenting rights since a marriage law came into effect in January 2009. The aim of their study was to investigate Norwegian attitudes to equal marriage and parenting rights for couples regardless of sexual orientation and to investigate beliefs about the welfare of children who are raised by same-sex parents. 1,246 Norwegian participants completed a questionnaire. The results showed that the majority of participants were in favour of equal marriage rights for same-sex couples but were less in favour of same-sex couples becoming parents.

This study showed that even in countries where the law supports same-sex parenting negative attitudes can still exist (Hollekim, Slaatten & Anderssen, 2012).

In the United States Brodzinsky, Patterson and Vaziri (2002) conducted a study of adoption agencies to investigate their attitudes and practices towards lesbians and gay men who are looking to adopt children. Questionnaires were sent to program directors at 891 public and private adoption agencies. Of the 214 agencies that responded 45 percent reported that they accepted applications from lesbians and gay men, however, in many cases only one individual of the same-sex couple could legally adopt. Agencies with religious affiliations did not accept applications from lesbians or gay men.

During the two year period studied the adoption agencies involved made a total of 22,584 placements of which just 371 were with self-identified lesbian and gay individuals and couples. This study highlights the difficulties faced by lesbians and gay men when trying to adopt in the United States. Similarly in Ireland a couple must be married to jointly adopt a child and under current legislation lesbians and gay men cannot marry in Ireland.

Pennington and Knight (2011) interviewed nine heterosexual adults to investigate their attitudes and beliefs around same-sex parenting. They used informal interviews to gather the participants' attitudes on same-sex parenting. They found that the attitudes that existed amongst the heterosexuals involved in the study were all based around hetero-normative, homophobic or heterosexist beliefs. Concern for the well-being and development of children brought up by same-sex parents appeared to be the main reason for negative attitudes toward same-sex parents. The researchers believed that underlying this concern was homophobia.

In other words, if same-sex parenting is already a social reality and that the children of these families are not same-sex attracted in ratios that exceed those raised by heterosexual couples, then this leaves homophobia as the main influence on participants' attitudes towards same-sex parenting (Pennington & Knight, 2011, p.70).

This is an interesting study because participants' reasons for having a generally negative attitude toward lesbian and gay parents are built on concerns for the children involved but the researchers have linked this back to an underlying current of homophobia because numerous studies and research have shown that there is generally no negative effect for children who are raised by same-sex parents (Pennington & Knight, 2001).

### **Effects of same-sex parenting on children**

The most common contentions are that gay men and lesbians are mentally ill: are promiscuous and have unstable relationships; and will influence the sexuality of their children, damage their emotional development, turn them against the opposite sex, molest them or indirectly cause them to suffer stigma and shame at the hands of their peers and others (Reder & Lucey, 1996, p.205).

From the studies that have been looked at so far it is clear that people across many societies have concerns over the effects same-sex parenting has on the children involved. Many participants of the studies did not display characteristics of homophobia but when it came to allowing lesbians and gay men raise children they were not as open and accepting as they had initially been towards homosexuals. It is both surprising and concerning that such attitudes exist despite the numerous pieces of research that have shown being raised by same-sex parents has little or no negative effect on children. Anderssen, Amlie and Ytteroy (2002) carried out a review of 23 studies that were published on children brought up by lesbian mothers or gay fathers. Eighteen of the studies reviewed were North American, three British, one Belgian/Dutch and one Danish.

In Scandinavian countries same-sex couples are not allowed to adopt children, the aim of the review was to provide evidence that children raised by lesbians and gay men are not psychologically affected. The twenty-three studies reviewed looked at the areas of emotional adjustment, sexual preference, stigmatisation, gender role behaviour, behavioural adjustment, gender identity and cognitive functioning.

In relation to stigmatisation the children involved did occasionally experience the stigma that a lesbian or gay man would experience. In terms of gender identity, gender role behaviour and sexual orientation there were no differences in the children raised by lesbians or gay men compared to children raised by heterosexuals. In many of the studies reviewed when investigating emotional functioning the researchers made comparisons between children of heterosexuals and children of homosexuals and found that children of homosexuals did not experience more emotional problems than those of heterosexuals. This review of studies shows that for children raised by same-sex parents there is little or no difference in their psychological development when compared to children of heterosexual parents (Anderssen et al., 2002).

Fairtlough (2008) carried out a content analysis of 67 young people's accounts of growing up with one or more lesbian or gay parents. Of the 67 young people 47 were female, 20 male, 51 had a lesbian mother, 19 had a gay father and 3 had both. The accounts came from the UK, the USA and New Zealand. This study is interesting because it looks directly at young people's personal experiences of homosexual parenting and does not compare them to the experiences of those raised by heterosexual parents. The most negative aspect of being raised by a lesbian or gay parent for these 67 young people was other people's negative attitudes towards them and/or their parent/s. Many of

them also found it difficult when it came to explaining their family set up to others. However none of the young people involved believed that having a gay or lesbian parent was the problem it was other people's attitudes. "Fundamentally what these young people communicated was that a parent's sexuality does not determine parenting ability (Fairtlough, 2008, p.526)".

In contrast Marchesani et al. (2003) in their study of Australian heterosexuals found that participants believed children of same-sex parents would be negatively affected and have problems as a result. Hollekim et al. (2012) found that negative attitudes towards same-sex parents were centred on a concern for the welfare of children growing up with same-sex parents. Even though numerous studies have shown that being brought up by same-sex parents has no negative affect on the development of children and the absence of studies proving otherwise, there remain many people who believe same-sex parenting will impact negatively on children.

### **The effect of same-sex parenting on children's sexual orientation**

According to research carried out by Golombok (2001) children of lesbian mothers are more likely to think about and experiment with same-sex relationships, however the majority of sons and daughters of lesbian mothers identify as heterosexual later in life. Sons and daughters of lesbian mothers are also not encouraged by their mothers to become lesbian or gay. Many people are of the belief that children raised by same-sex parents are more likely to be homosexual themselves in later life this belief is based on many reasons which include same-sex parents encouraging their children to be

homosexual and the absence of a mother/father role to support gender development and identity (Golombok, 2001).

Golombok and Tasker (1996) carried out a longitudinal study of children raised by lesbian mothers and children raised by single heterosexual mothers to see if parents influence the sexual orientation of their children. The children were first seen when they were aged 9.5 on average, when they were seen again at the average age of 23.5 semi-structured interviews were held with the young adults to discuss their sexual experiences so far.

The results of the study showed that 9 children of lesbian mothers and 4 of heterosexual mothers reported being attracted to the same gender. When it came to identifying as heterosexual or homosexual only 2 young women raised by lesbian mothers identified as lesbian themselves, compared with none from the group raised by heterosexual mothers. While the children of lesbian mothers were more likely to consider and experiment with gay or lesbian relationships there is no major difference in the results of this study between the children of lesbian mothers and those of heterosexual mothers.

Whereas there is no evidence from the present investigation to suggest that parents have a determining influence on the sexual orientation of their children, the findings do indicate that by creating a climate of acceptance or rejection of homosexuality within the family, parents may have some impact on their children's sexual experimentation as heterosexual, lesbian, or gay (Golombok & Tasker, 1996, p.9).

### **The benefit to society of same-sex parents**

Can same-sex parents and families have a positive impact on societies many people would argue not especially those who are not in favour of same-sex parenting. Golding

(2006) in her study of lesbian parents found that lesbian mothers believed their children grew up to be more rounded people as a result of the struggles they face growing up because their parent/s are lesbians. The lesbian mothers involved also believed that their children are not confined to gender specific roles, they learn to carry out tasks associated with both genders and to share tasks in the household, this can only be of benefit to a society (Golding, 2006).

Challenging the gender specific roles that exist in societies and challenging the idea that a nuclear family is better than all other family types is beneficial for not just same-sex families but for all family types that exist today.

David argued that those in single-sex partnerships challenged traditional gendered parenting stereotypes. He regarded this as a major step forward to the benefit of all parents because it validated the concept that men and women should not need to take up institutionalized roles once they become parents (Gatrell, 2005, p.215).

Giddens 1992 theory that same-sex couples would initiate social change supports this view. Giddens believed that because same-sex couples have been discriminated against in numerous areas they have the opportunity to do things differently and as a result create new social norms (Gatrell, 2005).

Similarly Dort (2010) in his study of same-sex male couples found that as the couples worked their way through the legal and administrative adoption processes that they challenged assumptions that exist in society about how their families should function.

### **Personality**

The term 'personality' is used regularly by people in everyday language generally to describe what type of person someone is but defining it precisely can be a difficult task

and one many people would not know where to begin with (Wagstaff, 1998). After analysing numerous definitions of personality G.W. Allport came up with the following definition, “Personality is a dynamic organisation, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person’s characteristic patterns of behaviour, thoughts and feelings (Allport, 1937, cited in Wagstaff, 1998, p.6)”.

Shackelford and Besser (2007), carried out a study of 1,012 people living in the USA using data collected by the General Social Survey, the aim of their study was to test the hypothesis that people who score higher on the personality dimension of openness to experience would have more positive attitudes towards homosexuals. Openness to experience is where individuals are willing to try new things, they are curious and are willing to move away from traditional values, on the other hand closed people would tend to more conventional and conservative in their beliefs and attitudes (Shackelford & Besser, 2007).

It is believed that heterosexuals who have negatives attitudes towards homosexuals are more incline to conform to a traditional gender belief system and also a general traditional belief system, such people would be closed people and would tend to score lower on the personality dimension of openness to experience (Shackelford & Besser, 2007). The results supported the hypothesis that people who scored higher on the personality dimension of openness to experience would have more positive attitudes towards homosexuals.

It therefore seems that respondents that score lower on Openness to Experience may be more threatened by non-traditional lifestyles ... The current results are congruent with the assumption that personality predisposes individuals to form particular kinds of attitudes (Shackelford & Besser, 2007, p.7).

Similarly Okura, Yamamoto and Shigemoto (2012) carried out a study of 164 heterosexual students of health and welfare in Japan. Participants completed the Index of Attitudes toward Homosexuals (IAH), a short form of Five Factor Personality Questionnaire and also provided information about their encounters with homosexuals. The results indicated that personality traits weakly but significantly influence the development of attitude toward homosexuals (Okura et al., 2012).

### **Conclusion of literature reviewed**

From the studies reviewed it can be derived that attitudes towards homosexual men and women are generally positive, however, when it comes to the question of same-sex couples as parents attitudes tend to shift. In all studies reviewed with the exception of Camilleri and Ryan (2006), participants were of the belief that same-sex parenting would impact negatively on the development of children; children would have psychological problems and would be more likely to turn out gay or lesbian than children raised by heterosexual parents.

In the study carried out by Camilleri & Ryan (2006) participants were in favour of same-sex couples adopting children, this difference in attitude can be ascribed to the fact that the participants of their study were social work students who had some level of knowledge of homosexual parenting. This highlights the need for education in the area of same-sex parenting through education negative attitudes can be challenged and changed.

### **Aims of the current study**

The current study aims to look at gender along with personality differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting within an Irish context. In reviewing the current literature in the area there was none to be found within an Irish context, this void creates an opportunity to investigate attitudes towards same-sex parenting in an Irish context.

Whitley (1988) found that gender does influence attitudes towards homosexuals, as participants in his study had more negative attitudes towards homosexuals of their own sex.

Shackelford & Besser (2007) found that people that scored higher on the personality dimension of openness to experience had more positive attitudes towards homosexuals, similarly the current study will measure participants' personality to see if it has a significant influence on the attitudes that people have towards same-sex parenting.

Along with measuring participant's personality this study will look at participants' attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. It will also look at whether participants believe same-sex couples should be allowed to jointly adopt in Ireland and if participants believe children of same-sex parents will be psychologically affected. It will also look at if participants believe children will be more likely to identify as homosexual later in life as a result of having same-sex parents.

### **Hypothesis**

Hypothesis one: There will be gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting.

Hypothesis two: There will be gender differences in attitudes towards lesbians.

Hypothesis three: There will be gender differences in attitudes towards gay men.

Hypothesis four: Personality will influence participants' attitudes towards lesbians.

Hypothesis five: Personality will influence participants' attitudes towards gay men.

## **Method**

### **Design**

In order to carry out the research it was decided that quantitative research methods would be used. Qualitative research is used when the research area or question is very open, it is not specific, it lacks structure and it is not sure what it hopes to achieve as an end result. The current study has a research question and knows exactly the area it wants to investigate. The research design is quasi-experimental design, the independent variables (IV) are personality and gender and the dependent variable (DV) is attitudes towards same-sex parenting.

### **Materials**

The participants completed a short booklet of questionnaires (Appendix 1) containing demographic questions such as gender, age, sexual orientation and level of education. The demographic questions were followed by three questionnaires, the first of which was 'The Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale' developed by Dr. Gregory Herek. This scale is used to measure attitudes towards lesbians and gay men it consists of 20 different statements, ten relating to lesbians and ten relating to gay men, participants indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement on a five point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate greater negative attitudes. The statements include 'Lesbians just can't fit into our society' and 'Male homosexual couples should be allowed to adopt children the same as heterosexual couples'.

The researcher designed the second questionnaire for the purposes of this study it contained 6 questions to which participants either ticked yes or no. The questions

included 'Do you think same-sex couples should be allowed to jointly adopt in Ireland' and 'Would you allow your child be friends with a child who's parents were same-sex parents'. This questionnaire was created because there were no established questionnaires that investigated attitudes towards same-sex couples as parents in Ireland and also looked at how people believe the children involved would be affected.

The third and final questionnaire used was a 10 item brief version of the big five personality inventory, this is a personality measure. It measures the five dimensions of an individual's personality - extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness (John & Srivastava, 1999). A brief 10 item version was used instead of the 44 item version because it was believed that the 44 item version would be too long when combined with the first two questionnaires and might deter participants from completing the questionnaire booklet in full. Participants indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with each of the ten statements on a five point Likert scale.

### **Participants**

The total number of participants for this study was 161, 51 males and 108 females, two participants did not provide their gender. The participants were all Dublin Business School students, 56.9% of males (n=29) had or were currently completing an undergraduate course, 11.8% of males (n=6) had completed a postgraduate course, 69.4% of females (n=75) had or were currently completing an undergraduate course and 5.6% of females (n=6) had completed a postgraduate course.

The minimum age of male participants was 19, maximum was 49 and male participants had a mean age of 29. The minimum age of female participants was 20, maximum was 56 and there was a mean age of 31 amongst female participants.

Of the male participants that provided their sexual orientation 86.3% of participants (n=44) identified as heterosexual and 7.8% (n=4) identified as gay. Of the female participants that provided their sexual orientation 73.1% (n=79) identified as heterosexual, 5.6% (n=6) identified as lesbian, 2.8% (n=3) identified as bi-sexual and 0.9% (n=1) identified as bi-curious. Participation in the study was voluntary and no incentives were offered.

### **Procedure**

Permission was sought from Dublin Business School lecturers to gain access to their classes both full-time and part-time. Once permission was granted the researcher explained the aim of the study to students, that their participation was voluntary and that all information collected would remain confidential. Participants were required to complete a short booklet of questionnaires, which took five to ten minutes to complete once participants were finished the questionnaires were collected by the researcher and placed in an envelope. The researcher thanked both the students for their participation and the lecturer for access to their class.

### **Ethical considerations**

Dublin Business School ethical guidelines for an undergraduate piece of research were followed for this study. The questionnaire booklet was reviewed by the research co-

ordinator before data collection commenced. At the start of the questionnaire was a brief note outlining the aim of the study and stating that the information collected would remain confidential, this was also verbally communicated to participants. Participants were informed that their involvement in this study was voluntary and they could withdraw at any stage, the minimum age to participate in the study was 18. Discussing attitudes towards same-sex parenting may be difficult for some participants; a list of relevant organisations was listed at the end of the questionnaire that participants could contact should they wish. The organisations listed included Gay Switchboard, GLEN and LGBT Helpline.

## Results

The aim of the current study is to investigate the attitudes of Dublin Business School students towards same-sex parenting and to look at gender and personality differences in attitudes.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics were run for the variables used in the analysis; table 1 shows the means and standard deviations.

**Table 1**

Gender		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	TotalAttitutLesbians	23.56	8.76	48
	TotalAttitutGayMen	24.61	7.39	49
	TotalPersonality	33.92	4.02	48
Female	TotalAttitutLesbians	23.08	6.68	94
	TotalAttitutGayMen	24.28	4.77	98
	TotalPersonality	35.72	3.38	99

Table 1 above shows that males had higher mean scores in both total attitude to lesbians and total attitudes to gay men therefore males had more negative attitudes to both lesbians and gay men. It also illustrates that women scored higher than men on the personality measure used in the study, the mean score for females was 35.72 (SD = 3.38) and the mean score for males was 33.92 (SD = 4.02).

## Hypothesis 1

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Hypothesis one predicted that there will be gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting. To measure attitudes towards same-sex parenting the researcher created a questionnaire containing six questions. Descriptive statistics were run for the six questions used to measure attitudes towards same-sex parenting. No inferential statistics were computed due to the small sample size.

**Table 2: Do you think same-sex couples should be allowed to jointly adopt in Ireland?**

Gender			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	Valid	Yes	38	74.5	76.0
		No	12	23.5	24.0
		Total	50	98.0	100.0
	Missing	System	1	2.0	
	Total		51	100.0	
Female	Valid	Yes	82	75.9	78.1
		No	23	21.3	21.9
		Total	105	97.2	100.0
	Missing	System	3	2.8	
	Total		108	100.0	

Table 2 above shows participants' responses to the question 'Do you think same-sex couples should be allowed to jointly adopt in Ireland?' It shows that a higher percentage of males (24%) responded 'No' to this question compared to females (21.9%). Therefore the findings of this question support the hypothesis that there will be gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting.

**Table 3: Do you think same-sex parenting will impact negatively on a child's development?**

Gender			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	Valid	Yes	15	29.4	30.6
		No	34	66.7	69.4
		Total	49	96.1	100.0
	Missing	System	2	3.9	
	Total		51	100.0	
Female	Valid	Yes	23	21.3	22.1
		No	81	75.0	77.9
		Total	104	96.3	100.0
	Missing	System	4	3.7	
	Total		108	100.0	

Table 3 above shows participants' responses to the question 'Do you think same-sex parenting will impact negatively on a child's development?' It shows that a higher percentage of males (30.6%) answered 'Yes' to this question compared to females (22.1%). Therefore the findings of this question support the hypothesis that there will be gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting.

**Table 4: Do you think children will have psychological issues as a result of same-sex parenting?**

Gender			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	Valid	Yes	15	29.4	30.6
		No	34	66.7	69.4
		Total	49	96.1	100.0
	Missing	System	2	3.9	
	Total		51	100.0	
Female	Valid	Yes	23	21.3	22.3
		No	80	74.1	77.7
		Total	103	95.4	100.0
	Missing	System	5	4.6	
	Total		108	100.0	

Table 4 above shows participants' responses to the question 'Do you think children will have psychological issues as a result of same-sex parenting?' It shows that a higher percentage of males (30.6%) answered 'Yes' to this question compared to females (22.3%). Therefore the findings of this question support the hypothesis that there will be gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting.

**Table 5: Do you think same-sex parenting will impact on a child's gender identity development?**

Gender			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	Valid	Yes	16	31.4	32.7
		No	33	64.7	67.3
		Total	49	96.1	100.0
	Missing	System	2	3.9	
Total			51	100.0	
Female	Valid	Yes	26	24.1	25.7
		No	75	69.4	74.3
		Total	101	93.5	100.0
	Missing	System	7	6.5	
Total			108	100.0	

Table 5 above shows participants' responses to the question 'Do you think same-sex parenting will impact on a child's gender identity development?' It shows that a higher percentage of males (32.7%) answered 'Yes' to this question compared to females (25.7%). Therefore the findings of this question support the hypothesis that there will be gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting.

**Table 6: Do you think children of same-sex parents are more likely to identify as homosexual later in life than children of heterosexual parents?**

Gender			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	Valid	Yes	16	31.4	32.7
		No	33	64.7	67.3
		Total	49	96.1	100.0
	Missing	System	2	3.9	
	Total		51	100.0	
Female	Valid	Yes	21	19.4	21.0
		No	79	73.1	79.0
		Total	100	92.6	100.0
	Missing	System	8	7.4	
	Total		108	100.0	

Table 6 above shows participants' responses to the question 'Do you think children of same-sex parents are more likely to identify as homosexual later in life than children of heterosexual parents?' It shows that a higher percentage of males (32.7%) answered 'Yes' to this question compared to women (21.0%). Therefore the findings of this question support the hypothesis that there will be gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting.

**Table 7: Would you allow your child be friends with a child who's parents were same-sex parents?**

Gender			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	Valid	Yes	44	86.3	88.0
		No	6	11.8	12.0
		Total	50	98.0	100.0
	Missing	System	1	2.0	
	Total		51	100.0	
Female	Valid	Yes	91	84.3	88.3
		No	12	11.1	11.7
		Total	103	95.4	100.0
	Missing	System	5	4.6	
	Total		108	100.0	

Table 7 above shows participants' responses to the question 'Would you allow your child be friends with a child who's parents were same-sex parents?' It shows that a higher percentage of males (12%) answered 'No' to this question compared to women (11.7%). Therefore the findings of this question support the hypothesis that there will be gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting.

The findings of the six questions used to test hypothesis one that predicted that there will be gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting, show males answering more negatively to all six questions compared to female responses, therefore the hypothesis is supported.

## **Hypothesis 2**

### *Inferential Statistics – T test analysis*

Hypothesis two predicted that there will be gender differences in attitudes towards lesbians. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare gender differences in attitudes towards lesbians, this showed that there was no significant difference  $t(140)=.362, p>.05$ . Therefore the hypothesis was not supported.

## **Hypothesis 3**

### *Inferential Statistics – T test analysis*

Hypothesis three predicted that there will be gender differences in attitudes towards gay men. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare gender differences in attitudes towards gay men, this showed that there was no significant difference  $t(145)=.323, p>.05$ . Therefore the hypothesis was not supported.

## **Hypothesis 4**

### *Inferential Statistics – Correlation analysis*

Hypothesis four predicted that personality will influence participants' attitudes towards lesbians. A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between personality and participants' attitudes towards lesbians. There was a statistically small negative but non-significant correlation between personality and participants' attitudes towards lesbians ( $r=-.106, N=134, p>0.05$ ). Therefore the hypothesis that personality will influence participants' attitudes towards lesbians was not supported.

## **Hypothesis 5**

### *Inferential Statistics – Correlation analysis*

Hypothesis five predicted that personality will influence participants' attitudes towards gay men. A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between personality and participants' attitudes towards gay men. There was a statistically small positive but non-significant correlation between personality and participants' attitudes towards gay men ( $r=.040$ ,  $N=139$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). Therefore the hypothesis that personality will influence participants' attitudes towards gay men was not supported.

## **Discussion**

The aim of this research was to examine attitudes amongst DBS students towards same-sex parenting in Ireland and to investigate gender and personality differences in participants' attitudes. The research investigated if participants believed same-sex parents should be allowed to jointly adopt in Ireland and also if they believed children of same-sex parents would be negatively affected. This discussion section will investigate further the findings of the study as presented in the results section. This section will also compare and contrast the findings of this research with those of previous researches in the area.

The first hypothesis predicted that there will be gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting. To measure participants attitudes towards same-sex parenting six questions were drafted, as the researcher was unable to find any established questionnaires to measure attitude towards same-sex parenting. When drafting the six questions the researcher aimed to create questions that were relevant and current to the issues surrounding same-sex parenting in Ireland today. The researcher also tried to make the questions more personal to participants by asking if they would allow their child be friends with a child who's parents were same-sex. The reason for doing this was to get participants genuine attitudes on the subject.

To analyse the data collected from the six questions descriptive statistics were run. Inferential statistics were not run due to the small sample size of the study. A higher percentage of males answered negatively to all six questions than females, therefore supporting the hypothesis that there would be gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting.

The first question asked participants whether they believed that same-sex couples should be allowed to jointly adopt in Ireland, a higher percentage of males answered no to this question compared to females. Under current legislation same-sex couples cannot jointly adopt a child in Ireland. If same-sex couples want to adopt in Ireland today the only option they have is for one partner to legally adopt a child, leaving the other partner with no legal relationship with the child. This can be a major obstacle for same-sex couples that are trying to form a family.

If couples do proceed with one partner adopting a child then the other partner will have no legal relationship with the child and this creates problems in many areas including education and healthcare. The ultimate consequence is that such adoption laws prevent same-sex couples and their children from functioning fully as a family.

The current position on same-sex adoption in Ireland is similar to other countries. Brodzinsky et al. (2002) in their study of adoption agencies in the United States found that of the 214 agencies that participated in the study, 45 percent accepted applications from lesbians and gay men, however similar to Ireland in many cases only one individual of the same-sex couple could legally adopt.

In April 2013 a Constitutional Convention was held in Ireland at which 79 percent of delegates voted in favour of same-sex marriage. It is now up to the Government to hold a debate on the issue and if voted in favour then a referendum must be held. This also includes the issue of legislation relating to parents and children in same-sex families. This is a very positive development for same-sex parents and their families. If same-sex marriage were to be passed into Irish law it would allow for same-sex couples to jointly adopt.

The second question asked participants if they believed same-sex parenting will impact negatively on a child's development, a higher percentage of males answered yes to this question compared to females. This belief in the current study of male participants that same-sex parenting will impact negatively on a child's development provides support for the findings of previous studies. Pennington and Knight (2011) in their study of nine heterosexual adults found that the participants believed same-sex parenting would impact negatively on a child's development and well-being. Furthermore, Hollekim et al. (2012) in their study of Norwegian attitudes towards same-sex parenting and beliefs about the welfare of children raised by same-sex parents found that participants had negative attitudes towards same-sex parenting and that these attitudes were founded out of concern for the welfare of children growing up with same-sex parents.

The findings in the current study are contrary to the findings of Fairtlough's (2008) content analysis of 67 young people's accounts of growing up with one or more lesbian or gay parents. The accounts came from the UK, USA and New Zealand. The results showed that many of the young people in the study found it difficult when they had to explain their family dynamic. The study found that for these 67 young people the most negative aspect of being raised by a lesbian or gay parent were the attitudes of other people towards them and their parents. None of them believed that having a gay or lesbian parent had a negative affect on their lives. They also believed that their parent's sexuality did not have an affect on their parenting ability (Fairtlough, 2008).

The third question used to measure participants attitudes towards same-sex parenting asked participants if they believed children will have psychological issues as a result of same-sex parenting. A higher percentage of males answered yes to this question

compared to females. The belief held by males in the current study is contrary to the findings of Anderssen et al. (2002) who reviewed 23 studies published on children brought up by lesbian mothers or gay fathers. The aim of the review was to provide evidence that children raised by lesbians and gay men are not psychologically affected. In many of the 23 studies when investigating emotional functioning the researchers compared children of homosexual parents with children of heterosexual parents and found that the children of homosexual parents did not experience any additional emotional problems compared to the children of heterosexual parents. This review of studies showed that there is little or no difference in the psychological development of children raised by homosexuals compared to those raised by heterosexuals (Anderssen et al., 2002).

It is possible that the beliefs of male participants in the current study are founded on elements of homophobia. Pennington and Knight (2011) believed that the negative attitudes towards same-sex parents amongst participants was as a result of homophobia and not out of concern for the well-being and development of children brought up by same-sex parents. They believed that as same-sex parenting already exists and the children of such families are not identifying as homosexual in numbers greater than those raised by heterosexual couples then the only reason for such attitudes towards same-sex parenting could be homophobia (Pennington & Knight, 2001).

While being contrary to the findings of Anderssen et al. (2002) the belief held by males in the current study that children will have psychological issues as a result of same-sex parenting provides support for the studies of Marchesani et al. (2003) and Hollekim et al. (2012) who found that participants were concerned for the well-being of children

growing up with same-sex parents and believed that children would be negatively affected.

Although numerous studies including Anderssen et al. (2002) have shown that children of same-sex parents do not have greater psychological issues compared to those of heterosexual parents, the current study along with Marchesani et al. (2003) and Hollekim et al. (2012) illustrate that people still believe children of same-sex parents will be psychologically affected. This is concerning given that studies have proven otherwise and highlights the need for education in the area.

Camilleri and Ryan (2006), in their study of social work students' attitudes towards homosexuality and homosexual parenting used the Knowledge of Homosexual parenting (KHP) scale to measure students' knowledge of homosexual parenting. The results from the scale indicated that students had moderate to high-levels of knowledge about homosexual parenting. The overall results from the study showed that students were in favour of same-sex parenting. This study proves that where people are educated in the subject of homosexual parenting their attitudes are more positive as a result. Through education common misconceptions can be elevated.

The fourth question used to measure participants attitudes towards same-sex parenting asked participants if they believed same-sex parenting will impact on a child's gender development. A higher percentage of males answered yes to this question compared to female participants. Many people are often of the opinion that children who are raised by same-sex parents and lack either a mother/father figure will have problems developing their gender identity. However, the opinion of male participants in the current study that same-sex parenting will impact on a child's gender development is

contrary to the findings of Anderssen et al. (2002) who found that there was no difference between children raised by homosexual parents and children raised by heterosexual parents in terms of gender identity, gender role behaviour and sexual orientation.

The fifth question used to measure participants attitudes towards same-sex parenting asked participants if they believed children of same-sex parents are more likely to identify as homosexual later in life than children of heterosexual parents, a higher percentage of males answered yes to this question compared to females. These findings are in line with the findings of Golombok and Tasker (1996) who carried out a longitudinal study of children raised by lesbian mothers and children raised by single heterosexual mothers to see if parents influence the sexual orientation of their children. When the participants of this longitudinal study were seen for the second time at an average age of 23.5 years old, two female participants raised by lesbian mothers identified as lesbians themselves compared to none from the group raised by heterosexual mothers.

The belief that children of same-sex parents are more likely to identify as homosexual later in life is contrary to the findings of Anderssen et al. (2002) who carried out a review of 23 studies on children brought up by lesbian mothers or gay fathers and found that there was no difference in terms of sexual orientation between children raised by lesbians or gay men and children raised by heterosexuals. Furthermore Golombok (2001) found that while children of lesbian mothers are more inclined to think about and experiment with same-sex relationships, the majority identified as heterosexual later in life.

The sixth question used to measure participants attitudes towards same-sex parenting asked participants if they would allow their child be friends with a child who's parents were same-sex parents, a higher percentage of males answered no to this question compared to females. The reason for asking participants this question was to bring up the area of contact with homosexuals. Participants can appear to be accepting of homosexuals and same-sex parenting until the area of contact with homosexuals is brought up. At this point it becomes more personal to participants.

Whitley (1988) found that in relation to contact with homosexuals participants had more negative attitudes towards homosexuals of their own sex. The researcher believes that the reason for the negative response from males in the current study is that they would be concerned that allowing their child be friends with a child who has same-sex parents could possibly affect their child's sexual orientation. Highlighting further the need for education in the area of homosexual parenting.

For the six questions used to test hypothesis three, males answered more negatively than females to all questions, therefore supporting the hypothesis that there would be gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting. The findings of the current study are in line with previous studies Whitley (1988) found that males held more negative attitudes towards the social roles of homosexuals. The social roles of homosexuals would include parenting therefore the findings of the current study support Whitley's (1988) findings.

The present research also supports the findings of LaMar and Kite (1998) who found that males had more negative attitudes towards homosexuals than females. Although the study conducted by LaMar and Kite (1998) looked at attitudes towards gay

men and lesbians and not attitudes towards same-sex parenting, it can be implied that males who have negative attitudes towards homosexuals will also have negative attitudes towards same-sex parenting.

The second hypothesis predicted that there would be gender differences in attitudes towards lesbians. 'The Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale' developed by Dr. Gregory Herek was used to measure participants' attitudes towards lesbians. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare gender differences in attitudes towards lesbians; this showed that there was no significant difference. Therefore this hypothesis was not supported.

This result is interesting as it is contrary to the findings of previous studies, Whitley (1998) found that people had more negative attitudes towards homosexuals of their own sex in relation to contact with homosexuals. LaMar and Kite (1998) also found that attitudes towards homosexuals differed based on participants gender, their results showed that female participants rated lesbians more negatively on the attitude component of contact. "Thus, both heterosexual men and women feel equally and extremely negatively about being the target of homosexual advances (Whitley, 1988, p. 290)".

Based on the findings of these two studies it would be expected that the present study would have found female participants to be more negative towards lesbians than male participants, however t-test analysis showed that there was no significant difference between male and female participants attitudes towards lesbians.

The third hypothesis predicted that there would be gender differences in attitudes towards gay men. 'The Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale' developed by Dr. Gregory Herek was used to measure participants' attitudes towards gay men. An

independent samples t-test was conducted to compare gender differences in attitudes towards gay men; this showed that there was no significant difference. Therefore this hypothesis was not supported.

This result is again contrary to the findings of previous studies (Whitley, 1988; LaMar & Kite, 1998) that found there to be differences in attitudes based on participants' gender. Whitley (1988) and LaMar and Kite (1998) in their studies found that male participants had more negative attitudes towards gay men than female participants. The reason for there being no significant gender difference found in attitudes towards gay men could be due to the small male sample size used in the present study. There were 51 male participants compared to 108 female participants.

One possible reason why the second and third hypotheses have been unsupported in the findings of the current study is that the questionnaire used to assess participants attitudes towards lesbians and gay men did not address the area of contact with homosexuals or homosexual advances. If it had perhaps the results would have been more in line with previous studies (Whitley, 1988; LaMar & Kite, 1998) that found participants to have more negative attitudes towards homosexuals of their own sex in relation to contact with homosexuals.

Morin and Garfinkle suggest that a sex difference occurs only when the questions assessing attitudes toward homosexuals deal with personal threat or anxiety as opposed to more general beliefs about homosexuals. One would therefore expect greater sex differences on items dealing with homosexual advances and feelings, for example, than with social roles, with contact items falling in between (Whitley, 1988, p.287).

The fourth hypothesis predicted that personality will influence participants' attitudes towards lesbians. A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between personality and participants' attitudes towards

lesbians. There was a statistically small negative but non-significant correlation between personality and participants' attitudes towards lesbians. Therefore the hypothesis that personality will influence participants' attitudes towards lesbians was not supported.

The results of the current study are contrary to the findings of previous studies. Shackelford and Besser (2007) in their study of 1,012 people living in the USA hypothesized that people who scored higher on the personality dimension of openness to experience would have more positive attitudes towards homosexuals. The results of their study supported the hypothesis. Therefore people who are more open, imaginative and interested in trying new things are more inclined to have positive attitudes towards homosexuals. The findings of the current study did not demonstrate this.

Similarly to Shackelford and Besser (2007), Okura et al (2012) in their study of 164 Japanese students found that personality traits did weakly but significantly influence the development of participants' attitudes towards homosexuals. Given the findings of previous studies it would have been expected that the current study would have found personality to influence participants' attitudes towards lesbians.

The fifth hypothesis predicted that personality will influence participants' attitudes towards gay men. A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between personality and participants' attitudes towards gay men. There was a statistically small positive but non-significant correlation between personality and participants' attitudes towards gay men. Therefore the hypothesis that personality will influence participants' attitudes towards gay men was not supported.

Similar to the fourth hypothesis the fact that the fifth hypothesis in the current study is unsupported is contrary to the findings of previous studies (Shackelford and

Besser 2007; Okura et al 2012) that found personality influenced attitudes towards homosexuals. The findings of these studies would suggest that the current study would have found that personality influences participants' attitudes towards gay men.

One possible reason why the fourth and fifth hypotheses in the current study have been unsupported is that a ten item brief version of the big five personality inventory was used instead of the standard 44 item version. The researcher felt that using the 44 item version might discourage participants from completing the questionnaire booklet in full. The ten item brief version used only had two statements for each of the five constructs of personality (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness), whereas the 44 item version uses eight to ten statements to measure each of the five constructs of personality. Therefore producing a more reliable and accurate result.

## **Limitations**

There were a number of limitations in the current research. The small sample size was one limitation there were 51 male participants and 108 female participants. The male sample size was very small and limited the analysis that could be run on the data collected subsequently affecting the findings of the current study. For more accurate and reliable results a larger male and overall larger sample size would be required.

The questionnaires used by the researcher are another limitation of the current study. The 'Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale' used did not contain any statements that addressed the subject of contact with homosexuals. The researcher believes that had a scale been used that addressed contact with homosexuals the findings may have been different. LaMar and Kite (1998) found that male and female participants rated homosexuals of their own sex more negatively on the attitude component of contact.

Another limitation was the personality measure used by the researcher in the current study. It was a ten item brief version of the big five personality inventory. As the two hypotheses addressing personality were not supported in the current study, the researcher believes that it would have been better to use the full 44 item version which uses eight to ten statements to measure each of the five constructs of personality.

## **Directions for future research**

Firstly, future research should consider the implications stated above. In terms of questionnaires future research should look at using an attitudes towards homosexuals scale that looks at contact with homosexuals, such as the 'Homosexuality Attitude Scale' developed by Kite and Deaux (1986). To measure personality more effectively future research should use the full 44 item of the big five personality inventory.

Future research should consider measuring participants' knowledge of homosexual parenting using the 'Knowledge of Homosexual Parenting' (KHP) scale. It would be beneficial when investigating attitudes towards homosexuals to know what level of knowledge participants have about homosexual parenting. Such information could be used to help interpret the results. If levels of knowledge were found to be low then the findings could be used to promote education in the area of homosexual parenting.

Future research should also consider investigating the area of belief systems. Pennington and Knight (2011) found that attitudes towards same-sex parenting were formed on hetero-normative and heterosexist beliefs. The researcher believes that if people have traditional belief systems they will be more inclined to have negative attitudes towards homosexuals and same-sex parenting. Therefore investigating the belief systems held by participants would be beneficial to future research.

## **Conclusion**

The main finding of the current research has been that there are gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting. It was found that male participants have more negative attitudes towards same-sex parenting. The researcher believes that through education of homosexual parenting negative attitudes can be dealt with.

Same-sex parenting is a very current issue in Ireland at the moment. The Constitutional Convention in April 2013 voted in favour of same-sex marriage, this will now be passed onto the Irish Government for them to hold a debate. If the Government vote in favour they will have to call a referendum on same-sex marriage. Included in this are the legal issues faced by same-sex couples who are currently parents or are trying to become parents. This is a very positive development for same-sex couples and families.

While the current research only touches on the surface of attitudes towards same-sex parenting amongst a small sample size it lays the foundations for further and more extensive research in the area. The researcher believes that further research could highlight the need to educate people in the area of homosexual parenting. Given that there may be an opportunity in the near future to change the current legal standing, it is important to assess the attitudes that exist and if education in the area is required.

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## Appendix 1

### **Personality and Gender differences in attitudes towards same-sex parenting amongst DBS students.**

**This study is concerned with personality and gender differences in attitudes toward same-sex parenting amongst DBS students.**

**Any information that you give will remain strictly confidential, you are not required to write your name anywhere on this survey. I hope you find this interesting, and I would like to thank you in advance for your time and co-operation.**

Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_

Sexual Orientation \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_

Level of Education \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can by ticking one of the boxes ranging from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'.

		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree somewhat</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree somewhat</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
<b>1</b>	Lesbians just can't fit into our society.					
<b>2</b>	A woman's homosexuality should not be a cause for job discrimination in any situation.					
<b>3</b>	Female homosexuality is bad for society because it breaks down the natural divisions between the sexes.					
<b>4</b>	State laws regulating private, consenting lesbian behaviour should be abolished.					
<b>5</b>	Female homosexuality is a sin.					
<b>6</b>	The growing number of lesbians indicates a decline in Irish morals.					
<b>7</b>	Female homosexuality in itself is not the problem, unless society makes it a problem.					
<b>8</b>	Female homosexuality is a threat to many of our basic social institutions.					
<b>9</b>	Female homosexuality is an inferior form of sexuality.					
<b>10</b>	Lesbians are sick.					
<b>11</b>	Male homosexual couples should be allowed to adopt children the same as heterosexual couples.					

12	I think male homosexuals are disgusting.					
13	Male homosexuals should not be allowed to teach in schools.					
14	Male homosexuality is a perversion.					
15	Male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in men.					
16	If a man has homosexual feelings, he should do everything he can to overcome them.					
17	I would not be too upset if I learned that my son were a homosexual.					
18	Sex between two men is just plain wrong.					
19	The idea of male homosexual marriage seems ridiculous to me.					
20	Male homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned.					

Please tick 'Yes' or 'No' to the below questions, there are no right or wrong answers.

		YES	NO
1	Do you think same-sex couples should be allowed to jointly adopt in Ireland		
2	Do you think same-sex parenting will impact negatively on a child's development		
3	Do you think children will have psychological issues as a result of same-sex parenting		
4	Do you think same-sex parenting will impact on a child's gender identity development		
5	Do you think children of same-sex parents are more likely to identify as homosexual later in life than children of heterosexual parents		
6	Would you allow your child be friends with a child who's parents were same-sex parents		

### How am I in general

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who *likes to spend time with others*? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

<b>1</b> <b>Disagree</b> <b>Strongly</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Disagree a</b> <b>little</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Neither agree</b> <b>nor disagree</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Agree a little</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Agree</b> <b>Strongly</b>
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	<b>I am someone who ...</b>	
<b>1</b>	Is reserved	
<b>2</b>	Is generally trusting	
<b>3</b>	Tends to be lazy	
<b>4</b>	Is relaxed, handles stress well	
<b>5</b>	Has few artistic interests	
<b>6</b>	Is outgoing, sociable	
<b>7</b>	Tends to find fault with others	
<b>8</b>	Does a thorough job	
<b>9</b>	Gets nervous easily	
<b>10</b>	Has an active imagination	

If you are concerned with or affected by any of the issues raised please do not hesitate to contact the following organisations:

Gay Switchboard	01 – 8721055
GLEN	01 – 6728650
LGBT Helpline	1890 929 539

I would once again like to thank you for taking part in this study and remind you that all information given here will remain strictly confidential. If you would like to know more about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at the below address.

Kevin Brussels (researcher) and Bernadette Quinn (research co-ordinator)

Department of Humanities & Social Science  
 DBS School of Arts  
 13-14 Aungier Street  
 Dublin 2

Tel: 01 - 4177500