

The different attitudes towards same sex marriage between younger and older generations and religious beliefs

Louise Pollock 1768606

Supervisor Name: Bernadette Quinn

Abstract

The primary purpose for this research was to investigate the attitudes towards same sex marriage in Dublin relating to age, religion and gender. The main finding of this research was that there was no gender differences in attitudes towards same sex marriage.

Introduction

The aim of this study was to look at the age along with religious beliefs relating to same sex marriage. Homosexuality has been criminalized in Ireland since 1861 starting with the offences against the person act. Since then David Norris has got homosexuality decriminalized. Even though Ireland has come a long way since 1861, same sex marriage is still not legalized. Same sex marriage is a major talked about topic in Ireland with a referendum coming up on may 22nd 2015. When asked how they would vote, 67% said they were in favour while 20% said they were against. 9% of people also had no opinion on the topic and 3% refused to give an answer.

Method

In order to carry out the research, quantitative research methods were used. The design used was a quasi-experimental design. The independent variables were age and religion and the dependent variable was the attitudes towards same sex marriage. A questionnaire "Development and Validation of the Attitudes toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale2 (2007) was handed out, along with demographic questions and religious based questions. There were 200 participants involved in this research. 104 of these were male and 96 were female. There were three age groups, first group aged 18-34, second group was aged 35-49 and the final group was aged 50-65 years.



Results

Hypothesis one predicted that older people will have a more negative view towards same sex marriage. An independent t-test was carried out to compare the older generation and younger generations views towards the topic. The results showed that there was a great significance "t= -3.461, DF= 125, (p<.01)". therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis two expected that more religious people will have a more negative view towards same sex marriage then non religious people. An independent t-test was also used to compare the two views. The results showed that there was a significance "t= 7.382, DF=196, (p<.01.)" this shows that the hypothesis was accepted.

The third hypothesis stated that females will have a more positive attitude towards same sex marriage. A t-test was run to compare the two genders. The results showed no real significance "t= .522, DF= 196, (p>.05.)" meaning that the hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

From the results regarding hypothesis one it showed that nearly half of the oldest generations is against the thoughts of same sex marriage in Ireland, while only a handful of the youngest generation were against same sex marriage. These findings agree with those of Oppenheimer et al (2014) who all found that younger people tend to have a more positive attitude towards same sex marriage while older people tend to have a more negative attitude.

Results from hypothesis two was also in line with previous research from the Public Religion Research Institute (2014) who found that people who classify themselves religious hold a more negative view towards those who do not classify themselves as religious.

The final hypothesis however contradicted that previous findings from. Barringer et al (2013) who found women would be more likely to support same sex marriage were men would be more likely to oppose of it. Research from this current study found that there was no difference between male and female views.

Reference

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