Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale

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Recent scholars have conceptualized attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals as multidimensional and wide-ranging (Worthington, Savoy, Dillon, & Vernaglia, 2002). There are two concurrent yet divergent trends in the United States with respect to attitudes toward LGB individuals. Although Yang (2000) has reported data that suggest a gradual trend over the past 25 years toward more positive attitudes among the general population, there also has been a corresponding increase in highly publicized violence (Cloud, 2008) and a mixture of outcomes in a variety of judicial and legislative legal battles over LGB civil rights issues. Furthermore, as LGB individuals become more visible in the mainstream of United States culture, knowledge of LGB history, symbols, and community is likely to evidence corresponding increases. Therefore, as attitudes toward LGB individuals reflect widening complexities in society, it is critical that scientific measurement provides increasing precision of range and dimensionality.

The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale (LGB-KAS) measures respondents’ attitudes and knowledge levels regarding LGB individuals. The multidimensional and wide-ranging factors assessed by the LGB-KAS include (a) Internalized Affirmativeness: a willingness to engage in proactive social activism for LGB issues and internalized sense of comfort with same-sex attractions, (b) Civil Rights Attitudes: beliefs about the civil rights of LGB individuals with respect to marriage, child rearing, health care, and insurance benefits, (c) Knowledge: basic knowledge about the history, symbols, and organizations related to the LGB community, (d) Religious Conflict: conflictual beliefs and ambivalent homonegativity with respect to LGB individuals, often of a religious nature, and (e) Hate: attitudes about avoidance, self-consciousness, hatred, and violence toward LGB individuals.

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Description

The LGB-KAS consists of 28 items. Each item represents an attitude or fact concerning LGB individuals or issues. Higher factor scores are indicative of a stronger endorsement of beliefs (or a higher level of knowledge) concerning each of the five factors (Internalized Affirmativeness, Civil Rights Attitudes, Knowledge, Religious Conflict, and Hate). The scale is intended for self-identifying heterosexual respondents.

The development and validation of the LGB-KAS included four studies (Worthington, Dillon, & Becker-Schutte, 2005). In Study 1, item development procedures and an exploratory factor analysis of an initial item pool were conducted. Discriminant validity estimates also were examined (described in Validity section). A review of (a) measures of homophobia, racism, and sexism, (b) literature examining attitudes toward LGB individuals, and (c) the Worthington et al. (2002) model of sexual identity yielded 211 initial items. Pilot studies decreased the item pool to 32 items. The remaining items reflected the following dimensions: violent homonegativity (e.g., “I sometimes feel violent toward gay men/lesbian women/bisexual individuals”); homophobic intolerance (e.g., “Same-sex marriage just does not make sense to me”); negatively ambivalent attitudes (e.g., “I do not care what LGB individuals do as long as they do not draw attention to themselves”); indifference (e.g., “I have never given much thought to my feelings about lesbian, gay, or bisexual people”); positively ambivalent attitudes (e.g., “I’m not sure what to say or do when someone makes an anti-LGB joke or statement”); affirmative or supportive attitudes (e.g., “It is important to teach children positive attitudes about LGB people”); and specific attitudes toward lesbians or gay men or bisexual persons (e.g., “Lesbian women [Gay men] should be allowed to adopt children”; “Gay men [Lesbian women] deserve the hatred they receive”). In addition, 28 items were developed to expand the range of items included in the measure. These new items reflected more contemporary issues related to civil rights (e.g., “Hospitals should acknowledge same-sex partners equally to any other next of kin”), items intended to reflect differential negativity toward lesbians versus gay men versus bisexual individuals (e.g., “[Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual] individuals should not be allowed to work with children”), and issues of religiosity (e.g., “I keep my religious views to myself in order to accept LGB people”). These items also were intended to reflect the present literature on attitudes and offer the foundation for multiple forms of the LGB-KAS to independently examine attitudes and knowledge regarding gay men or lesbians or bisexual men and women. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal axis factor extraction was performed on the remaining 60 items of the LGB-KAS. A five-factor solution using an oblique rotation yielded the most interpretable solution.

In Study 2, the factor stability of the initial EFA solution was established via confirmatory factor analyses, and construct validity estimates were obtained (described in the Validity section). Study 3 provided the test-retest reliability estimates of the instrument (described in the Reliability section) and evidence of convergent validity (described in the Validity section). In Study 4, another indication of construct validity of the LGB-KAS was investigated, that is, the sensitivity of the LGB-KAS to change across sexual orientation identities (described in the Validity section).

Response Mode and Timing

Participants respond to each item using a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Very Uncharacteristic of Me or My Views) to 6 (Very Characteristic of Me or My Views). It typically takes a participant approximately 10 minutes to complete the LGB-KAS.

Scoring

LGB-KAS subscale scores are obtained by summing all items within each of the five subscales and dividing by the number of items on the subscales receiving responses (i.e., items with missing data are not scored or included in the averaging). There are no reverse-scored items.

Reliability

The LGB-KAS subscales have evidenced adequate internal consistency (Cronbach’s α > .70) in past studies (Worthington et al., 2005). Test-retest reliability estimates indicated LGB-KAS subscale scores as highly stable over a 2-week time period (Worthington et al., 2005).

Validity

Discriminant validity was evidenced by an absence of relations between the total scale and subscales and a measure of impression management (Worthington et al., 2005). Construct validity was supported through (a) exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, (b) correlations between LGB-KAS subscales and social dominance orientation and sexual identity exploration, and (c) findings indicating differences between heterosexual and LGB individuals on all five subscales (Worthington et al., 2005). Convergent validity for subscales was supported by correlations with measures of attitudes toward bisexuality, as well as lesbian women and gay men (Worthington et al., 2005). More recently, Worthington & Reynolds (2009) have demonstrated that the LGB-KAS can be administered to LGB individuals to obtain information about internalized homonegativity.

Other Information

Ann M. Becker-Schutte was one of the original authors of the scale.
### References


### Exhibit

#### Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale

**Instructions:** Please use the scale below to respond to the following items. Circle the number that indicates the extent to which each statement is characteristic or uncharacteristic of you or your views. Please try to respond to every item.

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<td>Very Uncharacteristic of Me or My Views</td>
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**Note:** LGB = Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual.

Please consider the ENTIRE statement when making your rating, as some statements contain two parts.

1. I feel qualified to educate others about how to be affirmative regarding LGB issues.

2. I have conflicting attitudes or beliefs about LGB people.
3. I can accept LGB people even though I condemn their behavior.
4. It is important to me to avoid LGB individuals.
5. I could educate others about the history and symbolism behind the “pink triangle.”
6. I have close friends who are LGB.
7. I have difficulty reconciling my religious views with my interest in being accepting of LGB people.
8. I would be unsure what to do or say if I met someone who is openly lesbian, gay, or bisexual.
9. Hearing about a hate crime against an LGB person would not bother me.
10. I am knowledgeable about the significance of the Stonewall Riot to the Gay Liberation Movement.
11. I think marriage should be legal for same-sex couples.
12. I keep my religious views to myself in order to accept LGB people.
13. I conceal my negative views toward LGB people when I am with someone who doesn’t share my views.
15. Feeling attracted to another person of the same sex would not make me uncomfortable.
16. I am familiar with the work of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.
17. I would display a symbol of gay pride (pink triangle, rainbow, etc.) to show my support of the LGB community.
18. I would feel self-conscious greeting a known LGB person in a public place.
19. I have had sexual fantasies about members of my same sex.
20. I am knowledgeable about the history and mission of the PFLAG organization.
21. I would attend a demonstration to promote LGB civil rights.
22. I try not to let my negative beliefs about LGB people harm my relationships with the lesbian, gay, or bisexual individuals I know.
23. Hospitals should acknowledge same-sex partners equally to any other next of kin.
24. LGB people deserve the hatred they receive.
25. It is important to teach children positive attitudes toward LGB people.
26. I conceal my positive attitudes toward LGB people when I am with someone who is homophobic.
27. Health benefits should be available equally to same-sex partners as to any other couple.
28. It is wrong for courts to make child custody decisions based on a parent’s sexual orientation.
Scoring:

Hate = 4, 24, 8, 14, 9, 18
Knowledge = 20, 10, 16, 5, 1
Civil Rights = 27, 23, 11, 28, 25
Religious Conflict = 26, 12, 22, 7, 3, 13, 2
Internalized Affirmativeness = 19, 15, 17, 6, 21

There are no reverse-scored items. Subscale scores are obtained by averaging ratings on items receiving a response for each participant. Thus, if Item 19 is not rated by a specific respondent, only the remaining four items on the Internalized Affirmativeness subscale are used to obtain the average, and so on. This method ensures comparable scores when there are missing data.

*The 6-point rating scale follows each of the items.

Sexual Correlates of Female Homosexual Experience

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Goode and Haber (1977) investigated whether and to what extent college women who have engaged in homosexual behavior have had different sexual experiences than those who have not engaged in such behavior. Hence, setting aside the direction of causality, whether the respondent engaged in versus did not engage in homosexual or lesbian experiences was taken as the “independent” variable. We used a questionnaire that consisted of 66 questions about a wide variety and range of sexual behaviors and experiences. These included age of first heterosexual intercourse, total number of sexual partners, sex partners with whom the respondent was not in love, experiences with fellatio and heterosexual cunnilingus, types of sexual experiences with a woman, age of the respondent when she first engaged in homosexual experience, whether she engaged in masturbation and how often, and so on. We took the answers to these 66 questions as the “dependent” variables.

**Description**

We distributed the questionnaire/instrument during the spring of 1975 to all the female residents of several dormitories at the State University of New York at Stony Brook; the questionnaires were delivered on a door-to-door basis. When completed, residents sealed them in an envelope; we picked them up a week later. The response rate for the initial wave was just under 50%; the total response rate following the third and final wave was 64%, which is considered good for this type of survey. The sample N was 160. We consider the findings from this survey exploratory rather than definitive. Because the respondents were college students, their average age was between 19 and 20; no respondent was older than 23.

Among our respondents, 86% had engaged in heterosexual intercourse at least once in their lives; only 16 respondents (10%) had engaged in at least one form of homosexual experience we asked about at least once, and 9 out of the 16 had never achieved an orgasm in this fashion. We found that the homosexually experienced women had engaged in a wider range of heterosexual experiences, and with a substantially larger number of partners, than was true of the homosexually naive women. For instance, the modal number of men the women with homosexual experience had engaged in intercourse with was 2, the median was 5, and the mean was 7.4; for those without homosexual experience, these figures were 1, 2, and 3.6, respectively. The median age at first heterosexual intercourse for the homosexually experienced was 16.7, with a mode of 15 and a median of 16; for the homosexually inexperienced, the figures were 18.3, 17, and 17, respectively. Women with homosexual experience were more likely to have experienced or engaged in fellatio, heterosexual cunnilingus, loveless sex, regular self-masturbation, and fantasy during heterosexual intercourse. Women without homosexual experience were more likely to enjoy fellatio and rank heterosexual intercourse as the source of their most pleasurable orgasm. Attainment of orgasm in heterosexual sex (at all) was slightly more likely among homosexually experienced women, but always or almost always attaining orgasm during heterosexual intercourse was slightly less likely.

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