
Attitudes of Lebanese Adults age 18-22 towards Homosexuality

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Abstract. The attitude of Lebanese adults towards homosexuality is examined in this research article. In the past, the only acceptable affiliation was heterosexuality. Nowadays, attitudes towards homosexuality have undergone a tremendous change due to globalization. Participants in the study are 200 college students between the ages of 18-22. The sample was taken from 5 different regions in Lebanon: the north, Beirut, the Bekaa, the south, and the mountain of Lebanon. Participants filled anonymous questionnaires that include statements about their attitudes towards homosexuality, its causes and effects and whether they give homosexuals equal rights. Most participants considered homosexuality to be genetic or due to sexual abuse. Others believe it is due to cultural habits. 10% of the participants consider homosexuality to be a choice and gave homosexuals equal rights. 23 % refused the idea due to religious background. Consequently, results indicate a more positive Lebanese attitude towards homosexuality in urban areas. More male participants than females were positive towards the issue in this study due to cultural factors.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, with the technological advances and globalization, there are many views on a person's sexual preference. In the past, the only acceptable affiliation was heterosexuality. Neither the Islamic religion nor the Christian religion support homosexuality. How do the Lebanese adults feel about the issue? Do we consider ourselves a homophobic society? Are we comfortable being around with homosexuals? Do we tackle the issue as any other ordinary issue? Do we give these people equal rights? Is there a difference between males and females opinions? Is attitude related to demographic factors in Lebanon? Does religion affect attitude?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 What is the attitude of Americans towards homosexuality?

According to Pew Research Center Publications, 58% of adults say that homosexuality should be encouraged rather than discouraged by society. Findings from the latest Pew research center political typology survey released May 4, 2011 showed that opposition to gay marriage has continued to decline. It has fallen by 19 points since 1996. Majorities across most demographic groups say that homosexuality should be accepted by society. Among religious groups, 79% of Catholics argue that Homosexuality should be accepted. While 29% of Protestants agree. Among democratic groups in the typology, an overwhelming percentage of solid liberals 92% say that homosexuality should be accepted by society (the political typology report, 2011).

2.2 Is homosexuality biological?

For years, the question of whether homosexuality is biological or environmental has been the focus of many heated debates among scholars, scientists and socio-political activists. One of the first major studies conducted by American researchers on the nature of homosexuality began during the late 1930's. The study was conducted by the Kinsey group at Indiana University. Hormonal effects on the mother's nervous system during pregnancy may play a role in assigning gender identity. Those receiving lowered amounts of hormones from the parent may give rise to the child having problems identifying with their gender role (Grellert; 2008).

In a study by Hamer, he linked male sexuality to a stretch of genes on the x chromosome. Hamer had gone fishing in the DNA of forty pairs of homosexual brothers. Hamer also looked for a comparable X-linked marker for sexual orientation for lesbians, but had little luck. Female homosexuality does run in the family but there is no clear indication that it is genetic.

In August 1991, a San Francisco neuroanatomist, Simon LE Vay, published an article in the respected journal science. It reported his finding that a localized cluster (a nucleus) of cells in the brains of homosexual men was twice as large by volume on autopsy in "heterosexual " men.

2.3 Homosexuals prone to psychological symptoms and substance abuse:

The findings of a study published in the British Journal of Psychiatry (December 2003) suggest higher incidences of illegal drug usage, alcoholism, psychological problems and violence in the gay community than in the general population. Gay men and lesbians reported more psychological distress than heterosexual women, despite similar levels of social support and quality of physical health (king, M et.al, 2003). Gay men were almost ten percent more apt to suffer mental disorder than heterosexuals with almost the same relative rate for lesbians compared to straight women (Post.R, 2010). Homosexuals have a greater risk of suicide and consequently reduced life span (Hamer, 2010).

2.4 The negative health effects of homosexuality:

Reports of a national conference about Sexually transmitted diseases indicate that the highest risk group for several of the most serious diseases. Scientists believe that increased number of sexually transmitted diseases cases is the result of sexual practices by a growing number of gay men who believe that HIV is no longer a life illness. Some of these illnesses are: human papilloma virus, hepatitis, gonorrhea, syphilis, gay bowel syndrome, anal cancer and HIV among homosexuals.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Subjects:

The participants are 200 adults between the ages of 18 and 22 volunteering to participate in the study. These adults weren't chosen to be neither straight nor homosexuals. The sample is random. Participants filled out the survey that tells about their attitude towards the topic. To make sure the sample is representative, the 200 surveys were distributed equally on 5 locations: north (Batroun), Beirut (Hamra), Bekaa (Zahle), mountain (Deir quamar), and south (Saida and Nabatieh). It is important to mention that the locations taken include

different religious backgrounds: Muslims, Christians and Derze.

3.2 Apparatus and procedure:

The questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first was directed to a person's gender, religious background, sexual preference and area they came from whether urban or rural. The second part consisted of questions devised by the researcher that tell how the individual thought of and treated homosexuals with a ranking system of one to five. Statements were rated using the Likert Scale where participants have to choose whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or are undecided about the statement. Questionnaires were anonymous and no time limit was imposed on the participants.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

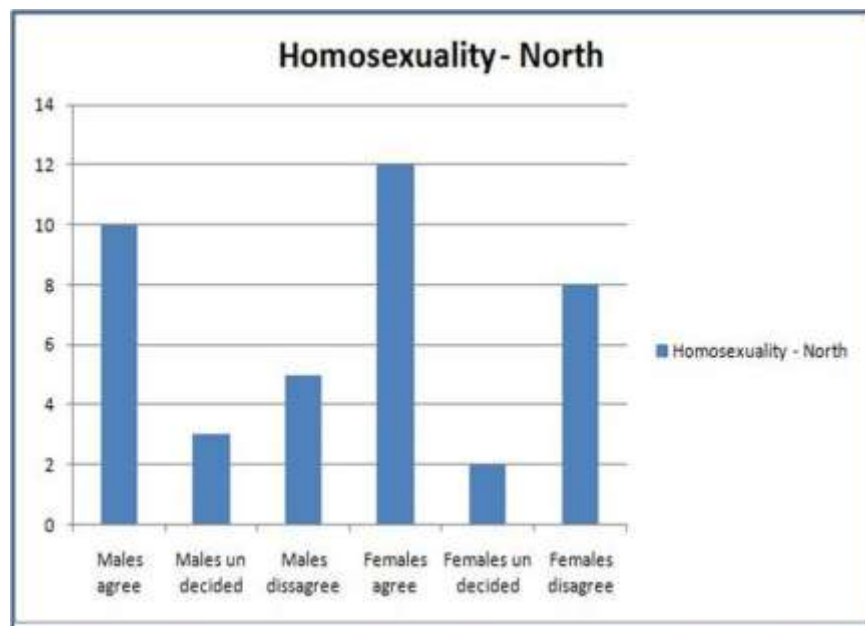


Figure 1 (urban area)

As shown in figure 1, ten males out of eighteen have a positive attitude towards homosexuality. Three participants are undecided and five males have a negative attitude towards the issue.

As for the females, twelve females have a positive attitude towards the topic. Two females are undecided and eight participants are against.

Thus, in the North, the attitude of male participants was more positive towards homosexuality than females. We had females with a positive attitude as many as females with a negative attitude towards the issue.

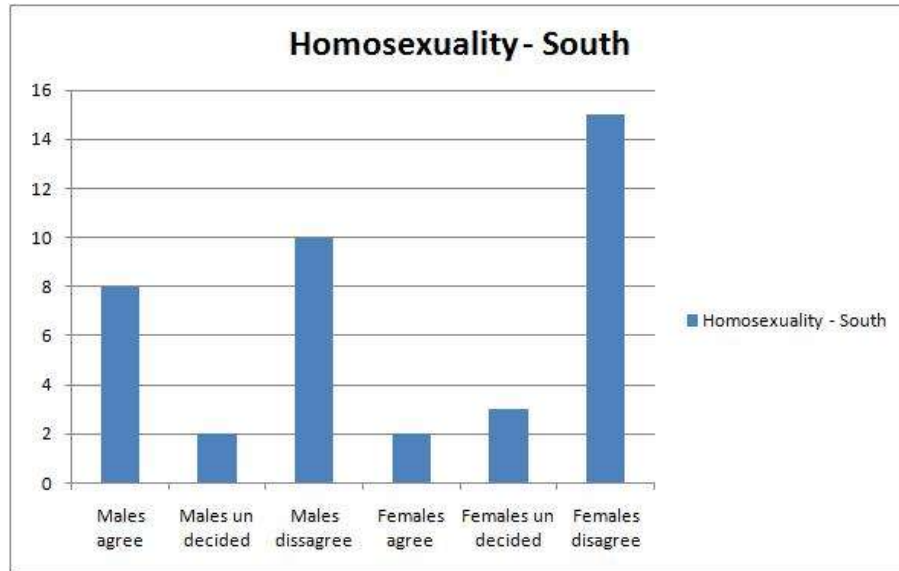


Figure 2 (rural area)

Figure 2 shows the results of participants living in the south. Most of the participants, both males and females were against homosexuality. Few participants out of the forty had a positive attitude towards the issue.

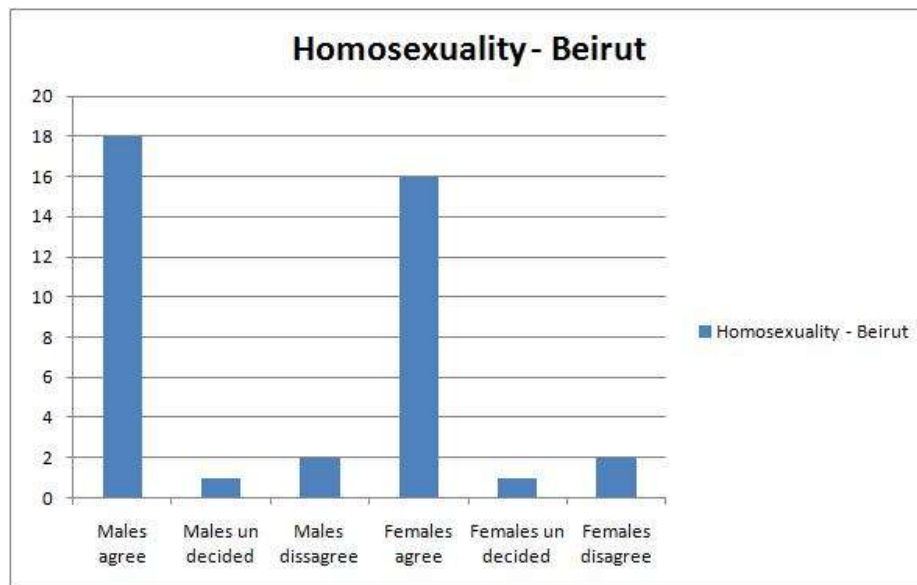


Figure 3 (urban area)

In Beirut, Males as well as females had a positive attitude towards the issue. Few participants were against.

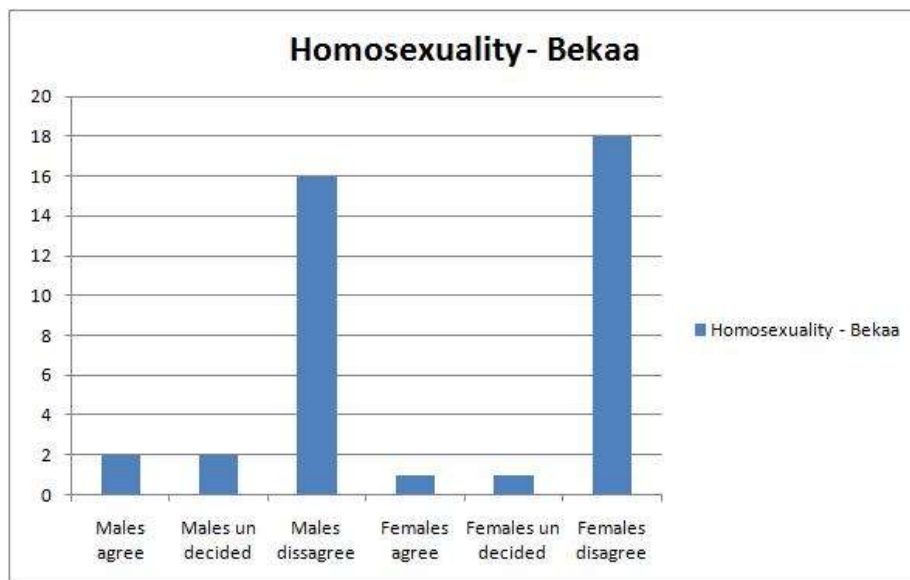


Figure 4 (rural area)

In Bekaa, most of the participants had a negative attitude towards homosexuality.

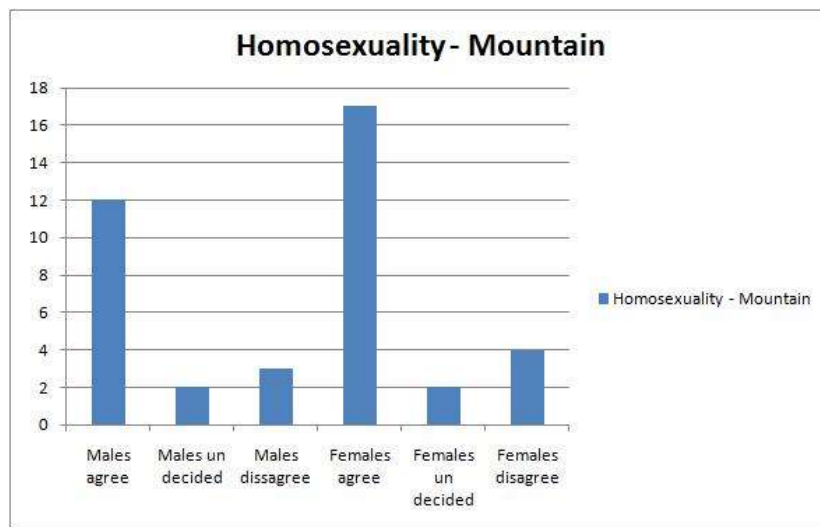


Figure 5 (rural area)

In the mountain, the attitude of participants was positive towards the issue with a few participants who are against homosexuality.

5 Conclusion

The study showed a more positive attitude towards homosexuality in the urban Lebanese areas and a less positive attitude in the rural Lebanese areas. In the rural areas, people are more conservative and religious, and the three main religions in Lebanon: Islam, Christianity and Druze forbid homosexuality.

For future research, I suggest to further develop this study with a larger sample size with a wider variation of backgrounds and sexual preferences.

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