

MONEY ATTITUDES IN SAME-SEX AND HETEROSEXUAL COUPLES

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BY

SCOTT JON TERRES, B.A., M.A.

DENTON, TEXAS


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TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
DENTON, TEXAS

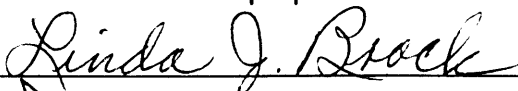
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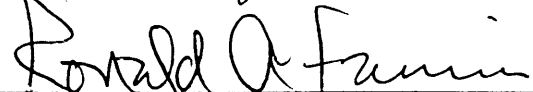
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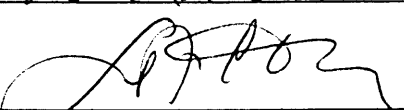
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Scott Jon Terres entitled "Money Attitudes in Same-Sex and Heterosexual Couples." I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Family Therapy.


Glen Jennings, Ed.D., Major Professor

We have read this proposal and recommend its acceptance.

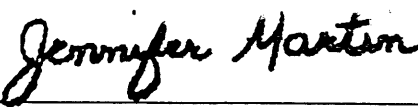






Department Chair

Accepted:



Dean of Graduate School

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ABSTRACT

SCOTT JON TERRES

MONEY ATTITUDES IN SAME-SEX AND HETEROSEXUAL COUPLES

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At a time when much if not all of the world is feeling the financial pinch of an economic recession, the attitudes that people and couples specifically, hold toward money could be the difference between weathering a financial storm or facing the specter of mounting debt and monetary uncertainty. Little scholarly research exists that can adequately measure money attitudes in individuals and couples and next to nothing exists in the reviewed literature that pertains specifically to same-sex couples in this area.

This study utilized a 34 item survey, without modification, created by Edward J. O'Brien III, PhD., during his dissertation research with the intent learning more about the general money attitudes held by individuals or couples. Specifically, the study focused on the money attitudes in self-identified same-sex couples in a committed relationship for a minimum of 5 years in comparison to heterosexual married couples who had also been together for a minimum of 5 years. In order to be included in the research, both members of the couple had to complete the survey. Those results were then used to examine the money

attitudes in same-sex couples vs. heterosexual couples based on the subscales of (1) flexibility, (2) evil, (3) responsibility, (4) self-esteem, (5) opportunity, (6) well-being and (7) confidence, the established constructs put forth in the O'Brien Attitude Toward Money Scale. Additionally, participants were asked to complete 6 voluntary demographic questions that were not included in the original study.

The data was collected using SurveyMonkey.com and the statistical test used was the ANOVA. A total of 20 same-sex couples and 21 heterosexual couples returned usable data that figured into the statistics. The researcher found that there is no statistically significant difference in the scores between the two groups in overall score on the O'Brien ATM nor was there any statistically significant difference in the constructs of the O'Brien ATM.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Imagine that two people meet. Maybe it was a chance coincidence. Perhaps friends got them together with the express purpose of match-making. Possibly, they arranged a meeting after chatting online and viewing one another's dating profiles. They have both been in relationships before, but something about this person seems different, more special somehow. Questions and doubts arise for them both. Could this be the real thing? Are they truly so lucky to have met the person of their dreams? Why does this person find suitability in a person that others never have, at least for the long term? Are the intentions here real or is this person only looking for something more superficial and fleeting?

Throwing caution to the wind, they embark on what they hope will be a mutually satisfying, long-term, committed relationship. They walk hand in hand wherever they go. They kiss, they pet, they live as if they are the only people in the world. In their eyes, they are. They have integrated one another completely into lives that are now very different than they were even just a short time ago. Meeting one another has changed both their lives in significant ways that were hardly imaginable, probably a bit scary and hopefully a lot more enjoyable.

They meet one another's friends and families who relay stories both embarrassing and telling. They start learning all about their chosen mate. Things

such as political leanings, likes and dislikes, prior relationship history, and the obstacles that one another have overcome in their lives to this point. They learn what makes the other person laugh and what makes that person sing. They celebrate birthdays and holidays with one another by creating new memories or inviting their partner to participate in long-standing traditions. Flipping through photo albums gives insight into their previous lives and the people who have impacted them in some form or fashion along the way. Who are the heroes of their respective lives? Who are the villains? They fall in love and make a significant commitment to one another. Maybe they even move in together to start a brand new experience and chapter of their life story. They buy new furniture, decorate their home, get some plants, maybe even a pet for which they share responsibility. Now imagine the couple in your mind is of the same-sex.

Financial concerns are a prominent source of difficulties for couples in committed relationships and are often part of the presenting issues that couples want to address when presenting for therapeutic counseling (Amato & Rogers, 1997). The research shows that financial concerns are not limited only to heterosexual couples but is also a focus of same-sex couples who are in committed relationships (Burns, Burgoyne & Clarke, 2008). The individuals who comprise the couples system both have ideas about money that could stem from multiple origins. Some of those origins include the families in which they were raised, their own personal experiences with financial situations, their respective

cultures and the personal meanings that money has to those individuals (Madanes, 1994).

Statement of the Problem

Economist Lee Badgett (1995) wrote that the field of economics has lagged behind the other social sciences in the way the field investigates and studies finances as they pertain to sexual orientation. Recent statistics show that approximately 9 million Americans self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) (Gates, 2011). For this reason, it is important and ethical for therapists in practice to be aware of the potential differences in money attitude between same-sex couples and heterosexual married couples. This includes potential differences in the ways in which LGBT couples go about handling their money and financial obligations, which could be completely separate, pooling or partial pooling (Clarke, Burgoyne & Burns, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the money attitudes of at least 20 same-sex couples who are in self-identified committed relationships and at least 20 heterosexual married couples who are in heterosexual marriages to evaluate if their results differ significantly. General financial issues should be an area of knowledge for therapists who encounter both individuals and couples in therapeutic practice. If differences in money attitudes exist, then the therapist needs to be better prepared to deal with those differences.

Hypotheses

To fulfill the purpose of this study, the following hypotheses were examined.

1. There will be no statistically significant difference in total scores on the O'Brien Money Attitude Scale when comparing same-sex couples and heterosexual couples.
2. There will be no statistically significant difference in subscale scores on the O'Brien Money Attitude Scale when comparing same-sex couples and heterosexual couples (O'Brien, 2002):
 - A. Flexibility
 - B. Evil
 - C. Responsibility
 - D. Self-esteem
 - E. Opportunity
 - F. Well Being
 - G. Confidence

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made.

1. Participants will answer the questions truthfully.
2. Participants will answer all questions presented.
3. Participants will have similar traits in some aspects of money attitudes compared to their partner.

4. Participants will have differing traits in some aspects of money attitudes compared to their partner.
5. Results will be based on the comparison of results for same-sex couples versus heterosexual couples.

Delimitations

The research was shaped by the following delimiting factors.

1. The study was comprised of same-sex couples in a self-identified committed relationship and heterosexual married couples of at least 5 years.
2. All couples were currently cohabitating.
3. Both members of each sample couple must complete the questionnaire for consideration in this study.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and ideas will be used as a guide for this research.

1. Same-sex couples: This study defines same-sex couples as a romantic relationship where the principals are either male/male or female/female.
2. Committed relationship for same-sex couples: For the purposes of this study, defined as involvement as a self-identified same-sex partnership.
3. Legally married heterosexual couples: For the purposes of this study, defined as couples who have gone through the legal process of marriage.
4. Money attitudes as used in this study and as measured in this study

are made up of the seven following subscales: flexibility, evil, responsibility, self-esteem, opportunity, well being and confidence.

Theoretical Framework

The theory used to guide this research is that of family systems. Klein & White (1996) generally define a system as a unit that has a reciprocal relationship with its environment. Meaning, the unit acts on the environment and in turn, is acted on by the environment. The authors go on to present four assumptions made about the systems perspective. The first is that there is interconnectedness among all parts of the system. This means that changes in one part of the system impacts all parts of the system. Second is that one can only understand the system by looking at it as a whole, meaning that the concept of a family exists on a different plane than just the individuals of which it is comprised. Third is the assumption that reciprocity is present between the system and the environment; a change in one has the potential to change the other. The final assumption is that of systems being a way to understand our world and not as a real thing. Systems offer a theoretical landscape to assist with understanding and are not concrete reality (Klein & White, 1996).

The couples who participated in this research have their own family of origin system, their couple or immediate family system and a system by which they relate with money. All of those systems impact the other systems of which they are a part. Those interactions have shaped and will continue to shape individual and couple money attitudes with the passage of time. Environmental

factors such as pay increases, inflation, recession, unforeseen expenditures and rates of return on investment may all affect a system and, in turn, effect a change in the system toward the financial environment. Individual money attitudes at work in a couple can also affect the way in which those individuals and couples respond to and interact with their particular financial environment. Changes such as economic recession could have an impact on the money attitudes of a group, culture or nation, where pay raises or unexpected costs may only impact one system making up those larger systems.

Summary

This study researched the money attitudes of self-identified same-sex couples who have been together for at least 5 years versus counterparts who are legally married heterosexual couples also together for at least 5 years to determine if there were statistically significant differences overall or within the subscales of: flexibility, evil, responsibility, self-esteem, opportunity, well being and confidence. The researcher used the O'Brien Attitude toward Money Scale, which was designed to look at their overall money attitude. Scores for both sets of couples were analyzed for statistically significant differences. Systems theory, the interconnectedness of the system and their environment, were the theoretical guide for this research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is commonly said that, in polite company, money, sex and religion are conversational topics that should be avoided. Probably good advice for a social or work function, however, in a therapeutic setting, these are topics that clients present with frequency and the profession has an ethical duty to be knowledgeable in these areas (Stanley & Einhorn, 2007). Money is something with which every person is familiar and that most adults use on an everyday basis. Whether it is money that is earned, owed or spent, the relationship with money and how it is used can be a complicated and stressful situation. Adults typically work for the money they make. This allows them to purchase shelter, goods and services such as electricity and food and material items that range from a small indulgence to grand displays of wealth. Family systems could potentially include romantic partners, children, grandchildren and pets, all of which require some level of financial expenditure to cover those basic needs. Children may even get an allowance for the chores that they do around the house, giving them their own money to spend for the things they would like to purchase.

Are there significant financial differences in the ways that same-sex couple systems treat their money when compared with the more traditional family

system? Do gay and lesbian individuals have a different relationship to money than do their heterosexual counterparts? Do they relate to money differently? Are the values around money and the meaning around money significantly different? This study proposes to look at those questions in terms of the money attitude of same-sex couples who are in a committed relationship of at least 5 years in length compared to heterosexual married counterparts.

While financial and economic issues have been widely studied across multiple scholastic disciplines, relatively little research has been conducted with same-sex couples, rather focusing on the larger population of other-sex couples (Burns, et al, 2008). In this section, research on money attitude will be reviewed. Then a review of the existing literature that exists about money and same-sex couples will be presented.

Money Attitude

Echoing Stanley and Einhorn (2007), Anoil and Snyder (1997) agree that therapists should have the basic knowledge and skills to talk about money with clients in intimate relationships. The indoctrination into all issues financial begins at an early age. Children often are rewarded for doing chores with small amounts of money. Many times, they have the ability to do whatever it is that they choose with the money they receive. The choices they make are typically able to be linked back to the information that they have learned about money within their own family of origin. The system is working off assumptions made by the adults in how they have in the past and now currently view the role of money in their

lives. Coming together to form a couples system, they may form a new overall way of relating to money, but the ideas they bring to the system relationship is usually a conglomeration of what each individual has learned about money and finances from their own family of origin. This means that couples who are teaching their children about money right now are doing so with ideas and knowledge that they have gained from multiple generations of intermingled family systems, familial influence on both participants of the current couples system, that they have adapted for their own purposes (Shapiro, 2007).

In this way, money attitudes do not simply appear, they are the work of multiple generations of ideas all coming together and working across the lifespan of multiple ancestors before the information finally reaches the children of a family system (Shapiro, 2007). As those children age and possibly head off to college, they are inundated with newfound freedom and potential buying power. Some of this buying power may be in the form of newly acquired credit cards. Credit card companies often target college students, looking for an opportunity to begin creating life-long credit users and abusers. It has become common practice for credit card applications to be included in shopping bags from the campus bookstore at the beginning of each semester. It is not unusual to see credit card representatives at booths or sporting events on the college campus, offering free gifts for signing up for their credit cards (Norvilitis et al, 2006).

College is an expensive investment, so it is not surprising to see credit card companies attempting to take advantage and create customers. Norvilitis et

al (2006) have done research showing that a majority of college students report having personal debt of over \$1000.00 during their first year of college.

Depending on the lessons learned about money from their family system, college students may have some level of immaturity around spending and debt management or may have learned poor credit card use habits from their family of origin. The researchers go on to report that college students are good targets due to their lack of information about how debt really works and that many young people in college do not fully comprehend the idea of delayed gratification and saving, opting instead to make impulse buys on credit. This has led to an increased level of financial stress among college aged individuals even before they have all the typical financial burdens of being on their own and having to provide for themselves completely.

What is it about money that creates such a wide range of management styles and attitudes? Generally, common sense would dictate that something such as money that has an individually specific finite supply should be monitored closely so that expenditures are not outpacing the ability to make and save the money needed to cover those expenses. Yet, many people hold some form of debt ranging from overdue bills to car loans and home mortgages. Shapiro (2007) reports that money attitude is more than just the buying power that money affords to an individual. His research states that many people also view money as a metaphor in their lives and that once those metaphorical connections are associated with financial ideas they can cause a great deal of anxiety around

money itself. Money can be tied metaphorically to acceptance, acknowledgement, adequacy, commitment, competence and security. These ideas are important in the formation and endurance of money attitude across the lifespan. As Shapiro (2007) points out "couples cannot live or fulfill their life dreams without money" (p. 285). This makes it easy to better understand how individuals form these underlying emotional connections to money.

Money is something that is at least considered on a daily basis by all adults (Stanley & Einhorn, 2007). Whether it is worrying about paying a bill or buying that cup of artisan coffee every morning, money plays a role in many of the decisions people make. Stanley and Einhorn (2007) speak about the metaphors that money creates, too, specifically for those in a couple system. They agree with Shapiro (2007) that money can create a metaphor for commitment and speculate that couples may also struggle with metaphors of power, trust, boundary creation and separation from ideas from their families of origin.

The research is showing that couple systems and family systems struggle with finances and money attitude. Gold (2009) states "Money concerns are identified as the number one argument for starting couples, are the top-rated problem in couples therapy, and center on issues of insufficient resources or spending priority" (p. 187). There are also reports of money as a major conflict topic for stepfamilies as well (McGoldrick & Carter, 2005). Financial concerns, again, are represented across the lifespan and across multiple systems. One

technique for addressing the money attitude of family systems is that of a money genogram. The money genogram would be an historical look at money attitude of all members of a particular system starting with family of origin, working up to present day, and with focus on the financial future that the system would like to obtain. It could give voice to ideas and expectations around finances not only of the couple, but of their children. It would address things such as investment, retirement, income, spending and saving as well as non-family financial obligations such as loans, debts, child support and so on. This technique gives the family a safe place to talk about these issues with the help of a trained professional to allow the family system to assess their attitudes and make changes in their money attitudes as needed (Gold, 2009).

The ingrained sense of taboo that accompanies discussing personal finances with anyone outside of the family system begs the question, how do financial concerns typically arise during the therapeutic relationship? Unfortunately, the research of Dakin and Wampler (2008) shows that the subject is most often broached by the clients rather than the therapist. Their research speculates that the therapist, also adhering to social norms, may feel as though it is impolite to bring up family finances unless the client has stated money as a concern. According to their study, the arguments around money do not typically stem from not having enough, though that is the case for some couples assuredly, rather they fight about how to manage the money they already have. This may be in reference to those metaphorical meanings that are created

around money attitude. The authors state that "Financial stress can include cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses that affect the relationship" (p. 300) and considering that finances are a major reason for therapeutic presentation, it is an area with which therapists need to be familiar and maybe a little impolite by addressing the taboo.

Same-sex Couples and Money

As was learned from the research of Gold (2009), finances are the main presenting problem of couples in counseling. How does this compare with the research that has been done with same-sex couples? First a short analysis of the background forces impacting same-sex couples. According to Solomon, Rothblum and Balsam (2005), despite some public perception, there are actually very few demographic differences between same-sex couples and other- sex counterparts. Blumstein and Schwartz, (1983) stated "...the social change of the past 20 years has given rise to new options in living as couples, options not generally sanctioned in previous generations" (p. 12). Yet, it has been nearly 30 years and there is still a lack of study across disciplines given to same-sex couples. While not, obviously, exactly alike, Solomon et al. (2005) write "...results indicated that same-sex couples were similar to each other on demographic and relationship factors when compared with married heterosexual couples" (p. 562). The authors also report that heterosexual couples do not report more money conflicts than same-sex couples. This gives credence to the idea that all people have some level of relationship with money.

One may wonder if there really is a need to conduct research that is specific to the same-sex community, since they are a minority of the overall population. Gates (2009) reports that until recently, the US Census Bureau did not have adequate ways of capturing data about sexual orientation. Many people who are part of a same-sex couple actually had their codes changed by the Census Bureau after the fact, with the workers thinking that the individuals miscoded the forms. Still, the actual prevalence of same-sex and lesbians in the United States has been hard to pinpoint. With updated research, Gates (2011) shows that approximately 9 million people in the US identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual. Further, about 19 million US citizens stated that they have engaged in same-sex sexual behavior and 25.6 million Americans report at least some level of same-sex sexual attraction. Every state in the US has individuals who identify as gay or lesbian, though higher percentages are observable in states that have some form of same-sex relationship recognition. With over 300 million people in the US, this is still a minority number, but research is starting to show that the LGBT community is increasingly comfortable in identifying as such and that their system is worth dedicated research.

Much of the research that does exist with same-sex couples has encountered some level of difficulty in being able to establish longitudinal results due to the lack of legal marriage for those couples. That is why this study proposes to use only couples that have been in a committed relationship for a minimum of 5 years. While some US states have legalized marriages, civil unions

and partnerships, most states do not have legal standing for same-sex partners. Laws regarding legal status for same-sex couples vary widely across the nations of the world. Some allow for full marriage rights and others allow for more restrictive rights (Solomon et al., 2005).

Here in the United States of America, there is the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which specifically defines marriage as being between a man and a woman. Many states have, in the last decade, actually introduced legislation into their state constitutions making same-sex marriage illegal. Even the Internal Revenue Service has tax policies that not only exclude same-sex partnership but actually promote heterosexual marriage and having children in the form of tax breaks. A same-sex couple living together does not get the same rights as a heterosexual married couple regardless of the laws of the state in which they live. Although same-sex marriage is legal in the state of Massachusetts, a couple married there would not be able to file a joint federal return as the Federal government does not acknowledge a state approved marriage. However, deductions still exist for children being raised in same-sex homes (Black, 2008). Ironically, Rickey (2008) also reports that due to DOMA, there now exist tax loopholes for split interest transactions for same-sex couples that were closed for heterosexual couples due to the propensity of tax fraud in other-sex marriage.

When it comes to the actual financial management of same-sex couples compared to heterosexual married couples, some differences exist along with overwhelming similarities. Speaking in terms of general demographics, there is

little overall difference observed in research between same-sex couples and heterosexual married couples. Income levels, educational levels and home ownership are not significantly different between the groups (Solomon et al., 2005). When researchers started digging more deeply, however, they did start to find some significant differences between the systems.

One difference is found in the area of tradition gender roles. In heterosexual marriages, there is an idea that the person who makes the most money, usually the male, has more general gender power than does his spouse. This would translate into greater financial say and sway on the part of the husband and possibly some level of discounting the ideas and needs the wife brings to the relationship. Women may find themselves financially disadvantaged due to gender role stereotypes. In these situations, even though they may earn their own money to contribute to the household, women may have less say in the way that the money is spent. In many families, it also falls to the woman to actually pay the bills and do the grocery shopping. Due to this imbalance of power that money creates, women who earn less than their husbands may not feel comfortable or entitled to have personal spending money, or may feel guilty buying something for themselves (Burns et al., 2008). There are many other gender role stereotypes that exist with heterosexual married couples, but as they do not necessarily pertain to money attitude or finance, they are not presented here.

With same-sex couples, those gender role stereotypes are less likely to arise, since the individuals are of matching genders. It is as if no preconceived notions apply about how to deal with money and finances, so the couple essentially has a blank canvass on which they can paint their financial future. While there is still gender inequality for paid work in the US, individuals in same-sex couples typically earn close to the same amount as their partners, as they are the same gender. There is also a more normative structure of dual breadwinners in same-sex couple systems than in their heterosexual married counterparts. Even where there are significant differences in the rate of pay among partners, same-sex couples are more likely to develop strategies that mitigate dependency (Burns et al., 2008).

Research suggests that, with increasing frequency, there are fewer heterosexual married couples with only a male breadwinner. Rather, both individuals work outside the home and both contribute to the annual household income. Despite rhetoric about equality among couple systems, studies show there is often still a power imbalance. With money beginning to be less of a defining characteristic of gender roles, and dealing with relationships where typical gender roles do not apply, how are couple systems managing their household money? Studies are showing that both heterosexual married couples and same-sex couples are changing their strategies of handling their money. There tend to be 3 major ways that couples intermingle their finances. The first is that they do not. They keep separate accounts and each party is responsible for

paying exactly half of all the bills the couple acquires. Keeping separate accounts and splitting all expenses is likely the most equitable financial arrangement in terms of expenses, but could put a considerable burden on one partner if there is a significant earning gap between the individuals. Second, is the strictly pooled method. All the money goes into one account to which both have access and bills are paid from that pooled account. This arrangement is more often seen when both partners earn close to the same amount of money. Finally, there is a method that combines the two, forming a partial pooled method. In this scenario, there is a joint account where some money is pooled but both individuals also maintain their own personal accounts to which their partner does not have access or has limited access. This method provides a way to pool some of the money for expenses, yet still maintain a private account to maintain control over at least a portion of their personal earnings (Vogler, Brockmann & Wiggins, 2006).

Hamplova and Le Bourdais (2009) did a comparative study of married and cohabitating heterosexual couples in Denmark, France, the United States and Spain. Their findings suggest that, across cultures, cohabitating couples are less likely to have a pooled money strategy. The authors also found that having children and the overall level of satisfaction with family life were indicators of couples being more willing to pool their money. In line with these findings is that same-sex couples, largely prohibited from legal marital status, were found, in general, to keep their money separate or use a partial pool strategy, in which

they make equal contributions to the household expenses but otherwise keep money in personal accounts. There is speculation that lesbians, in particular, have been in situations where a male figure (ex-husband, father) had control of the household finances and keep their money separate as a way to avoid potential financial power imbalances. For same-sex couples studied, the advent of pooling finances held the metaphors of togetherness and commitment to their partner. This is not to say that there are no power differences, real or perceived, among same-sex couples (Burns et al., 2008). The authors also state that "Although spending and bills were reported to be discussed and negotiated between couples, in practice, it was the partner who was contributing the most and actually paying the bills who seemed to have the last word and most of the decision-making power" (p. 493). Both same-sex couples studied professed that it would be undesirable for their partner to be financially dependent and that they would not want to be financially dependent on their partner. Even among those same-sex couples seeking to formalize their relationship through state-sponsored means, there was a desire to keep any money and assets they brought to the relationship, along with some of the money they earn, separate, indicated a co-independence within the relationship dynamic (Burns et al., 2008).

Summary

Governmental agencies have finally started tracking and acknowledging the existence of same-sex couples. Although the Federal government in the United States does not officially recognize the right of gay and lesbian individuals to marry, certain states have instituted policies that allow the couples to be recognized. Research shows that there are not significant differences in the general demographics of income, home ownership and education between heterosexual married couples and same-sex couples, but there are observable differences around the ideas of typical gender roles. Money as independence and power seem to be the most prevalent metaphors for financial interaction for both sets of couples systems. However, some studies show more money independence with unmarried heterosexual couples and same-sex couples that do not live in a state that recognizes their union. Ostensibly, this is due to the legal protection that comes along with the marriage contract, which DOMA has specifically said is not applicable to same-sex couples.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the money attitudes of same-sex couples in a self-identified committed relationship of at least five years compared to those of their heterosexual married counterparts. The study attempted to look at the constructs present in the questionnaires completed by all test participants and create an analysis of the data to determine the presence of any significant difference between the sets of couples. Marriage and Family Therapists have a responsibility to the clients to be well versed in matters of personal and couples finance, no matter the population with which they work. The hope of the author is that the information gathered from this research will be able to assist other professionals in the field in better serving the needs of their clients.

Population and Sample

The couples participating in this study were volunteers. The study was comprised of 20 same-sex couples who have self-identified as living together in a committed relationship for a minimum of 5 years and 21 legally married heterosexual couples who have been married for a minimum of 5 years. Participants were comprised of a convenience sample who reports the above conditions to be true and valid. Participants were solicited via requests on social networking website Facebook.com as well as emails to coworkers, friends and

colleagues requesting participation. The instrument used was replicated on website SurveyMonkey.com and the participants navigated to the website to complete the instrument. Only instruments that were filled out completely, meaning all questions answered, were considered for inclusion in the results.

Protection of Human Participants

All participants were apprised of their rights with the informed consent. The informed consent (APPENDIX C) presents a brief overview of the study, describing the purpose for conducting the study and why their participation is being solicited. The consent form provided a brief statement of confidentiality as well as potential risks and an explanation of how the data collected would be used for the purposes of the study. Participants agreed to participate in the study in order for their surveys to be accepted by the SurveyMonkey.com website, a technique called Skip Logic. Because the survey was completely online, terminology added to the informed consent stated "Return of your completed questionnaire constitutes your informed consent to act as a participant in this research." Participants had the ability to print the informed consent questions for their own records. Any materials printed out by the researcher for the purposes of this study or for review by the dissertation chair of Texas Woman's University containing confidential client information were secured in a large sealed envelope, transported under double lock and will be shredded at the conclusion of the study. The proposal was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Texas Woman's University.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation used for this study was the O'Brien Attitude toward Money Scale (O'Brien ATM; O'Brien, 2002). Dr. O'Brien developed this instrument for his dissertation in May of 2002, specifically to measure adult attitudes toward money. Dr. O'Brien allowed for validity and reliability by submitting a total of 160 possible questions for review by experts in the field. The scale was ultimately reduced to a 34 item, 7-construct scale. The O'Brien ATM constructs include the following with the Cronbach's Alpha score for reliability in parenthesis for the construct: Flexibility (.85), Evil (.81), Responsibility (.72), Self-esteem (.67), Opportunity (.75), Well-being (.72) and Confidence (.59). Dr. O'Brien also presents the eigenvalues for the constructs as: Flexibility (2.05), Evil (3.35), Responsibility (2.35), Self-esteem (1.38), Opportunity (2.15), Well-being (1.28) and Confidence (.95). This shows that the construct of confidence is perhaps the weakest in validity and reliability of all 7 constructs but is very close to goal values. As for reliability, the O'Brien ATM shows that "Constructs one, four, five, six and seven show a degree of correlation ranging up to a factor of .6. Constructs two and three have a low correlation with other constructs" (p. 36). The author points out that a lack of strong correlation would seem to support the content validity of the scale.

The instrument employs a 5-point Likert scale with points being given to each of the 5 responses. Reverse scoring was applied to 9 of the 34 items on the

scale. Point values for the majority of the questions are Strongly Agree(SA) =1, Agree(A)=2, Neutral(N)=3, Disagree(D)=4 and Strongly Disagree(SD)=5. For the 9 reversed score questions, the points are SA=5, S=4, N=3, D=2 and SD=1. The point values are assigned to the sub-scales or constructs determined by the instrument. The lower the score, the stronger the participant identifies with the particular sub-scale attitude toward money. O'Brien points out that there are no good or bad scores, simply a correlation between the score and the attitude toward that particular construct (O'Brien, 2002).

Collection of Data

All data were collected through electronic means using the website SurveyMonkey.com. The O'Brien ATM was reproduced exactly through this data collection website. Participants accessed the website via a link (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/P59ZSFY>) supplied either through the social networking site Facebook.com (APPENDIX D) or through the use of email requesting participation (APPENDIX E). Email requests were sent to co-workers of the researcher as well as former students and contacts of the researcher's dissertation chair. Participants supplied their name and the name of the partner (via open text data field on survey) to ensure that both parties completed the entire questionnaire for inclusion in the data results. The names of the participants were confidential and were not used in the final presentation of the data discussion. The option via the SurveyMonkey.com website that allows for IP

tracking, which could lead to identification of the participants, was toggled to the offsetting.

Participants filled out a six question survey to collect demographic information (APPENDIX F). They were asked if they were in a same-sex couple or a heterosexual couple and the time span that they have been in their committed relationship. Respondents were asked if their couple system is a single or dual earner household. Additionally, they were asked for a household income range and were asked to disclose their amount of personal credit card debt. The final demographic question asked participants to indicate the way in which they separate their money, if at all, with either separate accounts, separate accounts with a joint account (combined) or pooled accounts.

Treatment of the Data

Once all data collection was completed, the researcher used analytic tools from both the SurveyMonkey.com website as well as Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Upon completion of the O'Brien ATM data were compiled by the researcher. The researcher confirmed that both parties of each couple had completed the O'Brien ATM before the results were included in the research results. This was done by matching up the names given by the participants in each survey to their named spouse/partner. Through the use of the analytic tools, the data from the questionnaire were examined for scores relative to the 7 constructs. Further analysis was conducted from this information to see if a statistically significant difference existed between same-sex couples

and heterosexual married couples on the total scores using an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical test on the O'Brien ATM and the seven subscales: flexibility, evil, responsibility, self-esteem, opportunity, well being and confidence.

Data were stored on the SurveyMonkey.com website, which required a username and password to access. The only individuals that had the username and password information were the researcher and the dissertation chair. Results of the eventual findings were made available to participants who requested to be informed. This was done on a personal level for each participant who obtained information specific to the questionnaire completed, to the more general in terms of overall results of the dissertation. For that scenario, a summary of the discussion chapter was provided for the participants, sent to their reported email address, or mailed through the US Post Office, depending on participant request.

Analysis of Data

Data from the O'Brien ATM were compiled into two groups; same-sex couples and heterosexual married couples. The researcher checked to make sure that both parties in the couple had completed the questionnaire fully and matched partners with one another by name to make sure this had been completed, however, questionnaires were treated individually and not paired together for consideration of data.

The data were subjected to analysis via tools on the SurveyMonkey.com website as well as using SPSS to help determine statistical significance. Further analysis was conducted using t-test and/or f-test calculations. The final results

were placed in chart format and a comparison/contrast evaluation was conducted between same-sex couples and their heterosexual married counterparts.

Summary

A quantitative study technique was employed to analyze data gathered from questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of the O'Brien ATM scale measuring money attitudes of participants. The data were collected through the website SurveyMonkey.com and were analyzed using data analysis tools provided by the website in concert with SPSS software. The data were grouped into same-sex couples and heterosexual married couples. The researcher looked for significant differences between the two groups in any of 7 established constructs. The results were charted and evaluated for significance.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The O'Brien Attitude Toward Money Scale was posted online via the SurveyMonkey.com website for approximately two weeks (October 7, 2011 through October 22, 2011). The O'Brien ATM was designed to look at money attitudes along 7 constructs. This research is specifically looking for statistically significant responses of same-sex couples' attitudes toward money versus heterosexual counterparts. During the time in which the survey was posted, participants were recruited via Facebook.com posted invitation or through personal email, both of which directed them to the SurveyMonkey.com website. A total of 117 potential participants returned surveys through the website. Those results were examined for completeness, matched with a partner/spouse who also completed the survey, and for matching criteria of being together for at least 5 years. Surveys that were not complete, did not have partner/spouse matches or did not meet the criteria for length of relationship were not used in the outcome of this study. The yield was ultimately 20 qualified survey couples (40 total surveys) for same-sex couples and 21 qualified survey couples (42 total surveys) for heterosexual married couples. No survey results completed and returned after October 22, 2011 are reflected in this study.

Demographics

The distributions of the demographic information for the samples are presented in Tables 1 through 12. Of the same-sex couples, 13 of the 20 couples were comprised of gay men with the remaining 7 couples being lesbians.

Relationship lengths (Table 2) varied among same-sex couples, with the majority of the respondents citing having been together 11-15 years. Dual earning couples comprised 94% (Table 3) of participants and 82% of same-sex couples reporting household income in excess of \$50,000 (Table 4). Table 5 shows that 95% of same-sex participants have less than \$40,000 in credit card debt, with 52% reporting between \$0 and \$5000. Table 6 examines how same-sex couples handle their money management, with 23% using the combined method (each has separate accounts and then a joint account for the couple), 33% keeping their money totally separated and 44% having only one account where all money is pooled.

With the heterosexual participants, all responded that they are heterosexual (Table 7) and 91% of the responding couples (Table 8) reported being together between 5 and 20 years. An anomaly is that no responding couple reported being married 21-25 years. A full 98% of heterosexual couples report having dual earner households (Table 9) with 56% of those households making more than \$100,000 (Table 10). Heterosexual couples also overwhelmingly reported low levels of credit card debt, with 72% of respondents indicating \$5000 or less (Table 11). As for money management in heterosexual couples, only 17%

report having separate accounts only, 40% keep all money pooled in one account and the remaining 43% use the combined method with separate accounts and a joint account (Table 12).

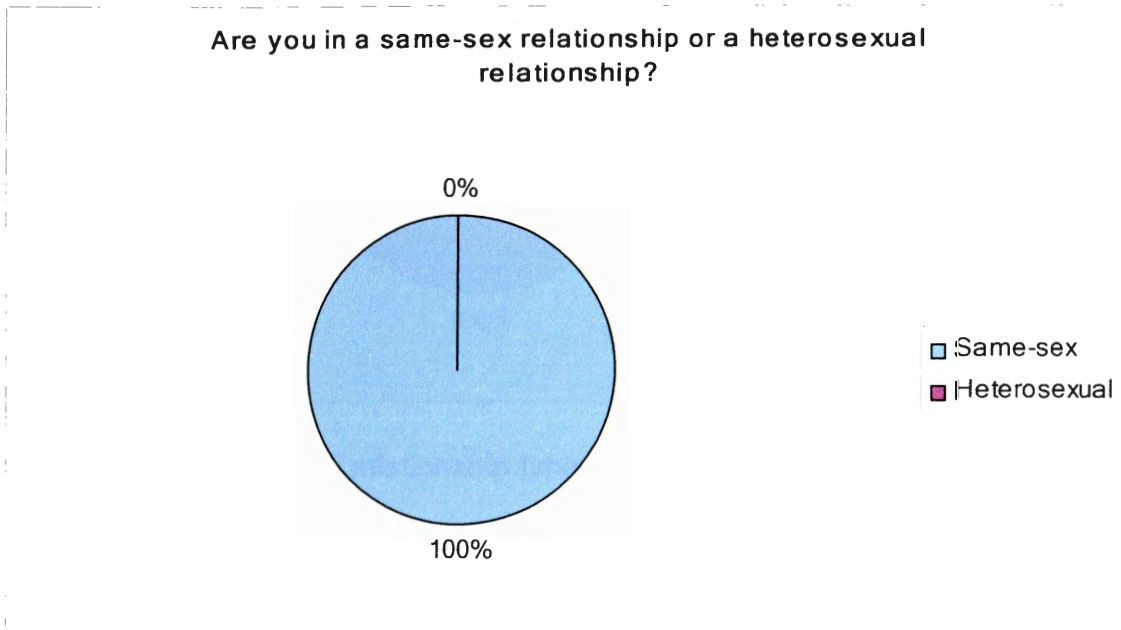


Figure 1: Same-Sex relationship type response

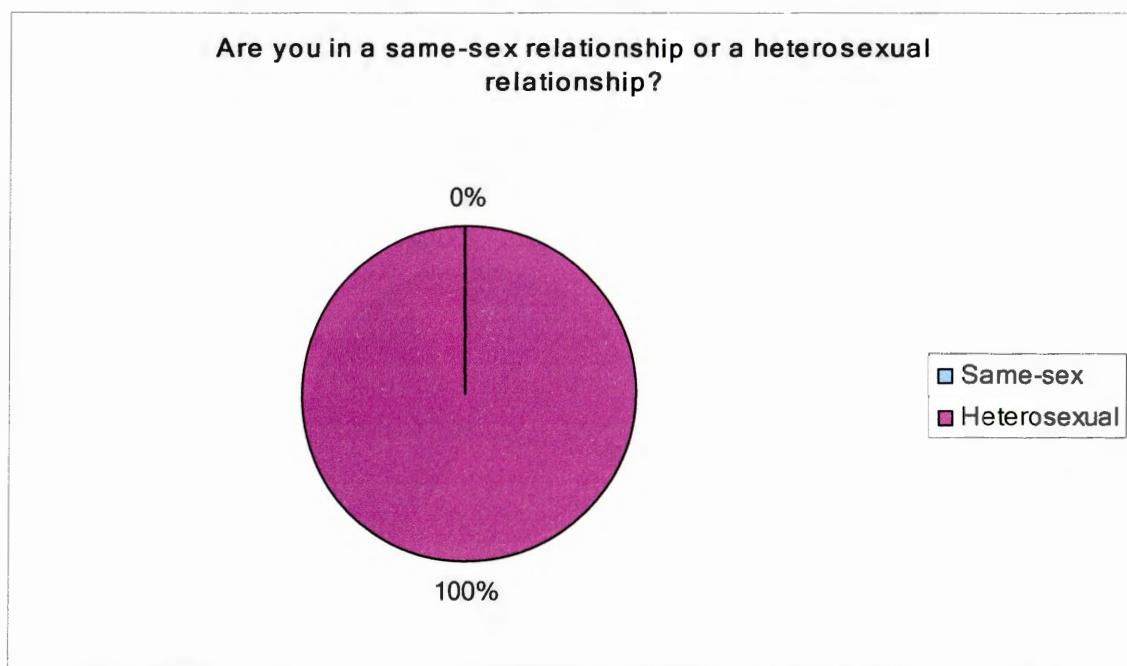


Figure 2: Heterosexual relationship type response

How long have you been in this committed same-sex relationship?

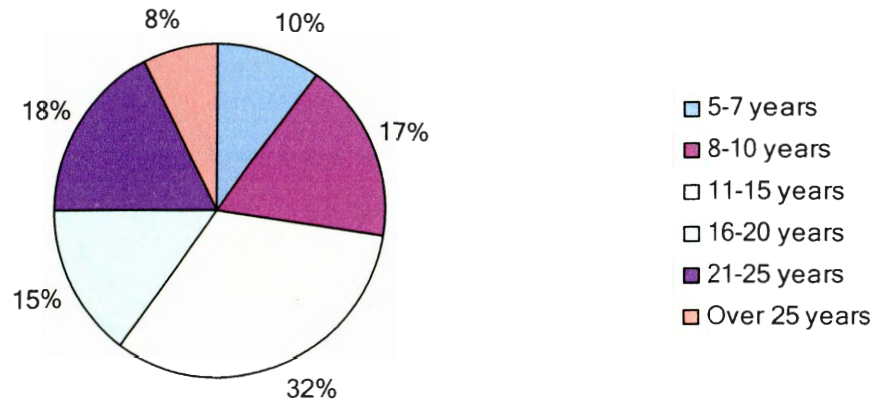


Figure 3: Same-sex relationship lengths response

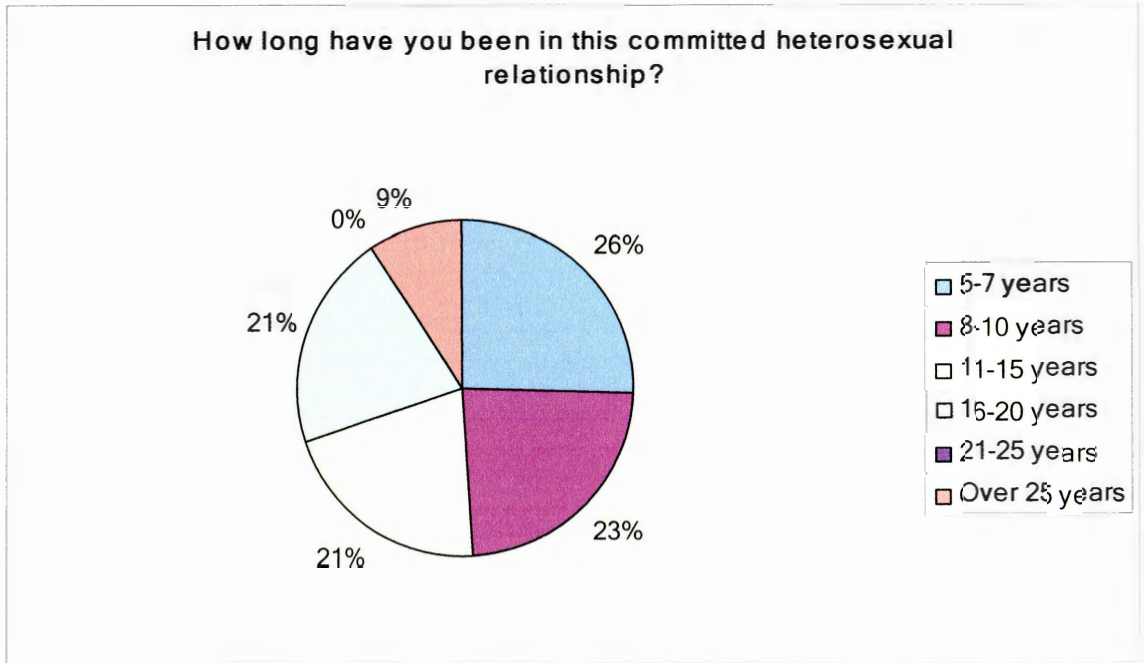


Figure 4: Heterosexual relationship lengths response

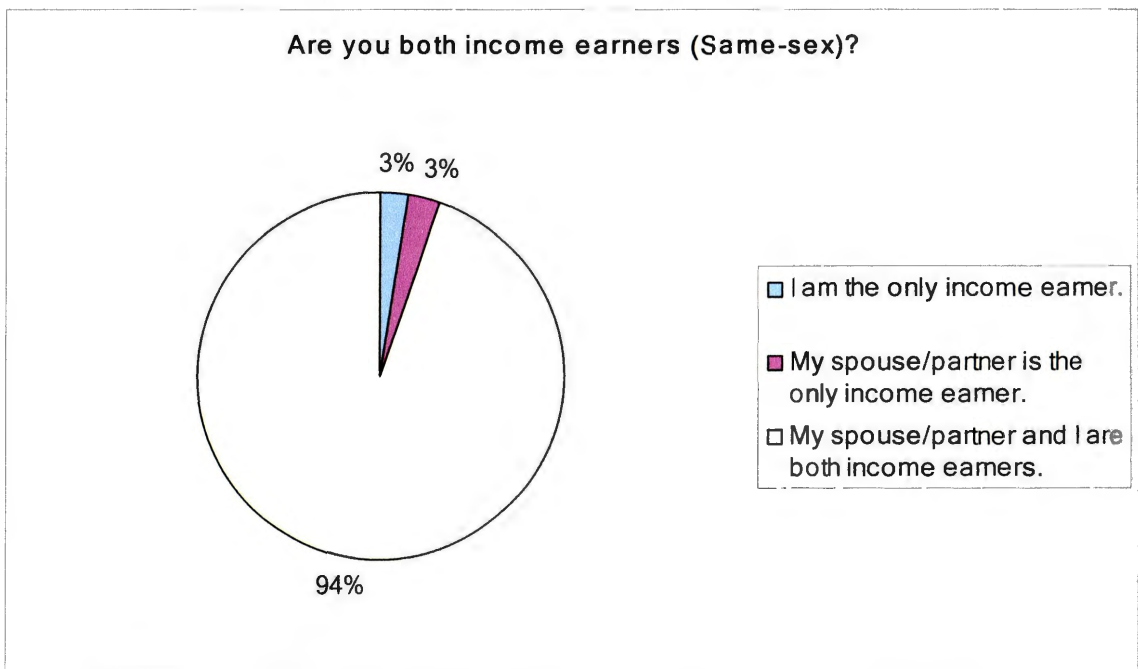


Figure 5: Same-sex financial contributions response

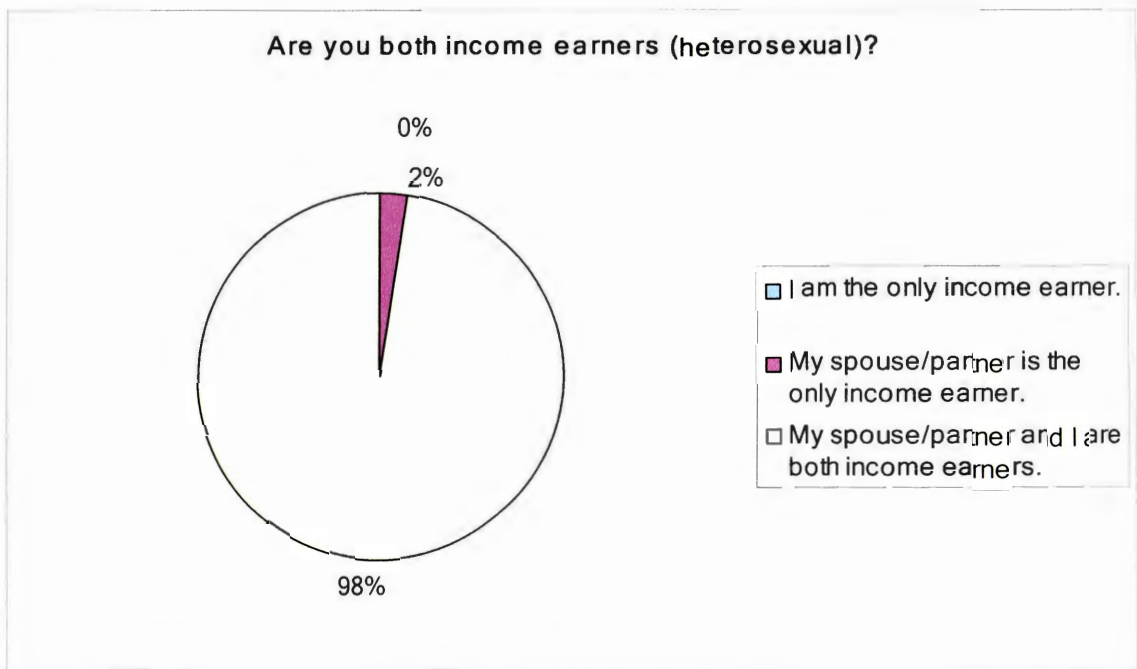


Figure 6: Heterosexual financial contributions response

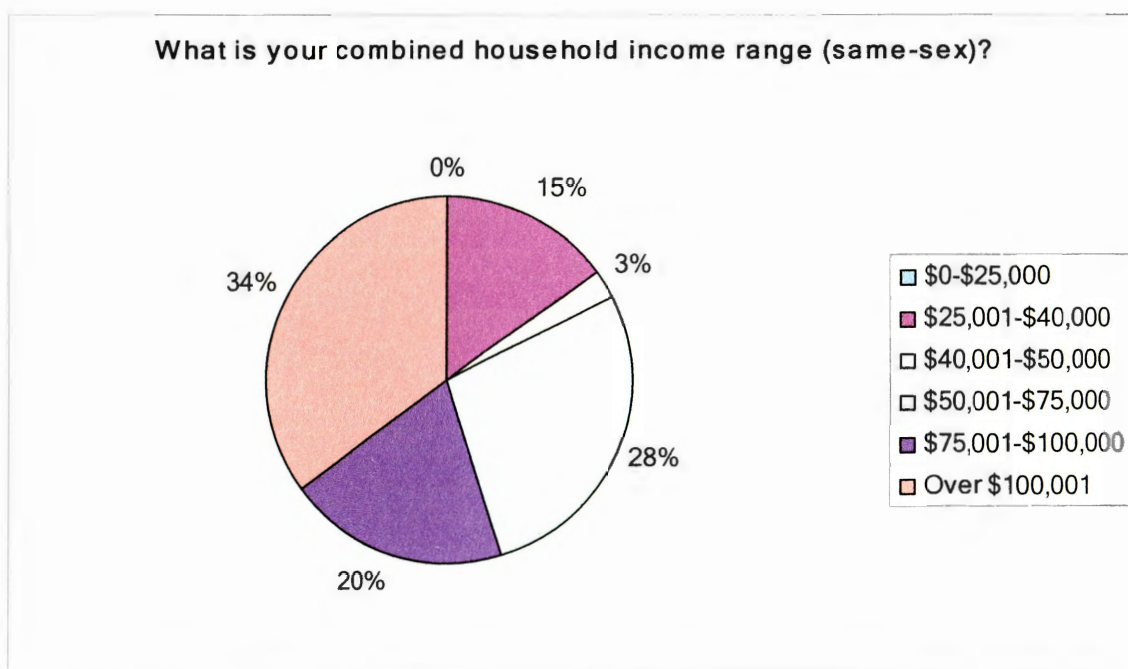


Figure 7: Same-sex income range response

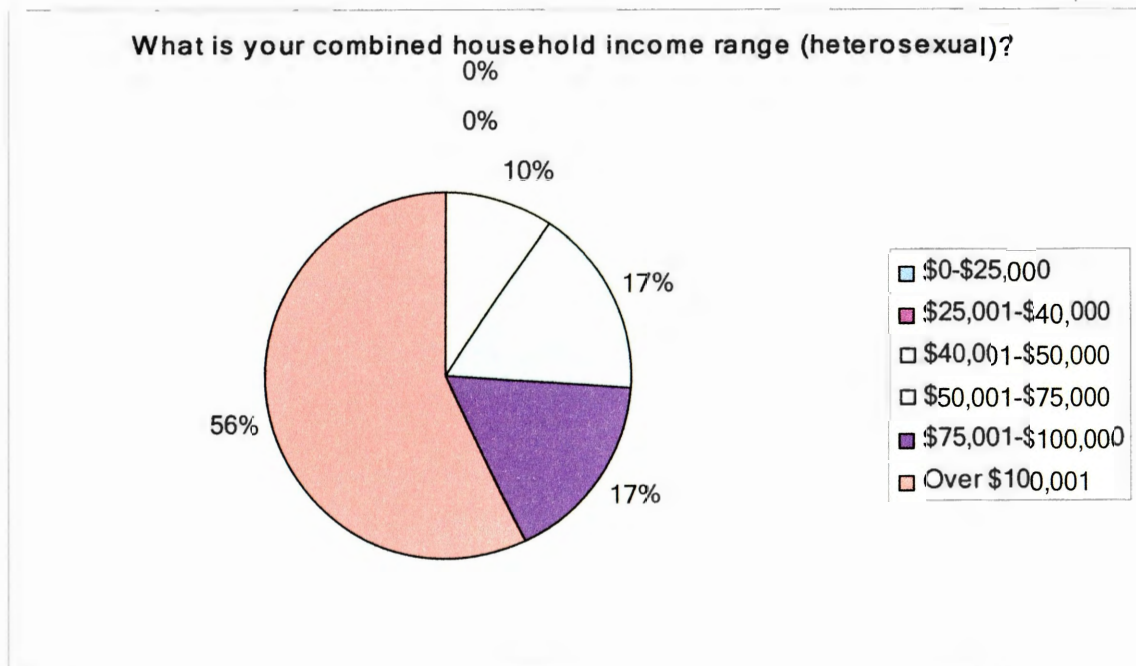


Figure 8: Heterosexual income range response

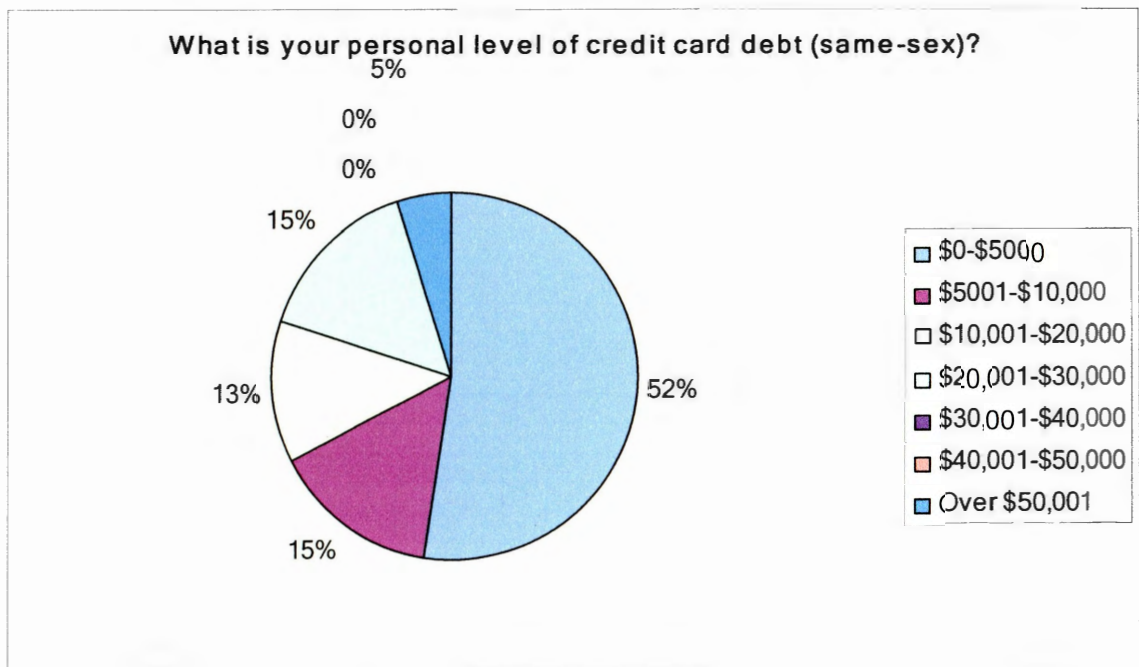


Figure 9: Same-sex credit card debt response

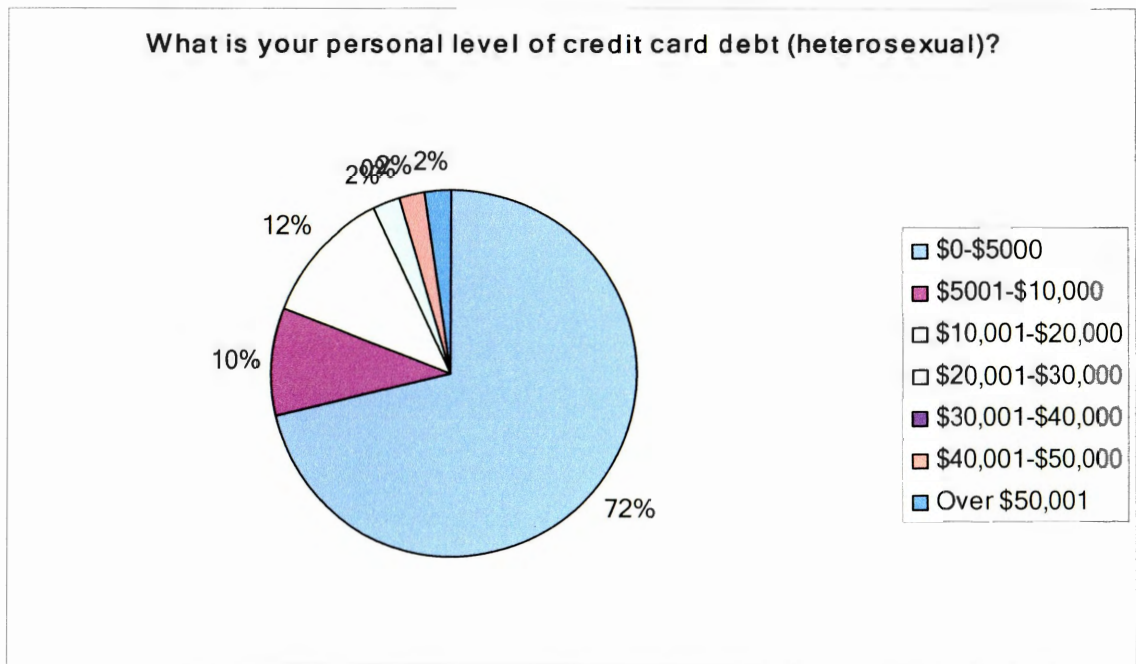
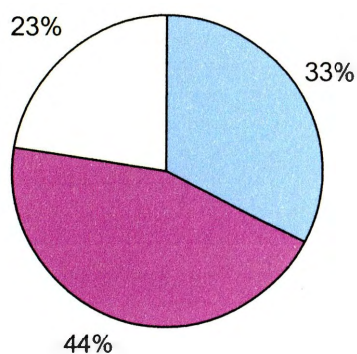


Figure 10: Heterosexual credit card debt response

Please choose the method below that best describes the way that you and your spouse/partner manage your bank accounts (same-sex).



- ☒ Separate (We each have only our own personal accounts)
- ☒ Pooled (All of our money goes into one account)
- ☐ Combined (We have separate accounts for personal use and a joint account)

Figure 11: Same-sex account management response

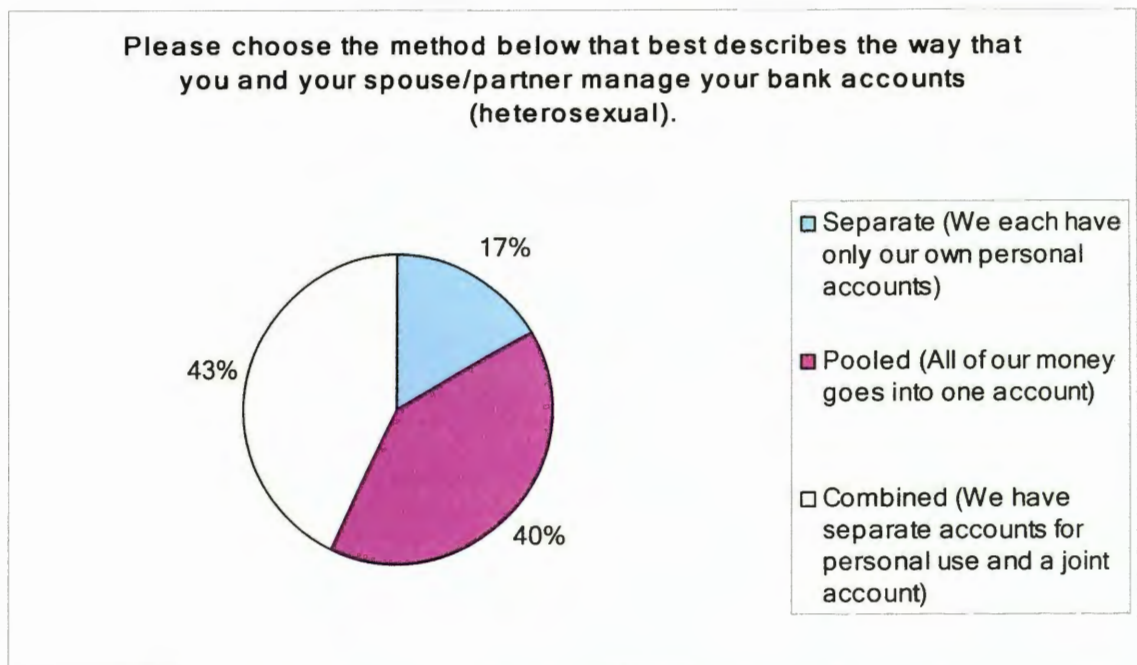


Figure 12: Heterosexual account management response

In terms of demographics, participants were, again, largely similar. One result that was somewhat surprising is the percentage of same-sex couples that employ the pooled account money management style. Same-sex couples reported a 33% utilization of separate accounts compared to only 17% of heterosexual couples. This may be due to the restrictions that exist in the majority of states that do not allow for same-sex marriages, which translates in some cases as a restriction of partner rights.

Statistical Results

Using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS), survey questions data were analyzed with respect to the 7 constructs established by the O'Brien ATM Scale. Testing conducted was an ANOVA. These constructs comprise the dependent variables. Participants were grouped as to same-sex or heterosexual orientation as the independent variable in an effort to determine a statistically significant difference between the two groups on the established constructs of money attitude. Each construct has been examined separately to look for significant differences between the groups.

Flexibility

For the dependent variable Money is Flexibility, the mean for same-sex couples was 3.10 and the mean for heterosexual couples was 2.91, with the standard deviations of same-sex couples .92 and the standard deviations of heterosexual couples of .93. This results in an $F(1,81)$ of 1.706 and $p=.195$, thus, no significant difference between the two groups. The flexibility construct has 6 total questions resulting in a possible point total of 30. Same-sex couples averaged a score of 16.4 of 30 and heterosexual couples averaged 18.38.

Table 13

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien Attitude Toward Money Scale Construct of Flexibility

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien ATM Construct of Flexibility				
Question Number	Same-sex	SD	Heterosexual	SD
16	2.18	1	3.03	0.93
26	3.65	0.95	3.23	1.04
28	3.03	0.95	2.85	0.85
29	3.58	0.75	2.93	0.86
33	3.2	0.94	2.6	1
34	2.93	0.94	2.8	0.88
Average Scores	3.10	0.92	2.91	0.93
F value	1.706			
p value	0.195			

Evil

For the dependent variable Money is Evil , the mean for same-sex couples was 2.49 and the mean for heterosexual couples was 2.55, with the standard deviations of same-sex couples .94 and the standard deviations of heterosexual couples of .93. This results in an F (1,81) of 1.394 and $p=.241$, thus, no significant difference between the two groups. The evil construct has 7 total questions resulting in a possible point total of 35. Same-sex couples averaged a score of 23.83 while heterosexual couples averaged 23.56.

Table 14

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien Attitude Toward Money Scale Construct of Evil

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien ATM Construct of Evil				
Question Number	Same-sex	SD	Heterosexual	SD
2	2.45	1.17	2.5	1.05
6	2.55	1.11	2.38	1.05
7	3.05	1.08	3.35	1.04
13	3.2	0.91	3.1	0.92
15	2.17	0.87	2.23	0.88
19	1.9	0.78	1.98	0.81
32	2.08	0.66	2.28	0.76
Average Scores	2.49	0.94	2.55	0.93
F value	1.394			
p value	0.241			

Responsibility

For the dependent variable Money is Responsibility , the mean for same-sex couples was 3.5 and the mean for heterosexual couples was 3.31, with the standard deviations of same-sex couples 1.02 and the standard deviations of heterosexual couples of .93. This results in an F (1,81) of .006 and p=.939, thus, no significant difference between the two groups. The responsibility construct 5 total questions resulting in a possible point total of 25. Same-sex couples averaged a score of 12.5 while heterosexual couples averaged 13.19. This construct has 2 reverse-scored questions, which are listed in the table (Table 15) as bold and underlined.

Table 15

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien Attitude Toward Money Scale Construct of Responsibility

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien ATM Construct of Responsibility				
Question Number	Same-sex	SD	Heterosexual	SD
<u>4</u>	3.55	1.06	3.33	1.05
14	3.43	1.08	3.28	0.95
18	3.1	0.98	2.78	0.94
24	3.53	0.99	3.68	0.9
<u>27</u>	3.9	0.98	3.48	0.82
Average Scores	3.50	1.02	3.31	0.932
F value	0.006			
p value	0.939			

Self-Esteem

For the dependent variable Money is Self-Esteem , the mean for same-sex couples was 2.28 and the mean for heterosexual couples was 2.32, with the standard deviations of same-sex couples .90 and the standard deviations of heterosexual couples of .95. This results in an F (1,81) of .006 and p=.939, thus, no significant difference between the two groups. The self-esteem construct has 4 total questions for a possible point total of 20. Same-sex couples averaged a score of 14.9 while heterosexual couples averaged 14.48.

Table 16

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien Attitude Toward Money Scale Construct of Self-Esteem

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien ATM Construct of Self-Esteem				
Question Number	Same-sex	SD	Heterosexual	SD
3	3.03	1.1	3.38	0.98
10	2.2	1.07	1.9	1.01
23	1.9	0.81	2.05	1.06
30	1.98	0.62	1.93	0.76
Average Scores	2.28	0.90	2.32	0.9525
F value	0.006			
p value	0.939			

Opportunity

For the dependent variable Money is Opportunity , the mean for same-sex couples was 3.45 and the mean for heterosexual couples was 3.51, with the standard deviations of same-sex couples 1.12 and the standard deviations of heterosexual couples of 1.03. This results in an F (1,81) of 1.683 and p=.198, thus, no significant difference between the two groups. The opportunity construct has 6 total questions for a possible point total of 30. Same-sex couples averaged a score of 16.5 while heterosexual couples averaged 16.06. All 6 questions of this construct are reverse-score items which are shown in Table 17 as bold and underlined.

Table 17

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien Attitude Toward Money Scale Construct of Opportunity

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien ATM Construct of Opportunity				
Question Number	Same-sex	SD	Heterosexual	SD
<u>8</u>	3.83	1.25	3.9	1.14
<u>9</u>	3.6	1.11	3.53	1.13
<u>11</u>	3.1	1.13	3.33	1.06
<u>17</u>	3.33	1.07	3.5	0.9
<u>20</u>	3.25	0.95	3.2	1.1
<u>25</u>	3.6	1.22	3.6	0.85
Average Scores	3.45	1.12	3.51	1.03
F value	1.683			
p value	0.198			

Well Being

For the dependent variable Money is Well Being, the mean for same-sex couples was 2.98 and the mean for heterosexual couples was 2.96, with the standard deviations of same-sex couples .98 and the standard deviations of heterosexual couples of .94. This results in an F (1,81) of .601 and $p=.44$, thus, no significant difference between the two groups. The well being construct has 4 total questions for a possible point score of 20. Same-sex couples averaged a score of 12.10 while heterosexual couples averaged 12.17.

Table 18

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien Attitude Toward Money Scale Construct of Well Being

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien ATM Construct of Well Being				
Question Number	Same-sex	SD	Heterosexual	SD
5	2.63	1.05	2.78	1.08
21	3.93	0.83	3.78	0.71
22	2.98	1	2.85	0.92
31	2.38	1.03	2.43	1.04
Average Scores	2.98	0.98	2.96	0.9375
F value	0.601			
p value	0.44			

Confidence

For the dependent variable Money is Confidence, the mean for same-sex couples was 3.02 and the mean for heterosexual couples was 3.05, with the standard deviations of same-sex couples 1.11 and the standard deviations of heterosexual couples of .97. This results in an F (1,81) of 1.011 and $p=.317$, thus, no significant difference between the two groups. The confidence construct has 2 total questions for a possible point score of 10. Same-sex couples averaged a score of 5.98 while heterosexual couples averaged 5.83.

Table 19

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien Attitude Toward Money Scale Construct of Confidence

Same-sex vs. Heterosexual Average Scores and Standard Deviations for O'Brien ATM Construct of Confidence				
Question Number	Same-sex	SD	Heterosexual	SD
1	3.5	1.26	3.65	1.03
12	2.53	0.96	2.45	0.9
Average Scores	3.02	1.11	3.05	0.965
F value	1.011			
p value	0.317			

Implications for Hypotheses

The tables above seem to suggest that both hypotheses are supported; there is no statistically significant difference in total scores on the O'Brien Money Attitude Scale when comparing same-sex couples and heterosexual couples and there is no statistically significant difference in subscale scores on the O'Brien Money Attitude Scale when comparing same-sex couples and heterosexual couples. The statistics show that no p value falls below 0.1 and average scores on individual answers as well as overall answers are extremely similar with both same-sex and heterosexual couples. The only construct with even a small difference in average scores between the 2 groups is Flexibility, with responding heterosexual couples feeling that money allows slightly more flexibility than did responding same-sex couples.

Summary

This study attempted to measure any statistically significant differences in answers on the O'Brien ATM Scale with respect to attitudes toward money between self-identified same-sex couples and heterosexual married couples, both of whom with a relationship length of at least 5 years. The researcher made the survey available on SurveyMonkey.com for 2 weeks. After reviewing qualifying responses, 20 same-sex couples and 21 heterosexual couples submitted surveys for use in this study. Participants were recruited through Facebook.com postings as well as an email invitation containing a direct link to the survey.

Data were accumulated through the SurveyMonkey.com website and then uploaded in to SPSS for statistical testing in the form of an ANOVA. Same-sex and heterosexual couples were grouped together and their total average scores were compared as well as analysis on each of the 7 constructs. Based on the f values and p values, the data suggests no statistically significant difference in any aspect on the O'Brien ATM between same-sex and heterosexual couples who responded to this survey.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This quantitative study was designed to determine if there exists a statistically significant difference between self-identified same-sex couples in a committed relationship for at least 5 years versus heterosexual married couples together for the same duration in respect to their money attitudes. The 34-item, 7-construct O'Brien ATM Scale was used as the survey tool for data collection and a link to the SurveyMonkey.com website, which hosted the survey, was provided to participants via multiple Facebook.com postings as well as an email invitation to coworkers, friends and colleagues. Data were collected over a 2 week period in October, 2011 and total usable survey yield was 20 same-sex couples (40 total participants) and 21 heterosexual couples (42 total participants) from a total 117 survey submissions. SPSS was used to complete a MANOVA to analyze the constructs and F-test to give F-values and p-values.

Based on the returned data, there is no statistically significant difference on overall scores or construct scores using the O'Brien ATM Scale in measuring money attitudes for same-sex and heterosexual couples. Demographic information collected shows that same-sex couples have a higher level of overall debt than do heterosexual couples (48% over \$5K vs. 28% over \$5K

respectively) and that same-sex couples are more likely to employ a separate account money management style than are the heterosexual respondents.

Limitations exist in this research that should be addressed in potential attempts at replicating this information. One is an issue where respondents had difficulty completing the survey from the same computer and another was ensuring that both members of the couple completed the survey completely for inclusion in the data collection for this study. Limitations are discussed in depth in following sections.

Discussion

Collected data seem to support the hypotheses that there is no statistically significant difference between overall scores on the O'Brien ATM Scale between same-sex respondents and heterosexual married respondents. Further, there seems to be no statistically significant difference in the 7 constructs established by the O'Brien ATM Scale between same-sex respondents and heterosexual married respondents.

There was a total of 117 survey respondents that supplied a yield of 82 usable data sets. Surveys were deemed unusable if: only one member of the couple responded to the survey, if the survey was not completed, or if the participants did not meet the 5 year relationship length requirement. Any survey responses received after October 22, 2011 were not included in the analyzed data presented in this study.

Average scores, both per individual question and for the survey as a whole were remarkably similar across both groups. There was no p value under 0.1 returned for any data sets. Standard deviations between the respondent groups are also very similar. All of these results suggest that little to no difference exists between same-sex couples together at least 5 years and their heterosexual married counterparts.

Sample Population

The sample used in this study was comprised of volunteers. Participants were solicited using posts on Facebook.com on the researchers own account. This invitation to participate also urged those seeing the post to re-post, for greater exposure to friends lists for increased participation. Email invitations were also sent out to friends, family and colleagues, including co-workers.

Demographically, there were few differences between the 2 data groups, with the exception being account management style, with same-sex couples reporting a higher level of completely separate bank accounts than was reported by heterosexual married couples by nearly a 2 to 1 margin. Heterosexual couples also reported an overall lower level of credit card debt. However, the majority of respondents also report income levels of over \$100,000, though heterosexual couples report a higher percentage of those making over \$100,000.

Data Collection Via Web Site

Data collection was done completely through the SurveyMonkey.com website. There is a small monthly fee associated with using the site, or an annual

subscription is available. The site allows for information to be downloaded and exported to an Excel file which was then uploaded into SPSS for statistical analysis. SurveyMonkey.com does offer a package that includes SPSS analysis, but it can be cost prohibitive as it is only available, at the time of this study, on an annualized basis.

Online surveys offer a factor of convenience. Anyone can be given a link to follow to participate in the study and it does offer anonymity, as the account holder can take precautions that limit the transfer of personal information. An example of this was that the researcher turned off IP logging so that identifying information of the computer of the participant is not captured. This particular survey did ask for participant names to enable matching of couple groups, but surveys do offer the ability to be completely anonymous. Creation of the survey was relatively simple through the website and the creator has the ability to set up the data to return only numerical information, which can then be easily transferred into the SPSS program for analysis.

The same factors that make online surveys attractive can also be a limitation. The researcher does not have control over who takes the survey. There were certain features that allow for some screening to take place within the survey itself, with a feature called Skip Logic. This was used in this study as a criteria for participation. Any respondent who chose the option to decline participation in the survey had the survey dismissed by the website, even if the survey was otherwise complete. There also exists a limitation to control the

population being sampled, due to wide access to the survey and the ability of others to provide the link information to anyone, whether or not they meet the criteria for the study. Data remains available for as long as the account is activated and the account holder has the ability to delete survey responses as well as removing the survey once data collection is complete. This offers additional safeguards to anonymity of the participants, as the data is able to be removed/deleted with ease.

The researcher also found an unanticipated limitation of using the SurveyMonkey.com website. Those that completed the survey and then had their spouse/partner complete the survey on the same computer experienced difficulty. The link would simply lead the participant back to the completed survey. This was able to be remedied by clearing recent internet history, but introduced a problem for some that did alert the researcher to this difficulty. It could be a contributing factor to the number of unmatched surveys obtained during the data collection process, as the spouse/partner may not have been able to access a fresh survey due to this unforeseen limitation.

Implications

The data returned by survey respondents seemed to indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the overall scores on the O'Brien ATM Scale for money attitudes or on the 7 constructs supported by the survey measure between same-sex and heterosexual couples. The researcher believes that more study in this area is needed for the fields of psychology, sociology and

financial research. If the research findings presented here can be shown to be accurate in other areas when comparing same-sex and heterosexual couples, it will assist therapists in the field who work with or may work with same-sex couples.

Limitations

Limitations to this research study may be as follows:

1. The sample population was voluntary. As such, self-report was the only verification of the qualifications for the study. This could possibly result in manufactured data from participants not actually meeting the qualifying terms for participation.

2. The sample population was required to have both members of the couple complete and submit the survey, possibly resulting in fewer matched responses.

3. Limitation of the survey in that couples using the same computer to access the survey may not have known to clear temporary internet history, resulting in the survey link taking the participant to the previously completed survey. This could have also limited the matched responses.

4. The survey was completely online. It was hosted online and the invitations to participate were all done through online means (Facebook.com and email). Those without access to a computer were not able to participate in any way.

5. Some participants that completed the survey were known to the researcher, which could impact results in an undetermined way or biasing the data.

Conclusions

1. There is no statistically significant difference in total scores on the 34-item, 7-construct O'Brien ATM Scale between self-identified same-sex couples in a committed relationship and heterosexual married couples, both of which having been together at least 5 years.

2. There is no statistically significant difference in construct scores on the 34-item, 7-construct O'Brien ATM Scale between self-identified same-sex couples in a committed relationship and heterosexual married couples, both of which having been together at least 5 years.

3. Overall, demographic information was also very similar, with the exceptions being higher level of debt for same-sex couples versus heterosexual couples and a higher level of separate account money management style among same-sex couples versus heterosexual couples. These factors should be considered for future research in money management.

4. This study should help reduce discriminatory thinking regarding same-sex people.

Recommendations

Given the overall sample size of 82 participants, a larger study with a longer data collection period would be helpful in confirming the results of this

study. A larger number of participants could prove to be statistically significant or could further uphold the idea that same-sex couples do not differ that greatly from heterosexual couples.

The construct of confidence only has 2 questions that factor into that construct. Further examination of the significance of that construct could prove valuable to the O'Brien ATM Scale overall. The possible removal of the construct would also seem to be a suggested study topic moving forward in the use of this evaluative tool for money attitudes.

There is little agreement in the therapeutic field over what constructs actually exist for money attitudes, resulting in a wide array of terminology for the same traits and multiple evaluative tools with little to no scholarly data to support the claims. Finding similar ground and terminology to use across the field is recommended so that those studying and using the principles expressed could all be speaking the same language with a set of specific criteria.

Same-sex couples included in this study reported that a majority of their households, as is true with heterosexual couples, have an annual income in excess of \$100,000. However, more and greater debt is reported across the board for same-sex respondents than is true for the heterosexual participants. This could point to a problem in actual money management skills among the same-sex couple population and should be an area of continued and expanded study.

Same-sex couples also reported a greater use of separate account money management style. This was nearly a 2 to 1 ratio compared to heterosexual couples. An assumption the researcher makes is that due to the limited legality of same-sex legal marriage, there may exist concerns on accessing money in a joint account in the instance of either separation of the couple or catastrophic illness, in which decision rights of the same-sex partner may be limited. Replication of this study in states that allow for same-sex marriage or civil unions may return different results or may show a real account management strategy difference that exists between same-sex and heterosexual couples.

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APPENDIX A

Instructions for Scoring the O'Brien Attitude Toward Money (ATM) Scale

Instructions for Scoring the O'Brien Attitude Toward Money (ATM) Scale

This scale is scored on its sub-scales only, that is, not on an overall total for the instrument. Item scores for most items are SA (Strongly Agree)=1, A (Agree)=2, N (Neutral)=3, D (Disagree)=4, SD (Strongly Disagree)=5. Nine items in the scale are reverse-scored, that is, SA=5, A=4, N=3, D=2, SD=1. Numbers of items that are reverse-scored **are underlined and are in bold print.**

The LOWER the score, the stronger the subject relates the sub-scale meaning to money. There is no such thing as a good or bad score. Scores reflect the subject's perception of money related to the sub-scale meaning at a level relative to the score compared to minimum and maximum for the sub-scale.

For the score on Sub-scale ONE, FLEXIBILITY:

Add the scores for items 16, 26, 28, 29, 33, and 34.

Minimum score = 6. Maximum score = 30.

For the score on Sub-scale TWO, EVIL:

Add the scores for items 2, 6, 7, 13, 15, 19 and 32.

Minimum score = 7. Maximum score = 35.

For the score on Sub-scale THREE, RESPONSIBILITY

Add the scores for items **4**, 14, 18, 24 and **27**.

Minimum score = 5. Maximum score = 25.

For the score on Sub-scale FOUR, SELF-ESTEEM:

Add the scores for items **3**, 10, 23 and 30.

Minimum score = 4. Maximum score = 20.

For the score on Sub-scale FIVE, OPPORTUNITY:

Add the scores for items **8**, **9**, **11**, **17**, **20** and **25**.

Minimum score = 6. Maximum score = 30.

For the score on Sub-scale SIX, WELL BEING:

Add the scores for items 5, 21, 22 and 31.

Minimum score = 4. Maximum score = 20

For the score on Sub-scale SEVEN, CONFIDENCE:

Add the scores for items 1 and 12.

Minimum score = 2. Maximum score = 10.

APPENDIX B

O'Brien ATM Scale

The return of your completed questionnaire constitutes your informed consent to act as a participant in the research. If you or your partner experience any discomfort as a result of participating in this study, please go to www.therapistlocator.net to find a qualified mental health practitioner with whom to schedule an appointment for services.

Indicate your level of agreement with each statement (SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree)						
#	Item	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	When I have money I go about my day more confidently.					
2	Money is the root of all evil.					
3	Money in my pocket/purse doesn't affect my spirits.					
4	I am not obligated to share my money with anyone.					
5	Without money I have little hope for the future.					
6	Money is a tool of the wealthy for oppressing the poor.					
7	Where there is lots of money, there is corruption.					
8	Money doesn't open doors otherwise closed.					
9	I don't see money as a reward.					
10	I feel important when I can be seen as the "big spender."					
11	(Financial) success doesn't breed more success.					
12	Confidence is having money in my pocket/purse.					
13	Money is not the language of corruption.					
14	Having money makes me responsible for changing the world for the better.					
15	Money is an invitation to evil.					
16	With enough money I can adapt to almost any change.					
17	Money doesn't mean opportunity.					
18	Having more than others puts me in the position of caretaker.					
19	Money is a tool of the devil.					
20	Flexibility in life decisions doesn't require money.					
21	There is good life without money.					
22	One has to have money to endure in the game of life.					
23	When I have a big bank balance I feel more attractive.					
24	With money comes a certain amount of duty.					
25	Money or lack of money has nothing to do with power.					
26	Almost anything is possible with enough money.					
27	The wealthy owe nothing to the less fortunate.					
28	With money in my pocket/purse, I'm ready to take on anything.					
29	With money as a resource I can attempt anything.					
30	I make friends more easily when I have money in my pocket/purse.					
31	Without money I cannot stand on my own.					
32	Where money goes, trouble follows.					
33	Money is my key to adventure.					
34	Money equals excitement.					

APPENDIX C
Informed Consent

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: Money attitudes in same-sex couples: A comparison to heterosexual married couples.

Investigator: Scott Terres.....scott.terres@gmail.com 512/921-6239

Advisor: Glen Jennings, Ed.D.,..... 940/898-2695

Explanation and Purpose of the Research

You are being asked to participate in a dissertation research study for Mr. Terres at Texas Woman's University. The purpose of the research is to examine differences in the money attitudes in same-sex couples in a self-identified committed relationship versus those of heterosexual married couples as evidenced by the O'Brien Attitude Toward Money Scale.

Research Procedures

For this study, the investigator asks that participants sign the informed consent and that both members of the couple fully complete the questionnaire for consideration in the study. The questionnaire is available on-line through a link provided through either social network media or email requests. The maximum amount of time needed is between 20 minutes and one hour. The questionnaire is taken from work on a previous dissertation by Edward O'Brien, PhD. There are two main target groups; same-sex couples in a self-identified committed relationship for at least 5 years and heterosexual married couples that have been married at least 5 years. At least 20 couple teams from each group will be used for the purposes of this study.

Potential Risks

Participants may find that their partners have very different money attitudes and this may cause friction or discomfort in respondents. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that it is allowed by law. However, the questionnaire will require your name and partner name to match couples accordingly, resulting in a possible loss of confidentiality. The information will be kept on-line behind a password protected account. Any information that is printed will be shredded at the conclusion of the research. The results will be published in the investigators dissertation and possibly in scholarly journals but no identifying information will be included in those publications. Since the researcher may ask people known to him to participate in the study, participants should know that completion of the survey is voluntary and is not expected in any way. Participants may experience some level of discomfort from the issues that arise from taking the survey. In this case, participants may take a break or stop answering questions at any time. If any participant should start to experience fatigue during answering of the survey, they may stop at any time and return to the survey without having to start over.

The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let researchers know at once if there is a problem and they will help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. However, only fully executed questionnaires will be considered for inclusion in the research results.

Questions regarding the Study

If you have any questions about the research study you should ask the researchers; their phone numbers are at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu.

Return of your completed questionnaire constitutes your informed consent to act as a participant in this research.

If you would like to be informed of the findings of this research study, please provide an address where this information can be sent:

Mailing Address:

If you would rather be notified by email, please provide an email address:

_____@_____

APPENDIX D

Facebook Invitation

Facebook Invitation to Participate in Research Survey

If you would like to participate in a Doctoral dissertation research survey titled Money Attitudes in Same-sex Couples: A Comparison to Heterosexual Married Couples and have been in either a self-identified same-sex committed relationship or heterosexual marriage for at least 5 years, please click the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/P59ZSFY>

Please feel free to repost.

APPENDIX E

Email Invitation

Email Invitation to Participate in Research Survey

Hello!

You are receiving this email on behalf of Scott Terres, a Doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University and his dissertation chair, Glen Jennings, EdD. This notice serves as an invitation to participate in a research survey for a dissertation being conducted by Mr. Terres. The topic of the research is titled Money Attitudes in Same-sex Couples: A Comparison to Heterosexual Married Couples.

Mr. Terres is asking members of self-identified same-sex and heterosexual married couples who have been in a committed relationship for a minimum of 5 years to participate in this research survey. The survey can be completed by clicking on the link provided at the conclusion of this email. Please feel free to forward this email to any possible participants that meet the above qualifications.

Please access the research survey by clicking the following link:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/P59ZSFY>

There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading and internet transactions. Participation in this research study is completely voluntary and participants may take a break or stop responding at any time.

You may direct any questions that you have either to Mr. Terres or Dr. Jennings directly. Mr. Terres can be reached by email, scott.terres@gmail.com, or by phone at 512-921-6239. Dr. Jennings may be reached at his office at Texas Woman's University, 940-898-2695.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Scott Terres

APPENDIX F

Demographic Questions

Demographic Questions

1. Are you in a same-sex relationship or a heterosexual relationship?

Same-sex

Heterosexual

2. How long have you been in this committed relationship?

5-7 years

8-10 years

11-15 years

16-20 years

21-25 years

Over 25 years

3. Are you both income earners?

I am the only income earner.

My spouse/partner is the only income earner.

My spouse/partner and I are both income earners.

4. What is your combined household income range?

\$0-\$25,000

\$25,001-\$40,000

\$40,001-\$50,000

\$50,001-\$75,000

\$75,001-\$100,000

Over \$100,001

5. What is your personal level of credit card debt?

\$0-\$5000

\$5001-\$10,000

\$10,001-\$20,000

\$20,001-\$30,000

\$30,001-\$40,000

\$40,001-\$50,000

Over \$50,001

6. Please choose the method below that best describes the way that you and your spouse/partner manage your bank accounts.

Separate (We each have only our own personal accounts)

Pooled (All of our money goes into one account)

Combined (We have separate accounts for personal use and a joint account)

Scott Jon Terres, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.

VITA

Scott graduated from Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, in 1997 with a degree in Psychology. While attending A&M, Scott began working at a halfway house for schizophrenics. He then moved to Abilene to pursue a Master of Arts degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Hardin-Simmons University, where he got his first experience in working directly with counseling clients. Scott moved to Austin, Texas, following completion of that program and started working at the Austin State Hospital. He returned to academia by enrolling at Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas, for completion of his Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in Family Therapy.

Scott is currently working as Vice President of Operations and Call Center Director for an employee's assistance program in Austin, Texas. Scott also maintains a private practice for seeing clients.