Objective: The aim of the present study is to assess the psychometric properties and factor structure of the Index of Attitudes toward Homosexuals (IAH; Hudson & Ricketts, 1980) in a sample of university students in Barbados.

INTRODUCTION: The subject of sexual diversity continues to be controversial in Barbados and throughout much of the English-speaking Caribbean. Research on homophobia in the region is needed, but existing measures have not been validated using Caribbean samples. This has led to the dearth of literature on this topic in the Anglophone Caribbean. The researchers sought to portray the region as intolerant of any deviation from the heterosexual norm (Crichlow, 2004; Goldberg, 2012; Gutzmore, 2004; Kempadoo, 2004; Mohammed, 2003; Walters & de Groulard, 2012). However, the presence and conditional tolerance of sexual diversity in the English-speaking Caribbean has also been documented through qualitative investigations and analyses of societal trends, and in Caribbean art and literature (Glave, 2008; Kempadoo, 2004; Murray 2002, Murray 2009; Wekker, 2006). Introducing valid measures of homophobia could help social scientists in the region to explore attitudes about sexual diversity and their impact on social and psychological phenomena.

Sampling: The study employed a convenience sampling strategy to obtain participants from a university in Barbados. First, the deans of each of the five faculties at the university were approached for permission to survey students within their faculties. Only three gave their permission. Next, the researchers approached individual lecturers from the approved faculties to ask for appointments to administer surveys during class time. Participants from those lecturers’ classes were then approached directly during the regular class meeting time.

Participants: Participants were 428 university students. They were predominantly women (n = 322), undergraduates (n = 396), and of Barbadian nationality (n = 335). Mean age of the participants was 23.6 (SD = 7.4). The participants’ major fields of study were many and varied, but psychology (n = 166) and medicine (n = 66) majors were especially well-represented.

Procedure: Participants completed the IAH, a demographic questionnaire, and the Sexual Prejudice Scale (SPS, Chonody, 2009). The SPS is a measure of anti-gay bias. Missing data (< 2%, MAR) were imputed using maximum likelihood estimation and reliability analyses were conducted on the entire sample. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on IAH data from 100 randomly selected cases using maximum likelihood estimation and oblique rotation. Finally, Mplus 6.0 was used to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on IAH data from the remaining cases to test the model suggested by the EFA.

The IAH: The Index of Attitudes toward Homosexuals (IAH; Hudson & Ricketts, 1980) is a measure of homophobia. It is a 25-item self-report instrument that uses a 5-point Likert-type response format. It includes items such as “I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my neighbour was homosexual,” and “I would feel that I had failed as a parent if I learned that my child was gay.” It was designed to assess attitudes toward homosexuals. The psychometric properties of the IAH have been established in the United States (Siebert, Chonody, Rutledge and Killian, 2009) and Australia (Pain & Disney, 1996). Siebert et al (2009) administered the IAH to a convenience sample of 331 American college students. They found the IAH to be internally consistent (α = .92) and found evidence of convergent validity with another measure of anti-gay bias (r = .77, p < .05). Siebert et al (2009) performed an EFA, which revealed two factors. The first factor was comprised of items measuring general attitudes toward homosexuals. The second factor was comprised of 5 items that involved attitudes about heterosexual attraction directed at the participant.

Pain and Disney (1996) administered the IAH to a sample of 150 Australian college students and observed similar results. They found evidence of strong internal consistency (α = .93) and convergent validity with another measure of homophobia (r = .84, p < .01). They also conducted an EFA and found it a 2-factor solution. The first factor accounted for 44% of the variance and the second accounted for 9%. These authors were unable to identify conceptual similarities among the items comprising the second factor and, noting that the second factor did not explain much more variance than a single item, concluded that the IAH was likely a unidimensional measure.

Factor Structure of the Index of Attitudes Toward Homosexuals in Barbados

Results: Scores on the IAH ranged from 2 to 98, with a mean of 58.51 (SD = 20.56). Higher scores on the IAH indicate greater homophobia or sexual prejudice. Hudson and Ricketts (1980) interpret scores above 50 to indicate homophobia. For purposes of comparison, the mean score of participants (n = 300) in the original validation study of the IAH was 53 (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980). The mean score of a contemporary US sample (n = 331) was 52.57 (Siebert, Chonody, Rutledge, & Killian, 2009), and the mean score of an Australian sample (n = 150) was 60.9 (Pain & Disney, 1996). The IAH was internally consistent (α = .93) and was strongly correlated with both subscales of the Sexual Prejudice Scale (r = .83, p < .01, r = .72, p < .01), providing evidence of concurrent validity.

The EFA revealed a two factor solution using the Kaiser criterion and scree plot. The first factor accounted for 48.6% of the variance and the second accounted for 11.5%. The first factor consisted of items measuring comfort with homosexuality. The second factor was comprised of 4 items and did not appear to have an overarching conceptual theme. However, two of the items did measure feelings about homosexual attraction directed at the participant. A CFA testing the same two factor solution had acceptable fit to the data after being respecified to allow for one additional factor. The goodness of fit indices (CFI = .91, TLI = .92, SRMR = .09, relative x2 = 4.39) indicated good fit to the data.

Table 1 Fit Indices of Confirmatory Factor Analysis for IAH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
<th>Relative x2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two factor</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index

Conclusions: The IAH has sound psychometric properties. The results support the continued research use of the IAH in the English-speaking Caribbean. The EFA revealed, and the CFA supported, a factor structure similar to that reported in US and Australian samples, suggesting that the construct of homophobia may be similar in these nations. Although more research is needed, it may follow that interventions aimed at reducing sexual prejudice in the US and Australia could be modified for Barbadian participants.