

THE EFFECT OF CAMPUS ATTITUDE CLIMATE UPON  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD PREMARITAL  
SEXUAL PERMISSIVENESS

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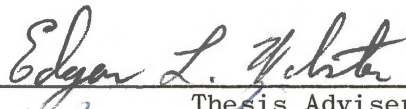
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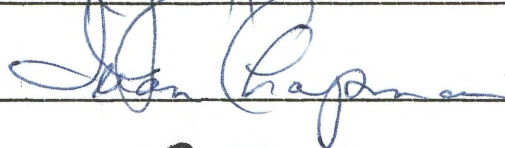
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Thesis Approved:



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION, REVIEW OF LITERATURE, AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Introduction

The study of attitude formation and change has been extensive in the area of social psychological research. Attitude development has been related to a number of different factors. One of these factors has been the way in which various types of information affects attitude formation or change. Other studies have focused in on a comparison of attitudes of persons' in different cultural or environmental settings.

The purpose of this study is to compare attitudes of students who come from different types of academic environments and to determine if the academic setting causes a difference in the attitudes the students hold toward premarital sexual permissiveness.

Students from social science classes of four northern and central Oklahoma schools comprised the samples for this study. A questionnaire containing socio-biographic questions, statements on attitudes toward role relations in marriage, and an attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness scale was administered to the classes used in each school. The attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness scale was the dependent variable in the research, with the school to which the student belonged and the academic classification of the student serving as independent variables.

The study attempted to get at the question of whether or not attitude climate affects student attitudes by the statement of four hypotheses. These hypotheses were related to different comparisons used in the study. One of these was a freshmen-to-freshmen comparison between schools. The second was a freshmen-to-upperclassmen comparison within schools. The third and fourth hypotheses dealt with upperclassmen comparisons between schools. The rationale for these hypotheses and comparisons are introduced in the next section.

#### Review of Literature, and Theoretical Framework

The idea that college environment can affect attitudes has support in the reference group theoretical perspective. In 1942, Herbert Hyman (1960:303-396) first proposed the concept of reference group. The concept assumes that people relate psychologically to groups and tend to make judgements and self-assessments based on this identification with different reference groups. It wasn't until 1950 that the reference group concept really gained attention when Merton and Kitt (1950:40-105) in making studies of the American soldier introduced new concepts related to the theory. These authors focused in on the comparative function of reference groups. This refers to the process by which an individual takes the values or standards of other individuals or groups as a comparative frame of reference. These groups can be ones to which the individual belongs or groups in which the individual is not a member. Merton also used the concept of relative deprivation (derived from Stouffer) in the study of the American soldier. He showed that the attitudes of soldiers were influenced by the groups to which they

compared themselves. For example (Merton and Lazarfield, 1950:43) Merton suggested that a drafted married man comparing himself with his unmarried associates in the army, probably felt that he was making the greater sacrifice. How the individual soldier felt about his army role depended on the group he compared himself to. The single man upon being drafted and possibly comparing himself to his 4F colleagues might have felt that he was being deprived also. Merton (1957:281-386) continued to explore topics related to reference group theory. He examined membership versus non-membership in a group, the concept of in-group and out-group, positive and negative reference groups and how individuals select reference groups. At various times, Merton in the chapter "Reference Groups and Social Structure" also suggested that reference groups have a normative function. He pointed out that there seemed to be a greater consideration by sociologists in studying how people choose different reference groups for different norms and values. Shibutani (1955:562-569) described three usages of the concept of reference group. These were (a) groups which serve as comparison points; (b) groups to which men aspire; and (c) groups whose perspectives are assumed by the actor. The first usage is that examined by Merton and Kitt in the study of the American soldier. Merton and Kitt (1950:93) also saw the reference group as being an aid to social mobility. Those wishing to climb the social strata had to adopt the mannerisms and values of the groups in that strata. The example used to illustrate this was that of inexperienced troops having to change their idealistic ideas about combat in order to fit in with the battle hardened veterans. The third usage Shibutani referred to corresponds to what Merton and Kitt spoke of as a social frame of reference for interpretations. Sherif



(1969:203-231) spoke of reference groups whose norms are used as anchoring points in structuring the perceptual field. This third usage relates to the normative aspect of reference groups.

Hyman (1960:384) commented on Newcomb's Bennington College study as it related to reference group theory. Newcomb's (1941) study looked at how the differing academic environment or "attitude climate" affected the attitudes of students from three schools. Using students from Bennington, Williams, and Catholic Universities, Newcomb compared their attitudes toward the Spanish Civil War. Bennington College was seen as having a pro-Loyalist attitude climate. The Catholic University was seen as a pro-Nationalist climate, primarily because of the Catholic church's favoritism of the Nationalist cause. Williams College represented a less distinct or more neutral attitude climate. According to Newcomb the attitude climate was affected by the type of information available on each campus. On the Bennington campus a lot of pro-Loyalist information was available, so this helped to create the attitude climate for favorable attitudes toward the Spanish Loyalists. Newcomb compared the three schools using a Likert-type scale to measure the extent of pro-Loyalist or pro-Nationalist attitudes. Bennington was ranked the most pro-Loyalist, Williams second, and the Catholic University third. Newcomb (Hyman, 1960:384) in his exploration of how individuals derived their attitudes and values from groups also took note that the individual variations had a lot to do with the groups with which one became affiliated and the degree and permanence of the affiliation. He explored the ways in which individuals related themselves to the various academic communities or used them as reference groups.

Christianson and Gregg (1970) compared attitudes of subjects taken from three different cultural environments. Some were taken from a highly restrictive Mormon culture, some from a moderately restricted Midwestern culture which were both in the United States. Some subjects were also taken from the highly permissive Danish culture. The first part of the study was done in 1958 using a questionnaire. Using subjects from the same schools located in each of the three areas, the questionnaire was re-administered in 1968. The study indicated that over a ten-year period, liberalization in sexual attitudes had taken place in all three schools. The Mormon culture, however, was still found to be more conservative than either the Midwestern or Danish cultures. This study, examined in light of reference group theory, points out how schools located in different cultural settings could serve as frames of reference or reference groups.

Sherif (1969:239-261) examined the normative function of reference groups. In his Robber's Cave experiment with groups of boys he showed how norms are developed in the group context. Expectations and attitudes also form along with the norms. The boys, adhering to their particular groups used these groups as sources of information. They anchored their beliefs, attitudes, and goals in these reference groups. Pollis (1968:302) stated that "the aspect of the socio-cultural world that the individual relates to is highly variable and may be termed the sociological referent of a reference group." The referent can be very concrete or very abstract. Concrete referents include small informal groups, institutional roles, or memberships in classifiable collectivities. The more abstract referents may include persons defining themselves in terms of their past relations to groups, their internalization

of norms, values, and attitudes. Pollis said that "any normative representation within any given individual is an attitude configuration." The concept of reference group should be seen as dynamic, a socio-psychological construct. According to Pollis, a person's reference group does not have to be physically present or identifiable, but can be seen as "configurations of sociological relevant attitudes . . . which define an individual's characteristic mode of response in specific normative situations."

Pollis (1968:303-307) also discussed reference groups and conflict. He stated that in this complex multi-group society, conflicts can arise because of an individual having to use many groups for a "frame of reference." A person may be a member of a group and may not use that group as a reference. Conflicts occur when the behavioral expectations of one group clash with those of another group. Pollis described three main conflict situations. These were membership-membership group conflict, membership group-reference group conflict, and reference group-reference group conflict. Pollis again pointed out that the individual's reference group may not be sociologically accessible or tangible. The sociological referent is not seen necessarily as either totally abstract or totally discernible. Rather it should be viewed as a continuum. The reference group seen in this broad social-psychological sense becomes a more applicable concept, but more difficult to measure.

## CHAPTER II

### DISCUSSION AND STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The contention of this study is that different schools foster different attitude climates. A comparison of students in the academic environments of four schools should show that there are differences in attitudes held by the students. This contention is based on an assumption that the students who attend these schools will adopt them as their reference group. The concept of reference group is used in a broad sense to include both those groups the student is a part of at the school, but also the normative standards, behavioral expectations and values which each school's climate promotes. This would be along the line of the non-identifiable or more abstract sociological referent. Hyman (1960:384) has already been mentioned for his comments on Newcomb's 1941 attitude climate study, with his look at three colleges as reference groups.

This paper also focuses in on the reference group in its normative function. The main idea is that the student's attitudes, values, and expectations will become anchored in the college environment. In this study, attitudes are seen as underlying pre-dispositional states of reaction positively or negatively toward given stimuli. These "stimuli" can be anything from ideas or concepts to actual places or events. In this study, a scale measuring attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness will constitute the dependent variable in the research.

The two independent variables for the research are the school to which the student belongs and the academic classification of the student within the school. Newcomb (1941) in his study of attitudes toward the Spanish Civil War set the precedent for the use of the first independent variable, the school and its respective attitude climate. In the present study, four schools in northern and central Oklahoma will be used. These are Tulsa University (T. U.), Oklahoma State University (O. S. U.), Phillips University (P. U.) and Oklahoma Baptist University (O. B. U.). Newcomb's (1943) study provided the precedent for the second independent variable. He compared the different academic classifications of students on a political-economic progressivism scale. He showed that differences existed between the classes, particularly freshmen compared to seniors.

In discussing hypotheses related to the main contention of this research, we must again draw upon reference group theory. A student, before coming to the university probably has reference group ties in his family and his peer group relations. Upon coming to the school as a freshman, the student does not change his reference group ties to the university immediately. Conflict, such as Pollis suggested, probably takes place. The student, although not in direct contact with his family, still carries with him that "configuration of attitudes" and internalization of norms from that reference group. Conflict may ensue when the student becomes a member of the college community and comes into contact with different groups which may or may not hold the same behavioral and attitudinal expectations that his family or high school peer groups did. The first hypothesis is based on the idea that freshmen, not having had time to adequately change their reference group

relations or to internalize new norms, will be less affected by the attitude climate of the school. Based on this assumption, the first hypothesis is stated:

Hypothesis I: In a comparison of freshmen at the four schools, there is no significant difference on attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness.

The second hypothesis deals with a comparison of freshmen to upperclassmen. Students, by the time they are upperclassmen (juniors and seniors), would have had adequate time to shift their reference group orientations. They would be more influenced by the school's attitude climate. The second hypothesis is stated:

Hypothesis II: There will be a significant difference found in the comparison of freshmen to upperclassmen in each school on attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness.

The third hypothesis is related to the second in that it is based on the idea that upperclassmen, having been in the attitude climate longer, will have taken the school as their reference group. Based on observation, it is felt that O. B. U. will have the most consistent attitude climate. Therefore, O. B. U. students should be most likely to be influenced by the attitude climate. The third hypothesis is stated:

Hypothesis III: In a comparison of upperclassmen of all four schools, O. B. U. on the conservative extreme and T. U. on the liberal extreme, will have a smaller variance on the distribution of scores

of attitudes toward premarital sexual  
permissiveness.

The fourth hypothesis deals with the type of attitude climate that occurs on each campus. Upperclassmen having been in the attitude climate of the school longer, should be more influenced by that attitude climate. Differences in attitude should be found in a comparison between upperclassmen, because of differing attitude climates of the schools. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is stated:

Hypothesis IV: In a comparison of upperclassmen of all four schools, significant differences will be found on attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

To test the hypotheses stated in Chapter I, samples were obtained of freshmen and upperclassmen from four universities. The students in these universities were compared on attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness. The comparison involved the construction and pretesting of the premarital sexual permissiveness scale. Questionnaires were administered to students at each school. The data derived from the questionnaires were analyzed to determine the degree of support for the hypotheses.

#### The Sample

Four schools in Oklahoma, Tulsa University (T. U.), Phillips University (P. U.), Oklahoma State University (O. S. U.), and Oklahoma Baptist University (O. B. U.), were used in this study. Tulsa University is located in Tulsa, Phillips University is in Enid. Oklahoma State University is in Stillwater and Oklahoma Baptist University is in Shawnee. T. U., P. U., and O. B. U. are private institutions. O. S. U. is a state land-grant university. The schools differ in the number in attendance, the ratio of Oklahoma students to out of state and foreign students. However, for this study, the difference most likely to affect attitude climate in the area of sexual



permissiveness is the degree of religious affiliation. O. B. U. is associated with the Southern Baptist denomination and the campus reflects this association by its rules and large number of religious organizations on the campus. Phillips has had an association with the Disciples of Christ and maintains a seminary on its campus. The author views P. U. as being less affiliated, however, because the ties do not seem to be as strong to the denomination. Also, students attending the university from the surrounding area possibly exert some liberal influence on the campus. T. U. was founded by the Presbyterian denomination and is now nominally associated with them. O. S. U. has never had any religious affiliation. Viewed on a continuum of religious association, O. B. U. is seen as the most highly affiliated and, therefore, should have the most conservative and traditional setting. Phillips is less associated than O. B. U., but more so than T. U. or O. S. U. P. U. is seen as more conservative than these two schools. Despite the nominal religious affiliation, T. U. is viewed as the most liberal campus, because of its location in a larger city and based on general observation that a more liberal type of student attends that school. O. S. U. is seen as generally having a more conservative campus than T. U.

Availability samples were taken from each school. These samples are gathered over a month and one-half period. The researcher went to P. U., T. U., O. S. U., and O. B. U. in that order. The researcher worked with professors in each school's sociology department to gain access to introductory and upper division sociology courses. In all but one school, students of sociology courses made up the samples. In P. U., the exception, a general psychology class was used as well as two upper division psychology courses along with sociology classes. Since these

are both social sciences the addition of psychology classes in the sample was not seen as being detrimental to the research.

The samples for each school were derived from these classes. Sophomores who filled out questionnaires in each school were not used in the study. Married or divorced students were not used in the analysis, because it was thought that they might have different reference groups than single students. Junior and senior students who transferred into the school also were not used in the study. These students having transferred in could not logically be perceived as having been in the attitude climate of the school for as long a time as non-transfers. Consideration was also given to the age of the respondents. Freshmen or upperclassmen who were over the typical age range for their classification were not used. Usually by eliminating married students, this took care of the age factor as well.

Sample Ns varied and are listed as follows. The T. U. sample was composed of 40 freshmen and 34 upperclassmen. The P. U. sample contained 36 freshmen and 38 upperclassmen. At O. B. U., 100 freshmen and 23 upperclassmen were obtained. The O. S. U. sample consisted of 51 freshmen and 27 upperclassmen.

#### Procedure

The procedure for the administration of the questionnaire was essentially the same in every school. The researcher was admitted to the classrooms and after being introduced by the professor, he proceeded to give the following instructions:

This is a short questionnaire composed of 34 items. The first nine questions are related to what are called core variables, such as your age, sex, classification in school, etc. Items 10 through 34 are a series of statements related

to two attitude areas I am attempting to measure. By each statement is a series of numbers, 1-6. As the instructions indicate, you are to read each statement, then circle the number which best represents how you feel toward the statement. Circleing number one indicates that you strongly agree with the statement; circleing two that you agree, and so on. If you run across a statement which you have trouble answering, please try to go with your general feeling and circle some answer.

Basically this set of instructions was used in all the classes with minor changes in wording or order of information presented. The students were then allowed 15-20 minutes to fill the questionnaire out. The only exception to this procedure was for one upper division class at O. B. U. where the questionnaire was administered by the professor.

#### Development of the Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire composed of some socio-biographic variables, an attitude toward premarital sexual permissiveness scale and a set of statements related to attitudes toward role relations in marriage, which were not used in this study. Socio-biographic variables included age, marital status, sex, and the academic classification in school of the respondent. A control variable question which asked if upperclassmen respondents had transferred into the school was also included. Additional questions regarding the employment record of the respondent's mother and the birth order of the student were also included, but not utilized in this study.

The premarital sexual attitude measure was a set of 15 statements comprising a Likert-type scale. The scale differed from the regular five responses with neutral included as a response alternative in that it had six response alternatives and no neutral alternative. The response alternatives were strongly agree, agree, slightly agree,

slightly disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. These were scored so that a conservative response toward a premarital sexual permissiveness item received a score of six and a liberal response a score of one. Statements used in the scale were derived partly from Ira Reiss (Sussmann, 1968:227-236) and a study by Kaats and Davis (Delora and Delora, 1972:53-65). The statements dealt with three variables which interact in determining attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness; sex, presence of love, and three levels of intimacy (light petting, heavy petting, and intercourse). One statement was given for each combination of the three variables. For example, "I believe that light petting (kissing or touching your partner above the waist) is acceptable for the male before marriage if he is in love with his partner." Two additional items were included on pretests to the scale. These were: "It is important to me to be a virgin at the time of my marriage," and "I think having had sexual intercourse before marriage is more injurious to a female's reputation than to a male's reputation."

To test the scalability of the items, they were pretested with a sample of 143 O. S. U. students, primarily underclassmen. To determine if the scale was internally consistent, Pearson's  $r$  correlations were computed for each item with all other items. Items were retained if they had an  $r > .30$  with each of the other items. The discriminatory power of each item was determined by taking the difference between the mean scores of those items in the upper quartile and those in the lower quartile. A difference between the means of at least 2.0 was required to retain an item. As a result of this pretest, items 10 through 24 listed in the Appendix, were included on the final questionnaire.

The final scale was analyzed using the same techniques and criteria

as the pretest, to be sure it was internally consistent and that the items discriminated between the individuals who have liberal or conservative attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness. The correlation matrix is shown in Table I. All the items correlated well with each other and with the scale as a whole, with the exception of item 12 which was item number 12 on the questionnaire. This item was dropped from the scale and not used in the analysis of the data because it did not correlate or differentiate well. Table II gives the difference of means for the two extreme quartiles. As can be seen, all items had a mean difference over 2.5 with the exception of the item that was thrown out and items 16 and 22. Most of the items had even larger differences of three and four points.

#### Data Analysis Procedures

In the analysis of the data certain controls were used. All incomplete data; that is, when a person failed to mark each item on the scale, were eliminated. As was explained in the sub-section dealing with the samples, married and transfer students were also eliminated from the analysis along with those of non-typical ages.

To test the first hypothesis, two procedures were used. An analysis of variance was run between the four schools and an  $f$  ratio was computed. The Neuman-Keul procedure was used to further determine between which schools significant differences of means occurred. The second hypothesis was tested by computing  $t$  ratios between the freshmen and upperclassmen of each of the four schools. The third hypothesis was tested by ranking the schools according to the size of the variance. The fourth hypothesis was tested using the same two procedures as were

TABLE I

## CORRELATION MATRIX FOR ITEMS OF THE PERMISSIVENESS SCALE

	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Average Correlation	Correlation With Scale
10		.48	.24	.71	.79	.50	.48	.71	.68	.53	.70	.67	.45	.69	.81	.56	.81
11			.04	.65	.57	.53	.45	.39	.50	.62	.43	.43	.72	.64	.55	.73	.69
12				.15	.14	.16	.09	.30	.19	.14	.25	.24	.05	.13	.20	.15	.28
13					.82	.54	.55	.62	.73	.60	.62	.67	.58	.89	.84	.60	.85
14						.51	.58	.66	.71	.61	.69	.66	.53	.84	.92	.60	.86
15							.45	.66	.67	.80	.61	.67	.58	.52	.53	.52	.76
16								.43	.49	.51	.45	.47	.52	.59	.57	.44	.65
17									.83	.64	.89	.88	.42	.62	.79	.59	.85
18										.77	.86	.88	.43	.73	.71	.61	.89
19											.67	.70	.62	.64	.61	.56	.82
20												.87	.40	.65	.70	.59	.85
21													.47	.70	.70	.60	.87
22														.63	.55	.46	.68
23															.86	.61	.86
24																.62	.87

TABLE II  
MEAN DIFFERENCES FOR PERMISSIVENESS SCALE

Item	Low	High	Difference
10	1.63	5.78	4.15
11	1.37	4.02	2.65
12	3.73	4.98	1.25
13	1.58	5.66	4.08
14	1.57	5.88	4.31
15	1.57	4.98	3.41
16	1.12	3.53	2.41
17	2.10	5.97	3.87
18	1.67	5.88	4.21
19	1.49	5.13	3.64
20	1.92	5.94	4.02
21	1.86	5.84	3.98
22	1.40	3.88	2.48
23	1.48	5.62	4.14
24	1.52	5.88	4.36

used to test the final hypothesis. Further analysis by computing t ratios between certain schools was done to try and determine if there were any significant differences which did not show up in the Neuman-Keul procedure.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The first hypothesis dealt with a comparison of freshmen at all four schools. The hypothesis stated that no significant difference would be found between freshmen on attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness. An analysis of variance was run and an f ratio obtained to test the hypotheses. The results are shown in Table III. An f ratio for between groups was significant ( $P \leq .01$ ) and thus the null hypothesis could be rejected. A further analysis using the Neuman-Keul procedure (Table IV) showed between which schools the differences were significant. Significant differences were found between the O. B. U. freshmen and the freshmen of the other three schools. Thus, the first hypothesis was not supported since O. B. U. freshmen were significantly different from the freshmen of the other three schools.

The second hypothesis stated that there would be significant differences found in a comparison of freshmen to upperclassmen in each school. Significant t ratios were found in the T. U., O. B. U., and O. S. U. comparisons, but not at P. U. These results are located in Table V. The differences were toward increased liberality, for all schools a result expected at T. U., O. S. U., and perhaps P. U., but not at O. B. U. This hypothesis was supported in three out of four schools.

The third hypothesis was related to determining which school had

TABLE III  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR FRESHMEN OF T. U., P. U.,  
O. B. U., AND O. S. U.

Source	D. F.	S.D.	F
School	3	9926.00	39.70*
Residual	223	250.24	
Corrected Total	226	378.68	

\* $p < .01$

TABLE IV

ORDERED MEANS AND NEUMAN-KEUL PROCEDURE FOR FRESHMEN OF T. U.,  
P. U., O. B. U., AND O. S. U.

	39.90	O. S. U. 43.49	P. U. 45.75	O. B. U. 65.81	q.99 (r,4)	(st) q.99 (r,4)
T. U.	39.90	3.59	5.85	25.91*	4.40	11.44 (r,4)
O. S. U.	43.49		2.86	22.32*	4.12	10.71 (r,3)
P. U.	45.75			20.06*	3.64	9.46 (r,2)

\*p < .01

d.f. = 223

st = 2.6

TABLE V

NS, MEANS, S.D.'S, D.F., AND T RATIOS FOR A COMPARISON  
OF FRESHMEN TO UPPERCLASSMEN IN EACH SCHOOL

School	Class	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	D.F.	T
T. U.	Freshmen	40	39.90	14.98	72	2.14*
	Upperclassmen	34	32.00	17.00		
P. U.	Freshmen	36	45.75	17.48	72	.49
	Upperclassmen	38	43.82	15.67		
O. B. U.	Freshmen	100	65.81	15.54	121	3.8*
	Upperclassmen	23	51.87	18.69		
O. S. U.	Freshmen	51	43.49	14.79	76	2.50*
	Upperclassmen	27	34.00	15.62		

\* $p < .05$

the most consistent attitude climate. It was reasoned that the most conservative and religious affiliated school would have the most consistent attitude climate and this would be reflected in a smaller variance. T. U. as viewed on the liberal extreme should also have had a smaller variance. The null hypothesis could not be rejected because it was found that O. B. U. had the largest variance, with T. U. second and P. U. and O. S. U. a close third and fourth as seen in Table VI.

The fourth hypothesis stated that in a comparison of upperclassmen of all four schools, significant differences would be found. Specifically it was expected that O. B. U. upperclassmen would be found to be the most conservative and T. U. upperclassmen the least conservative. In the analysis of variance (Table VII) an f ratio for between groups was statistically significant at the .01 level.

A further comparison using the Neuman-Keul procedure showed that O. B. U. was significantly more conservative than T. U. or O. S. U., but not P. U. These data are shown in Table VIII. There were no other significant differences found using this procedure. In computing t ratios between certain other schools, however, the following significant differences were found (see Table IX). O. B. U. upperclassmen were found to be significantly more conservative than P. U. upperclassmen. P. U. upperclassmen were found to be significantly more conservative than either O. S. U. or T. U. upperclassmen. The hypothesis was supported because of the significant differences found between schools.

In summary, these results were found. In looking at the first hypothesis, which stated that no significant differences were to be found between freshmen of the four schools, the hypothesis was not supported, significant differences were found between O. B. U. freshmen

TABLE VI

NS, S.D.'S, AND VARIANCE FOR UPPERCLASSMEN AT T. U.,  
P. U., O. B. U., AND O. S. U.

School	N	S.D.	V
O. B. U.	23	18.69	349.39
T. U.	34	17.00	288.54
P. U.	38	15.67	245.56
O. S. U.	27	15.62	244.15

TABLE VII

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR UPPERCLASSMEN OF T. U.,  
P. U., O. B. U., AND O. S. U.

Source	D.F.	S.D.	F
School	3	23.02.73	8.31*
Residual	118	276.63	
Corrected Total	121	326.86	

\*p < .01

TABLE VIII

ORDERED MEANS AND NEUMAN-KEUL PROCEDURE FOR UPPERCLASSMEN OF T. U.,  
P. U., O. B. U., AND O. S. U.

	T. U.	O. S. U.	P. U.	O. B. U.	q.99 (r,4)	(st) q.99 (r,4)
	32.00	34.00	43.82	51.87		
T. U.	32.00	2.00	11.82	19.87*	4.50	15.75 (r,4)
O. S. U.	34.00		9.82	17.87*	4.20	14.70 (r,3)
P. U.	43.82			8.05	3.70	12.95 (r,2)

\*p < .01

d.f. = 118

st = 3.5

TABLE IX

NS, MEANS, S.D.'S, D.F., AND T RATIOS FOR A COMPARISON OF  
UPPERCLASSMEN BETWEEN CERTAIN SCHOOLS

School	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	D.F.	T
O. B. U.	23	51.87	18.69	59	24.39*
P. U.	38	43.82	15.67		
P. U.	38	43.82	15.67	70	22.73*
T. U.	34	32.00	17.00		
P. U.	38	43.82	15.67	63	20.00*
O. S. U.	27	34.00	15.62		

\* $p < .001$



and freshmen of the other three schools. The second hypothesis tested, a comparison of freshmen to upperclassmen in each school, resulted in significant differences being found in three out of four schools. In the third hypothesis, a comparison of variances of the four schools, the hypothesis was not supported because it was found that O. B. U. and T. U. had the largest variances, when it was expected that they would have the smallest. In the fourth hypothesis, a comparison of upperclassmen of the four schools, the null hypothesis could be rejected because significant differences were found between principally O. B. U. upperclassmen and those of T. U., P. U., and O. S. U.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### Explanation of Findings

With the results found in this study, the first impulse might be to throw out the theoretical framework to which they are related. However, there are several reasons why this should not be done. First of all, there are possible alternative explanations which should be explored, which relate to the findings and that still have some connection with the theoretical framework. Secondly, there are certain criticisms of the present study which must be taken into account. Finally, along with a critique of the present study, suggestions should be made that could improve the research in this area and that could perhaps yield more conclusive results.

The findings related to the first hypothesis showed that the original notion about all freshmen having the same attitudes proved false. Instead, it was found that there was significant difference between O. B. U. freshmen and freshmen at the other three schools. The results of the testing of the second hypothesis showed that in three out of four schools there was a significant difference between freshmen and upperclassmen. The difference in each of the schools was from conservative to more liberal attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness. This was true even at O. B. U. which supposedly had a conservative attitude climate. Significant differences were also found in the

comparison of upperclassmen, but these differences could not be accounted for by the existence of an overall campus attitude climate.

Although attitude climate cannot be said to have acted upon students to change or affect their attitudes in the way in which it was originally put forth in this paper, still the researcher feels the concept is a valid one. Freshmen students instead of being affected by the overall attitude climate of a school, nevertheless, might be attracted to the school because of a perceived difference. Freshmen at O. B. U. were more conservative than freshmen at the other three schools. O. B. U. as a school might attract more conservative students because it has a reputation as being more conservative than other schools. By the same token, T. U. might attract more liberal students because it is perceived as being a campus with a more liberal or open atmosphere.

Concerning the change in attitudes on all four campuses from conservative to more liberal attitudes, this is not without precedent. If we look back at Newcomb's 1943 Bennington College study we see that he also found a change between the freshman and senior years toward the liberal direction. This was on a political-economic progressivism scale. Increasing liberality may be related to age and experience. With the advancement in age a person is more likely to have participated in dating and sexual behavior, thereby causing him or her to adjust their attitudes toward a more liberal position.

The fact that there were significant differences found in the comparison of upperclassmen of the four schools indicates the possibility that attitude climates do exist, although not as strong or in as all pervasive a manner as was first thought. Despite the fact that the

upperclassmen were more liberal than the freshmen in the most conservative schools, O. B. U. and P. U., they were still more conservative than the upperclassmen of T. U. or O. S. U.

In trying to explain why there was this shift toward liberality in each school, but with inter-school differences, two reasons could be considered. First, as it was proposed earlier, an attitude climate strong enough to attract certain types of students might exist for each campus. This would help to explain the inter-school differences for freshmen. Secondly, we should look at the idea that not just one overall attitude climate exists, but perhaps several, related to different reference groups on each campus.

A look at the differences in variance for the four schools showed O. B. U. with the largest variance, T. U. second, and P.U. and O. S. U. third and fourth. The differences in variance first of all meant that the hypothesis stating that O. B. U. would have the most consistent attitude climate was not supported. Beyond this, however, the researcher thought that a wide variance might give evidence of clusters or divisions of scores which would indicate the possibility of different reference groups in existence.

Some evidence to investigate the above possibility can be found in a breakdown of frequency distributions for freshmen and upperclassmen of each school on attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness. Table X presents the frequency distribution for the O. B. U. sample. The freshmen distribution showed a large number of conservative scores from 57 to 84, with possibly two or three groups being identified out of the larger group. A scattering of "liberals" are present with the score of 15 to 53. A group of moderates could be identified from scores

TABLE X  
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS FOR FRESHMEN AND UPPERCLASSMEN  
 GROUPS OF THE O. B. U. SAMPLE

Freshmen		Upperclassmen	
Value	Frequency	Value	Frequency
15	1	14	1
16	1	23	1
25	1	26	1
27	1	31	1
28	1	32	1
30	14%	39	1
37	1	44	1
38	1	46	1
39	2	48	1
42	1	49	1
44	2	50	1
48	1	52	1
53	1	55	1
57	1	56	1
58	2	58	1
59	1	60	2
60	6	65	1
61	2	71	1
62	86%	74	1
63	4	76	1
64	3	80	1
65	6	84	1
67	2	Total	23
68	5		
69	8		
70	3		
71	2		
72	5		
73	1		
74	4		
75	2		
76	2		
77	2		
78	2		
79	1		
80	3		
81	1		
82	6		
83	5		
84	5		
Total	100		

57 to 65. Strong conservatives cluster from 82 to 84. For O. B. U. freshmen, 86% fall on the conservative side of the midpoint of 49.

In looking at the upperclass group, however, the logic fails to be supported by the evidence. The scores are so spread out as to not indicate the existence of any particular groups. The only slight indication comes from dividing the distribution at the midpoint of 49 and seeing that 61% of the upperclassmen fall on the conservative side of the distribution. One problem might have been the small sample size. This would make the group insufficient to get a clear picture of what is going on in the school. Table XI presents the frequency distribution for T. U.

In looking at the T. U. freshmen we see no indication of separate distinct groups with the exception of a small cluster from scores 27 to 29. However, 70% of the scores fall on the liberal side of the distribution, below the midpoint of 49. In the upperclassmen group, two and possibly three groups can be identified. There are some very liberal persons clustered around scores 14 and 15. A second group of liberals are located from score 24 to 30. A possible third group of "conservatives" exists clustered from scores 55 to 58. It should be noted that those stated as conservatives in this sample are still more liberal than the majority of the O. B. U. sample. In the T. U. upperclassmen group, 74% of the scores fall toward the liberal side, below the midpoint of 49.

Table XII shows the P. U. sample. As in the T. U. sample, the P. U. freshmen are very spread out with no clearly discernible groups. In this group, 61% of the scores fall below the midpoint of 49. Two clusters can be seen in the upperclassmen group. One of

TABLE XI  
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS FOR FRESHMEN AND UPPERCLASSMEN  
 GROUPS OF THE T. U. SAMPLE

Freshmen		Upperclassmen	
Value	Frequency	Value	Frequency
14	1	14	[ 8 ]
16	1	15	[ 2 ]
17	1	18	1
21	1	19	1
23	2	24	[ 1 ]
27	[ 3 ]	26	[ 3 ]
28	70% [ 2 ]	27	74% [ 1 ]
29	[ 2 ]	28	[ 1 ]
30	1	29	[ 1 ]
31	1	30	[ 2 ]
32	1	34	2
34	1	35	1
35	1	36	1
36	1	49	1
38	2	50	1
40	1	55	26% [ 3 ]
42	1	56	[ 2 ]
44	1	58	[ 2 ]
47	2	64	1
48	2	Total	34
51	2		
52	2		
54	30% 1		
55	1		
59	1		
60	1		
61	1		
64	1		
67	1		
71	1		
Total	40		

TABLE XII  
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS FOR FRESHMEN AND UPPERCLASSMEN  
 GROUPS OF THE P. U. SAMPLE

Freshmen		Upperclassmen	
Value	Frequency	Value	Frequency
14	1	14	1
20	1	16	1
21	1	21	1
23	1	22	1
24	1	27	1
26	1	29	1
29	2	30	1
34	1	31	3
37	1	32	2
38	1	33	1
39	2	35	2
40	1	40	1
41	1	42	2
42	2	43	1
43	1	44	1
44	2	45	1
46	1	46	1
48	1	47	1
51	1	50	1
52	1	51	1
53	1	52	2
54	1	56	1
55	1	57	2
56	1	63	1
57	1	64	1
60	2	66	1
70	1	67	1
73	1	69	1
77	1	70	1
82	1	71	1
84	1	Total	38
Total	36		



these is located from score 27 to score 35. A second smaller cluster is found from score 50 to score 52. These at least indicate the likelihood of a conservative and a more liberal group on campus. The distribution is unequal, with 63% being on the liberal side of the midpoint of 49.

Finally, the O. S. U. sample is presented in Table XIII. The O. S. U. freshmen give no indication of being in definite groups, again with the possible exception of a cluster from score 42 to 45. In this group, 63% fall on the liberal side of the midpoint of 48. Upperclassmen do not show any definite groupings either, excluding a minor cluster around scores 14 and 15. About 78% of the scores fall below the midpoint of 49, toward the liberal side of this distribution. Pollis (1968) stated that a "persons reference group does not have to be physically present or identifiable." Reference groups could be in existence on each of these campuses without necessarily showing up on a comparison of distribution of scores.

Although the evidence is far from conclusive, there is at least some suggestion that multiple reference groups do exist, rather than one general overall attitude climate that dominates the total institution. Evidence for supporting multiple reference groups was evident in the P. U. and T. U. samples. Looking at all four universities, the division at the midpoint shows that at least two types of reference groups could exist on each campus, one conservative and one liberal. The students by the time they are upperclassmen should have chosen the reference group or groups which they adhere to. Even being on a particular campus after a semester or almost two, like the freshmen in these samples were, might be enough time for them to sort themselves

TABLE XIII  
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS FOR FRESHMEN AND UPPERCLASSMEN  
 GROUPS OF THE O. S. U. SAMPLE

Freshmen		Upperclassmen	
Value	Frequency	Value	Frequency
14	1	14	[ 5 ]
18	1	16	[ 1 ]
19	1	23	
23	3	24	1
25	1	29	2
27	2	30	78% 2
28	2	31	1
29	1	35	1
30	1	37	1
31	1	38	2
34	67% 2	40	1
35	1	41	1
36	1	47	1
38	1	50	2
39	1	52	22% 1
41	1	53	1
42	[ 3 ]	61	1
43	[ 2 ]	71	1
44	[ 4 ]	Total	[ 1 ] 27
45	[ 2 ]		
46	1		
47	1		
49	1		
50	1		
52	1		
54	1		
56	1		
57	2		
59	1		
62	33% 2		
63	1		
64	1		
66	1		
67	1		
68	1		
77	1		
82	1		
Total	51		

out. We see this especially in the case of the O. B. U. freshmen. Granted this attempt at explanation while logical, is based on scanty evidence. Indications, however, can lead to further exploration and clarification through research.

### Problems

Numerous problems were encountered in this study. The original design included two additional attitude areas to be measured. These were attitudes toward authority and attitudes toward role relations in marriage. Due to lack of previous research in these areas, it was difficult to construct items that could be used in a scale. Pretesting questions on attitudes toward authority resulted in dropping that whole area from the study. Questions related to role relations did correlate and differentiate to some extent, but not enough to meet the criteria set up to make a scale. These questions were retained on the questionnaire with the idea of doing some later research with the data. They were not used in the present study.

The original design also called for the use of Oral Roberts University students in the sample, but the researcher was unable to gain access to this university. Reasons given by the Academic dean of the school were that the nature of the questionnaire might be offensive to O. R. U. students and, therefore, he could not permit it to be administered. This fact points out that the assumptions made about O. R. U. having a very conservative attitude climate were probably correct. If data could have been obtained from this campus, it is possible that additional support for attitude climate would have been obtained. As it was, the school had to be dropped and O. B. U. and O. S. U. added

to the design.

The researcher was also hampered by the lack of access to students, particularly upperclassmen. Originally the design called for use of only seniors in the sample, but after pulling out transfers and married or divorced students the sample sizes were so small they needed to be bolstered by adding juniors into the groups. This was felt to be within the basic framework, since it is likely that one has been influenced by the attitude climate by the second semester of his junior year, if he is going to be influenced at all. Even so, sample sizes for the upperclassmen populations were smaller than desired.

#### Critique of Study

Basically the design of the study was good, founded on the precedent set by Newcomb in his previous research. The premarital sexual permissiveness scale was well grounded in past research and was found to be adequate insofar as the criteria that were established. The overall questionnaire, however, could have used some improvement, especially by the inclusion of certain questions as controls. For example, the researcher did not include a control variable of race or a question related to what country the subject was born or raised in. These two factors could make a difference in the types of reference groups the person adheres to, possibly making them distinct from some predominant types of reference groups on campus. Black students and foreign born students are likely to have reference groups related to their race or country.

Although students were taken from social science classes, particularly sociology, no attempt was made to identify the student's

major. The student's major may have indicated more the types of people he would associate with or take as his reference group.

Other criticisms might include the problem mentioned earlier of having small sample sizes. Also the fact that the study was done using second semester freshmen who might have been more acclimated to their respective campuses than first semester freshmen.

Since an availability sample was used rather than some form of random sampling, this limits the conclusions we can draw from the data based on statistical analysis.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

Despite the obvious problems, the criticisms and results of the research, the findings call into question the existence of an overall attitude climate for an institution and lend support to the idea of multiple reference groups on each campus. In considering further research in this area, there are several suggestions that might be made to make the research more effective.

The most effective research would, of course, include some sort of stratified or random sampling procedure. Even an availability sample might be improved by increasing sample size.

Assuming we would have to work with an availability sample of some kind, the study could be enhanced by improving the questionnaire with such suggestions as were mentioned previously and by using more than one attitude area.

Further research might also try to get at the reference groups of the individual students. The phenomenon of change in attitudes from the freshmen to upperclassmen status could be explored more thoroughly in

relation to reference group theory. This could be done by means of a longitudinal study design. Widening an availability sample to include students in other types of classes and different majors could help to identify different reference groups.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### Summary

Newcomb's (1941, 1943) studies set the precedent for this study. He proposed the concept of attitude climate and contributed the idea of using a between school, between academic classification comparison design. Hyman (1960:384) commented on Newcomb's Bennington College study as it related to reference group theory. Merton (1957) and Merton and Kitt (1950) provided additional information about the function of reference groups. Sherif (1964) talked about the normative function of reference groups. Pollis (1968) stated that referents can be very concrete or very abstract. Pollis (1968) also discussed reference groups and conflict. Shibutani (1955) described different usages of the reference group concept. Christianson and Gregg (1970) were cited for their attitude comparison study of universities in three different cultural settings. The theoretical framework was designed to point to the possibility that universities, by virtue of their respective attitude climates, act as a reference group for the student.

Hypotheses stated were related to the expectations of finding attitude climate affecting the attitudes students had toward premarital sexual permissiveness, the dependent variable in the study. Hypothesis one was a comparison of freshmen, between schools with the assumption that no significant differences would be found. Hypothesis two was a

comparison of freshmen to upperclassmen, in which significant differences were expected in each school. Hypothesis three was a comparison of upperclassmen on size of variance. The two extremes, O. B. U. and T. U. were expected to have the smallest variances. Hypothesis four was a comparison of upperclassmen, in which significant differences were expected between schools.

Availability samples were taken at four northern and central Oklahoman schools: Tulsa University, Phillips University, Oklahoma Baptist University, and Oklahoma State University. Students from social science classes, both introductory and upperdivision courses comprised the samples. A questionnaire composed of socio-biographic questions, a scale to measure attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness and statements related to attitudes toward role relations in marriage, was administered in each class. The latter statements were not used in the testing of the hypotheses for this study.

Mean scores on the scale of attitudes toward premarital sexual permissiveness were obtained for both freshmen and upperclassmen groups in each school. Hypotheses one and four were tested using an analysis of variance and the Neuman-Keul procedure. Hypothesis two was tested by computation of t ratios between freshmen and upperclassmen of each school. Hypothesis three was tested by comparing the variances of the four schools. Further analysis was also done related to hypothesis four by computing t ratios between certain schools, to uncover significant differences not found by the Neuman-Keul procedure.

Results of the testing of the first hypothesis indicated that there were differences between freshmen of the four schools, particularly O. B. U. compared to the others. This was against the assumption of the



study that there would be no significant differences found. T ratios were found to be significant in three out of four schools in testing the second hypothesis. In the third hypothesis, O. B. U. and T. U. were expected to have smaller variances than the other schools, but instead they had the largest variances. Testing the fourth hypothesis revealed significant differences between O. B. U. compared to T. U. and O. S. U. Significant differences were also found between P. U. compared to T. U. and O. S. U.

The findings indicate that the campus attitude climate may not be strong enough to account for attitude change, but may act to attract freshmen students to the school. Differences found in the freshmen upperclassmen comparison, may be related to advancement in age and experience. Additional indications, especially by looking at the frequency distributions of the scores of students comprising the samples in each school, point to the possibility of at least a conservative and a liberal type of reference group existing on each campus.

#### Conclusion

Although the results of the present study are mixed and the idea of an attitude climate existing in some form cannot be ruled out. The research actually raises more questions than it answers. More research needs to be done with the concept of attitude climate. We need to answer questions such as, To what extent does a campus wide attitude climate exist? What factors are related to the maintenance of the attitude climate? This was only barely touched upon in this study. Is there a possibility that multiple climates exist? How can we measure the affect of these different climates or reference groups on attitudes

held by the students? These are just some of the questions that could be considered for further research.

The findings of this study though not in relation to positive results, should be valuable if only to point out areas which need more examination.

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**APPENDIX**

## Attitudinal Questionnaire

Please circle the appropriate number under each category.

1. Age            1-17        3-19        5-21        7-23  
                  2-18        4-20        6-22        8-24 and over
  
2. Sex  
                  1-male                    2-female
  
3. Classification  
  1-freshman  
  2-sophomore  
  3-junior  
  4-senior  
  5-graduate or special student
  
4. If you are a junior or senior, have you transferred into this school?  
                                  1-yes            2-no
  
5. Marital status  
  1-single  
  2-married  
  3-divorced or separated  
  4-divorced and re-married
  
6. Has your mother been employed while you lived at home?  
  1-yes                    2-no
  
7. If you answered "yes" on the above question, please indicate during what time period your mother was employed.  
  
    1-After your birth, but before entering elementary school.  
    2-During elementary school only.  
    3-During junior high school only.  
    4-During high school only.  
    5-During both junior high and high school.  
    6-During elementary and high school only.  
    7-During elementary school up through high school.  
    8-From after your birth and up to high school.
  
8. What was your mother's chief occupation during the time in which she was employed? \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. How many brothers and sisters do you have?  
  
    Younger brothers    0    1    2    3    4 or more  
    Older brothers        0    1    2    3    4 or more  
    Younger sisters       0    1    2    3    4 or more  
    Older sisters         0    1    2    3    4 or more

Below are a series of statements related to your opinions toward different topics. By each statement there is a set of possible responses as follows:

strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6

Please read each of the statements and then circle the number of the responses which best represents your immediate reaction to the opinion expressed. If you have reservations about some part of a statement, circle the number of the response which most clearly approximates your general feeling.

10. 1 2 3 4 5 6 It is important to me to be a virgin at the time of my marriage.
11. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that light petting (kissing or touching your partner above the waist) is acceptable for the male before marriage if he is in love with his partner.
12. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I think having had sexual intercourse before marriage is more injurious to a female's reputation than to a male's reputation.
13. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that heavy petting (genital manipulation and sexual play short of intercourse) is acceptable for the female before marriage if she is in love with her partner.
14. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that it is all right for a male to engage in premarital sex (intercourse) if he is in love with his partner.
15. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that light petting (kissing or touching your partner above the waist) is acceptable for the female before marriage even if she is not in love with her partner.
16. 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sexual standards for both males and females should be left primarily to the individuals choice.
17. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that it is all right for a female to engage in premarital sex (intercourse) even if she is not in love with her partner.

18. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that heavy petting (genital manipulation and sexual play short of intercourse) is acceptable for the male, before marriage even if he is not in love with his partner.
19. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that light petting (kissing or touching your partner above the waist) is acceptable for the male before marriage even if he is not in love with his partner.
20. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that it is all right for a male to engage in premarital sex (intercourse) even if he is not in love with his partner.
21. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that heavy petting (genital manipulation and sexual play short of intercourse) is acceptable for the female before marriage even if she is not in love with her partner.
22. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that light petting (kissing and touching your partner above the waist) is acceptable for the female if she is in love with her partner.
23. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that heavy petting (genital manipulation and sexual play short of intercourse) is acceptable for the male before marriage if he is in love with his partner.
24. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that it is all right for a female to engage in premarital sex (intercourse) if she is in love with her partner.
25. 1 2 3 4 5 6 A woman's place is in the home.
26. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that the husband should make the final decisions on almost all money matters.
27. 1 2 3 4 5 6 Women who want to remove the word "obey" from the marriage service don't understand what it means to be a wife.
28. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that the care of the children should be left up almost entirely to the wife when they are babies.
29. 1 2 3 4 5 6 Some equality in marriage is a good thing, but by and large the husband ought to make the final decisions concerning the matters related to economics.



30. 1 2 3 4 5 6 A wife should leave her job if her husband wants her to.
31. 1 2 3 4 5 6 Husband's whether the wife works or not should always be considered the main income source for the family.
32. 1 2 3 4 5 6 A wife should spend most of her leisure time at home with her husband, not out doing things with others members of her own sex.
33. 1 2 3 4 5 6 I believe that the husband should take the entire responsibility for earning the family living.
34. 1 2 3 4 5 6 A husband should spend most of his leisure time at home with his wife, not out doing things with other members of his own sex.

VITA

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Master of Science

Thesis: THE EFFECT OF CAMPUS ATTITUDE CLIMATE UPON STUDENTS'  
ATTITUDES TOWARD PREMARITAL SEXUAL PERMISSIVENESS

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