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## Students' views and attitudes towards homosexuality at the University of Venda, Limpopo province, South Africa.

**Mercy Mushwana**

University of Venda, South Africa

**Background:** while the past decade has seen an improvement in attitudes towards homosexuality, negative attitudes are still prevalent in many parts of the world. In general, increased levels of education tend to be predictive of relatively positive attitudes towards homosexuality.

**Aim:** This study was about students' views and attitudes about homosexuality at the University of Venda. The main aim of this study was to examine students' views about homosexuality, highlighting possible determinants of attitudes towards homosexuality and to identify strategies, which promote tolerance and understanding of sexual orientation and preferences.

**Methods:** The study was qualitative in nature and used non-probability sampling. The population involved students at the University of Venda. The two subtypes used were snowball sampling and purposive sampling. The study was conducted at the University of Venda within the Thulamela Municipality, Vhembe District in Limpopo Province. The data was collected from 8 participants. The data was analysed using thematic content analysis.

**Results:** The study found that some students at the University of Venda have positive views about homosexuality and equally negative views. The possible determinants that were identified by the researcher were Christian beliefs, the family that a person comes from and their cultural beliefs as well as also lack of exposure to different people. The study also found that students believed that education, strict rules and social activities would reduce the negative attitudes towards homosexuality. Cultural beliefs also played an important role in students beliefs when it comes to homosexuality. It was found out that it is culturally unacceptable for one to be in a homosexual relationship or engage in sexual activities with the person of same sex. The study collected found that family has an influence as a determinant of view and perception towards homosexuality because people are highly influenced by the family that they were raised in.

**Conclusion:** The current study showed that most students interviewed suggested education as a strategy to promote tolerance towards homosexuality, the participants suggested that the educational programs and campaigns regarding LGBT should be offered to the students in order to reduce the negative thoughts among them.

### Biography

Mercy Mushwana is a Lecturer in Department of Psychology at the University of Venda where she teaches mainly courses in research methods. She supervises Masters and Honors research students. She is currently finalizing her PhD with the University of Venda. She has worked as a SAHARA Journal Manager for five years. She also worked as a Researcher at HRSC. Her research interest includes rehabilitation of offenders, obesity, mental health and health promotion. She has reviewed several books and published several articles in accredited journals.

mercy.mushwana@univen.ac.za

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