

Homosexual Entrepreneurs: Different but the Same



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ABSTRACT

The search is on for more and better ways of creating enterprising people and especially for developing entrepreneurs, (Scott et al., 1998). Researchers have studied every facet of the entrepreneur. Initially research concentrated on adult white males (Watkins and Watkins, 1984), but recent research has also included other entrepreneurial groups, i.e. women, the young and ethnic minorities. Scase and Goffee (1980: 29) suggest that 'entrepreneurs may be more likely to emerge from those groups in society which are "deprived" or "marginal" i.e. groups which are discriminated against, persecuted, "looked down upon" or "exceptionally exploited".'

Despite this suggestion, one minority group that matches this description has been omitted from research to date. This is the homosexual. This may be due to their relative invisibility. However, more homosexuals are openly setting up in business and at least one gay business association exists in the UK. As a result, the homosexual entrepreneur is now easier to research.

This paper seeks to determine whether the homosexual entrepreneur is a suitable candidate for research and whether the homosexual entrepreneur is motivated to set up in business for the same reasons as other entrepreneurs. It will show that homosexual entrepreneurs, while appearing to have their own specific reasons for setting up in business, are motivated by the same factors as entrepreneurs in general and women in particular.

INTRODUCTION

The last 20 to 30 years have seen strong growth in the level of interest shown in entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship particularly since Birch (1979) reported that 60 per cent of the unemployed found employment in businesses employing less than 20 people. Until the early 1980s, the only group to be systematically researched were adult male entrepreneurs (Watkins and Watkins, 1984). Women and minority or marginalised groups do not appear to have been specifically targeted for research (Martin and Roberts, 1984). The work car-

ried out by researchers such as Alvarez and Meyer (1998), Birley (1989), Brown and Hisrich (1986), Carter and Cannon (1989), Cromie (1987), Goffee and Scase (1985), McDermott (1985), Rosa and Hamilton (1994), Schreier (1976), Smith et al. (1982) and Watkins and Watkins (1984) has somewhat redressed this imbalance. One minority group that has been ignored is that of the homosexual entrepreneur.

This paper considers the position of the openly homosexual entrepreneur *vis-à-vis* their heterosexual counterparts. It seeks to determine whether homosexual entrepreneurs are a minority group worthy of independent study within the field of entrepreneurship. It also seeks to determine whether they are motivated to set up in business for the same reasons as their heterosexual counterparts.

WHAT MAKES INDIVIDUALS ENTREPRENEURS?

Research into what makes individuals entrepreneurial has tended to polarise round economic (Cantillon, 1755; Hayek, 1949; Knight, 1921; Schumpeter 1962 and Kirzner, 1979), sociological (Bridge et al., 1998), behavioural (Caird, 1992; Churchill and Lewis, 1983) and personality theories (Brockhaus, 1980a; Chell, 1985; Kets de Vries, 1977; Timmons, 1989). In the context of this study, which seeks to determine who is likely to become an entrepreneur, the above research is of less relevance as it concentrates rather on what it is that they do as entrepreneurs.

Authors such as McClelland (1961), Wickham (1998) and Storey (1998) suggest that particular catalysts make some individuals pursue entrepreneurship, i.e. that individuals were either 'pushed' or 'pulled' into starting a business (Storey, 1991). The 'push' hypothesis suggests that individuals create new businesses because conventional options are less attractive or because they become unemployed or feel excluded (Wickham, 1998). Westhead (1988), however, suggests that most entrepreneurs are 'pulled' into business. For theorists such as Kets de Vries (1977), Shapero (1975b) and Scase and Goffee (1980) there is a definite 'push' factor for the individual to reduce the difference between their own self-image and that apparently placed on them by society. This apparent contradiction could be explained by the fact that Westhead's list of 'pull' factors could be reworded as 'push' factors, i.e. if what appears attractive as a 'pull' factor is missing in an individual's current environment, it could be viewed as a 'push' factor out of that environment.

Female Entrepreneurs

Until relatively recently, most social science investigations either totally excluded women from consideration or assumed women to behave in much the same way as men (Cromie, 1987; Watkins and Watkins, 1984). Since Watkins and Watkins highlighted the lack of research specifically related to women entrepreneurs, other researchers have taken up the challenge, for example Alvarez and Meyer (1998), Birley (1989), Brown and Hisrich (1986),

Carter and Cannon (1989), Cromie (1987), Goffee and Scase (1985), McDermott (1985), Schreier (1976) and Smith et al. (1982).

Specific research into female entrepreneurs has shown little difference in profile (Welsch and Young, 1983), motivation, traits, attributes and characteristics (Chaganti, 1986; Fischer et al., 1993; Gerritson et al., 1987; Schreier, 1976; Welsch and Young, 1983). The catalysts that propel women into business include family commitments and general career dissatisfaction (Brockhaus, 1980b; Cromie, 1987; Goffee and Scase, 1985; Storey, 1982). Women are typically characterised as the home makers in society and therefore any work they take on must usually fit in with this (Baron and Norris, 1976; Richardson and Hartshorn, 1988; Welsch and Young, 1983). Entrepreneurship affords greater flexibility to combine domestic and employment possibilities (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Kuratko and Hodgetts, 1992; McDermott, 1985; Vinnicombe, 1987).

Other findings show that women appear to enter entrepreneurship at a younger age than men (32 years as opposed to 39), are more highly educated than their male counterparts and are four times more likely to have been subject to the influences of an entrepreneurial parent than a member of the general population (Alvarez and Meyer, 1998; Birley, et al., 1986; Dolinsky et al., 1993; Watkins and Watkins, 1984; Welsch and Young, 1983). In addition, women tend to be crowded into certain female occupations where technical experience and managerial skills were not central to success, and they tend to enter non-male-dominated markets, for example service industries and retailing (Brown and Hisrich, 1986; Cromie, 1987; Watkins and Watkins, 1984). Women tend to have limited access to their own money or collateral for borrowing (Cannon et al., 1988).

The Homosexual as a Minority Group Worthy of Entrepreneurial Research

What is democracy but mob rule? As John Stuart Mill said democracy leads to the tyranny of the majority. Let me ask you, who are the disenfranchised of this country? Minorities, that's who. Ethnic, racial and sexual minorities.

(Rodi, 1994: 127)

Kets de Vries (1977) and Hagen (1962) suggest that entrepreneurs frequently come from ethnic, religious or some other form of minority groups. While many minority groups have now been studied, the homosexual appears to be the most obvious minority group not to have received any attention from entrepreneurial researchers. Several explanations could be given as to why this minority has been ignored to date, ranging from the view that such a group does not exist, that they have already been researched along with males and females or that they are too invisible to form the basis of research.

Historically homosexuality is linked with artistic avocation and not with an interest in business. This might suggest that homosexual entrepreneurs do not exist. This suggestion is rebuffed by Edward Sagarin, who is quoted by Kaiser

(1997) as arguing that homosexuals are hardly confined to the arts. In addition, Kets de Vries (1977) felt that an artistic avocation might be to an individual's advantage in setting up in business.

Others might suggest that to be singled out for research a minority group needs to be seen to be different from those groups already studied and therefore, as part of the overall population, homosexuals have already been studied. The same was said about the need to research female entrepreneurs until the early eighties (Cromie, 1987; Watkins and Watkins, 1984).

The third and probably most plausible reason why homosexuals, as a minority group, may have been ignored is that unlike race or sex, homosexuality can easily be concealed. It is very difficult to research a group that has become expert at concealing its identity. For many homosexuals the frustration of negative homophobic experiences may never end. The need for concealment may begin at school, but may go on into employment.

'Coming out of the closet', is still seen as a major problem. The deepest of the closets is the corporate closet. I know thousands of people who are gay, but I cannot name a single openly gay board member or officer of a public company.

(Jefferson, 1991: B14)

The advent of the gay liberation movement in the 1970s and the increasing number of homosexuals abandoning the corporate ranks in favour of running their own businesses may mean that invisibility and the need for concealment may be coming to an end. Also with groups such as The Gay Business Association listing almost 200 members and trade publications such as the *Gay to Z Directory* listing over 5,000 gay/gay friendly businesses throughout the UK, homosexual entrepreneurs can no longer be ignored. Such evidence would suggest that they make a suitable minority entrepreneurial group to investigate what motivates them to be entrepreneurs and what propels them into business.

The Homosexual as a Deviant, Marginalised or Displaced Person

A deviant is defined as 'a person whose behaviour, especially sexual behaviour, deviates from that which is considered to be acceptable', as a marginalised person 'relegated to the fringes, out of the mainstream' and as the displaced person 'forced from his home or country' (Collins, 1986: 423).

The homosexual would appear to fulfil all three definitions on the grounds that their sexual orientation still appears to be unacceptable to a large portion of the population. Many are also forced to leave their home town and move to cities where they are more likely to find acceptance.

Sylacauga like many small towns is not the kind of place where it is easy to be an out gay or lesbian. If they are fortunate, most gays move to Birmingham or, better still, Atlanta in the neighbouring state of Georgia.

(Cook, 1999: 44)

On the basis of such evidence many homosexuals also meet the definition of the displaced.

Entrepreneurial Research Relating to Deviant or Marginalised Individuals – The Psychodynamic Model

No specific research has been carried out to date on the homosexual entrepreneur, but several researchers have studied entrepreneurs in the context of being socially deviant or marginalised characters such as Hagen (1962), Kets de Vries (1977), Scase and Goffee (1980) and Stanworth and Curran (1976).

Kets de Vries (1977: 34–57) is probably the best-known proponent of the psychodynamic model of entrepreneurship. He suggests that entrepreneurs are misfits, deviants or marginal characters spurred on primarily by adverse experiences in early childhood. He also believed that 'the possession of, and belief in, different systems from that of the mainstream of society will contribute to the development of unconventional patterns of behaviour – entrepreneurship being one of them'. The homosexual, as a member of a marginalised minority group, is at odds with the majority of the population regarding their sexuality and may act like Kets de Vries' deviants and opt out of employment, with its risks of sexual discrimination and harassment, and set up in business on their own.

Kets de Vries (1977) believes that as a result of this psychological process the entrepreneur may feel at their best when they have reached 'rock bottom'. Their feelings of guilt being paid off, they are free, unburdened and able to start all over again. Homosexuals who have decided to be open about their sexuality often have to reassess and restructure their whole existence.

Shapero (1975b) addressed the issue of the entrepreneur as being a displaced person. Homosexuals may well fit into this group of 'displaced' individuals wishing to escape homophobia in the workplace or the perceived constraints relating to promotion and advancement placed on them in the workplace if their sexuality becomes an issue. This would appear to be consistent with the social marginality theory put forward by Stanworth and Curran (1976) and Scase and Goffee (1980), who suggest that a perceived incongruity can arise between an individual's personal attributes and the position they hold at work and in society.

Hagen (1962) suggested that where the behaviour of a group is not accepted or where a group is discriminated against, then a psychological disequilibrium would occur. He suggested that while many individuals within such a group would withdraw out of sight – 'homosexual invisibility' – for others the situation may trigger a personality transformation. For Hagen, this transformation could result in the emergence of an entrepreneur.

The work of Kets de Vries (1977) has been criticised on a number of counts. Most successful entrepreneurs, when asked, stated they had perfectly happy childhoods. Stanworth and Curran (1976) and Scase and Goffee (1980) stated that Kets de Vries' research did not take into account the wider social or societal pressures that might propel individuals into self-employment. Levinson et al. (1978) and Chell et al., (1991) felt that his work was too

focused on childhood experience to the exclusion of other lifecycle effects thus omitting the possible influences that occur during adolescent and adult stages of development.

It is these last two criticisms (i.e. societal pressure and the gap years between childhood and the age when individuals actually set up in business) that this paper seeks to address in relation to the homosexual entrepreneurial. Homosexuals may well have had idyllic childhoods and good relationships with their parents. However, the major difference for the homosexual is that from puberty or earlier, because of their developing sexuality, they may have felt 'different', 'excluded', 'unacceptable to society', often being labelled deviants – and this does not change with age.

As stated earlier, certain researchers have hypothesised that individuals are either 'pushed' or 'pulled' into entrepreneurship (Storey, 1991). Homosexuals, like heterosexuals, may be 'pushed' into self-employment because conventional options are less attractive or because they become unemployed or feel excluded. According to Scase and Goffee (1980), entrepreneurs may be more likely to emerge from those groups in society that are 'deprived' or 'marginal', i.e. groups which are discriminated against, persecuted, 'looked down upon' or 'exceptionally exploited'. Homosexuals may fit into this group of 'displaced' individuals wishing to escape homophobia in the workplace or the perceived constraints relating to their promotion and advancement placed on them because of their sexuality if it is known or suspected in the workplace.

Like their heterosexual counterparts, homosexuals are likely to be 'pulled' into creating new businesses by the same desire for the perceived financial rewards of entrepreneurship, the sense of achievement to be gained from running their own business, the desire to gain the social standing achieved by entrepreneurs and the need to be creative. In addition many homosexuals may be 'pulled' by the desire to be free of the stigma of their sexuality and be able to work with other homosexuals.

In 1981, Robert Caseletto left his position as assistant treasurer of a large cosmetic concern to start his own business. As a one-time stockbroker, he had long hoped to run a brokerage concern. As a homosexual, he wanted a job where he could be open about his sexual orientation and work with other gay people.

(Jefferson, 1991: B14)

Chell (1985: 2) states that to validate the psychodynamic approach 'it should be possible to identify a set of reasons (consonant with the deviant stereotype) which typify the entrepreneur. While it is possible to agree with this contention for entrepreneurs in general, homosexuals could have one reason consonant with the deviant stereotype, i.e. the continued, often violent, homophobia prevalent all around them.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Aims of the Research

The research undertaken for this paper set out to:

- Determine whether homosexuals are a minority group worthy of research in the context of entrepreneurship;
- Determine whether UK male homosexual entrepreneurs have the same traits and are motivated to set up in business for the same reasons as their heterosexual male counterparts or whether, as with the minority group of women, other forces are at work.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are to be tested:

H1: UK male homosexuals have the same entrepreneurial traits and attributes as their heterosexual counterparts; and,

H2: UK male homosexual entrepreneurs are motivated by the same catalysts to set up in business as their heterosexual counterparts.

In order to determine whether homosexuals have the same entrepreneurial traits and are motivated to set up in business by the same catalysts as their heterosexual counterparts, and the minority group of women, it was necessary to research the position relating to entrepreneurs in general and women in particular. This was accomplished through secondary research by an analysis of textbooks, journal articles, newspaper articles, the Internet and government information. The objective was to create a picture of individual entrepreneurs, the reasons why entrepreneurs in general create new businesses and the reasons why female entrepreneurs, a recognised minority group in entrepreneurship, create new businesses. In addition, in an attempt to determine whether homosexual entrepreneurs are a minority group worthy of study, in the context of deviant, marginalised or displaced persons, the remaining secondary research focused specifically on the work of those such as Hagen (1962), Kets de Vries (1977), Scase and Goffee (1980), Shapero (1975b) and Stanworth and Curran (1976).

Primary research was carried out through a postal questionnaire sent to 185 members of the only known UK gay business association. A total of 68 completed questionnaires were returned for analysis (a response rate of approximately 37 per cent). Due to the limited accessibility of homosexual entrepreneurs to study, no pre-test or pilot questionnaires were used. The questionnaire used only 'closed' questions (Gill and Johnson, 1997). Space was left at the end of the questionnaire to allow respondents to express any further views.

Of the respondents 94 per cent were homosexual males, which meant that no useful statistical evidence could be drawn from the remaining 6 per cent

relating to heterosexual males and homosexual females. Therefore only the results of the responding homosexual males will be analysed.

DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of the data confirmed that there is little, if any, difference between homosexual entrepreneurs and their male and female heterosexual counterparts when it comes to traits, attributes and characteristics relevant to entrepreneurship: 33 per cent wanted to take advantage of an opportunity; 18 per cent wanted freedom to adapt their own approach to their work; 14 per cent needed to achieve something and get recognition for it; 12 per cent desired higher earnings; and 8 per cent wanted to control their own time. Interestingly, the most popular first choice appears to suggest that the economic theories of entrepreneurship may still be relevant, i.e. many of the respondents were merely responding to an economic opportunity that presented itself to them.

The majority of respondents entered into entrepreneurship from previous employment (83 per cent) and almost all appear to have been 'pulled' into entrepreneurship by the attractions of setting up in business on their own. Only one respondent was apparently 'pushed' into business by the negative aspects of employment, i.e. to escape homophobia at work. The fact that the respondents appeared to have been 'pulled' into business by its apparent attractions is not surprising as the motivational statements from which they had to choose were almost all expressed in positive 'pull' terms.

While the respondents did not appear to give any weight to homophobia in the work-place as a factor which 'pushed' them into entrepreneurship, an unusual result occurred in relation to their responses to their openness about their homosexuality as they progressed through life and into business. While at school, only 9 per cent were open about their sexuality; the figure rose to 61 per cent while in employment and up to 80 per cent when in a business of their own. It appears that while being open about their sexuality was a progressive thing, at least 19 per cent felt that they could only be open about it once out of employment. The lack of ability to be open about their sexuality whilst in employment could have been because of the fear of homophobia or the feeling of being a 'misfit' at work.

There appears to be no obvious link between the catalysts indicated by women and those of the homosexual respondents. Again this would not seem unreasonable, as the biggest catalyst for women appeared to be their need to balance family life with their work life, something that does not normally affect homosexual males.

Findings in Relation to Psychodynamic Theories

The results of the primary research carried out in relation to the psychodynamic theories of those such as Kets de Vries (1977) also appear to be inconclusive. Kets de Vries (1977) placed a lot of emphasis on entrepreneurs being individuals who had experienced an unhappy childhood with fathers who were either domineering or distant. Of the respondents 81 per cent claimed to

have had a happy childhood but, interestingly, fathers do not appear to have had a strong childhood influence, i.e. they appear distant as suggested by Kets de Vries. Sixty-four per cent of the respondents said that their mothers or some other family member had the strongest influence over them during childhood. While not conclusive, the evidence does appear to suggest that the majority of homosexual entrepreneurs had only weak relationships with their fathers, which may support the findings of Kets de Vries.

Thirty-six per cent of the respondents said that they felt isolated from their heterosexual peers suggesting that a large proportion of respondents appeared to be marginalised. Thirty-six per cent indicated that they had suffered from some form of homophobia during their childhood and only 9 per cent were open about their sexuality while at school. The implication of this last fact might be that the remaining 91 per cent feared homophobic abuse if they had been open about their sexuality, i.e. they suffered in silence. Almost 20 per cent of the respondents waited until they were in business on their own before they were open about their sexuality. The above evidence would appear to give some, though very weak, support to the social marginality theories of Scase and Goffee (1980) and Stanworth and Curran (1976), who believed that individuals may become entrepreneurs to avoid the incongruity of how they view themselves and how they are viewed by society.

Factors Influencing Entrepreneurs: Education, Age, Experience and Financial Support

As in the case of female entrepreneurs, some of the more interesting findings come in relation to other information that was collected from the questionnaire responses.

Education: Table 7.1 shows that the homosexual male entrepreneur appears to be better educated than either the men or women in the Watkins and Watkins (1984) study, with 88 per cent having A Levels or above compared to 77 per cent for heterosexual males and 81 per cent for women.

Table 7.1: Education Level of Female, Male and Male Gay Entrepreneurs

Education Level	Women %*	Men %*	Homosexual Males %**
0 Level or equivalent only	19	23	2
A Level or equivalent	10	2	27
Degree or equivalent	26	21	15
Secretarial-type qualifications (sub-degree commercial)	19	2	0
Recognised professional qualifications	<u>26</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>56</u>
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

*Information taken from Watkins and Watkins (1984).

**Results of questionnaire.

The percentage of homosexuals holding professional qualifications (56 per cent) was slightly higher than that of their heterosexual male counterparts (52 per cent) and significantly higher than that of women (26 per cent). Of the homosexual respondents 74 per cent said that their professional qualification related to their current business as compared to 80 per cent for heterosexual males. The evidence gathered would appear to agree with sociologists such as Roberts (1977) who believe, amongst other things, that the level of education attained dictates the individual's business prospects.

Financial Support: Of the respondents 50 per cent used only their own funds or those of family and friends when setting up in business. A further 42 per cent used banks in addition to their own funds or those of their families as a source of finance. Only 3 per cent made use of public sources of finance such as local or central government grants. Forty-six per cent of the respondents said that their major constraint when setting up in business was the lack of finance. This would appear similar to the position of female entrepreneurs.

Age and Experience: According to Watkins and Watkins (1984) the average age of men becoming entrepreneurs was 39 years, compared to 32 years for women. The results of the questionnaire show the average age of homosexuals when setting up in business was 32 years like their female counterparts. Watkins and Watkins suggested that at 32 years women were probably too young to have accumulated a lot of experience or capital. Evidence from the questionnaire also suggests that the average number of jobs held by homosexual entrepreneurs prior to going into business was only 3, which again might suggest that they had little opportunity to gain experience and managerial skills before going into business, compared to their heterosexual male counterparts. Interestingly 55 per cent of the homosexual entrepreneurs said that their current business related to their previous work experience. This was marginally better than women entrepreneurs (40 per cent), but much worse compared to their heterosexual male counterparts (84 per cent), as stated by Watkins and Watkins (1984).

When compared to the business areas of operation identified in Watkins and Watkins' study, an unusual similarity occurs between previous findings relating to women and that of homosexual entrepreneurs. Table 7.2 shows that the majority of homosexual entrepreneurs (88 per cent) appear to be involved in service-related business, compared to 61 per cent for women and only 25 per cent for heterosexual men.

The areas in which homosexuals set up in business might appear contradictory in light of the educational achievements attained by both homosexuals and women, but when considered with the findings relating to access to finance and the age at which they enter entrepreneurship, a similar position to women may exist. The homosexual appears to rely primarily on their own funds when setting up in business. They also appear to set up in business at a fairly young age, certainly much younger than their heterosexual counterparts. By being younger, they will not have had the opportunity to accumulate large amounts of capital. They will also have had less chance of gaining sufficient

Table 7.2: Business Operation Areas: Female, Male and Male Gay Entrepreneurs

Business Area	Women's* Businesses	Men's* Businesses	Homosexual Males** Businesses
Distribution	12	2	-
Catering	6	0	11
Other Consumer Services	14	2	23
Industrial/Commercial Services	<u>29</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>54</u>
(All Services)	61	25	88
Manufacturing	31	67	12
Construction	0	2	0
Transportation	2	2	0
Primary Extraction	0	2	0
Agribusiness	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
	100	100	100

*Information taken from Watkins and Watkins (1984).

**Results of questionnaire.

experience from previous employment. As a result, the choice could be seen in terms of high motivation to immediate independence tempered by economic reality, rather than a conscious decision to enter a sector that requires lower educational qualifications, less experience and less capital.

CONCLUSION

The aims of this paper were to:

- Determine whether homosexuals are a minority group worthy of research in the context of entrepreneurship;
- Determine whether homosexual entrepreneurs have the same traits and are motivated to set up in business for the same reasons as their heterosexual male counterparts or whether, as with the minority group of women, other forces are at work

and to test the following hypotheses:

H1: Homosexuals have the same entrepreneurial traits and attributes as their heterosexual counterparts.

H2: Homosexual entrepreneurs are motivated by the same catalysts to set up in business as their heterosexual counterparts.

This paper demonstrates that homosexual entrepreneurs are a minority group worthy of research in the context of entrepreneurship. It also lends support to the hypothesis that homosexual male entrepreneurs appear to have the same traits and are motivated by the same catalysts to set up in business as their heterosexual male counterparts. From the evidence gathered, the aims of this paper have been met and the two hypotheses have been confirmed.

Apparent Contradictions

Despite the conclusion reached above, the results attained may not represent homosexual entrepreneurs throughout the UK. It was shown within the paper 'The Homosexual as a Deviant, Marginalised or Displaced Person' that the homosexual entrepreneur had many similarities to the individuals identified by researchers such as Kets de Vries, (1977) Scase and Goffee (1980), Shapero (1975a) and Stanworth and Curran (1976). Each of these researchers studied the entrepreneur as either a 'deviant', 'marginalised' or 'displaced person' who is 'pushed' into business by the negative aspects of either their position at work or in society. It might have been expected that homosexuals, as a marginalised group, would have indicated such 'push' factors as homophobia at work as a motivational factor propelling them into business, but very few of the respondents did mention such factors.

Firstly, when sending out the questionnaire via The Gay Business Association, no information was available as to the membership of the association, the type of businesses operated or the location from which the businesses operated. Subsequent to the return of the questionnaire it was discovered that all but three of those sent the questionnaire operated in or around the City of London. Such homosexual entrepreneurs may experience little or no problems with regard to being open about their sexuality as compared to those homosexual entrepreneurs operating outwith London.

Secondly, the average age of the respondents' current businesses was over nine years. In addition, the majority of respondents had also owned businesses prior to the current one, indicating that it is at least nine years since the decision to go into business was made. It may be possible that some of the respondents, now comfortable with their sexuality, do not remember if negative reasons, including homophobia, were important motivational factors in propelling them into business.

Finally, the very wording of the questionnaire may have influenced the responses. Similarly to previous research, the questions relating to motivation were expressed primarily in 'pull' terms, i.e. in terms of the attractions of setting up in business. Had the questions been worded in 'push' terms different responses may have been obtained.

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