Annotated Bibliography for Sexism, 2010 - 2016

DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

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Annotated Bibliography for Cyberbullying

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External Reports

Summary: This document presents a collection of externally published research articles focusing on sexism. Articles include authors from both academic and military settings. This bibliography includes articles, citations, and abstracts. A total of 25 reference citations are provided that span from 2010 to 2016.
External Reports


Traditional heterosexual dating and courtship scripts (e.g., men pay for date, women take partner’s last name in marriage) reflect different standards of desirable behavior for women and men. Analogous to sexual double standards, dating double standards reflect the greater agency and power traditionally accorded to men in society. In the present study, we investigated factors related to young heterosexual adults’ endorsement of dating double standards. Participants were 330 female and male U.S. undergraduates at a California public university (57% female, ages 18–25 years-old) from diverse ethnic backgrounds. In the Heterosexual Dating Double-Standards Scale, respondents rate the desirability of five dating and courtship behaviors (initiate date, hold door open, pay for date, propose marriage, take spouse’s last name) separately for women and men. Preliminary analyses revealed participants generally expressed double standards by rating the desirability of behaviors differently for female and male characters in the traditional direction (e.g., paying for a date rated more desirable for a man than for a woman). We predicted dating double standards would be positively related to factors previously found to predict traditional gender roles (viewing popular media, religious attendance) as well as attitudes that reflect traditional views (conservative political beliefs, benevolent and hostile sexism, disavowing a feminist identity). These hypotheses were generally supported. Among these correlations, dating double standards were strongly associated with benevolent sexism (among women and men) and with hostile sexism (among men). Implications for future research are discussed.


Few studies have examined how people perceive psychological gender differences despite the practical importance of these perceptions for everyday life. In three studies, we examined whether there is a positive association between sexism and the tendency to exaggerate psychological gender differences. Study 1 demonstrated that the more strongly men endorsed hostile sexism and the more strongly women endorsed hostile or benevolent sexism, the larger they perceived gender differences to be across a broad range of psychological traits. Study 2 documented that the more strongly people endorsed hostile or benevolent sexism, the more likely they were to exaggerate the size of gender differences. In Studies 1 and 2, women perceived gender differences to be larger than did men, after accounting for sexism. Finally, Study 3 showed that increasing (decreasing) the perceived size of gender differences predicts corresponding increases (decreases) in sexism. These results support relevant theory, which argues that differentiation between genders underlies sexist ideologies, and they may inform future intervention studies that aim to reduce sexism by targeting exaggerated gender beliefs. Discussion highlights the proposed connection between sexism and the belief that “men are from Mars and women are from Venus”.

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Sexism and sexual harassment are not uncommon in online environments such as social networking sites, forums, and video games. This experiment investigated whether users’ anonymity and level of interactivity with sexist content on social media influenced sexist attitudes and offline behavior. Participants (N =172) used a Twitter account that was anonymous or had personally identifying details. They were asked to share (i.e., retweet) or write posts incorporating a sexist hashtag. After exposure, participants completed two purportedly unrelated tasks, a survey and a job hiring simulation in which they evaluated male and female candidates’ resumés. Anonymous participants reported greater hostile sexism after tweeting than nonanonymous participants. Participants who composed sexist tweets reported greater hostile sexism and ranked female job candidates as less competent than those who retweeted, although this did not significantly affect their likelihood to hire.


Sexist humor may be more difficult to confront than serious expressions of sexism because humor disguises the biased nature of the remark. The present research investigated whether delivering a sexist remark as a joke, compared to a serious statement, tempered perceptions that the speaker was sexist which, in turn, made women less likely to confront. Using a computer-mediated instant messaging paradigm, women were randomly assigned to receive the same sexist remark phrased either in a serious manner or as a joke. We recorded how women actually responded to the sexist remark and coded for confrontation. In Experiments 1 (195 women) and 2 (134 women) we found that humor decreased perceptions that the speaker was sexist. Furthermore, as perceptions that the perpetrator was sexist decreased, women’s confronting also decreased. Experiment 2 demonstrated an additional consequence of reducing the perceived sexism of the perpetrator—it increased tolerance of sexist behavior perpetrated against an individual woman and sexual harassment more generally. Interestingly, the indirect effects only appeared when women at least moderately endorsed hostile sexism. For hostile sexists, failure to identify sexism reduced confrontation and increased tolerance for sexual harassment and sexist behavior. Contrary to popular belief, humor can actually make sexist messages more dangerous and difficult to confront than serious remarks.

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Prior research demonstrates detrimental effects of sexism on female targets’ well-being and career outcomes. Extending research on those targeted by sexism, the current study explored the collateral damage of ambient sexism on bystanders observing sexism directed at others. An experiment with 218 U.S. undergraduates at a large West-coast public university assessed how ambient sexism directed at a female job applicant impacted male and female bystanders’ self-esteem and career aspirations. Results generally supported theoretical predictions regarding the moderating impact of bystander gender on the relationship between ambient sexism and bystander well-being. As hypothesized, ambient hostile sexism more negatively impacted female bystanders than male bystanders with regard to performance-based state self-esteem. Performance-based self-esteem in turn predicted career aspirations such that lower performance-based state self-esteem predicted lower career aspirations: gender moderated this mediated relationship such that the indirect effect was more negative for female bystanders than male bystanders. Gender also moderated the relationship between ambient benevolent sexism and appearance-based state self-esteem. Women observing benevolent sexism tended to report enhanced appearance-based esteem relative to women in the hostile sexism and control conditions, whereas men observing benevolent sexism reported significantly lower appearance esteem than men in the hostile sexism and control conditions. In sum, the current study suggests that women and men bystanders are impacted differently by ambient benevolent and hostile sexism.


Expressions of prejudice are considered more severe when consistent with prototypical features. Two studies examine how speaker gender interacts with the type of sexism expressed (hostile vs. benevolent) to influence participants’ agreement with sexism. Participants (*N = 806*) evaluated a male or female target whose opinions reflected hostile or benevolent sexism toward women (Study 1) or men (Study 2). Participants were more likely to agree with benevolent sexist statements expressed by speakers praising their out-groups and were more likely to agree with hostile sexist statements expressed by speakers denigrating their in-groups. Mediation analyses suggested that participants’ agreement increased as their perceptions of the speaker as prejudiced decreased. These findings are discussed in the context of the justification of sexism.

Much work has been carried out on sexist attitudes, but only little on sexist behaviors. The goal of the present research was to close this gap by testing how a variety of benevolent and hostile sexist behaviors correlate with implicit and explicit sexist attitudes. In Study 1 ($N = 126$), we developed implicit association tests for benevolent sexism and hostile sexism and illustrated that implicit and explicit benevolent sexist beliefs, as well as implicit and explicit hostile sexist beliefs, were positively correlated. In Study 2 ($N = 83$ of Study 1), we tested whether implicit and explicit benevolent and hostile sexist attitudes correlate with benevolent and hostile sexist behaviors. As expected, explicit benevolent (but not hostile) sexist attitudes predicted benevolent sexist behavior, whereas explicit hostile (but not benevolent) sexist attitudes predicted hostile sexist behavior. Implicit sexist attitudes did not predict sexist behavior. The implications of these findings are discussed.


Two experiments test whether using humor moderates the effect of the type of prejudice (racist or sexist) on evaluations of discriminatory communications. Experiment 1 examined a) the offensiveness of sexist and racist humor and b) whether jokes were judged as confrontation-worthy compared to statements expressing the same prejudicial sentiment. Racist jokes and statements were rated as more offensive and confrontation-worthy than sexist statements and jokes, respectively. Additionally, sexist jokes were rated as less offensive than sexist statements. Experiment 2 examined a) the perceived appropriateness of three responses (ignoring, saying “that’s not funny,” or labeling as discrimination) to sexist or racist jokes and b) the likeability of the confronter. Saying “that’s not funny” was the most acceptable response to jokes, but labeling a racist joke as racism was perceived as more appropriate than labeling a sexist joke as sexism. Finally, confronters of racism were liked more than those who confronted sexism.

Gender inequality in organizations is a complex phenomenon that can be seen in organizational structures, processes, and practices. For women, some of the most harmful gender inequalities are enacted within human resources (HRs) practices. This is because HR practices (i.e., policies, decision-making, and their enactment) affect the hiring, training, pay, and promotion of women. We propose a model of gender discrimination in HR that emphasizes the reciprocal nature of gender inequalities within organizations. We suggest that gender discrimination in HR-related decision-making and in the enactment of HR practices stems from gender inequalities in broader organizational structures, processes, and practices. This includes leadership, structure, strategy, culture, organizational climate, as well as HR policies. In addition, organizational decision makers’ levels of sexism can affect their likelihood of making gender biased HR-related decisions and/or behaving in a sexist manner while enacting HR practices. Importantly, institutional discrimination in organizational structures, processes, and practices play a pre-eminent role because not only do they affect HR practices, they also provide a socializing context for organizational decision makers’ levels of hostile and benevolent sexism. Although we portray gender inequality as a self-reinforcing system that can perpetuate discrimination, important levers for reducing discrimination are identified.


This study examined the nonverbal and verbal expressions of hostile and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism is sexist antipathy and benevolent sexism is a chivalrous belief that women are warm yet incompetent. We predicted that hostile sexist men would display less affiliative expressions but benevolent sexist men would display more affiliative expressions during mixed-gender interactions. Twenty-seven pairs of U.S. male and female undergraduates from a private university in New England participated in this study. These mixed-gender dyads participated in two social interactions: a structured trivia game followed by an unstructured conversation period. During the trivia game, men with more benevolent sexism were perceived to be more patient overall when waiting for the woman to answer the trivia questions. Furthermore, we examined the men’s nonverbal and verbal expressions during the unstructured interaction—naïve raters made impression ratings of the men’s nonverbal and verbal behavior, and trained coders counted the frequency of specific nonverbal cues (e.g., smiles). A word count software was used for verbal content analysis. As predicted, more hostile sexism was associated with less affiliative nonverbal and verbal expressions (e.g., less approachable, less friendly, and less smiling), but more benevolent sexism was associated with more affiliative nonverbal and verbal expressions (e.g., more approachable, more likely to smile, and more positive word usage). The effects held after controlling for men’s personality traits and partners’ nonverbal behavior. Differential behavioral expressions of benevolent and hostile sexism have theoretical importance as we can examine how sexism maintains the status quo at the interpersonal level.

We investigated how men’s masculine identification and ambivalent sexism relate to evaluations of male and female subtypes. Masculine identification correlated with positive attitudes toward male and female types that conform to traditional gender norms (i.e., masculine men, feminine women), but negative attitudes toward feminine men. However, masculine identification was not associated with negative evaluations toward other nontraditional male (stay-at-home fathers, feminist men) or with nontraditional female (masculine women, career women, and feminist women) subtypes. By contrast, hostile sexism consistently predicted negative evaluations of nontraditional female and male types, whereas benevolent sexism predicted positive evaluations of traditional female types. We suggest that masculine identification generally promotes favoritism toward traditional male and (like benevolent sexism) traditional female subtypes, rather than (as hostile sexism does) derogation toward nontraditional subtypes.


We investigated whether ambivalent sexism predicts bias against female drivers in a simulated civil trial paradigm. Participants were randomly assigned to read a vignette of an automobile accident involving a male or female defendant. In a driving context designed to incite feelings of competitiveness toward women (Study 1), hostile sexism predicted greater responsibility attributed to the female defendant. In a context designed to elicit paternalistic attitudes toward women (Study 2), benevolent sexism predicted increased responsibility attributed to the female defendant. Findings show that hostile and benevolent sexism predict different patterns of discriminatory treatment depending on contextually triggered concepts of women.

The sexual double standard is the notion that women are evaluated negatively and men positively for engaging in similar sexual behaviors. Because traditional, gender-based stereotypes are reflected in the attitudes that people hold towards men and women, it is likely that sexism plays a part in the manifestation of the double standard. The goal of the present study is to investigate the relationship between sexism (prejudice against individuals based on their gender) and the sexual double standard. There are two types of sexism: hostile (negative prejudice) and benevolent (positive prejudice). We hypothesized that participants displaying high levels of either type of sexism would be most likely to exhibit the sexual double standard. A US-sample of 232 undergraduates from a Southwestern university completed the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) and the Ambivalence Towards Men Inventory (AMI) and then evaluated a hypothetical target individual who reported having zero, one or 12 sexual partners. Results show that participants’ sexist attitudes towards men and women were related to their exhibition of the sexual double standard. Specifically, men and women’s hostile attitudes towards targets of their own gender were related to negative evaluations of highly sexually active targets of the same gender, while men and women’s benevolent attitudes towards the opposite gender were related to positive evaluation of highly sexually active targets of the opposite gender. Implications of the present results and directions for future research are discussed.


U.S. Air Force noncommissioned officers assigned to basic military training instructor (MTI) duty completed measures of attitudes previously linked to sexual harassment and sexual assault in the research literature: (a) attitudes of antipathy toward women (hostile sexism, Glick & Fiske, 1996), and (b) attitudes favoring authoritarian use of power. Concurrent validation against trainee evaluations of MTIs on broader criteria showed that proauthoritarian attitudes were negatively associated with ratings of MTI effectiveness in mentoring and leadership; additionally, MTIs with stronger attitudes of hostile sexism were more likely reported as engaging in maltreatment of female trainees. These initial results contribute to ongoing understanding of individual differences as relevant to improve screening for a position of authority over the lowest ranking, and potentially most vulnerable military members. Directions for future research and implications for personnel selection and broader cultural changes are discussed.

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In the first examination of the accuracy of metaperceptions of sexism among White, Asian, and Black women and men (N = 308), results showed that regardless of ethnicity, both genders were similarly inaccurate, but in opposing ways. Women overestimated men’s hostile sexism (HS) and underestimated men’s benevolent sexism (BS), whereas men overestimated women’s BS and underestimated women’s HS. Further, metaperceptions of HS were negatively related to metaperceptions of BS, for both genders. Individual differences in sexism informed metaperceptions only for men (not women). In concert, the findings support an illusion of antagonism between HS and BS. Viewing HS and BS as oppositional is an illusion because, cross-culturally, they are positively correlated in men and women alike (e.g., Glick et al., 2000), and both forms of sexism reinforce the gender hierarchy (Rudman & Glick, 2008). Therefore, disarming the illusion of antagonism is an overlooked key to advancing gender equality.


Benevolent sexism functions to uphold gender inequality by expressing caring and reverent attitudes exclusively toward women. Do these subjective benefits lure women to endorse benevolent sexism? We tested this by examining whether women’s psychological entitlement was associated with concurrent levels of benevolent sexism and longitudinal changes in benevolent sexism over 1 year in a national panel sample (N = 4421 New Zealanders). As predicted, latent variable interaction analyses indicated that women higher in psychological entitlement more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism and increasingly endorsed benevolent sexism over the year. Men’s psychological entitlement was more weakly associated with benevolent sexism concurrently and unrelated to changes in benevolent sexism across time. These findings provide the first evidence that the benefits of benevolent sexism are central to women’s adoption and endorsement of sexist attitudes toward their own gender—attitudes which contribute more broadly to the maintenance of gender inequality.

Recent research has shown that narcissistic men in the United States express more ambivalent sexism than their non-narcissistic counterparts. The present study sought to extend these findings by hypothesizing that psychological entitlement would be a predictor of ambivalent sexism but that that this relationship may vary by gender. Given entitlement’s associations with hostility and aggression and the previously established link between narcissism and sexism in men, we hypothesized that entitlement would predict hostile sexism in men. Given that entitlement is characterized by a pervasive sense of deservingness for special treatment and goods, we expected that entitled women would endorse attitudes of benevolent sexism. These hypotheses were tested using two cross-sectional samples in the U.S.—a sample of undergraduates from a private university in the Midwest (N = 333) and a web-based sample of adults across the U.S. (N = 437). Results from regression analyses confirmed that psychological entitlement is a robust predictor of ambivalent sexism, above and beyond known predictors of sexism such as low openness and relevant covariates such as impression management. In addition, entitlement was a consistent predictor of benevolent sexism in women, but not in men, and a consistent predictor of hostile sexism in men, but not in women. These relationships were largely robust, persisting even when relevant covariates (e.g., socially desirable responding, trait openness) were controlled statistically, although in one sample the link between entitlement and hostile sexism in men was reduced to non-significance when benevolent sexism was controlled for statistically. Implications of these findings are discussed.


This study examined four forms of sexist beliefs as predictors of attitudes toward women in the military and in combat. Survey data revealed that military-affiliated college students (n = 62) held more negative attitudes than civilian students (n = 254) toward women in combat, but the groups did not differ on attitudes toward women in the military. All forms of sexism contributed uniquely to the prediction of attitudes toward women in the military, and 3 forms were associated with approval of women in combat. Sexist beliefs mediated the relationship between military-affiliation status and approval of women in combat.
The increasing presence of women in the public spheres has provoked cultural changes that affect social cognition. These changes implicate social organizations such as the military. Focusing the interest in approaching modern forms of prejudice in terms of gender inequalities, we studied ambivalent sexism attitudes, values and social dominance orientation in a sample of 238 males and females from the National Military School training to become officials. Results show the presence of sexist attitudes. In sex roles and gender typing, female participants show an androgynous stereotype probably related to the need to present themselves closer to men in order to assume leadership.

Research indicates that there is a relationship between gender and sexism. However, there is a gap in the literature linking gender as a moderator of sexism with the use of more modern measures of sexism, rape, and sexual harassment myths. Based on the theory of ambivalent sexism, the purpose of this study was to examine whether gender had a significant moderating effect on sexism as a predictor of the endorsement of rape and sexual harassment myths. Undergraduate students (N = 408) from a private college were administered measures that assessed sexism, rape, and sexual harassment myth acceptance. Two separate moderated hierarchical regression analyses were utilized to assess the moderating effect of gender on two predictor variables (hostile sexism, benevolent sexism) onto the two separate criterion variables (Rape Myth Acceptance and Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance) to see if the variables significantly contribute to the prediction of endorsement of rape and harassment myths. It was found that gender was a significant variable in predicting endorsement of myths, but gender was not a significant moderator of sexism. Additionally, adding hostile and benevolent sexism scores increased prediction over the effect of gender alone. The results of this study will add to the existing body of literature by examining the relationships between gender, two forms of sexism, rape and sexual harassment myths by using modern measures that address validity issues of previous first-generation measures. This investigation will contribute to social change because it addresses complex processes of hostile and benevolent sexist behaviors. Further understanding can provide improved educational measures to recognize sexist attitudes and to prevent rape and sexual harassment.

In two studies, we investigated implicit gender stereotypes of successful managers. Using an adaptation of the Implicit Association Test (IAT) named the Successful Manager IAT (SM-IAT) in Study 1, we found that male participants were more likely to implicitly associate men with successful manager traits and women with unsuccessful manager traits compared to reversed pairings. Women, individuals high in internal motivation to respond without sexism, and those low in external motivation to respond without sexism showed positive implicit associations between women and successful manager traits. In contrast, all participants showed positive views of women on workplace-contextualized explicit measures of gender stereotypes. The findings of Study 2 also revealed that implicit gender stereotypes predicted hypothetical workplace outcomes, such that a greater implicit association of men with successful manager traits, and women with unsuccessful manager traits, was linked to increased workplace rewards assigned to male managers by both male and female participants. The findings of our studies have important implications for both gender stereotyping researchers and workplace practitioners. Theoretically, our studies suggest that explicit and implicit stereotypes of female managers diverge, with implicit stereotypes being more likely to highlight traditional, often negative, views of female managers. Our findings point toward a better understanding of female managers’ challenges in the workplace.


The current research draws from ambivalent sexism theory to examine potential gender differences in the quantity and quality of developmental work experiences. In a sample of managers in the energy industry, men and women reported participating in a similar number of developmental experiences (with comparable levels of support), but men rated these experiences as more challenging and received more negative feedback than did women. Similarly, a sample of female managers in the health care industry reported comparable amounts, but less challenging types, of developmental experiences than their male counterparts’. The results of three complementary experiments suggest that benevolent sexism is negatively related to men’s assignment of challenging experiences to female targets but that men and women were equally likely to express interest in challenging experiences. Taken together, these results suggest that stereotype-based beliefs that women should be protected may limit women’s exposure to challenging assignments, which in turn may partially explain the underrepresentation of women at the highest levels of organizations.

Literature showed that, in respect to hostile sexism, benevolent sexism is relatively positively evaluated. Moreover, women exposed to benevolent sexism tend to neglect their task-related characteristics. The present study aimed at extending research to the general adult population and to men as target of stereotype. Two were the main goals: 1) to explore the possibility of recognizing both hostile and benevolent attitudes toward women and men as prejudiced, and 2) to identify the effects of these attitudes both on women’s and men’s self-perception. On the whole, our results showed that benevolent attitudes toward women are not recognized as sexist, while men seem more sensitive in recognizing sexist ideologies about their in-group. Concerning self-perception, data confirmed the tendency of women and men to respectively describe themselves in communal and agentic terms, except when men are exposed to hostile attitudes toward their in-group. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2014 APA, all rights reserved) (journal abstract)


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The special issue on Ambivalent Sexism (Glick and Fiske 1996, 1999, 2001) reflects the current landscape of ambivalent sexism research. This introduction reviews the theory, exploring the particularly insidious case of benevolent sexism. Next, it presents the included papers, which range broadly, but generally fit one of three research streams in the development of ambivalent sexism research. Some papers focus on converging correlations, exploring ambivalent sexism’s relation to other ideologies and cultural dimensions. Other papers demonstrate causality in context, revealing impact on targets and the prescriptive power of ambivalent ideologies. A third line documents converse causality, illustrating impact on perceivers’ self processes. Finally, we discuss possible future areas of research.