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Ambivalent sexisms Role in Determining Responsibility for Gender Differentiated Negative events

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Introduction

I am interested in discovering if women take harsher blame for negative events that happen while under the influence of alcohol. This idea came to me because of one particular incident that I witnessed at a university. I noticed two college students, one male and one female, making a mistake while drinking. The female college student received harsh blame from friends and other students while the male college student did not. Instances like this can be seen in many different scenarios, especially with college aged students where these alcohol related situations or mistakes may be more prevalent. College age students are, for the majority, drinking alcohol for the first time. For most college students, they cannot drink legally until their second or third year in college but even before they can legally drink, they have access to excess amounts of alcohol with little to no supervision. They interact with it more often and on a larger scale than many other ages that I could have measured which is why they were the best possible group to use in this experiment. College students are more likely than other groups to drink heavily, binge drink, and have alcohol dependence.

Making poor decisions under the influence of alcohol is something that can and does happen to both genders. I realized that an experiment with college students would best allow me to explore gender differences when it comes to responsibility for these types of events. I decided to do a study to see if an individual's Hostile and Benevolent Sexism inventory is something that can lead participants to place more blame on bad decisions made by females than by males. I studied this potential bias using two different quantitative methods which will be discussed at greater lengths under the methodology section. The purpose of this study was to determine if gender bias is a factor that would affect an individual's rating of responsibility for negative

events when alcohol is involved.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if gender bias is a factor that would affect an individual's rating of responsibility for negative events when alcohol is involved. There is little to no current empirical literature that talks about responsibility for alcohol influenced judgements. As of now, it is not proven if the bias exists as no empirical study has been done to figure this out. If one does exist, it would be crucially important to identify why it exists and how to dismantle it. Making a mistake or poor decision under the influence of alcohol is something that can cause stress on an individual's life. Receiving unfair or unjust blame is something that can contribute additional amounts of stress on the individual. It is also important that institutions, most importantly the staff making decisions about citations for alcohol related behaviors at colleges and universities, understand their motivation behind their decision for how just or harsh the punishment may be.

If there is a bias against women acting under the influence, it is possible that women may receive more or harsher punishments. Along with this bias, the opposite would be true, that males receive less punishment from the same institutions. The lesser amount of punishment may lead to a lack accountability. Less blame for the same actions would be harmful for the individual. The individuals would not learn from their mistakes in the same manner due to being held to a different standard and may be more likely to repeat the same types of mistakes or worse mistakes in the future. If there is a difference between responsibilities attributed to males versus females in the same situation, it would be imperative to both genders that the gap be identified

and changes be made in the individual and institutional level to remedy the difference.

Alcohol Prevalence in College

Men and women in college have a higher prevalence of alcohol in their lives than other persons of the same age (18-22) who do not attend college. According to the NSDUH, in 2015 58% of college students who attended full time drank alcohol within the previous month. This is compared to 48% of non-college drinkers of the same age consuming alcohol within the previous month. Heavy drinking is seen in 12.5% of full time college students where their same aged counterparts only had a heavy drinking rate of 8.5% (NSDUH, 2015). There are many consequences of alcohol consumption whether it is due to the physical effects of alcohol or the decisions made while under the influence. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 1825 college students between the ages of 18-24 die every year from alcohol related incidents. 696,000 students every year of the same age are physically assaulted by another student who is under the influence of alcohol. One in four college students find that their academic performance has decreased as a result of drinking. These college students who consume alcohol are six times more likely to perform poorly on a test and five times more likely to miss a class. As well as these consequences, the students who drink to excess also have more health problems, injuries, unsafe sex, driving while intoxicated, and involvement with the police (NIH, 2015).

These less severe events that affect larger amounts of students are the ones that I wanted to study as gendered stories. Where death or assault are more likely to have a clear victim and perpetrator, responsibility for unsafe sex and driving under the influence are slightly harder to

determine. These less severe events require placing a certain amount of responsibility on the person making the mistake or bad decision but it is harder to determine who is responsible so these types of events were considered when creating the stories. With such a large number of college students drinking and so many risks, these stories take on great significance and misplacement of blame can have additional consequences. It's important to discuss how to handle the situation when a mistake is made as to not create discrepancies between genders.

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI)

The most important literary resource in the development of this thesis is the original study by Glick and Fiske in 1996 on Ambivalent Sexism along with the development of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI). The study starts by outlining the attitudes of sexism into two categories, Hostile or Benevolent. Hostile and Benevolent Sexism are positively correlated. Glick and Fiske also ran a study measuring these two types of sexism against males but that study does not apply in this situation, as this thesis focuses on measuring sexism towards women. Hostile Sexism is much easier to recognize due to its easily identifiable negative feelings against a determined gender, specifically women in this case.

Benevolent Sexism is much harder to spot because it hides itself in subjectively positive tones. In the literature, Glick and Fiske define Benevolent Sexism as "A set of interrelated attitudes toward women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles but that are subjectively positive in feeling tone (for the perceiver) and also tend to elicit behaviors categorized as prosocial or intimacy seeking. Benevolent Sexism is not considered a good thing, for despite positive feelings it may indicate for the perceiver, its

underpinnings lie in traditional stereotyping and masculine dominance, and its consequences are often damaging"(p 491-492). The Benevolent Sexism stereotypes toward women includes viewing women as pure, kind, nurturing, matronly, and as more innocent than males.

Ambivalent Sexism is the mix of Hostile and Benevolent prejudice against women and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) is the 22 question survey used to measure these types of sexism. Without the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory test, it would be much more difficult for researchers to spot Benevolent Sexism. The test was developed to measure the levels of Hostile and Benevolent Sexism against women. The test involved 2250 participants over 6 different studies. They all came from Massachusetts, with four of the studies gathering college student participants, and the other two from public areas as a non-student sample. The participants took a 140 item survey of "attitudes toward men and women and their relationships in contemporary society." The 140 statements asked the participants to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with the given prompt. The level was measured on a scale of 0-5 with 0 being disagree strongly and 5 being agree strongly with no midpoint. The questions for Hostile Sexism included statements such as "the world would be a better place if women supported men and criticized them less" and Benevolent statements such as "many women have a quality of purity that few men possess". 22 statements out of the original 140 were required for the study, 11 regarding Hostile Sexism and 11 regarding Benevolent Sexism. The study found that Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism are positively correlated and Hostile Sexism averaged about M = 2.75, SD = 0.49 for men; M = 2.04, SD = 0.42 for women. Benevolent Sexism averaged (M = 2.56, SD = 0.62 for men; M = 2.57, SD =0.46 for women . The positive correlation measured .71 which is a strong correlation and it means that as the scores for Hostile Sexism increase, so will the scores

for Benevolent Sexism and vice versa (Glick and Fiske, 1996).

As studied by Abrams, Viki, Masser & Bohner (2003), those who do not follow these gendered stereotype expectations are treated negatively by individuals high in Hostile Sexism. Women who conform to the traditional gender roles that are reinforced by Benevolent Sexism, such as being as pure and kind, are treated favorably by people who are high in Benevolent Sexism. In situations where a woman violates Benevolent Sexism expectations, those who score high in Benevolent Sexism will see her as no longer deserving of protection. Those high in Benevolent Sexism will respond negatively to her, such as holding her more accountable for a negative event. This study was specifically related to blame placed on the victims of stranger and acquaintance rape and it was done using 65 participants from England. The study found that individuals who are high in Benevolent Sexism place more blame on victims of acquaintance rape than individuals who are low in Benevolent Sexism. Since the victims of acquaintance rape are seen as violating the perceived gendered expectations for women, there is more blame placed on them than for stranger rape (Abrams et al, 2003).

The literature also tells the reader that this type of sexism and justification allows the members of the dominant group, in this case males, to discriminate without thinking of their actions as exploitative. This creates a situation where Benevolent Sexism is used as compensation for Hostile Sexism. One example of this would be not letting women walk alone at night. While it may seem compassionate and safer, it relies on the premise that women are weaker and require protection which can lead to further discrimination. These subjectively positive feelings that hide negative stereotypical views towards females can lead to greater blame being placed on these females. The women who end up deviating from the Benevolent sexist

views are going against what is considered acceptable by those who hold Benevolent sexist views. One such Benevolent sexist view is the viewpoint that women 'have a quality of purity that few men possess'. If a woman is seen as breaking from this view, they can be subject to harsh judgements and may be punished for the violation of what is deemed acceptable. Although it is hidden in a positive statement, Benevolent Sexism still perpetuates gender roles and stereotypes and leads to harsher judgements against females, and in this way is similar to Hostile Sexism (Rodgers, 2005). Both types of sexism are important when discussing the levels of responsibility placed on gendered individuals. The stories that will be shown to the participants in my own study will be also be violating the gendered expectations for women in a minor but recognizable way. This is done to see if those high in Benevolent Sexism will place more blame on the female gendered stories than on the corresponding male stories (Abrams et al, 2003).

Previous Findings

Wiener et al. (1997) ran a study involving perceptions of sexual harassment to test if sexual harassment in a work environment interacts with Hostile and Benevolent Sexism. The researchers administered the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, as described and outlined in previous literature and asked the participants to read two harassment cases and make legally relevant decisions about it. The study gathered 320 participants from psychology and business classes at a private Midwestern University with exactly half identifying as female and half identifying as male. This study found that men scored higher than women in both Hostile and Benevolent Sexism. Hostile Sexism means that the person is more likely to exhibit overtly negative stereotypes. This negative effect is easier to notice than Benevolent Sexism, which reinforces

stereotypes and negative gender roles through seemingly positive comments. The participants received one out of two legal cases of work environment sexual harassment. In one of these, labeled the reasonable person (woman) condition, the participants were instructed that Hostile work environments start when an employee is subjected to unwanted and unwarranted sexual conduct that a reasonable person would view as sufficiently severe. The participants would read one of the standards and rate whether the sexual conduct was unwelcome, the severity of the sexual conduct, the pervasiveness of the sexual conduct, and the likelihood that the conduct would affect the victim's work performance. Other factors that were included were the likelihood that the alleged sexual conduct affected the victim's psychological well-being and the likelihood that the plaintiff was subjected to Hostile work environment sexual harassment.

Their responses were recorded on a 9-point Likert scale. The levels that they found of Benevolent and Hostile Sexism in regards to the participants matched Glick and Fiskes original findings and it showed that men scored higher than women on both Hostile and Benevolent Sexism. The study found that women were more accurate than men at distinguishing between the two types of reasonable person situations. Men were not as likely to distinguish between the two standards. Females and participants who scored low in Hostile Sexism also found the defendants alleged conduct to be more unwelcome. Those low in Hostile Sexism also found the sexual harassment to be more severe. Overall, those who were high in Hostile Sexism were less likely to find the defendant's behavior to be unwelcome, less severe, less pervasive, less likely to negatively impact the work performance of the plaintiff, less likely to impact the wellbeing of the plaintiff. By comparing Ambivalent Sexism scores to opinions about situations involving misconduct, this study is looking for how the inventory scores can influence judgement upon

characters in a story. Instead of asking about responsibility, such as this current study did, Wiener et al focused more on perceptions of the event instead of attitudes towards the person or character behind the event. If this study were to be run again, it would be interesting to look into this aspect and help understand views on perpetrators of sexual harassment situations in the workplace which could be applied to other settings. This article helps to provide a clear template for methodology, which was adapted for use in my own study.

Another piece of literature that I found is called *Chivalry and the Moderating Effect of Ambivalent Sexism: Individual differences in Crime Seriousness Judgements,* by Herzog and Oreg (2008). Previous studies found that female offenders are more likely to be given lenient judgements in court and this study offers the theory that this is because of chivalrous sexism for those who fulfill stereotypical roles. Crime judgements often take into account the sociological perspective such as gender and men and women tend to form different crime judgements. Studies show that women are less likely than men to be arrested, charged, convicted, and sentenced, and if they are sentenced, they are likely to get shorter sentences. This finding goes against what is predicted for the current study, as the current studies prediction is that sexism would create more blame on a female than a male for the same mistake, or in this case crime. Herzog and Oreg instead found that females were not punished as harshly, but it is because they fulfill these Benevolent sexist stereotypical role. It is not known if those women who are seen as breaking these stereotypes would be given longer sentences and harsher treatment by the court. In that way, chivalrous sexism could work against females by those who rate high in Benevolent Sexism. Measuring these levels of Ambivalent Sexism and comparing them to judgements of responsibility for alcohol related incidents in college students may also be able to be applied to

other situations if a bias is shown. The information from this article was vital when constructing the stories that the participants read in the current study.

To determine the specific negative events used in the gendered stories I based my negative events off the findings of a study run by Rossi, Waite, Bosse, and Berk (1974) which investigated how participants rated the seriousness of different crimes. It uses ratings of seriousness for 140 different crimes and then ranking it from least serious to most serious. At the top of the list includes planned killing of a police officer, selling heroin, and planned killing of a person for a fee. This does not work for my project as they are too extreme and it is likely that there will be no differences in blame when using gendered names. For examples of crimes, the ones lower on the list are considered less severe and will have more variation on blame. These include shoplifting, being drunk in public places, and disturbing the peace (Rossi et. al, 1974). Since these less severe crimes could still be seen as women breaking the perceived Benevolent gender norm, it is possible that it could result in the women being blamed more harshly for the event. I decided to use this article because it is hard to come up with stories involving mistakes under the influence of alcohol that participants could relate to while still considering it serious.

The gendered stories created for this study and judged by the participants are based off the 'Donald' paradigm and how the gender of 'Donald' plays a role in the effect on the reader. The original study done by Srull and Wyer in 1979 is summarized by Otten and Stapel (2007) and it showed that "perceptions of Hostile intent can be activated relatively subtly and implicitly by using what came to be known as the 'Donald paradigm.' In this paradigm, participants first had to unscramble a series of short sentences, some of which dealt with aggressive behavior (e.g, "break his leg" see Costin, 1969). Then in an ostensibly unrelated second study, participants

were given an ambiguously aggressive description of 'Donald' and asked to judge Donald on a number of traits. Srull and Wyer (1979) found that, compared to a control condition (in which neutral sentences had to be unscrambled), participants viewed Donald's relatively aggressive and Hostile" (Otten and Stapel, 2007). The stories used in this study are based off the methodology of the 'Donald paradigm' and will use the method of instilling different traits (in this case gender) in two almost identical stories. The stories used in this study are not Donald Paradigms but are modified versions that I created myself. They do not focus on aggressive traits or require the participant to unscramble sentences. Instead they use the Donald Paradigms ability to evoke feelings through the use of priming. The Donald Paradigm uses priming to affect a person's judgement and it's been found that minor exposure to the trait being portrayed is enough to influence the reader (Mussweiler and Damisch, 2008).

This study was trying to influence readers by using gender of the character in the story to create variations on responsibility levels. Instead of the participant being primed by gender, it would appear that they were primed instead by the use of alcohol in the stories. The first and second lines of this version of the Donald Paradigm which I call gendered negative events all included words related to alcohol such as bar, drink, club, drunk, or alcohol. The participants were made aware early in the story that the character in the story was under the influence. This could have made their judgement harsher than it would be if they were not primed or informed of the characters alcohol related behaviors.

Comparison mechanisms were utilized by the readers of these stories to determine the level of responsibility. Judgement of the responsibility is done by the reader comparing the character in the story to another in this situation, specifically the same character while not under

the influence. The characters were defined early on as being under the influence and no other defining characteristics about the character were used besides gender. The comparison that was meant to be made was between genders, whether the male or the female would receive harsher judgement in the same situations. Instead the comparison that took place was between either gendered characters under the influence versus a character not under the influence. Comparisons of this nature rely on standards with situational accessibility when there is no direct or provided situation to compare it to. An individual's judgement of the original situation is dependent on what judgements they make of the compared situation. These comparisons are often done quickly without the participant being aware that they made them. (Mussweiler and Damisch, 2008). Since there was such a small difference in the gendered stories, specifically the types of stories and the gender of the characters, the comparisons that the participants made should have showed what the determining factor was when assigning responsibility.

Methodology

The study will be a Mixed-Subjects design with participants' gender (between-groups variable), the gender of the character in the story (between-groups variable), the type of negative event (between-groups variable), and Ambivalent Sexism scores (within-groups variable) as the independent variables. The dependent variable will be participants' attributions of blame for each of thee 4 scenarios, (list). The structure of the study is a 2 (sex of participant: male or female) x continuous (Ambivalent Sexism inventory score)

To be able to explore the effect of sexism, it is required that all of the participants take the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory includes a 140 statements to

measure two different types of sexism. For the purpose of this study, only 22 questions are necessary as they are specifically worded to differentiate between Hostile and Benevolent Sexism. It was developed by Peter Glick and Susan Fiske in 1996 and published in the American Psychological Association's Journal of Personality and Psychology. The list of ASI statements can be viewed below.

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

(1) No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.

(2) Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for "equality."

(3) In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men.

(4) Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.

(5) Women are too easily offended.

(6) People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.

(7) Feminists are not seeking for women to have more power than men.

(8) Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.

(9) Women should be cherished and protected by men.

(10) Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.

(11) Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.

(12) Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.

(13) Men are complete without women.

(14) Women exaggerate problems they have at work.

(15) Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.

(16) When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.

(17) A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.

(18) There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.

(19) Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.

(20) Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.

(21) Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men.

(22) Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.

The scale ranged from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree utilizing a Likert scale, having the middle option as Neither Agree nor Disagree. Some of the questions were worded in a way that the score needed to be reversed. These were questions 3, 6, 7, 13, 18, 21. The questions were reversed for the purpose of controlling for acquiescence bias. This means that participants could not simply agree or disagree with all of the questions for the purpose of coming off as less sexist. They had to really read and fully understand the questions in this inventory before making a decision.

After completing the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, a buffer activity was done to prevent

the possibility of priming the participants for the subsequent activity. Buffer activities can be anything along the lines of math problems, readings on unrelated topics, or even watching a short video. In this case, it was a list of 15 simple multiplication and division problems that were labeled at a third grade level. They were not supposed to be hard for the participant to solve, but they had to provide a distraction so that the participant would not connect the purpose of the section before and after the math problems. It has to be off the topic of sexism or alcohol because I would not want this activity or the previous Ambivalent Sexism Inventory to influence any of the next sections answers.

After the buffer activity, the participants read five to ten stories, each a paragraph long, with the same wording except one difference. The two similar stories described a negative event that takes place under the influence of alcohol. The only difference in the two almost identical stories was the gender of the main character. Half the participants are given a story with the negative event happening to a female. The other half of the participants had the same story with the negative event happening to a male. Each participants assessed how much blame is to be placed on the person in the negative situation. Some of these stories were related to negative sexual events, such as waking up next to a stranger, sleeping with a best friend's partner, or taking their clothes off in public. The other stories were unrelated to sexual events, such as having their wallet stolen at a bar, getting in fight, and taking money from a friend without their permission. The types of stories involved, whether they were sexual or nonsexual, were also intended to influence the participants in the story to change their level of responsibility. Sexual stories were predicted to be given a higher rate of responsibility for females than males. This was due to the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory and preconceived notions in the participant's minds

about how a female should act. Benevolent sexist views place a larger amount of harsh judgement on women for their sexual actions. Seemingly positive Benevolent attitudes towards women include viewing women as angelic and pure in nature. These positive stereotypes would lead the participant to place more blame on the female characters when they acted outside of these characteristics, such as when they make a sexual mistake. This was not expected to be seen in the nonsexual stories because they do not challenge angelic or pure stereotypes.

The stories that I created had to have an element of doubt. The doubt is there to attempt to give the participants a reason not to rate the responsibility for each story as 100 out of 100. To create this doubt, I tried to add a reason why the gendered character in the story would make this mistake, as a way of making the readers think that the mistake might not be all the characters fault. Each of the stories involved the main character drinking alcohol but the stories attempted to provide a reason why the participant would not be completely at fault. This was done by adding a reason that the character would have made the mistake. One example of this can be seen in the first and second nonsexual story. The character in the story was drinking previously and decided to drive to drive themselves and their friends' home because their designated ride home was not answering and other options were closed for the night. This attempt at creating doubt did not work in the end and the majority of participants continued to rate each responsibility as 100 out of 100, giving my experiment a massive ceiling effect. All of the stories are listed below.

Gender Differentiated Mistake Stories

Male - nonsexual

A man goes out to the bar to drink with some of his friends. The man and his friends get drunk and after a few hours decide to leave. The person that promised them a ride home earlier that night did not answer and all other options are closed for the night. The man and his friends instead decide that he is capable of driving them home. On the drive home he swerves and hits a mailbox. How responsible is the man for what happened that night?

Female - nonsexual

A woman goes out to the bar to drink with some of her friends. The woman and her friends get drunk and after a few hours decide to leave. The person that promised them a ride home earlier that night did not answer and all other options are closed for the night. The woman and her friends instead decide that she is capable of driving them home. On the drive home she swerves and hits a mailbox. How responsible is the woman for what happened that night?

Female - nonsexual

A woman goes out to her local bar with some of her friends. While there, she and her friends have a few drinks and the woman gets drunk. The next morning she realizes that she left her credit card with the bartender for the tab. When she goes back and asks the bartender, he tells her that he gave it back to her when she left last night. She does not remember getting it from him and does not know where it went. How responsible is the woman for what happened that night?

Male - nonsexual

A man goes out to his local bar with some of his friends. While there, he and his friends have a few drinks and the man gets drunk. The next morning he realizes that he left his credit card with

the bartender for the tab. When he goes back and asks the bartender, he tells him that they gave it back to him when he left last night. He does not remember getting it from him and does not know where it went. How responsible is the man for what happened that night?

Female - Sexual

A woman and a group of her friends go out to a club. She and her friends drink alcohol and get drunk. The DJ starts playing a sexually explicit song and tells everyone to grab the person next to them and make their way to the dance floor. The woman was next to her best friend's boyfriend and they started provocatively dancing with each other. The woman and her best friend fight about it the next morning. How responsible is the woman for what happened that night?

Male - sexual

A man and a group of his friends go out to a club. He and his friends drink alcohol and get drunk. The DJ starts playing a sexually explicit song and tells everyone to grab the person next to them and make their way to the dance floor. The man was next to his best friend's girlfriend and they start provocatively dancing with each other. The man and his best friend fight about it the next morning. How responsible is the man for what happened that night?

Female - sexual

A woman goes out to a company party with some of her coworkers. The party included an open bar and the woman gets drunk. She sits down and starts talking to her boss and she thinks they

are hitting it off. The woman goes in to kiss her boss but she gets rejected and Human Resources

gets involved the next work day. How responsible is the woman for what happened that night?

Male - sexual

A man goes out to a company party with some of his coworkers. The party included an open bar

and the man gets drunk. He sits down and starts talking to his boss and he thinks they are hitting

it off. The man goes in to kiss his boss but he gets rejected and Human Resources gets involved

the next work day. How responsible is the man for what happened that night?

The scale of blame will go from 0-100, with 0 being no responsibility to 100 being total

responsibility. It does include the numbers because it was not meant for the participants to see.

This way, they could attribute the amount of responsibility without having a number scale to

affect their decision. The entire survey was run through to completion by a small group of people

in the department and no problems were noticed. All of the people who took the survey

beforehand were able to complete every section as well as demographics with no issues. Their

scores were not considered or tested but if they had been reviewed in terms of data analysis, it

may have partially predicted the outcome of the study.

Participants

Data was collected from 203 participants, with 116 (57%) participants identifying as

Female and 62 (30.5%) participants identifying as Male and 1 participant identifying as

Transgender/Gender non-conforming (TGNC). For the purposes of this study, we did not include

the one participant who was TGNC for their scores alone would not have been significant. The

participants ages ranged from 18-38 (M_{age}=19.3). The majority of participants indicated they

were Freshman which is to be expected due to the fact that the participant pool is made up of

students from introductory psychology courses at the university. There was an error in qualtrics

that made the rest of the demographic questions only show up a quarter of the time. Because of

this, the answers from these questions are invalid and would not accurately describe the sample.

In future research, it would be important to accurately obtain this information, specifically

questions including major, minor, and ethnicity.

Data Analysis

I collected all of my data through Qualtrics which provides an easy way for researchers to

collect and analyze data online. The bulk of the data analysis was done through the statistical

program SPSS where the scores for the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory and Gender differentiated

negative stories were compared. The mean score for both Hostile and Benevolent Sexism for all

participants was 2.74 out of a total of 5. The average scores for Females for their responses on

the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory were lower than the scores for males which was to be

expected. The average female scores for Hostile Sexism were M=2.54, SD=.66. The average

female Benevolent Sexism scores were M=2.80, SD=.56. The average male scores for Hostile

Sexism were M=2.79, SD=.61. The average male scores for Benevolent Sexism were M=2.93,

SD=.49.

Table *1. Average Scores for Males and Females on the ASI*

Average Scores for Males and Females on the ASI		
To which gender identity do you most identify?	Hostile ASI	Benevolent ASI
Female	2.54	2.8
Male	2.79	2.93
Total	2.63	2.85

Correlations between these scores were run and we found that female and male scores for Hostile Sexism were positively correlated with Benevolent Sexism. This makes sense because the questions are all measuring types of Sexism.

Table *1.* *Correlations Between ASI Scores for Male and Female Participants*

Correlations Between ASI Scores for Male and Female Participants		
	Hostile Sexism	
	Female	Males
Benevolent Sexism	.404**	.276*

$^+p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$

Correlational methods found that there is an interaction between the types of stories, showing that they are all measuring similar topics. This is important because if they were not correlated it would mean they are not measuring similar topics and it would show that the stories were not a valid method of collecting scores for ratings of responsibility.

Table 3. *Correlations Between Ratings of Responsibility for Types of Gendered Stories*

Correlations Between Ratings of Responsibility for Types of Gendered Stories				
	Male Sexual	Male Nonsexual	Female Sexual	Female Nonsexual
Male Sexual	----	.327**	.246*	.318**
Male Nonsexual		----	.383**	.329**
Female Sexual			----	.482**
Female Nonsexual				----
Mean (SD)	5.72 (.74)	3.76 (.98)	5.37 (.83)	5.68 (.75)

‾p < .10 * p < .05 ** p < .001

Regression analyses were done between the gendered stories, testing for the interaction between ASI and gender. A linear regression tested the effect of ASI, participant gender, and the interaction of ratings of responsibility of the Male Non-Sexual scenarios. The effect was non-significant, $F_{(3,109)} = .36$, $p = .78$. There was no main effects and no interaction for this variable. The next linear regression compared the ratings of responsibility for male sexual and found that the effect was non-significant, $F_{(3,108)} = 1.5$, $p = .219$. There were no main effects and no interactions for this variable.

. The next linear regression was done comparing ratings of responsibility for female sexual and found that the effect was not significant, $F_{(3,104)} = .44$, $p = .24$. There were no main effects and no interactions for this variable. The last linear regression was done comparing ratings of responsibility for female non-sexual and found that the effect was marginal, $F_{(3,106)} = 2.41$, $p = .07$. However, the interaction between ASI and gender was marginal, $F\Delta_{(1,103)} = 2.75$, $p = .10$. The interaction explained 6.5% of the variability in responsibility ratings of the female non-sexual scenario. The interaction is graphed in Graph 1.

Graph *1*. *Interaction between ASI Scores and Ratings of Responsibility for Female Non-Sexual Stories*

Interaction between ASI Scores and Ratings of Responsibility for Female Non-Sexual Stories
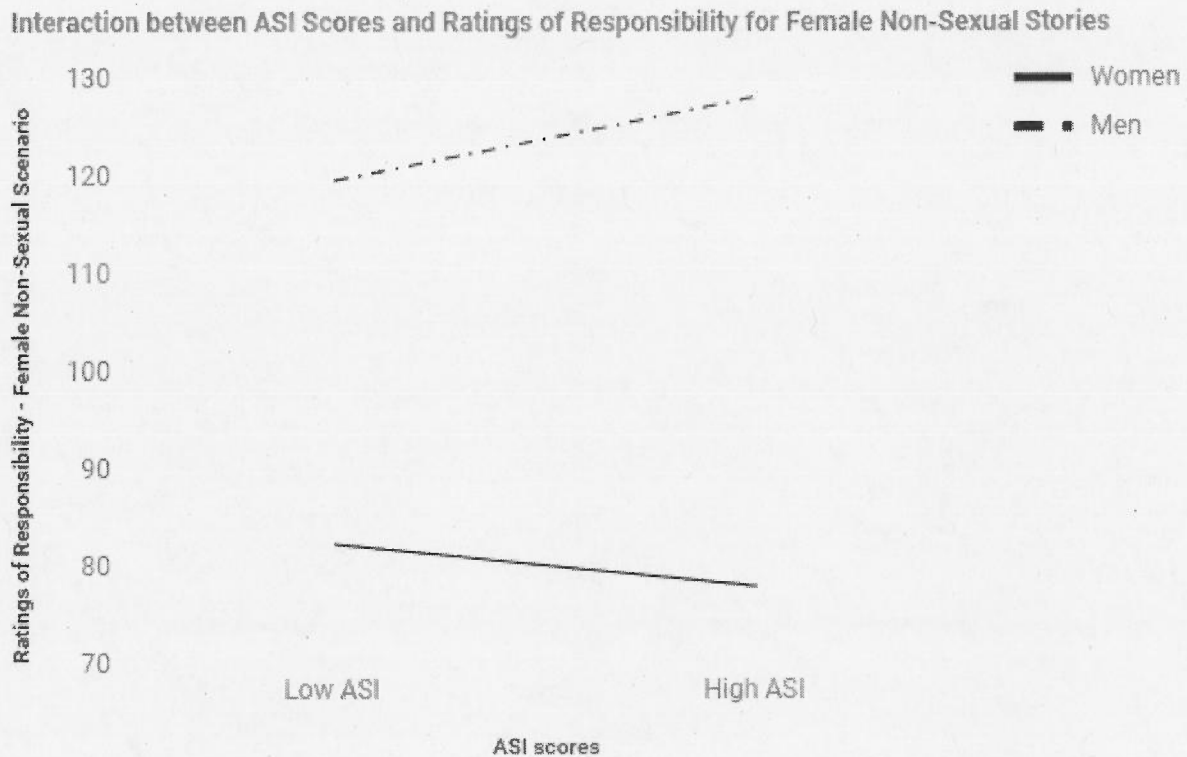
This graph shows that as male scores for ASI increase, their ratings of responsibility for the gendered story involving females making non-sexual mistakes also increases. In female participants, we see the opposite. As the female scores for the ASI increase, their ratings of responsibility for females making non-sexual mistakes decreases.

Results

The way that this study was designed it led many of the participants, when determining responsibility for gender differentiated negative events, to attribute a responsibility level of 100 out of 100. The number of participants responding for each story varies due to qualtrics random

assignment feature. For each story, the percentage of participants that picked 100 out of 100 ranged from 37% to 60%. This is a very large amount of participants and before the study was run, we expected the scores to fall more mid-range instead of being negatively skewed due to a ceiling effect. When the small group of people from the department ran the study for themselves to test its accessibility, their final results were not considered and were deleted. If these scores had been considered before distributing the test, there is a chance that this ceiling effect could have been predicted due to the large percentage of participants that chose 100. While this finding is interesting in and of itself but it meant that these scores had little variability, making it impossible to compare it back to the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory or more specifically, Hostile or Benevolent Sexism. There are a few reasons why this may have happened but the most likely answer is that the students who reported responsibility based their decision on the fact that the characters were drinking alcohol.

Alcohol is the main factor in the eight stories while the gender, situation, and mistake changes each time. This leads one to believe that responsibility for the negative event is determined based on this one condition of being under the influence of alcohol above all other conditions. With so many participants choosing to score 100 out of 100 instead of any other score, they are attributing the entire amount of responsibility possible on the character who has consumed alcohol. If the participants were determining the blame based off any other factor used in the stories then the scores would have more variability that could be seen based off of any other characteristic. The participants that took the survey are mainly freshman in college. They are realizing the consequences of their alcohol related decisions without having previous experiences to base their decisions for responsibility off of. Since there are such large

consequences, whether they are physical consequences or social ones determined by their actions under the influence, they are placing all of the blame for these actions on the character under the influence without considering the full situation, whether this is gender or type of story. The results of the responsibility for gender differentiated negative events could not be related back to the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory scores meaning new tests will have to be implemented to determine if there are potential biases.

It is important to talk about the results of the regression analysis that was done comparing Female Non-sexual stories to ASI scores. As the ASI scores for males participants increase, so do their ratings of responsibility for Female Non-sexual events. Female participants showed the opposite and when their ASI scores increase, their ratings of responsibility for the Female Non-sexual stories decrease, as shown in the data analysis section. This could be because as male ASI scores go up, they place the responsibility on the female in the story. For female participants the opposite is seen, leading us to believe that as the female ASI scores go up, they remove the blame from the female in the story and place it on outside factors. We did not see this pattern when we ran the regressions for Female sexual events or for either Male events. The significance was marginal so it is possible that the ASI scores are not the cause of the significance but more tests are needed to prove this.

Significance

The results of my study were intended to have high external validity and therefore be able to be generalized to more college campuses. I focused on stories that would resonate with a wide range of college students from different campuses since they embodied my entire demographic,

this is one reason as to why I separated the gendered stories into sexual and non-sexual mistakes. My participants were between the primary age group that I was hoping to study which are college student ages 18 to 23. The average age of my participants was 19.3. This would be helpful in how orientation leaders talk to the new students to prepare them for these situations. Orientation leaders and alcohol education programs tend to focus on the physical effect that it has on the body and cognition. There can be a lot of shame that a person experiences after an alcohol related negative event and being blamed for this event more than another gender is a stressful situation. Creating awareness of underlying bias is one way to affect the level of blame and relieve some of this stress. If this study showed that females are more harshly blamed than males, it would have been an important factor of alcohol consumption that is not talked about or brought to awareness in many instances.

Future Research

This study had some issues with data collection. One of the major issues was the ceiling effect that was received for the gendered negative stories. When most of the scores are 100 out of 100 it reduces variability making it impossible to compare the scores back to the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. When setting up the survey on Qualtrics, there was an error that made it impossible to analyze demographic factors, making the results invalid. When presenting at the Eastern Psychological Association conference, I received a large amount of feedback about how to run this project more successfully in the future. Some of the suggestions were made regarded future research and other topics but many of these comments were about how to adjust the scale used in the gendered stories to make it so that not as many individuals picked 100. One of the

pieces of advice I received was to change the scale to measure who should be blamed, not the level of blame. This could be done by making the scale go from 'Not the characters fault' to a midrange of 'shared responsibility' to 'Completely the characters fault'. If the scale were changed to encompass these options, I would also include a textbox asking the participant to identify who they think is at fault for the action.

Advice from other viewers included a story where you could not identifying the gender of the character but instead having an ambiguous character and find what level of responsibility was placed for these stories. It was also recommended that the stories be changed to involve Hostile and Benevolent sexist views in the form of stories instead of describing an event. The main comment that I heard from viewers is that I should create a story that involves a mistake from the gendered character but have no alcohol involved. While this study had the specific goal of finding judgements for characters under the influence, it is hard to understand the significance behind the levels of responsibility under alcohol when you cannot compare it to scores while sober. If the scores for alcohol related mistakes are higher than ones where the character is sober, it will be clear that alcohol is the main predictor of these responsibility levels. Alcohol is seen as a determining factor when attributing blame for college age students but for younger or older populations, this may not be the case.

The college students are not experienced when it comes to alcohol related decisions while older adults are more likely to have been through these situations themselves or seen it happen to their peers. They will have more knowledge when it comes to alcohol and its effects and may consider the situation as a larger determining factor than the use of alcohol. The population that I pulled my sample from, college students, is very specific so it would be interesting in future

research to determine if other ages also determine responsibility from the same situations.

Although my findings were not able to determine if there is a bias against Males or Females, the

result that large amounts of blame are put on individuals under the influence should be further

examined.

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