

# BIKINIS AND BIGOTRY

## DO SEXIST ADVERTISEMENTS ENCOURAGE HOMOPHOBIA?

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### Introduction

#### Background

- The effects of sexist advertising on sexist beliefs are well-established (Ward & Harrison, 2005)
- Evidence suggests sexism may be conceptually linked to other forms of prejudice (Aosved, Long & Voller, 2009)
- Both homophobia and sexism are based on adherence to traditional gender roles (Hetzl, 2011; Kite & Whitley, 1998)
- It is argued that homophobia and sexism are integrally linked (Madureira, 2007), however may differ enough so as not to be theoretically integrated (Capezza, 2007)

#### Purpose

- To determine whether sexist advertisements encourage homophobia, particularly among traditionally sex-typed individuals

### Hypotheses

1. Sexism and homophobia will be positively correlated
2. Sex-typed Ps will score higher on sexism and homophobia than those who identify as cross-typed or undifferentiated
3. Sexist conditions will present as more sexist and homophobic, whereas counter-stereotypic conditions will present as less
4. Sex-typed Ps will be more affected by ad condition than cross-typed or undifferentiated Ps

### Materials

- Bem Sex Role Inventory—Short (Bem, 1981)
- Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973)
- Index of Homophobia Scale (Hudson, & Ricketts, 1980)

### Ad Conditions



Counter-stereotypic



Sexist



Non-sexist

Ad conditions selected in accordance with lay sample ratings

### Sample

- 113 female and 63 male undergraduate psychology students from Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- 35% Caucasian, 31.5% South Asian, 24% Asian, 9.5% other

#### Ad conditions

- Counter-stereotypic :  $n = 57$  (37 female, 20 male)
- Overtly sexist:  $n = 60$  (39 female, 21 male)
- Non-sexist:  $n = 59$  (37 female, 22 male)

#### Sex roles

- Sex-typed:  $n = 55$
- Cross-typed:  $n = 55$
- Undifferentiated:  $n = 64$

### Procedure

- Ps completed the BSRI followed by an ad rating task (10 ads)
- Ps were informed that the study had been completed
- Ps were then invited to participate in an ostensibly unrelated study, wherein they completed the AWS, IHS and demographics
- Ps were thanked for their participation and fully debriefed

### Results

- Analyses: 3 (ad condition) x 3 (sex role) ANCOVA
- Cov = Language spoken at home

#### Sexism v Homophobia

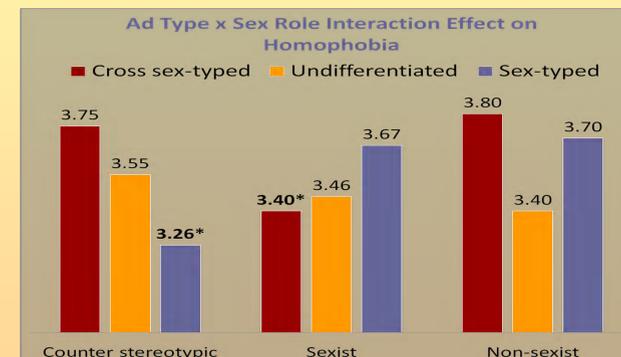
- Significant, but negative correlation ( $r = -.57, p < .000$ )

#### Sexism

- No significant effects of ad condition or sex role

#### Homophobia

- Ad Condition x Sex Role,  $F(4, 173) = 2.53, p = .043$



#### Simple effects of Ad Condition

- Sex-typed,  $p = .05$ ; counter-stereotypic < other conditions
- Cross-typed,  $p = .06$ ; sexist < other conditions

### Discussion

- **H1 not supported:** Sexism and homophobia were significantly correlated, though negatively
- **H2 not supported:** No differences were found between sex-typed and cross-typed on measures of sexism or homophobia
- **H3 not supported:** Sexist ads did not elicit higher scores of sexism or homophobia, nor did counter-stereotypic elicit lower scores
- **H4 partially supported:** Sex-typed were more affected than undifferentiated, but so were cross-typed
  - Sex-typed may be more susceptible to social gender messages
  - Evidence suggests sex-typed individuals tend to process information in terms of gender schemas (Bem, 1981)
  - Cross sex-typed likely demonstrated reactivity to depictions of traditional gender roles
- **Strengths:** This is the first study to **a)** investigate the effects of sexist media on homophobia and **b)** examine the moderating effect of sex role identification on receptiveness to media messages
- **Limitations:** Future iterations would benefit from **a)** a no-ad control condition and **b)** inclusion of gender in the analysis (pending further data collection)

### Information and Contact

Poster presented at the Western Psychological Association 2012 convention, San Francisco, CA, April 28, 2012

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References available upon request.

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