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Ambivalent Sexism:
The Effect of Self-Esteem on Ambivalent Sexism Expression

by

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Honours Thesis

Department of Psychology

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Abstract

Ambivalent sexism occurs when a socially dominant group is dependent on a subordinate group, resulting in a collection of ambivalent ideologies (Lee, Glick, & Fiske, 2010). It utilizes both hostile sexism as well as benevolent sexism in order to maintain control over the subordinate group (Lee, Glick, & Fiske, 2010). The former refers to subjectively negative attitudes while the latter refers to subjectively positive attitudes. The literature suggests that both benevolent sexism and hostile sexism are used to buffer male self-esteem (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The current study investigated the effect of lowering an individual's self-esteem on their ambivalent sexism expression. It was proposed that individuals with lower self esteem would demonstrate higher levels of ambivalent sexism. It was also hypothesized that in particular males with a lower self esteem would score higher in hostile sexism, and females in benevolent sexism. Hypotheses were not supported by the results. This may be due to a small sample size.

Ambivalent Sexism: The Effect of Self-Esteem on Ambivalent Sexism Expression

While a variety of prejudicial attitudes remain pervasive in current North American society, ambivalent sexism proves to be one of the most pervasive forms (Lee, Glick, & Fiske, 2010). Ambivalent sexism leads to a variety of negative consequences ranging from reduction of a woman's influence outside of a romantic relationship, to reduction of a woman's ability to recognize continuing inequalities, and in some cases it increases a woman's feelings of incompetency (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Lee, et al., 2010; Overall, Sibley, & Tan, 2011). It occurs when a dominant group is forced to be dependent on a subordinate group, in this case men dependent on women (Lee, et al., 2010). Benevolent attitudes — those that are subjectively positive — and hostile attitudes — those that are subjectively negative — create the ambivalence and make it more difficult to identify this type of prejudice (Lee, et al., 2010).

While the previous literature thoroughly examines the function and consequences of ambivalent sexism, it says little about what its instigators are and therefore what can be done to reduce it. The literature often alludes to a link between ambivalent sexism and self-esteem buffering, which could have dramatic implications for its reduction, but fails to investigate this connection (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Lee, et al., 2010). This study will investigate the proposed link between self-esteem and ambivalent sexism expression. These findings will not only fill the gap of what the potential causes of ambivalent sexism are, but may have important implications for the reduction of this type of sexism, and more largely implications for the feminist movement (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Overall, et al., 2011; Lee, et al., 2010). This paper will serve to determine if self-esteem has an influence on ambivalent sexism as well as examine the potential moderating effects of gender.

Ambivalent sexism explains what occurs when social dominance is combined with the need for intimacy (Lee, et al., 2010). It consists of two unique attitude types — hostile and benevolent sexism — which work in unison to maintain the subordinate status of woman (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Lee, et al., 2010). Hostile sexism consists of subjectively negative attitudes and is most easily seen as traditional sexism (e.g. “Woman are too easily offended.”). Benevolent sexism consists of subjectively positive attitudes but they are highly stereotypical and serve to keep woman in limited restricted roles (e.g. “A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.”; Lee, et al., 2010). Whilst these constructs seem far from each other they are not independent; it is important to make note that they are complementary belief systems and both are predictors of gender inequality (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Lee, et al., 2010).

There are three constructs within ambivalent sexism that aid in the continuation of gender inequality: paternalism, gender differentiation, and heterosexuality (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Lee, et al., 2010). Each construct branches out between hostile and benevolent sexism and has unique ways in which it contributes to the negative consequences of ambivalent sexism. (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Lee, et al., 2010).

Paternalism functions through asserting gender stereotypes in two unique ways (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Dominative paternalism, which falls under hostile sexism, utilizes positive stereotypes about men’s competence while simultaneously categorizing women as weak (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The use of these stereotypes suggests that men should hold power and that women are not fit to do so. In contrast, protective paternalism, which falls under benevolent sexism, emphasizes women’s value as romantic partners whilst making it clear that women are weak and in need of a men’s protection (Glick & Fiske, 1996). This construct further highlights

women's weaknesses whilst depicting in a way that seems subjectively positive (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Gender differentiation, however, is dependent on the use of stereotypical traits which divide woman and men (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Competitive gender differentiation, a sub-construct of hostile sexism, suggests that men possess traits that emphasize ability and power while women are once again denoted as the weaker sex (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Similarly complementary gender differentiation, a sub-construct of benevolent sexism, utilizes traditional gender stereotypes as well as roles (Lee, et al., 2010). It suggests that women have many positive traits that complement men's, although they are generally of lower status (Lee, et al., 2010).

Heterosexuality is an incredibly important construct in ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Heterosexuality is what creates the ambivalence in the first place; men's need for intimate relationships and child bearers interferes with their dominance over women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile heterosexuality, a tenant of hostile sexism, suggests that women use their attractiveness and desirability in an attempt to control men (Lee, et al., 2010). Heterosexual intimacy is the counter-construct, a tenant of benevolent sexism, and promotes several positive stereotypes about women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). There is a large focus on the desired closeness to women and it often produces sincere helping behaviours from men, however it can play a large role in restricting the areas women feel competent in (Lee, et al., 2010).

Literature pertaining to sexism demonstrates that these three constructs within hostile sexism may be harmful. A study by Overall and colleagues (2011) demonstrated that within romantic couples men who scored higher in hostile sexism were more likely to be aggressive, as

well as exhibit more frequent use coercive behaviours. Benevolent sexism, however, is just as harmful (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Lee, et al., 2010; Overall, et al., 2011). Benevolent sexism decreases a woman's influence outside of her romantic relationship (Overall, et al., 2011). This is problematic because it restricts the situations in which a woman may be seen, and can see herself as competent, resulting in an even greater power imbalance (Overall, et al., 2011). Benevolent sexism also creates a niche within the patriarchal society in which women feel safe (Lee, et al., 2010; Overall, et al., 2011). While it is important that there are feelings of safety this in particular makes women feel as though they are comfortable in the roles prescribed to them. This is often labeled as maternalism, the notion that men have weaknesses and that they require the nurturance of a female (Lee, et al., 2010). This provides women with a positive group relation without challenging male dominance (Lee, et al., 2010). Not only is this incredibly limiting but it also decreases the likelihood that they will question larger scale inequalities, as well as decreases resistance to those inequalities that are seen (Lee, et al., 2010; Overall, et al., 2011). This dramatically hinders a woman's ability to progress and makes it difficult for the women's movement to progress on a global level (Overall, et al., 2011). Similarly, benevolent sexism increases memory recall of times when a woman has felt incompetent (Lee, et al., 2010). This recall undermines self efficacy and undoubtedly contributes to restricted influence and inability to see larger inequalities.

Benevolent, as well as hostile sexism, are not only harmful but they seem to be used to buffer the self-esteem of both women and men (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Lee, et al., 2010). Realistic group conflict theory suggests that either real or perceived competition between groups gives rise to prejudice (Jackson, 2011). This is partially due to the human response of using prejudice to

buffer self-esteem when feeling threatened (Jackson, 2011). If an individual is able to make their group seem subjectively better their self-esteem can be bolstered in this way (Jackson, 2011). In contrast, individuals may also turn to subjectively positive stereotypes about their group in order to feel better about themselves through group relations (Jackson, 2011). Human beings have a natural tendency to want to feel positively about themselves and their group memberships giving rise to this effect (Jackson, 2011).

If a man is feeling threatened or self-conscious, negative stereotypes about women may aid him in feeling as though his group is superior (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Lee, et al., 2010). In a similar way subjectively positive stereotypes about women may aid in his identification with the positive male social identity, once again bolstering self-esteem. Paternalism, gender differentiation, and heterosexuality play a substantial role in this bolstering effect (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Lee, et al., 2010).

Dominative paternalism plays a large role in bolstering male self-esteem. "The world would be a better place if woman supported men more and criticized them less" is an example of how dominative paternalism may help to bolster self-esteem. In a situation in which the man has failed he is able to easily write it off to the lack of support and criticism he infers from his wife (Lee, et al., 2010). This statement in particular, along with other examples of this construct, allows men to feel power over women and has the potential to increase their self-esteem by identifying with the male social identity (Glick & Fiske, 1996). On the other side of the spectrum protective paternalism has an equal effect on boosting male self-esteem. The statement "a woman is weak and therefore requires protection from a man.", makes it clear that women are

weak whilst giving men a seemingly important and necessary role which they can feel good about regardless of other happenings in their lives (Lee, et al., 2010).

Competitive gender differentiation suggests that males are the superior sex. “A wife should not be significantly more successful in her career than her husband” is one example of a statement that supports the stereotype that men are the greater sex, and therefore is an example of competitive gender differentiation. (Lee, et al., 2010). A man may bolster his self-esteem by identifying himself as more successful and therefore better. The statement “a woman completes a man” however, demonstrates once again how the benevolent counterpart, in this case complementary gender differentiation, contributes to raising male self-esteem. The statement gives woman some amount of merit while simultaneously reducing her to a commodity that a man should have (Lee, et al., 2010).

Heterosexual hostility often reflects what is thought of as traditional sexism. A statement such as “there are many woman who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances” effectively demonstrates heterosexual hostility (Lee, et al., 2010). It is clear how a man who has been rejected after a sexual advance can place blame on the woman and therefore buffer his self-esteem. Heterosexual intimacy does less to bolster self-esteem itself but is a main tenant in the existence of ambivalent sexism itself (Overall et al., 2011).

The purpose of the current study is to determine the effects of self-esteem on ambivalent sexism expression, and it also examines the potential moderating effects of gender. Participants took part in what they believed to be two separate studies comprising one research session. In the first study, they completed the Cognitive Failures Questionnaire (Broadbent, Cooper,

FitzGerald, & Parkes, 1982) and received false feedback in order to manipulate self-esteem. In the second study they completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), to serve as a manipulation check, followed by the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick, & Fiske, 1996). It was hypothesized that low self-esteem would predict higher hostile sexism scores in males as they would use hostile attitudes to buffer their self-esteem placing them in the dominant group. It was also hypothesized that low self-esteem would predict higher benevolent sexism scores in women. This was due to the fact that if a woman feels threatened she will be more likely to identify with positive stereotypes relating to her group in order to bolster self-esteem. Finally, it was hypothesized that the effect of self-esteem on sexism would be stronger for males in general due to the fact that we live in a primarily patriarchal society. Whilst previous studies have shown similar scores on benevolent sexism, male's scores on hostile sexism are often higher than female's and it is predicted that they will be particularly higher when self-esteem is threatened (Glick, & Fiske, 1996).

Methods

Participants

Participants were recruited from the Psychology 1000 pool at King's University College. A total of 47 participants completed the study (14 male and 33 female). Participants, with ages ranging from 18-40 ($M = 19$), received 2.5% course credit through the SONA system for participating in the study.

Materials

The Cognitive Failures Questionnaire (Broadbent, et al., 1982) served as a manipulation tool for the study. Participants completed this 25 point scale by rating the frequency of specific

cognitive failures on a five point Likert-type scale ranging from very often (4) to never (0). The reliability of the questionnaire is not relevant to the study as participants received false feedback upon completion to serve as a manipulation of self-esteem.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965) served as a manipulation check and was the second scale completed by participants. It consists of 10 items that are rated on a four point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Higher scores are indicative of higher self-esteem. The scale is widely used and Cronbach's α ranges from 0.72-0.87.

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) evaluated both the benevolent and hostile sexist attitudes of the participants. This 22 item scale is highly reliable with a Cronbach's α ranging from 0.83-0.92. The scale is scored using a six point Likert scale ranging from disagree strongly (0) to agree strongly (5). The scale contains two subscales that will be used in this study, benevolent sexism and hostile sexism. Each subscale consists of 11 items. Cronbach's α for the subscales is slightly lower ranging from 0.75-0.87. Higher scores indicate greater sexist attitudes.

Procedure

The entire study was completed online using SONA and Qualtrics and took less than 30 minutes to complete. After viewing the study on SONA participants registered for a one hour time slot during which they would complete the study via Qualtrics. Once on the Qualtrics webpage participants were presented with a letter of information and informed consent statement (see Appendix A). After agreeing with the terms of the study, participants began what they believed to be the first study. They completed the Cognitive Failures Questionnaire and soon

after were presented with randomized false feedback stating that they had either performed significantly better or significantly worse than their peers (see Appendix B). They then received a short message letting them know that the first study had been completed and the second study would now begin. In what the participants believed to be the second study, they were first presented with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Upon completion they were then presented with the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. A message indicating that the two studies were completed successfully followed the completion of these two measures. Lastly a debriefing form was displayed indicating the true nature of the study and offering additional readings and resources (see Appendix C).

Results

Reliability

Reliability analyses revealed that all measures used in the study reached an acceptable level of reliability according to Cronbach's α . Reliability was not calculated for the Cognitive Failures Questionnaire as it was not relevant to the study. Consistent with the literature, Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale was found to be highly reliable with a Cronbach's α of .91. Separate reliabilities were run for each subscale of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. A reliability analysis on the benevolent scale found it to reach a good reliability with a Cronbach's α of .74. This lower reliability is supported by the literature as it is a more difficult construct to evaluate (Glick, & Fiske, 1996). A reliability analysis on the hostile sexism scale found it to be highly reliable with a Cronbach's α of .91.

Manipulation Check

An independent samples t-test revealed that there was significantly poorer self-esteem for those who received negative feedback ($M = 3.29$, $SD = .57$) than those who received positive feedback ($M = 2.96$, $SD = .52$; $t(45) = 2.11$, $p = .04$), indicating that the manipulation was successful (see Figure 1).

Sexism Expression

A two way ANOVA was run to determine if there was an interaction between gender and feedback for benevolent sexism. The interaction failed to reach significance, $F(1,43) = .002$, $p = .97$ (see Figure 2). A main effect of gender was revealed, indicating that males ($M = 3.84$, $SD = .47$) demonstrated significantly more benevolent sexism than females ($M = 2.85$, $SD = .67$), $F(1,43) = 22.38$, $p < .001$. The main effect of feedback was not significant, $F(1,43) = .002$, $p = .96$, indicating there was no significant difference in benevolent sexism scores between those in the positive feedback condition ($M = 3.07$, $SD = .75$) and the negative feedback condition ($M = 3.21$, $SD = .79$).

A two way ANOVA was run to determine if there was an interaction between gender and feedback for hostile sexism. The interaction failed to reach significance, $F(1,43) = .16$, $p = .69$ (see Figure 3), and main effect of gender failed to reach significance, $F(1,43) = .13$, $p = .72$, indicating that means were not significantly different between males ($M = 3.29$, $SD = .81$) and females ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.10$). The main effect of feedback also failed to reach significance, $F(1,43) = .77$, $p = .39$, indicating that means were not significantly different for the positive feedback condition ($M = 3.12$, $SD = .97$), and the negative feedback condition ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.09$).

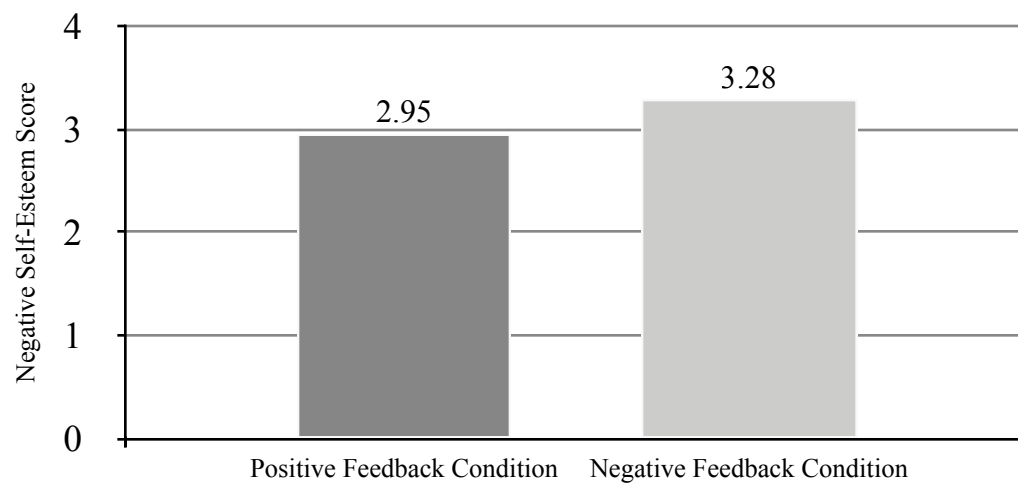


Figure 1. Self-esteem scores for the positive feedback condition and negative feedback condition.

Note: The difference was significant, $p < .05$.

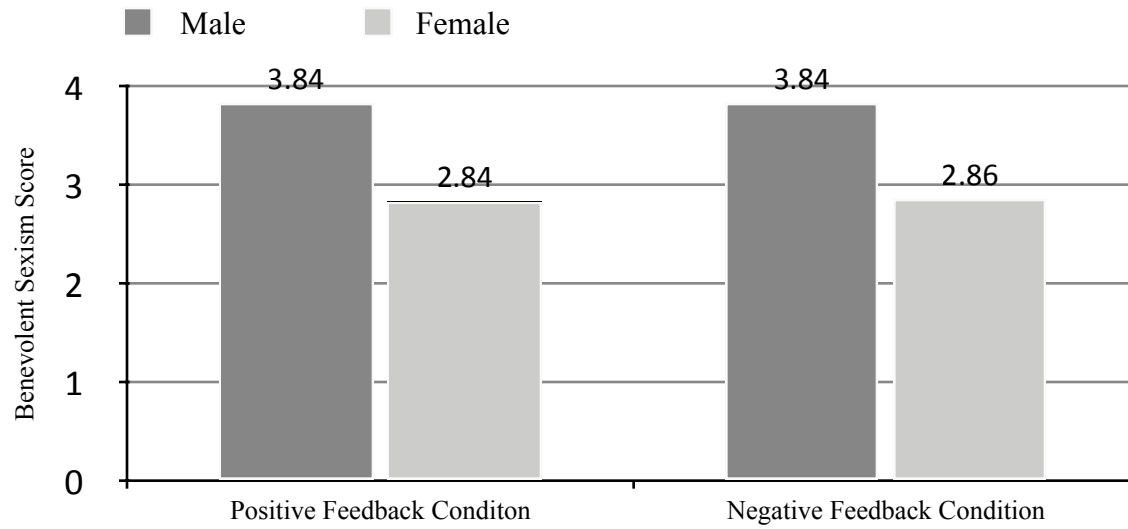


Figure 2. Benevolent sexism scores for males and females who received positive or negative feedback.

Note: There was a significant main effect of gender, $p < .001$.

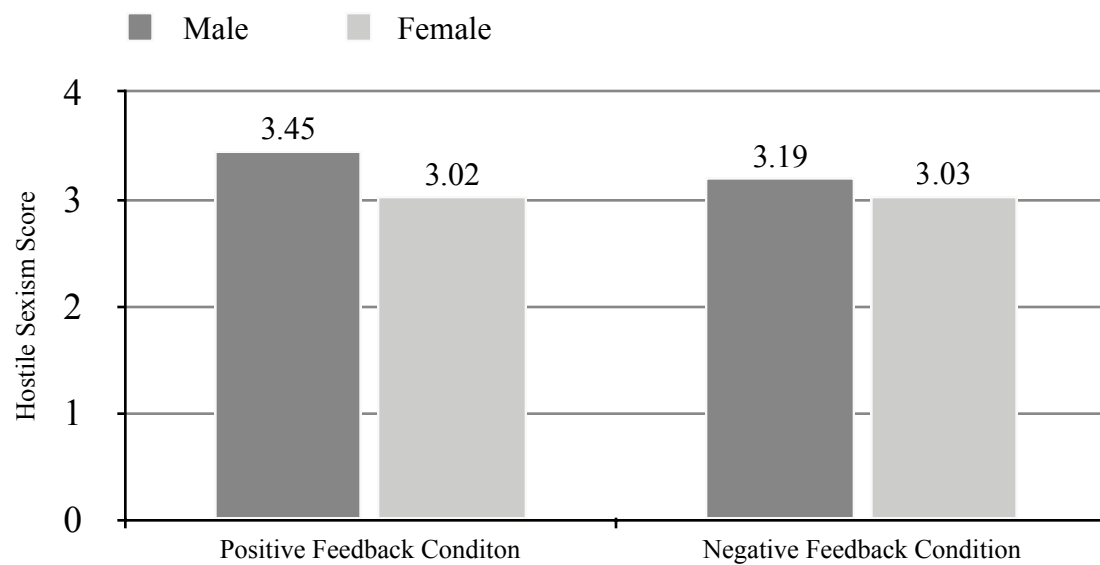


Figure 3. Hostile sexism scores for males and females who received positive or negative feedback.

Discussion

The results of the study failed to support the hypotheses as the expression of ambivalent sexist attitudes, benevolent nor hostile, were not significantly affected by a change in self-esteem. Participants in the negative feedback condition, and therefore negative self-esteem condition, failed to express more benevolent or hostile sexist attitudes than their counterparts who received positive feedback. It was found that males demonstrated significantly more benevolent sexism than females, however no gender difference was found for hostile sexism scores.

Participants who had their self-esteem lowered were hypothesized to express more hostile sexism, particularly males. However, male participants actually showed equal hostile sexism expression when compared to males in the positive self-esteem condition. It is important to note that these results could be explained by a relatively low sample size. Females who had their self-esteem lowered exhibited a similar amount of benevolent sexism than those in the positive self-esteem condition as well. Although this was not predicted, increasing hostile sexism is unlikely to buffer a female's self esteem according to the tenants of Realistic Intergroup Conflict Theory, which would explain why similar levels of expression were exhibited (Jackson, 2011).

Participants in the low self-esteem condition were also hypothesized to express more benevolent sexism, particularly females. However, both males and females demonstrated no change in benevolent sexism expression in either the low self-esteem or positive self-esteem condition. This may be explained either by the relatively small sample size, or due to the fact that benevolently sexist ideals are just starting to be formed in the late teens and early 20s (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Males did demonstrate significantly more benevolent sexism than females, which

is supported by the literature (Glick, & Fiske, 1996), although it may also be a result of social desirability. Benevolent sexist ideals seem subjectively positive and may have been endorsed by male participants in order to be perceived more positively.

The effect of self-esteem was predicted to be more profound in males, however because no significant effect of self-esteem was found it is difficult to offer an explanation to this hypothesis. The limitations of the study should be addressed in regards to the lack of significant findings. The biggest limitation to the study was a relatively low sample size ($n=47$). A more ideal sample size for the study would have been roughly 80 participants as originally proposed, however, due to technological issues and time constraints, this was not able to be attained. Additionally, ambivalent sexist attitudes, particularly for males, are only just starting to form in this age group. The study may have been more successful in an older age group with more concrete beliefs. The use of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory as the sole measure of ambivalent sexism may have also been problematic. Though it maintains a high reliability this self-report measure leaves itself open to misinterpretation of statements, and also to several problems associated with self-report, namely social desirability effects. Participants, sometimes unconsciously, want the results of their self-report measures to be socially acceptable, skewing the results of the study (Booth-Kewley, Edwards, & Rosenfeld, 1992; Lance, 2009). The use of an implicit attitude test as well as the Ambivalent Sexism inventory may have been more insightful, though it is debated whether or not implicit measures solve the social desirability effect (Gawronski, 2009).

Lastly, the use of university students, psychology students in particular, poses a problem, not only for generalizability, but it may also explain the lack of support found for the hypotheses.

University students differ from the general population in a variety of ways when it comes to socioeconomic status, cultural background, education, and the environments and interactions they are exposed to on a daily basis. In particular, psychology students, starting in their first year, begin to learn about cognition, attitude formation, and lastly the mechanisms of prejudice. These students also exist in a female dominated field which has the ability to alter sexist beliefs. The study was run on such a small, targeted population that generalizability is questionable. Sexism is a complex construct that interacts with a variety of factors, therefore such a limited sample says little about the effect of self-esteem (Glick, & Fiske, 2001). The results would most likely differ to some extent if run with participants from the general population. There is evidence supporting that it would also likely be different if it were run including students of different areas of study. For example, social dominance orientation, a strong predictor of prejudice, has been found to increase dramatically among law students along with their prejudice levels, when compared to psychology students, as they progress through their schooling. This effect was found even though both groups displayed similar levels of both social dominance and prejudice when beginning their programs (Guimond, Dambrun, Mitchinov, & Duarte, 2003).

The lack of significant findings in this study could imply that the effect of self-esteem is dependent on age of attitude formation, however it could also be due to the study's limitations. Regardless, the study provides a vast amount of avenues to continue to explore ambivalent sexism and the factors that perpetuate these beliefs, which are areas of research that currently remain fairly limited. In future research it may be interesting to look at the idea of low self-esteem acting as a buffer in older populations who have more solidified beliefs in regards to ambivalent sexism. The use of an implicit measure may also yield different results and help to

minimize the misleading effects of social desirability. It may also be useful to run a similar study using students in different areas of study. As Guimond et al. (2003) suggest, different areas may promote more sexist beliefs, and the buffering effect would be higher for those more willing to hold said beliefs.

Finally, this research has numerous theoretical implications for the future. Feminism has become an entirely new construct since its arrival. In an age where in many social circles feminism has become a dirty word, it is important that research continues to focus in on issues that put restraints on the status of women. Benevolent sexism is becoming more readily endorsed by females as they feel that society has made sufficient progress and search to find their niche in a man's world. With research continuing to press on the drivers and catalysts of constructs such as ambivalent sexism, there is hope that this can lead to new ways to reduce of sexist beliefs and actions.

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Appendix A

Letter of Information**Project Title 1: A General Cognitive Evaluation of First Year Psychology Students****Project Title 2: An Exploration of Perceptions of Self and Others****Principal Investigator: Ashley Catala, 4th year Honours Student, Thesis Project, Kings****University College****Letter of Information**

You are being invited to participate in these two short research projects. Study one will pertain to a general cognitive evaluation, while study two will explore perceptions of self and others.

The purpose of this letter is to ensure you have the information required to make an informed decision regarding your participation in these studies. The purpose of the first study is to evaluate cognitive function. The purpose of the second study is to determine the relationship between perception of self and others.

All individuals who are enrolled in the Psychology Research Participant Pool are eligible to participate in these studies. There is no exclusion criteria for either study. If you agree to participate, in the first study you will be asked to complete the cognitive evaluation and receive feedback. In the second study you will be asked to first complete a survey concerning your perceptions of self, and secondly a survey asking questions pertaining to gender norms and attitudes. Your demographic information will also be collected. All individual data will remain confidential and be used for research purposes only. It is anticipated that the completion of both studies will take less than one hour, resulting in a total of one research session. The task(s) will

be completed online. Participants will receive written feedback when the tasks have been completed. There will be a total of 80 participants.

There are no known or anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study.

Psychology 1000 students can receive up to 2.5% bonus marks for completing a related assignment. Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants are free to withdraw at any time, refuse to answer any questions, as well as refuse to participate and still receive credit for the written assignment. Note these two short studies implicate one research session and thus only one credit will be awarded.

Contacts for Further Information

If you require any further information regarding this research project or your participation in the study you may contact Ashley Catala, 4th year Honours Student (acatala3@uwo.ca) or Dr. Karen Dickson (kdickso9@uwo.ca).

Results of either study will be held confidential. If you would like to receive a copy of any potential study results, please contact Ashley Catala, 4th year Honours Student (acatala3@uwo.ca).

You will indicate your consent to participate by answering the consent question at the beginning of the first study.

Appendix B

Self Esteem Manipulation Responses

Low Self Esteem Condition

Unfortunately your score on the cognitive evaluation shows that you make a significantly higher number of cognitive failures than your peers. This means that you have more perceptual, attentional, memory, and action-related mental lapses than other people. As a result, you may not learn new things as easily as other university students.

High Self Esteem Condition

Congratulations! Your score on the cognitive evaluation shows that you make a significantly lower number of cognitive failures than your peers. This means that you have fewer perceptual, attentional, memory, and action-related mental lapses than other people. As a result, you may learn new things more easily than other university students.

Appendix C

Debriefing Form

Project Title: Ambivalent Sexism: A look at the effect of Self Esteem on Ambivalent Sexism

Expression

Principal Investigator: Ashley Catala, 4th year Honours Student, Thesis project

In the first research session you were asked to complete the cognitive failures questionnaire and placed in one of two conditions. You may have received feedback that your score on the task was above average which would have placed you in the low self esteem group stating that you experienced more cognitive failures than your peers. Alternatively you may have received feedback that your score was above below average placing you in the high self esteem group stating that you experienced far less cognitive failures than your peers. The feedback provided was entirely falsified meaning it had no relation to your actual cognitive evaluation. In the second research session your demographic data was collected prior to the completion of a scale measuring your self esteem to see if the manipulation in the first study was successful. The second survey measured your levels of ambivalent sexism. The results of the two short research studies have been put together to gather data for the study at hand.

This study set out to explore the relationship between self esteem and the expression of ambivalent sexism. Ambivalent sexism is the combination of what is called hostile and benevolent sexism. Hostile Sexism refers to an obviously antagonistic attitude towards the other gender (ex. Women are less intelligent than men) whilst benevolent sexism refers to attitudes that seem favourable but serve to perpetuate stereotypes about that gender (Women are delicate and need protection). It was hypothesized that following the research done on terror management

theory, those whose self esteem was threatened were more likely to express a greater level of ambivalent sexism, hostile sexism in particular, than those whose self esteem had been boosted.

The effects of the participants gender will also be examined.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. Without your time the study would not have been able to be conducted. All results will remain entirely confidential, your personal information will never be tied to your responses.

Unfortunately we could not tell you the full details of the study initially because it may have biased your responses. In order to reduce the risk of other biased responses it is asked that you not discuss the details with fellow students. If you have any questions regarding this research please contact Ashley Catala (acatala3@uwo.ca)

The falsified results in this study may leave you vulnerable to belief perseverance, particularly those of you who were placed in the low self esteem group. Belief perseverance is a psychological effect in which even though you are now aware that the feedback was false you may ruminate on it causing you to think and feel negatively towards yourself. In order to prevent this effect please keep in mind that the results were entirely fabricated. The research article provided below by Crocker et al. (1987) explains belief perseverance in greater depth.

Suggested Readings:

Crocker, J., Thompson, L., McGraw, K., & Ingerman, C. (1987). Downward comparison, prejudice, and evaluations of others: Effects of self-esteem and threat. *Journal of personality and social psychology* 52, 907-916.

Lee, T., Fiske, S., & Glick, P. (2010). Next gen ambivalent sexism: Converging correlates, causality in context, and converse causality, an introduction to the special issue. *Sex Roles* 62, 395-404.

Nestler, S. (2010). Belief perseverance: The role of accessible content and accessibility experiences. *Social psychology* 41, 35-41.