



UNDERSTANDING HETEROSEXUALS' SEXUAL PREJUDICES AND BEHAVIORAL REACTIONS TO THE FUNDAMENTAL MOTIVE OF MATING

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INTRODUCTION

Our research sought to understand the sexual prejudices heterosexual men and women hold toward heterosexual, bisexual, and gay/lesbian men and women by applying an affordance-management perspective (Gibson, 1979; McArthur & Baron, 1983; Neuberg et al., 2010; Pirlott & Neuberg, 2014), which proposes that human cognition and behavior serve to manage the perceived threats and opportunities (affordances) posed by others in a social environment.

In particular, we looked at the extent to which heterosexuals perceived some sexual orientation groups to pose unwanted sexual interest threats, which elicited fear and negativity, which motivated avoidance of those targets in private settings to mitigate that perceived threat.

METHOD

Participants

309 heterosexual college students

Design

Using a 2 (target sex; within-subjects) x 3 (target sexual orientation: heterosexual, bisexual, gay/lesbian; within-subjects) x 2 (participant sex; between subjects) design, participants rated their perceptions of, emotional reactions to, and behavioral inclinations toward each target group

Dependent Variables

Perceptions of Unwanted Sexual Interest—perceptions of target sexual interest *minus* participants' sexual interest

Fear—fearful and afraid

Negativity—negative, general dislike

Private Avoidance—e.g., sharing an apartment suite, private office, hotel room, carpooling long distance

ANALYSES & DISCUSSION

Mixed ANOVAs

We first performed mixed ANOVAs on each dependent variable and compared the pattern of means to determine the mediation model. See figures at right.

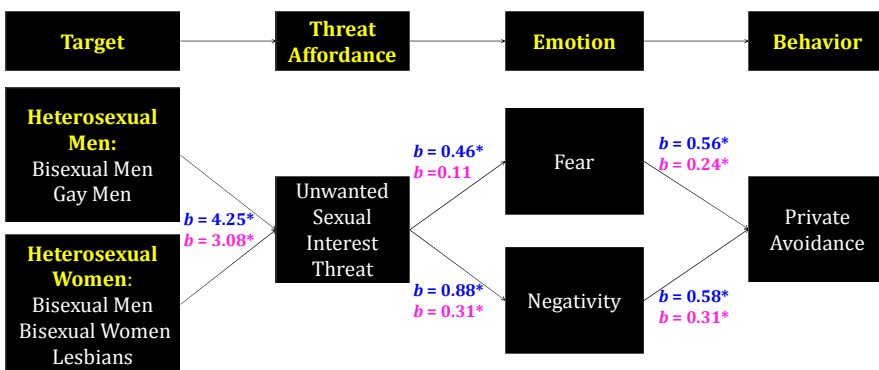
Multilevel Mediation Analyses

We recoded targets according to whether they posed an unwanted sexual interest threat (1) or not (0), according to perceiver sex. We next used multilevel regression analyses to predict each outcome variable. Mediation analyses determined the extent to which targets elicited perceptions of unwanted sexual interest threats, fear and negativity, and private avoidance. See below figure.

Discussion

Mediation analyses revealed that perceptions of unwanted sexual interest threats perceived posed by certain sexual orientation groups drive fear and negativity, which motivate private avoidance of those targets.

MEDIATION ANALYSES



Note. *b* refers to the unstandardized regression coefficient; * $p < .001$; pink coefficients refer to women's path coefficients; blue to men's.

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