



11-3-2019

Consequences of Sexism in Counselor Education: A Collective Analytic Autoethnography

Michael P. Chaney

Oakland University, chaney@oakland.edu

Alcia A. Freeman

University of the Cumberlands, Alcia.freeman@ucumberlands.edu

Jennifer Boswell

University of Houston Victoria, boswellj@uhv.edu

Stephanie Crockett

Oakland University, crockett@oakland.edu

Erin Binkley

Wake Forest University, binkleee@wfu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr>



Part of the [Counselor Education Commons](#)

Recommended APA Citation

Chaney, M. P., Freeman, A. A., Boswell, J., Crockett, S., & Binkley, E. (2019). Consequences of Sexism in Counselor Education: A Collective Analytic Autoethnography. *The Qualitative Report*, 24(11), 2693-2707. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2019.3954>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Qualitative Report at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Qualitative Report by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.



Qualitative Research Graduate Certificate
Indulge in Culture
Exclusively Online • 18 Credits
LEARN MORE

NSU
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN
UNIVERSITY

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN

Consequences of Sexism in Counselor Education: A Collective Analytic Autoethnography

Abstract

In this article we used collective analytic autoethnography to explore experiences and perceptions of sexism among five counselor educators. Based on analysis of narrative data, we introduced a model that illustrates how sexism was experienced and given meaning by participants. Sexist events lead to positive (empowerment, sexism externalization, advocacy, and relationships with others) and negative (low self-confidence, internalized sexism, negative affect, institutional sexism) consequences within their personal and professional lives. Implications of this model are discussed and directions for future research are presented.

Keywords

Sexism, Gender-Based Oppression, Counselor Education, Autoethnography

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

Consequences of Sexism in Counselor Education: A Collective Analytic Autoethnography

Michael P. Chaney

Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan, USA

Alcia A. Freeman

University of the Cumberland, Williamsburg, Kentucky, USA

Jennifer Boswell

University of Houston Victoria, Texas, USA

Stephanie Crockett

Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan, USA

Erin Binkley

Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, USA

In this article we used collective analytic autoethnography to explore experiences and perceptions of sexism among five counselor educators. Based on analysis of narrative data, we introduced a model that illustrates how sexism was experienced and given meaning by participants. Sexist events lead to positive (empowerment, sexism externalization, advocacy, and relationships with others) and negative (low self-confidence, internalized sexism, negative affect, institutional sexism) consequences within their personal and professional lives. Implications of this model are discussed and directions for future research are presented. Keywords: Sexism, Gender-Based Oppression, Counselor Education, Autoethnography

Sexism has been defined as an, “institutional and ideological system that prescribes division by gender, differentiates the social roles attributed to women and men, and ranks them in a hierarchy” (Gianettoni & Roux, 2010, p. 375). Namely, women, their roles and contributions are ranked as less than within a patriarchal system. Hostile sexism views women as less capable than men, which leads to men possessing more power and social stature (Becker & Wright, 2011). Benevolent sexism manifests itself through patronizing attitudes and beliefs that women need to be protected and cared for due to their compliance with traditional social roles and their fragility (Overall, Sibley, & Tan, 2011). Although benevolent sexism may express itself as chivalrous behavior, combined with hostile sexism, it perpetuates inequity for women. Regardless of the type of sexism experienced, the consequences of sexist oppression influences women in a variety of ways.

Consequences of Sexism

Sexism can lead to physical, emotional, interpersonal and employment-related consequences including negative influences on cardiovascular health (Salmon, Burgess, & Bosson, 2015), the immune system (Pieterse & Carter, 2007), and cognitive functioning (Dardenne et al., 2013). Individuals exposed to sexist events reported greater anxiety and

psychological distress (Hurst & Beesley, 2013; Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014); anger and depression (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001); body shame (Calogero & Jost, 2011); diminished self-esteem (Oswald, Baalbaki, & Kirkman, 2018); and binge drinking and smoking (Zucker & Landry, 2007). Women also are negatively impacted by institutional sexism in the workforce, as demonstrated by gender disparities in salary earnings. Recent reports revealed that women employed full-time earned 78% of the median full-time salary of their male counterparts (i.e., a woman earns 78 cents for every dollar a man earns) (Council of Economic Advisers, 2015). Furthermore, while working in male-dominated employment settings, women frequently experience gender-based harassment, which can lead to decreased job performance and diminished satisfaction with their jobs (Leskinen, Cortina, & Kabat, 2011; Leskinen, Caridad-Rabelo, & Cortina, 2015). For individuals who are employed in higher education, discrete expressions of sexism also have consequences.

Sexism in Higher Education

According to Wolfinger, Mason, and Goulden (2008) the path to the professorate is a pipeline with cracks and blockages that thwart women's progress toward tenured faculty positions. Even with women earning more doctoral degrees than men, less than half hold faculty positions, and this number is significantly reduced for women of color (Beck, 2003; Kelly & McCann, 2014). Women are underrepresented in higher-ranking professorate positions in academe. The National Center for Education Statistics (2017) reported that in the fall of 2016 there were an estimated 815,760 full-time faculty members (54.11% men, 45.89% women). Assistant Professors (11.09% women; 10.52% men), Associate Professors (8.73% women, 10.62% men), and Full Professors (7.22% women; 15.2% men) were documented. Notably, as rank increased, the number of women in senior positions decreased.

Women academics as compared to their male counterparts are more often given higher teaching loads, which compromise scholarly productivity (Riley, Frith, Archer, & Veseley, 2006). For women of color in the professorate, experiences are more discouraging where racism and sexism intersect and influence the promotion process and individual merit (i.e., validity of scholarship, intellect etc.) is scrutinized (Croom, 2017). Albeit the aforementioned reports add to our understanding of sexism within higher education generally, few studies examined the influence of gender-based oppression within counselor education specifically.

Gender-Based Disparities in Counselor Education

There is a paucity of literature that examined the roles of women in counselor education. This is somewhat surprising considering the gender make-up of the profession. Based on a recent report from The National Center for Education Statistics (2017), a total of 11,179 master's degrees (1,922 to males, 9,257 to females) and 363 doctorates (89 to males, 274 to females) in counselor education, school counseling, or guidance services were granted from 2015-2016. As well, this gender disparity is reflected in the gender composition of the American Counseling Association (ACA). As of June 1, 2018, there were 52,646 ACA members. Of members who reported their gender, 7,533 identified as female and 2,601 were male (ACA, 2018). Though women are over-represented in the professions of counseling and counselor education, few studies in professional literature explored women's experiences in counselor education. In one study, Roland and Fontanesi-Seime (1996) quantified scholarly productivity trends among 144 female counselor educators. Stinchfield and Trepal (2010) used a mixed-methods approach to investigate women counselor educators' perceptions of

balancing work and family life. Another study explored women counselor educators' scholarly contributions and found that they are more successful at contributing conference presentations compared to men who produce more journal articles and other professional publications (Ramsay, Cavallaro, Kiselica, & Zila, 2002). A more recent study focused on professional identity development, found that professional identities of women counselor educators were more compromised compared to their male counterparts as measured by level of engagement (i.e., women were less likely than men to engage in activities associated with higher status positions and requirements for tenure) in the field (Healey & Hays, 2012). In one of the few articles focused specifically on women of color in counselor education, Bradley (2005) explored the challenges women of color face in academia and presented strategies for overcoming these obstacles within counselor education. Although valuable, the aforementioned studies did not give voice to experiences and meanings of sexism.

Our study originated from small, informal writing meetings among the authors. Over the course of a year, we established weekly writing support sessions at a local coffee shop for all of our individual writing projects, typically on Fridays. In addition to getting a lot of writing done, discussions organically evolved to focus on the impact and observations of sexism, racism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression in higher education, and in counselor education specifically. Moreover, we regularly reflected on our personal and professional experiences with and our relationships to sexism. Thus, the purpose of our study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of sexism among a small group of counselor educators. As such, we limited the scope of our study to experience and observations surrounding gender-based oppression, specifically, sexism. We focused our project on sexism for two primary reasons. First, we identify as four females and one male feminist who are passionate about combatting gender-based oppression. Second, as the abovementioned literature review demonstrated, issues of sexism in the professional counseling literature is omitted.

Method

We utilized autoethnographic methods in this study. Analytic autoethnography allows a researcher to use the self and their subjective experiences via personal narratives as the source of data development and collection (Taylor, Lehan, Mackin, & Oldenburg, 2008). Autoethnography goes beyond telling personal stories to an intentional analysis of individual narratives where an investigation of the self as data takes place. Autoethnography allowed us to explore and link our personal experiences to our socio-cultural contexts (Hays & Singh, 2012; Reed-Danahay, 1997).

Anderson (2006) proposed five components of analytic autoethnography. First, the researcher is a member of the socio-cultural group under investigation. Second, a process of analytic reflexivity is engaged whereby understanding and awareness of the connections among the researcher, others, and their socio-cultural contexts are examined. Third, there is clear visibility and voice of the researcher in textual data. Fourth, because analytic autoethnography involves the study of self in relation to others, discourse with others should be part of the data and ethnographic process. Lastly, the narrative data is analyzed so that findings may be applied to the socio-cultural construct under investigation. Due to this study meeting the aforementioned characteristics, analytic autoethnography was utilized.

Participants

Rationale for inclusion. The five authors (four women and one man) of this article comprised the participants of this study. We shared two important characteristics. First, all

researchers' professional responsibilities involved educating counselors-in-training. Second, all researchers were directly or indirectly affected by sexism based on aspects of their cultural identities. The rationale for including a gay male in this study is based on research that linked sexism and prejudice against gay men (Davies, 2004; Murphy, 2006). More recent studies have found that prejudice toward gay men is explained by sexism (MacInnis & Hodson, 2015). Data from the male author solely focused on observations of sexism within counselor education and sexist events impacting the female co-authors (i.e., eye-witness accounts, present when event occurred etc.). These entries were used as data source triangulation to add to the credibility of findings (Patton, 2015). We acknowledge the observations of a man are not needed to bolster trustworthiness or to justify the experiences of the women in this study.

Researcher positionality. The first author, a counselor educator, identifies as a gay, white, cisgender, male. Throughout this project, he remained aware his multiple privileged identities (white, cisgender male, able-bodied, associate professor), as well as his oppressed identity as a gay person. His worldview is centered on the assumption that the root of heterosexism is sexism. The second researcher was a doctoral student and adjunct instructor in counselor education at time of data collection and has since earned her doctorate. She is an assistant professor in counselor education who identifies as an African-American, heterosexual female. Throughout this study, she remained aware of how the intersectionality of various facets of her identity impacts her subject experiences. The third author, a counselor educator (assistant professor), identifies as a White, heterosexual female. She tried to remain aware of the impact of gender on academic culture and relationships and how one's gender and the experiences of sexism impact one's view of their profession and growth. The fourth author, a counselor educator (associate professor), identifies as a white, heterosexual female. She views society and its institutions as patriarchal, oppressing individuals who do not have white, heterosexual male privilege. During this project, she tried to remain aware of how her gender intersected with other aspects of her identity to affect her experiences of sexism. The fifth author, a counselor educator (assistant professor), identifies as a white, heterosexual female. She approached the current project from a perspective of interest and curiosity. At the inception of this study, all researchers were housed within the same CACREP accredited counseling department; however, midway through data collection, two of the researchers moved on to different universities.

It should be noted that the order of authorship is strictly based on contributions to this project and was agreed upon at the outset of this study. Although a male first author on a study about sexism appears to perpetuate patriarchy, he conceptualized, initiated, and organized this study from its inception to completion while consulting with co-authors throughout the project. This study was excluded from institutional review because data was the investigators' own narratives, no interventions or interactions with outside participants were involved, and no identifiable private information was collected. Collectively, we gave consent to use our journal entries in this study and to publish the quotes contained herein. We treated each other and our data in accordance with ethical research standards of the American Psychological Association and American Counseling Association. Names and identifying characteristics were excluded to protect our confidentiality and anonymity.

Procedure and Analyses

The authors journaled their observations, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about sexism as experienced within their professional lives and/or observed around them. Journal entries primarily focused on experiences that occurred at the departmental, school, and university levels and within national professional organizations. Banks-Wallace (2008) suggested that journaling is an appropriate procedure for research because journaling facilitates

understanding of how our various worldviews and identities influence the research process. Because prolonged engagement enhances trustworthiness and credibility, the authors journaled for a nine-month period (Patton, 2015).

To analyze the data, we employed principles of grounded theory. Past researchers have also integrated grounded theory and autoethnography (See Arnold, 2011; Belgrave et al., 2012). Upon completion of writing journal entries, the first and second author developed the initial codebook. Separately, the two researchers engaged in a process of open coding all journal entries (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Once this step was completed, they came together to compare and discuss emerging codes. The initial codebook was created once consensus was reached. Using the initial codebook, the third and fourth authors individually coded all journal entries. Once they had completed their analyses, the first, second, third, and fourth researchers convened to compare and discuss new codes and revise existing codes until consensus was reached. This resulted in the development of the second version of the codebook. Moving into the axial and selective coding phases (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and using the refined codebook, the first and fourth authors individually coded all journal entries paying particular attention to connections, themes, and patterns between codes. The first and fourth authors came together to compare and challenge each other's conclusions and interpretations until agreement was reached in a logical manner, and a coherent model emerged from the data.

Findings

Salient themes and patterns emerged from the data. Collectively, sexism influenced individuals' professional lives. Notably, the data revealed a greater focus on the consequences of sexism rather than sexist events themselves. Narratives revealed that the primary domain of consequences of sexism was comprised of two sub-domains, negative and positive outcomes. The positive and negative consequences impacted the participants on two tiers, internally and externally. These themes and sub-themes, at times, overlap and link due to reciprocity of construct interactions, resulting in a global theme, Gender-based oppression leads to negative and positive consequences (See Figure 1).

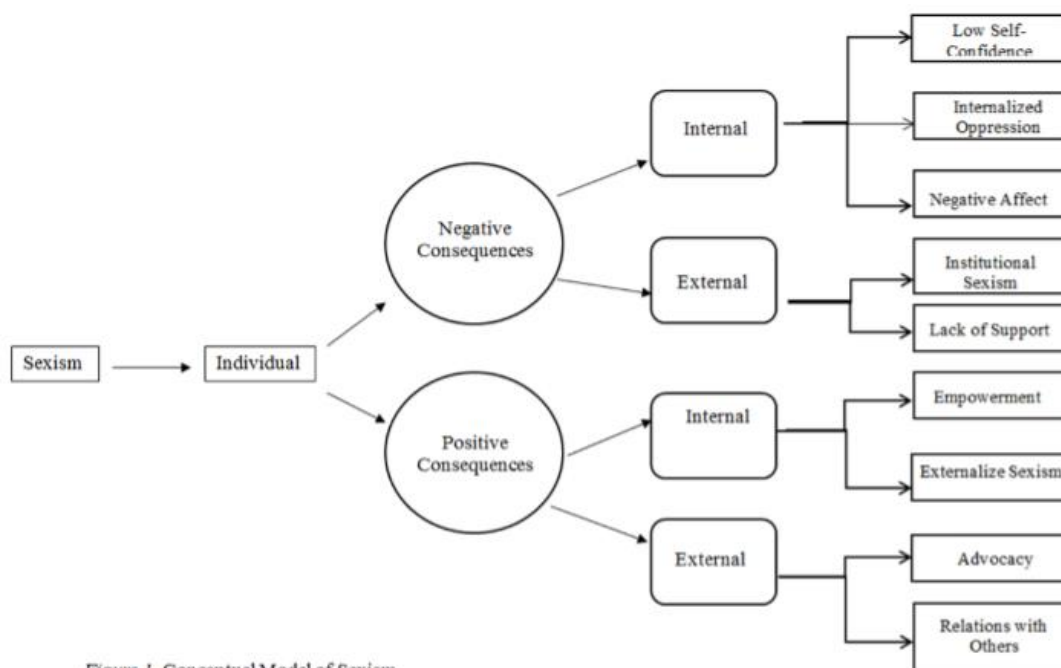


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Sexism

Internal Negative Consequences

An observable theme was that experiences of sexism lead to internal negative consequences for individuals. These types of adverse consequences were either directly experienced by individuals or observed as influencing the authors. Three sub-themes emerged including diminished self-confidence, negative affect, and internalized oppression.

Self-confidence. The first sub-theme was that sexist events were detrimental to global self-confidence. For example, a researcher wrote her confidence was affected this way:

The past two and a half years, I have found it incredibly difficult to trust my own intuition and intelligence. I feel that every decision I make is an opportunity for someone to point out that I am wrong and the consequences of being wrong are high-stakes. Being wrong, making mistakes means that my whole world crumbles. I am not worthy, not intelligent, and a failure.

In the context of observing how sexism affects the self-confidence of co-authors, one author wrote, "To see how it [sexism] affects the women involved is very upsetting. I see that they start to question themselves and their worth as scientists and educators." Another researcher wrote about how sexism has influenced her self-confidence in the classroom:

Another characteristic that struck me was fear of being evaluated, and overestimating others while underestimating myself. I have always thought that people know more than I do, and that I have to work hard in order to be successful and prove myself.

Negative affect. A second sub-theme was that sexist experiences often resulted in the development of negative affect. One author wrote about her feelings after a discussion she had with other professionals about the roles of women in the field of counselor education. She wrote,

One of the prevailing emotions that came out of the discussion for me was discouragement. We talked about not being able to separate ourselves from our identities as females, no matter what. It felt like a 'damned if you do and damned if you don't' type of discussion, which left me feeling so frustrated.

Another individual wrote about her feelings regarding oppressive comments received from colleagues after giving a presentation on sexism at a professional conference: "I feel angry that my peers have experienced these comments. It creates a level of frustration for me but more than that it is hurt and worry for them and myself."

Other negative emotions that were described were due to participants attempting to balance the multiple socialized gender-based expectations placed on them within their personal and professional lives. In addition, gender-based oppression resulted in feelings of frustration as described the following statement,

This week I find myself with more questions than ever about the role women play in counselor education and how we might seek to change and bring awareness about these roles. I get frustrated at the seemingly endless ways that sexism is evident in our culture...

The journal entries revealed that a continuum of negative feelings emerged after experiencing a sexist event. The following quote illustrates the myriad of adverse emotions experienced: "...so many emotions are coming up for me now as I recall these [sexist] experiences. I am livid and enraged by my experiences. I am also distressed, exhausted, and hopeless."

Internalized oppression. The third sub-theme, internalized oppression, was salient in the majority of journal entries. Of particular interest was how sexism intersected with other forms of oppression such as racism and heterosexism. One journal writer described it this way:

It is always interesting to witness the social construction of race and gender actually play out in the university. I am aware that on many levels my worldview is shaped by my lived experiences, and that I've internalized racism and sexism.

Another researcher wrote:

It is much easier for me to write about sexism from the perspective of its relationship to heterosexism and how I experience the heterosexist attitudes and behaviors around me and my own internalized heterosexism. By this, I mean that I see the women around me and/or women in counselor education, ACA, and other organizations are treated how I am treated. I am devalued, ignored, and subtly shamed. I imagine this is how my female colleagues feel, and I see this is how the women around me are treated... I see the internalized shame among the women I work with.

Another author described a moment of coming to recognize that she had internalized sexism. She explained:

When I was not talking about sexism, it was invisible to me. I did not understand what was happening to me, why I was so unhappy, and why I was reacting to my environment in the way I was. I felt isolated and deeply insecure. I completely internalized everything.

Another entry exemplified how gender-based oppression is internalized:

So, one of my biggest internalized messages that I struggle with is feeling inadequate because I am not assertive enough in most areas of my life. I constantly fear that I am viewed as weak... I have come to realize that these feelings of inadequacy most likely stem from my socialization as a female. Women are taught not to be assertive, especially in comparison to their male counterparts...

External Negative Consequences

A resulting outcome associated with sexism was external negative consequences. These unfavorable outcomes typically were the result of interactions with others and/or often occurred on a meso- and macro-level. Two categories of negative external consequences consistently emerged from the data: institutional sexism and lack of support.

Institutional sexism. Depictions of institutional sexism were commonly recounted by all authors. One author wrote about a recent experience at a faculty meeting.

During the meeting, the interim Dean of the school, who strikes me as a member of the good ole' boys club, asked three people to speak about their vision for the college. Given that our school is made of roughly half men and women, it made logical sense that both sexes would be represented in this sharing of a vision. However, he chose three white, older males to get up and speak about their visions... I felt defeated, incompetent, and devalued as they spoke.

Another author wrote about how institutional oppression manifests itself on a departmental level: "The department is clearly dominated by white, heterosexual men, and they have all of the power in terms of decision-making, policy establishment, and the primary runnings of the department." Another journal writer shared her experience of how gender-based power helps to maintain sexism on meso- and macro-levels.

I continued to feel that my experiences and thoughts about sexism were continually suppressed by the notion of others holding a level of power held over me. In my mind, this leads to the continuation of the existence of sexism in higher education, counselor education, and even in society as a whole.

One particular journal entry pointed out how institutional sexism manifests itself within a larger professional association.

In many ways, I think what happens in our department and in counselor education is representative of what happens within the profession on a broader level, specifically, within the ACA. I guess what I am referring to is that the Executive Director is a male... Although there have been female ACA presidents, including lesbian past presidents, the past couple of years within ACA have limited women's opportunities to hold such high leadership because of new rules for who can be president. Another example is that, to date, there is no ACA endorsed division specifically geared to women and women's issues. Yes, there is a Women's Interest Network, but the interest networks are like groups that "don't really count" because ACA says there are not enough numbers.

Lack of support. Participants in the current study perceived that one effect of sexism is lack of support from others, especially professionally. One author characterized the lack of support in the following way. "In general, it seems like there is very little support for women, personal and professional. This is not limited to my department. The professional literature and ACA do little to address these issues." This is consistent with an entry from another author who desired support and mentorship. She stated, "I crave mentorship from seasoned counselor educators who are women." Another author expressed the lack of support as a repercussion for speaking out about sexism. She wrote, "After expressing some opinions to [Administrative Authority], I do feel raw and vulnerable, and sometimes unsupported."

Internal Positive Consequences

A common theme within all journals was that at times, there were positive consequences associated with some sexist experiences and how individuals processed the events. Internal positive consequences are outcomes that occurred within individuals and

directly benefited the individual. Empowerment and being able to externalize sexism emerged as two sub-themes.

Empowerment. One researcher described how she has felt more empowered working with students as a result of journaling and gaining an understanding of the influence of sexism in her life. She wrote, “Perhaps some of it has come through the journaling process and learning about sexism... There is certainly empowerment associated with just knowing about sexism and labeling your experiences.” Another author wrote, “I am recognizing I can have a voice” about her experiences in advocating for herself to a colleague in a position of power. Another journal statement illustrated how experiences of sexism can lead to feeling empowered. It read, “I am learning that it seems important for women to feel connected, supported, and empowered to take charge of their own lives.”

Externalizing sexism. Externalizing sexism refers to the ability to recognize that gender-based oppression is a larger systemic issue outside of the control of the individual. For example, an author described how connecting with like-minded mentors helped her to see the systemic roots of oppression, “Understanding that the construction of sexist and racist ways of being are so deeply ingrained into the fabric of our culture, they are actively working to deconstruct this way of thinking.” A second writer articulated when she was able to recognize sexism. She stated, “It externalizes the problem to a large extent. Before this year, I certainly internalized my problems and insecurities. It is really therapeutic to see your issues as stemming from a larger context/system.” A common theme among the authors was how discourse about gender-based oppression helped them to externalize sexism as a systemic issue rather than to personalize it as evidenced by the following quote.

For me, I have found that simply talking about my experiences with sexism to others helps me to not feel alone. I feel normal and justified in my experiences, which allows me to stop internalizing the sexist messages as much.

External Positive Consequences

External positive consequences are outcomes that occurred outside of individuals or actions taken, as a result of sexism that had an effect on others or had some impact on combating sexism. Fostering relationships with others and advocacy emerged as two sub-themes.

Relationships with others. In reference to the connections and strengthened relationships that grew out of gender-based oppressive experiences one author wrote, “I guess this is reminding me how important it is to have a strong support system and alliances to deal with the sexism in the department and in our profession overall.” Another author described how her relationships with others helped her to become more aware of sexism. “Having discussions with peers, family, and writing this journal has made me more aware of the impact in the larger community, on a personal level, and professionally.” The preceding quote also underscores how relationships with others intersect with being able to externalize sexism. Another entry highlights how sexist experiences influenced relationships with other professionals. “Even though many of these experiences with male counselor educators were not enjoyable, I learned quite a bit about working with other counselor educators, and how to decide who I want to work with in the future.” A common experience among the authors was the importance of establishing affirming relationships in one’s personal and professional lives to counteract some of the effects of sexism. For example, one author wrote, “I wonder if one key thing is to try to maintain my relationships with women in my family a little better so I

don't feel as isolated." She continued, "I think I also need to continue to seek out relationships in the department that support me instead of bringing me down."

Advocacy. A common experience written about by all authors was that experiences of oppression often lead the oppressed to engage in advocacy efforts to dismantle various forms of oppression including sexism, racism, and heterosexism. Mentorship as an advocacy effort was reflecting this way: "Both in society and at the professional level, we need to mentor young women and women professionals to be assertive and give them models of women who are taking on these roles and being successful in their roles." Similarly, other participants advocated by educating counselor education students about sexism:

It seems as though our focus on sexism has started conversations among doctoral students and they are beginning to speak about their experiences with sexism in the department. It is interesting how just talking about our experiences and letting them be known seems to facilitate an environment for others to talk.

Education about the effects of sexism as an advocacy effort was described: "I guess in the end it [sexism] motivates me to continue on educating women."

Authors also described instances of advocating for self. One author explained how she advocated for herself by speaking up to a male professor about concerns she had in the context of being a woman in a counselor education program. She wrote:

As I struggled through the second semester of my first year of doctoral studies, I expressed my feelings and concerns to a male professor. Speaking with that professor challenged my thinking and served as an affirmation that I belonged and can excel in academe.

Another participant wrote about this research project as a way to advocate for women, and stated, "...what matters is that these are their truths and how we can use this project and the process of this project to combat oppression of women (and all individuals) in our field and society at large."

Discussion

In this study, we found that participants focused more on the consequences of sexism than on life events through which they experienced sexism. As illustrated in the emergent model (See Figure 1), participants generally identified sexism through a series of internal and external positive and negative consequences of their experiences rather than through the experiences of these sexist events themselves. In other words, participants assigned interpretation and meaning to the sexist events they experienced or witnessed, by viewing sexism as a mechanism by which either negative or positive consequences were triggered. Similar to other studies, internalizing sexism (Bearman, Korobov, & Thorne, 2009), feeling pressure to maintain traditional gender roles (Connelly & Heesacker, 2012), and experiencing negative emotional and psychological effects of sexism (Pieterse & Carter, 2007, Oswald et al., 2018) also surfaced for authors. The process of experiencing both negative and positive consequences of sexism has ramifications for those affected by gender-based oppression in general, and in counselor education specifically. Leaders in higher education, faculty members, and students may benefit from having knowledge and awareness of the lived experiences of those targeted by sexism. *Vis-à-vis* this knowledge, those in positions of power may support others to navigate the consequences of sexism and engage in a process of

self-reflection to examine their own contributions to gender-based oppression. Those affected by sexism may find empowerment through awareness.

An element of community in the context of relationships with others surfaced as a common theme in much of the data. Narratives were often focused on the participants' thoughts regarding who they could trust, where they felt most free to be themselves, spaces where they noted sexist messages being communicated, and with whom they could safely discuss the thoughts and feelings resulting from sexist experiences. Further, the need for mentorship of women by women in counselor education was described as a buffer from some of the effects of sexism. This is consistent with past research that has reported mentorship facilitates success for women as they navigate sexism in academia (Croom, 2017).

Results of this study suggest that sexist events are often experienced internally and can lead to feelings of isolation. However, all participants noted that discussing events and experiences often led to a greater sense of shared identity, alleviating some feelings of isolation. Although hopelessness seemed to be a common consequence of sexism, participants also seemed to find hope through conversation and advocacy. Many participants seemed interested in finding ways of opening the conversation with others affected by sexism and giving voice to sexist events. A recent study may help to explain this finding. Becker and Wright (2011) examined women's responses to exposure to sexism and found that women were likely to speak out against hostile sexism, but not necessarily against benevolent sexism. Further inquiry and education is needed in this area in order to empower counselor educators to recognize and speak out against all forms of sexism.

In this vein, counselor educators should engage in ongoing discussions of sexism, whether via formal platforms such as conference presentations and classrooms, or informally with students and colleagues, reaching outward even to family, friends, and professionals in other disciplines. Mallett and Wagner (2011) contended that educating individuals about the consequences and emotions stemming from sexist behavior may lead to increased awareness and a change in behavior, even for perpetrators. Becker et al. (2014) corroborated this contention, reporting that experiential learning may increase individuals' abilities to recognize benevolent sexism. With this new knowledge, individuals can more effectively be taught both how to avoid perpetrating sexist behavior and how to combat sexist experiences when they do occur.

A study examining the emotional effects of both hostile and benevolent sexism found that while both forms of sexism communicate a patronizing message to women, hostile sexism elicits feelings of anger in its victims, while benevolent sexism leads more often to depression (Bosson, Pinel, & Vandello, 2010). Therefore, counselor educators who experience sexist events should look for avenues of support such as personal counseling, supervision, or professional colleagues willing to engage in conversation in an affirming space.

Advocacy efforts are needed that facilitate sexism awareness within counselor education. One means of advocating for change is to hold all counselor education programs, regardless of accreditation status, accountable to infuse social justice education into the counseling curriculum, which should include risk and protective factors of sexism. When students are equipped with a tool set, they are able to create change by breaking patterns and barriers within existing systems of oppression (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007; Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2003).

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Though measures were taken to bolster the trustworthiness and veracity of the current study, there were a few limitations. First, because the conceptual model emerged from the

data of the five individuals who were initially housed in one institution, the model might not be applicable to all counselor educators; however, it should be noted that generalizability is not a goal of autoethnography. The inclusion of journal entries from a male researcher is also a plausible limitation. As a result of the protective aspects of male privilege, it is impossible for men to experience the impact of sexism in the same way as women. Albeit, the use of observational accounts of sexism from the male researcher enhanced triangulation of data. Lastly, it is not possible to definitively attribute the positive and negative consequences presented in this study as being caused by sexism. Due to these limitations, further research is needed to fully understand sexism and its influences on women in counselor education. To help minimize the deleterious effects of sexism, future research should examine factors that help to buffer the negative consequences of gender-based oppression. Analyzing the nature of empowerment, externalization of sexism, advocacy, and social support in relation to gender-based oppression could assist with the development of strategies to combat sexism within society in general and within the field counselor education specifically. In addition, future research should explore the relationship between resiliency and sexism among women in counselor education. Finally, because counselor education departments are microcosms of the society in which we live, the intersectionality of multiple identities must be taken into account when surveying departmental climates as they relate to sexism and other forms of oppression (i.e., racism, heterosexism etc.). Albeit, intersectionality did not emerge as a dominant theme in this study, a more definitive focus on sexism through the lens of intersectionality could benefit the profession and lead to the creation of safer and more equitable spaces for all counselor educators.

References

- Adams, M., Bell, L.A., & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (2007). *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Taylor and Francis Group.
- American Counseling Association. (2018). *Membership report*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Anderson, L. (2006). Analytic autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35(4), 373-395. doi: 10.1177/0891241605280449
- Arnold, J. (2011). The self as data: A qualitative methodology. *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology*, 1(1), 65-73. doi: 10.5539/jedp.v1n1p65
- Banks-Wallace, J. (2008). Eureka! I finally get it: Journaling as a tool for promoting praxis in research. *ABNF Journal*, 19(1), 24-27.
- Bearman, S., Korobov, N., & Thorne, A. (2009). The fabric of internalized sexism. *Journal of Integrated Social Sciences*, 1(1), 10-47.
- Beck, A. J. (2003). *Through the looking-glass ceiling: The advancement of women administrators and women faculty in an institution of higher education*. University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/etd/d/2003/beckaj032/beckaj032.pdf>
- Becker, J. C., & Wright, S. C. (2011). Yet another dark side of chivalry: Benevolent sexism undermines and hostile sexism motivates collective action for social change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101, 62-77. doi:10.1037/a0022615
- Becker, J. C., Zawadzki, M. J., & Shields, S. A. (2014). Confronting and reducing sexism: A call for research on intervention. *Journal of Social Issues*, 70(4), 603-614. doi: 10.1111/josi.12081
- Belgrave, L. L., Celaya, A., Gurses, S. A., Boutwell, A., & Fernandez, A. (2012). Meaning of political controversy in the classroom: A dialogue across the podium. *Symbolic Interaction*, 35(1), 68-87. doi: 10.1002/SYMB.1

- Bosson, J. K., Pintel, E. C., & Vandello, J. A. (2010). The emotional impact of ambivalent sexism: Forecasts versus real experiences. *Sex Roles, 62*, 520-531.
- Bradley, C. (2005). The career experiences of African American women faculty: Implications for counselor education programs. *College Student Journal, 39*(3), 518-527.
- Calogero, R., & Jost, J. (2011). Self-subjugation among women: Exposure to sexist ideology, self-objectification, and the protective function of the need to avoid closure. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 100*, 211-228. doi:10.1037/a0021864
- Connelly, K., & Heesacker, M. (2012). Why is benevolent sexism appealing? Associations with system justification and life satisfaction. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 36*, 432-443. doi: 10.1177/0361684312456369
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. L. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Council of Economic Advisers (U.S.). (April, 2015). *Gender pay gap: Recent trends and explanations*. [Washington, DC]: Executive Office of the President, Council of Economic Advisers. Retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/equal_pay_issue_brief_final.pdf
- Croom, N. N. (2017). Promotion beyond tenure: Unpacking racism and sexism in the experiences of Black woman professors. *The Review of Higher Education, 40*(4), 557-583. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2017.0022>
- Dardenne, B., Dumont, M., Sarlet, M., Phillips, C., Baiteau, E., Dequeldre, C., ...Collette, F. (2013). *NeuroReport: For Rapid Communication of Neuroscience Research, 24*(10), 572-577. doi: 10.1097/WNR.0b013e3283625b5b
- Davies, M. (2004). Correlates of negative attitudes toward gay men: Sexism, male role norms, and male sexuality. *The Journal of Sex Research, 41*, 259-266. doi:10.1080/00224490409552233
- Gianettoni, L., & Roux, P. (2010). Interconnecting race and gender relations: Racism, sexism, and the attribution of sexism to the racialized other. *Sex Roles, 62*, 374-386. doi: 10.1007/s11199-010-9755-9
- Hays, D. G., & Singh, A. A. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry in clinical and educational settings*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Healey, A. C., & Hays, D. G. (2012). A discriminant analysis of gender and counselor professional identity development. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 90*, 55-62.
- Hurst, R. J., & Beesley, D. (2013). Perceived sexism, self-silencing, and psychological distress in college women. *Sex Roles, 68*(5-6), 311-320.
- Kelly, B. T., & McCann, K. I. (2014). Women faculty of color: Stories behind the statistics. *Urban Review, 46*, 681-702. doi: 10.1007/s11256-014-0275-8
- Leskinen, E. A., Coritna, L. M., & Kabat, D. B. (2011). Gender harassment: Broadening our understanding of sex-based harassment at work. *Law and Human Behavior, 35*, 25-39. doi: 10.1007/s10979-010-9241-5
- Leskinen, E. A., Caridad-Rabelo, V., & Cortina, L. M. (2015). Gender stereotyping and harassment: A "catch-22" for women in the workplace. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 21*(2), 192-204. doi: 10.1037/law0000040
- Lewis, J., Arnold, M. S., House, R., & Toporek, R. L. (2003). *ACA Advocacy Competencies*. Retrieved from: <https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/competencies>
- MacInnis, C. C., & Hodson, G. (2015). Why are heterosexual men (vs. women) particularly prejudiced toward gay men? A social dominance theory explanation. *Psychology & Sexuality, 6*(3), 275-294. doi: 10.1080/19419899.2014.987684
- Mallett, R. K., & Wagner, D. E. (2007). The unexpectedly positive consequences of confronting sexism. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 47*, 215-220. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2010.10.001

- Murphy, M. K. (2006). 'The fire will not consume us': Exploring the link between homophobia and sexism in U.S. feminism. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 15, 209-221. doi: 10.1080/09589230600861978
- National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. (2017). *Digest of Education Statistics. Table 318.30, Bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by sex of student and discipline division: 2015-16.* Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_318.30.asp
- National Center for Education Statistics, U. S. Department of Education. (2017). *Full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, and academic rank: Fall 2013, fall 2015, and fall 2016.* Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_315.20.asp?current=yes
- Oswald, D. L., Baalbaki, M., & Kirkman, M. (2018). Experiences with benevolent sexism: Scale development and associations with women's well-being. *Sex Roles*, 78(9-10), 591-605. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11199-018-0933-5>
- Overall, N. C., Sibley, C. G., & Tan, R. (2011). The costs and benefits of sexism: Resistance to influence during relationship conflict. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101(2), 271-290. doi: 10.1037/a0022727
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pieterse, A. L., & Carter, R. T. (2007). An examination of the relationship between general life stress, racism-related stress, and psychological health among black men. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 54(1), 101-109. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.54.1.101
- Ramsay, M., Cavallaro, M., Kiselica, M., & Zila, L. (2002). Scholarly productivity redefined in counselor education. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 42 (1), 40-57.
- Reed-Danahay, D. (1997). *Auto/ethnography*. New York, NY: Berg.
- Riley, S., Frith, H., Archer, L., & Veseley, L. (2006). Institutional sexism in academia. *The Psychologist*, 19(2), 94-97.
- Roland, C. B., & Fontanesi-Seime, M. (1996). Women counselor educators: A survey of publication activity. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 74, 490-494.
- Salmon, K., Burgess, K. D., & Bosson, J. K. (2015). Flash fire and slow burn: Women's cardiovascular reactivity and recovery following hostile and benevolent sexism. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 144(2), 469-479.
- Schmitt, M. T., Branscombe, N. R., Postmes, T., & Garcia, A. (2014). The consequences of perceived discrimination for psychological well-being: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140, 921-948. doi: 10.1037/a0035754.
- Stinchfield, T. A., & Trepal, H. (2010). Academic motherhood for counselor educators: Navigating through the academic pipeline. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 32, 91-100. doi: 10.1007/s10447-009-9086-0
- Swim, J. K., Hyers, L. L., Cohen, L. L., & Ferguson, M. J. (2001). Everyday sexism: Evidence for its incidence, nature, and psychological impact from three daily diary studies. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(1), 31-53. doi:10.1111/0022-4537.00200
- Taylor, J. Y., Lehan, M. A., Lehan Mackin, M. A., & Oldenburg, A. M. (2008). Engaging in racial autoethnography as a teaching tool for womanist inquiry. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 31(4), 342-355.
- Wolfinger, N. H., Mason, M. A., & Goulden, M. (2008). Problems in the pipeline: Gender, marriage, and fertility in the ivory tower. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79(4), 388-405.
- Zucker A. N., Landry L. J. (2007). Embodied discrimination: The relation of sexism and distress to women's drinking and smoking behaviors. *Sex Roles*, 56, 193-203.

Author Note

Michael P. Chaney and Stephanie A. Crockett are with the Department of Counseling at Oakland University. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to chaney@oakland.edu and crockett@oakland.edu respectfully.

Alcia A. Freeman is with the School of Counseling at the University of the Cumberlands. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: Alcia.freeman@ucumberlands.edu.

Jennifer Boswell is with the School of Education, Health Professions, and Human Development at the University of Houston-Victoria. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: boswellj@uhv.edu.

Erin E. Binkley is with the Department of Counseling at Wake Forest University. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: binkleee@wfu.edu.

Copyright 2019: Michael P. Chaney, Alcia A. Freeman, Jennifer Boswell, Stephanie Crockett, Erin Binkley, and Nova Southeastern University.

Article Citation

Chaney, M. P., Freeman, A. A., Boswell, J., Crockett, S., & Brinkley, E. (2019). Consequences of sexism in counselor education: A collective analytic autoethnography. *The Qualitative Report*, 24(11), 2693-2707. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol24/iss11/2>
