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The relationship between homonegativity, sexual harassment myth acceptance, harasser and target sex, and perceptions of sexual harassment

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**The Relationship Between Homonegativity, Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance,
Harasser and Target Sex, and Perceptions of Sexual Harassment**

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Abstract

The purpose was to determine the relationship between participant homonegativity (a prejudice towards homosexuality), sexual harassment myth acceptance (beliefs of sexual harassment myths), and perceptions of sexual harassment where the gender of the target and harasser varied. We predicted that homonegativity level would be related to perceptions of the sexual harassment scenario. Participant homonegativity was positively correlated with sexual harassment myth acceptance. Interestingly, participants higher in homonegativity or sexual harassment myth acceptance were more likely to rate the harassment as less severe and had less of an emotional reaction. The current results imply that regardless of the type of sexual harassment (different or same-sex), higher homonegativity participants may not react in institutionally appropriate ways regarding sexual harassment in the workplace.

Keywords: homonegativity, sexual harassment, gender, sexual harassment myth acceptance

The Relationship Between Homonegativity, Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance, Harasser and Target Sex, and Perceptions of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment has historically been researched as the harassment of a woman by a man harasser (McCabe & Hardman, 2005), however, as the years have progressed research on multiple forms of sexual harassment (e.g., harassment of the same sex, harassment of men) has increased (Houle, et al., 2011). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2017) defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that affects an individual's work performance, or creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment. In 2016, 20.9% of female federal employees and 8.7% of male federal employees reported experiencing sexual harassment (U.S. MSPB, 2018). Sexual harassment can have a significant negative effect on individuals' work performance, job satisfaction, as well as their mental health (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997; Houle, Staff, Mortimer, Uggen, & Blackstone, 2011; Shneider, Swan, & Fitzgerald, 1997; U.S. MSPB, 2018). However, there is an inconsistency with the rates of sexual harassment cases that do get reported (Foster & Fullager, 2018). Foster and Fullager (2018) have suggested that victims fear that their reports will not be believed or perceived as severe; thus, the harasser would not face any consequences. Organizations need to sustain a work environment where the employees feel safe by including clear policies on sexual harassment and hiring trusted supervisors. However, individual differences among workers (including supervisors) in organizations may vary in their perceptions and attitudes towards sexual harassment. As a result, creating standardized policies to enforce sexual harassment may be a difficult process.

Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance

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A possible explanation for a victim's fear of not being believed could be due to the myths that exist regarding sexual harassment claims. Researchers have developed studies to measure an individual's acceptance of sexual harassment myths, as well as identify attitudes that may correlate with this behavior. Page, Pina, and Giner-Sorolla (2016) showed positive correlations between sexual harassment myth acceptance and moral disengagement in sexual harassment. More specifically, those who are likely to believe sexual harassment myths may lack moral judgment, which, in turn, can influence emotional reactions to hostile work environment harassment (e.g., sympathy, guilt, shame, anger). Sexual harassment myth acceptance is the belief of certain widely held, yet incorrect ideas regarding sexual harassment (e.g., Women who claim sexual harassment have usually done something to cause it). Page and Pina (2018) extended this finding by demonstrating moral disengagement in sexual harassment is a strong predictor for the tendency to sexually harass. Behaviors such as moral disengagement can compromise how one can perceive sexual harassment scenarios. However, relationships between sexual harassment myth acceptance and perceptions of severity, realism, and emotional reactions to a harassment scenario have yet to be researched.

Social Influences

In addition to beliefs of sexual harassment, other social influences can mediate attitudes and perceptions of sexual harassment. For instance, researchers have found that sexual harassment behaviors are viewed as less severe if performed by women rather than men (McCabe & Hardman, 2005). Thus, the gender of the harasser and the gender of the victim affect the perception of sexual harassment. Furthermore, researchers have continued to identify the effects gender has on sexual harassment perceptions. For example, Law, Rishes, and Farmer (2018) were interested in the relationship between sexist attitudes (i.e., hostile sexism,

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benevolent sexism) and perceptions of sexual harassment. Hostile sexism is defined as an overtly negative view towards certain sex (e.g., degrading and objectifying someone of another sex).

Whereas benevolent sexism is a paternalistic prejudice towards women (e.g., the belief that women must be protected by men) (Glick & Fiske, 1999). They found that individuals who are high in hostile sexism are less likely to believe sexual harassment claims, however, there was not a significant relationship between benevolent sexism and believability.

Homonegativity

Although other social attitudes have been found to influence perceptions of various types of harassment, there is a gap in the research identifying the relationship between homonegativity and differences in perceptions of sexual harassment scenarios involving same-sex and opposite-sex individuals. Grollman (2008) defines homophobia as the fear and disgust of homosexuals and the belief that homosexuality is morally wrong (e.g., “*homosexuality is disgusting and unacceptable*”). However, homonegativity is a less severe form of homophobia and is defined as “any prejudicial affective or behavioral response directed toward an individual because he or she is perceived to be gay” (Morrison et al., 1999, p.111-126). An example of a homonegative perception might be reflected in a statement such as, “*there is no need to learn about gay rights in school*” (Morrison & Morrison, 2010). Morrison and Morrison (2010) consider homonegativity to be a modern term, that could potentially be more common in comparison to homophobic views. However, individuals’ homonegative attitudes may differ towards lesbian women and gay men. For instance, researchers found that those who are high in homonegativity are less comfortable with gay men than lesbian women (Jewell & Morrison, 2012). Although there has been research on the relationship between homonegativity and sexual harassment proclivity, specifically sexually coercive behaviors (Morrison, McLeod, Morrison, Anderson, & O’Connor, 1997), there

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is a gap in the research examining how homonegativity may influence differences in perceptions of sexual harassment reports. The purpose of this research is to determine a relationship between homonegative attitudes and perceptions of sexual harassment, and the perceptions dependent on the sex of the victim and the sex of the harasser.

Hypotheses

H1. There will be differences in ratings of severity, emotional reaction, realism, and consequence between the higher and lower homonegativity groups.

H2. For higher homonegativity participants, there will be differences in ratings of severity, emotional reaction, realism, and consequence between the same-sex scenarios and different-sex scenarios (H_{2a}). For lower homonegativity participants, there will be no differences in ratings of severity, emotional reaction, realism, and consequence between the same-sex scenarios and different-sex scenarios (H_{2b}).

H3. Participants with higher homonegativity will rate man-to-man harassment more severely than woman-to-woman harassment (H_{3a}), and participants with lower homonegativity will show no significant differences in severity ratings between the same-sex scenarios (e.g., woman-to-woman scenario; man-to-man scenario) (H_{3b}).

H4. All participants (lower homonegativity group and higher homonegativity group) will rate man-to-woman harassment the highest in severity, realism, emotional reaction, and consequence.

H5. Homonegativity levels will be positively related to sexual harassment myth acceptance, and both homonegativity and sexual harassment myth acceptance will be negatively correlated with perceptions of severity, realism, and emotional reaction.

Method

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Design

The experiment formed a 2 x 4 between-subjects factorial design with participant homonegativity level (higher, lower) and sexual harassment vignette (as the between-subjects factors). Participant homonegativity levels served as the grouping variable. The dependent variables included perceptions of severity, the realism of the scenario, emotional reaction to the sexual harassment, as well as the chosen consequence for the harasser. Our eight experimental conditions were created by crossing higher and lower homonegativity levels of the participants with four sexual harassment vignettes, where the harasser was either a man or a woman and the target of the sexual harassment was either a man or a woman: 1. man harasser, man target, 2. man harasser, woman target, 3. woman harasser, man target, 4. woman harasser, woman target.

Participants

Participants were solicited through introductory business and psychology courses at a small private liberal arts college. A total of sixty-eight individuals (between ages 18 - 25 years old) participated in the experimental portion of the study. Three participants failed the manipulation check, and as a result, we excluded their data from the data analyses. The sample was 76% female, 17% male, and 4% other. The ethnic makeup of the sample was 76% Caucasian, 5% African American, 7% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 8% other. The sample was also 56% heterosexual, 5% homosexual, 7% bisexual, and 2% other. Finally, participants indicated if anyone they know or knew anyone who was sexually harassed: 20% of participants reported they had been affected, 47% reported that someone they know had been affected, 8% reported both themselves and someone they know, and 17% reported that neither themselves nor someone they know had been sexually harassed.

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Materials

Sexual Harassment Vignettes. The experimenters created four sexual harassment vignettes by crossing the gender of the harasser with the gender of the target: 1. man harasser, man target, 2. man harasser, woman target, 3. woman harasser, man target, 4. woman harasser, woman target (See Appendix A). All of the vignettes included the same information regarding sexual harassment behavior between two co-workers: only the gender of the harasser and the gender of the target varied between the vignettes. The target and harasser were given ambiguous labels (e.g., co-worker A, co-worker B) instead of names.

Modern Homonegativity Scale (MHS) (Morrison & Morrison, 2002). This scale consisted of 24 statements, 12 about gay men and 12 about lesbian women. Participants rated how much they agreed with the statement on a 5-point Likert scale (where 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*). Scores on the scale can range from 24 to 113, with higher scores indicating higher levels of homonegativity. Overall, the scale was determined to be highly reliable (*Cronbach's* $\alpha = .90 - .91$) (Morrison & Morrison, 2002). The scale was also shown to have high construct validity as it correlated with other measurements and attitudinal variables (e.g., $r = .56$ with the Old Fashioned Homonegativity Scale, by Morrison, Parriag, & Morrison, 1999) and measures of sexism ($r = .57$) (*Neosexism Scale* by Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & Joly, 1995).

The MHS was used as a prescreening survey to create the grouping variable of participant homonegativity (higher, lower). Participants scoring in the higher (1/3) and lower (1/3) range on the MHS were invited back to participate in the experimental portion of the study where they were randomly assigned to one of the four sexual harassment vignette conditions. Homonegativity levels were categorized on the basis of the highest third of the score ranges (68 and higher) and lowest third of score ranges (56 and lower). Specifically, the higher homonegativity group ($n = 26$)

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included those who scored higher than 68 on the MHS (range = 68-113; $M = 81.92$, $SD = 12.54$) and the lower homonegativity group ($n = 45$) included those who scored lower than 56 (range = 24-56; $M = 42.93$, $SD = 9.30$). An independent samples t-test confirmed that those in the higher homonegativity group scored higher on the MHS than those in the lower homonegativity group, $t(67) = -14.66$, $p < .001$.

Workplace Incidents Scale (WIS). This experimenter developed survey was designed to measure participants' perceptions of severity, realism, and emotional reaction to the sexual harassment scenario. This scale consisted of 28 statements (e.g., "Co-worker B's behavior is hostile") measured on a 6-point Likert scale (where 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 6 = *Strongly Agree*). An additional question assessed perceptions of the most appropriate consequence on a 6-pt Likert (where 1 = *No consequence* and 6 = *Termination*).

Illinois Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance Scale (ISHMA) (Lonsway, Cortina, & Magley, 2008). This scale was designed to assess participants' acceptance of sexual harassment myths. This survey included 20 statements (e.g., "Women who claim that they have been sexually harassed are usually exaggerating") measured on a 7-pt Likert scale (where 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 7 = *Strongly Agree*). The scale has been shown to have high internal consistency (*Cronbach's α* of .91) (Lonsway, Cortina, & Magley, 2008).

Procedure

Upon arrival to the experiment, higher and lower homonegativity participants (as determined by scores on the previously administered MHS) were randomly assigned to one of the four sexual harassment vignettes (see Appendix A). The experimenter told the participant to read the scenario before completing a subsequent survey. They were given an unlimited amount of time to read the vignette. After reading the vignette, they completed the WIS. Upon completion of the

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WIS, all participants completed the ISHMA, a manipulation check questionnaire (e.g., correctly identify the gender of the harasser and the target), and a demographic questionnaire designed to assess age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and their experience (if any) with sexual harassment.

Results

A series of 2 x 4 between-subjects factorial ANOVAs were conducted with homonegativity levels (higher, lower) as the grouping variable and vignette type as the between-subjects factor. The dependent measures included the responses on the WIS (i.e., perceptions of severity, realism, emotional reaction, and the chosen consequence for the harasser) and the ISHMA.

Severity

The effect of vignette type on perceptions of severity approached significance, $F(3,61) = 2.64, p = .058, \eta_p^2 = 0.12$. Planned pairwise comparisons revealed that participants who read the vignette of a man harassing a woman, reported higher perceptions of severity of the scenario ($M = 5.16, SD = 0.65$) compared to participants who read the vignette of a man harassing a man ($M = 4.70, SD = 0.89$), $p = 0.04$, *Cohen's d* = .59 and compared to participants who read the vignette of a woman harassing a woman ($M = 4.42, SD = 1.10$), $p = .02, d = .82$. The higher perception of severity reported by participants in the man harassing woman condition compared to the group who read about the woman harassing the man ($M = 4.50, SD = .80$) approached significance, $p = 0.059, d = .91$. No other pairwise comparisons were significant, $ps > .59$. In conclusion, the highest ratings of severity were given by the participants in the man harassing woman condition, with no other significant differences in perceptions of severity between the other scenarios.

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The relationship between homonegativity level and perceptions of severity approached significance, $F(1,61) = 3.34$, $p = .07$, $\eta_p^2 = .052$. Participants higher in homonegativity reported marginally lower perceptions of severity ($M = 4.47$, $SD = .84$) compared to those lower in homonegativity ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 0.88$), $d = .51$.

As shown in Table 1, there was no significant interaction between vignette type and homonegativity level on perceptions of severity, $F < 1$. Planned pairwise comparisons revealed that there was no difference in perceptions of severity as a function of homonegativity level for the scenarios where a woman harassed a man, $p = .91$, $d = .08$, or harassed a woman, $p = .56$, $d = .34$. However, when a man was the harasser the relationship between homonegativity level and perceptions of severity approached significance. Specifically, in the man harassing man condition, those higher in homonegativity ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.03$) reported lower perceptions of severity compared to those lower in homonegativity ($M = 4.93$, $SD = .75$), and this difference approached significance, $p = .06$, $d = .89$. Additional pairwise comparisons between the vignette conditions within the low homonegativity group (see Table 2) and the high homonegativity group (see Table 3) revealed that there was only significantly greater perceptions of severity between those in the man harassing woman condition ($M = 5.33$, $SD = .51$) compared to those in the woman harassing man condition ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.02$) within the group that was lower in homonegativity, $p = .02$, $d = 1.05$. As shown in Table 2, lower homonegativity participants reported higher ratings of severity for the man harassing woman condition ($M = 5.33$, $SD = .51$) compared to the man harassing man condition ($M = 4.93$, $SD = .75$), and this difference approached significance, $p = .11$, $d = .62$. All other pairwise comparisons of perceptions of severity between the vignette conditions within each homonegativity group were not significant, $ps > .16$.

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Table 1

Pairwise Comparisons Between Homonegativity (HN) for All Dependent Measures Levels in Each Vignette Condition

Dependent Measure	Harasser Gender	Target Gender	Low HN Mean (SD)	High HN Mean (SD)	<i>t stat</i> (df)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Severity	Man	Man	4.93 (0.75)	4.13 (1.03)	2.00 (19)	0.060	0.89
	Man	Wom	5.33 (0.51)	4.86 (0.79)	1.71 (20)	0.125	0.71
	Wom	Man	4.48 (1.02)	4.53 (0.43)	-0.11 (10)	0.913	0.60
	Wom	Wom	4.55 (1.21)	4.18 (0.94)	0.60 (12)	0.557	0.34
Emotional Reaction	Man	Man	4.22 (0.90)	2.92 (1.25)	2.69 (19)	0.015*	1.19
	Man	Wom	4.65 (0.92)	3.69 (1.20)	2.09 (20)	0.049*	0.90
	Wom	Man	3.39 (1.58)	2.93 (0.96)	0.58 (10)	0.572	0.35
	Wom	Wom	3.68 (1.28)	3.08 (1.19)	0.87 (12)	0.403	0.49
Realism	Man	Man	3.73 (1.62)	4.00 (2.00)	-0.32 (19)	0.753	0.15
	Man	Wom	4.57 (1.91)	4.45 (1.63)	0.44 (20)	0.666	0.07
	Wom	Man	4.86 (1.46)	4.00 (2.35)	0.78 (10)	0.451	0.44
	Wom	Wom	4.22 (1.79)	3.00 (1.58)	1.27 (12)	0.227	0.72
Consequence	Man	Man	3.29 (1.27)	3.00 (1.23)	0.44 (17)	0.670	0.23
	Man	Wom	3.36 (1.01)	2.75 (0.71)	1.50 (20)	0.150	0.70
	Wom	Man	2.57 (0.54)	2.80 (0.45)	-0.78 (10)	0.450	0.46
	Wom	Wom	2.75 (0.46)	2.60 (0.55)	0.53 (11)	0.610	0.30

Note. * denotes significance of $p < .05$. Man = Man, Wom = Woman.

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Table 2

Results of Planned Pairwise Comparisons Between Vignette Conditions for Each Dependent Measure for the Low Homonegativity Group

Dependent Measure	Harasser Gender	Target Gender	1	2	3	4
Severity	1. Man	Man	-	$t(27) = -1.66,$ $p = 0.108$	$t(20) = 1.19,$ $p = 0.249$	$t(22) = 0.95,$ $p = 0.350$
	2. Man	Wom		-	$t(19) = 2.60,$ $p = 0.018^*$	$t(21) = 2.16,$ $p = 0.043^*$
	3. Wom	Man			-	$t(14) = -0.14,$ $p = 0.894$
	4. Wom	Wom				-
Emotional Reaction	1. Man	Man	-	$t(27) = -1.26,$ $p = 0.218$	$t(20) = -1.58,$ $p = 0.131$	$t(22) = 1.21,$ $p = 0.239$
	2. Man	Wom		-	$t(19) = 2.31,$ $p = 0.032^*$	$t(21) = 2.10,$ $p = 0.048^*$
	3. Wom	Man			-	$t(14) = -0.40,$ $p = 0.693$
	4. Wom	Wom				-
Realism	1. Man	Man	-	$t(27) = -1.28,$ $p = 0.213$	$t(20) = -1.56,$ $p = 0.135$	$t(22) = -0.69,$ $p = 0.499$
	2. Man	Wom		-	$t(19) = -0.35,$ $p = 0.733$	$t(21) = 0.44,$ $p = 0.666$
	3. Wom	Man			-	$t(14) = -0.76,$ $p = 0.460$
	4. Wom	Wom				-
Consequence	1. Man	Man	-	$t(26) = -.165,$ $p = 0.870$	$t(19) = 1.42,$ $p = 0.173$	$t(20) = 1.14,$ $p = 0.266$
	2. Man	Wom		-	$t(19) = 1.92,$ $p = 0.071$	$t(20) = 1.60,$ $p = 0.130$
	3. Wom	Man			-	$t(13) = -0.69,$ $p = 0.500$
	4. Wom	Wom				-

Note. * denotes significance of $p < .05$. Man = Man, Wom = Woman.

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Table 3*Results of Planned Pairwise Comparisons Between Vignette Conditions for Each Dependent**Measure for the High Homonegativity Group*

Dependent Measure	Harasser Gender	Target Gender	1	2	3	4
Severity	1. Man	Man	-	$t(12) = -1.52,$ $p = 0.155$	$t(9) = -0.81,$ $p = 0.437$	$t(9) = -0.08,$ $p = 0.938$
	2. Man	Wom		-	$t(11) = 0.86,$ $p = 0.410$	$t(11) = 1.43,$ $p = 0.181$
	3. Wom	Man			-	$t(8) = -0.77,$ $p = 0.461$
	4. Wom	Wom				-
Emotional Reaction	1. Man	Man	-	$t(12) = -1.17,$ $p = 0.266$	$t(9) = -0.01,$ $p = 0.991$	$t(9) = -0.21,$ $p = 0.836$
	2. Man	Wom		-	$t(11) = 1.19,$ $p = 0.258$	$t(11) = 0.90,$ $p = 0.389$
	3. Wom	Man			-	$t(8) = -0.22,$ $p = 0.832$
	4. Wom	Wom				-
Realism	1. Man	Man	-	$t(12) = -0.31,$ $p = 0.65$	$t(9) = 0.00,$ $p = 1.00$	$t(9) = 0.91,$ $p = 0.389$
	2. Man	Wom		-	$t(11) = 0.27,$ $p = 0.794$	$t(11) = 1.74,$ $p = 0.110$
	3. Wom	Man			-	$t(8) = -0.79,$ $p = 0.452$
	4. Wom	Wom				-
Consequence	1. Man	Man	-	$t(11) = -.472,$ $p = 0.646$	$t(8) = 0.34,$ $p = 0.740$	$t(8) = 0.67,$ $p = 0.524$
	2. Man	Wom		-	$t(11) = -0.14,$ $p = 0.891$	$t(11) = 0.40,$ $p = 0.695$
	3. Wom	Man			-	$t(8) = -0.63,$ $p = 0.545$
	4. Wom	Wom				-

Note. * denotes significance of $p < .05$. Man = Man, Wom = Woman.

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Emotional Reaction

The effect of vignette type on emotional reaction ratings approached significance, $F(3,61) = 2.43, p = .07, \eta_p^2 = .11$). Planned pairwise comparisons revealed that participants who read the vignette of a man harassing a woman, reported higher emotional reaction ratings ($M = 4.30, SD = 1.11$) compared to participants who read the vignette of a woman harassing a man ($M = 3.20, SD = 1.32$), $p = .02, d = .90$. Participants who read the vignette of a man harassing a woman also reported higher emotional reaction ratings ($M = 4.30, SD = 1.11$) compared to participants who read the vignette about a woman harassing a woman ($M = 3.47, SD = 1.24$), however, this difference only approached significance, $p = .06, d = .71$. No other pairwise comparisons were significant, $ps > .11$. In conclusion, the highest emotional reaction ratings were given by the participants in the man harassing woman condition, with no other significant differences in emotional reaction ratings between the other scenarios.

There was a significant relationship between homonegativity level and emotional reaction ratings, $F(1,61) = 8.02, p = .006, \eta_p^2 = .12$. Participants higher in homonegativity reported significantly lower emotional reaction ($M = 3.21, SD = 1.14$) compared to those lower in homonegativity ($M = 4.12, SD = 1.17$), $d = .79$. As shown in Table 1, there was no significant interaction between vignette type and homonegativity level on emotional reaction ratings, $F < 1$. Planned, pairwise comparisons revealed that there was no difference in emotional reaction ratings as a function of homonegativity level for the scenarios where a woman harassed a man, $ps > .39$. However, there was a relationship between homonegativity levels and emotional reaction ratings when a man was the harasser. Specifically, in the man harassing man condition and in the man harassing woman condition, those higher in homonegativity reported significantly lower emotional reaction ratings compared to those lower in homonegativity, $ps > .049$.

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Additional planned comparison between vignette conditions revealed that there were only significant differences within the lower homonegativity group (see Table 2). Specifically, those lower in homonegativity reported greater emotional reaction ratings between those in the man harassing woman condition compared to both the woman harassing man condition and the woman harassing woman condition within the group that was lower in homonegativity, $ps > .05$. All other pairwise comparisons of emotional reaction ratings between the vignette conditions within the low homonegativity group and all of the conditions within the high homonegativity group (see Table 3) were not significant, $ps > .22$.

Realism

There was no effect of vignette type on realism ratings, $F < 1$. Planned pairwise comparisons revealed no significant differences in realism ratings across any of the vignettes, $ps > .20$. There was also no significant relationship between homonegativity level and realism ratings, $F(1, 61) = 1.41$, $p = .24$, $\eta_p^2 = .023$. Participants higher in homonegativity did not report significantly lower realism ratings ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.68$) compared to those lower in homonegativity ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.72$), $d = 0.23$.

There was no significant interaction between vignette type and homonegativity level on realism ratings, $F < 1$. As shown in Table 1, there are no significant differences in realism ratings between lower and higher homonegativity participants, $ps > .23$. There was also no significant differences in realism ratings across any of the vignette conditions for both low homonegativity participants (see Table 2), $ps > .135$, and high homonegativity participants (see Table 3), $ps > .11$.

Consequence

There was no main effect of vignette type on the selection of consequence, $F < 1$. Planned pairwise comparisons revealed no significant differences in selection of consequence across any

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of the vignettes, $ps > .19$. There was no significant relationship between homonegativity level and selection of consequence, $F < 1$. Participants higher in homonegativity did not select significantly less lenient consequences ($M = 2.78$, $SD = .74$) compared to those lower in homonegativity ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.00$), $d = .35$.

There was no significant interaction between vignette type and homonegativity level on the selection of consequence, $F < 1$. As shown in Table 1, there are no significant differences in selection of consequence between lower and higher homonegativity participants across any of the vignette conditions, $ps > .15$. Additional planned pairwise comparisons revealed there were no significant differences in consequence ratings across any of the vignette conditions for either low homonegativity (see Table 2) or high homonegativity participants (see Table 3). The low homonegativity participants who received the vignette describing a man harassing a woman, ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.01$) gave higher consequence ratings compared to low homonegativity participants who received the vignette of those woman harassing a man ($M = 2.57$, $SD = .54$), however, this difference only approached significance, $p = .07$, $d = .98$.

Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance

Correlational analyses were conducted between Homonegativity level, Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance (SHMA) and perceptions of severity, emotional reaction, and realism (See Table 4). These correlational analyses revealed significant positive correlations between Homonegativity level and SHMA ($r = .66$, $p < .001$) and significant negative correlations between Homonegativity level and perceptions of severity ($r = -.26$, $p = .029$), and perceptions of emotional reactions ($r = -.39$, $p < .01$). However, there was no significant correlation between Homonegativity and perceptions of realism ($r = -.15$, $p = .21$). SHMA was also significantly, negatively correlated with perceptions of severity ($r = -.37$, $p = .002$), and perceptions of emotional reactions ($r = -.45$, $p <$

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.001). However, there was no significant correlation between SHMA and perceptions of realism ($r = -.017, p = .89$). There was a significant positive correlation between perceptions of emotional reaction and perceptions of severity ($r = .71, p < .001$). Perceptions of realism were not correlated with either perceptions of severity ($r = .02, p = .90$), nor emotional reaction ($r = -.06, p = .62$).

Table 4

Correlations between homonegativity level (HN), sexual harassment myth acceptance (SMHA), severity, emotional reaction (ER), and realism

		SHMA	Severity	ER	Realism
HN	$r(p)$.66 (< .001)*	-.26 (.029)*	-.39 (< .01)*	-.15 (.21)
SHMA	$r(p)$		-.37 (.002)*	-.45 (< .001)*	-.02 (.89)
Severity	$r(p)$.71 (< .001)*	.02 (.90)
ER	$r(p)$				-.06 (.62)

SHMA emerged as a significant predictor of severity ratings ($\beta = -.373$). SHMA accounted for almost 13% of the variance in severity ratings ($adj. R^2 = .126$). SHMA is a significant predictor of emotional reaction ratings ($\beta = -.448$). SHMA accounted for almost 19% of the variance in emotional reaction ratings ($adj. R^2 = .189$). SHMA is not a significant predictor of realism ratings ($\beta = -.017$). SHMA accounted for only 1.5% of the variance in realism ratings ($adj. R^2 = -.015$).

Discussion

Previous researchers (Diehl, Rees, & Bohner, 2018; Law, Rishes, & Farmer, 2018; Lonsway, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; McCabe & Hardman, 2005; Russell & Oswald, 2016) have linked perceptions of sexual harassment with other attitudes (e.g., homophobia and sexism); however, there is a gap in the literature on the relationship between prior levels of homonegativity

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(a more subtle bias) and perceptions of sexual harassment that vary in terms of the sex of the target and harasser. Thus, the purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between prior levels of participant homonegativity, sexual harassment myth acceptance, and perceptions of sexual harassment where the gender of the target was crossed with the gender of the harasser.

To summarize, we found partial support for H₁ (i.e., *there will be differences in ratings of severity, emotional reaction, realism, and consequence between the higher and lower homonegativity group*): Compared to high homonegativity participants, low homonegative participants did report higher emotional reactions towards both scenarios where the man was the harasser. However, we failed to find any other significant differences between high and low homonegativity groups for any of the other dependent measures (severity, realism, and consequence) across any of the harassment vignettes.

We failed to find support for H_{2a} (i.e., *for higher homonegativity participants, there will be differences in ratings of severity, emotional reaction, realism, and consequence between the same-sex scenarios and different-sex scenarios*): There were no significant differences in any of the dependent measures between any of the vignette conditions within the higher homonegativity group. We found partial support for H_{2b} (i.e., *for lower homonegativity participants, there will be no differences in ratings of severity, emotional reaction, realism, and consequence between the same-sex scenarios and different-sex scenarios*). Participants in the lower homonegativity group gave significantly lower severity and emotional reaction ratings for the woman harassing woman scenario compared to the man harassing woman scenario. However, ratings of realism and consequence did not vary between the woman to woman and the man to woman scenario. Furthermore, there were no significant differences among any of the dependent measures of realism and consequence between any of the same-sex scenarios and any of the different-sex

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scenarios within the low homonegativity group. Thus, the comparisons between the same and different-sex are inconsistent with previous research showing that individuals with low homonegativity have less prejudice towards homosexuals (Morrison, Parriag, & Morrison, 1999). However, it is important to note our failure to find a relationship between homonegativity and perceptions of sexual harassment as a function of same or different-sex may have been masked by smaller sample size.

Inconsistent with H_{3a} , participants with higher homonegativity did not rate man-to-man harassment more severely than woman-to-woman harassment. There were no significant differences in perceptions of severity between any of the vignette conditions within the higher homonegativity group. However, we did find support for H_{3b} : participants with lower homonegativity exhibited no significant differences in severity ratings between the same-sex scenarios (i.e., woman-to-woman scenario; man-to-man scenario).

Partially consistent with H_4 (i.e., *all participants will rate man-to-woman harassment the highest in severity, realism, emotional reaction, and consequence*), participants rated the man harassing woman scenario higher in severity compared to both same-sex scenarios, however, severity was only marginally significantly higher than the woman harassing man scenario. Participants rated the man harassing woman scenario significantly higher in emotional reaction compared to the woman harassing man scenario. To summarize, participants (collapsed across homonegativity level) in the man-to-woman conditions gave the highest ratings of severity and emotional reaction, with man-to-woman emotional reaction being significantly higher than the woman-to-man scenario and the man-to-woman severity rating being significantly higher than the two same-sex scenarios. Vignette type did not affect realism and consequence ratings.

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We found partial support for H₅ (i.e., *sexual harassment myth acceptance will be negatively correlated with perceptions of severity, realism, and emotional reaction*). Sexual harassment myth acceptance was negatively correlated with both perceptions of severity and emotional reactions, but not with realism. These correlational results suggest that participants who were more likely to believe myths of sexual harassment were also less likely to see the harassment as severe and they had less of an emotional reaction to the scenarios, a trend that we found among participants who were higher in homonegativity. In support of the relationship between homonegativity and sexual harassment myth acceptance, we found a significant, positive correlation between scores on the homonegativity scale and sexual harassment myth acceptance scale ($r = .66, p < .001$) and significant negative correlations between homonegativity and perceptions of severity and emotional reaction. Thus higher homonegativity participants were more likely to perceive the scene as less severe and to have less of an emotional reaction to it. These relationships between homonegativity and perceptions of severity and emotional reaction could be moderated by the acceptance of sexual harassment misconceptions. For example, participants who are higher in homonegativity tend to endorse sexually coercive behaviors (Morrison, McLeod, Morrison, Anderson, & O'Connor, 1997). Thus, higher homonegativity participants do not perceive the severity of sexual harassment because they do not perceive harassment as wrongdoing. Future researchers could include sexual harassment proclivity measures to determine if this variable mediates or moderates the relationship between homonegativity and perceptions of sexual harassment.

Limitations and Future Directions

There were a few limitations within our study that may limit conclusions drawn and generalizability. Importantly, our small sample size may have reduced our statistical power. Our

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sample consisted of students in introductory psychology and business courses at a small liberal arts college, therefore our results may not generalize to individuals outside of these majors or to those outside a college environment. Also, our sample largely consisted of females, who were straight and white. Therefore, our results may not generalize to other genders, sexual preferences, or racial/ethnic groups. Given that this study was focused on attitudes towards homosexual individuals, another possible limitation of the current study is that only 60% of the sample answered the question regarding sexual orientation on the demographics questionnaire. Also due to a lack of diversity within our small sample, it was difficult to secure a sizable sample of higher homonegativity participants. Because of a possible social desirability bias, participants may not have been as honest regarding their homonegativity tendencies. Finally, because the sample consisted of undergraduates with limited work experience compared to others in the workforce, the results may not generalize to those with more work experience. The sample may also have had little experience with sexual harassment and sexual harassment education which may have also served to limit conclusions drawn.

Future researchers should include larger sample sizes to increase statistical power. A large amount of variance could account for failures to find significant differences in perceptions of sexual harassment between the high and low homonegativity groups and between the same and different-sex conditions. Also, to collect large samples and more data from male participants, the type of sexual harassment behavior, and the severity of the behavior could be manipulated. In the current study, unwanted sexual attention was the focus of the research, however, it may be beneficial to include other types of sexual harassment such as gender harassment and sexual coercion. It is possible that other attitudes, such as sexism, may be correlated with homonegativity and thus may be a possible mediator for differences in perceptions between harassment scenarios.

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Because a large portion of our sample did not provide information on their sexual orientation, we were unable to examine the relationship between homonegativity, participant sexual orientation, and perceptions of sexual harassment. Therefore, a final suggestion for future research would be to collect more sexual orientation information (from a larger sample) in order to examine the relationship between additional individual difference variables, such as participant sexual orientation, and perceptions of sexual harassment in addition to differences in prior homonegativity levels.

In conclusion, we found that perceptions of sexual harassment did vary as a function of the homonegativity level and sexual myth acceptance level of the participants as well as the gender of the target and harasser, but not exactly in the way we expected. Although higher and lower homonegativity participants did not vary in terms of their perceptions of severity, realism, or consequence and higher homonegativity participants did not report any perceived differences between the different-sex and same-sex scenarios (nor did they rate man-to-man harassment more severely than woman-to-woman), we did find that participant homonegativity was positively correlated with sexual harassment myth acceptance, and that participants higher in homonegativity or sexual harassment myth acceptance were less likely to view the harassment as severe and had less of an emotional reaction. Thus, the correlational results are only partially consistent with previous research showing that individuals with low homonegativity have less prejudice towards homosexuals (Morrison, Parriag & Morrison, 1999). The current results imply that regardless of the sexual harassment scenario (different or same-sex), higher homonegativity participants may not react in institutionally appropriate ways regarding sexual harassment in the workplace.

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Appendix A

Sexual Harassment Vignette

Imagine you are at work and a [female, male] co-worker (worker A) tells you that another [female, male] coworker of the same level (worker B) continues to comment on how [she, he] looks (worker A's). [She, He] tells you that every day the [female, male] co-worker makes comments along the lines of, "*Wow, your pants really make your butt look good!*" Co-worker A also tells you that [she, he] has made it clear that [she, he] does not like the unwanted attention, however, the [female, male] coworker (worker B) continues to make similar comments.