

Gendered Ableism: The Effect of Able-Bodied Media and Gender Role Beliefs on Perceptions of Disability and Sexuality



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Background

- Media Influence → the voice of our society's culture → a great influence on the way we develop our views of the world
- < .5% of all television shows feature individuals with a disability
- Parsons & Reichl (2013) found that exposure to advertisements featuring able bodied individuals has a significantly negative effect on attitudes toward the sexuality and sexual expression of women with disabilities
- Exposure to advertisements featuring individuals with physical disabilities caused an even stronger negative effect on attitudes than the able bodied ads
- People with strong traditional gender role beliefs are more likely to endorse:
 - Sexist views (Glick & Fiske, 1996)
 - Anti-gay attitudes (Sakalli, 2002; Stevenson & Medler, 1995)
 - Acceptance of hate crimes (Cowen et al., 2005)

Hypotheses

- H1:** Traditional participants → men with disability > women with disability
- H2:** Disabled ads → increase negative attitudes towards disabled women amongst traditional participants
- H3:** Able bodied ads → increase negative attitudes of traditional participants when compared to no ad condition
- H4:** All ads → no effect on attitudes of egalitarian participants

Design

- This study employed a **3 x 2 x 2 x 2** factorial design:
- Ad Condition: ads featuring able bodied individuals, ads featuring disabled individuals, no ads
 - Participant gender → male or female
 - Gender of individual with physical disability → male or female
 - Traditional vs. egalitarian participant



Materials

- Part 1**
- Perceptions of Advertisements II
 - Gender Role Beliefs Scale (GRBS; Kerr & Holden, 1996)
 - Ad Rating Questionnaire (Reichl & Ali, 2013)

- Part 2**
- Student Beliefs About Sexuality: Perceptions of Sexuality Scale (Scotti, Slack, Bowman & Morris, 1996)
 - Attitudes to Sexuality Questionnaire (Individuals with a Severe Physical Disability) (adapted from Cuskelly & Bride, 2004)
 - Demographics Questionnaire

Procedure

- Participants informed that the title of this study is "Perception of Ads II" and its purpose to investigate how individuals perceive different advertisements
 - Complete GRBS
 - Random assignment to one of three ad conditions
 - Ad Rating Questionnaire
- Participants given opportunity to participate in additional study:
 - "Student Beliefs About Sexuality"
 - Perceptions of Sexuality Scale (Sex Behaviors)
 - Attitudes to Sexuality Questionnaire (Sexual Rights)
 - Demographics questionnaire

Participants

- N = 707 participants
 - 361 female, 341 male, 5 other
 - Aged 18 to 78 years (M = 27.86; SD = 9.70)
- 25% of participants knew someone with a physical disability
- 7% indicated close contact with this person
- 19% rated their interactions with this person as positive

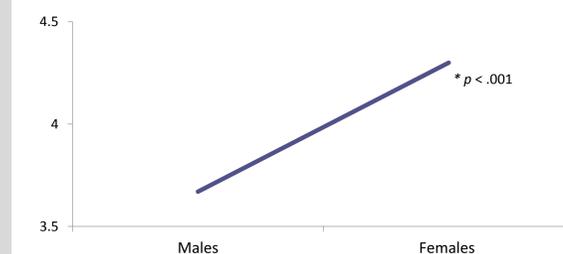
Analyses

- GRBS used to categorize participants as either high in traditional attitudes or high in egalitarian (feminist attitudes)
- MANOVA → Significant Box's M ($p < .001$) → Unequal sample sizes
- ANOVAS conducted on each dependent variable (ASQ, PSS)
- 3 (ad condition) x 2 (participant gender), x 2 (gender of individual with physical disability) x 2 (traditional vs. egalitarian participant) factorial design

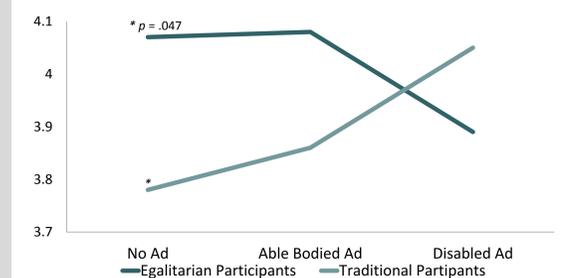
Results:

Perception of Sexuality Scale

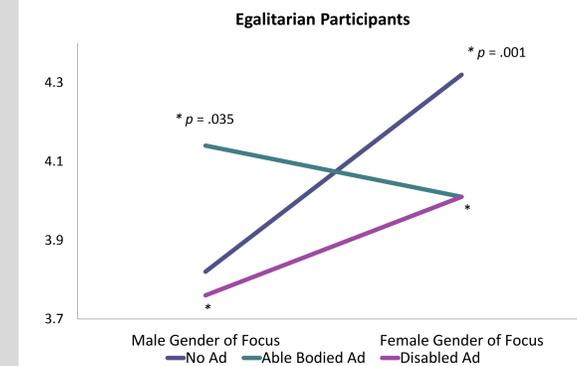
Main effect of gender, $F(1, 678) = 61.99, p < .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .084$



Significant interaction between ad condition and gender role belief of participant, $F(2, 678) = 3.53, p = .027$; partial $\eta^2 = .010$

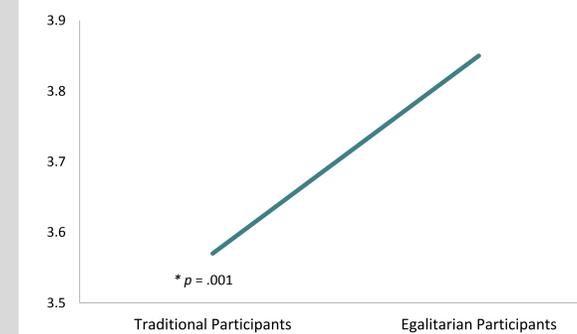


Three way interaction for ad condition by gender of focus by gender role of participants, $F(2, 678) = 2.96, p = .053$; partial $\eta^2 = .009$

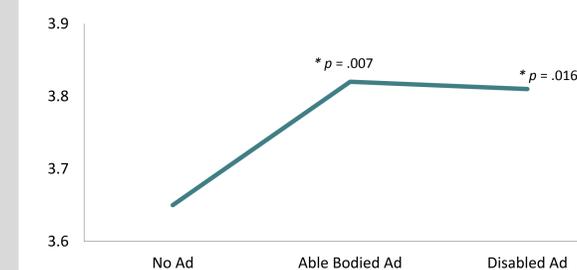


Attitudes to Sexuality Questionnaire

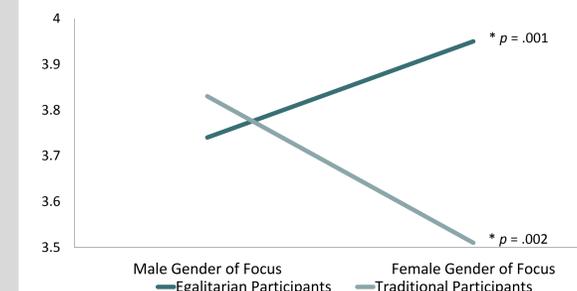
Main effect for gender role belief of participant, $F(1, 678) = 12.19, p = .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .018$



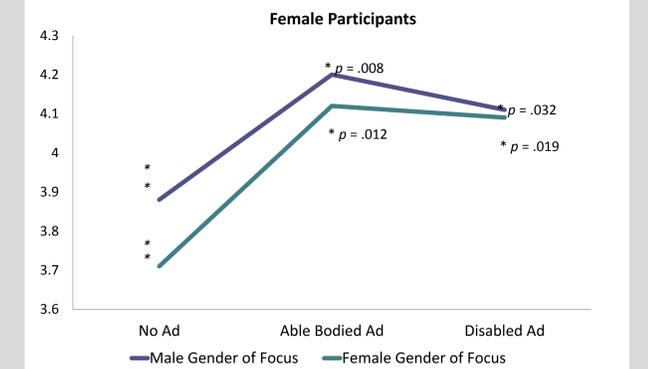
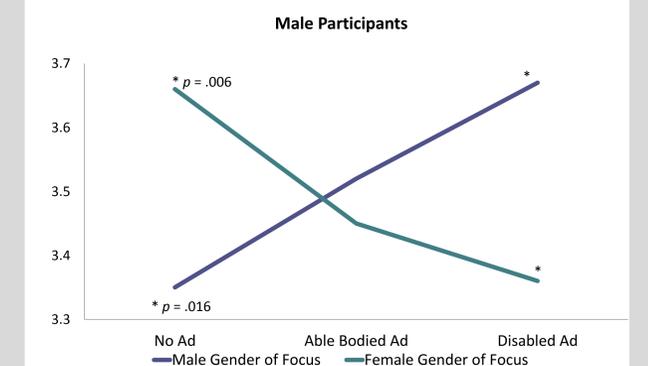
Main effect for ad condition, $F(2, 678) = 4.18, p = .016$; partial $\eta^2 = .012$



Significant interaction between gender of focus and gender role belief of the participant, $F(2, 678) = 26.54, p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .038$



Significant three way interaction between ad condition, gender of focus, and gender of participant, $F(2, 678) = 4.38, p = .013$; partial $\eta^2 = .013$



four way interaction between all independent variables was also significant, $F(2, 678) = 3.27, p = .039$; partial $\eta^2 = .010$

Discussion

- Women with disabilities → not viewed as sexual beings and often do not receive the most basic in sex education
- Women with disabilities → not believed to be sexually active → most do not receive basic internal examinations that are routine in the lives of able bodied women (Tilley, 1996).
- Women's Liberation Movement and the Disabled People's Movement share a similar cause → two movements occupy separate political spheres
- Need to understand how sex and impairment combine to form disabled women's dual oppression
- First study of its kind to attempt to understand this dual oppression
- First study known to establish link between endorsement of traditional gender role beliefs and ableism
- First study to establish influence of advertisements on attitudes towards disability and sexuality

Limitations

- Convenience sampling
- Online data collection
- Education level of participants
- Difficulty finding ads featuring individuals with disabilities
- Possibility of cultural/religious influence

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