Age, Race, and Sexism Predict Hostile and Benevolent Ageism.

Maddie DeMott & Donna Nelson, Ph.D.

Winthrop University

Introduction

When Glick and Fiske (1996) termed the phrases "benevolent and hostile sexism," they made the argument that both subtle and overt gender prejudice can exert a powerful influence. Consistent with this contention, Infanger, Bosak, & Sczesny (2012) found that benevolent sexism predicted positive reactions to gender-stereotypical advertisements while hostile sexism predicted negative reactions to advertisements that were counter-stereotypical. Less is known about the effects of overt and subtle ageist prejudice. Cary, Chasteen, & Remedios (2017) recently developed the Ambivalent Ageism Scale to assess benevolent and hostile ageism. We aimed to investigate the unique effects of each type of ageist prejudice on reactions to stereotype consistent and inconsistent images. We expected hostile ageism to predict unfavorable appraisals of counter-stereotypical portrayals of older adults and benevolent ageism to predict favorable appraisals of stereotypical portrayals of older adults. We also investigated associations between sexist and ageist attitudes and differences in each type of prejudice as a function of gender, age, and race.

Method

Participants were 117 adults (63.4% women; 69.7% Caucasian) with an age range of 18 to 74. Participants were presented with eight images. Images included four age and four gender stereotypical and non-stereotypical behaviors. The amount of time participants viewed the images was recorded. Then participants responded to questions regarding their willingness to live in a residential complex that was being advertised with the particular images. After responding to all eight pictures, participants responded to demographic questions regarding race, political affiliation, and age. Finally, participants completed the Ambivalent Ageism Scale (Cary, et al., 2017) and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Age

The older the participant,

- the less favorable their appraisal of picture 1 (stereotypical gender roles - childcare), $r(110) = -.21$, $p < .025$
- the less favorable their appraisal of picture 2 (non-stereotypical gender roles - childcare), $r(112) = -.33$, $p < .001$
- The higher their benevolent ageism, $r(115) = .40$, $p < .001$
- the higher their hostile ageism score, $r(115) = .43$, $p < .001$
- the higher their benevolent sexism, $r(115) = .25$, $p < .008$

Stereotypical and Non-Stereotypical Images

Picture 1

Picture 2

Picture 3

Picture 4

Picture 5

Picture 6

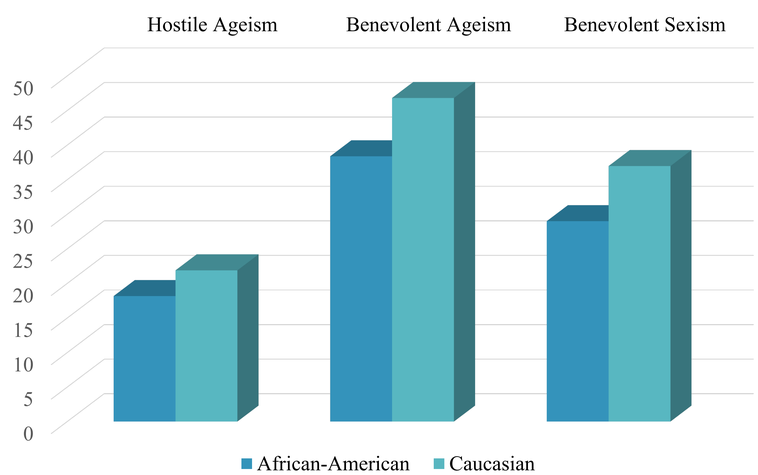
Picture 7

Picture 8

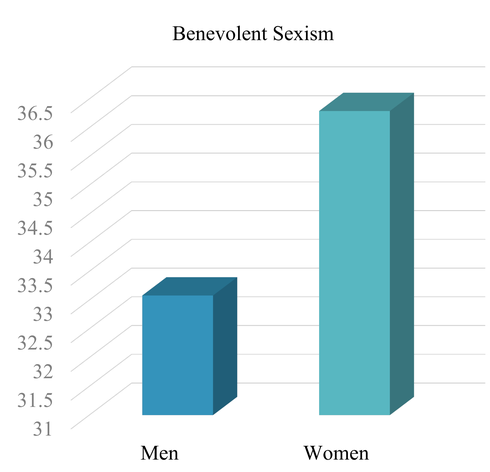
Prompt given before pictures were shown:

I am gathering data for a class research project on marketing strategies. I hope to get feedback on how to create effective promotional brochures. You will be asked to give your opinions about possible photos for brochures. The brochures would be designed to create an inviting image of a residential living community that is comprised of apartments catered for typical family style dwelling as well as a section for older individuals (55+).
You will be asked to give your opinion about different photos for the brochures and will also be asked to provide information about your demographics (e.g., age, ethnicity), background and attitudes.

Race Differences



Gender Differences



Compared to African Americans, Caucasians had higher hostile ageism scores, $t(104) = 3.45$, $p < .001$, and had higher benevolent ageism scores, $t(104) = 4.63$, $p < .001$. Caucasians also had higher benevolent sexism scores, $t(104) = 3.68$, $p = .001$.

Compared to men, women had higher benevolent sexism scores, $t(110) = -1.93$, $p = .056$. There were no other gender differences.

Ambivalent Ageism

The higher the benevolent ageism,

- the less favorable their appraisal of picture 1 (stereotypical gender roles - childcare), $r(111) = -.20$, $p < .038$
- the less favorable their appraisal of picture 8 (stereotypical aging - dependence), $r(112) = .29$, $p < .002$

The higher the hostile ageism,

- the less favorable their appraisal of picture 8 (stereotypical aging – dependence), $r(112) = -.20$, $p < .035$
- the higher their benevolent ageism, $r(72) = .51$, $p < .001$

Ambivalent Sexism

The higher the benevolent sexism,

- the higher their benevolent ageism, $r(116) = .45$, $p < .001$
- the higher their hostile ageism, $r(116) = .38$, $p < .001$
- the higher their hostile sexism, $r(116) = .51$, $p < .001$
- the less favorable their appraisal of picture 8 (stereotypical aging - dependence), $r(112) = -.22$, $p < .022$

The higher the hostile sexism,

- the higher their benevolent ageism, $r(116) = .44$, $p < .001$
- the higher their hostile ageism, $r(116) = .37$, $p < .001$
- the less favorable their appraisal of picture 5 (non-stereotypical aging - independence), $r(112) = .19$, $p < .047$
- the less they favorable their appraisal of picture 8 (stereotypical aging – dependence), $r(112) = -.24$, $p < .010$

Conclusion

In conclusion, our hypothesis that hostile ageism would predict negative reactions to counter- stereotypical images of the elderly was incorrect. Instead, higher hostile ageism scores were associated with negative reactions to picture 8, a stereotypical image depicting the elderly as dependent. Benevolent ageism mimicked this reaction to the same image. These unfavorable reactions to picture 8 may reveal an overall negative attitude of those with ageist views toward elderly who require help.

Further analysis revealed that older age predicted both forms of ageism while also predicting benevolent sexism. This seems to reflect internalized ageism.

An association between ageism and sexism was also observed, suggesting prejudice may generalize across race and gender domains.

African Americans scored lowest in both types of ageism, suggesting greater intergenerational support within their communities.

Overall, a lack of divide between benevolent and hostile ageism indicates a wider acceptance of various ageist views.