

# Gender-Stereotyping of Sexual Minorities at the Interpersonal Level

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## Introduction

Research on anti-gay bias is rare relative to research on racial or gender bias (Callender, 2015). Kite and Deaux (1987) found that gay men are thought to hold the same feminine characteristics as straight women, while lesbians are thought to hold the same masculine characteristics as straight men, suggesting an inverse of gender.

This study examines “gender inversion” of sexual minorities by using career choice as an indirect measure of stereotyping.

## Method

Participants were 174 undergraduates (51% female;  $M_{age} = 19.09$ ). They were told that the study was on impression formation using limited information and that there was a student in the other room completing the same tasks as them. This other student was not real.

- Participants wrote a short autobiography. The autobiography was supposedly exchanged with the other student, and they were randomly assigned to receive one of four fake autobiographies written by the other student which alluded to the gender and sexual orientation of the other student.
- After reading the autobiography, they rated how likely the student was interested in various careers on a 7-point scale (1= Not at all interested; 7= extremely interested).

## Method cont.

Examples of career types:

**Stereotypical-male careers:** architect, lawyer, dentist

**Stereotypical-female careers:** social worker, registered nurse

**STEM careers:** computer scientist, electrical engineer

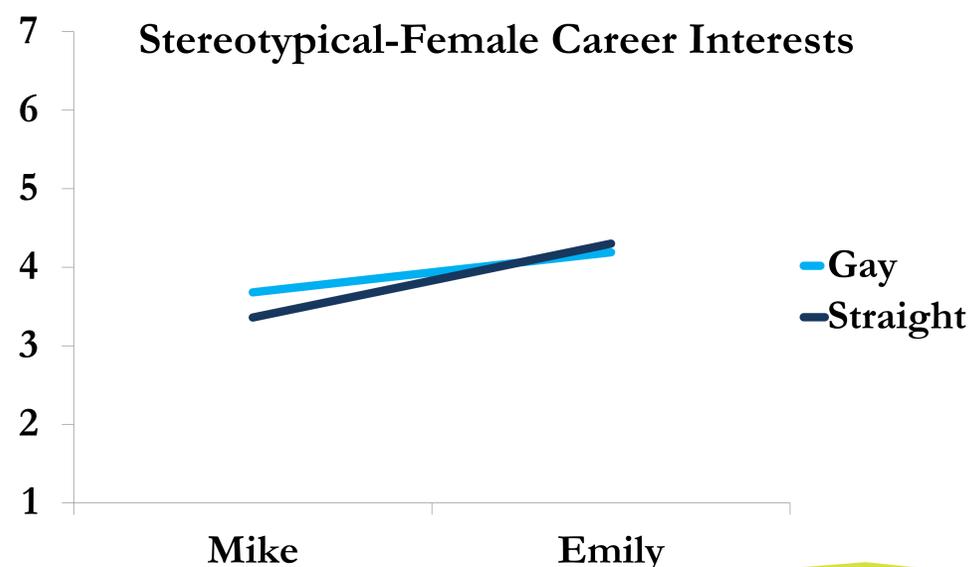
## Results

A 2 (participant gender: male or female) x 2 (gender condition: Mike or Emily) x 2 (sexual orientation condition: straight or gay) factorial design was used for analyses

**Stereotypical-male careers:** no effects, all  $F_s < 1.22$ ,  $p_s > .27$ .

**Stereotypical-female careers:** marginal significant gender x sexual orientation interaction,  $F(1, 166) = 2.78$ ,  $p = .098$ .

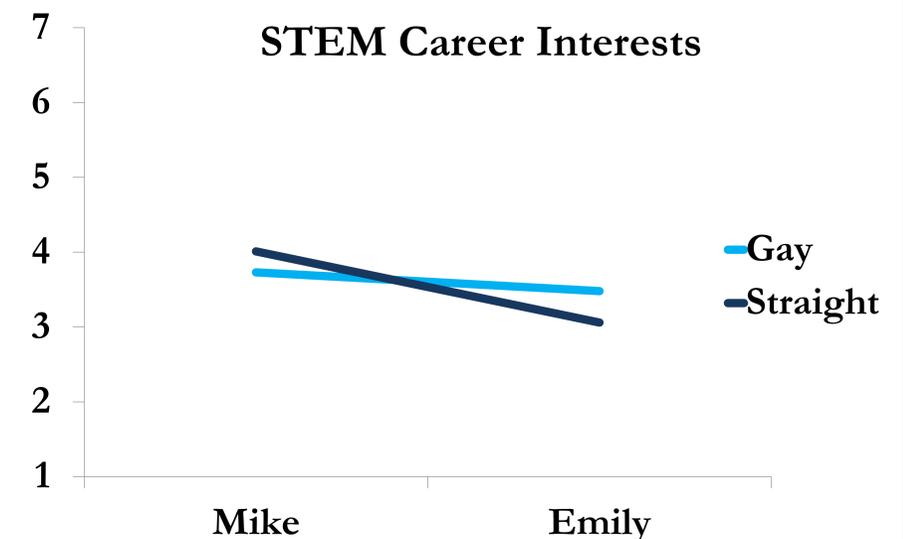
- Participants thought gay Mike ( $M = 3.68$ ;  $SD = .69$ ) was more interested in female careers than his straight counterpart ( $M = 3.36$ ;  $SD = .96$ ),  $t(89) = 1.84$ ,  $p = .070$ . Interest in stereotypical female careers did not differ for Emily by sexual orientation.



## Results Cont.

**STEM careers:** significant gender x sexual orientation interaction,  $F(1, 166) = 6.89$ ,  $p = .010$ .

- Participants thought gay Mike ( $M = 3.73$ ;  $SD = .85$ ) was less interested in STEM than straight Mike ( $M = 4.01$ ;  $SD = .78$ ),  $t(89) = 1.67$ ,  $p = .098$ .
- Lesbian Emily ( $M = 3.48$ ;  $SD = .88$ ) was thought to be more interested in STEM than her straight counterpart ( $M = 3.06$ ;  $SD = 1.05$ ),  $t(81) = 1.99$ ,  $p = .050$



## Conclusion

Participants showed a tendency to use “gender inversion” when stereotyping sexual minorities. In particular, people feminized gay men but masculinized lesbian women.

Although the results were weak, people in general are less likely to endorse stereotypes on the surface; thus, using indirect measures is warranted.