

**Just a joke? Sexist Humour, Gender,
Stereotypical Sexual Attitudes,
Female Objectification and
Sexual Harassment Attitudes.**

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1. ABSTRACT

The current study investigates the effects of sexist humour on stereotypical sexual attitudes of men and women, female objectification and sexual harassment attitudes in an Irish context. Ninety-eight participants took part in an online experimental quantitative design. Participants were required to watch a short video and complete questions taking from the Attitudes Towards Dating and Relationships scale (ATDR), Attitudes Towards Women Scale (ATWS) and the Sexual Harassment Attitudes Scale (SHAS). A 4x2 factorial design was utilised in which interaction effects between gender and the videos were examined against stereotypical sexual attitudes of men and women, attitudes towards women and attitudes towards sexual harassment. Overall results did not support the hypotheses. Sexist humour had no effect on participants attitudes. However, results indicated that males had more progressive attitudes towards women. Further research into sexist humour is needed.

2. INTRODUCTION

“A man and a woman were stranded in an elevator and they knew they were going to die. The woman turns to the man and says, ‘make me feel like a woman before I die.’ So he takes off his clothes and says, ‘Fold them!’” (Ford et al., 2008).

Sexist humour demeans, insults, stereotypes, victimizes, and objectifies a person (LaFrance & Woodzicka, 1998). Today, the popularity of sexist humour is evident in the media, in the workplace, and in social interactions with research suggesting that it is closely related to sexist attitudes held in society (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010). Research suggests that sexist humour develops and maintains stereotypical attitudes towards a group (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010). This has been demonstrated in a number of domains. One such domain is stereotypical sexual attitudes towards men and women. A significant amount of research supports the assumption that men have more sexual desires than women (Baumeister, Catanese, & Vohs, 2001) and that women predominately are sexually objectified by men (Szymanski, Moffitt & Carr, 2011). However, much of research that examine the effects of sexual humour and sexual attitudes explore extreme manifestations, such as, sexual assault (McDermott, Kilmartin, McKelvande, & Kridel, 2015) and rape (Romero-Sánchez, Carretero-Dios, Megías, Moya & Ford, 2016) with little studies investigating the effect of sexist humour on stereotypical sexual attitudes. Thus, presenting a gap in the literature.

Moreover, research suggests that sexist humour encourages the expression of prejudice against women (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010), and creates more antagonistic attitudes towards women by men (Thomae and Viki, 2013). However, while a significant amount of research supports these assumptions, studies have primarily been conducted in the United

States with little research examining whether this is the case in Ireland. Moreover, according to MacKinnon (1979, p. 52), humour, which reflects unconscious hostility, has contributed majorly to the trivialisation of sexual harassment. However, little research has been conducted to support this claim. Moreover, the majority of research on sexual harassment predominately looks at identifying the construct (Rotundo, Nguyen, & Sackett, 2001) with little research examining why it may occur in the first instance (Berdahl, 2007). A significant study conducted by Ryan and Kanjorski (1998) examined the effects of sexist and non-sexist jokes on attitudes towards rape. Results indicated that the enjoyment of sexist humour was positively correlated with rape-related attitudes. In connection to this, the current study will adapt this previous research to see if the findings are mirrored. Moreover, it seeks to further expand the literature and examine whether there is a link between sexist humour and attitudes in the unexamined domains. Thus, the current study will examine the effects of sexist humour on trivialising stereotypical sexual attitudes of men and women, stereotypical attitudes towards women, and sexual harassment attitudes. Moreover, it specifically seeks to ascertain this in an Irish context.

2.1 Humour

Humour is a universal concept, recognised globally as an intrinsic part of human behaviour, experienced in nearly every type of interpersonal relationship (Ford, Platt, Richardson & Tucker, 2016). According to Polimeni and Reiss (2006, p.350), the ability to generate and perceive humour is considered “a biological process, a cognitive phenotypic trait, almost certainly dependent on a corresponding genetically based neurological substrate.” Moreover, it has been characterised as a mode of communication that involves sharing information, judgements and intentions (Freud, 1905). Humour has become a topical component of research in recent years and a diversity of literature examining the benefits of humour has been conducted (Bennett & Lengacher, 2006; Lefcourt & Martin, 1986; Martin, 2007). Previous research has suggested that humour can improve immune function, increase pain tolerance, and decrease stress response (MacDonald, 2004). Moreover, it has been suggested that humour can have positive physiological effects, such as decreasing stress hormones like epinephrine and cortisol and that it can increase the activation of the mesolimbic dopaminergic reward system (Berk, Felten, Tan, Bittman, & Westengard, 2001; Mobbs, Greicius, Abdel-Azim, Menon, & Reiss, 2003). Furthermore, humour has been suggested to impact positively on patients with chronic schizophrenia (Gelkopf, Gonen, Kurs, Melamed, & Bleich, 1993), cancer (Erdman, 1991) and to have positive psychosocial benefits for older adults (Berk, Felten, Tan, Bittman, & Westengard, 2001).

A significant amount of psychological research on humour has largely focused on its benefits within society. However, despite popular acclaim, other research within the realm of humour has insufficiently supported these assumptions (Martin 2001; Martin, 2002). Humour researchers generally tend to presuppose that both the producer and the recipient will find the same humorous contexts funny (Chlopicki & Brzozowska, 2017, p. 179). However, humour relies on an individual’s interpretation and while some may derive laughter from a particular

context, others may find that instance of humour discriminatory in nature (Morreall, 2009). Moreover, humour occurs in individuals of all culture, race and ethnicity and its interpretation can be dependent on the perspective and value system of each group (Stewart, 2013). Furthermore, research suggests that the function and intent of humour differs between men and women (Barreca, 1992), that humour develops from aggression in males (Shuster, 2012) and that males tend to use aggressive humour more often than females (Chan et al., 2009; Kazarian & Martin, 2006; Yip & Martin, 2006).

Over the years, the link between humour and aggression has been questioned with a considerable amount of research examining the psychological theory of humour developed by Freud (Roth, 2017). Freud theorised that humour is a defence mechanism which converts one's socially tabooed aggressive impulses to acceptable ones, which helps to avoid wasting additional mental energy to suppress them (Morreall, 1987). Moreover, he considered humour as a 'safety valve' allowing the producer 'to let off steam' by expressing internal sexual and aggressive impulses, through jokes (Oring, 2017). Interestingly, Freud's (1905/1963) theory focused solely on men as he claimed that women do not need a sense of humour as they have few aggressive feelings to repress. Supporting this assumption, Grotjahn (1957), suggested that women don't tell jokes as jokes are considered an aggressive act. Moreover, there is a perception that women are not suited to telling jokes but rather to being the punchlines (Goodwin, 1990). Furthermore, researchers have suggested that the intention of aggression is unconscious and that jokes are a reaction to an underlying hostile impulse, that in turn is exerted towards a particular audience (Roth, 2017). This is particularly evident in sexist humour as unconscious hostile impulses such as aggression are projected towards women by men.

2.2 *Sexist Humour*

Sexist humour is a powerful language that needs to be looked at through a critical lens (Ford et al., 2008). It demeans, insults, stereotypes, victimizes, and objectifies a person (LaFrance & Woodzicka, 1998). Recently, sexist humour has become a relevant topic of interest (Ford & Woodzicka, 2016; Ford, Woodzicka, Triplett, Kochersberger, 2013; Thomae & Pina, 2015) with research predominately indicating that trivialising sexist humour creates a norm of tolerance which blurs the boundaries of socially accepted behaviour (Ford et al., 2013). Moreover, according to Zillmann and Cantor (1976), jokes are generally perceived as funnier when they derogate a relevant marginalised group, especially if the group is disliked. This is particularly relevant to sexist humour, as it is considered as a form of disparaging humour that derogates and belittles women specifically (Thomae & Pina, 2015). In connection to this, the theory of superiority or disparagement, accentuates negative attitudes and hostile impulses of sexist humour by the joke teller towards their ridiculed target (Morreall, 2014). Moreover, Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal (1997) suggested that disparaging humour allows for the maintenance of feelings of superiority over these disliked groups. In relation to this, previous research has indicated that disparaging humour contributes to the development and maintenance of group stereotypes and in most instances, it both diminishes and reinterprets women (Greenwood & Isbell, 2002). Research has suggested that sexist attitudes and behaviours towards women are closely linked. Greenwood and Isbell (2002), reported that male higher in hostile sexism perceived 'dumb blonde' jokes as funnier and less offensive. Moreover, sexist humour is suggested to be misogynistic in that it functions to sexually objectify women, devalue their abilities, which thus support the tolerance of violence against them (Bemiller & Zimmer-Schneider, 2010). Furthermore, sexist humour is suggested to be linked with sexist attitudes and rape (Ryan & Kanjarski, 1998) and sexual assault (McDermott et al., 2015). However, little studies have examined the

link between sexist humour and less aggressive forms of sexual violence such as, sexual harassment.

A link between sexist humour and sexism is evident, however, in terms of evaluation, sexist humour is much more difficult to identify because humour can often disguise its true intent (Mallett, Ford & Woodzicka, 2016). Moreover, sexism communicated through humour creates an interpretative ambiguity which presents a challenge that non-humorous sexism would provoke (Bill & Naus 1992; Johnson 1990). Furthermore, due to sexist humour being disguised as benign amusement, it has the potential to cultivate distress and harassment, specifically for women. Thus, the ambiguity around the true intent of the joke can facilitate the tolerance of sexism and discriminatory behaviour by men towards women (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010).

Today, sexist humour exists and is tolerated in everyday interactions (work, education, social settings) resulting in the creation of gendered ideological frameworks. These ideologies produce inequalities and reinforce particular gendered behaviours in daily interactions (Bemiller & Zimmer- Schneider, 2010). It has been suggested that the acceptance of sexist humour that disparages women contribute to the structural inequalities between men and women in society. Sexist humour facilitates patriarchal ideologies, giving men power over women and making women feel inferior to men (Anderson, 2008). Moreover, these patriarchal ideologies are fundamental to gender harassment which is considered the most common form of sexual harassment. Research findings suggest that many instances of sexual harassment are more often to occur between a male perpetrator and a female victim (Angelone, 2008). In line with this, Siebler, Sabelus, & Bohner (2007) reported that males higher in hostile sexism sent (by computer) sexist jokes to a female chat partner as a means of gender harassment. However, while the study presents a link, little to no other studies have examined the effects of sexist humour towards sexual harassment attitudes. Thus, in light of

the aforementioned research, it is evident that sexist humour is linked with sexual objectification, attitudes towards women and sexual harassment attitudes of women.

However, in most instances little research has examined these assumptions. Thus, the current study seeks to expand the existing literature and examine whether a link is presented.

2.3 Stereotypical Sexual Attitudes of men and women

Gender studies have been at the forefront of sexist research, providing a realm of thought and discussion (Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Haines, Deaux & Lofaro, 2016). Gender stereotyping concerns the beliefs and expectations concerning men's and women's traits and how people should behave, based on their gender (Baron & Branscombe, 2006, p. 213).

According to Ford, Wentzel, & Lorion, (2001) humour maintains and disrupts gender and to appreciate the joke, a mutual understanding of the stereotype about the group that is ridiculed is a prerequisite. A significant amount of research has started to explore stereotypical sexual attitudes held of men and women within society with a considerable amount focusing on the perception of "men as sex driven" and "women as sex objects."

Baumeister, Catanese, and Vohs (2001) conducted a review that measured both men and women across multiple sex related characteristics. Results indicated that men have more frequent and more intense sexual desires than women. Moreover, other research has mirrored the findings with results indicating that men have more sexual partners (Petersen & Hyde, 2011) and have more permissive attitudes towards sex (Petersen & Hyde 2011), while women are considered to be more sexually compliant (Impett & Peplan, 2003) and become sexually victimised (Peplau, 2003). While most of these studies support stereotypical attitude held of males as sex driven, most of them used self-reporting which can lead to inaccurate assumptions. Perceived attitudes around certain sexual behaviour and social expectations can

lead to dishonest reporting (Sechrist & Stangor, 2001). Interestingly, a study conducted used automatic behavioural priming by Bargh, Chen, & Burrows (1996) indicated that there was a link between the concepts of power and sex among male students who indicated they were drawn to sexual aggression and sexual harassment.

Furthermore, research has been conducted examining the stereotypical view of women as sex objects. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) objectification theory postulates that many women are sexually objectified and treated as an object. According to Bartky (1990), sexual objectification occurs when a woman's body or body parts are singled out and separated from her as a person and she is viewed primarily as a physical object of male sexual desire (Szymanski, Moffitt & Carr, 2011). Previous research has indicated that sexual objectification of women can lead to numerous psychological effects such as body shame, eating disorders, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder (Miles-McLean et al., 2015; Moradi & Huang, 2008; Szymanski et al., 2011). Although women are frequently objectified in the media particularly in humour, most research has focused primarily on pornographic media (Hald, Malamuth & Yuen, 2010) and on extreme manifestations of sexual humour on sexual violence such as, sexual assault (McDermott et al., 2015) and rape (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2016) One study conducted by Ryan and Kanjorski (1998) results indicated that the enjoyment of sexist humour was positively correlated with rape-related attitudes. It is evident that a significant amount of research has focused on portraying men as sex driven and women as sex objects. However, little studies have examined whether the endorsement of sexist humour helps in reinforcing these attitudes. Thus, in light of the aforementioned claims, the current study seeks to examine whether sexist humour has an effect on trivialising attitudes towards men as sex driven and attitudes towards women as sex objects in society. Moreover, it seeks to ascertain this in an Irish context.

2.4 Attitudes towards Women

Research has suggested that a preference for sexist humour is closely related to the simultaneous endorsement of sexist attitudes (Eyssel, Bohner & Siebler, 2006) and jokes are generally perceived as funnier when they derogate a relevant marginalised group, especially if the group is disliked (Zillmann & Cantor, 1976). Previous research has indicated that disparaging humour contributes to the development and maintenance of group stereotypes, in particular, attitudes towards women (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010). Moreover, previous studies have suggested that exposure to sexist humour can promote greater willingness to discriminate against women (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010) and creates more antagonistic attitudes towards women (Thomae & Viki, 2013). Moreover, according to Ford et al. (2008) sexist humour can lead men who are high in hostile sexism to behave in a discriminatory manner toward women. Furthermore, Greenwood and Isbell (2002) suggested that males with higher levels of hostile sexism perceived “dumb blonde” jokes as more amusing and less offensive. A more recent study by Ford et al. (2013) indicated that male participants higher in hostile sexism reported greater acceptance of current gender relations and greater acceptance of societal devaluation of women after reading sexist jokes than after reading neutral (non-sexist) jokes.

Other studies have suggested that sexist humour and gender is not necessarily linked in trivialising sexist attitudes. Earlier research by Moore, Griffiths, and Payne (1987) suggested that regardless of participant’s gender, those who held traditional gender attitudes found female-disparaging jokes funnier than those who held liberal gender attitudes. Similarly, Henkin and Fish (1986) reported that, ‘anti-feminist’ participants found sexist cartoons targeting men and women funnier than ‘pro-feminist’ participants. Moreover, a more recent study conducted by Wright, DeFrancesco, Hamilton, & Vashist (2017), supported the assumption that exposure to sexist humour can influence viewer’s sexist views

and femininity ideology. Thus, much of previous studies have suggested that sexist humour trivialises attitudes towards women. However, research has suggested that gender of the participant does not necessarily plays a role. Thus, the current study seeks to examine both male and females' attitudes towards sexist humour towards women. Moreover, the majority of previous research has been conducted in the United States with little research exploring the link between sexist humour and attitudes towards women in an Irish context. Thus, the current study seeks to address this gap in the literature.

2.5 Sexual Harassment

While the concept of sexual harassment is relatively new, the behaviours that are usually defined as such are not (Brewer & Berk, 1982; as cited in Mazer & Percival, 1989). MacKinnon (1979, p.1) described sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination, suggesting that it is contingent on the gender of the victim and that sexual harassment occurs and reoccurs through the “regulation of inferiority based on sex”. According to Holland, Rabelo, Gustafson, Seabrook, & Cortina (2016) the experience of sexual harassment, regardless of the severity, can be associated with negative feelings such as disrespect, disgust, anger, sadness and embarrassment, particularly in incidents of inappropriate touching (Willness, Steel & Lee, 2007; Spector, Zhou & Che, 2013). Moreover, sexual harassment still remains as one of the most pervasive forms of violence against women today (Latcheva, 2017) despite laws governing sexual harassment as an act of discrimination (Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act, 2017).

The issue of sexual harassment has recently garnered increased attention, due to amplified media coverage with research examining the effects of sexual harassment in the workplace (Willness et al., 2007), in the military (Harris, McDonald & Sparks, 2017), in sport

(Taylor, Smith, Welch, & Hardin (2017), on the internet (Barak ,2005) in online video gaming (Fox & Tang, 2017) and in a social drinking context (Graham, Bernards, Abbey, Dumas, & Wells, 2016), with findings suggesting that women are primarily victimised. In connection with this, previous research has supported this assumption (Lott, Reilly & Howard, 1982; Reilly, Lott, & Gallogly, 1986). In addition, a considerable amount of research has suggested that gender harassment is the most common form of sexual harassment, with instance of sexual harassment more often to occur between a male perpetrator and a female victim (Angelone, 2008; Ivy & Hamlet, 1996). Moreover, findings suggest that women are more likely than men to perceive instances of gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention as sexual harassment while men are more likely to perceive them as harmless (Angelone, 2008; Russell & Trigg, 2004).

Much of research on sexual harassment predominately looks at identifying the construct (Rotundo, Nguyen, & Sackett, 2001) with little research examining why it may occur in the first instance (Berdahl, 2007). According to MacKinnon (1979, p. 52), humour, which may reflect unconscious hostility, has contributed majorly to the trivialisation of sexual harassment. However, little research has been conducted to examine this assumption. As previously mentioned, a study conducted by Ryan and Kanjorski (1998) examined the effects of sexist and non-sexist on attitudes towards rape. Results indicated that the enjoyment of sexist humour was positively correlated with rape-related attitudes. Thus, the current study seeks to adapt this study by examining the effects of sexist humour and non-sexist humour against attitudes in sexual harassment, a domain that has been underexamined. Moreover, the current study will also address it in an Irish context as majority of studies have been conducted in the United States, thus presenting a gap in the literature.

2.6 Rationale for the current study

In light of the aforementioned studies, it is evident that there is probable cause for examining sexist humour. Previous research has supported the assumption that the effect to which someone enjoys sexist humour is influenced by their disposition towards the group (Zillmann & Cantor, 1976) and jokes are perceived as funnier when they derogate women specifically (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010). As previously mentioned, sexist humour is suggested to develop and maintain stereotypical attitudes towards a particular group. Moreover, Research has supported the assumption of men as sex driven and women as sex objects. However, a paucity of research remains examining whether sexist humour can influence the endorsement of these attitudes held in society. Moreover, it is evident that there is a link between sexist humour and attitudes held against women. Some studies suggest that sexist humour reinforces males' attitudes towards women (Greenwood & Isbell, 2002) while other studies claim that gender is irrelevant in reinforcing these attitudes (Moore et al., 1987). However, while a diversity of results is presented, all the literature examining sexist humour and particularly attitudes towards women has been conducted in the United States. Thus, it is important that the current research ascertains this in an Irish context. Moreover, as previously mentioned, the majority of studies examining sexist humour on attitudes towards sexual harassment have focused on extreme implications such as rape (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2016) with little research examining whether sexist humour has an effect on attitudes towards sexual harassment. Hence, the current study seeks to address the gap presented in the literature. Thus, the aim of the current study is to investigate whether sexist humour will affect attitudes towards men as sex driven, women as sex object, attitudes towards women and sexual harassment attitudes. Moreover, whether the influence of sexist humour on

trivialising these attitudes is dependent on gender, and finally whether similar results are found in an Irish context.

Thus, the main research question is as follows:

Will sexist humour have an effect on attitudes towards men as sex driven, attitudes towards women as sex objects, attitudes towards women and sexual harassment attitudes? Moreover, will the influence of sexist humour on attitudes towards men as sex driven, attitudes towards women as sex objects, attitudes towards women and sexual harassment attitudes be dependent on whether the participant is male or female?

2.7 Hypotheses

Based on the aforementioned studies and rationale, the hypotheses of the current study are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant difference in interaction effects between gender and the condition (male sexist video, female sexist video, male non-sexist video, female non-sexist video) on stereotypical sexual attitudes of men and women.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant difference in interaction effects between gender and the condition (male sexist video, female sexist video, male non-sexist video, female non-sexist video) on men as sex driven.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant difference in interaction effects between gender and the condition (male sexist video, female sexist video, male non-sexist video, female non-sexist video) on women as sex objects.

Hypothesis 4: There will be a significant difference in interaction effects between gender and the condition (male sexist video, female sexist video, male non-sexist video, female non-sexist video) on attitudes towards women.

Hypothesis 5: There will be a significant difference in interaction effects between gender and the condition (male sexist video, female sexist video, male non-sexist video, female non-sexist video) on sexual harassment attitudes.

3. METHODS

3.1 Participants

The sample consisted of ninety-eight participants (N=98) over the age of 18, who had access to the internet and to visual audio. Of these participants, 53 (45.9%) were female and 45 (54.1%) were male. The participants age ranged from 18 to 61. The mean age of all participants was 28.58 (SD = 10.04). All ninety-eight participants watched one of the four videos; 25 (25.5%) participants watched the male sexist video (11 males and 14 females), 24 (24.5%) participants watched the female sexist video (10 males and 14 females), 25 (25.5%) participants watched the male non-sexist video (12 males and 13 females) and 24 (24.5%) participants watched the female non-sexist video (12 males and 12 females). Four online questionnaires were made using Google forms. Each questionnaire embedded one of four conditions. They were each imputed in “Nagg” an A/B (Split) testing programme. One link was generated for the four questionnaires and was posted up on the social media forum, Facebook to collect the sample. Snowball sampling was used and participants were randomly assigned to one of four questionnaires. This provides the possibility to gain a large sum of participants who were able to access the video link embedded in the questionnaires. Participation was completely voluntary. The questionnaire comprised of two demographic questions: age and gender. Nationality was not asked as a demographic question. However, participants were asked to only take part in the study if they identified as Irish.

3.2 Design

Based on the research question, an online quantitative experimental design was used. A two-way between-groups Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The study utilized a 4x2 factorial design with 8 treatments. The independent variables (IV) in the design are: Factor A: Condition (male sexist video, female sexist video, male non-sexist video, female non-sexist video) and Factor B: gender (male and female). Both independent variables (IV) were between subjects. The dependent variables (DV) in the design are: gender stereotypical sexual attitudes, Men as sex driven, women as sex objects, attitudes toward women and attitudes towards sexual harassment. “Nagg” an A/B split testing programme, randomly assigned participants to one of four conditions.

3.3 Materials & Apparatus

Questionnaires:

The Attitudes toward Dating and Relationships scale (ATDR) (Ward, 1999) was used to measure participants sexual attitudes towards gender stereotypes (Appendix A). The questionnaire contained 24-items that consisted of two subscales; “Recreational Orientation” and “Procreational Orientation”. The first subscale, “Recreational Orientation” measures the sexual double standard of males and females, using sex as an object of exchange (Ward, 1999). It contains 2 sections. The first section contains 7-items with each referring to the participants sexual attitudes towards ‘men as sex driven’. This section included questions such as, “Men always want and are always ready for sex, they think about it all the time” and “men are usually interested in women as potential sex partners, and do not want to be "Just friends" with them” (Ward, 1999). The second section contains 10-items with each item referring to the participants sexual attitudes towards “Women as sexual objects.” This

section included questions such as, “Using her body and looks is the best way for a woman to attract a man” and “A beautiful woman attracts comments on her appearance and should be able to handle that” (Ward, 1999). For the purpose of the current study, the second subscale, “Procreational Orientation” was removed. It measured traditional religious dictates and courtship norms making it not applicable to the current study. The scale adapted a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (slightly disagree), 4 (slightly agree), 5 (agree) to 6 (strongly agree) with higher scores indicating more progressive attitudes towards gender stereotyping of sexual attitudes. The range of possible scores for the subscale is 17-102. The range of possible scores for the first section ‘men as sex driven’ is 7-42, and the range for the second section ‘women as sex objects’ is 10-60. No questions were reverse scored. Reliability was given for each subscale, with “Recreational Orientation” displaying high internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha .84) (Ward, 1999; Ward 2006).

The Attitudes Towards Women Scale (ATWS) (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973) was used to measure participants’ attitudes toward women (Appendix A). The original shortened scale consisted of 25-item. However, in the current study a simplified 12-item survey was used (Delevi & Bugay, 2013; Lynch, 2014). The items in the scale refer to participants beliefs about the roles women should play in different societal situations (e.g., academia, the home and employment settings). The scale included questions such as, “In general the father should have greater authority than the mother in making family decisions” and “Swearing is worse for a woman than for a man” (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1973). The scale adopted a 4-point scale with the response categories, 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree), and 4 (strongly agree). The possible range of score is 12- 48. Items 3, 5, 7, 9, 12 were reversed coded with higher scores indicating more progressive attitudes towards

women. The scale displayed high Internal consistency, (Cronbach's Alpha .88) (Lynch, 2014) and (Cronbach's Alpha .81) (Delevi & Bugay, 2013).

The Sexual Harassment Attitude Scale (SHAS) (Mazer & Percival, 1989) was used to measure participants attitudes towards sexual harassment (Appendix A). The scale contains 19-item. The scale included questions such as, "A lot of what people call sexual harassment is just normal flirtation between men and women" and "One of the problems with sexual harassment is that some women can't take a joke." Participants were asked to rate their agreement with statements reflecting attitudes about sexual harassment on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree), 2 (agree), 3 (neutral), 4 (disagree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The possible range of scores is 19-95. Higher scores indicate more acceptance and tolerance of sexual harassment and less agreement with contemporary feminist descriptions about its causes (Mazer & Percival, 1989). No items were reversely scored. The scale indicated high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha .84) (Mazer & Percival, 1989).

The Condition (male sexist video, male non-sexist video, female sexist video, female non-sexist video) (Appendix B)

Male Videos:

Two videos of male British Comedian, Jimmy Carr were utilised; one with sexist content and the other with non-sexist content. The same comedian was used in both videos to make the videos comparable and more reliable.

Video 1: (Appendix B)

The first video (2:02 minutes) contains a clip of Jimmy Carr, an English stand-up comedian. The video contains content of a sexist and sexually explicit nature, with specific references towards women only. The video includes content such as, “my girlfriend is a very deep sleeper, you can’t wake her up, which has got its advantages. She is going to be thrilled when I tell her she’s pregnant” and “men’s reaction to Britney Spears, I think tells us a lot. Because Britney spears is the kind of women that men see on television and say, “well she’s let herself go, what is she a size 12? what a state” but if we fucked her we would be high fiving strangers on the night bus.” The content of the video was screened prior and was edited specifically to focus on sexist humour that degrades women and sexually objectifies them.

Video 2: (See Appendix B)

The second video (2:24 minutes) contains a clip of Jimmy Carr, an English comedian. The video contains content of a non-sexist and non- sexually explicit nature. The video was censored so no sexual referencing or any derogatory and discriminatory language was used. The video includes content such as, “Go into any high street bakery at 4 o’clock in the afternoon and they will say, in the same voice, anywhere you will go in the country and they will go “we’ve run out of rolls” and “have you noticed how underneath McDonalds it still says “restaurant”, who is that for? who doesn’t know what McDonalds do, and also “restaurant”? It is a restaurant, really?” The content of the video was screened prior and anything sexist, sexual or discriminatory was removed.

Female videos:

Two videos of Indian born, American female comedian, Monrok were utilised; one with sexist content and the other with non-sexist content. The same comedian was used in both videos to make the videos comparable and more reliable.

Video 3: (See Appendix B)

The third video (0:54 minutes) contains a clip of Monrok, an Indian born, American female comedian. The video contains content of a non-sexist and non-sexually explicit nature. The video was censored so no sexual referencing or any derogatory and discriminatory language was used. The video includes content such as, “I hate baggage claim. Its like waiting for a prize and then it’s your own shit” and “I hate Facebook status updates. That say thing like “watching a movie”, “taking a nap”, “going to the gym”. Like really can we not think of anything a little bit more original people.” The content of the video was screened prior and anything sexist, sexual or discriminatory was removed.

Video 4: (See Appendix B)

The forth video (1:28 minutes) contains a clip of Monrok, an Indian born, American comedian. The video contains content of a sexist and sexually explicit nature, with specific references towards women. The video includes content such as, “I just want a man to pay for my shit, and let me stay at home I do, I don’t need to vote” and “Fuck it, right, I am Indian I’ll take a beating every once and while. Its not that big of a deal.” The content of the video was screened prior and the content was edited specifically to focus on sexist humour that degrades women and sexually objectifies them.

Nagg (Split testing programme)

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four videos using na.gg a A/B split testing programme. Four questionnaires were made in total on Google form. Each questionnaire has one of four videos embedded and all questionnaires had the same questions. All four questionnaires were imputed into link boxes on “Nagg”, and an overall link was generated. This link was put on the social media forum. As participants clicked on the link, “Nagg” randomly assigned a participant to one of four questionnaires. “Nagg” evenly distributed the participants.

3.4 Procedure

Four questionnaires were made on google forms. Each questionnaire was embedded in Nagg and an overall link was generated. Participants were asked to click on this link that was provided on the social media forum, Facebook. It was communicated to them that the questionnaire would take 10/12 minutes to complete and that participants must be over the age of eighteen to take part. An information sheet was provided at the start of the questionnaire (Appendix C), giving participants a brief overview of the current study. Participants were told, that the survey is comprised of a serious of questions relating to gender, specifically looking at attitudes towards women.” Participants were made aware that they had the right to withdraw at any given time. The subjects were provided with an email address in case they had questions relating to the study. Participants were made aware that the information given was confidential. The material was anonymous and the only information obtained on the participants was there age and gender. Once participants were given sufficient instructions they were asked if they consent to participate.

Participants were randomly allocated to one of the four questionnaires using ‘nagg’ an A/B split testing programme. Each participant was only exposed to one of the four conditions (e.g. male sexist video, female sexist video, male non- sexist video, female non-sexist video) (Appendix B). Following exposure to one of the four conditions, all participants proceeded to file out the same questions that measured the dependent variables; sexual attitudes towards gender stereotyping, female objectification and attitudes towards sexual harassment. After participants submitted the questionnaire, they were told the nature of the study was to examine the interaction effect of sexist humour and gender on attitudes towards men as sex driven and women as sex object, female objectification and attitudes towards

sexual harassment. Contact information for support services such as ‘Samaritans’ and the ‘Rape Crisis Centre’ was included for participants who may have been affected by the content. Finally, participants were thanked for taking the time to participate in the study (Appendix D).

The three scales, The Attitudes toward Dating and Relationships scale (ATDR) (Ward, 1999); The Attitudes Towards Women Scale (ATWS) (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973; and the Sexual Harassment Attitudes Scale (SHAS) (Mazer & Percival, 1989) were scored and the attitudes towards ‘men as sex driven,’ ‘women as sex objects,’ ‘attitudes towards women,’ and ‘attitudes towards sexual harassment’ were measured for each participant. This data was downloaded into excel and coded. It was then opened in SPSS, coded and a variety of statistical tests were carried out. Firstly, descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation on gender, age, the condition were run. Four two-way between groups Analysis of Variance (4x2 Factorial design) were run to test the interaction effects of the two Independent variables; the condition (male sexist video, female sexist video, male non-sexist video, female non-sexist video) and gender (male and female) against each of the dependent variables; sexual attitudes towards gender stereotyping, attitudes towards women and attitudes towards sexual harassment. Graph were created after. All scored were stored electronically.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Demographics:

Out of 98 participants, 53 (54.1%) were female and 45 (45.9%) were male. The average age was 28.58 (SD= 10.04). The youngest participant was 18 and the oldest participant was 61. The majority of participants were in the age range of 18-24. (51 participants, 52%). The descriptive statistics for demographics are shown below in table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Demographics

Variable	N	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
<i>Gender</i>						
Female	53	54.1%	-	-		
Male	45	45.9%	-	-		
Total	98	100%	-	-		
Age	98	-	28.58	10.04	18	61

Further descriptive statistics were carried out on the interaction of both independent variables, gender and the condition (male sexist video, female sexist video, male non-sexist video, female non-sexist video). Table 2 below shows that of the sample (N=98), 25 (25.5%) participants watched the male sexist video (11 males and 14 females), 24 (24.5%) participants watched the female sexist video (10 males and 14 females), 25 (25.5%) participants watched the male non-sexist video (12 males and 13 females) and 24 (24.5%) participants watched the female non-sexist video (12 males and 12 females).

Table 2 Descriptive statistics for Gender and the condition (videos)

Videos	Male Sexist	Female Sexist	Male Non-Sexist	Female Non-Sexist
Male	11	10	12	12
Female	14	14	13	12
Total	25	24	25	24

Descriptive statistics were carried out for the psychological scale measures used are shown in table 3. The mean score for ATDR, MASD, WASO, ATWS and SHAS was 44.48 (SD= 10.05), 19.01 (SD= 5.59), 25.47 (SD= 6.50), 17.74 (SD= 4.01) and 65.06 (SD= 10.80). The minimum and maximum scores are also displayed in the table.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Psychological measures

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
ATDR	98	44.48	10.05	19	70
MASD	98	19.01	5.59	8	34
WASO	98	25.47	6.50	10	43
ATWS	98	17.74	4.01	12	27
SHAS	98	65.06	10.80	19	70

ATDR= Attitudes towards Dating and Relationships; MASD= Men as sex driven; WASO= Women as sex objects; ATWS= Attitudes towards women scale; SHAS= Sexual harassment attitudes scale

Finally, internal reliability was tested for all psychological scale measures, as shown in Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha value for all measures used indicated high internal consistency. The Attitudes Towards Dating and Relationships Scale (ATDR) was split into two subscales; men as sex driven and women as sex objects. Previous reliability was not given. However, Cronbach's Alpha reported moderate internal consistency for both. Therefore, the study utilised both as a combined scale and individually as two subscales.

Table 4 Descriptive statistics for Cronbach's Alpha of psychological measures

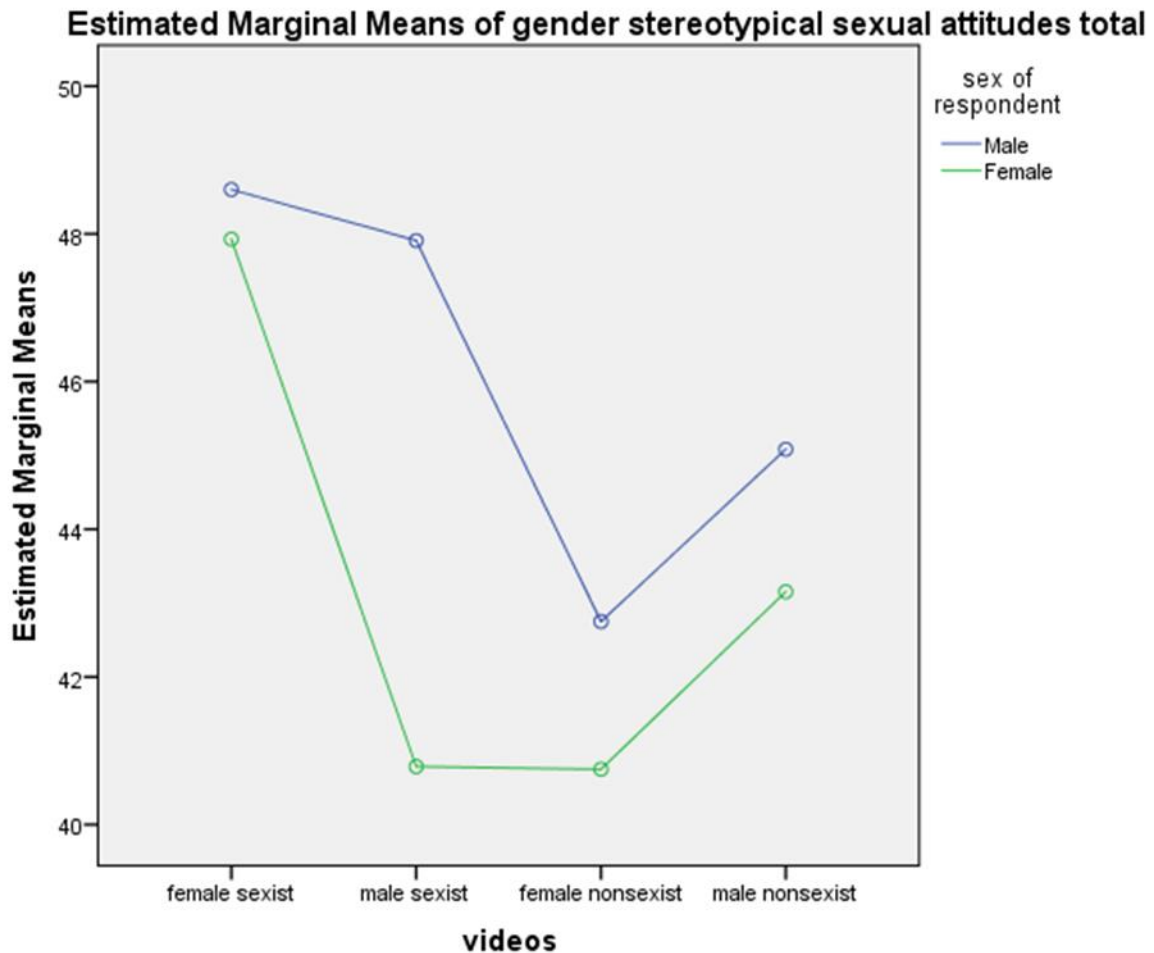
Measure	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
ATDR	17	.763
MASD	7	.718
WASO	10	.680
ATWS	12	.733
SHAS	19	.850

ATDR= Attitudes towards Dating and Relationships; MASD= Men as sex driven; WASO= Women as sex objects; ATWS= Attitudes towards women scale; SHAS= Sexual harassment attitudes scale

4.2 Inferential statistics

Hypothesis 1: Interaction effect between IV variables (gender and the condition) on the dependent variable (DV) sexual attitudes towards gender stereotyping

To test the assumption of the first hypothesis, a two-way between groups Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) examined the role of the independent variables, gender and the condition on the dependent variable, sexual attitudes towards gender stereotyping and found no significant interaction effect ($F(3, 90) = .50, p = .681$), therefore, the influence of the videos on sexual attitudes towards gender stereotyping were not depend on whether the participant was male or female. No main effects were reported for gender ($F(1, 90) = 2.10, p = .151$) and no main effects were reported for the condition ($F(3, 90) = 1.73, p = .166$). Post hoc analysis reported no significant difference between videos. A Levene's test was carried out to test homogeneity of variance and found significance (.007), therefore violating the assumption. For this reason, $p < .01$ was used as the significance cut off. Thus, as all results reported to not be significant, the null hypothesis was accepted. As per the hypothesis further analysis was conducted on each of the subscales of the overall scale 'sexual attitudes towards gender stereotyping.'



Hypothesis 2: Interaction effect between IV variables (gender and the condition) on the dependent variable (DV) men as sex driven

To test the assumption of the second hypothesis, a two-way between groups Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) examined the role of gender and the condition on ‘men as sex driven’ and found no significant interaction effect ($F(3,90) = .863, p = .464$). However, a main effect was reported for the condition ($F(3,90) = 3.68, p = .015$) with a medium effect size (.109).

Post hoc analysis confirmed that there was a significant difference between female non-sexist

video group and female sexist video group (-5.0, $p = .009$, CI (95%) -9.03 - -.97) and male non-sexist video group and female sexist group (-4.40, $p = .025$, CI (95%) -8.39, - .41).

Table 4 below illustrates the results of the Bonferroni post hoc comparisons of men as sex driven across the video categories. No main effects were reported for gender ($F(1,90) = 1.73$, $p = .192$). A Levene's test was carried out to test homogeneity of variance and found no significance (.386), therefore complying with the assumption. For this reason, $p < .05$ was used as the significance cut off. Thus, overall there was no significant interaction effect, however, as a main effect was recorded for the condition, the null hypothesis is partially rejected.

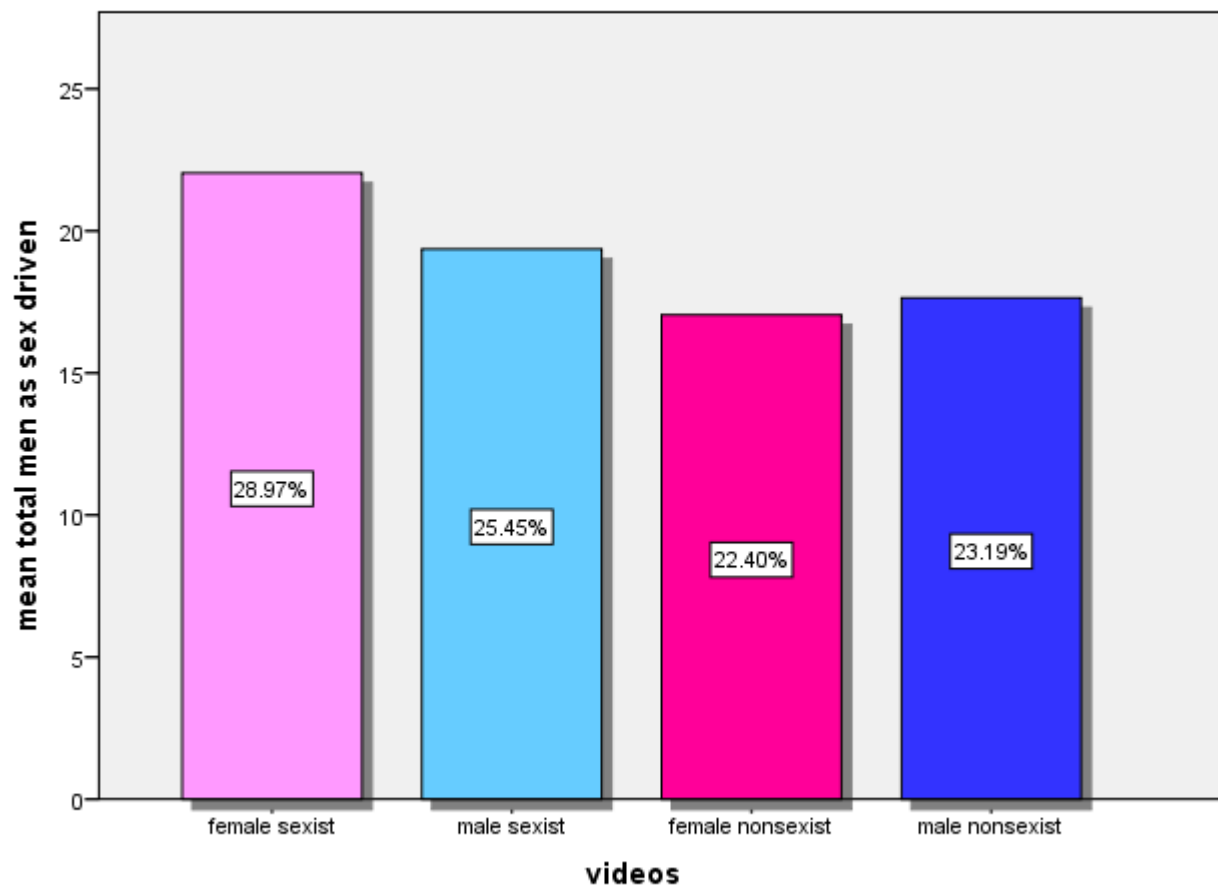
Table 4: Bonferroni post hoc comparisons of men as sex driven across video categories

DV	Group	Mean difference	Sig	95% CI		
				Lower	Upper	
Men as sex driven	Female sexist	Male sexist	2.68	.299	-1.31	6.67
		Female non-sexist	5.00*	.009	.97	9.03
		Male non-sexist	4.40*	.025	.41	8.39

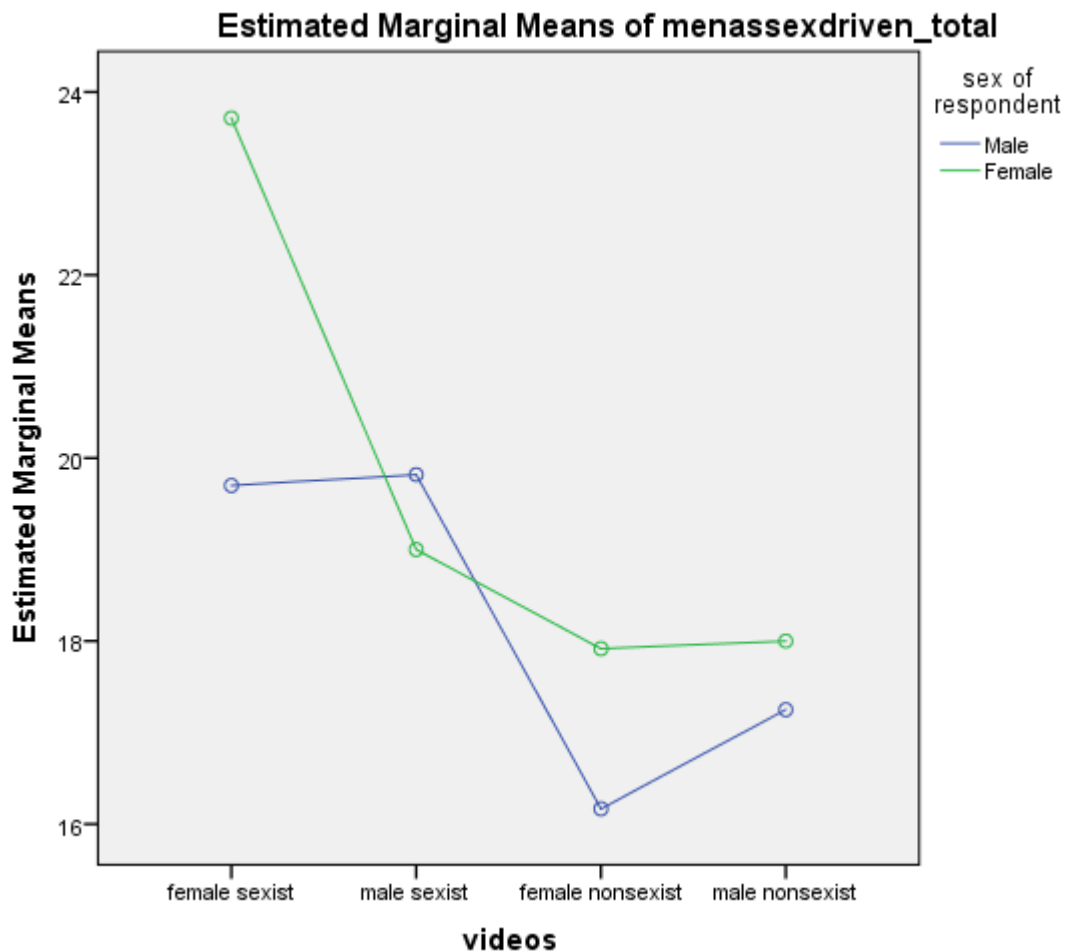
Male sexist	Female sexist	-2.68	.299	-6.67	1.31
	Female non-sexist	2.32	.429	-1.67	6.31
	Male non-sexist	1.72	.665	-2.23	5.67
Female Non-sexist	Female sexist	-5.00*	.009	-9.03	-.97
	Male sexist	-2.32	.429	-6.31	1.67
	Male non-sexist	-.60	.979	-4.59	3.39
Male Non-sexist	Female sexist	-4.40*	.025	-8.39	-.41
	Male sexist	-1.72	.665	-5.67	2.23
	Female non-sexist	.60	.979	-3.39	4.59

*CI 95%

A bar chart showing the effects of videos on attitudes of men as sex driven



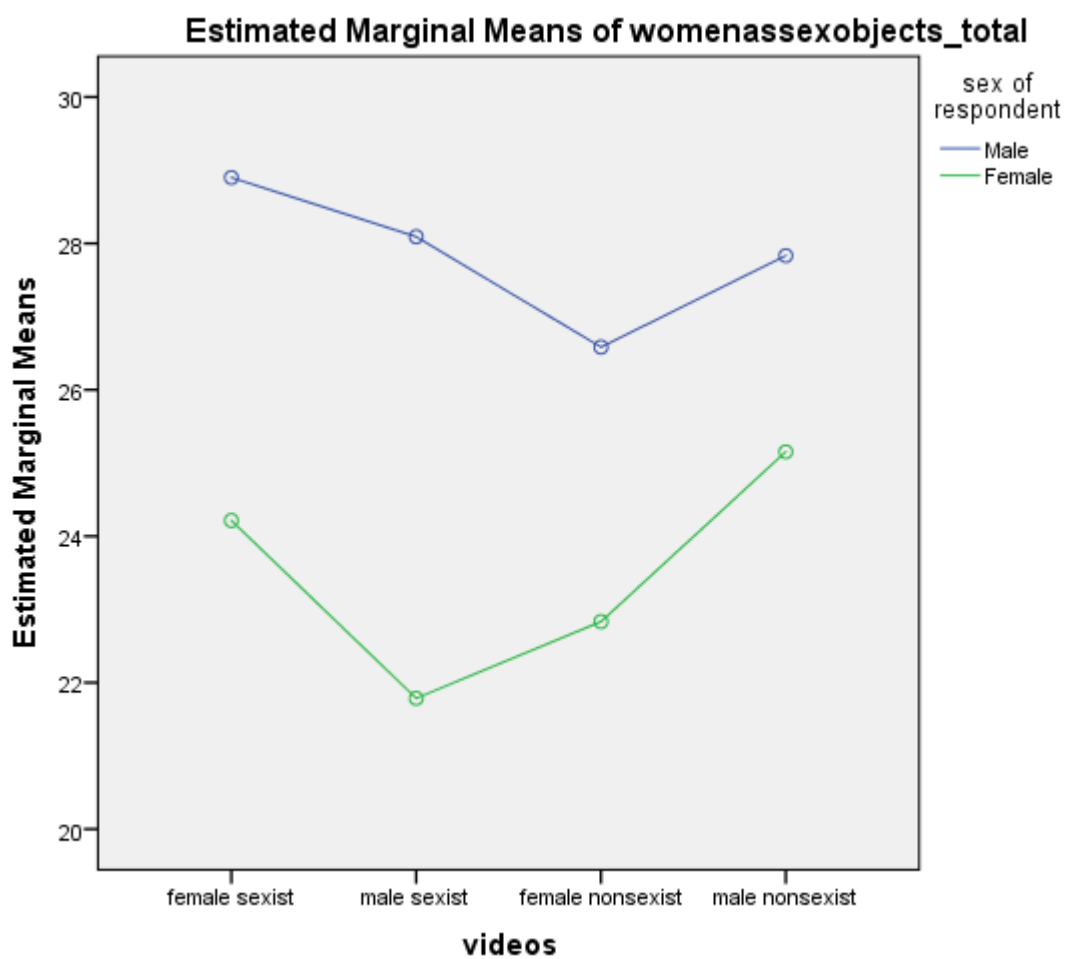
Error bars: 95% CI



Hypothesis 3: Interaction effect between IV variables (gender and the condition) on the dependent variable (DV) women as sex objects

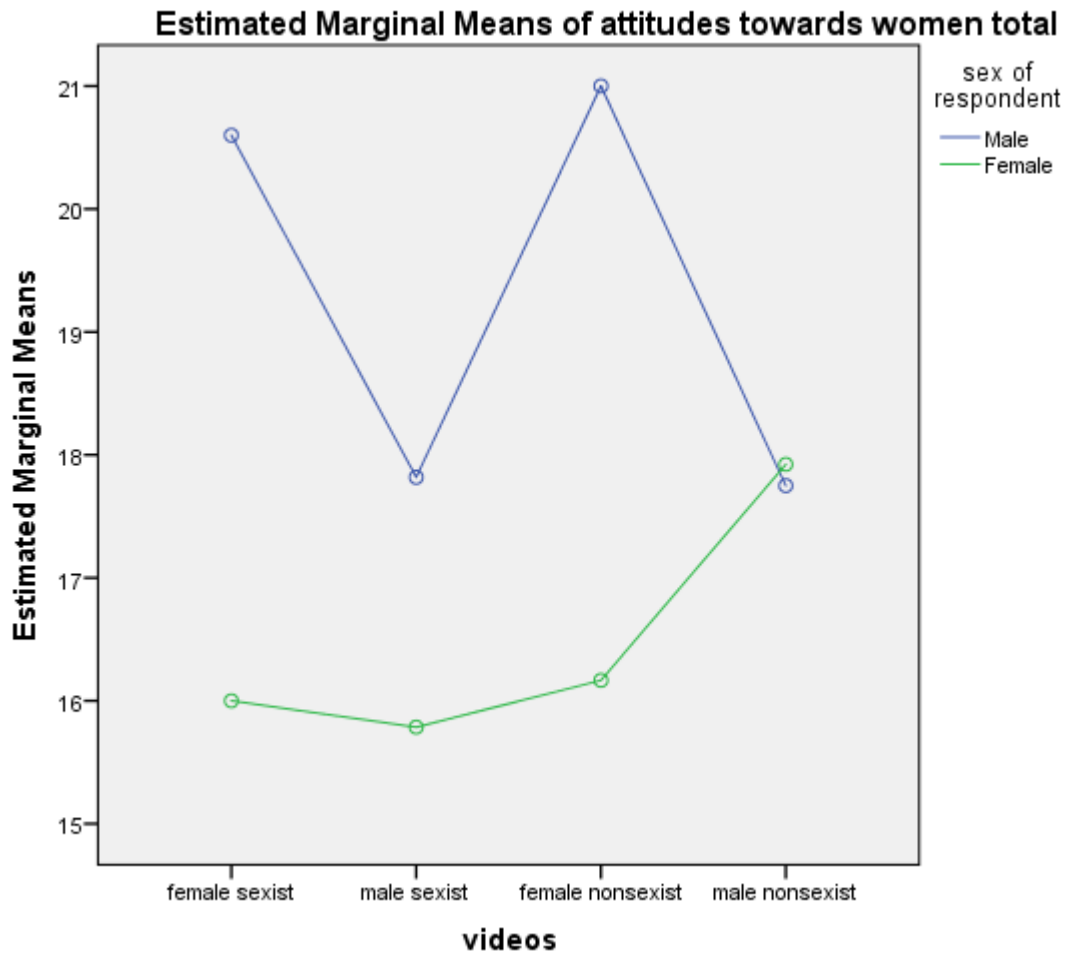
To test the assumption of the third hypothesis, A two-way between groups ANOVA examined the role of gender and the condition on ‘women as sex objects’ and found no significant interaction effect ($F(3,90) = .372, p = .774$). However, a main effect was reported for gender ($F(1, 90) = 11.70, p = .001$) with a medium effect size (.115). Males reported higher attitudes towards women as sex object ($M = 27.80, SD = 6.94$) oppose to females ($M = 23.49, SD = 5.42$). Post hoc analysis reported no significant difference between the

conditions. No main effects were reported for the condition ($F(3, 90) = .600, p = .616$). A Levene's test was carried out to test homogeneity of variance and found significance (.005), therefore violating the assumption. For this reason, $p < .01$ was used as the significance cut off. Overall the hypothesis was not supported by the results. However, because a main effect was reported for gender, the null hypothesis is partially rejected.



Hypothesis 4: Interaction effect between IV variables (gender and the condition) on the dependent variable (DV) attitudes towards women

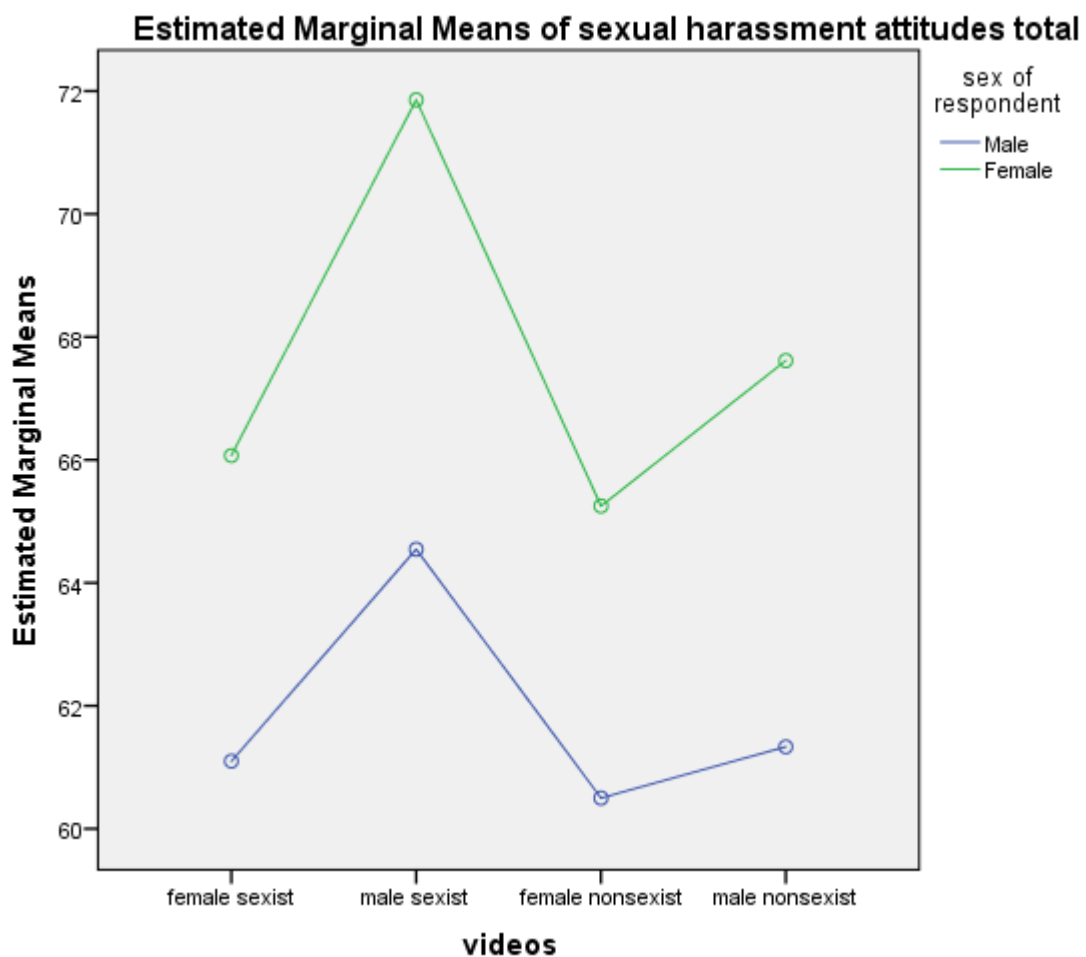
To test the assumption of the fourth hypothesis, a two-way between groups ANOVA examined the role of gender and the condition on attitudes towards women and found no significant interaction effect ($F(3,90) = 2.51, p = .064$). However, a main effect was reported for gender ($F(1,90) = 14.18, p = .000$) with a medium effect size of (.136). Males reported higher attitudes towards women ($M = 19.27, SD = 3.96$) than females ($M = 16.45, SD = 3.61$). However, post hoc analysis reported that there were no significant differences between the videos. No main effects were reported for the condition ($F(1,90) = 1.10, p = .356$). A Levene's test was carried out to test homogeneity of variance and found significance (.029), therefore violating the assumption. For this reason, $p < .01$ was used as the significance cut off. Overall, results did not support the hypothesis. However, a main effect was reported for gender, therefore the null is not fully but partially rejected.



Hypothesis 5: Interaction effect between IV variables (gender and the condition) on the Independent variable (DV) sexual harassment attitudes

To test the assumption of the fifth hypothesis, a two-way between groups ANOVA examined the role of gender and the condition on attitudes towards sexual harassment and found no significant interaction effect $F(3, 90) = .078, p = .972$. However, a main effect was reported for gender ($F(1, 90) = 7.40, p = .008$) with a small effect size (.076). Females reported higher attitudes towards sexual harassment ($M = 67.79, SD = 8.34$) than males ($M =$

61.86, SD= 12.47). However, post hoc analysis, reported that there were no significant differences between the condition. No main effects were reported for the condition ($F(3,90) = 1.23 = .303$). A Levene's test was carried out to test homogeneity of variance and found significance (.001), therefore violating the assumption. For this reason, $p < .01$ was used as the significance cut off.



5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Overall findings

The main aim of the current study was to investigate the interaction effect between gender (male and female) and the condition (male sexist video, female sexist video, male non-sexist video, female non-sexist video) towards gender stereotypical sexual attitudes, attitudes towards men as sex driven and women as sex objects, attitudes towards women and sexual harassment attitudes. The overall results of the study indicated that there was no interaction effect between gender and the condition on any of the variables. Moreover, the results indicated the effects of sexist humour in Ireland differ from the United States. Thus, the influence of sexist humour on attitudes towards men as sex driven, attitudes towards women as sex objects, attitudes towards women and sexual harassment attitudes was not dependent on whether the participants were male or female. Overall the results do not support the research that suggests males exposed to sexist humour have a greater acceptance of societal devaluation of women (Ford et al., 2013), that exposure to sexist humour creates a greater willingness for men to discriminate against women (Ford et al., 2008) and that males view sexist humour as funnier when it derogates women (Ford et al., 2013).

Moreover, as interaction effects between gender and the condition were not significant, the study investigated the main effect of gender and the condition independently towards the dependent variables. No overall main effects were reported for the condition, thus sexist humour had no effect on the dependent variables. This is contradictory to previous research which suggests sexist humour specifically creates a norm of tolerance and blurs the boundaries of socially accepted behaviours (Ford et al., 2013), that the preference for sexist humour is closely related to endorsement of sexist attitudes (Eysell & Bohner, 2006), that

sexist humour can be discriminatory towards a particular group (Morreall, 2009), that sexist humour contributes to the development and maintenance of group stereotypes, particularly attitudes towards women (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010), that it functions to sexually objectify women (Bemiller & Zimmer-Schneider, 2010), belittle them (Thomae & Pina, 2015) and that sexist humour contributes to the trivialisation of sexual harassment (Mackinnon, 1979).

However, overall main effects were reported for gender across attitudes towards women as sex objects, attitudes towards women, and sexual harassment attitudes with males predominately having more progressive attitudes. Thus, supporting the assumption that males have more progressive attitudes towards women as sexual objects (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), that men predominately sexually objectify women, devalue their abilities, and support the tolerance of violence against women (Bemiller & Zimmer-Schneider, 2010).

5.2 Key findings

The first hypothesis stated that there would be an interaction effect between gender and the condition on gender stereotypical sexual attitudes. However, the results did not support the hypothesis, which indicated that the influence of the condition on gender stereotypical sexual attitudes was not dependent on whether the participant was male or female. Moreover, gender and the condition independently have no effect on gender stereotypical sexual attitudes. Overall, results contradict the assumption that sexist humour contributes to the maintenance of group stereotypes (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010). Moreover, results contradicted Ward and Rivadeneyra, (1999) who suggested that tv exposure to sexually orientated genres was linked to stereotypical attitudes towards sex.

The second hypothesis stated that there would be an interaction effect between gender and the condition on attitudes towards men as sex driven. This however was not supported by the results. The results indicated that the influence of sexist humour on attitudes towards men as sex driven was not dependent on whether the participant was male or female. Moreover, as interaction effect were not significant, main effects for both gender and the videos were examined. A main effect was reported for videos towards men as sex driven. Interestingly, the results indicate that exposure to the female sexist video found significantly higher effects on attitudes towards men as sex driven than the non-sexist female video and that exposure to the female sexist video found significantly higher effects on attitudes towards men as sex driven than the non-sexist male video. No main effects were recorded for gender therefore, whether the participant was male or female had no effect on their attitudes towards men as sex driven. The results produced extremely interesting findings as the content of the female video specifically objectifies women yet results indicated that participants had

more progressive attitudes towards men. No previous literature has expressed similar findings. However, the result did support the assumption that sexist humour can contribute to the maintenance of group stereotyping (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010). Future research in this field could shed some light on the findings.

The third hypothesis stated that there would be an interaction effect between gender and the condition on women as sex objects. This however, was not supported by the results which indicated that the influence of the videos on women as sex objects was not dependent on whether the participant was male or female. No main effects were reported for the condition across women as sex objects. This suggests that sexist humour has no effect on participants attitudes towards women as sex objects. This refutes previous research that states sexist humour has negative consequences and can re-enforce sexual attitudes towards women as sex objects (Bemiller & Zimmer-Schneider, 2010). Moreover, it does not mirror the findings of Ryan and Kanjarski (1998) study which indicated that sexist humour is positively correlated with rape related attitudes. However, results did indicate that males have more progressive attitudes towards women as sex objects which is reflected in the literature (Barkly, 1990; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1998; Hald et al., 2010; Peplau, 2003).

The fourth hypothesis stated that there would be an interaction effect between gender and the condition on attitudes towards women. This however, was not supported by the results thus, indicating that the influence of the of the condition was not dependent on whether the participant was male or female. This contradicts previous claims that sexist humour can lead men who are high in hostile sexism to behave in a discriminatory manner toward women (Ford et al., 2008). Moreover, it contradicts Greenwood and Isbell (2002)

research which suggested that males with higher levels of hostile sexism perceived “dumb blonde” jokes as more amusing and less offensive. Moreover, the sexist humour videos had no effect on the participants attitudes towards women which does not support previous research findings (Henkin & Fish, 1986; Moore et al., 1987). However, participants gender influenced attitudes towards women which supported previous literature that males have more progressive attitudes towards women (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010).

The fifth hypothesis stated that there would be an interaction effect between gender and videos on sexual harassment attitudes. This however, was not supported by the results. Thus, indicating that the influence of the condition on sexual harassment attitudes was not dependent on whether the participant was male or female. Results did not mirror previous findings that suggested sexist humour has an effect on males’ attitudes towards sexual assault (McDermott et al., 2015) and rape (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2016; Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998). Moreover, interesting findings were reported for gender attitudes. Female participants reported to have more progressive attitudes towards sexual harassment than men. This contradicts previous research which suggested that women are more likely to perceive unwanted instances of sexual attention as sexual harassment and men to perceive them as harmless (Angelone, 2008; Russell & Trigg, 2004) Results also contradict a number of previous studies which suggested that males have more progressive attitudes towards sexual harassment than women (Lott et al., 1982; Reilly et al., 1986). Moreover, main effects were not reported for the condition which suggests that sexist humour had no effect on participants attitudes towards sexual harassment. This contradicts MacKinnon (1979) who stated that, humour contributes to trivialising of sexual harassment attitudes.

5.3 Implications, limitations and strengths

The current study did not support the main research question that sexist humour and gender influence stereotypical attitudes of men as sex driven, women as sex objects, attitudes towards women and attitudes towards sexual harassment, thus contradicted several previous studies (Ford et al., 2013; Greenwood & Isbell, 2002; Ryan & Kanjarski, 1998; Woodzicka & Ford, 2010). A potential cause for this could be reflected in the limitations. One limitation of the current study is that it is difficult to ascertain that participants watched one of the videos. However, measures were taken to try prevent this. Prior to exposure, participants were made aware of the importance of the video in relation to the study. Moreover, after exposure, participants were asked if they had watched the video in which all participants answered yes. However, no further measures could have been taken to ascertain this and if participants did not watch the video this could have had an impact on the findings.

Another limitation of the current study is that participants' attitudes were self-reported and not measured over a period of time. Participants' current attitudes could be a reflection of the socially acceptable attitudes held towards sexism within society. Sexist humour and attitudes towards women have become a topical issue within society, specifically with media coverage of late surrounding sexual harassment in Hollywood, Donald Trump's sexist remarks and the rape trial in Belfast. Due to this increased media coverage, people have become more aware of what attitudes are not socially acceptable within society (Sechrist & Stangor, 2001).

). Thus, participants may have answered questions based on social norms opposite to their own internal attitudes. A suggestion for future application could be to use The Implicit-association test (IAT). Adapting a previous study conducted by Ford et al., (2013), after exposure to sexist and non-sexist humour, participants could be tested using the IAT to see

whether they report higher tolerance of sexually objectifying behaviour towards women, more negative attitudes towards women and higher tolerance of sexual harassment.

While results did not support the hypotheses, a strength of the current study was the use of NAGG, an online A/B (split) testing programme. Each of the four questionnaires were embedded into NAGG and an overall link was generated. When participants clicked on the link the programme split them up accordingly. As a result, all participants were randomly assigned to one of four questionnaires. Moreover, there was an even amount of both male and female participants across the four conditions. Another strength, was that the study was an online quantitative experimental design where answers were submitted anonymously. This allowed for participants to answer questions truthfully and confidentially.

In conclusion, the findings of the current study suggest that overall sexist humour and gender does not have any influence on sexual attitudes towards gender stereotyping, attitudes towards women and attitudes towards sexual harassment within an Irish context. This has contradicted previous research which has predominately focused on attitude held within the United States. However, overall results did support the assumption that males have more progressive attitudes towards women, which supports previous research. While the current study did not support the assumption that sexist humour trivialises attitudes towards specific groups, limited studies have been conducted in this domain and no such study has examined sexist humour across these variables simultaneously. Nevertheless, while it is not reflected in the current study, the relevance of sexist humour and attitudes is particularly topical and it is evident that sexist humour is a serious issue that needs to be addressed. The implicate associations test could be adapted to future studies to detect the strength of a person's automatic association between sexist humour and sexist attitudes held in society.

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7. APPENDIX

Appendix A: Questionnaires

Demographic Questions:

1. What gender are you? (Short-text response)
2. What age are you? (Short-text response)

Answers were then coding into categories:

Gender: 1(male), 2(female) and 3 (bigender).

Age: scale variable with age groups also defined 1(18-24), 2 (25-35) and 3 (35+).

Section 1: Men as sex driven (Gender stereotyping and sexual attitude)

1. Men are usually interested in women as potential sex partners, and do not want to be "Just friends" with them.
2. It is hard for men to resist their sexual needs.
3. It is very natural for a man to worship a woman, to ogle women and to care about their appearance, even if he has a partner commitment.

4. There is something wrong with a man who rejects the possibility of sex.
5. Men who "are good with women" and get a woman in bed are cool.
6. Men always want and are always ready for sex, they think about it all the time.
7. It is natural for a man to make sexual advances toward a woman he finds attractive.

Section 1B: Women as sexual- objects: (Gender stereotyping and sexual attitude)

1. If a woman is attractive, she should use it. It is in her favour.
2. A beautiful woman attracts comments on her appearance and should be able to handle
That.
3. Women should focus more on their appearance than men.
4. Women should take care of their appearance, because men prefer a girlfriend whose good-
looking.
5. There is nothing wrong with men whistling at shapely women.
6. It annoys me when a man is only interested in a woman if she is attractive.
7. There is nothing wrong with men who are only interested in a woman's body.
8. Women prefer a handsome, strong and muscular man as a partner.
9. Women should not initiate sexual contact but should wait for the man to make his move.
10. Using her body and looks is the best way for a woman to attract a man.

Section 2: Attitudes toward women scale:

1. Swearing is worse for a woman than for a man.
2. On a date the man should be expected to pay for expenses.
3. On average women are as smart as men.
4. More encouragement in a family should be given to sons than daughters to go to college.
5. It is alright for a girl to play rough sports like football.
6. In general the father should have greater authority than the mother in making family decisions.
7. It is alright for a female to ask a male on a date.
8. It is more important for males than females to do well at school.
9. If both husband and wife have jobs, the husband should do a share of the housework such as washing dishes and laundry.
10. Males are better leaders than females.
11. Women should be more concerned in becoming good wives and mothers rather than desiring a professional or business career favour.
12. Women should have the same freedom as men.

Section 3: The Sexual Harassment Attitude Scale

1. An attractive woman has to expect sexual advances and should learn how to handle them.
2. Most men are sexually teased by many of the women with whom they interact on the job or at school.
3. Most women who are sexually insulted by a man provoke his behaviour by the way they talk, act, or dress.
4. A man must learn to understand that a woman's "no" to his sexual advances really means "no."
5. It is only natural for a woman to use her sexuality as a way of getting ahead in school or at work.
6. An attractive man has to expect sexual advances and should learn how to handle them.
7. I believe that sexual intimidation is a serious social problem.
8. It is only natural for a man to make sexual advances to a woman he finds attractive.
9. Innocent flirtations make the workday or school day interesting.
10. Encouraging a professor's or a supervisor's sexual interest is frequently used by women to get better grades or to improve their work situations.
11. One of the problems with sexual harassment is that some women can't take a joke.

12. The notion that what a professor does in class may be sexual harassment is taking the idea of sexual harassment too far.
13. Many charges of sexual harassment are frivolous and vindictive.
14. A lot of what people call sexual harassment is just normal flirtation between men and women.
15. Sexual assault and sexual harassment are two completely different things.
16. Sexual harassment refers to those incidents of unwanted sexual attention that aren't too serious.
17. Sexual harassment has little to do with power.
18. Sexism and sexual harassment are two completely different things.
19. All this concern about sexual harassment makes it harder for men and women to have normal relationships.

Appendix B: The Condition (male sexist video, female sexist video, male non-sexist video, female non-sexist video)

Video 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1uv0JW4CmY&t=1s>

Video 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFv3V22xiOE>

Video 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQ8L6kOD3pQ>

Video 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxRmMeeg5QQ&t=7s>

Appendix C: Information sheet

My name is Aoibheann Rogers and I am a Postgraduate student at Dublin Business School. I am conducting research in the Department of Psychology that examines the relationship between comedy and gender. This research will be submitted for examination.

You are invited to take part in this study. Participation involves watching a short stand-up comedy video clip and completing an anonymous survey. The survey is comprised of a series of questions relating to gender, specifically looking at attitudes towards women. Participation is only required for people who identify as Irish. Audio is a necessary requirement to watch the video clip. Due to the nature of the content, participants must be over the age of 18. Participation in the study may cause distress therefore participants have the right to withdraw at any given time. If any of the content raises difficult feelings for you, contact information for support services are included on the final page.

The following questionnaire will take approximately 10-12 minutes to complete.

Participation is completely voluntary and so you are not obliged to take part. If you consent to take part, please answer questions truthfully.

Participation is anonymous. Thus, responses cannot be attributed to any one participant. For this reason, it will not be possible to withdraw from participation after the questionnaire has been collected.

It is important that you understand that by completing and submitting the questionnaire that you are consenting to participate in the study.

Should you require any further information about the research, please contact me via email, [REDACTED]. My supervisor Dr. Lucie Corcoran can be contacted at [REDACTED].

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey.

Thank you for completing the following experiment. Your response has been recorded anonymously and your answers will be stored electronically.

The nature of the study was to examine the interaction effect of sexist humour and gender on attitudes towards men as sex driven and women as sex object, female objectification and attitudes towards sexual harassment.

If you feel that answering this survey has raised some issues for you, please consider contacting some of the support services listed below, or speak to a friend, family member or professional.

Rape Crisis Centre:

The Rape Crisis Centre 24 Hour Helpline on 1800 778888

Available to call 24 hours a day.

Email for support at: www.rapecrisishelp.ie

Samaritans

Call on: 116 123

Available 24hrs a day, 365 days a year. Free to call.

Email: jo@samaritans.org