

Sexist Events and Its Impact on Depression in Women

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### **Abstract**

The author of the present study contributes to research on the role of sexism in women's health by examining how sexist events and benevolent sexist beliefs impact levels of depression in women. A questionnaire comprised of The Schedule of Sexist Events (SSE), Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI), and Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was administered to 76 female students at a private, Christian university. Bivariate correlations were conducted. The results found a positive correlation between reported sexist events and levels of depression. There were no correlations between sexist beliefs, depression levels, and reporting sexist events. The results of the research supported previous studies that stated that sexism negatively impacts mental health. Further implications, limitations, and need for future research were discussed.

## Chapter I

### Introduction

Around the world, society possesses a gender system with deep patriarchal roots. There exists a hierarchy where masculinity is superior to femininity. Gender norms can change due to social pressure and individual actions, as evidenced by several Women's Rights movements throughout the decades. Nevertheless, gender discrimination still exists, and those who try to deviate from gender norms or challenge gender injustices can experience discrimination and social sanctioning (Heise, Green, Opper, Stavropoulon, Harper, Nascimento, & Zewdie, 2019). All forms of discrimination are detrimental to a person's psychological well-being. However, sexism has a broader impact because it is experienced by women regardless of race, ethnicity, or age. According to Klonoff and Landrine (1995), sexism takes a variety of forms including sexual harassment, unfair treatment from family, partners, and spouses, unfair treatment from teachers or professors, being called sexist names, ignoring one's presence, experiencing hostility, being discriminated against at work in salaries, promotions, tenure, and assignment, and being perceived as "aggressive" for assertive behavior.

Glick and Fiske (2001) further categorized sexist events into two categories: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism is an "adversarial view of gender relations," while benevolent sexism "characterizes women as pure creatures who ought to be protected, supported, and adored" (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Although men may experience similar events such as unfair treatment in the workplace and gender stereotypes, women frequent those situations at a much higher rate than men. As a result, past research studied the impact of sexism on women's mental health. There have been positive correlations between higher levels of perceived sexist events

and symptoms in women, including depressive, obsessive-compulsive, somatic, and overall distress (Landrine & Klonoff, 1995).

This research seeks to add to current studies by looking at how sexist events impact levels of depression in women. By examining this, researchers and clinicians can better understand women's experiences. The following literature review examines studies regarding sexism's impact on women's mental health as well as hypotheses positing higher levels of sexism correlating to higher levels of depression.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

#### Frequency of Sexism

Sexism happens regardless of ethnicity, age, or race. It is a universal experience women endure throughout their lives. Klonoff and Landrine (1995) classified the variety of sexist events as acute (recent) or chronic (lifetime). Their sample consisted of 631 women who completed the Schedule of Sexist Events (SSE). The ages of the women ranged from 18 to 73. According to the results, only six women (1%) reported never experiencing a sexist event in their lifetime, while 99% of the sample did. Nineteen women (3%) of the study reported not experiencing a recent sexist event within the past year, while 97% of the sample did (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995). The sexist events reported happened to women of all ages and ethnicities. However, the results found that women of color reported more discrimination in the domains of degradation and sexism in a close relationship than white women (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995).

Hostile forms of sexism, such as assault or violent language, are more natural to identify because they are the most obvious. On the other hand, benevolent sexism might not seem like prejudice at the time. A man wanting to protect his wife at all costs or feeling like he should be the one providing for her can be an example of benevolent sexism if his rationale comes from the belief that she is unable to protect or provide for herself. This sentiment and other examples of benevolent sexism stem from the notion that women are “pure beings” (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Although benevolent sexism is not violent and aggressive, it does reinforce sexist notions about women that reduce their autonomy. However, because benevolent sexism does not cause a sense of immediate danger like hostile sexism, many women deny that benevolent sexism is sexist.

Women across several countries were more likely to reject hostile sexist acts but were more likely to endorse benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2001).

Overt forms of discrimination, such as verbal abuse or physical acts, are easy to identify and demand social change. However, subtle or passive-aggressive instances can be more challenging to recognize. An oversaturation of experiencing sexist events can compound this difficulty and even create a sense of numbness to daily sexist discrimination. For some women, it might be easier to deny or accept that level of discrimination than fight it or report it.

A possibility exists that women might deny an event as sexist as a form of self-preservation and protection. In countries where male sexist views were high, women also reported more acceptance of benevolent sexist ideals (Glick & Fisk, 2001). Further instances of women denying or not reporting sexist events include women who deny being physically assaulted or do not want to report rape. Only 25% of victims reported rape or sexual assault to the police in 2018 (United States Department of Justice, 2018). Sexual assault, harassment, and rape are forms of sexism based on hostile beliefs. Denial or repression of a hostile sexist event may be a defense mechanism used in instances of denying benevolently based sexist events as well.

Denial, acceptance, or repression might occur because the situation was too painful to bear or because the perpetrator was someone well known by the victim. In cases such as that, there might be disbelief or denial that the perpetrator was sexist. As a result, assessing the frequency of sexist events can be difficult.

Much of the research related to identifying the frequency of sexist events is retrospective. Reporting sexist events can be skewed because participants might feel uncertain about labeling something or someone as sexist, moments could be minimized or overlooked, reoccurrences of

sexist events might even cause participants to overlook them, and similarities between types of sexist events might pose challenging to assess their actual frequency.

To try and obtain better data, Swim, Hyers, and Ferguson (2001) conducted a daily diary study of sexist events. The purpose was to more thoroughly examine sexism and its daily impact on the lives of participants. The study had three different groups of participants, including men and women. Swim et al. (2001) hypothesized that women would report more daily sexist events than men. They also posited that women with related feminist beliefs would be more aware of sexism and thus report sexist events more.

In each of the three studies, participants answered two pages of open and closed-ended questions asking to describe the gender-related incident observed. Incidents recorded were then categorized in terms of gender stereotypes, derogatory comments or behaviors, sexual objectification, and other. Swim et al. (2001) examined whether the target of discrimination was the individual, men and women in general, or a combination of categories. For each incident observed, participants filled out a diary page. They then rated on a Likert type scale whether the incident was prejudiced, as well as their emotional response (Swim et al., 2001).

This study helped identify the frequency of sexist events personally experienced as well as witnessed in the participant's daily life. Reliable and valid results were still obtained, despite the study relying on the discretion of the participants to report what they perceived as sexist as they would with a scale survey. On average, women reported approximately one sexist incident per day (Swim et al., 2001).

Sexism also impacts men. As shown in Swim et al. (2001), men experienced traditional role stereotypes and demeaning or derogatory comments. However, the frequency was not near the number reported by women. Men also did not report any instances of sexual objectification

while women did. Furthermore, “to obtain a manageable number,” participants were asked to exclude sexism witnessed in media and advertisements (Swim et al., 2001). Therefore, participants did not consider the gender stereotypes, sexual objectification, and demeaning comments found in movies, television shows, commercials, and print media.

SteelFisher, Findling, Bleich, Casey, Blendon, Benson, Sayde, & Miller (2019), examined the prevalence of gender discrimination across institutional and interpersonal domains. They administered a survey between January 26, 2017, to April 9, 2017, consisting of questions related to gender discrimination in employment, education, healthcare, housing, political participants, police, and personal experiences (SteelFisher et al., 2019). The results found that 18% of women reported sexism at the doctor, 41% reported sexism when asking for equal pay or promotions, 31% reported sexism when applying for jobs, 37% reported themselves or female family members being sexually harassed, and 29% reported themselves or female family members had been threatened (SteelFisher et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the study found that women between the ages of 18-29 reported more sexual discrimination compared to those 30 and over (SteelFisher et al., 2019). Women of color and those identifying as LGBT also reported more instances of sexism than white women or women who identified as straight (SteelFisher et al., 2019). A reason for this could be because women of color and LGBT are more acutely aware of discrimination due to other possible discriminatory experiences because on their race and sexual orientation.

The prominence of the #MeToo movement in the past few years has raised awareness of sexism and allowed women to come forward to share their experiences and have solidarity with others who have faced similar situations. This movement spearheaded by celebrities and activists is an essential first step in holding hostile sexism accountable, such as harassment in the

workplace. However, it does not adequately address the benevolent sexism that a larger demographic of women experiences across a broader spectrum of domains.

Sexism is everywhere, whether in personal experiences, stories on the news, or the media in which they consume. The consequences of sexism in the media can be severe. Not only does it reinforce gender stereotypes and other forms of benevolent sexist ideals, but it also “furthers hostility and negative attitudes toward women” (Peters, Holmgren, & Oswald, 2015). Because of the overabundance of sexist discrimination, there is a psychological impact on women.

### **Psychological Impact of Sexism**

Cassidy, O’Connor, Howe, and Warden (2004) and Corning (2002) found that any form of discrimination has links to an individual’s psychological distress. Although Klonoff and Landrine (1995) focused on discovering the frequency sexist of events that occurred, they stated that measuring the psychological impact of acute and chronic events should be examined by future researchers.

In the Swim et al. (2001) diary studies, women reported low self-esteem and higher levels of depression as a result of experiencing sexist events. Experiencing acute or chronic discrimination can cause psychological distress. Effects of perceived sexist events cause psychological symptoms that go beyond distress experienced from daily hassles or stressful events. Because sexism is “inherently demeaning, degrading, and highly personal,” the psychological impact is severe (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995). They further stated that even though women may experience a specific event often, one might consider it more stressful than another (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995) Therefore, a general statement about the severity of a sexist event cannot be made.

Discrimination itself implies control over another group. Those being discriminated against have to rely on others for the desired outcome rather than themselves. In the case of sexism, if a woman wants a job promotion, it is contingent upon her boss not being sexist. If a woman wants to go out for dinner by herself or go on a date, she must prepare for the possibility of a sexual assault or harassment. In the study by SteelFisher et al. (2019), 9% of the female participants were not going to the doctor or calling the police for emergencies out of fear of experiencing sexism.

Sexism can impact mental health on multiple levels: the act itself, fear and anxiety over experiencing sexism, and the consequences of experiencing a sexist act. Often, a sexist event can have ongoing repercussions. For example, harassment in the workplace could cause a domino effect, possibly impacting a woman's ability to function at work, relationships at home, and views of self. As a result, this reinforces feelings of shame, guilt, and hopelessness, which contribute to depression.

Over time, gender discrimination can harm a woman's mental health by constantly heightening their emotional and physiological reactivity (Anderson & Harnois, 2019). When examining how sexism impacts depression in women, other factors like socioeconomic status must be considered as well. Women with higher education or higher SES status might have access to resources that women in low SES conditions do not (Anderson & Harnois, 2019). This feeling of helplessness and being “trapped” only reinforces feelings of depression.

Violent forms of sexism are traumatic. Wilson, Miller, Leheney, Ballman, and Scarpa (2017) posited that experiencing rape or sexual assault, whether reported or not, would have psychological consequences in the areas of depression and post-traumatic stress. However, they hypothesized that unacknowledged rape would lead to higher depression symptoms. Because

those who did not acknowledge or report their assault would internalize the situation and blame themselves, the symptoms of depression would be more significant.

Research has shown that benevolent sexism can influence whether a woman reports a sexist event. Wilson et al. (2017) also examined hostile and benevolent sexism as a moderator for whether acknowledging their rape or not was a risk of psychological distress or protection against it. Results found that the highest levels of depression and PTSD were from victims who acknowledged their rape and had low levels of benevolent sexist beliefs. Conversely, acknowledged, and unacknowledged rape survivors with high levels of benevolent sexism reported low levels of depression and PTSD (Wilson et al. 2017). The lowest levels of depression were unacknowledged rape survivors with low levels of benevolent sexism.

These results might indicate that for rape survivors, conforming to traditional roles might be a protective factor against psychological distress by minimizing the event. However, the women might still experience distress from the sexual assault itself and any other consequences as a result.

It is not just rape, assault, or sexual objectification that psychologically impacts women, but subtle sexism as well. Unlike hostile sexism, which is more aggressive, benevolent sexism can appear kind. Nevertheless, it still condescends women and puts them in subordinate roles. Being put in a position of helplessness over a continuous period can cause psychological distress. When gender discrimination is involved, clinicians have found that areas causing psychological distress include a personal sense of control, perceiving the sexist event as significant to one's being, and rumination of the event (Kim & Park, 2018). An individual's self-view is gathered from the explicit and implicit feedback from the environment around them. Therefore, if a

woman is continually experiencing sexism or witnessing other women endure sexism, she will eventually internalize those negative situations, which in turn impacts her mental health.

Hackett, Steptoe & Jackson (2019) conducted a study in the United Kingdom to examine how sexism impacts mental health in women. The researchers stated that discrimination is a social stressor that can directly impact health through biological pathways or negatively influence behaviors that serve as coping mechanisms, such as drugs and alcohol (Hackett et al. 2019). Data was gathered annually from 2009 until 2014 through a computer, face to face interviews, and paper questionnaires. A survey was compiled using the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12, Goldberg & Williams, 1988), the 12-Item Short-Form Health Survey (SF-12) (Ware, Kosinski, & Keller, 1996), life satisfaction rating on a Likert type scale (Lucas & Donnellan, 2012), and self-rated health (DeSalvo, Bloser, Reynolds, He, & Munter, 2006; Steptoes & Jackson, 2018). Depression was self-reported by noting whether a doctor diagnosed them with clinical depression (Hackett et al., 2019).

Few men reported sex discrimination, and so the researchers considered that men would have different experiences regarding sexism and mental health; therefore, researchers dropped male participants from analysis (Hackett et al., 2019). The participants included 2,596 women, 576 (19.5%) reported experiencing sexism (Hackett et al., 2019). Sexist experiences were then broken down into further categories. Feeling unsafe in surroundings because of being a woman was the most reported reason (93.9%), followed by avoiding somewhere because of being a woman at (38.1%), being insulted (18%), and physical attack (2.6%) (Hackett et al., 2019). According to the results, the sexist events reported primarily took place on the street at 77%. The women who reported sexism were also more likely to report a diagnosis of clinical depression. (Hackett et al., 2019).

Glick and Fiske (2001) stated that benevolent sexism could do more harm psychologically due to its subtle nature. Moradi and Subich (2002) hypothesized that denial of discrimination would lead to more considerable psychological distress. If a woman is aware of sexist events, they are less likely to accept sexism, take responsibility for them, or take proactive measure to avoid sexist situations. Krieger (1990) found that women who reported experiencing no discrimination in sexist situations were more likely to accept unfair treatment.

Changes in gender roles over the years and growth in feminist therapy have helped women become aware of sexist incidents and thus provide tools to help them mentally cope. In fact, “female preponderance in depression has been less pronounced due to gradual changes in gender roles and better education” in recent years (Hosang & Bhul, 2018). Moradi and Subich (2002) studied how perceived sexist events and feminist identity attitudes linked to psychological distress. They used the Feminist Identity Development Scale (FIDS) (Bargad & Hyde, 1991) to assess women’s identification of Downing and Roush’s feminist identity model. The domains of the Downing and Roush (1985) model include Passive Acceptance (PA-denial, Revelation (R)—anger and guilt, Embeddedness and Emanation (EE) of women’s culture, Synthesis (S) of a positive self-concept, and Active Commitment (AC) toward societal change.

A woman’s psychological distress might be a cause of their experience with sexism and feminist identity attitudes (Moradi & Subich, 2002). Using the SSE (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995) and FIDS (Bargad & Hyde, 1991), Moradi and Subich (2002) found positive correlations between psychological distress and chronic and acute sexist events in women identifying with PA, R, and EE. These results suggest that denial of sexism, whether for defensive purposes or not, still lead to psychological distress. Furthermore, guilt and anger override the benefits of

awareness, and the integration of feminist ideology does not necessarily protect women from distress (Moradi & Subich, 2002).

That is not to say that women are unable to experience sexism without feeling distressed. Moradi and Subich (2006) examined the sexism distress relation with perceived social support and positive self-appraisal. Measuring positive self-appraisal can be done through empowerment and self-esteem. Participants completed the Brief Symptom Inventory, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Personal Progress Scale-Revised, the SSE, and Social Provisions Scale.

Results indicated that self-esteem and empowerment were correlated positively with each other and negatively with psychological distress (Moradi & Subich, 2006). Frequency of sexist events correlated positively with distress but uncorrelated with self-esteem; this was consistent with previous studies (Moradi & Subich, 2006). The frequency of sexist events also did not correlate with empowerment or social support (Moradi & Subich, 2006). However, empowerment and self-esteem did correlate to psychological distress.

Their study emphasized that studying women's experiences with sexism also needs to provide something that promotes women empowerment. Doing so would be consistent with feminist therapy perspectives because psychologists must understand the role of empowerment in women's mental health.

Past research has found that there are correlations between sexism and psychological distress. One component of psychological distress is depression. Little research has focused specifically on depression as a result of experiencing sexism. This research seeks to add to current studies by focusing on the influence of sexist events and levels of depression. The following hypotheses will be tested:

*Hypothesis 1:* Women reporting a higher frequency of sexist events will have a positive correlation with higher levels of depression

*Hypothesis 2:* Women with higher levels of benevolent sexist beliefs will have a positive correlation with higher levels of depression

*Hypothesis 3:* Women with higher levels of benevolent sexist beliefs will report fewer sexist events

### Chapter III

#### Methodology

##### *Participants*

Participants included undergraduate men and women from a private, southeastern Christian university. Participants who were enrolled in psychology courses received extra credit for participating in the study. One hundred thirty-five individuals started the survey, but only 88 completed it. Because the study looked at how sexist events impacted women, the 12 male responses were dropped, resulting in a total of 76 female participants. Forty-six percent identified as Hispanic, 19% as White, 14% as African-American, 11 % as other, and 7% as Asian/Pacific Islander. The ages ranged from 18 to 36. Ninety-two percent identified as heterosexual while the remaining 8% identified as bisexual.

##### *Measures*

Participants completed a survey packet that includes a demographic questionnaire and the following instruments.

*Depression:* The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) (Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock & Erbaugh, 1960) is a 21-item measure used to categorize symptoms and attitudes of depression. Each category describes a specific behavioral manifestation of depression. The self-evaluative statements are put on a scale from 0-3, with the severity ranking neutral to maximum. The scores are averaged with the higher the score indicating higher levels of depression.

*Ambivalent Sexism:* Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) (Glick & Fiske, 1996) is a 22-item self-report. The measure includes two 11-item subscales to evaluate hostile and benevolent sexism. The items are rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 0=*disagree strongly* to

5=*agree strongly*. The responses are then summed and averaged. Higher scores indicate greater agreement with sexist statements.

*Perceived Sexist Events*: The Schedule of Sexist Events (SSE) (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995) is a 20-item self-report measure that assesses the frequency of sexist events. Participants rate items for the frequency of sexist events on a scale of 1=*never* to 6=*almost all the time*. Ratings are summed and can range from 20-120. Higher scores indicate the frequency of sexist events.

### **Procedures**

The consent form, demographic page, and measures were compiled in an online survey. It was sent through SurveyMonkey to male and female students through their university email. The initial survey page explained the background and purpose of research. Participants were also informed that participation in the survey was voluntary, and they could stop at any time. After giving consent and the use of anonymous responses, participants completed the questionnaire.

## Chapter IV

### Results

Hypothesis 1 stated that women who reported a higher level of sexist events would also report higher levels of depression. The correlations reported in Table 1 indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between lifetime and recent sexist events and depression at a .01 level ( $r(74) = .49, p=.000$ ). The women who reported a higher frequency of experiencing sexism had higher levels of depression.

**Table 1**  
*Depression and Lifetime and Recent Sexist Events*

		Lifetime Sexist Events	Recent Sexist Events	Depression
Lifetime Sexist Events	Pearson Correlation	1	.871**	.486**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	76	76	76
Recent Sexist Events	Pearson Correlation	.871**	1	.491**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	76	76	76
Depression	Pearson Correlation	.486**	.491**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	76	76	76

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To test hypothesis 2, a bivariate correlation was used to examine the relationship between benevolent sexist ideals and the frequency of reported sexist events. As indicated in Table 2 and Table 3, no levels of significance was found (Lifetime:  $r(74) = -.17, p = .146$ ; Recent:  $r(74) = -.2,$

$p = .100$ ). These findings suggest that benevolent sexist beliefs did not influence the participants in reporting the sexism experienced throughout their life and within the past year.

**Table 2**  
*Benevolent Sexism and Lifetime Sexist Events*

		Benevolent Sexism	Lifetime Sexist Events
Benevolent Sexism	Pearson Correlation	1	-.168
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.146
	N	76	76
Lifetime Sexist Events	Pearson Correlation	-.168	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.146	
	N	76	76

**Table 3**  
*Benevolent Sexism and Recent Sexist Events*

		Benevolent Sexism	Recent Sexist Events
Benevolent Sexism	Pearson Correlation	1	-.190
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.100
	N	76	76
Recent Sexist Events	Pearson Correlation	-.190	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.100	
	N	76	76

A bivariate correlation was used to determine if there was a significant relationship between benevolent sexist beliefs and depression. As shown in Table 4, there was no significant correlation ( $r(74) = -.07$ ,  $p = .552$ ). This would also suggest that benevolent sexist ideals did not impact the depression levels in the participants.

**Table 4**  
*Depression and Benevolent Sexist Events*

		Benevolent Sexism	Depression
Benevolent Sexism	Pearson Correlation	1	-.069
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.552
	N	76	76
Depression	Pearson Correlation	-.069	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.552	
	N	76	76

## Chapter V

### Discussion

Like previous research, this study also found that a high volume of women report experiencing sexism in both acute and chronic phases. Out of the 76 participants, 2 individuals reported that they never experienced a sexist event within the past year and throughout their life. The study also found a correlation between experiencing sexist events and levels of depression. The higher frequency of sexism the participants reported, the higher their levels of depression. This was consistent with previous research which found that sexism did have a detrimental affect on women's mental health.

Whether consciously or unconsciously done, an individual's view of themselves is built from their interactions with the world around them. Therefore, if an individual is exposed to negative stimuli, like sexist events, it can possibly contribute to depressive symptoms. For example, the most reported instance of sexism in this study was experiencing degrading comments. Hearing degrading comments can contribute to depressive symptoms such as shame, anger, and sadness. These symptoms can be more severe if the person making the comments was in a close interpersonal relationship with the individual. Furthermore, instances of sexism that create a toxic work or home environment can also contribute to depression.

This study also examined how benevolent sexist beliefs influenced reporting sexist events and levels of depression. No correlations were found. An explanation could be that ideals and beliefs are fluid and ever changing. According to this data, benevolent sexist beliefs were not as impactful towards depression as experiencing the sexist event itself. This could be because

beliefs are ever changing and abstract in nature. A sexist experience is more concrete and therefore has a greater influence towards symptoms of depression.

Based on these results, benevolent sexist ideals also did not influence whether the individual reported experiencing sexism. The participants who had high benevolent sexist beliefs still reported instances of sexism. Again, this could be caused by the concrete nature of sexism such as verbal harassment or assault, being more impactful than abstract beliefs.

One of the limitations of this study was the sample size. Compared to previous studies that had hundreds and sometimes thousands of participants, this sample size was small. Because of the smaller number of participants, the demographics section was not diverse in terms of LGBT representation or age. Most of the participants were between 19 and 20 years old. Only three individuals identified as being in their thirties, so the experiences of older women were not examined.

Depression is a complex mental condition that can be caused by a variety of factors. This study cannot definitively state that the depression indicated by the participants were directly caused by the sexism they reported experiencing. The participants could be experiencing other kinds of stressors contributing to their depression. Therefore, as Swim et al. (2001) did with their diary studies, future research should use longitudinal diary studies alongside the questionnaires used in this research. As a result, participants can document their specific feelings and reactions towards the sexist event. They can also return to the entry weeks or months later to then reflect on whether that sexist event did influence any depressive feelings.

Future research should continue to examine how sexism impacts the depression in women of color and those who identify as LGBT. Previous research (SteelFisher et al., 2019)

found that women of color and LGBT report a higher volume of sexism than Caucasian women or those who identify as heterosexual. Research should look into the psychological affects already marginalized women face when it comes to experiencing sexism, since these groups are also concurrently dealing with other forms of discrimination.

Finally, future research should exclusively examine how sexism impacts depression in men. Most of the research, this one included, exclusively examined the impact on women. However, it has been proven that men experience sexism as well albeit their experiences look different that of women (Swim et al., 2001). Because of these differences, the sexism men experience and how it impacts their mental health should be researched.

Sexism may reduce self-esteem because of a feeling of "inability to control one's life" (Kim & Park, 2018). This feeling of lack of control can contribute to feelings of hopelessness and despair, which are symptoms of depression. These implications are crucial for clinicians who counsel women with depression. No matter the number of the sexist event experienced throughout their life or recently, it can have a negative mental effect.

Humanity and society have made improvements in changing sexist norms over the centuries. Although sexism looks different now than it did back then, it is still prevalent. Because gender norms are deeply rooted in the cognitive schemas of our society, research on this topic is essential. Not until we develop an awareness of our actions and a willingness to change will there be a stop to sexism and other forms of discrimination. Psychologists and other mental health professionals can help bring about this cognitive awareness, as well as provide skills to build resiliency against dealing with adverse mental effects.

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## **Appendix I**

### **Consent Form**

Research participation is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time, without prejudice, should you object to the nature of the research. You are entitled to ask questions and to receive an explanation after your participation.

#### **Description of the Study:**

The research seeks to examine how frequency of sexist events impacts depression in women.

#### **Nature of Participation:**

You will answer three questionnaires: The Beck Depression Inventory, The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, and the Schedule of Sexist Events.

#### **Possible Risks:**

When filling out the questionnaires, you may come across a statement that you may find unpleasant, upsetting, or otherwise objectionable.

#### **Possible Benefits:**

Participation in the study may increase self-awareness towards some of the situations stated in the questionnaire.

#### **Confidentiality:**

All identifying information will be removed from questionnaires. No one will be able to know which are your questionnaire responses.

**Opportunities to Withdraw At Will:**

If you decide not or at any point to withdraw this consent or stop participating, you are free to do so at no penalty to yourself.

## Appendix II

### The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI)

Below is a series of statements concerning men and women and their relationships in contemporary society. Please indicate the degrees to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the following scale: 0 = disagree strongly; 1 = disagree somewhat; 2 = disagree slightly; 3 = agree slightly; 4 = agree somewhat; 5 = agree strongly

1. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for “equality”

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men.

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. Women are too easily offended.

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

6. People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.

0            1            2            3            4            5

7. Feminists are not seeking for women to have more power than men.

0            1            2            3            4            5

8. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.

0            1            2            3            4            5

9. Women should be cherished and protected by men.

0            1            2            3            4            5

10. Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.

0            1            2            3            4            5

11. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.

0            1            2            3            4            5

12. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.

0            1            2            3            4            5

13. Men are complete without women

0            1            2            3            4            5

14. Women exaggerate problems they have at work.

0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

15. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.

0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

16. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.

0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

17. A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.

0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

18. There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.

0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

19. Women, compared to men, tend to have superior moral sensibility.

0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

20. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.

0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

21. Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men.

0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

22. Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.

0

1

2

3

4

5

### Appendix III

#### The Schedule of Sexist Events

Please think carefully about your life as you answer the questions below. For each question, read the question and then answer it twice: answer once for what your ENTIRE LIFE (from when you were a child to now) has been like, and then once for what the PAST YEAR has been like. Circle the number that best describes events in YOUR ENTIRE LIFE, and in the PAST YEAR, using these rules:

Circle 1= If the event has NEVER happened to you

Circle 2= If the event happened ONCE IN A WHILE (less than 10% of the time)

Circle 3= If the event happened SOMETIMES (11-25% of the time)

Circle 4 = If the event happed A LOT (26-49% of the time)

Circle 5= If the event happened MOST OF THE TIME (50-70% of the time)

Circle 6 = If the event happened ALMOST ALL OF THE TIME (more than 70% of the time)

1. How many times have you been treated unfairly by teachers or professors because you are a woman?
  - a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
  - b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
  
2. How many times have you been treated unfairly by your employer, boss, or supervisors because you are a woman?
  - a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
  - b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6

3. How many times have you been treated unfairly by your co-workers, fellow students or colleagues because you are a woman?
  - a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
  - b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. How many times have you been treated unfairly by people in service jobs (store clerks, waiters, bartenders, waitresses, bank tellers, mechanics, and others) because you are a woman?
  - a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
  - b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. How many times have you been treated unfairly by strangers because you are a woman?
  - a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
  - b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. How many times have you been treated unfairly by people in helping jobs (doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, case workers, dentists, school counselors, therapists, pediatricians, school principals, gynecologists, and others) because you are a woman?
  - a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
  - b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. How many times have you been treated unfairly by neighbors because you are a woman?
  - a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
  - b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. How many times have you been treated unfairly by your boyfriend, husband, or other important man in your life because you are a woman?
  - a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6

- b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. How many times were you denied a raise, promotion, tenure, good assignment, job, or other such thing at work that you deserved because you are a woman?
- a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
- b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. How many times have you been treated unfairly by your family because you are a woman?
- a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
- b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
11. How many times have people made inappropriate or unwanted sexual advances to you because you are a woman?
- a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
- b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. How many times have people failed to show you the respect that you deserve because you are a woman?
- a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
- b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. How many times have you wanted to tell someone off for being sexist?
- a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
- b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. How many times have you been really angry about something sexist that was done to you?
- a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6

- b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
15. How many times were you forced to take drastic steps (such as filing a grievance, filing a lawsuit, quitting your job, moving away, and other actions) to deal with some sexist thing that was done to you?
- a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
- b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
16. How many times have you been called a sexist name like bitch, cunt, chick, or other names?
- a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
- b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
17. How many times have you gotten into an argument or a fight about something sexist that was done or said to you or done to somebody else?
- a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
- b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
18. How many times have you been made fun of, picked on, pushed, shoved, hit, or threatened with harm because you are a woman?
- a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
- b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6
19. How many times have you heard people making sexist jokes or degrading sexual jokes?
- a. How many times IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE? 1 2 3 4 5 6
- b. How many times IN THE PAST YEAR? 1 2 3 4 5 6

20. How different would your life be now if you HAD NOT BEEN treated in a sexist and unfair way

a. THROUGHOUT YOUR ENTIRE LIFE:

The same as now      A little Different      Different in a few ways      Different in a Lot of Ways  
Different in Most Ways      Totally Different

IN THE PAST YEAR

The same as now      A little Different      Different in a few ways      Different in a Lot of Ways  
Different in Most Ways      Totally Different

**Appendix IV**

Beck Depression Inventory

1.
  - 0 I do not feel sad
  - 1 I feel sad
  - 2 I am sad all the time and I can't snap out of it
  - 3 I am so sad and unhappy that I can't stand it
2.
  - 0 I am not particularly discouraged about the future
  - 1 I feel discouraged about the future
  - 2 I feel I have nothing to look forward to
  - 3 I feel the future is hopeless and that things cannot improve
3.
  - 0 I do not feel like a failure
  - 1 I feel I have failed more than the average person
  - 2 As I look back on my life, all I can see is a lot of failures
  - 3 I feel I am a complete failure as a person
4.
  - 0 I get as much satisfaction out of things as I used to
  - 1 I don't enjoy things the way I used to
  - 2 I don't get real satisfaction out of anything anymore
  - 3 I am dissatisfied or bored with everything
- 5.

- 0 I don't feel particularly guilty
- 1 I feel guilty a good part of the time
- 2 I feel quite guilty most of the time
- 3 I feel guilty all of the time

6.

- 0 I don't feel I am being punished
- 1 I feel I may be punished
- 2 I expect to be punished
- 3 I feel I am being punished

7.

- 0 I don't feel disappointed in myself
- 1 I am disappointed in myself
- 2 I am disgusted with myself
- 3 I hate myself

8.

- 0 I don't feel I am any worse than anybody else
- 1 I am critical of myself for my weaknesses or mistakes
- 2 I blame myself all the time for my faults
- 3 I blame myself for everything bad that happens

9.

- 0 I don't have any thoughts of killing myself
- 1 I have thoughts of killing myself, but I would not carry them out
- 2 I would like to kill myself
- 3 I would kill myself if I had the chance

10.

- 0 I don't cry any more than usual
- 1 I cry more now than I used to
- 2 I cry all the time now
- 3 I used to be able to cry, but now I can't cry even though I want to

11.

- 0 I am no more irritated by things than I ever was
- 1 I am slightly more irritated now than usual
- 2 I am quite annoyed or irritated a good deal of the time
- 3 I feel irritated all the time

12.

- 0 I have not lost interest in other people
- 1 I am less interested in other people than I used to be
- 2 I have lost most of my interest in other people
- 3 I have lost all of my interest in other people

13.

- 0 I make decisions about as well as I ever could
- 1 I put off making decisions more than I used to
- 2 I have greater difficulty in making decisions more than I used to
- 3 I can't make decisions at all anymore

14.

- 0 I don't feel that I look any worse than I used to
- 1 I am worried that I am looking old or unattractive
- 2 I feel there are permanent changes in my appearance that make me look unattractive
- 3 I believe that I look ugly

15.

- 0 I can work about as well as before
- 1 It takes an extra effort to get started at doing something
- 2 I have to push myself very hard to do anything
- 3 I can't do any work at all

16.

- 0 I can sleep as well as usual
- 1 I don't sleep as well as I used to
- 2 I wake up 1-2 hours earlier than usual and find it hard to get back to sleep
- 3 I wake up several hours earlier than I used to and cannot get back to sleep

17.

- 0 I don't get more tired than usual
- 1 I get tired more easily than I used to
- 2 I get tired from doing almost anything
- 3 I am too tired to do anything

18.

- 0 My appetite is no worse than usual
- 1 My appetite is not as good as it used to be
- 2 My appetite is much worse now
- 3 I have no appetite at all anymore

19.

- 0 I haven't lost much weight, if any, lately
- 1 I have lost more than five pounds
- 2 I have lost more than ten pounds
- 3 I have lost more than fifteen pounds

20.

- 0 I am no more worried about my health than usual
- 1 I am worried about physical problems like aches, pains, upset stomach, or constipation
- 2 I am very worried about physical problems and it's hard to think of much else
- 3 I am so worried about my physical problems that I cannot think of anything else

21.

- 0 I have not noticed any recent change in my interest in sex
- 1 I am less interested in sex than I used to be
- 2 I have almost no interest in sex
- 3 I have lost interest in sex completely

## **Appendix V**

### Background/Demographics

Gender (Circle)

Female

Male

Other

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your primary ethnic identity:

African American

Asian American/Pacific Islander

White, non-Hispanic

White, Hispanic

Middle Eastern

Native American

Other

Do you consider yourself to be:

Heterosexual or straight

Gay

Lesbian

Bisexual

Transgender

Queer

Asexual

What is your religious preference?

Protestant

Catholic

Muslim

Jewish

Mormon

Atheist

Agnostic

Some thing else (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What are your political ideologies?

Liberal

Moderate

Conservative

Republican

Democrat

Independent

Apolitical