Are You Man Enough to do This Job? The Impact of Applicant Gender and Sexual Orientation on Screening Decisions

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Participants viewed application materials of one of four job candidates (i.e., heterosexual male or female, lesbian or gay man) for a male-typed job. Then, participants rated the applicant on agency and communality and made hiring and salary recommendations. Lesbians were perceived as more agentic (e.g., dominance, confidence) than heterosexual women and gay men. Agency was a predictor of hiring and salary outcomes. These results emphasize that agentic traits are valuable in terms of hiring and salary decisions when applying for a male-oriented position. Neither applicant sex nor sexual orientation impacted hiring or salary recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, it is estimated that about six percent of the American workforce is comprised of gay men and lesbians (The Williams Institute, 2009). However, the percentage could be higher because there is not a great deal of information on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals in the workplace. This is partly due to the fact that many employers do not ask workers to report their sexual orientation and many individuals choose not to disclose their sexual orientation.

For lesbians and gay men, sexual orientation disclosure may lead to harassment and discrimination (Sears & Mallory, 2011). The Williams Institute (2009) examined documented workplace discrimination among LGBT employees and found extensive reports of verbal harassment (Sears & Mallory, 2011). Some examples of this verbal harassment were reports of LGBT employees being called names (e.g., pervert, homo, dyke, queer, fag, or faggot) at work. The report also documented physical violence experienced by LGBT employees in the workplace. This research also examined self-report results across nine surveys of perceived employment discrimination amongst LGBT employees and found the following results: 8 to 17 percent were fired or denied employment, 10 to 28 percent were denied promotion or given negative performance evaluations, 7 to 41 percent were verbally or physically abused or reported their workspace vandalized, and 10 to 19 percent reported unequal pay or benefits compared to their heterosexual co-workers (Sears & Mallory, 2011). Another study found 62 percent of gay men and 59 percent of lesbians report experiencing some form of employment discrimination (Griffith & Hebl, 2002). These statistics suggest that sexual orientation discrimination is prevalent in U.S. workplaces.

The consequences of LGB discrimination in the workplace are severe. Lesbian and gay employees who feared coming out exhibited negative job attitudes, they received fewer promotions, and also reported more physical, stress-related symptoms than individuals who did not fear disclosing their sexual orientation (Sears & Mallory, 2011), These results demonstrated how harassment and discrimination could affect physical well-being as well as personnel decisions for lesbians and gay men in organizations.

Discrimination against or harassment of an individual on the basis of sexual orientation can occur in any context (e.g., schools, households, churches). However, when this mistreatment occurs in workplace settings, it can prove to be detrimental to people's livelihoods. Employment discrimination of lesbians and gay men on the basis of sexual orientation may affect the job prospects of a large group of qualified individuals. This study examines the first step in the employment processing, screening decisions. One of the first employment hurdles is to pass the resume screen. This study examines how job application materials that reveal job candidate sex and sexual orientation may impact screening decisions. To further understand sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace, it is beneficial to examine current legal protection for LGB individuals.

Legal Protection for Sexual Orientation Discrimination

Federal protection for gay men and lesbians from workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the United States is evolving. Some lower courts have considered expanding the scope of Title VII to include sexual orientation, but the Supreme Court has declined to review the issue. The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission and the Department of Justice disagree on the issue as well (Smith, 2017). However, there has been federal legislation proposed to provide workplace protection from sexual orientation discrimination. This legislation is known as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). The goal of ENDA is to extend the protections provided under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation as a protected group (Human Rights Campaign, 2016). It is worth noting that 22 states have legislation that prohibits discrimination against individuals on the basis of sexual orientation (Human Rights Campaign, 2016). Additionally, 92% of Fortune 500 companies have policies designed to provide sexual orientation protection (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2016). However, there is still limited protection for many people who are experiencing harassment and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Stereotypes of Lesbians and Gay Men

In order to understand employment discrimination based on sexual orientation, it is important to understand the stereotypes that have an effect on perceptions of lesbians and gay men. According to Blashill and Powlishta (2009), differences in stereotypes are likely based on perceived levels of masculinity and femininity. In this study, participants were randomly assigned to rate a male or female and then asked to give their perceptions of the masculine or feminine traits associated with that gender without sexual orientation disclosed. Overall, men were seen to have more masculine traits and women were seen to have more feminine traits. Once sexual orientation was disclosed to participants, lesbians were seen as more masculine than heterosexual women. Also, gay men were seen as more feminine than heterosexual men. Blashill and Powlishta (2009)'s findings suggest that lesbians evoke similar perceptions of masculinity as heterosexual men, whereas gay men trigger perceptions of femininity associated with heterosexual women. They also analyzed self-ratings of lesbians and gay men to assess if these perceptions of masculinity and femininity were accurate (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009). The findings showed discrepancies between self-ratings and others' ratings. Gay men and lesbians rated themselves higher in both masculinity and femininity while others rated them high on either masculinity or femininity. This study showed a more androgynous self-definition among lesbians and gay men.

The basis of forming stereotypes about each homosexual group is based on perceptions of the possession of either masculine or feminine traits. These traits have often been thought of alongside the terms agency and communality; where agency relates to masculinity and communality relates to femininity (Heilman, 2001). This study will focus on understanding agentic and communal traits and their relationship to sexual orientation.

Agentic and communal traits represent "meta-constructs that refer to modes of relating to the world" (Moskowitz, Suh, & Desaulniers, 1994; p. 753). In other words, these two overarching constructs help us understand the ways that people tend to behave interpersonally. Agency is characterized by the need for status or achievement. This is shown through assertive and dominant, rather than submissive and passive, behaviors. Alternatively, communality is represented by the need for love or service. This would be expressed through warm and agreeable, rather than cold and confrontational, behaviors (Moskowitz, et al., 1994).

The most widely shared gender stereotype beliefs characterize men with agentic traits and behaviors and women with communal traits and behaviors. This leads to different assumptions about men and women and their appropriate social roles. For instance, these labels lead to a description of women as kind, concerned, and generous, and men as aggressive, independent, and decisive. These are stereotype descriptions about what we believe men and women *are* in society, but these stereotypes also show themselves through prescriptions about what men and women *should* be in congruence with their gender roles (Heilman, 2001).

Some jobs have been described as male as they are seen as having masculine or agentic characteristics (Heilman, Block, Martell, & Simon, 1989). The role of a manager is thought to require achievement orientation, emotional toughness, and aggressiveness (Heilman, 2001). These stereotypical descriptions align with agency, and therefore, portray men and masculinity as qualifiers for the position. This places women aspiring to leadership and management positions at a disadvantage because their stereotypical communal and feminine traits and behaviors are not necessarily perceived as congruent with those of effective leaders (Rosette & Tost, 2010).

According to Eagly and Karau (2002), the importance of agentic and communal traits can be explained by role congruity theory. This theory proposes that gender roles are tied to agentic and communal behaviors based on ideals about men and women. When we think about an individual, this activates a schema about how that person will behave in situations. Acting in accordance with one's prescribed gender role produces congruence and avoids negative consequences. However, when individuals do not behave in accordance with their gender role it creates incongruence and potentially negative outcomes (Eagly & Karau, 2002). For example, women are often perceived less favorably than men in leadership positions because their leadership role conflicts with the values of communality and femininity (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Role congruity theory has not been defined as heterosexually-based, however, there is little to no application of this theory when assessing gay and lesbian stereotypes and gender role conformity. Sexual orientation may provide a different overall schema for comparison beyond gender. Taylor (1983) assessed stereotypes of homosexuals as compared to heterosexuals. This research showed that lesbians were considered to possess traits most closely associated with heterosexual men, while gay men were considered more similar to heterosexual women (Taylor, 1983). The similarity of lesbians to heterosexual men would suggest that these two groups trigger a similar schema. Likewise, gay men and heterosexual women may also trigger similar schema. If this is the case, then lesbians could be receiving the benefits of workplace success in male-oriented jobs because they are expected to be agentic, like heterosexual men. Alternatively, gay men may be penalized in the same job because they are expected to be communal, like heterosexual women.

> *Hypothesis 1a*: Gay men and heterosexual women will be perceived as more communal than heterosexual men and lesbians.
>
> *Hypothesis 1b*: Heterosexual men and lesbians will be perceived as more agentic than gay men and heterosexual women.

Hiring Decisions

It is important to explore sexual orientation discrimination in the hiring process further because selection and hiring are among the first steps in the personnel process and can determine the rest of an individual's career outlook at a given organization. According to Horvath and Ryan (2003), there are significant differences in the way people make hiring decisions regarding lesbians and gay men. They

presented résumés of heterosexual and homosexual males and females who were applying for the job of technical writer, which was perceived to be a gender-neutral job (Horvath & Ryan, 2003). Participants were asked to rate the overall qualifications of the prospective applicant résumés. Findings showed that heterosexual male applicants were rated the highest, followed by homosexual applicants, and finally, heterosexual women. There were no significant differences in hiring ratings for lesbian and gay male applicants.

When studying the hiring experiences based on sexual orientation, it is also important to consider the gender-type of the job. A male-oriented job was used in this study because these jobs typically offer higher salaries (Hegewisch & Hartmann, 2014) and, therefore, may produce a more competitive application process than female-oriented positions with lower pay. This will provide information about which applicant(s) will be rated higher for these sought-after positions. It is expected that for male-oriented jobs, applicants perceived as having agentic traits might be considered more suitable. For a male-oriented job, there will be differences in hiring rating such that:

Hypothesis 2a: Heterosexual men will have higher hiring ratings than homosexual men.
Hypothesis 2b: Homosexual women will have higher hiring ratings than heterosexual women.
Hypothesis 2c: Overall, heterosexual men will have the highest overall hiring ratings.

For a male-oriented job, hiring ratings will be:
Hypothesis 3a: positively related to agency, and
Hypothesis 3b: negatively related to communality.

Salary Recommendation

Differences between lesbian and gay male applicants were not only demonstrated in the hiring process, but also have been shown to exist in salaries. One study found that distinct differences in pay were dependent on sexual orientation: gay, lesbian, or heterosexual (Badgett, 1995). Analysis of the national results from the General Social Survey showed that across jobs, gay men earned approximately 11 to 27 percent less than heterosexual men (Badgett, 1995). However, when lesbians were compared to heterosexual women across jobs, there were not statistically significant differences.

In an attempt to further explore the relationship between sexual orientation and wage earnings, Black, Makar, Sanders and Taylor (2003) replicated Badgett's (1995) study. The replication altered the definition of homosexuality to include marital status. With this new definition included in the analysis of homosexuals versus heterosexuals, Black, et al. (2003) found different results. Homosexual and heterosexual women were not shown to receive similar pay. In fact, lesbians actually had approximately 20 percent higher earnings than heterosexual women. This could be due to the masculine traits that are stereotypically associated with lesbians. Also, this could be the result of same-sex partners being unable to bear children as a couple, which would translate to less stress associated with work-life balance in an employer's eyes (Black, et al., 2003). Gay men, on the other hand, were penalized compared to heterosexual men in terms of their earnings. In contrast to females, this could be due to the feminine traits associated with gay men. It seems that masculine traits were valued over feminine traits because both heterosexual females and homosexual males were paid less than heterosexual men and lesbians (Black, et al., 2003)

Clain and Leppel (2001) found similar results based on U.S. Census data from 1991. Specifically, men who reported living with male partners were found to earn less on average than men living with female partners or alone. Alternatively, women who reported living with female partners actually earned more than other women. The researchers suggested that this difference may be due to response rates in regional areas and career choice differences between homosexual and heterosexual survey takers (Clain & Leppel, 2001). However, due to the consistency in findings across studies, it is important to consider an effect of discrimination in wage allocations. Male-oriented jobs are shown to pay more (Hegewisch & Hartmann, 2014) and be valued more in our society. If women pursue male-oriented jobs and are perceived as agentic, they may receive higher salaries than women who are perceived as communal.
For a male-oriented job, there will be differences in salary recommendation such that:

Hypothesis 4a: Gay men will be allocated a lower salary than heterosexual men.
Hypothesis 4b: Lesbians will be allocated a higher salary than heterosexual women.
Hypothesis 4c: Heterosexual men will be allocated the highest salary and heterosexual women will be allocated the lowest salary.

For a male-oriented job, there will be a:
Hypothesis 5a: positive relationship between agency ratings and salary recommendations, and
Hypothesis 5b: negative relationship between communality ratings and salary recommendations.

METHOD

Participants

Participants for the pilot and the main study were recruited from the online survey-taking source known as Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). According to Mason and Suri (2012), this online data collection forum is ideal for accessing participants of more diverse backgrounds than traditional university student samples. The location of participants was restricted to the United States because employment laws vary across different countries. On average, MTurk users reported an average age of 32 years, 55% were female, and the average salary was approximately $30,000 per year (Mason & Suri, 2012). They are also more likely to have work experience than college students. It has been found that MTurk users showed similar survey response variability and problem solving skills as lab setting participants and comparable internet survey workers (Mason & Suri, 2012).

Several quality check questions were included to assess how much participants paid attention throughout the study. If participants failed to correctly answer these questions, then their data was discarded from the final analyses. A sample question read, "What is the current year?" Respondents were also excluded from the final sample if they failed to correctly identify the volunteer experience, applicant sex, and applicant sexual orientation in the study manipulation checks. The original sample consisted of 275 participants. However, 79 individual participants were excluded from the final sample because they failed a quality or manipulation check question.

The final sample size consisted of 196 participants. Fifty-four percent of participants were male, while 46% were female. The average age of participants was 37.48 years (SD = 12.41). Eighty-three percent of the participants were White/Caucasian, 6% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 5% were Hispanic/ Latino, 5% were Black/African-American, and 1% were Native American/ American Indian. Of these individuals, 94% identified as heterosexual, 5% homosexual and 1% bisexual. Most individuals reported being currently employed (n = 145); the average period of employment was 5.33 (SD = 4.66) with a range of 3 months to 20 years. Most reported having gay friends (n = 149); the average number of gay friends reported was 4.65 (SD = 4.98).

Stimulus Materials

Job Description

Heilman (2001) claimed that the stereotypical traits associated with a successful manager align with agency, and therefore, portray masculinity as a qualifier for the position. Assistant Vice President (AVP) of Operations for an aircraft company was chosen based on the work of Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, and Tamkins (2004). Their research used the job title and industry to convey a male gender-typed job. Products involved on the job were also listed in the job description to augment a more masculine orientation for the position (e.g., engine assemblies, fuel tanks, etc.). The job responsibilities included training and supervising subordinates, bringing the company into different markets, following aircraft industry trends, and generating new clientele (Heilman et al., 2004). The job description for the current study used a combination of sources to portray the AVP of Operations position (Heilman, et al. 2004; O*NET Online, 2010). The job description was pilot tested and over 70 percent of pilot participants viewed the job as masculine. In the main study, 81 percent of the participants reported the AVP of Operations position as a masculine job.

Résumés. Participants were randomly assigned to view one of four résumés. The résumé content for each applicant for the open AVP of Operations position met the job qualifications. Work experience and education were identical across all four conditions. To manipulate applicant gender, the four résumés had one of two names. Both female résumés showed the name "Jessica Taylor" and both male résumés showed "Jason Taylor" The résumés were also altered with volunteer experience to manipulate sexual orientation. The volunteer experiences have been adapted from Horvath and Ryan (2003). The male and female homosexual applicants had volunteer experiences with the "Gay People's Alliance," a fictitious organization. Alternatively, the male and female heterosexual applicants had volunteer experience with "Alliance 35." The pilot test showed that participants were able to correctly identify the listed volunteer experience, gender, and sexual orientation of the applicants based on résumé manipulations.

Measures

Hiring Decision

The hiring decision scale was adapted from Barrick, Swider, and Stewart (2010). Participants assessed 5 items and made ratings based on perceptions of the suitability of an applicant for a job. This rating was done on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree to* 7 = *strongly agree*). A sample item states, "*I would recommend hiring this person.*" For all items on this scale, higher scores reflect the perception that the applicant is a good fit for the job and should be hired. According to Barrick, et al. (2010), Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .93. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .93 for this scale.

Salary Recommendation

Participants were asked to recommend a starting salary for the applicant based on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *lower than average to* 7 = *higher than average*). Anchors for salary ranges were provided based on the reported income for top operations managers (comparable to the AVP of Operations position) according to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013) data. The tenth percentile of earnings in the U.S. for this job is approximately $53,000, while the median percentile is about $106,000 and the top 90th percentile earns close to $151,000. This income is dependent on the location and the industry of the specific job. The anchors for the salary recommendation scale reflect the full range from tenth to ninetieth percentile ($62,000 - $151,000) reported income data using the following salary ranges: 1 = *$50,000 - $65,000*, 2 = *$66,000 - $81,000*, 3 = *$82,000 - $97,000*, 4 = *$98,000 - $113,000*, 5 = *$114,000 - $129,000*, 6 = *$130,000 - $145,000*, and 7 = *$146,000 - $161,000*.

Agentic and Communal Traits

Participants were asked to rate their perception of the applicant's agentic and communal traits. A total of 12 items originally developed by Nadler (2010) were used to measure agentic and communal traits. Nadler's (2010) full 24 items were not used because participants could only rate their perceptions based on résumés instead of visual cues (i.e., interviews). The following items represent agentic traits: *assertive, independent, dominant, deliberate, confident,* and *insistent*. Communality was represented as *helpful*, *agreeable*, *cooperative*, *supportive*, *sensitive*, and *modest*. These items were chosen because it was important to equally represent the positive and negative traits associated with both agency and communality. The rating of these traits was completed on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all* to 6 = *perfectly).* According to Nadler (2010), agentic and communal trait items loaded as two separate constructs in a factor analysis. This required separate scores for agentic and communal traits. These separate scores are calculated from the average of each subset of items (6 agentic, 6 communal). Cronbach's alphas for the agentic and communal scales were reported at .95 and .92, respectively (Nadler, 2010). For the shortened scales, Cronbach's alpha was .78 for the agentic scale and .78 for the communal scale.

Manipulation Check

The manipulation check served as an evaluation of the participants' knowledge of the stimulus materials and consisted of four items. Participants were asked to correctly identify the sex and volunteer experience of the applicant résumé they reviewed. They were also asked to identify the applicant as homosexual or heterosexual. The last item assessed their perception about the gender-type of the open position (male, female, equally male/female).

Demographics

Participants were asked to report demographic information relating to the following areas: gender, age, race, sexual orientation (e.g., gay, lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual, other), work experience, and number of family members or close friends who identify as gay or lesbian.

Procedure

A 2 (male vs. female) x 2 (heterosexual vs. homosexual) design was used to assess the effects on the variables of hiring rating, salary, recommendation, agency, and communality. The participants began by reviewing a recruitment statement. Next, participants reviewed the job description associated with the open position. After reviewing the job description, participants were randomly assigned to review one of four applicant résumés associated with the position (heterosexual male, gay male, heterosexual female, and lesbian). Next participants made hiring and salary recommendations and assessed the candidate's agentic and communal traits. Manipulation check and demographic items followed. Afterwards they were thanked and debriefed.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

A correlation matrix was created to assess the relationships amongst variables. See Table 1. Several significant intercorrelations were found. For example, younger participants tended to rate the job candidate higher on the hiring decision scale, $r(190) = -.16$, $p = .02$.

Planned Analyses

A 2 (male vs. female) X 2 (heterosexual vs. homosexual) between subjects factorial MANOVA was conducted to assess the hypotheses regarding the outcomes of communal traits, agentic traits, hiring decision, and salary recommendation. This analysis provided an overall model that explored the main effects and interactions for gender and sexual orientation (See Table 2). Subsequently, univariate ANOVAs and Pearson correlations were used to test several individual hypotheses.

TABLE 1
CORRELATION MATRIX WITH HIRING, SALARY, AGENCY, COMMUNALITY AND ALL VARIABLES OF INTEREST

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Applicant Sex [a]	1.54	.50	-									
2. Applicant Sexual Orientation [b]	1.49	.50	-.02	-								
3. Participant Sex [c]	1.46	.50	-.06	.09	-							
4. Participant Age [d]	37.48	12.41	-.13	.02	.22**	-						
5. Length of Employment [d]	5.33	4.66	-.13	.01	-.09	.30***	-					
6. Homosexual Family/Friends [e]	4.65	4.98	.05	-.01	.17*	.14	.09	-				
7. Agentic Traits [f]	3.63	.60	-.01	-.05	-.03	.07	.09	-.03	(.78)			
8. Communal Traits [f]	3.75	.58	.07	-.17*	.05	-.04	-.06	.11	.47***	(.78)		
9. Hiring Decision [g]	3.47	.57	.08	-.07	-.03	-.16*	.03	-.10	.52***	.34***	(.93)	
10. Salary Recommendation [h]	3.65	1.27	-.06	.08	-.01	.01	.15	.002	.35***	.15*	.47***	-

[a] 1 = Female, 2 = Male. [b] 1 = Homosexual, 2 = Heterosexual. [c] 1 = Male, 2 = Female. [d] Reported in years. [e] Reported number of close family members or friends. [f] 1 = Not at all, 6 = Perfectly. [g] 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree. [h] 1 = $50,000-$65,000, 7 = $146,000-$161,000. Reliability coefficients for the hiring, agentic, and communal scales are listed in parentheses. *Note*. N ranged from 145 - 193. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

TABLE 2
MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR HIRING DECISION, SALARY RECOMMENDATIONS, AGENTIC RATINGS, AND COMMUNAL RATINGS OF JOB APPLICANTS

Variable	*df*	*F*	η^2_p	*p*
Applicant Sex (S)	4	1.21	.03	.31
Applicant Sexual Orientation (SO)	4	2.09	.04	.08
S x SO	4	2.54	.05	.04*

Note. N = 193. *$p < .05$.

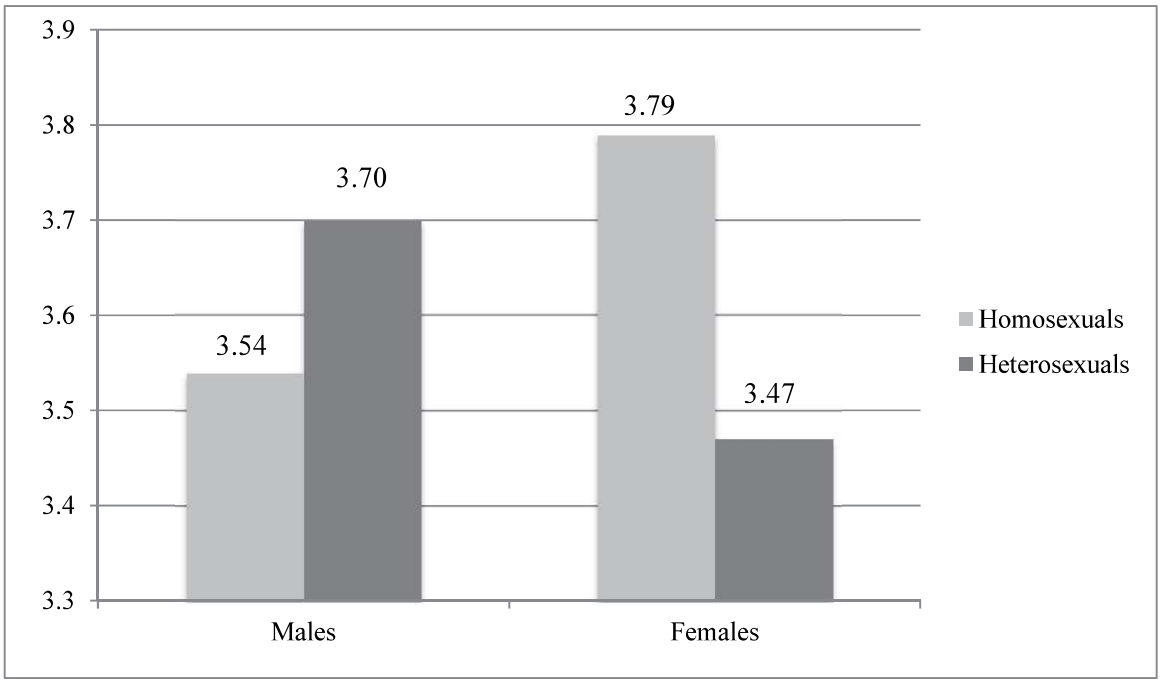
Wilks' Lambda indicated that there was a significant multivariate interaction between gender and sexual orientation on at least one of the outcome variables, $\Lambda = 0.95$, $F(4, 186) = 2.54$, $p = .04$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$. Hypothesis 1a predicted that gay men and heterosexual women would be perceived as more communal than heterosexual men and lesbians. Univariate tests did not show a significant interaction between gender and sexual orientation on communality scores, which did not support the hypothesis, $F(1, 189) = .39$, $p = .53$. Hypothesis 1b expected that heterosexual men and lesbians would be perceived as more agentic than gay men and heterosexual women. Univariate tests showed a significant interaction between gender and sexual orientation on agency scores, $F(1, 189) = 7.72$, $p = .006$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. A Bonferroni adjustment was used to explore the simple main effects of the interaction. Results showed that lesbians ($M = 3.79$, $SD = .54$) were perceived as more agentic than heterosexual women ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .59$), $p = .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. However, there were no significant differences between gay men ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .64$) and heterosexual men ($M = 3.70$, $SD = .58$), $p = .17$. Additionally, there were significant differences where lesbians were seen as more agentic than gay men, $p = .04$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. There were, however, no differences in agency scores for heterosexual men and women even though this approached significance, $p = .06$ (See Table 3 and Figure 1). These results partially supported hypothesis 1b.

TABLE 3
AGENTIC RATING SCALE MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

Sexual	Males			Females		
Orientation	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Homosexual	3.54 [a]	.64	53	3.79	.54	45
Heterosexual	3.70	.58	50	3.47 [b]	.59	45

Note. Higher scores reflect more alignment with agentic traits. Maximum score = 6. N = 193.
[a] Significantly different from the lesbian applicant, $p = .04$.
[b] Significantly different from the lesbian applicant, $p = .01$.

FIGURE 1
MANOVA INTERACTION BETWEEN SEX AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION ON AGENTIC RATINGS



Hypothesis 2a – c examined differences across groups on hiring decision ratings. Univariate tests following the omnibus MANOVA results did not show a significant interaction between gender and sexual orientation on hiring ratings, $F(1, 189) = .05$, $p = .82$. The results do not support the interaction effects of gender and sexual orientation on hiring differences, as there were no significant differences between groups.

Pearson correlations were used to test hypotheses 3a and b. Hypothesis 3a stated that hiring rating would be positively related to agency. The correlation results showed a significant, positive correlation between the hiring scale and agency scores, $r(191) = .52$, $p < .001$. This finding supported the hypothesis and demonstrated that higher hiring ratings were related to higher levels of agentic traits. Hypothesis 3b stated that hiring rating would be negatively related to communality. However, the results of the correlation showed a significant, positive relationship between hiring ratings and communality, $r(191) = .34$, $p < .001$. This finding suggests that higher hiring ratings are also related to higher levels of communality. These results do not support the hypothesis surrounding the relationship between hiring ratings and communality.

Hypothesis 4a predicted that gay men would be allocated a lower salary than heterosexual men. Next, hypothesis 4b stated that lesbians would be allocated a higher salary than heterosexual women. Last, hypothesis 4c expected heterosexual men to be allocated the highest salary and heterosexual women to be allocated the lowest salary. Univariate tests did not show a significant interaction between gender and sexual orientation on salary, $F(1, 189) = .76$, $p = .10$. The results did not support the interaction effects between gender and sexual orientation on salary, as there were no significant differences between groups.

A Pearson correlation was used to test hypotheses 5a and b. Hypothesis 5a predicted a positive relationship between agency ratings and salary recommendation. Results showed a significant, positive correlation between agency ratings and recommended salary, $r(191) = .35$, $p < .001$. This demonstrated that higher ratings of agency are associated with higher salary recommendations. Hypothesis 5b predicted a negative relationship between communality ratings and salary recommendation. However, the correlation results showed a positive relationship, where higher levels of communality were actually

related to a higher salary recommendations, $r(193) = .15$, $p = .03$. This finding is opposite of the hypothesized direction and did not support the predicted negative relationship between communality and salary recommendation.

Due to the existing correlations between agency and communality with both hiring decisions and salary recommendation, we performed a stepwise, multiple regression to analyze the relationship between agency and communality as predictors of hiring decision. There was a significant, positive relationship between agentic scores and hiring outcomes, $B = .58$, $\Delta B = .52$, $t(191) = 8.46$, $p < .001$. This showed a significant, positive relationship between agency and hiring decisions, where higher agency ratings predicted higher hiring ratings. Agency accounted for 27% of the variance explained in hiring outcomes, $R^2 = .27$, adjusted $R^2 = .27$, $F(1, 191) = 71.55$, $p < .001$. However, communality was not a significant predictor of hiring outcomes and was excluded from the model, $t(191) = 1.68$, $p = .10$ (See Table 4).

TABLE 4
REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR AGENTIC AND COMMUNAL PREDICTORS ON HIRING DECISION

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	Δ*B*	*t*	*p*
Agency	.58	.07	.52	8.46	.001***
Communality	.12			1.68	.10

Note. ***$p < .001$. N = 192.

A stepwise, multiple regression was also used to analyze the relationship between agency and communality as predictors of salary recommendation. There was a significant, positive relationship between agentic scores and salary recommendation, $B = .12$, $\Delta B = .35$, $t(191) = 5.12$, $p < .001$. This showed a significant, positive relationship between agency and salary, where higher agentic ratings predicted higher salary ratings. Agency accounted for 12% of the variance explained in salary recommendation, $R^2 = .12$, adjusted $R^2 = .12$, $F(1, 191) = 26.12$, $p < .001$. However, communality was not a significant predictor of salary ratings and was excluded from the model, $t(191) = -.17$, $p = .87$ (See Table 5).

TABLE 5
REGRESSION ANALYSIS S FOR AGENTIC AND COMMUNAL PREDICTORS ON SALARY

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	Δ*B*	*t*	*P*
Agency	.12	.02	.35	5.12	.001***
Communality	-.01			-.17	.87

Note. ***$p < .001$. N = 192.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of sex (male vs. female) and sexual orientation (homosexual vs. heterosexual) on hiring and salary recommendation and the perceptions of agency and communality. We expected sex and sexual orientation to interact and impact the perceptions and outcomes associated with each job applicants' résumé when applying for a male-oriented job. Participants reviewed a job description for a male-typed job (Assistant Vice President of Operations in the airlines industry) and an applicant résumé, and then made hiring decisions and salary recommendations. Participants also rated applicants on their agency and communality.

Based on previous research, it was predicted that communality would be a trait perceived to be primarily held by heterosexual women and gay men (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Rosette &

Toste, 2010; Taylor, 1983). However, the results of this study do not support this theory because there were no differences in communality across groups. It is possible that applicants were seen as equally communal because of the similar volunteer experiences across résumés. Communality is demonstrated through warm, agreeable, and relationship-oriented behaviors (Moskowitz, et al., 1994). Showing volunteer experience outside of work obligations may have portrayed all of the applicants at the same level of communality, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

While communality differences were not supported, the findings regarding agentic traits pointed to some similar outcomes from previous research (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Rosette & Toste, 2010; Taylor, 1983). As expected, lesbians had higher agency ratings than heterosexual women and gay men. However, it is interesting that there were no differences between heterosexual men, heterosexual women, or gay men. These findings suggest that there are not differences across males or heterosexuals in terms of agency. For lesbians, these results point us back to role congruity theory. Eagly and Karau (2002) found that lesbians are thought to possess similar agentic traits as men, not other women. The lesbian applicant was seen as agentic, regardless of the communal stereotypes associated with women. The high ratings of agency for the lesbian applicant support the argument that sexuality provides a different schema for comparison beyond gender.

There were also effects of agency and communality on hiring ratings and salary recommendations. Ultimately, higher agency and communality ratings were related to higher hiring and salary recommendations. This showed that for a male-oriented job, the perceptions of agentic and communal traits could relate to the success of applicants during the initial hiring process. It is also important to recognize that agency and communality were also significantly correlated with each other. This relationship could be due to similar agentic and communal ratings across gay males, heterosexual females, and heterosexual males. It could also point to these two constructs being more interrelated than what was initially considered (Moskowitz, et al., 1994).

In addition to differences across agentic and communal traits, it was predicted that applicant sex and sexual orientation would affect hiring ratings and salary recommendations. However, there were no differences in hiring ratings or salary recommendations across applicants. This finding contradicts previous research regarding hiring differences (Crow, Folk, & Hartmann, 1998; Horvath & Ryan, 2003; Weichselbaumer, 2003). For job applicants, the implications of these findings demonstrate that job candidate's sex and sexual orientation may play less of a role than previously believed. It is possible that increased legal activity and social awareness have impacted views about discriminating between applicants in the hiring process on the basis of sex or sexual orientation. Further, the findings regarding salary recommendation are contrary to the literature (Badgett, 1995; Black, et al., 2003; Clain & Leppel, 2001). Our results suggest that applicants are likely to receive similar starting salaries despite differences in sex and sexual orientation. Since there were no differences in hiring or salary recommendations, this could prove to be good news for job applicants. However, this could also be the result of participants providing socially desirable responses because the manipulation of sexual orientation may have been too obvious.

Across the results, it is clear that sex and sexual orientation did not affect the applicants' hiring recommendations for the position or starting salary. However, agentic ratings were a significant predictor of both hiring decisions and salary recommendation. It may be possible that the perception of an applicant's agentic traits more of an impact on hiring and salary for a masculine job than other individual traits (e.g., sexual orientation). Communality, alternatively, did not have a predictive relationship with hiring or salary ratings based on the regression results. This showed that for a male-oriented job, the perception of communal traits would not have the same impact that agency had for hiring decisions and salary recommendation. It is possible that higher perceptions of agency predict success in the initial phases of the hiring process for a male-oriented job. However, it would be interesting to see if communality is more related to different ratings such as preference for work as a colleague.

The emphasis on masculinity based on the job-type may have led communal traits to be seen as an added bonus to applicant résumés, but not something that would make or break the candidates'

subsequent success on the job. If the job were female-oriented, it is possible that agentic traits would also be viewed as less critical in the selection and salary recommendation process.

The dichotomy between agency and communality may also relate to the two-factor leadership model of task versus relationship orientation. Task-oriented leadership focuses on behavioral outcomes to achieve organizational performance standards or tangible results, while relationship-oriented leadership focuses on interpersonal outcomes such as employee satisfaction and well-being (Northouse, 2010). Based on previous definitions (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Moskowitz, et al., 1994), agency is comprised of traits that could align with a task orientation, while communality may relate to a relationship orientation. Task-oriented leadership has been related to success in the early stages for teams, while a relationship orientation proves to be vital in maintaining success with group outcomes (Kivlighan, 1997). This may be why communality did not have an impact. It could be more feasible that communality would be demonstrated in later stages of the employment process through organizational citizenship behaviors and on-the-job performance.

Based on the results of this study as a whole, it is important to recognize that applicant sex and sexual orientation did not impact hiring ratings or salary recommendation outcomes. Views in our society may be changing when it comes to homosexuality for males and females. However, the impact of perceived agency may affect outcomes for certain groups. This finding may have several practical implications. Practitioners in the field of employee selection should be aware of the impact perceived agency and communality have in the hiring and salary process. For male-oriented jobs, agentic applicant traits may be viewed as the most ideal. However, it is important that discrimination does not occur when narrowing down the applicant pool based on these perceived traits.

For job applicants, the results of this study demonstrated that individuals might not be disadvantaged on the basis of their sex or sexual orientation. Instead, job seekers should focus on the impression they are leaving on employers. The perception of an individual's agentic or communal traits can be altered through résumé content. Applicants should focus on presenting more task-oriented qualifications for male-oriented jobs that value agency. This could include focusing on past experiences in management positions and achievement outcomes. In contrast, it may be beneficial to present relationship or team-oriented qualifications. This might be done by highlighting customer service or problem solving skills on a résumé.

Limitations

The first limitation associated with this research is the use of MTurk for data collection. While this online tool allowed for a less labor intensive and time-consuming process, it ultimately resulted in a loss of approximately 30% of the original sample size. These participants were excluded from the final analyses because they incorrectly answered a quality check or manipulation check question. This could be due to a lack of attention to detail throughout the study. The final analyses only included people who correctly answered these questions. It is plausible that there were significant differences between participants who did or did not produce useable data, which could potentially have had an effect on the results of this research. For example, more liberal participants may not infer sexual orientation from membership in the Gay People's Alliance volunteer organization. Alternative methods of data collection should be researched to avoid this result in future studies. For example, it may be beneficial to compare the results of this study with actual workplace data if available.

A second limitation is the use of "paper people". According to Murphy, Herr, Lockhart, and Maguire (1986), using paper people refers to research methodology that requires participants to ratings for one or more ratees based on indirect, non-observational cues. Murphy et al. (1986) found that paper people methods created inflated ratings in several areas of research. These findings implied that we are more likely to make representative ratings of others when we have stable, observable cues presented about that individual. This concept may relate to the lack of significant findings for sex and sexual orientation on the outcomes of hiring and salary ratings. It may have been difficult for participants to make accurate judgments about the applicants without more available information. If participants saw a visual

representation of applicants, the traits associated with each sex and sexual orientation may have been more salient and resulted in different ratings.

The third limitation of this research derives from asking participants to explicitly rate the applicants on the basis of their sex and sexual orientation. Each participant correctly identified the manipulation of these variables across conditions. It is possible that participants did not feel comfortable outwardly communicating any negative views towards the applicants in the form of allocating lower hiring or salary ratings. The purpose of the study may have been too transparent to participants, which could have caused participants to respond in a socially desirable way.

Future Research

One future research direction would be to replicate the results of this study using a different manipulation of sexual orientation. Lesbians and gay men may face internal pressure to pass as heterosexual in the initial stages of employment. Explicitly listing volunteer experience with a gay rights organization may not be realistic in employment settings, as applicants might fear they will not be hired based on their sexuality. It would be interesting to conduct a study where participants are asked to initially rate candidates without knowledge of sexual orientation. This information could later be presented after making initial hiring and salary ratings in an interview setting where observable traits are available for assessment.

A second research direction could be to replicate this study using a female-oriented job. The results showed that agentic traits were a significant predictor of hiring ratings and salary recommendation for the male-oriented. However, communal traits may prove to be a significant predictor in a female-oriented job such as nursing. Résumé qualifications could be altered to emphasize relationship-oriented qualities associated with communal traits (e.g., team experiences, organizational citizenship behaviors). It is possible that applicants would be rated differently for a position that emphasized communality over agency.

A third option for future research would be to design a study that forces participants to choose the applicant that they would most likely hire. Presenting all four résumés to each participant would allow for a comparison that may better mimic the recruiting process in organizations. The résumé content would need to be altered to include similar, but not identical qualifications. It would also be necessary to create different volunteer experiences across participants or pilot a similar manipulation of sexual orientation. The results of this study design may better answer the question of who is the *most* likely to be seen as qualified for the job (gay men, lesbians, heterosexual men, or heterosexual women).

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of job applicant sex and sexual orientation on the employment outcomes of hiring and salary, as well as perceptions of agentic and communal traits. There were no differences in hiring ratings or salary across applicants. However, lesbians were seen as more agentic than heterosexual women and gay men. Agency was also a predictor of hiring and salary outcomes. These results emphasize that agentic traits are valuable when applying for a male-oriented position. Female and homosexual job applicants may not need to feel discouraged about seeking employment. They may, however, place more emphasis on displaying agency through application materials if the position focuses on a task-orientation or other characteristics of male jobs. It is possible that we are moving toward more accepting views of minority groups, including lesbians and gay men.

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