



Biases and Their Impact on Opinions of Transgender Bathroom Usage

Clements, Munro, Mendel, & Rostosky
Towson University & The University of Kentucky



Introduction

- **48%** of Americans believe that transgender people should use the bathroom that corresponds to their sex assigned at birth (Gallup, 2017).
- Arguments surrounding the support of bathroom bills often lack scientific support.
- People evaluate arguments of persuasive messages significantly more favorably if the arguments support pre-existing attitudes (Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979; Munro & Ditto, 1997).
 - Open-Mindedness may mediate some of these effects.

Participants

- N* = 260 (*M* = 22, *SD* = 9.38):
- **80% Female**, 18.8% as Male, 0.8% choose not to identify, 0.4% “Other”.
 - **66% White/European-American**, 18.1% Black/African-American, 7.5% Asian/Asian-American, 3.5% Latina/o/Hispanic, and 5% as Mixed/Biracial
 - Recruited using Towson University’s Research Pool website as and through multiple internet portals.

Measures

Scientific Reasoning Scale [SRS]: (Drummond & Fischhoff, 2015)

Narcissism Personality Index Scale [NPI]: (Raskin & Hall, 1979)

Open-Minded Cognition Scale [OMC]: (Price, Ottati, Wilson, & Kim, 2015)

Active Open-Minded Thinking Scale [AOT]: (Stanovich & West, 2007)

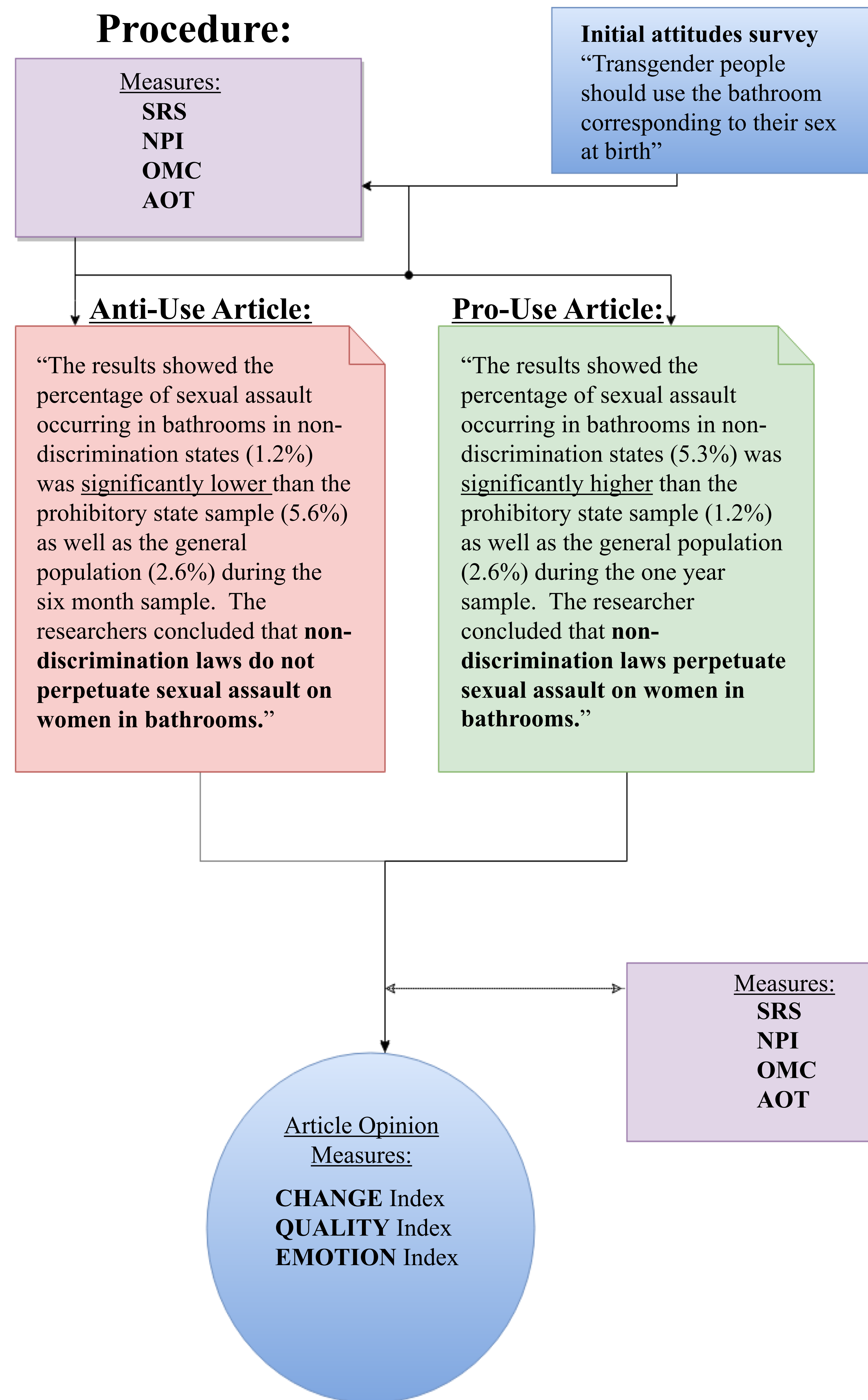
Fake scientific article: *opposed* or *supported* transgender bathroom use consistent with gender identity regardless of assigned sex at birth

Emotion and Article Opinion Measures(Munro & Ditto, 1997)

Contact Information

Zakary A. Clements
Doctoral Student
Counseling Psychology
University of Kentucky
zakary.alexander@uky.edu

Procedure:



Results:

IV	Multivariate Regression Results
NPI	-0.010 (0.017)
SRS	-0.0270 (0.043)
AOT	0.369** (0.134)
OMC	0.026* (0.111)
Match	0.669** (0.200)
Observations	257
R-squared	0.111
F	6.270

DV: Quality Index
Standard errors in parenthesis
**p<0.01 *p<0.05

- Participants rated the quality of the article significantly higher ($t(206) = 2.643, p = .009$) and rated their own emotions more positively ($t(205) = 1.64, p = .05$) when their opinion on bathroom use was congruent with the article than when it was incongruent.
- Participants who read an article congruent with their opinions ($N = 103$) rated the quality ($t(257) = 3.495, p = .001$) of the essay significantly higher than those who read an article incongruent with their opinions.
- Participants ($N = 105$) who read an article incongruent with their opinion did not rate the quality of the article significantly lower than those who read a congruent article.
 - However, those who read an article that disagreed with their opinion had a significantly higher negative emotions toward others ($t(255) = 2.207, p = .028$) than those who read an article which matched their opinion on transgender bathroom use

Conclusions

- Those who support bathroom bills may have strong biases against transgender people using congruent bathrooms.
- In support of the biased assimilation paradigm (Munro & Ditto, 1997), participants rated the quality of the article higher if it matched their opinion.
- Bias reduction is necessary to function in a world where scientific facts are called into question on a consistent basis, therefore this study attempted to isolate distinct characteristics that may be influencing biased assimilation
- **Open-Mindedness** can potentially lead to a less biased view of others’ opinions

