



Promoting Empathy with Film: Improving Attitudes towards Older LGBTQ+ Adults Experiencing Homelessness

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

- Rising national and global prominence of older adults (Mather, Jacobsen, & Pollard, 2019; World Health Organization, 2015), gender and sexual minorities (Newport, 2018), and individuals experiencing homelessness have been reported (HUD, 2018).
- Older age, identification with a sexual or gender minority, and homelessness retains stigmatized status, often culminating in disproportionate rates of social stigma and victimization (e.g., Norton & Herek, 2012).
- Stigma and victimization have been linked with a range of negative physical and mental health outcomes (Grollman, 2014; Meyer, 2003), including depression, anxiety, and suicidality (Richardson, & King, 2017).
- Using indirect contact theory approaches (e.g., anti-discrimination documentary films) can reduce stigma and consequences of discrimination, similar to direct contact (e.g., Gregory, 2015).
- Film interventions lack testing, particularly those targeting ageism, homophobia, and homelessness as well as those lying at the intersection of these minority identities.

PURPOSE

In the present research, we seek to examine the influence of viewing a film depicting the narratives of older, homeless, and LGBTQ+ adults on attitudes towards these vulnerable populations.

HYPOTHESES

- Relative to the control group, participants who view the documentary film featuring the narratives of older sexual and gender minority adults experiencing homelessness will have:
 - **Hypothesis 1:** Significantly greater decreases in ageism from baseline to posttest
 - **Hypothesis 2:** Significantly greater decreases in homophobia from baseline to posttest
 - **Hypothesis 3:** Significantly greater increases in empathy from baseline to posttest

METHODOLOGY

VARIABLES & MEASURES

- **Ageism**
 - Fraboni Scale on Ageism - (Fraboni, Saltstone, & Hughes, 1990)
 - Sample item: "Teenage suicide is more tragic than suicide among the old."
- **Homophobia**
 - Index of Homophobia Scale - (Hudson and Ricketts, 1980)
 - Sample item: "I would feel comfortable working closely with a male homosexual."
- **Empathy**
 - Empathy Towards Homosexuals Scale - (Minett, 2008)
 - Sample item: "I get very angry when I see a GLBT individual being ill-treated."
- Note: Cronbach alphas ranged from .87 to .95

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

- 62 emerging adults (33 experimental, 29 control)
- Ranged in age from 18-19 ($M = 18.31$)
- 37.1% male, 62.9% female
- 9.7% White/Caucasian, 4.8% Black/African American, 19.4% Asian/Pacific Islander, 59.7% Hispanic/Latinx, 1.6% Middle Eastern, 3.2% Armenian, 1.6% Other
- Self-reported access to secure housing at the time of participation

PROCEDURES

- Convenience sample
- One public university in southern California
- Condition randomized at the level of timeslot
- Eligible participants self-selected from either a morning or afternoon timeslot
 - Two study administration sessions occurred on the same day in a quiet classroom on campus
 - Self-report data collected via Qualtrics
- Administration procedures lasted two hours:
 - Review informed consent and complete baseline battery of surveys
 - View approximately one hour of documentary film
 - Experimental: "Older LGBTQ+ United"
 - Control: "Kiwi Country New Zealand"
 - Complete follow-up battery of surveys

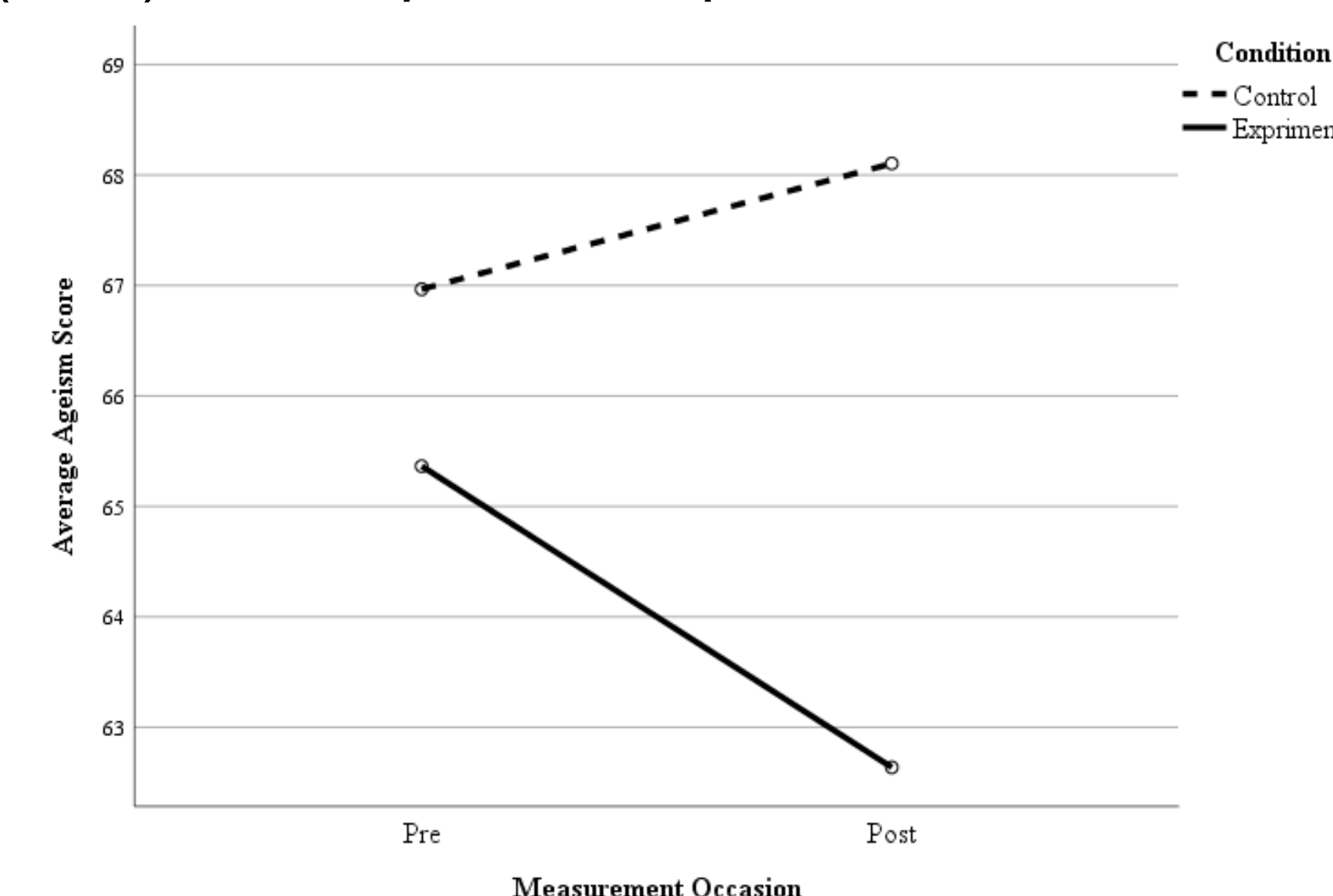
RESULTS

ANALYSIS

Series of 2x2 mixed-model repeated measured analyses of variance (ANOVA)

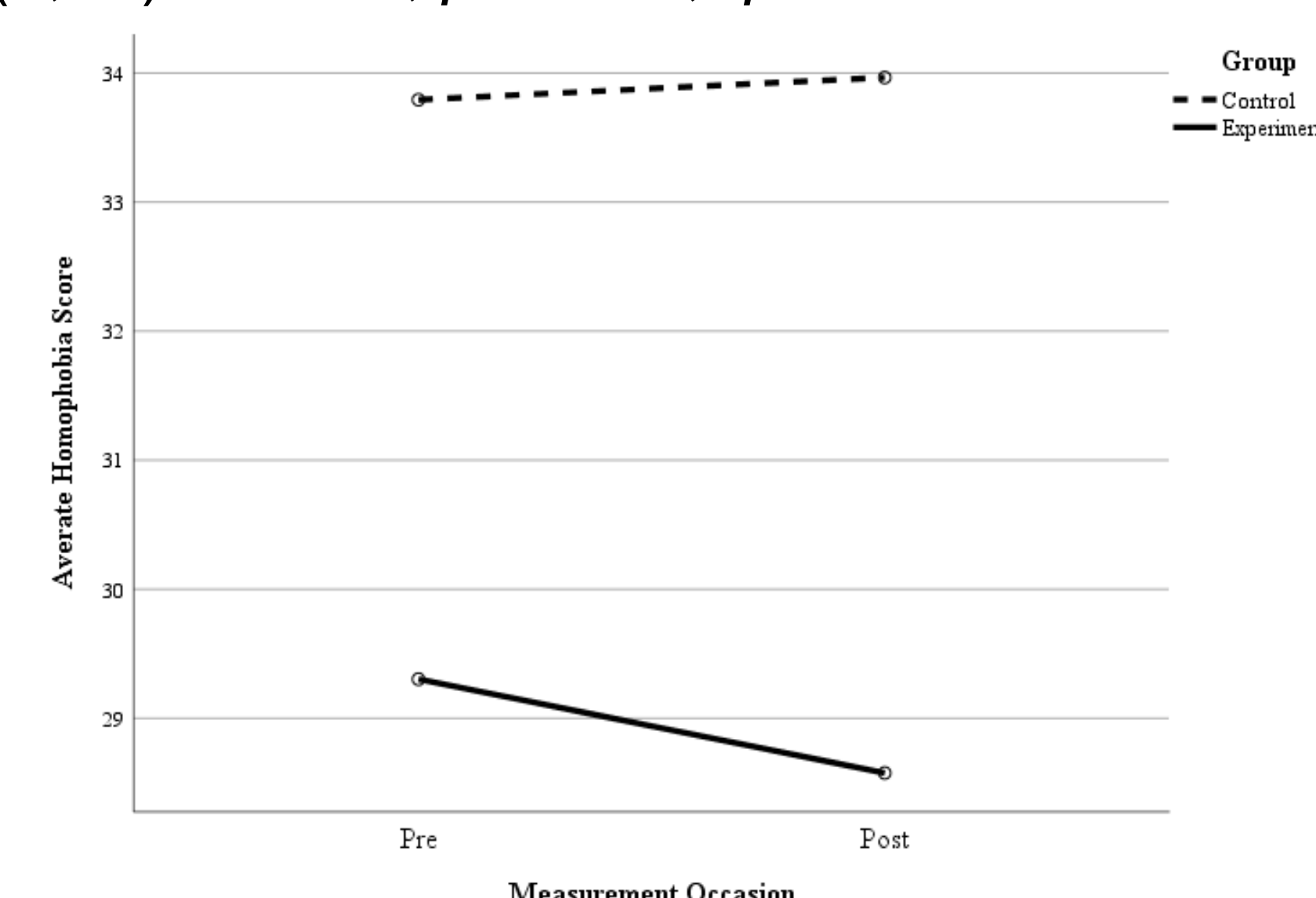
HYPOTHESIS 1: AGEISM

- Main effect was nonsignificant, $F(1, 60) = 1.00, p = .321, \eta^2 = .016$
- Interaction was significant $F(1,60) = 5.91, p = .018, \eta^2 = .090$



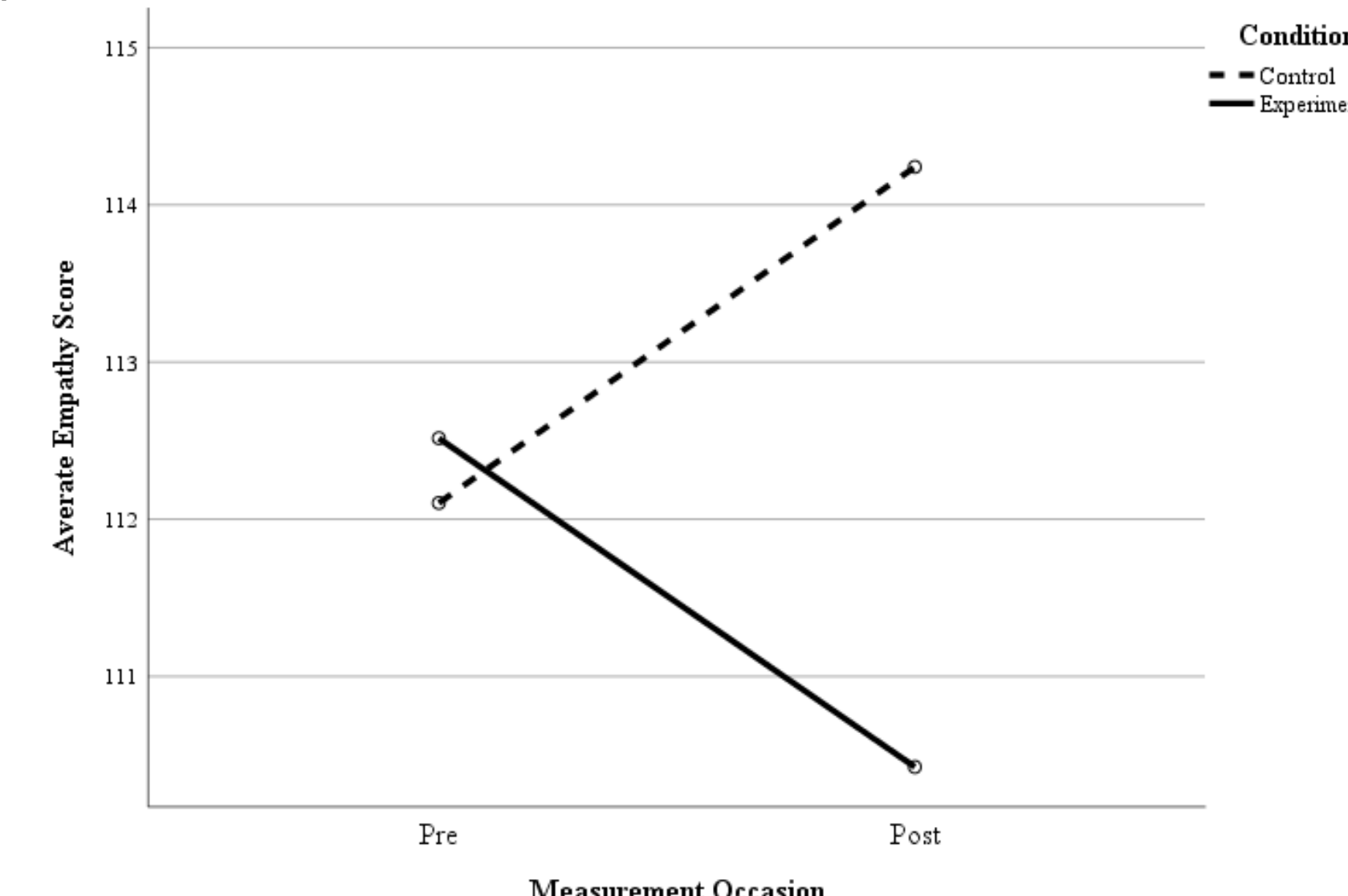
HYPOTHESIS 2: HOMOPHOBIA

- Main effect was nonsignificant, $F(1, 60) = 0.06, p = .807, \eta^2 = .001$
- Interaction was nonsignificant $F(1,60) = 0.159, p = .692, \eta^2 = .003$



HYPOTHESIS 3: EMPATHY

- Main effect was nonsignificant, $F(1, 60) = 0.00, p = .985, \eta^2 = .000$
- Interaction was marginally significant $F(1, 60) = 2.88, p = .095, \eta^2 = .046$



CONCLUSION

DISCUSSION

- Aligned with prior research, results indicate that emerging adults' ageist attitudes may be improved via the dissemination and viewing of anti-bias documentaries, such as the "Older LGBTQ, and Homeless" film depicting the narratives of minority figures.
- Viewing the documentary was related to significant increases in positive attitudes towards older adults
 - Approximately 70% of the effect size related to change in experimental group scores
- Empathy was only marginally significant
- Contrastingly, exposure to the film was associated with insignificant change in homophobia

LIMITATIONS

- Limitations to this research exist and may inform future experiments, including
 - Small sample size
 - Convenience sample
 - Ceiling effect related to recruitment of emerging adults from a university setting in southern California, linked to more liberal sociopolitical perspectives at baseline (la Roi and Mandemakers, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2014).
 - Limited psychometric validity of measures
 - Self-report measures

IMPLICATIONS

- Pilot results suggest that stigmatizing attitudes are not fixed
- Film offers a strategy that may be disseminated to improve emerging adults' ageist attitudes (and, marginally, empathy) without endangering vulnerable, older, sexual and gender minority adults experiencing homelessness.
- Important to consider how findings may extend to those reporting lower empathy at baseline.

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