

Original Paper

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Refusing to Tolerate Intolerance: An Experiment Testing the Link Between Exposure to Gay-Related Content and Resulting Attitudes and Behaviors

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Abstract

This article describes a 2×2 factorial design experiment with 334 undergraduates testing the influence of exposure to gay-related photographs on endorsement of tolerant gay attitudes and likelihood to interact with the photograph within a social media context. Individuals were more likely to interact with and be attitudinally influenced by pro-gay rather than anti-gay content. Prior media exposure to gay-related content was positively associated with likelihood to interact with the photographs. The experimental condition moderated this association. Our results provide support and extension for social cognitive theory, cultivation, and the heuristic processing model, as well as offer new information related to the study of social media, particularly those current conversational trends related to gay men and lesbians.

Keywords

Social media Experiment Gay Social cognitive theory Cultivation

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Title

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