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Gender Differences in the Attitudes Towards the Homeless

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Differences between male and female attitudes towards the homeless

There are many negative stigmas of the homeless. For example, it is a negative stigma that most homeless people are misusing drugs. Attitudes towards the homeless population can be influenced by these negative stigmas. There has been little research conducted on the public's perception of the homeless and even less research done on the differences between male and female attitudes. In past research, researchers have noticed gender differences even when they did not seek them out. They found that female respondents demonstrated attitudes that were more sympathetic than males towards the homeless (Tompsett, Toro, Guzicki, Manrique, and Zatakia, 2006). The purpose of the current study is to determine if there are any gender differences in participants' attitudes about the homeless. Participants (n=50) will be recruited from Dominican University of California. The students will be sent an emailed link in order to complete an online questionnaire through surveymonkey.com. Participants will voluntarily and anonymously fill out a questionnaire of 34 items adapted from Van Zomeren, Fischer, and Spears (2007). The items are grouped into categories that include negative attitudes, realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and frequency of negative contact.

Demographic questions asked of the student include age and gender. It is predicted that a) female respondents will report more negative contact with the homeless than male respondents and b) male respondents will report more negative attitudes towards the homeless than female respondents. It is important to identify differences in attitudes towards the homeless because negative stigmas are often false and lead to discrimination.