

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Clinical Evaluations of Fathers Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Role Expression.

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An analogue study was conducted in which 133 counseling psychologists were randomly assigned to read one of four vignettes regarding a father whose sexual orientation and gender role expression were manipulated. The participants evaluated the vignette fathers on measures of personal reactions, parenting skills, and overall adjustment. Multivariate analysis of covariance followed by descriptive discriminant analysis were performed to test the hypotheses that gay fathers (as compared to heterosexual fathers) and gender nontraditional fathers (as compared to traditionally masculine fathers) would receive more negative evaluations, with gay, gender nontraditional fathers receiving the most negative evaluations. The hypothesis that the participants' masculinity ideologies would moderate their biases was also tested. Differences were detected, but not in predicted directions. Gay fathers received more favorable therapist personal reactions, and gender nontraditional fathers were rated as having more favorable parenting skills and less favorable overall adjustment. The participants' agreement with masculinity ideology was not a significant moderator of their clinical judgments. Findings are discussed in relation to masculinity and gender studies.