

Openly gay: Does it affect performance appraisal?

May 13 2013

Although knowing an actor is gay significantly affected ratings of his masculinity, there was no significant effect on ratings of his acting performance, researchers say.

A team of researchers tested the hypothesis claimed by recent news columns that an "out" actor cannot convincingly play a heterosexual because knowing someone is gay will bias perceptions of his or her performance.

Led by Paul Merritt, a professor in the psychology department at Clemson University, the researchers published their findings in the journal *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*.

"Early research showed that people tend to perceive a direct connection between sexual orientation and established [gender roles](#), especially in the entertainment industry," said Merritt. "However, these new findings indicate that knowledge of an actor's sexual orientation doesn't necessarily cause their performance to be perceived in light of stereotypes about gays and lesbians."

Nearly 400 college students participated in the study by answering questions about a male actor's fictional Facebook page that included a photograph and basic [demographic information](#), including sexual orientation. After watching a video of the actor's performance, participants rated the performance and their likelihood of casting the actor in their own productions.

The findings indicate that knowledge of an actor's [sexual orientation](#) doesn't necessarily cause their performance to be perceived in light of stereotypes about gays and lesbians. Moreover, there was no significant effect on ratings of a knowingly gay person's performance.

Provided by Clemson University

Citation: Openly gay: Does it affect performance appraisal? (2013, May 13) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-05-openly-gay-affect.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.