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BRIEF REPORT

How women’s sexual orientation guides accuracy of interpersonal judgements of other women

Mollie A. Ruben, Krista M. Hill, and Judith A. Hall
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This research examines how women’s sexual orientation guides the accuracy of judgements of other women. One hundred ten judges (67 straight and 43 lesbian women) watched videotapes of 9 targets (4 straight and 5 lesbian) and made judgements about the targets’ thoughts, emotions, personality, and sexual orientation. Accuracy scores were created for each judge by comparing judgements to criterion data gathered about targets. Straight judges were significantly more accurate at judging thoughts and marginally more accurate at judging emotions compared to lesbian judges. There were no significant differences in judging personality. Straight targets’ thoughts and personality were more easily assessed than lesbian targets’ while lesbians’ emotions were more easily judged than straight targets’. Lesbian judges were more accurate at judging sexual orientation regardless of their tendency to categorize women as lesbian compared to straight judges. Findings support past research on the accurate perception of sexual orientation and contribute to understanding how sexual orientation guides person perception.

Keywords: Sexual orientation; Interpersonal accuracy; Empathic accuracy; Emotion recognition; Personality judgement.

Theoretical background

Every day, people make countless judgements of others’ thoughts, emotions, and personalities, and of what social categories those people belong to. The ability to detect these characteristics is referred to as interpersonal sensitivity. One type of interpersonal sensitivity skill is judging the sexual orientation of another person. Research demonstrates that perceivers can accurately judge the sexual orientation of another person (Johnson, 2014). Many factors contribute to the ability to perceive others accurately. The purpose of this research was to examine sexual orientation as one of those factors. We examined the effect of women’s sexual orientation on accuracy in perceiving lesbian and straight women’s thoughts, emotions, personality, and sexual orientation.

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Gill, Reichman, & Tassinary, 2007; Shelp, 2002), and can also make these judgements when vocal cues are present without visual information (Gaudino, 1994; Linville, 1998; Smyth, Jacobs, & Rogers, 2003), when presented with only very thin slices of behavior (10 s and 1 s silent video clips; Ambady, Hallahan, & Conner, 1999), when only isolated facial features are shown (Rule, Ambady, Adams, & Macrae, 2008; Rule, Ambady, & Hallett, 2009), and when asked to make snap judgements versus deliberate judgements (Rule et al., 2009). Gay men and lesbians, in particular, have been shown to have a greater sensitivity to sexual orientation differences compared to heterosexual men and women (Ambady et al., 1999). Homosexual people tend to be hypervigilant to their environment and may in turn better understand others as a consequence, in order to avoid discrimination and potential violence or to locate potential mates and in-group peers (Barrett & Swim, 1998; Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). Using this reasoning, we proposed that lesbians would be more accurate when judging target women’s thoughts as stated by the targets when watching their own video (empathic accuracy; Ickes, Bissonnette, Garcia, & Stinson, 1990), personality (as measured in terms of the Big Five traits), and emotions (as self-rated by the targets). We speculated that lesbian women would show these advantages because they are more motivated to be accurate—both to discriminate between potential partners and peers and to avoid potential harm through discrimination and prejudice. Lesbian women would also show these advantages due to their experience with other women. Women in general tend to interact with more women on average than men do (Maccoby, 2002; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001), but lesbian women also date women, thus their experience in judging other women may be greater than that of straight women.

The present research is novel to the field as the vast majority of past research has focused on judgements of male sexual orientation using male judges (exceptions include Ambady et al., 1999, and Tabak & Zayas, 2012). Furthermore, unlike the great majority of studies of interpersonal accuracy, the current study includes multiple tests of interpersonal sensitivity (i.e., tests of judging thoughts, emotions, personality, and sexual orientation), which allows us to look at different associations with judges’ and targets’ sexual orientation and also to examine relationships among these different kinds of accuracy.

METHOD

In phase one, video stimuli were collected of straight and lesbian target women. In phase two, female judges were recruited to watch the videos and make judgements of the targets.

Phase I: Stimuli creation

Targets

Nine target women (5 straight and 4 lesbian) aged 18–32 were recruited through the Introductory Psychology participant pool at Northeastern University and through the first author’s personal network to take part in a study on social interactions but were not told any other information about the study. Targets were compensated with partial course credit or $20 if they were not undergraduate psychology students. Within the informed consent, targets were notified that their sexual orientation would be disclosed to future participants (though we did not do so in the present study) but that their interaction partner was blind to the purpose of the study and had not been told their sexual orientation. There were no major demographic differences between straight and lesbian targets, except that the lesbian targets were significantly older and had more variability in age ($M = 25, SD = 4.47$) than the heterosexual targets ($M = 19, SD = 1.31$).

Procedure and materials for targets

Targets had a five-minute semi-structured conversation with a confederate blind to the purpose of the study and to the target’s sexual orientation. The confederate was trained to ask about family
relationships and future plans in life in order to evoke emotions from the targets without the interaction feeling like an interview. After the conversation, targets were aware that they were going to watch the videotaped interaction alone and stop the videotape every time they had a thought or feeling during the conversation, thus satisfying the criterion for Ickes et al.’s (1990) empathic accuracy paradigm. Targets wrote down what their thought or feeling was along with the time at which the thought or feeling occurred and proceeded to the next one until they had watched the full five-minute conversation. For the remainder of the paper we will refer to the thoughts and feelings as thoughts.

Next, all targets filled out a questionnaire that assessed the degree to which they experienced different emotions (amusement, anger, compassion, contempt, contentment, disgust, embarrassment, excitement, fear, guilt, happiness, hope, inspiration, jealousy, love, relaxation, sadness, surprise, and worry) during the videotaped interaction on a 1 (not at all) to 9 (all of the time) scale. Targets completed questionnaires that assessed their demographic information, personality (using the 44-item Big Five Inventory; John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991), and sexual orientation using a continuous 6-point scale of homosexuality that ranged from not at all to extremely.

Finally, targets were asked to nominate one friend to fill out an emailed personality questionnaire about the target. Of the nine friends nominated, eight responded with the completed personality inventory (one straight target’s friend failed to complete it).

Phase II

Judges

Sixty-seven straight female undergraduate judges recruited from Introductory Psychology courses and 43 lesbian judges recruited from the community with flyers in local cafes and postings on lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) websites participated in a study on judgements of others (none who had participated in the target phase). Ages ranged from 18 to 35 and 79 were non-Hispanic white, 11 Asian or Asian American, 8 other, 7 Black or African American, 4 Hispanic or Latino, and 1 Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. There were no major demographic differences between the two groups although lesbian judges tended to be older and had more variability in their age ($M = 25$, $SD = 4.47$) compared to straight judges ($M = 19$, $SD = 1.31$). This age difference does not present a problem as research examining the relationship between age and interpersonal accuracy has only found ability differences between older adults ($M = 60–85$) and younger adults ($M = 18–39$) but not within the younger adults’ age range (Isaacowitz et al., 2007). Judges were compensated with partial course credit or $20 if they were not undergraduate psychology students.

Procedure and materials for judges

Judges were run in groups of 1–5 and were told that they would be watching videotapes of women interacting with an experimenter. They were instructed not to make ratings on any target whom they recognized. This occurred for seven judges who consequently had missing data for one target each. Judges were told to ignore the experimenter and focus on the target, as the experimenter was visible. Empathic accuracy judgements were assessed by stopping the video at the time targets had indicated they had a thought. At this stopping point the video was paused and judges made judgements about what the target was thinking at that exact moment. After watching one target’s interaction, judges rated that target’s emotions, personality, and sexual orientation. After completing judgements of the nine targets, judges completed questionnaires about themselves including a demographic questionnaire.

Emotion and personality judgements were assessed using the same emotion ratings that the targets had completed and the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003). Judgements and self-ratings of sexual orientation were assessed using the same continuous sexual orientation scale.
RESULTS

Empathic accuracy

Empathic accuracy was calculated using Ickes et al.’s (1990) paradigm in which the judges’ inferences about what the target was thinking were compared to the targets’ actual thoughts. A coder assigned a 0, 1, or 2 to each thought depending on how close each judgement resembled the actual thought. The mean of all points earned by each judge was computed to create an empathic accuracy score across targets and separately for lesbian targets and straight targets. Reliability of the coder was assessed by having a second coder score 9% of the thoughts (642 out of 7150 thoughts). Reliability was good, \( r = .67, p < .001 \).

Overall, the mean empathic accuracy score on the 0–2 coded scale was \( M = .06, SD = .04 \). This low level of accuracy is consistent with other studies using this paradigm (Gesn & Ickes, 1999; Hall & Schmid Mast, 2007).

A 2 (judge sexual orientation) × 2 (target sexual orientation) repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA), with target sexual orientation as the repeated factor, showed a main effect of target sexual orientation, \( F(1, 102) = 28.22, p < .001, r = .47 \), where straight targets’ thoughts were more easily judged than lesbian targets. There was a main effect of judge sexual orientation, \( F(1, 102) = 6.69, p = .01, r = .25 \), such that straight judges were more accurate than lesbian judges. There was also an interaction between target sexual orientation and judge sexual orientation, \( F(1, 102) = 4.60, p < .05, r = .21 \). While the interaction per se indicates that same-sexual orientation judgements were relatively more accurate than opposite-sexual orientation judgements, the means indicate that the greatest accuracy was for straight judges judging straight targets. Simple effects showed that straight judges were substantially better at judging straight than lesbian targets, \( t(66) = 6.00, p < .001, r = .59 \), while lesbian judges showed the same effect but more weakly, \( t(36) = 2.15, p < .05, r = .34 \) (Table 1).

Emotion detection accuracy

Emotion accuracy was assessed using profile correlations. Each judge’s ratings of each target’s emotions were correlated with each target’s self-ratings of emotions to assess the similarity of these ratings. The resulting correlation coefficient was the emotion detection accuracy score. Each judge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accuracy measure</th>
<th>All judges M (SD)</th>
<th>Straight judges M (SD)</th>
<th>Lesbian judges M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathic accuracy (all targets)</td>
<td>.06 (.04)</td>
<td>.07 (.05)</td>
<td>.04 (.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathic accuracy (straight targets)</td>
<td>.08 (.08)</td>
<td>.10 (.08)</td>
<td>.05 (.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathic accuracy (lesbian targets)</td>
<td>.04 (.03)</td>
<td>.04 (.03)</td>
<td>.03 (.02)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotion accuracy (all targets)</td>
<td>.30 (.10)</td>
<td>.31 (.08)</td>
<td>.28 (.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion accuracy (straight targets)</td>
<td>.24 (.13)</td>
<td>.25 (.12)</td>
<td>.22 (.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion accuracy (lesbian targets)</td>
<td>.37 (.11)</td>
<td>.39 (.09)</td>
<td>.35 (.14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personality accuracy (all targets)</td>
<td>.12 (.15)</td>
<td>.13 (.15)</td>
<td>.12 (.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality accuracy (straight targets)</td>
<td>.12 (.19)</td>
<td>.13 (.17)</td>
<td>.11 (.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality accuracy (lesbian targets)</td>
<td>−.07 (.25)</td>
<td>−.07 (.25)</td>
<td>−.08 (.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation accuracy (all targets)</td>
<td>.53 (.17)</td>
<td>.52 (.17)</td>
<td>.55 (.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation accuracy (straight targets)</td>
<td>.53 (.32)</td>
<td>.66 (.28)</td>
<td>.33 (.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation accuracy (lesbian targets)</td>
<td>.52 (.27)</td>
<td>.40 (.23)</td>
<td>.72 (.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity of sexual orientation judgements (( A' ))</td>
<td>.83 (.14)</td>
<td>.81 (.14)</td>
<td>.86 (.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias of sexual orientation judgements (( B''_{LD} ))</td>
<td>.42 (.79)</td>
<td>.84 (.44)</td>
<td>−.24 (.78)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
had an emotion detection accuracy score for each target and these scores were used to calculate emotion detection accuracy for lesbian targets separate from straight targets, as well as emotion detection accuracy for all targets. All correlation coefficient scores were Fisher \( z \) transformed before running analyses and were returned to Pearson \( r \) metric for presentation.

A 2 (judge sexual orientation) × 2 (target sexual orientation) repeated measures ANOVA revealed a marginal main effect of judge sexual orientation, \( F(1, 108) = 2.85, p < .10, r = .16 \), such that straight judges were more accurate than lesbian judges. There was also a main effect of target group such that lesbian targets’ emotions were more easily judged than straight targets’ emotions, \( F(1, 108) = 85.87, p < .001, r = .67 \). The interaction of judge by target sexual orientation was nonsignificant, \( F(1, 108) = .046, p = .83 \).

When comparing the original self-report of emotions made by lesbian targets and straight targets, a trend emerged for almost every emotion such that lesbian targets were in general feeling more of every emotion than straight targets, both positive and negative. As a result of feeling more emotions, lesbian targets may have been acting in a more expressive manner or may have had difficulty concealing their emotions thus making it easier for their emotions to be judged. Independent sample \( t \)-tests, however, on each emotion were not significantly different due to the small sample size of targets.

### Personality accuracy

To add robustness to the criterion personality data of the targets, targets’ self-report ratings of their personality traits for each trait were correlated with their respective peer-report ratings for each respective trait. The target-peer correlations for the five traits ranged from .35 to .83. The average agreement between target and peer-report ratings was good, \( r(6) = .66 \), so the two ratings were aggregated for each target and used for the following analyses (except for the one target who did not have a peer report and in that case just the target self-report was used as the criterion).

Accuracy of personality judgements was assessed with profile correlations. Each judge’s ratings of each target on the five personality traits were correlated with each target’s self-ratings of the five personality traits to assess similarity of these ratings. All correlation coefficient scores were Fisher \( z \) transformed for analysis and returned to Pearson \( r \) for presentation. Each judge had a personality accuracy score for each target, which was used to calculate the mean personality accuracy score for lesbian targets and straight targets separately, and a mean personality accuracy score for all targets.

A 2 (judge sexual orientation) × 2 (target sexual orientation) repeated measures ANOVA showed a main effect of target sexual orientation, \( F(1, 108) = 40.55, p < .001, r = .52 \), such that straight targets’ personalities were more accurately judged than lesbian targets’. The main effect of judge sexual orientation and the interaction of judge by target sexual orientation were nonsignificant, \( F(1, 108) = .28, p = .60 \) and \( F(1, 108) = .02, p = .90 \), respectively.

### Sexual orientation accuracy, sensitivity, and bias

Although sexual orientation is not intrinsically dichotomous, we created a binary sexual orientation variable from the continuous 7-point homosexuality variable. Each judge watched all nine targets and made the continuous homosexuality rating of each target. Judgements of 1 (not at all homosexual) and 2 (slightly homosexual) were grouped as straight while judgements of 3–7 (mildly homosexual, moderately homosexual, significantly homosexual, very homosexual, extremely homosexual) were grouped as lesbian. All straight targets had selected a 1 (not at all homosexual) and all lesbian targets had selected a 6 or 7 (very homosexual or extremely homosexual) so the target criterion data were grouped in the same way as the judges’ perception data.

Overall accuracy for judging sexual orientation was scored as 1 for correctly identifying a lesbian or straight target and 0 for incorrectly identifying the sexual orientation of each target. Across all nine targets, each judge had a mean accuracy score.
from 0 to 1, where chance level was $M = .50$. A one-sample $t$-test against .50 showed that overall sexual orientation mean accuracy was marginally greater than chance, $t(109) = 1.76, p = .08, r = .17 (M = .53, SD = .17)$. Each judge also had a lesbian mean accuracy score and a straight mean accuracy score, that is, for lesbian targets, how accurate judges were at categorizing lesbian targets as lesbian and for straight targets, how accurate judges were at categorizing straight targets as straight. A repeated measures ANOVA showed no main effect of judge sexual orientation, $F(1, 108) = .044, p = .84, r = .02$, and a marginal main effect of target sexual orientation, $F(1, 108) = 3.19, p = .08, r = .17$, such that lesbian targets were more easily judged compared to straight targets (Table 1). There was also a strong interaction between judge sexual orientation and target sexual orientation, $F(1, 108) = 87.26, p < .001, r = .67$, showing an in-group advantage for judging sexual orientation such that straight judges were more accurate at judging straight targets’ than lesbian targets’ sexual orientation as shown through the simple effects for straight judges, $t(66) = 5.93, p < .001$, and lesbian judges were more accurate at judging lesbian targets’ sexual orientation as the simple effects also highlighted, $t (42) = 7.36, p < .001$ (Figure 1).

Although the mean accuracy in categorizing sexual orientation across targets is an ecological measure, that is, it is closest to people’s perceptions in everyday life when they categorize others as gay or straight, the mean accuracy measure fails to take bias into account. For example, lesbian judges could be accurate at judging lesbian targets because they are biased to categorize everyone as lesbian and straight judges could be accurate at judging straight targets because they are biased to categorize everyone as straight. Signal detection provides a statistical tool to extract sensitivity in judging sexual orientation from bias for selecting a particular sexual orientation.

Categorizations of lesbian women as lesbian were counted as hits ($M = .60, SD = .30$) and categorizations of straight women as lesbian were counted as false alarms ($M = .13, SD = .22$). Lesbian judges had significantly more hits than straight judges—correctly identifying lesbians as lesbians, $t(108) = 3.18, p < .001, r = .29 (M_{lesbian} = .85, SD_{lesbian} = .18; M_{straight} = .45, SD_{straight} = .25)$, and lesbian judges had significantly more false alarms than straight judges—incorrectly identifying straight women as lesbians, $t(108) = 7.24, p < .001, r = .57 (M_{lesbian} = .26, SD_{lesbian} = .26; M_{straight} = .05, SD_{straight} = .12)$.

$A'$ values were then calculated using the formula provided by Rae (1976) and measures of response bias ($B''_D$) were calculated using the formula provided by Donaldson (1992).$A'$ indicates the sensitivity of judges in discriminating the

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$1$The formula for $A'$ was taken from Rae (1976):

$$A' = \frac{(\text{Hits}^2 + \text{False Alarms}^2 + 3 \text{Hits} - \text{False Alarms} - 4 \text{False Alarms} \times \text{Hits})}{4 \text{Hits}(1 - \text{False Alarms})}$$

when Hits $\geq$ False Alarms

$$A' = \frac{\left(\text{Hits} - \text{Hits}^2 + \text{False Alarms} - \text{False Alarms}^2\right)}{4 \text{False Alarms}(1 - \text{Hits})}$$

when Hits $<$ False Alarms

The formula for $B''_D$ was taken from Donaldson (1992):

$$B''_D = \frac{[1 - \text{Hits})(1 - \text{False Alarms}) - (\text{Hits})(\text{False Alarms})]}{[1 - \text{Hits})(1 - \text{False Alarms}) + (\text{Hits})(\text{False Alarms})]}$$
Lesbian judges showed that lesbians tended to categorize targets as lesbian: $M_{B_D} = -.24$, $SD_{B_D} = .78$; $t(42) = 2.05$, $p < .05$, $r = .30$.

Straight judges’ sensitivity in discriminating lesbian from straight was also significantly better than chance (.50): $M_{A'} = .81$, $SD_{A'} = .14$; $t(66) = 17.40$, $p < .001$, $r = .91$. Analysis of response bias for straight judges showed that straight judges tended to categorize targets as straight: $M_{B_D} = .84$, $SD_{B_D} = .44$; $t(66) = 15.75$, $p < .001$, $r = .89$.

An independent samples $t$-test comparing lesbian to straight judges’ sensitivity at discriminating sexual orientation supported the hypothesis that lesbian judges were significantly better able to judge sexual orientation compared to straight judges, $t(108) = 2.09$, $p < .05$, $r = .20$. There was also a significant difference in straight and lesbian judges’ response bias with lesbians showing a bias for categorizing women as lesbians and straight women showing a bias for categorizing women as straight, $t(108) = 9.37$, $p < .001$, $r = .67$.

Finally, we examined the relationship between sensitivity, $A'$, and the measure of overall sexual orientation accuracy. $A'$ and sexual orientation accuracy were significantly positively correlated, $r(108) = .43$, $p < .001$. This positive correlation shows the overlap between sensitivity and accuracy but it is not a perfect correlation because overall accuracy is not independent from bias while sensitivity is independent of bias.

### Correlations among interpersonal accuracy measures and sexual orientation accuracy

Next, we examined the relationship among the four types of interpersonal accuracy as no study has ever examined these associations (Table 2). Across straight and lesbian judges, emotion detection accuracy was significantly positively related to personality judgement accuracy. Empathic accuracy was significantly positively related with emotion detection accuracy. Sexual orientation sensitivity ($A'$) was unrelated to other measures of interpersonal accuracy, showing that sexual orientation sensitivity is a distinct skill.
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to assess how sexual orientation guides four types of interpersonal accuracy measures: empathic accuracy, emotion detection accuracy, personality accuracy, and sexual orientation accuracy of lesbian and straight women. We hypothesized that lesbian judges would be more accurate compared to straight judges across all types of accuracy. Contrary to our hypothesis, lesbian judges were only more accurate than straight judges when assessing other women’s sexual orientation. Although lesbian judges were more sensitive in judging sexual orientation using both sensitivity ($A'$) and accuracy measures, they also tended to have a bias in categorizing women as lesbians. Straight women also showed a bias, but in categorizing women as straight. However, because sensitivity in our signal detection analysis was independent of bias, it remains correct to say that the lesbian women were more sensitive in judging sexual orientation though both straight and lesbian judges were performing at above chance levels.

Contrary to our hypothesis, straight judges were more accurate at judging thoughts, particularly of straight targets, and emotions of other women compared to lesbian judges. There was no difference in straight and lesbian judges’ abilities to judge personality. A hypothesis worth pursuing in future research is that lesbian judges were less accurate at judging thoughts, emotions, and personality because they were overly concerned with judging the sexual orientation of each target and therefore failed to recognize important cues of thoughts, emotions, and personality. Because sexual orientation is a salient social category for lesbians, they may have found it more interesting, motivating, and rewarding to judge the sexual orientation of other women compared to judging their thoughts, emotions, or personality. Straight judges, on the other hand, do not have to place such priority on judging the sexual orientation of other women and therefore judging thoughts, emotions, and personality of targets seemed more interesting, motivating, and rewarding for them.

Another possible explanation for the difference in judges’ empathic accuracy and emotion detection accuracy could lie in their group membership. Straight judges may have perceived lesbian targets as out-group members and were less motivated to empathize with them, which decreased accuracy when judging lesbians’ thoughts, emotions, and personality. Lesbian judges, on the other hand, may not have viewed straight targets as out-group members, which may account for the lack of difference in their empathic accuracy scores of lesbian and straight targets.

Although we did not have hypotheses about whether lesbian or straight targets would be judged more accurately, interesting findings emerged. Empathic accuracy and personality accuracy were higher when judges viewed straight targets. On the other hand, lesbian targets’ emotions were more easily judged than straight targets’ emotions. These findings must be interpreted as preliminary, as the number of targets in our study (i.e., nine) was not large enough to draw

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Personality accuracy</th>
<th>Emotion accuracy</th>
<th>Empathic accuracy</th>
<th>Sexual orientation accuracy</th>
<th>Sensitivity ($A'$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>.27**</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-04</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotion accuracy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.29**</td>
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<td>.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathic accuracy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.43***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation accuracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitivity ($A'$)</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>

**$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$. 

Table 2. Correlations among interpersonal accuracy measures and sexual orientation accuracy

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conclusions about target judgeability; nevertheless, some speculations can be made. Lesbian targets may have failed to regulate their emotions during the interaction because they were attempting to regulate their expression of personality and outward cues that were related to their sexual orientation and, thus, may have displayed more nonverbal cues than the straight targets. Conversely, judging the thoughts of the lesbian targets may have been harder because accuracy on this task is determined more by verbal content than nonverbal content (Gesn & Ickes, 1999; Hall & Schmid Mast, 2007). As a stigmatized group, the lesbian targets may have been more motivated to conceal their thoughts and because the verbal channel is more controllable than the nonverbal channel (Zuckerman, DePaulo, & Rosenthal, 1981), they may have been successful in doing so. Future research should address the verbal and nonverbal cues displayed by lesbian and straight targets to examine how differences in expressivity and concealment affect judgements of the targets.

Although the present research is novel by incorporating multiple measures of interpersonal accuracy and examining the effect of sexual orientation on judgements, there are several limitations. The lesbian targets in our study were not a random sample but were recruited as a convenience sample through friend networks and LGB websites. Also, this study was conducted at a large university in a large liberal city, so perceptions of others may be quite different from what they would be in a more rural and conservative city or country where bias in judging sexual orientation may be much more skewed toward judging a target as straight for both lesbian and straight judges because the base rates of gay people in those regions are lower (Gates & Newport, 2013). In more conservative regions, homosexual targets may also be more likely to change how they act in order to conceal their sexual orientation, making it difficult to judge their sexual orientation accurately. Finally, target participants in our study knew that their sexual orientation may be used for future research and therefore may have concealed or revealed their sexual orientation, depending on their motivation, through nonverbal channels or appearance.

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