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Interventions to Affect Perceptions of Homelessness

Sophie Srivastava, David Frederick PhD, and Vincent Berardi PhD
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Introduction

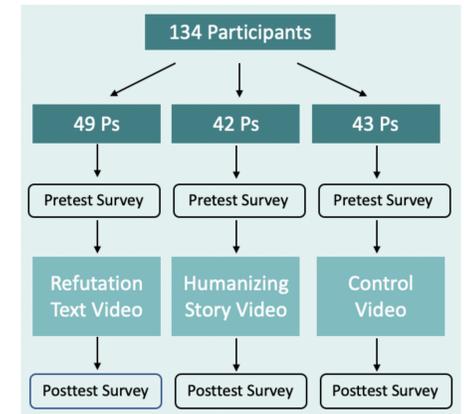
- Background**
 - ~568,000 people experience homelessness in a single night and CA has more than half of all unsheltered people in the country (HUD, 2019)
 - Public opinion → policy formation
 - Need interventions to correct public misperceptions about the homeless and gather more support for beneficial policies
- Interventions:**
 - Refutation Texts:** written material that first calls attention to a misconception and directly refutes by providing concrete evidence (Aguilar et al., 2019)
 - Based on the Knowledge Revisions Components (KReC) framework (Kendeou & O'Brien, 2014)
 - Personal Stories:** indirect contact with homeless individuals to promote compassion and understanding (Knecht & Martinez, 2009)
 - Based on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954)

Hypotheses

- Main Effects:** No hypotheses
- Interaction between time and Intervention type on Opinions that Homeless are Harmful:** I hypothesized that the degree to which attitudes became less negative from Time 1 to Time 2 would vary depending on which intervention video participants viewed.
- Interaction between time and intervention type on Support for Pro-Homeless Policies:** I hypothesized that the degree to which support for pro-homeless policies became more positive from Time 1 to Time 2 would vary depending on which intervention video participants viewed.
- Interaction between time and intervention type on Beliefs in Structural and External Causes:** I hypothesized that the degree to which belief in structural and external causes became stronger from Time 1 to Time 2 would vary depending on which intervention video participants viewed.

Methodology

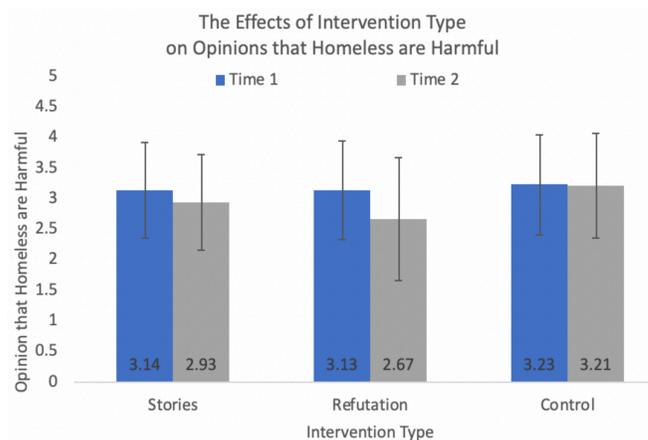
- N = 134 (removed 185 Ps)
- Demographics:**
 - Average age = 28 (range 18-62)
 - Median income = \$70,000
 - 59% Female; 39.6% Male
 - Majority = White and Democrat
- Data Analysis**
 - Exploratory Factor Analysis – Created 3 scales:
 - Opinions that Homeless are Harmful
 - Support for Pro-Homeless Policies
 - Structural and External Causes of Homelessness
 - Cronbach's alphas > 0.7
 - 2x3 Mixed ANOVA and Paired samples t-tests



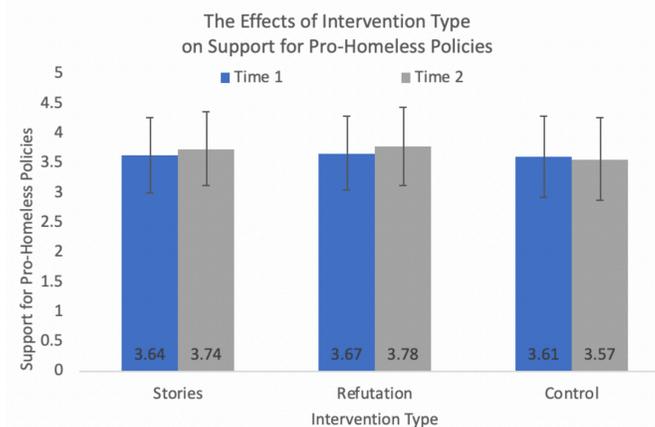
The Stories and Refutation interventions significantly decreased participants' belief in the Opinions that Homeless are Harmful scale, $t(41) = 3.60, p < .001, d = .56$, and $t(48) = 5.55, p < .001, d = .79$.

Results

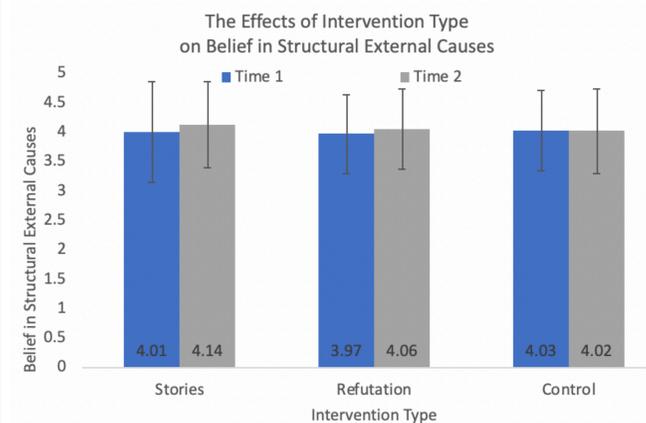
- Results for Scale: Opinions that Homeless are Harmful**
 - ANOVA Results:** Statistically significant main effect of Pre-Versus-Post Rating, such that attitudes were more negative before the intervention ($M = 3.17, SD = .80$) than they were after the interventions ($M = 2.93, SD = .91$), $F(1, 131) = 33.65, p < .001$.
 - Statistically significant interaction $F(2, 131) = 10.51, p < .001$.
 - Paired Samples t-test Results:**
 - No statistically significant difference in Time 1 vs Time 2 attitudes for Control participants, $t(42) = .41, p = .681$.
 - Attitudes did become less negative from Time 1 to Time 2 for Stories participants, $t(41) = 3.60, p < .001, d = .56$, and for Refute participants, $t(48) = 5.55, p < .001, d = .79$.
 - The effect size was larger for Refute participants than for Stories participants.



- Results for Scale: Support for Pro-Homeless Policies**
 - ANOVA Results:** Statistically significant main effect of Pre-Versus-Post Rating, such that attitudes were more against Pro-Homeless policies before ($M = 3.64, SD = .64$) than they were after the interventions ($M = 3.69, SD = .66$), $F(1, 131) = 6.33, p = .013$.
 - Statistically significant interaction, $F(2, 131) = 4.68, p = .011$.
 - Paired Samples t-test Results:**
 - No statistically significant difference in Time 1 vs Time 2 attitudes for the Control participants, $t(42) = 1.42, p = .162$.
 - Attitudes became more supportive from Time 1 to Time 2 for Stories participants, $t(41) = -2.36, p = .023, d = -.36$, and for the Refute participants, $t(48) = -2.60, p = .012, d = -.37$.
 - Refute participants showed a slightly bigger increase in support than the Stories participants.



- Results for Scale: Structural and External Causes**
 - ANOVA Results:** Statistically significant main effect of Pre-Versus-Post Rating, such that there was less belief before ($M = 4.00, SD = .74$) than after the interventions ($M = 4.08, SD = .71$), $F(1, 131) = 4.34, p = .039$.
 - No significant interaction, $F(2, 131) = 1.31, p = .275$
 - Paired Samples t-test Results:**
 - No statistically significant difference in Time 1 vs Time 2 attitudes for the Control participants, $t(42) = .15, p = .881$.
 - There was significantly more belief from Time to Time 2 for Stories participants, $t(41) = -1.59, p = .120, d = -.25$, and for the Refute participants, $t(48) = -.16, p = .114, d = -.23$.
 - The Refute participants showed a slightly bigger increase in belief than the Stories participants.



Discussion

- Key Findings**
 - Stories and Refute interventions significantly decreased belief in the Opinions that Homeless are Harmful scale, significantly increased Support for Pro-Homeless Policies, and increased belief in the Structural and External Causes scale
 - No interaction for Structural and External Causes
 - Refutation had stronger effect on Opinions that Homeless are Harmful
- Limitations**
 - Small sample size
 - No measures of long-term effects
 - No measure of behavioral change
 - No validity for intervention videos
- Strengths**
 - Random assignment and experimental design → causal claims
 - Effective intervention – novel way to reduce prejudice in video format
 - High Cronbach's alphas for scales
- Implications**
 - Enhancing knowledge of Knowledge Revisions Components framework Videos could be implemented in public spaces or on social media to reach a wider audience
 - Areas for future research:
 - Operationalize behavioral change (measuring voting behavior, interactions with homeless, etc.)
 - Social media campaigns
 - Long-term effects of such interventions

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