

Understanding Perceived Vulnerability to Intimate Partner Violence: A Bifactor(S-1) Model Exploring the Role of Sexism and Violence Against Women Myths



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Intimate Partner Violence Against Women (IPAW): Prevalence and Negative Impact

- **One in three women worldwide** have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021)
- **One in nine women** have suffered **controlling behaviors**, **one in ten have been raped**, and **one in two have faced psychological aggression** during their intimate relationship (Breiding et al., 2014; Thompson et al., 2006).
- Violence against women starts young: around **1 in 4 women aged 15–24** who have been in a relationship experience intimate partner violence by their mid-20s (WHO, 2024)

Perception of invulnerability of IPVAV

Despite its significant detrimental impact, **many cases of IPVAV remain unreported**, largely due to its acceptability and the perception of invulnerability (Bosch-Fiol & Ferrer-Perez, 2020; Rollero et al., 2021).



Ideological Factors

Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958) proposes that people use their beliefs and prior schemas to evaluate the behavior of others and their own experiences, interacting with the stimuli present in these situations.

**Situational Factors****Ideological Factors**

Sexist Attitudes:

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

(ASI; English version of Glick & Fiske, 1996; Spanish version of Expósito et al., 1998)

Sexist attitudes are part of the *Ambivalent Sexist Theory*, which describes sexism as a combination of:

- **Hostile Sexism:** Openly negative attitudes toward women who challenge traditional roles or male dominance.

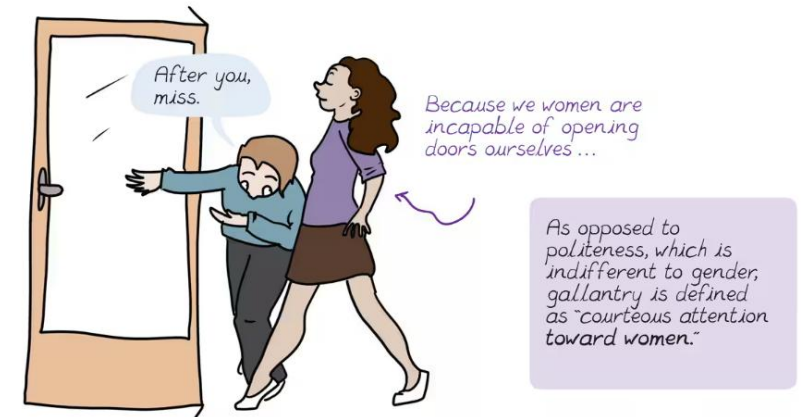
Example: *Women use feminism to control men.*

- **Benevolent Sexism:** Seemingly positive attitudes that idealize women as nurturing, pure, or in need of male protection.

Example: *Women are more moral and should be protected by men.*

+Do you know what is the longest part of a women body?

-The map handle!



RAPE MYTHS*Acceptance of Modern Myths About Sexual Assault*

(AMMSA, English and Spanish versions of Bohner et al., 2022, Gerger et al., 2007)

BELIEFS**DESCRIPTIVE**

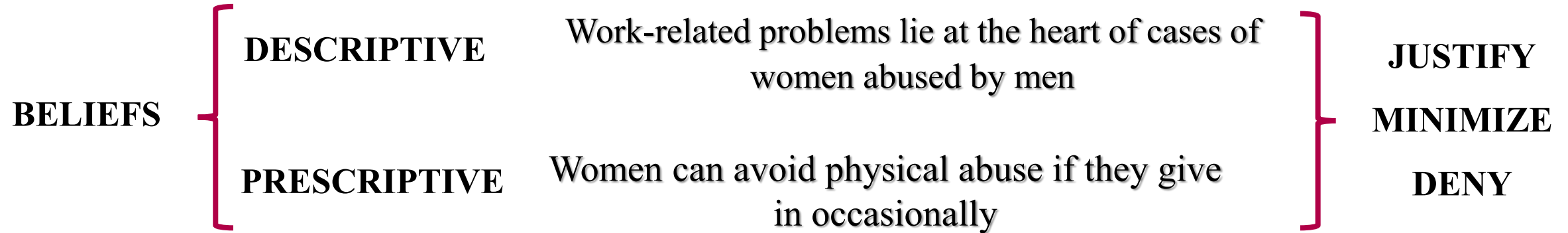
Many women tend to misinterpret a well-meant gesture as a 'sexual assault'

PRESCRIPTIVE

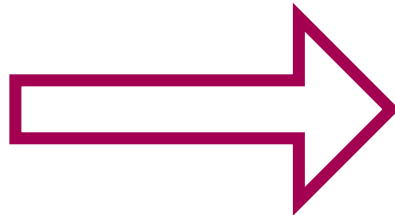
In dating situations, the general expectation is that the woman "hits the brakes" and the man "pushes ahead"

JUSTIFY**MINIMIZE****DENY**

MYTHS ABOUT INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE



**ACCEPTANCE OF
MYTHS ABOUT IPV**



**SOCIAL PERCEPTION
OF AN INTIMATE PARTNER
VIOLENCE**

Acceptance of Myths About Intimate Partner Violence
(AMIVAW, English and Spanish versions of Megías et al., 2018)

- Despite the fact that these instruments exhibit adequate psychometric properties, the specific contribution of each instrument is unknown
- Studies show that these measures have a high empirical correlation, ranging between values of $r = 0.70$ and $r = 0.80$

Table 1

Intercorrelations Between the AMIVAW Scale and Related Constructs (Megías et al., 2018)

	Myths IPVAW	Hostile Sexism	Benevolent Sexism	Rape Myths
Myths IPVAW	-	.73**	.46**	.81**
Hostile Sexism	.67**	-	.42**	.80**
Benevolent Sexism	.49**	.65**	-	.45**
Rape Myths	.72**	.75**	.62**	-

Note. Spanish version correlations below diagonal, English version correlations above diagonal.

< .01. ** $p < .001$. p -values < .05 are not specified due to sample sizes.

Objectives

1. Exploring whether **myths about violence against women in intimate partner relationships (IPV)** differ from other constructs related to sexism and violence against women (i.e., hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, rape myths) or whether they represent different manifestations of the same construct.
2. Analyzing the relationships among the attitudinal variables.
3. Examining the extent to which the **myths about intimate partner violence (IPV: reference trait)**, compared to the other attitudinal variables, can predict the perception of vulnerability to intimate partner violence.

Hypotheses

1. We expected that myths about intimate partner violence, rape myths, hostile sexism and benevolent sexism to be distinctive yet partially overlapping traits
- 2.1. We expected a positive relationship between myths about intimate partner violence, hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, and rape myths for both gender groups
3. We expected myths about intimate partner violence to predict the perception of vulnerability to intimate partner violence in women beyond other attitudinal factors, but not in men

Antecedents

Question

Results

Discussion

Sample

- 485 participants (41% men, 59% women) from United States
- $M_{\text{age}} = 36.31$; $SD = 13.31$
- 7% primary education, 27% secondary education, and 66% university education

Procedure and Measures

1. **Acceptance of Myths About Intimate Partner Violence Against Women (IPV)**
[REFERENCE TRAIT]
2. Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) – Two subscales: **Hostile Sexism (HS)**
[CONSTRUCT 2] and **Benevolent Sexism (BS)** [CONSTRUCT 3]
3. **Acceptance of Modern Myths About Sexual Assault (RM)** [CONSTRUCT 4]
4. **CRITERO VARIABLE: Perception of vulnerability** – Inverse scores (i.e., I am certain I will never be a victim of intimate partner violence)
5. Sociodemographic data (gender, age, studies level and native language)

Antecedents

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Data analyses

- Estimator: Robust maximum likelihood (MLR) method
- Mplus 8.11 Version (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017)

Step 0

Creation of parcels using the Item-to construct balance technique (Little et al., 2002) by gender

Step 1

First-Order CFA Factor Model



Examining relationships and distinctiveness of factors

Step 2

Bifactor(S-1) Model



Exploring the unique contribution all of the other attitudinal variables when we controlled myths about intimate partner violence (IPV)

Step 3

Bifactor(S-1) Model with criterion variable



- Assess the unique contribution of myths about IPV in predicting the criterion variable
- Examine contributions beyond other facets in the model

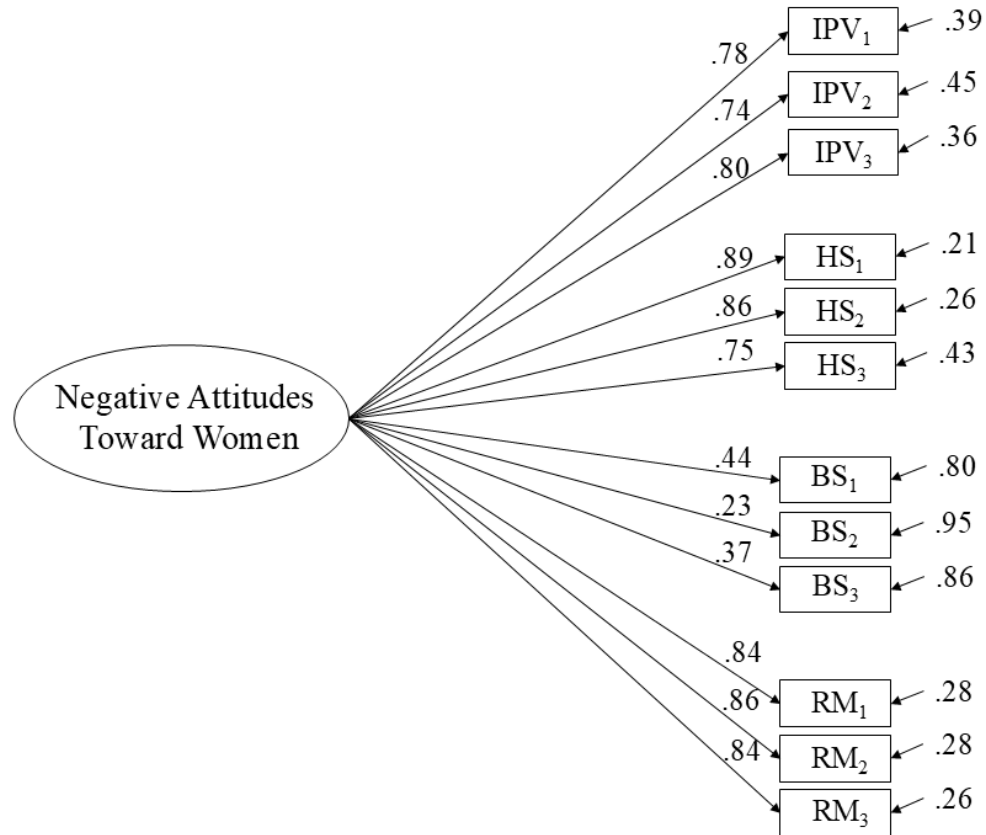
Results

Unidimensional CFA Factor Model

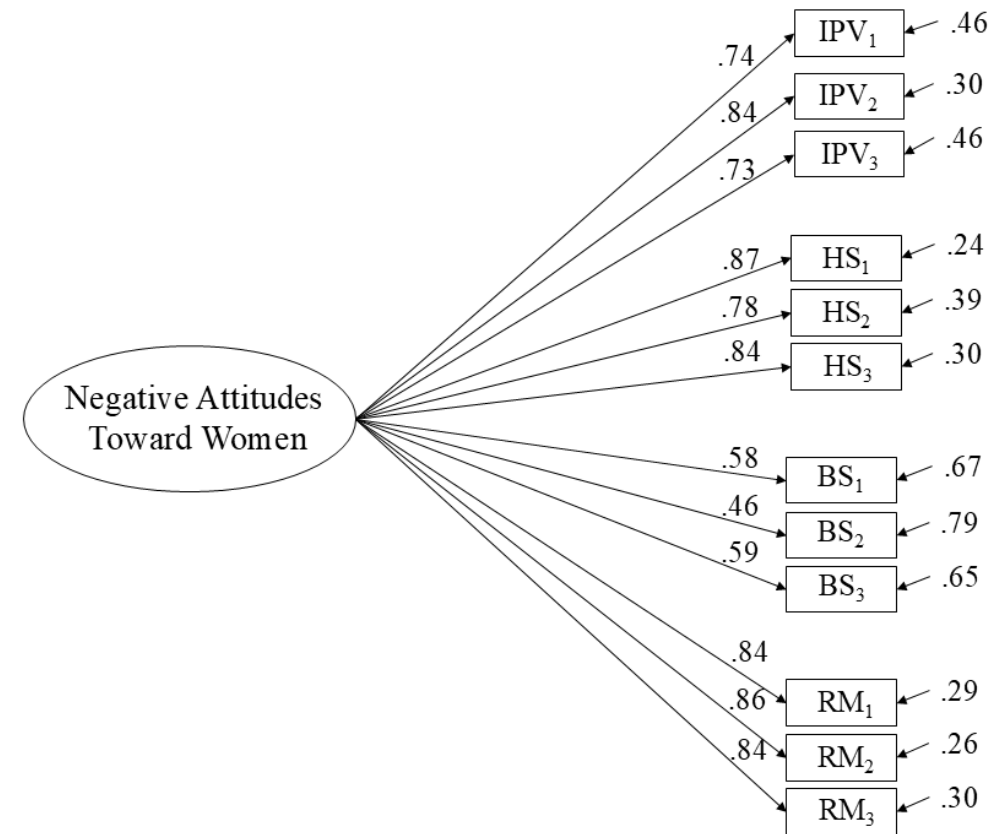
Model fit

- Men: $\chi^2(54) = 467.95, p < .001, CFI = .747, SRMR = .117, RMSEA = .196, 90\% CI [.180, .213]$
- Women: $\chi^2(54) = 729.50, p < .001, CFI = .723, SRMR = .104, RMSEA = .209, 90\% CI [.196, .223]$

MEN



WOMEN



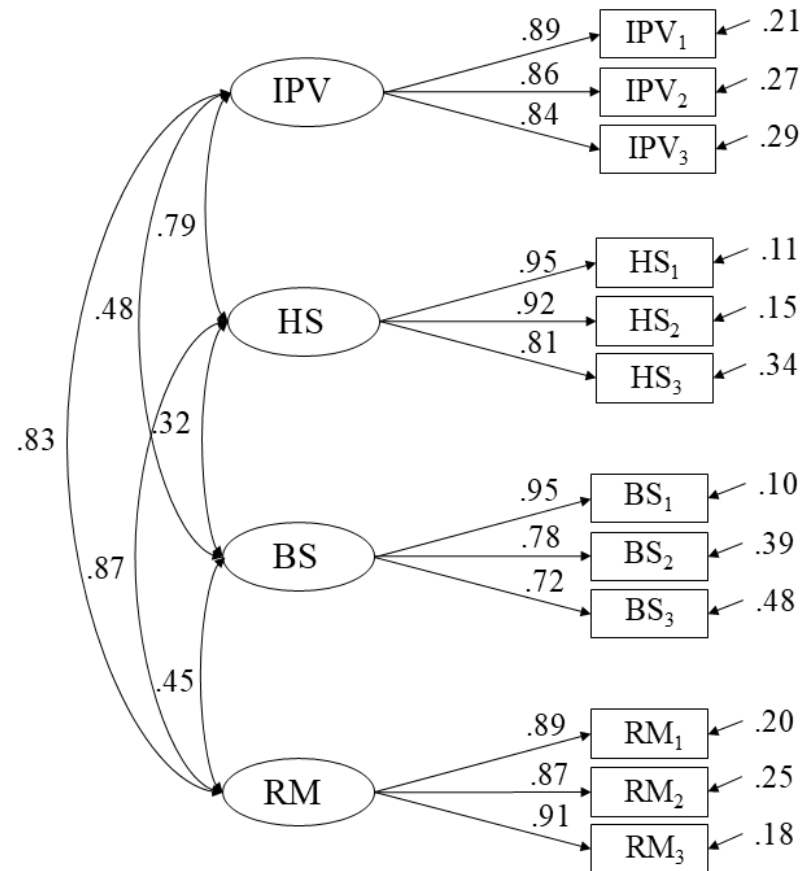
Results

First-Order CFA Factor Model

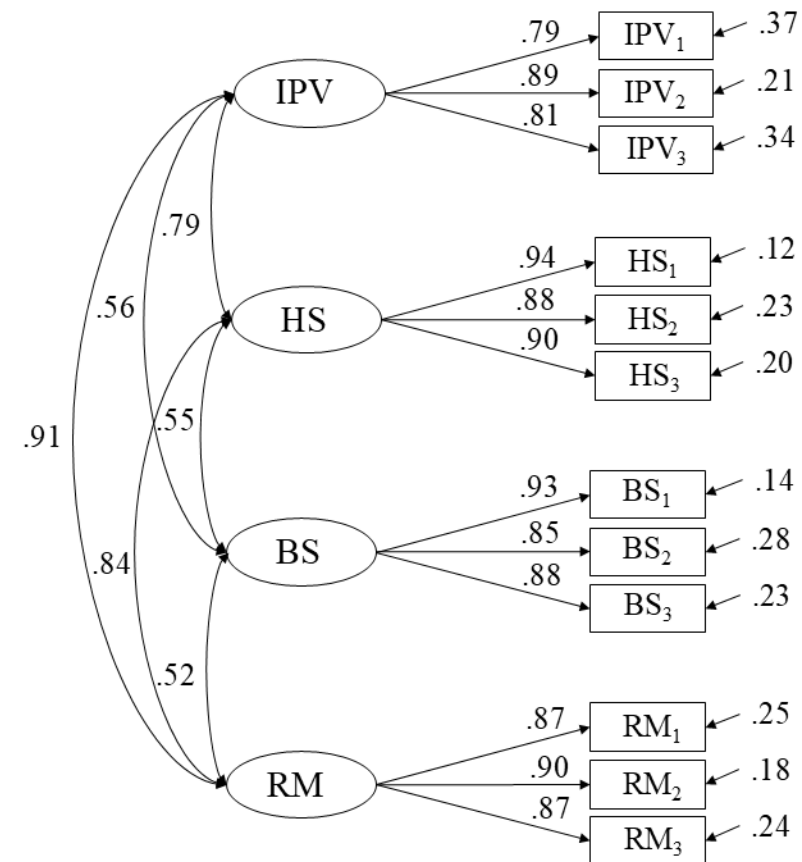
Model fit

- Men: $\chi^2(80) = 173.75$, CFI = .956, SRMR = .057, RMSEA = .077, 90% CI [.061, .092]
- Women: $\chi^2(80) = 210.21$, CFI = .959, SRMR = .040, RMSEA = .075, 90% CI [.063, .088]

MEN



WOMEN

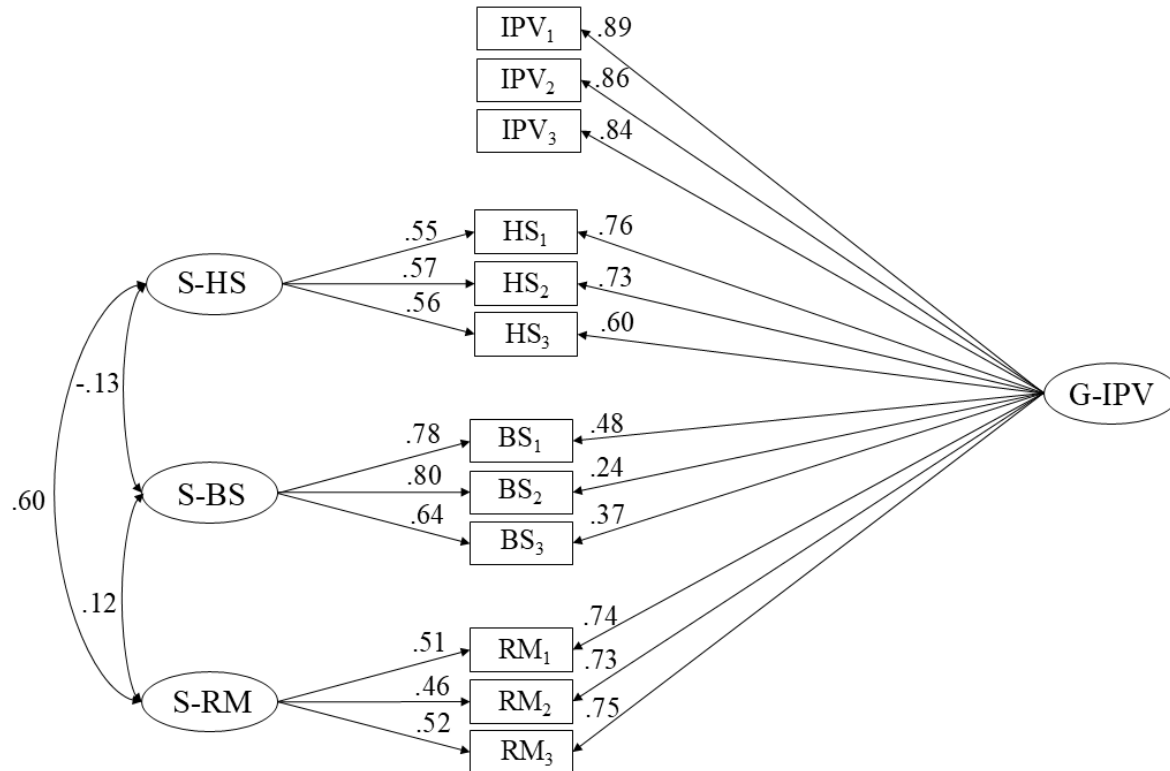


Results Bifactorial(S-1) Model

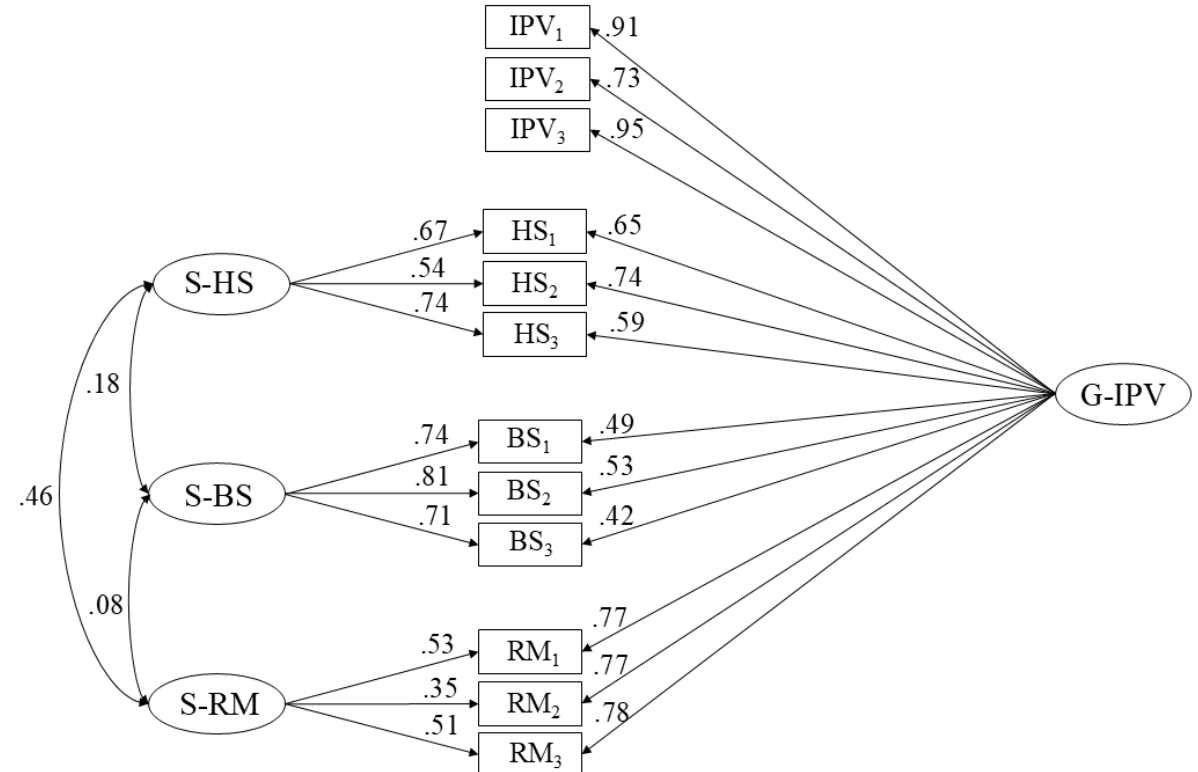
Model fit

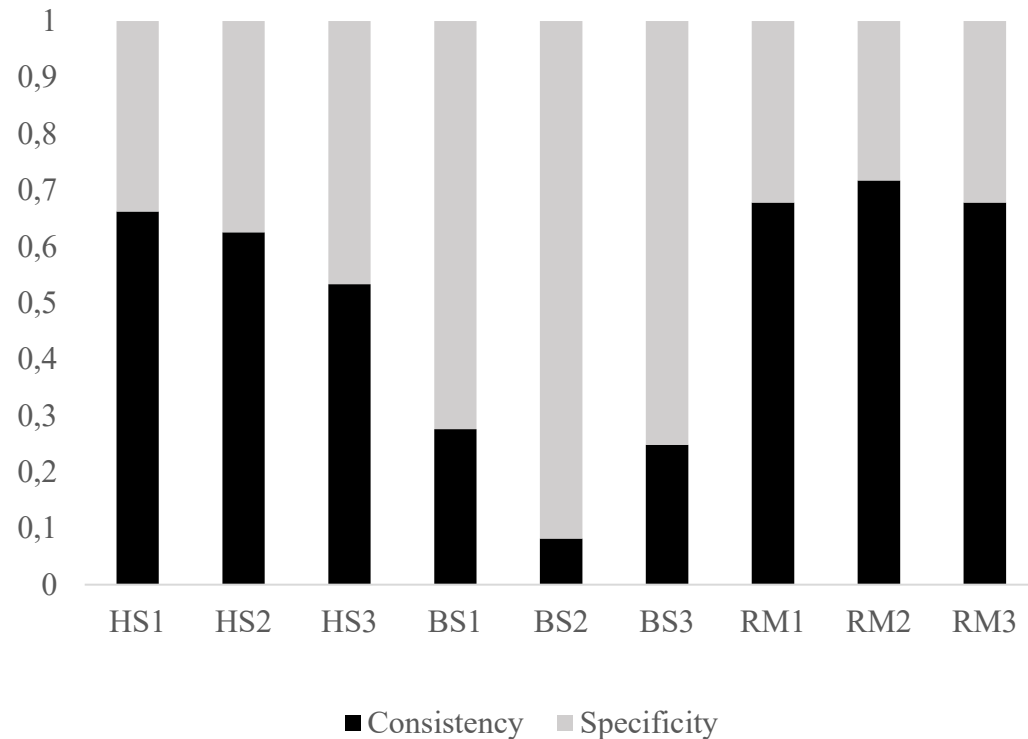
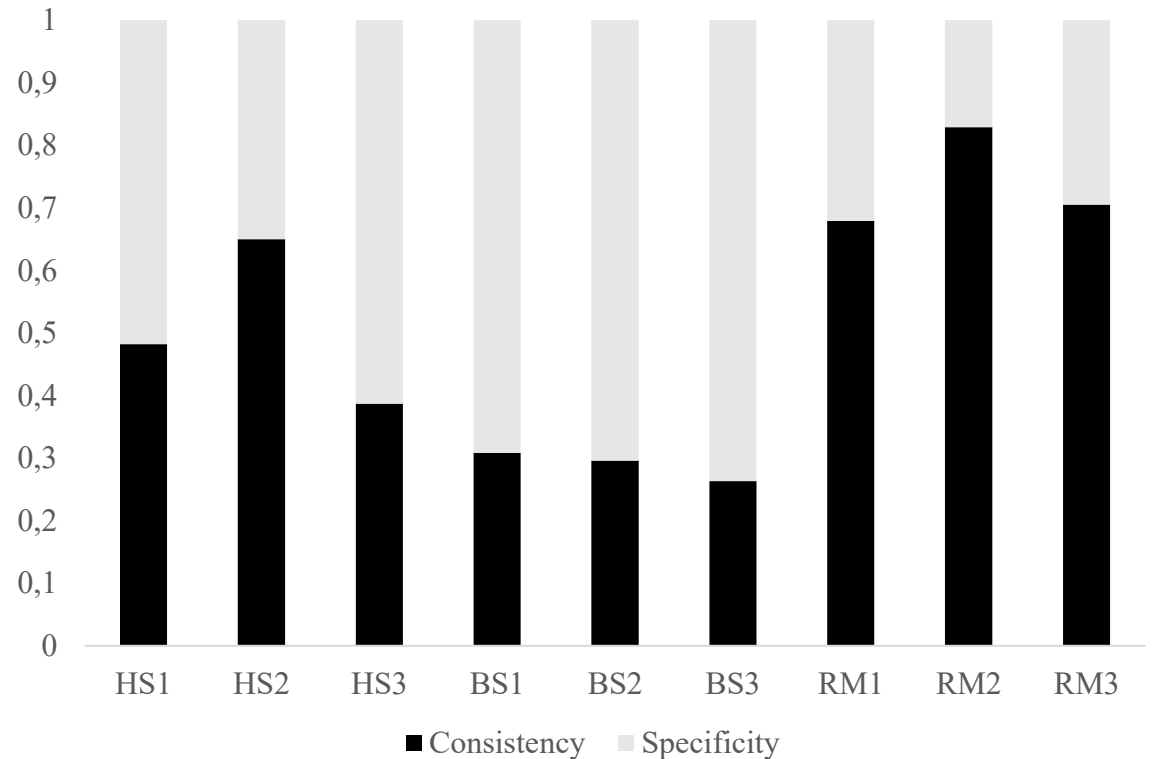
- Men: $\chi^2(48) = 91.57, p < .001, CFI = .973, SRMR = .050, RMSEA = .068, 90\% CI [.046, .088]$
- Women: $\chi^2(48) = 145.04, p < .001, CFI = .960, SRMR = .037, RMSEA = .084, 90\% CI [.069, .100]$

MEN



WOMEN



Results**Bifactorial(S-1) Model****MEN****WOMEN**

Results

Bifactorial(S-1) Model with criterion variable

Model fit

- Men: $\chi^2(82) = 131.40$, CFI = .977, SRMR = .034, RMSEA = .055, 90% CI [.037, .072]
- Women: $\chi^2(82) = 193.956$, CFI = .965, SRMR = .029, RMSEA = .069, 90% CI [.057, .082]

Table 1*Regression Analyses Predicting Perceived Vulnerability to Intimate Partner Violence*

Predictors	Men Sample			Women Sample		
	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>p</i>
G-IPV	.10	.08	.217	-.30	.06	<.001
S-HS	.25	.15	.086	.23	.08	.006
S-BS	-.04	.10	.680	-.05	.07	.479
S-RM	-.44	.16	.005	-.18	.10	.079

Note. G: IPV = Reference factor: Myths about Intimate Partner Violence; HS = Specific factor of hostile sexism; BS = Specific factor of benevolent sexism; RP = Specific factor of rape myths; F = Specific factor of feminist attitudes.

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Question

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Discussion

Hostile sexism: "I hate playing with girls! They're no good at sports."

Rape Myths

Women like to play coy. This does not mean that they do not want sex

Myths about Intimate Partner Violence

The State gives too much help to women who report intimate partner violence

Benevolent sexism: "You're smart for a girl."

Sexist Ideology

Educational programs to prevent violence against women and sexist discrimination

Intervention programs on victims

Social media (i.e., posts, influencers, humor, etc.)



Different attitudes of sexism and myths about violence against women



THANK YOU!



AMIVAW Scale (Megías et al., 2018)

Below you will find a series of statements. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement. To do so, please mark a number from 1 to 7. Number **1** means “**Totally disagree**” and number **7** means “**Totally agree**”.

1. A man who abuses his partner does it because he doesn't know how to behave otherwise
2. Some behaviors of women can drive any man mad
3. Men who use violence against their partners can't control themselves because they are jealous
4. Once a complaint for abuse has been filed, men are unprotected by law
5. If women who experience domestic violence really wanted to put an end to the relationship they would leave their partners
6. Work-related problems lie at the heart of cases of women abused by men
7. If we paid greater attention to the opinion of men accused of abuse, everything would be better
8. Abused women have enough social resources to escape from that situation
9. Only a minority of all the cases of domestic violence that are made public is true
10. The State gives too much help to women who report abuse
11. Men tend to abuse women physically but women tend to abuse men psychologically
12. If we talked to many abusers, we would identify with their situation more than we can imagine
13. Women obtain too many social benefits by claiming that they are abused
14. It's impossible to understand why an abused woman does not separate from her partner to put an end to the nightmare her children are going through
15. If a woman goes on living with a man who abuses her, then it is to a great extent her responsibility if he abuses her again

Ambivalente Sexism Inventory (ASI, Glick & Fiske, 1996; Expósito et al., 1997)

Below is a series of statements concerning men and women and their relationships in contemporary society. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the following scale: **0 = Disagree strongly; 1 = Disagree somewhat; 2 = Disagree slightly; 3 = Agree slightly; 4 = Agree somewhat; 5 = Agree strongly**

Benevolent sexism subscale [Construct 2]

BS 1. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.

BS 3. In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men.

BS *6. People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.

BS 8. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.

BS 9. Women should be cherished and protected by men.

BS 12. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.

BS * 13. Men are complete without women.

BS 17. A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.

BS 19. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.

BS 20. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.

BS 22. Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.

Hostile sexism subscale [Construct 3]

HS 2. Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for "equality."

HS 4. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.

HS 5. Women are too easily offended.

HS* 7. Feminists are not seeking for women to have more power than men.

HS 10. Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.

HS 11. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.

HS 14. Women exaggerate problems they have at work.

HS 15. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.

HS 16. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.

HS * 18. There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.

HS * 21. Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men.

AMMSA (Rape Myths, Gerger et al., 2007; Megías et al., 2011)

Please express your **agreement or disagreement with the following statements**. The number **1 means "Totally disagree"** and the number **7 means "Totally agree"**. Check the number that best fits your opinion in each case.

1. To get custody for their children, women often falsely accuse their ex-husband of atendency toward sexual violence
2. After a rape, women nowadays receive ample support
3. Nowadays, a large proportion of rapes is partly caused by the depiction of sexuality in the media as this raises the sex drive of potential perpetrators
4. When a woman starts a relationship with a man, she must be aware that the man will assert his right to have sex
5. Most women prefer to be praised for their looks rather than their intelligence
6. Because the fascination caused by sex is disproportionately large, our society's sensitivity to crimes in this area is disproportionate as well
7. Women like to play coy. This does not mean that they do not want sex
8. Many women tend to exaggerate the problem of male violence
9. When a man urges his female partner to have sex, this cannot be called rape
10. Women often accuse their husbands of marital rape just to retaliate for a failed relationship
11. The discussion about sexual harassment on the job has mainly resulted in many a harmless behavior being misinterpreted as harassment
12. In dating situations, the general expectation is that the woman "hits the brakes" and the man "pushes ahead"
13. Although the victims of armed robbery have to fear for their lives, they receive far less psychological support than do rape victims
14. Alcohol is often the culprit when a man rapes a woman
15. Many women tend to misinterpret a well-meant gesture as a "sexual assault"
16. Nowadays, the victims of sexual violence receive sufficient help in the form of women's shelters, therapy offers, and support groups

Perception of Vulnerability (Megías et al., 2011)

Please express your **agreement or disagreement** with the following statement.

The number **0** means "**Totally disagree**" and the number **5** means "**Totally agree**". Check the number that best fits your opinion.

1. I am certain I will never be a victim of intimate partner violence