

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

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Oral presentation

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Abstract

Introduction:

Intimate partner violence against women is a significant social and public issue, with myths that justify and minimize intimate partner violence playing key roles in its perception and perpetration. Although a measure to assess myths about intimate partner violence against women (AMIVAW) has been developed and validated, the empirical relationship between AMIVAW and other measures of sexist attitudes is strong, with some correlations approaching levels that suggest a common construct. Therefore, we aimed to explore whether myths about violence against women in intimate partner relationships (AMIVAW) differ from other constructs related to feminist attitudes, sexism and violence against women (i.e., hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, rape myths), or whether they represent different manifestations of the same underlying construct.

Method:

A total of 485 participants (199 men and 286 women) from the United States completed a survey that included measures of feminist attitudes, sexist attitudes and myths about intimate partner violence. First, we examined the relationships among these variables using a first-order Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) model. We hypothesized positive relationships between AMIVAW and sexist attitudes (both hostile and benevolent sexism) and rape myths, and a negative relationship between feminist attitudes and these constructs. Second, we used a bifactor (S-1) model to analyze the specific contributions of each variable while controlling for AMIVAW, hypothesizing that these attitudes are distinct but partially overlapping with AMIVAW. Finally, we explored how AMIVAW predicts the perception of vulnerability to intimate partner violence, expecting AMIVAW to predict vulnerability in women, but not in men.

Results:

The tested models showed an acceptable fit ($CFI > .95$, $SRMR < .06$, $RMSEA < .08$). The results confirmed our hypotheses and further revealed that AMIVAW was the strongest predictor of vulnerability to intimate partner violence.

Conclusion:

This study provides a deeper understanding of the relationship between measures of feminism, sexist attitudes and myths about violence against women.

Keywords

Bifactor(S-1) Model, Construct Validity, Assessment

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