2018

How Internalized Sexism Impacts Young Adult Women and their Sociopolitical Behavior

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I. Introduction

Sexism: A belief, practice, or system that supports the idea that the male sex is intrinsically superior to the female sex.

- The two major types of sexism are hostile and benevolent.
- In addition to external experiences of sexism, these beliefs can be internalized by women and are linked to negative outcomes.
- The overall climate surrounding women’s issues is becoming more contentious.
- Because of this, research and conversation surrounding gender equality are in the mainstream consciousness.
- This study used a correlational design to examine the relationship between internalized sexism, psychological health, relationship satisfaction, political affiliation, voting patterns, religious fundamentalism, social desirability, and self-efficacy.
- Regression analyses were also conducted to identify mediators.

II. Methods

Participants: 210 women, 18-25 years (M = 22), representative of the U.S. population.

Procedure: Online survey – Qualtrics recruited and compensated participants.

Measures: Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, Internalized Misogyny Scale, Attitudes Toward Women, Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale, & Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale.

III. Results

- Significant negative relationship between:
  1. Internalized misogyny and relationship consensus & satisfaction.
  2. Hostile sexism and all RDAS measures.
  3. Attitudes toward women and all RDAS measures.
- Significant positive relationship between religious fundamentalism and internalized misogyny, ambivalent sexism, & attitudes toward women.
- Internalized misogyny, benevolent sexism, and attitudes toward women mediated the relationship between religious fundamentalism and lower relationship satisfaction.
- Republican participants scored the highest on average across Internalized Misogyny and Ambivalent Sexism scales when compared to participants of other political affiliations (Fig. 2).
- Participants who voted for Trump scored the highest on average across all scales when compared to participants who voted for other candidates (Fig. 1 & 2).
- Not affiliated participants scored the highest average on the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Fig. 2).

IV. Conclusions

- Republican participants and those who voted for Trump reported the highest levels of internalized misogyny, adherence to traditional gender roles, and both types of sexism.
- There was a negative mediated relationship between religious fundamentalism and relationship satisfaction. Internalized misogyny, benevolent sexism, and attitudes toward women were found to explain this relationship.
- Other significant correlations between study variables were identified.