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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.
  1. Republican participants scored the highest on average across Internalized Misogyny and Ambivalent Sexism scales when compared to participants of other political affiliations (Fig. 2).
  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).
  3. 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.

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