

Development and Validation of the Attitude toward Sexual Aggression against Women (ASAW) Scale

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International Society for Research on Aggression, July 2024



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30%

of women have experienced intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner



Offence-Supportive Cognitions

Machismo

Beliefs about rape

Rape myth acceptance

Attitudes Justifications

Cognitive distortions

Hostility toward women

Minimizations



Attitudes

Favourable or unfavourable evaluations of a psychological object

Attitudes

Attitude-Behaviour Link

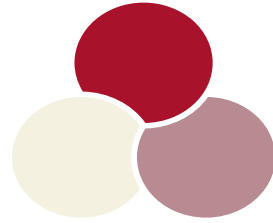


Preliminary evidence

- **Attitude toward sexual aggression against women**
 - Men's attitude toward sexual aggression is **associated** with, and potentially **predictive** of, sexually aggressive behavior
 - Attitude toward sexual aggression may be **distinct** from other offence-supportive cognitions



Attitude toward Sexual Aggression Against Women (ASAW) Scale



Study 1: ASAW Development



Method

- 3 independent **samples of men** recruited from an online panel
- Iterative process of **item development & selection**:
 - Writing
 - Testing
 - Analysis





Attitude toward Sexual Aggression against Women (ASAW) Scale

RESPONSE SCALE: very bad, pretty bad, not that bad, not at all bad

#	Item
1	You're with a woman who is wearing a sexy dress and has been flirting with you. She's refusing to let you kiss or sexually touch her, so you block her from getting away from you (for example, by blocking the doorway) until she lets you kiss or sexually touch her.
2	You're with a woman who is drunk or high. She's having sex with you but refuses to let you take sexual pictures of her. You take sexual pictures of her anyway.
3	You're talking with a woman you just met. You put your hand on her leg, but she pushes it away. You put your hand back on her leg.
4	You have oral sex with your date/girlfriend/wife when she is too drunk or high to know or stop what is happening.
5	You're with a woman who is wearing a sexy dress and has been flirting with you. She's giving you oral sex but refuses to have sexual intercourse with you, so you tell her that you'll spread rumours about her if she doesn't have sex with you.
6	Your date/girlfriend/wife agrees to have sex with you, but only if you wear a condom. You put a condom on. While you're having sex, you purposely break or remove the condom without her knowing and continue to have sex with her without a condom.



Attitude toward Sexual Aggression against Women (ASAW) Scale

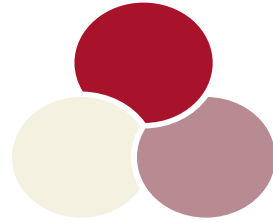
7	You're with a woman who is wearing a sexy dress and has been flirting with you. She refuses to give you oral sex, so you tell her that you'll make something bad happen to her reputation or employment if she doesn't give you oral sex.
8	You're with a woman you just met who is wearing a sexy dress and has been flirting with you. You grab her butt, but she pushes your hand away. You grab her butt again.
9	Your date/girlfriend/wife refuses to let you kiss or sexually touch her, so you intimidate her by yelling, swearing, or breaking stuff until she lets you kiss or sexually touch her.
10	You have sex with a woman who was flirting with you and wearing a sexy dress when she is too drunk or high to know or stop what is happening.
11	Your date/girlfriend/wife is refusing to have sex with you, so you tell her that you'll post sexual pictures of her on the internet if she doesn't have sex with you.
12	Your date/girlfriend/wife refuses to give you oral sex, so you physically force her (for example, by holding her down) to give you oral sex.
13	You're having vaginal sex with your date/girlfriend/wife. You push your penis against her anus to have anal sex with her, but she moves your penis away and says she doesn't want to have anal sex. You have anal sex with her anyway.

SCORING: Responses to each item are scored from 1 to 4 (*very bad* = 1, *pretty bad* = 2, *not that bad* = 3, *not at all bad* = 4), and averaged to compute the total score.



ASAW psychometric properties

- **13 non-redundant items:** inter-item correlations ranged from .50 to .85
- **Internally consistent:** McDonald's Omega [ω] = .92
- **Unidimensional:** confirmatory factor analysis confirmed that all items loaded strongly ($> .70$) onto a single factor
- **Reduced floor effects** compared to previous attitude measures



Study 2: ASAW Discriminant & Incremental Validity



Hypotheses

- **Hypothesis 1:** ASAW items will be driven by a distinct latent construct than items from commonly-used measures of offence-supportive cognitions (**discriminant validity**)
- **Hypothesis 2:** ASAW scores will be independently associated with sexually aggressive behaviour after accounting for other measures of offence-supportive cognitions (**incremental validity**)



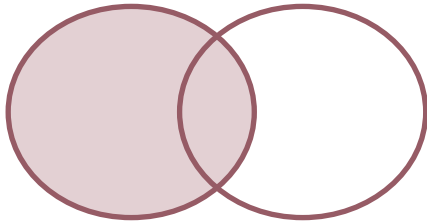
Methods



- Sample of men recruited from an online panel
 - Measures of:
 - **Attitude toward SA (ASAW)**
 - Rape myth acceptance
 - Cognitive distortions
 - Beliefs about rape
 - Past SA
 - Likelihood of engaging in SA
 - Likelihood to rape
- Offence-supportive cognitions
- Sexually aggressive behaviour

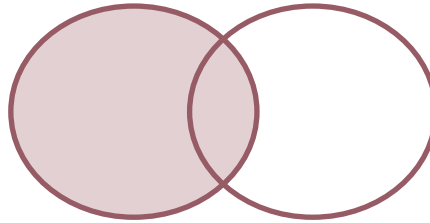


Discriminant Validity



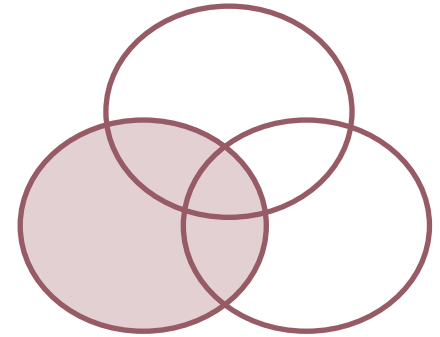
ASAW vs. Rape
Myths

H 1



ASAW vs. Cognitive
Distortions

H 1

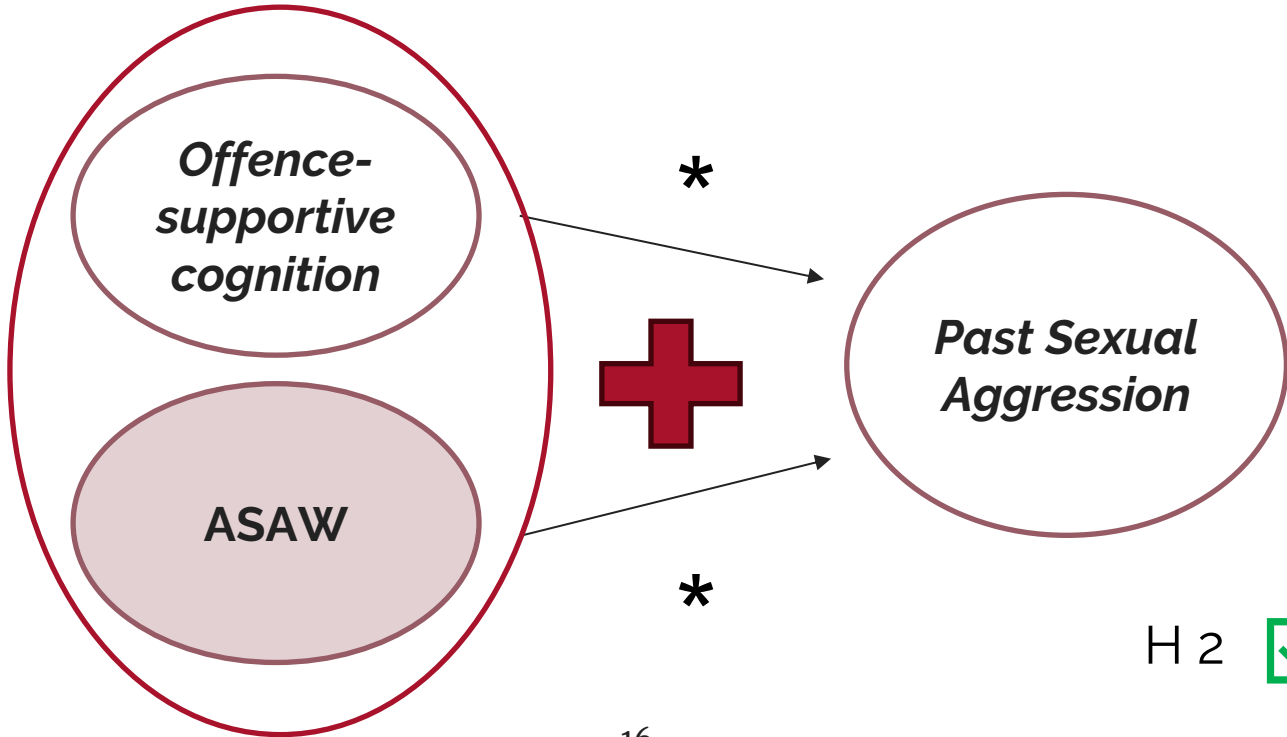


ASAW vs. Beliefs
About Rape

H 1



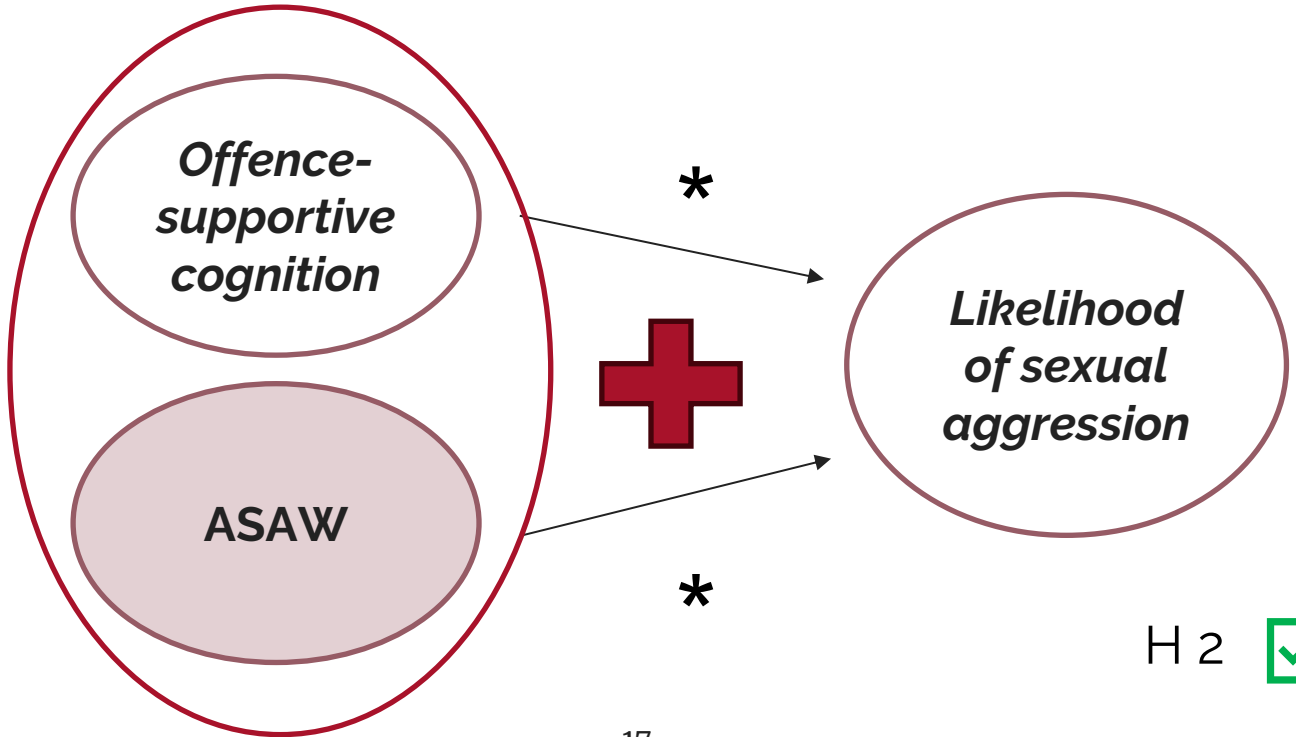
Incremental Validity



H 2



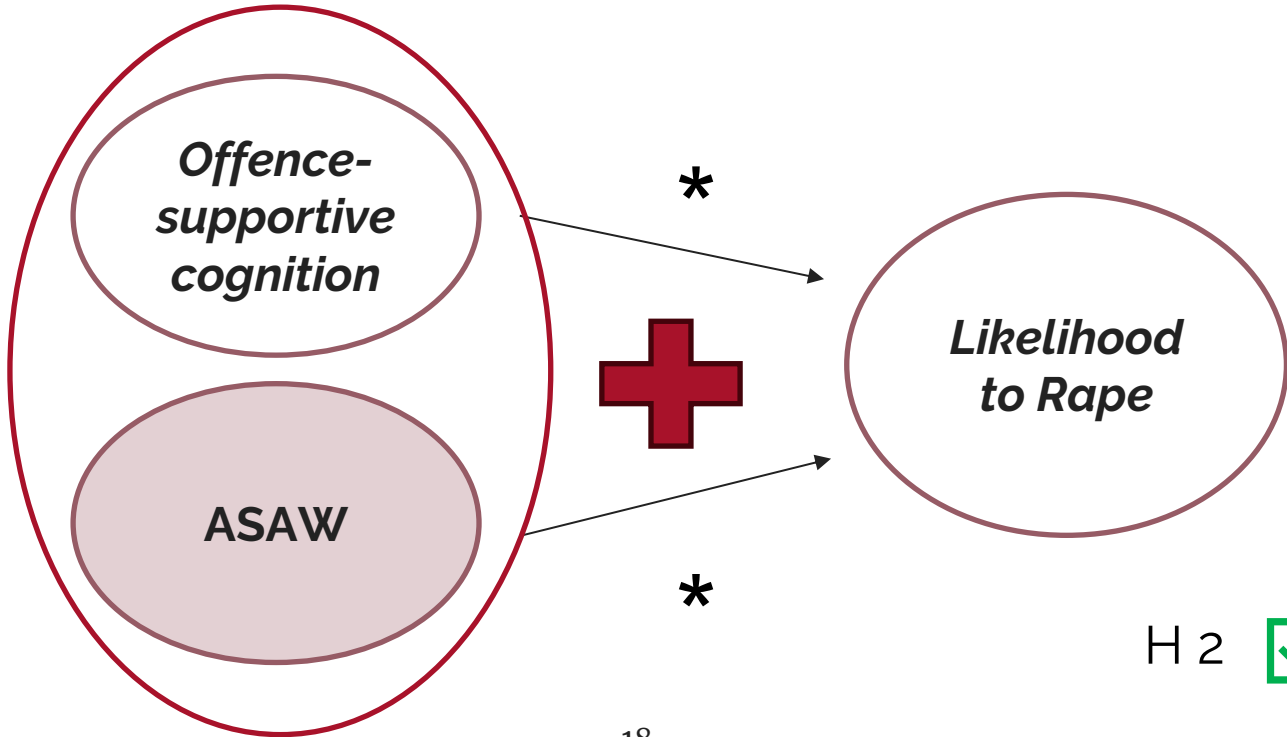
Incremental Validity



H 2



Incremental Validity



H 2



Study 3: ASAW Construct Validity



Method

- Sample of 617 men recruited from an online panel
- Experimental study
- Attitude-change manipulation:
 - Persuasive message (make attitude toward SA more negative)
 - Control condition (no impact on attitude toward SA)



Method

- Solomon 4-group design

Condition	SA History	Pretest*	Manipulation	Posttest*
Attitude-change pre-post	Past SA	ASAW	Attitude-change	ASAW
Attitude-change post-only	Past SA		Attitude-change	ASAW
Control pre-post	Past SA	ASAW	Control	ASAW
Control post-only	Past SA		Control	ASAW

*Participants also completed a measure of rape myth acceptance



Hypotheses

- **Hypothesis 1 (construct validity):**
 - 1.1: Post-manipulation ASAW scores will be lower, on average, in the attitude-change condition than in the control condition
 - 1.2: Difference will be greater among men with a history of sexual aggression

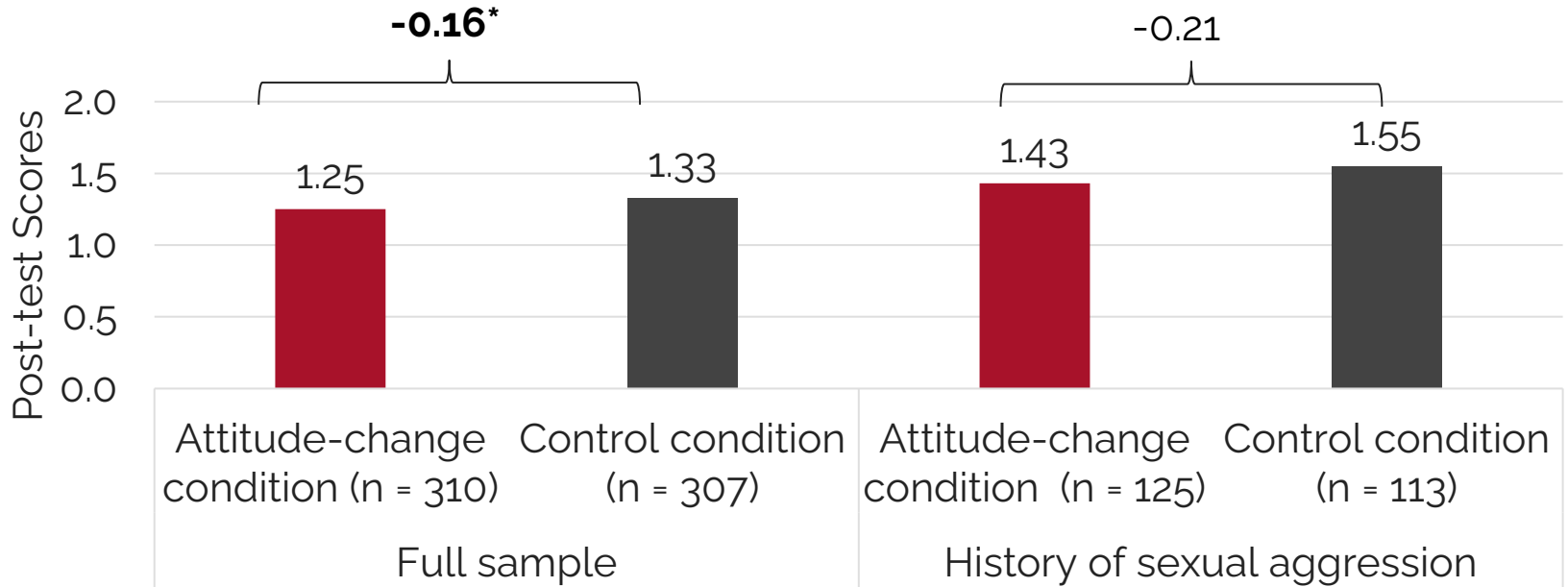


Hypotheses

- **Hypothesis 2 (construct validity):**
 - 2.1: Scores on the ASAW will show a greater reduction from pre- to post-test in the attitude-change condition than in the control condition.
 - 2.2: Reduction will be larger among men with a history of sexual aggression



Construct Validity

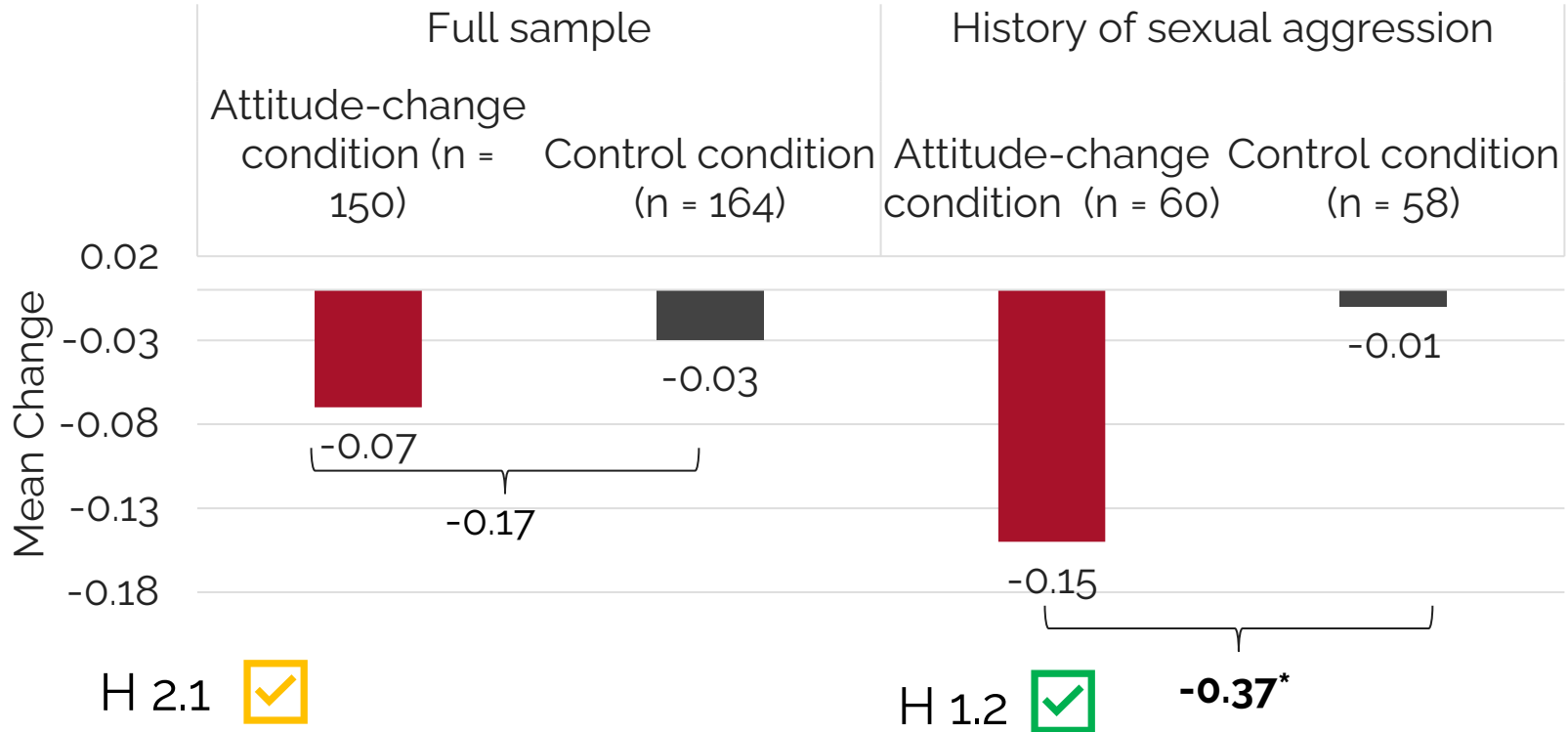


H 1.1

H 1.2



Construct Validity





Limitations

- Social desirability
- Attitude-change manipulation also seemed to influence scores on a measure of rape myth acceptance
- Brief persuasive message



Summary



Summary

ASAW:

- Psychometric properties = strong
- Discriminant validity evidence = strong
- Incremental validity evidence = strong
- Construct validity evidence = moderate



Practical Implication

ASAW:

- Could be used in research or intervention settings*
- Could be used to assess changes in attitude
- Could be combined with other measures of offence-supportive cognition

*pending additional construct validity evidence



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Thank
you!