Positive Evaluations of Rape Predict Sexually Aggressive Behaviour

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Evaluations

Evaluations (attitudes) are theoretically and empirically associated with subsequent behaviour

• Implicit evaluations: automatically activated evaluations
• Explicit evaluations: deliberative evaluations
• Evaluations are a unique (distinct) cognitive construct

Evaluations of Rape

Few studies have explored the relationship between evaluations of rape and sexually aggressive behaviour

• Some evidence of a positive relationship between implicit and explicit evaluations of rape and indicators of sexually aggressive behaviour
• Limitations:
  • Cross-sectional research designs
  • Primarily student samples

Purpose

Explore the relationships between implicit and explicit evaluations of rape and sexually aggressive behaviour using a longitudinal research design

Participants

Community Sample (N = 248):

• 75.4% were 40 to 60+ years
• 86.3% White
• 62.8% in a relationship
• 46.4% had full time employment
• 60.9% completed college/university

Measures: Implicit Evaluations of Rape

Rape Evaluation Implicit Association Test (REIAT): implicit evaluations of rape relative to consenting sex

RAPE
CONSENTING SEX
positive
negative
FORCE

Positive scores suggest rape and positive/good are more strongly associated than rape and negative/bad and negative scores suggest the opposite
Measures: Explicit Evaluations of Rape

**Evaluation of Sexual Aggression Scale**
(modified SES-TFR Abbey et al., 2005)
- 6 tactics: verbal coercion to physical force
- 6 behaviours: (kissing to oral/vaginal/anal penetration)
- Likert scale: (1) very negative to (7) very positive
- Average of all 36 items

How POSITIVE or NEGATIVE do you think the behaviour below is?
Giving a woman drugs or alcohol without her permission in order to...
(c) Make her have oral sex with you

Measures: Sexually Aggressive Behaviour

**Sexual Experience Survey – Tactics First Revised**
(modified Abbey et al., 2005)
- 6 tactics: verbal coercion to physical force
- 6 behaviours: (kissing to oral/vaginal/anal penetration)
- Frequency: (0) None to (9) Nine times or more
- Weighted total score from Cue Davis et al. (2014)

How many times SINCE YOU WERE 16 years old...
How many times in the PAST FOUR MONTHS...
Have you given a woman drugs or alcohol without her permission in order to...
(c) Make her have oral sex with you

Procedure

**Wave 1: Online Survey**
- Implicit evaluations of rape (1 of 4 IAT measures)
- Explicit evaluations of rape
- Past sexually aggressive behaviour (since 16 years old)

**Wave 2: Online Survey**
- Implicit evaluations of rape
- Explicit evaluations of rape
- Sexually aggressive behaviour (4 month period between Wave 1 and Wave 2)

Results

Cross-Lagged Panel Models

15.7% (n = 38) participants reported committing a sexually aggressive act during 4 months since Wave 1

Explicit Evaluations of Rape at Wave 1 Predicted Sexually Aggressive Behaviour at Wave 2

\[ \hat{R}^2 \text{ Sexually Aggressive Behaviour (Wave 2)} = 0.14^* \]

Implicit Evaluations of Rape at Wave 1 Predicted Sexually Aggressive Behaviour at Wave 2

\[ \hat{R}^2 \text{ Sexually Aggressive Behaviour (Wave 2)} = 0.13^* \]
Implicit and Explicit Evaluations of Rape at Wave 1 Predicted Sexually Aggressive Behaviour at Wave 2

Discussion

Implicit and explicit evaluations of rape independently predicted subsequent sexually aggressive behaviour in a sample of community men

- Consistent with notion that evaluations of rape play a causal role in sexually aggressive behaviour
- Consistent with social psychological theory and research that suggests attitudes can be important determinants of behaviour

Implications

Theory:
- Evaluations of rape should be considered in theories explaining sexual offending against adults

Research:
- Replicate and expand upon these findings

Correctional Practice:
- Assessment
- Treatment

Limitations

1. Self-report measures of sexually aggressive behaviour
2. Validity of implicit and explicit measures of evaluations of rape
3. Use of the word ‘rape’ in measures of implicit evaluations of rape

Future Directions

Replicate and expand on current results

1. Longitudinal studies with samples of incarcerated men and official indicators of sexually aggressive behaviour (sexual recidivism)
   - Do evaluations of rape predict sexual recidivism?
   - Does change in evaluations of rape predict sexual recidivism?
2. Experiments manipulating evaluations of rape
3. Explore the validity of measures of evaluations of rape

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### How many participants reported past sexually aggressive behaviour (since 16 years old)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexually Aggressive Tactic</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arguments and pressure</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made promises you knew were untrue</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shown you were not happy by making a woman feel guilty, swearing sulking, or getting angry</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving a woman drugs or alcohol without her permission</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman passed out or too drunk to stop what was happening</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used physical force</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How many participants reported sexually aggressive behaviour during 4 months between Wave 1 and 2?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexually Aggressive Tactic</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arguments and pressure</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made promises you knew were untrue</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shown you were not happy by making a woman feel guilty, swearing sulking, or getting angry</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving a woman drugs or alcohol without her permission</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman passed out or too drunk to stop what was happening</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used physical force</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>6</td>
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