

Nunes, K. L., Hatton, C. E., Stafford, S. D., & Mallon, I. K. (2024, November 13-16). *Different measures of violent attitudes may not be so different after all* [Paper presentation]. American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, United States.

## Different Measures of Violent Attitudes May Not Be So Different After All

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## Attitudes Toward Violence

- Attitudes toward violence are relevant for the explanation, prediction, and reduction of violent/aggressive behavior
  - (e.g., Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Bonta & Andrews, 2017; Douglas, 2014; Mills et al., 2004; Nunes et al., 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024; Polaschek et al., 2004)
- Concerns raised about potential discrepancies between conceptualizations and measures of violent attitudes (Nunes et al., 2015, 2021, 2023)



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## Attitudes in Social Psychology

- “Degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior” (Ajzen, 1991)
- Attitudes = evaluations



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## Attitudes in Forensic Theory, Research, and Practice

- “Lots of people are out to get you”
- “I see myself as a violent person”
- “Sometimes you have to threaten people to get them to do the right thing, even if you don’t like doing it”



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## at-ti-tude

/ˈədəˌt(y)oʊd/

noun

a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.

"she took a tough attitude toward other people's indulgences"

**synonyms:** view, viewpoint, outlook, perspective, stance, standpoint, position, inclination, temper, orientation, approach, reaction

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## To avoid confusion...

- Evaluative attitudes toward violence:
  - Extent to which violence is viewed negatively or positively



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**Do typical violent attitude measures assess evaluative attitudes?**



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**Evaluation of Violence Questionnaire (EVQ) (Nunes et al., 2021)**

- Designed to measure men's evaluative attitudes toward their own actual or hypothetical violence against other men
- 17 items
- "You hitting (for example, punching or kicking) a guy who tries to make you look stupid"

Very bad      A bit bad      A bit good      Very good

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**Violent Attitudes Scale of the Revised Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA-R) (Mills & Kroner, 2007)**

Sometimes you have to fight to keep your self-respect

1      2      3      4  
Disagree      Agree

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**Criminal Attitudes to Violence Scale (CAVS) (Polaschek et al., 2004)**

Fighting between men is normal

1      2      3      4      5  
Strongly disagree      Strongly agree

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**Past Research: Mixed Evidence for Distinctiveness**

- EVQ highly correlated ( $r = .75$ ) with the MCAA-R-V and CAVS
- EVQ items formed a separate factor from the CAVS items, but not from the MCAA-R-V items
- EVQ was independently correlated with violent behavior

• Nunes et al. (2023)

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**Study 1**

- If the EVQ reflects evaluative attitudes toward violence more so than the other measures, then it should be most affected by an experimental manipulation of evaluative attitudes toward violence
- We used the persuasive message from Nunes et al.'s (2021, 2022) experimental manipulation


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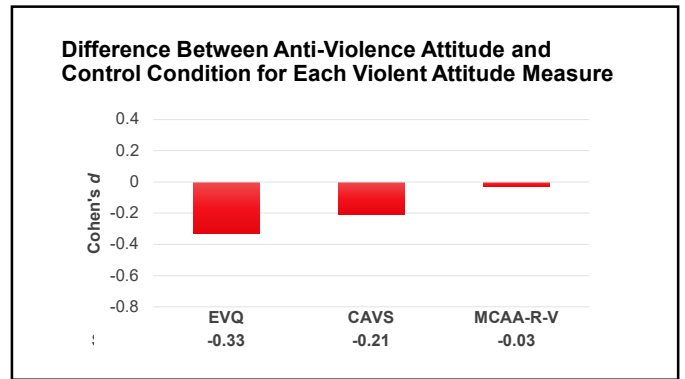
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**Method**

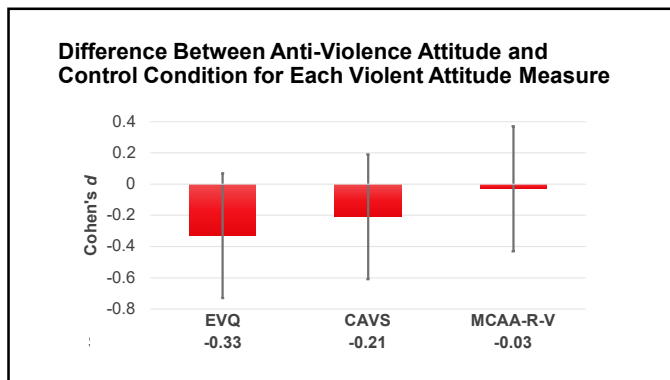
- 152 men (university students)
- Randomized experiment
  - Anti-violence attitude message
  - Control message
- Evaluation of Violence Questionnaire (EVQ)
- Criminal Attitudes To Violence Scale (CAVS)
- Violent Attitude Scale of the Revised Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA-R-V)



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**EVQ Highly Correlated with CAVS and MCAA-R-V**

	CAVS	MCAA-R-V
EVQ	.78 [.65, .86]	.73 [.58, .83]

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**Study 2**


- We presented the EVQ items with one of the original evaluative response scales (bad vs. good) and again with alternate response scales derived from the themes and wording from other definitions and measures of violent attitudes and related cognitions
  - (e.g., Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Bandura, 1978; Dodge & Crick, 1990; Huesmann, 1998; Mills et al., 2002; Polaschek et al., 2004, 2009)
- If the scales are distinct, then they should not be too highly intercorrelated ( $r < .70$ ) and the correlations with aggressive/violent behavior could be different (i.e.,  $> .10$  difference; Carlson & Herdman, 2012)



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**Method**

- 164 men university students
- Evaluation of Violence Questionnaire (EVQ)
  - Original bad vs. good response scale
  - 8 alternate response scales
- Doll Aggression Task (DAT; DeWall et al., 2013)
- Violent Behavior Questions (VBQ; Monahan et al., 2001)



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**EVQ and Alternate Scale Response Options**

Scale	Response Options			
<b>EVQ</b>				
<b>Good</b>	Very bad	A bit bad	A bit good	Very good
<b>Alternate</b>				
<b>Acceptable</b>	Not at all acceptable	A bit not acceptable	A bit acceptable	Very acceptable
<b>Right</b>	Very wrong	A bit wrong	A bit right	Very right
<b>Reasonable</b>	Not at all reasonable	A bit unreasonable	A bit reasonable	Very reasonable
<b>OK</b>	Not at all OK	A bit not OK	A bit OK	Very OK
<b>Necessary</b>	Not at all necessary	A bit not necessary	A bit necessary	Very necessary
<b>Understandable</b>	Not at all understandable	A bit not understandable	A bit understandable	Very understandable
<b>Normal</b>	Not at all normal	A bit not normal	A bit normal	Very normal
<b>Not your fault</b>	Completely your fault	A bit your fault	A bit not your fault	Not at all your fault

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**High Correlations Between Original “Bad vs. Good” EVQ Response Scale and Alternate Response Scales**

Scale	<i>r</i>	95% CI
<b>Acceptable</b>	.89	[.85, .92]
<b>Right</b>	.86	[.81, .91]
<b>Reasonable</b>	.86	[.81, .91]
<b>OK</b>	.84	[.76, .89]
<b>Necessary</b>	.78	[.69, .85]
<b>Understandable</b>	.74	[.66, .82]
<b>Normal</b>	.70	[.60, .79]
<b>Not your fault</b>	.65	[.51, .77]

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**Similar Correlations with Aggressive/Violent Behavior for Most Response Scales**

	DAT		VBQ	
	<i>r</i>	95% CI	<i>r</i>	95% CI
<b>Good</b>	.52	[.37, .64]	.38	[.25, .52]
<b>Acceptable</b>	.46	[.32, .58]	.35	[.21, .48]
<b>Right</b>	.52	[.38, .64]	.40	[.28, .53]
<b>Reasonable</b>	.49	[.35, .62]	.33	[.21, .46]
<b>OK</b>	.49	[.34, .60]	.34	[.20, .47]
<b>Necessary</b>	.51	[.37, .62]	.34	[.19, .48]
<b>Understandable</b>	.40	[.25, .51]	.33	[.20, .46]
<b>Normal</b>	.40	[.26, .53]	.34	[.22, .45]
<b>Not your fault</b>	.38	[.21, .53]	.16	[-.02, .33]

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- Limitations**
- Student samples
  - Inadequate sample sizes for comparisons
  - Limited approaches and set of measures

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- Maybe Not So Different After All?**
- The evidence generally suggests that, for the most part, differences between the EVQ and other violent attitude measures may not be practically important
  - Future research could compare the patterns of correlations with other variables and the effects of other experimental manipulations

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**Thank you!**

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