Validating... and then Revising... an Evaluation of Sexual Aggression Scale

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Preliminary Research on Evaluative Attitudes towards Sexual Aggression

Cross-sectional studies (Hermann et al., 2016; Nunes et al., 2018):

Evaluations ⟷ Sexual Aggression

Longitudinal studies (Hermann & Nunes, 2016):

Evaluations ⟶ Sexual Aggression

Exploratory Factor Analysis (Nunes et al., 2018):

Evaluations ≠ Cognitive Distortions

Next step:

Examine the **construct validity** of scales designed to assess evaluative attitudes towards sexual aggression

Study 1: Validating the ESAW

Evaluation of Sexual Aggression Against Women (ESAW) Scale

21-item self-report scale based on the **Sexual Experience Survey (Abbey, Parkhill, & Koss, 2005)**

Example item: How **positive** or **negative** is it to **use physical force** on a woman in order to **kiss and/or sexually touch her** when she doesn't want to?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

very negative   *very positive*

Method

Participants: 253 male undergraduate students

Groups	Pretest	Manipulation	Posttest
Experimental group 1	ESAW	- Evaluation-change	ESAW
Control group 1	ESAW	Control	ESAW
Experimental group 2		- Evaluation-change	ESAW
Control group 2		Control	ESAW

Negative evaluation-change manipulation

Persuasive message

Evaluative conditioning
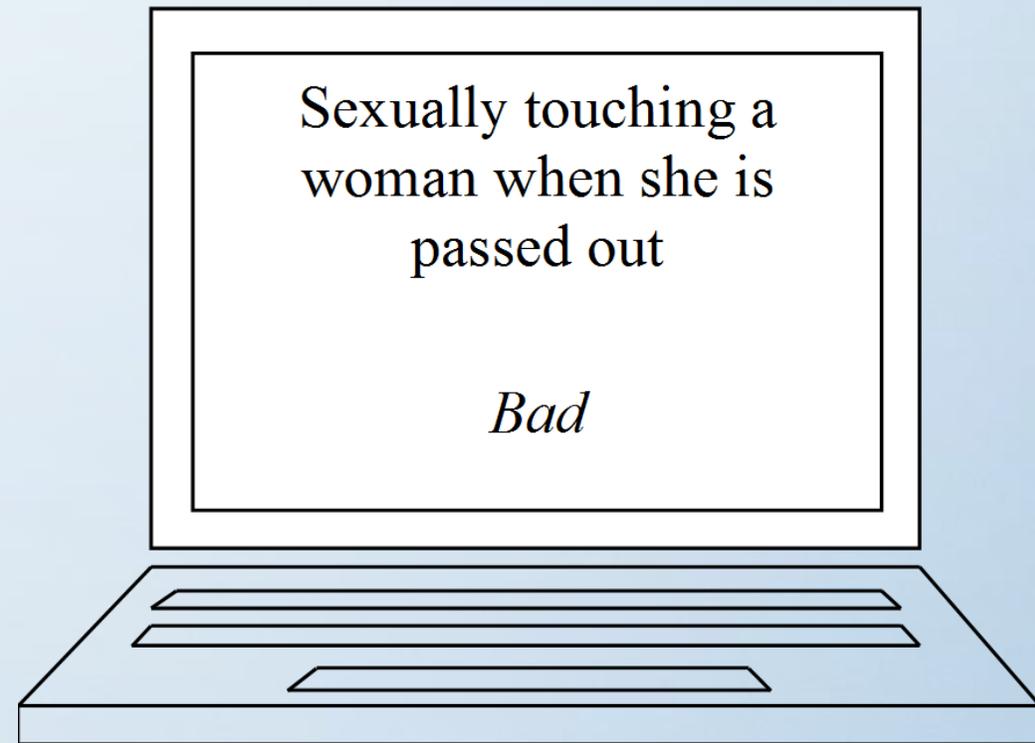
Consequences for:

- Men who commit sexual assault

- Victims of sexual assault

- The community

What other men think of sexual assault…

Sexually touching a woman when she is passed out

Bad

Control condition

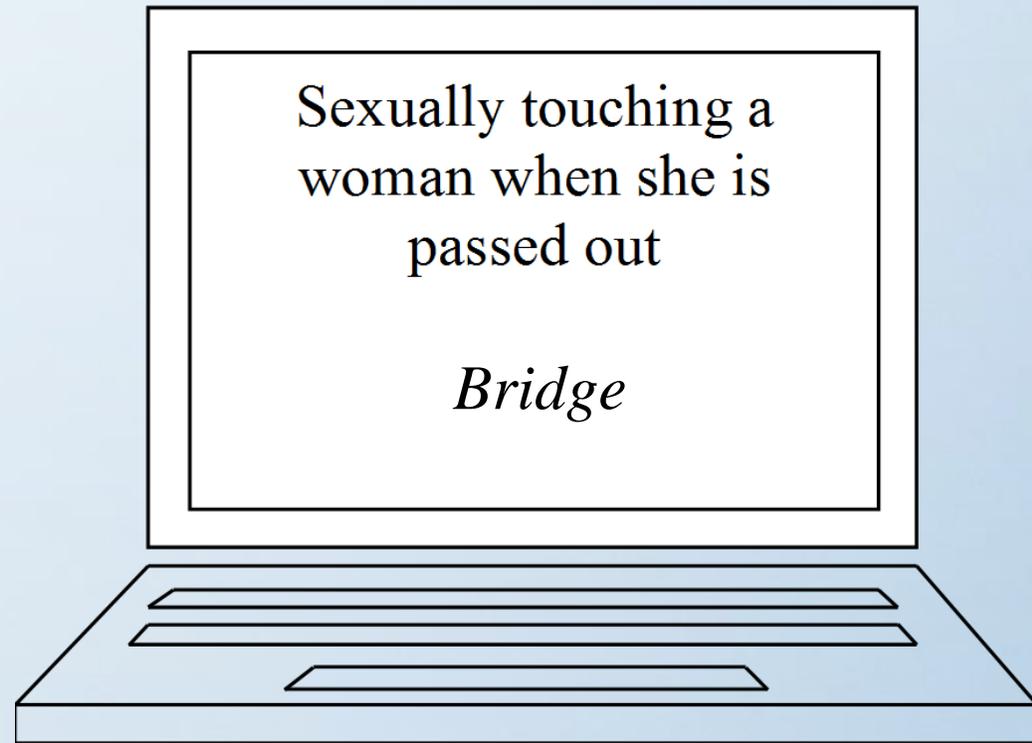## Informative message

The Grand Canyon has:

- Different climates

- Different types of rocks

- Activities for everyone

The Grand Canyon is a great place to visit…

Neutral pairs
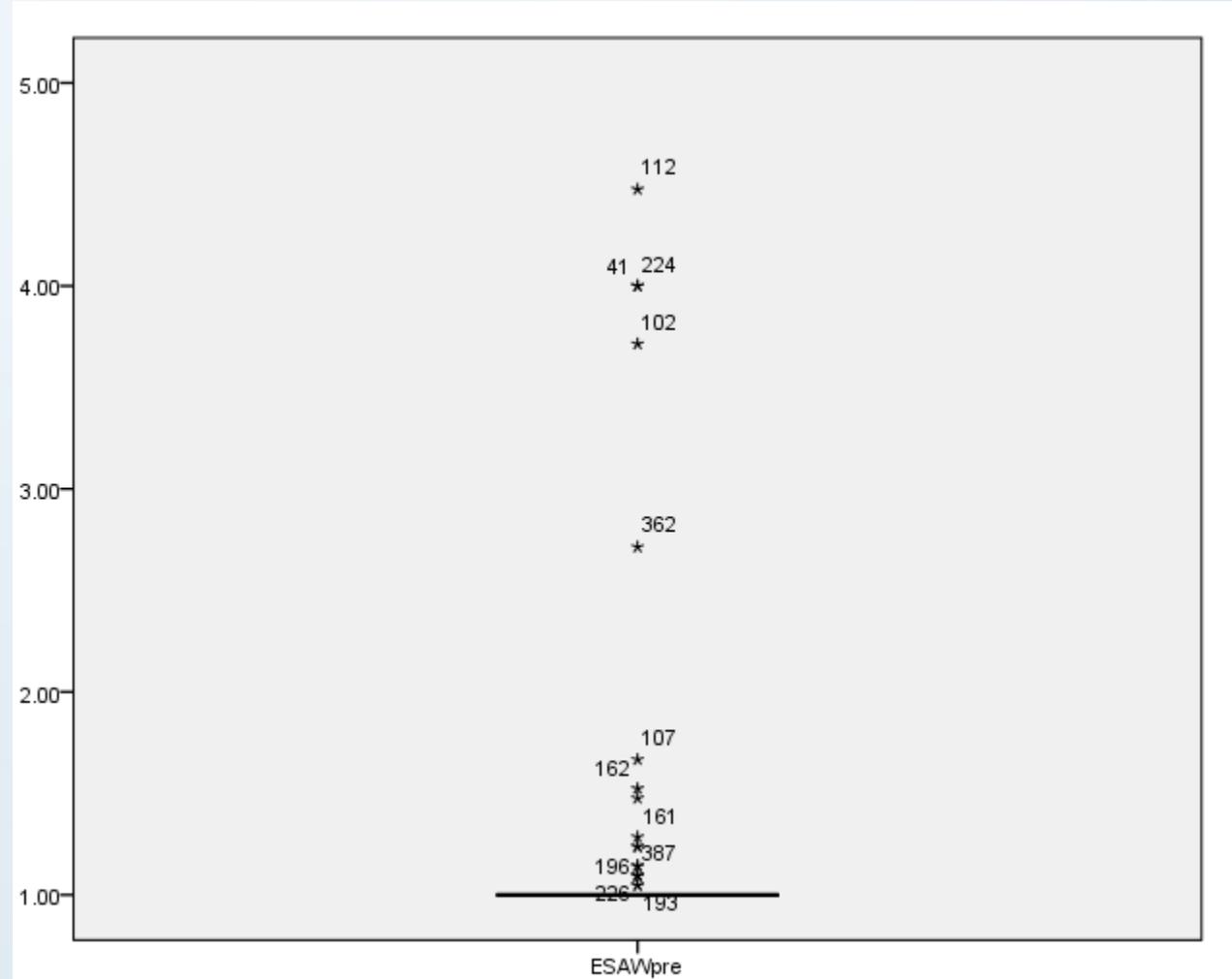
Sexually touching a woman when she is passed out
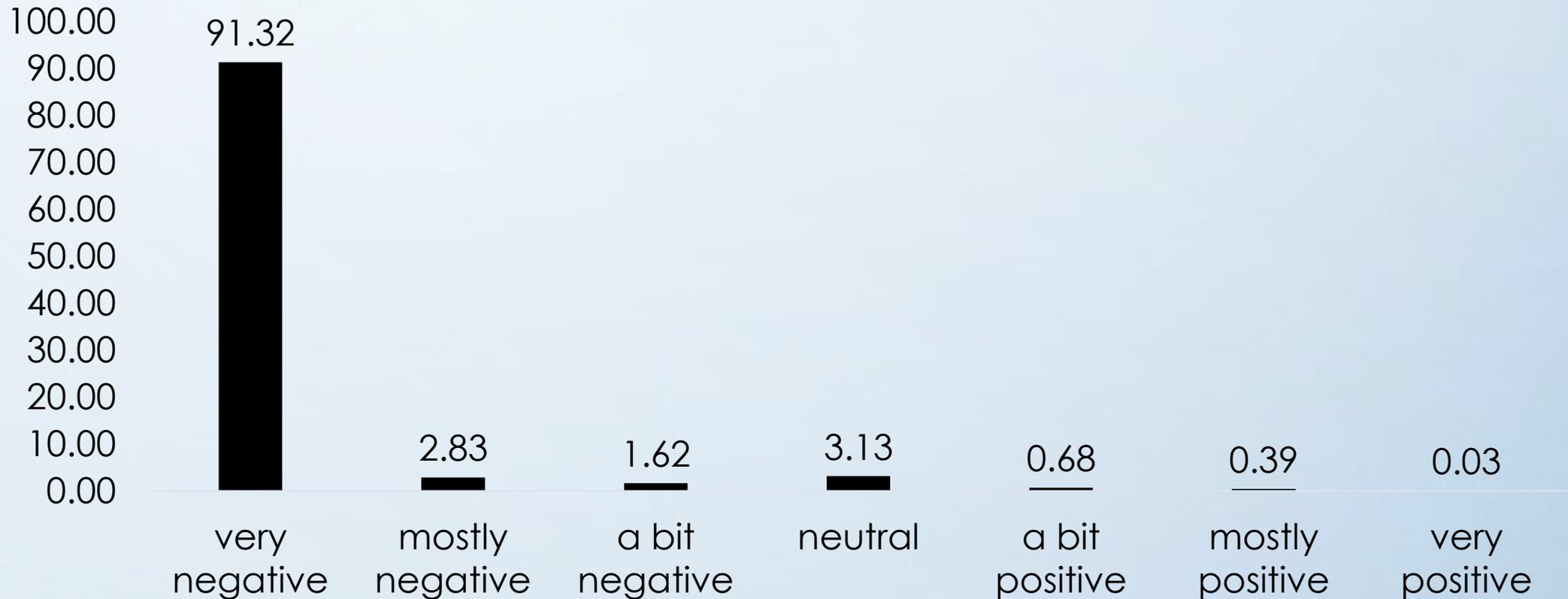
Bridge

Results

Low Scale Variability

Low Scale Variability

Average Item Endorsement (%)

Category	Value
very negative	91.32
mostly negative	2.83
a bit negative	1.62
neutral	3.13
a bit positive	0.68
mostly positive	0.39
very positive	0.03

Study 2: Revising the ESAW

Developing New Items

- Added 3 contexts:
  - You're with a woman who is wearing a sexy dress and has been flirting with you.
  - You're with a woman who is drunk or high.
  - Your date/girlfriend/wife refuses to…

- New response scales:
  - very bad, a bit bad, a bit good, very good
  - very sad, a bit sad, a bit fun, very fun
  - very negative, a bit negative, a bit positive, very positive

Developing New Items

Example Item:

You're with **a woman who is drunk or high**. She refuses to give you **oral sex**, so you **threaten to physically harm her** if she doesn't give you oral sex.

	1	2	3	4	

very bad   *very good*

Method

- 380 heterosexual men from the community completed the 153 new items (Qualtrics sample)

  – Median age = 29 (min = 18; max = 75)

  – United States (*n* = 247); Canada (*n* = 133)

Selecting new ESAW Items

- Discarded redundant items (i.e., polychoric correlations > .90)
  - Items with higher variance were retained

- Exploratory Factor Analysis
  - Items with factor loadings > .40 were retained

ESAW-Revised

- 12-item scale

- *Mean* = 1.30 (*SD* = 0.55); min = 1, max = 3.58

- Internal consistency: Cronbach's *α* = .96

ESAW-Revised

Example items:

You having **sex** with a woman who has been **flirting with you and is wearing a sexy dress** when she is too drunk or high to know or stop what is happening.

	1	2	3	4	
very bad					*very good*

ESAW-Revised

Example items:

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.

	1	2	3	4	
very sad					*very fun*

ESAW-Revised

Example items:

You're with a woman who is **drunk or high**. She refuses to give you **oral sex**, so you **block her from getting away from you** (for example, by blocking the doorway) until she gives you oral sex.
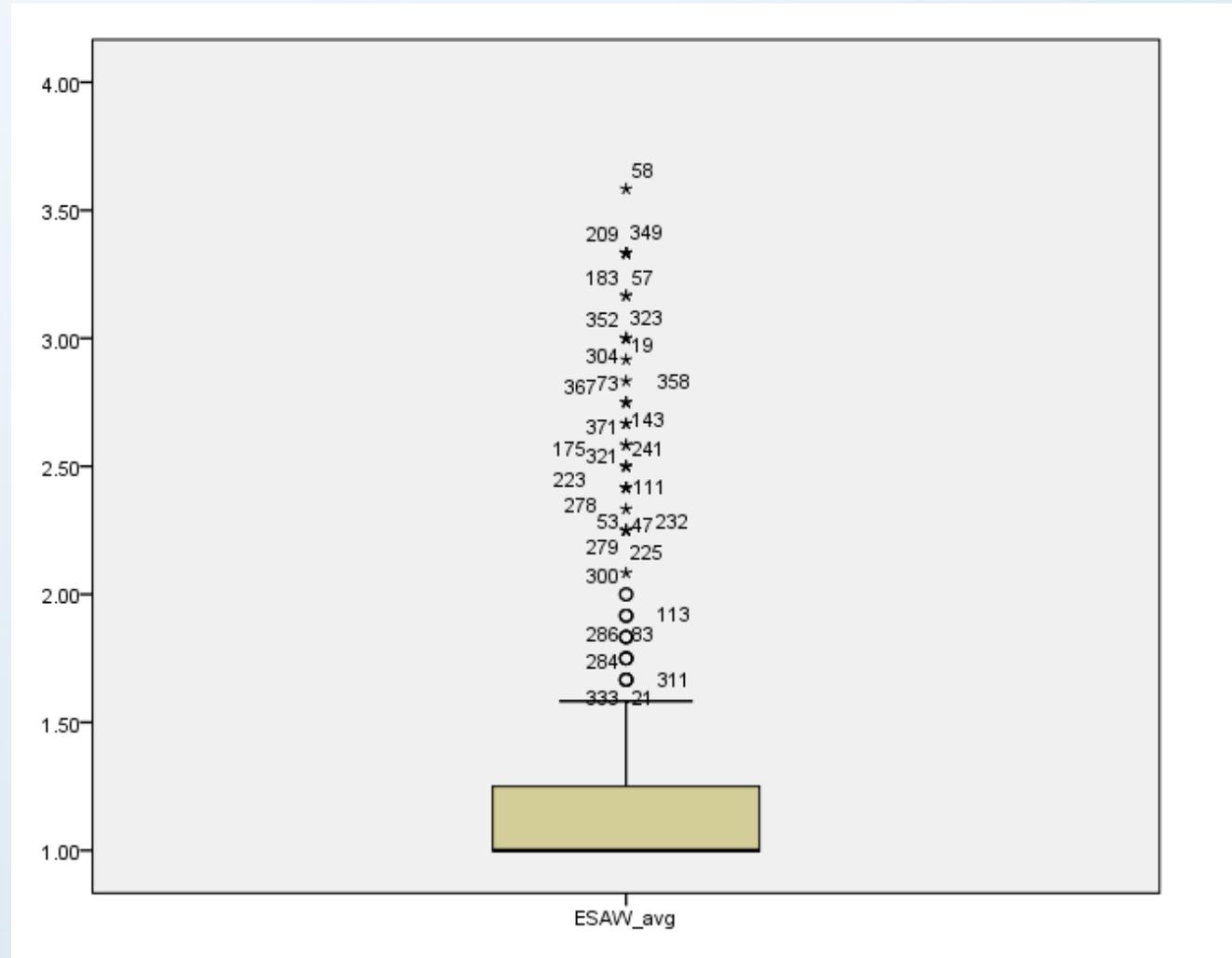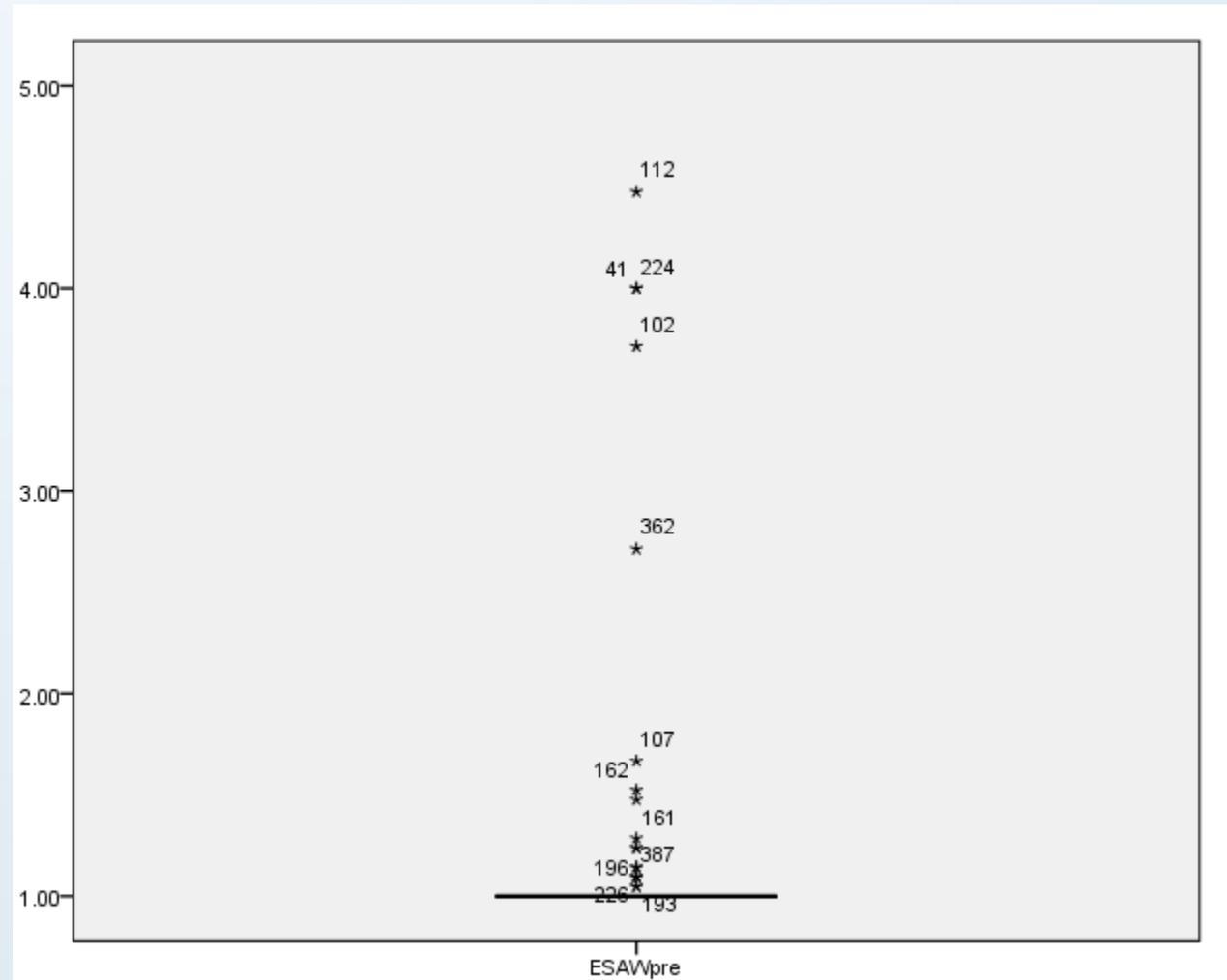
	1	2	3	4	
very negative					*very positive*

ESAW-Revised

Original ESAW

ESAW-Revised

Average Item Endorsement (%)

80.42		
11.21	6.01	2.32

~ 20

very bad/sad/negative — a bit bad/sad/negative — a bit good/fun/positive — very good/fun/positive
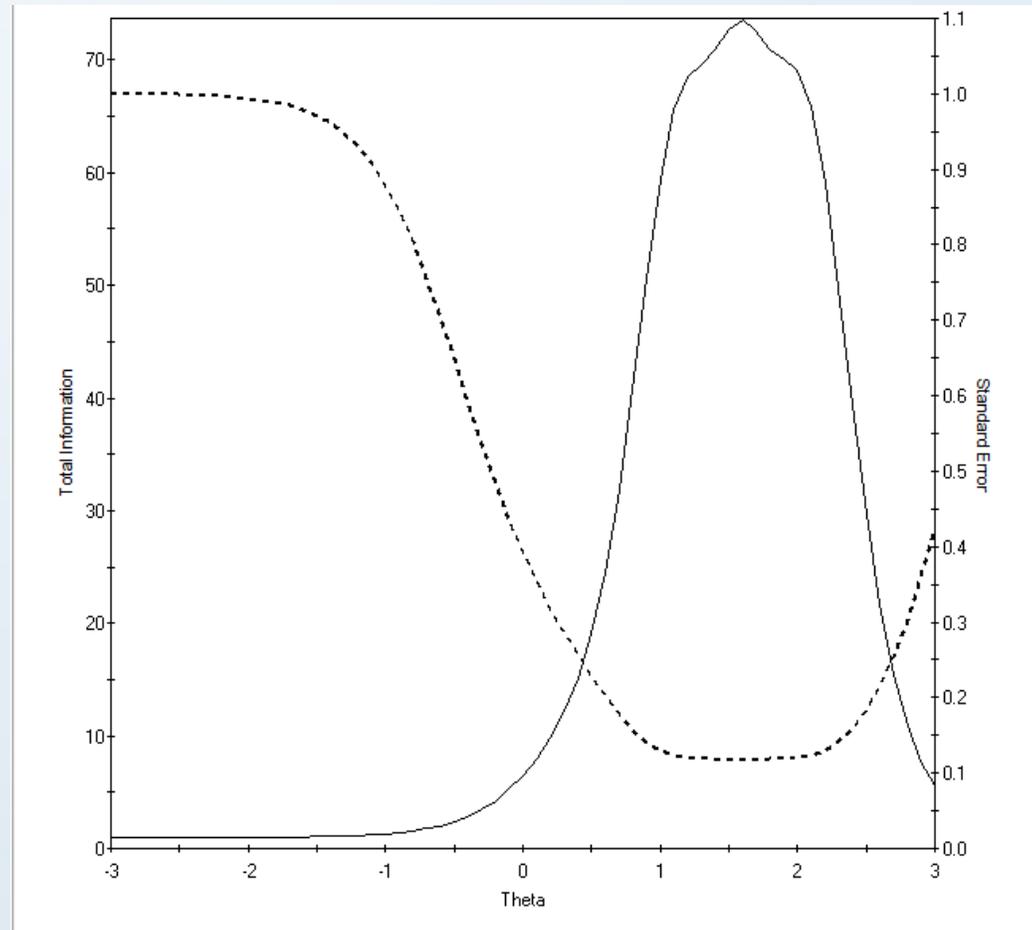
Original ESAW

Average Item Endorsement (%)
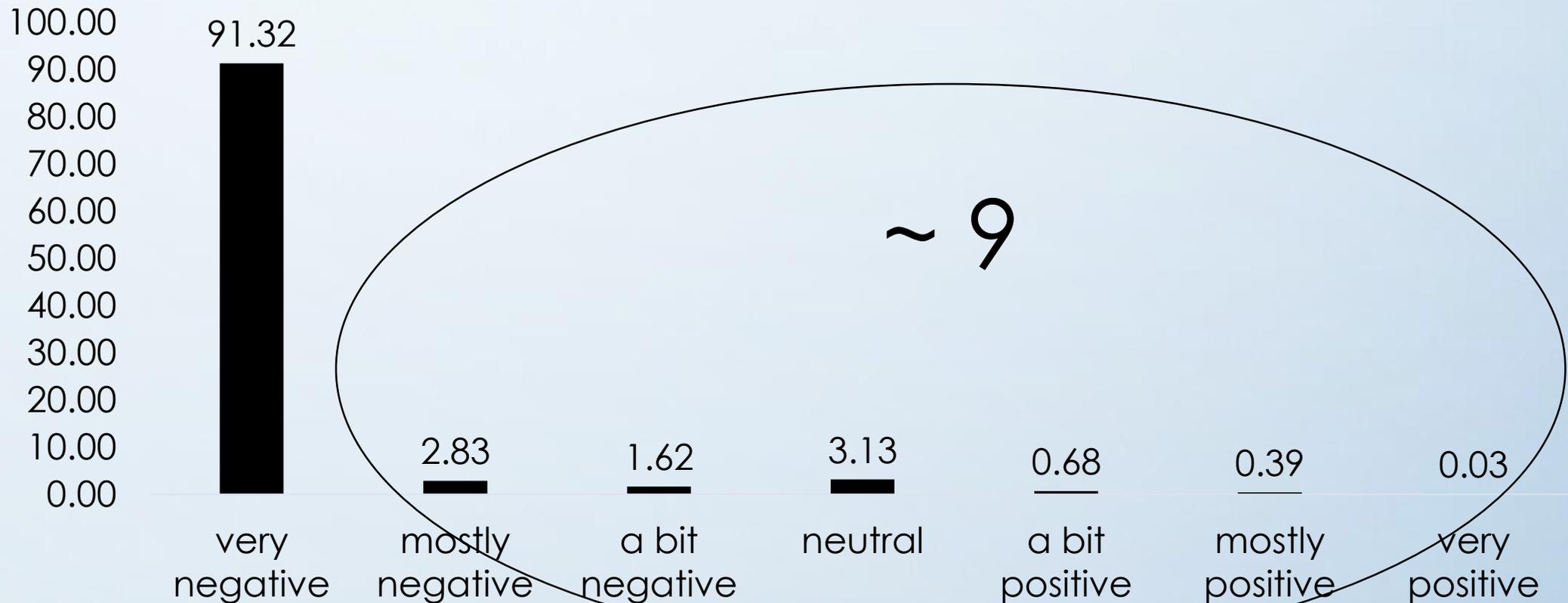
Item Response Theory: Test Information Curve

Conclusions and Next Step

- Increased variability of the ESAW

- Still room for improvement

- Still need to examine <u>construct validity</u>

Thank you!

For slides, visit
https://carleton.ca/acbrlab

Or e-mail me:
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Relevant articles

General evaluative attitudes:

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50, 179-211. doi:10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T

Glasman, L. R., & Albarracín, D. (2006). Forming attitudes that predict future behavior: A meta-analysis of the attitude-behavior relation. Psychological Bulletin, 132, 778-822. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.132.5.778

Kraus, S. J. (1995). Attitudes and the prediction of behavior: A meta-analysis of the empirical literature. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21, 58-75. doi:10.1177/0146167295211007

Evaluative attitudes towards sexual aggression:

Hermann, C. A., & Nunes, K. L. (2016). Implicit and explicit evaluations of sexual aggression predict subsequent sexually aggressive behavior in a sample of community men. Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/1079063216682952

Hermann, C. A., Nunes, K. L., & Maimone, S. A. (2016). Examining implicit and explicit evaluations of sexual aggression and sexually aggressive behavior in men recruited online. Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/1079063216681560

Nunes, K. L., Hermann, C. A., White, K., Pettersen, C., & Bumby, K. (2018). Attitude may be everything, but is everything an attitude? Cognitive distortions may not be evaluations of rape. Sexual Abuse, 30, 43-62. doi:10.1177/1079063215625489

ESAW-Revised Items	Response Scale	Loading
1. You're with a woman who is drunk or high. 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.	Bad vs. Good	.805
2. You having sex with a woman who has been flirting with you and is wearing a sexy dress when she is too drunk or high to know or stop what is happening.	Bad vs. Good	.724
3. You having oral sex with your date/girlfriend/wife when she is too drunk or high to know or stop what is happening.	Bad vs. Good	.687
4. You're with a woman who is drunk or high. She refuses to give you oral sex, so you block her from getting away from you (for example, by blocking the doorway) until she gives you oral sex.	Sad vs. Fun	.863
5. Your date/girlfriend/wife refuses 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.	Sad vs. Fun	.803
6. 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.	Sad vs. Fun	.817
7. 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.	Sad vs. Fun	.860
8. 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.	Negative vs. Positive	.856
9. You're with a woman who is wearing a sexy dress and has been flirting with you. She refuses 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.	Negative vs. Positive	.868
10. You're with a woman who is drunk or high. She 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.	Negative vs. Positive	.869
11. You kissing or sexually touching your date/girlfriend/wife when she is too drunk or high to know or stop what is happening.	Negative vs. Positive	.698
12. Your date/girlfriend/wife refuses to let you kiss or sexually touch her, so you physically force her (for example, by holding her down) to let you kiss or sexually touch her.	Negative vs. Positive	.843