

Validation of the Experience with Ambivalent Sexism Scale (EASS)

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Introduction

The EASS aims to measure both hostile and benevolent sexism experiences, as current validated sexist experiences scales primarily assess only hostile sexism (e.g., Schedule of Sexist Events¹)

Benevolent sexism:²

Protective Paternalism (PP): seemingly well-intended, but infantilizing treatment

Complementary Gender Differentiation (CGD): assumes biological differences are justification for traditional gender roles

- Using initial form of the EASS, PP predicted worse STEM course performance³
- PP exposure associated with poorer cardiovascular recovery relative to hostile sexism⁴
- Benevolent sexism causes women to present themselves as incompetent and impairs their cognitive performance^{5,6}

H: The EASS will show test-retest reliability and divergent validity from the Schedule of Sexist Events. EASS subscales will also be associated with measures of well-being and gender identity.

EASS Example items

Protective Paternalism (5-item)

How often have you been treated as if you need a man's help?

Complementary Gender Differentiation (5-item)

How often have you been treated as if others expected you to be sweet and friendly?

Hostile Sexism (10-item)

How often have you been the target of obscene sexual comments or gestures?

Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire Example Item

My being female does not influence how people act with me (R)

Method

- 513 female undergraduates completed the EASS online at two time points.
- Covariate: **Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ)**

Time Point 1

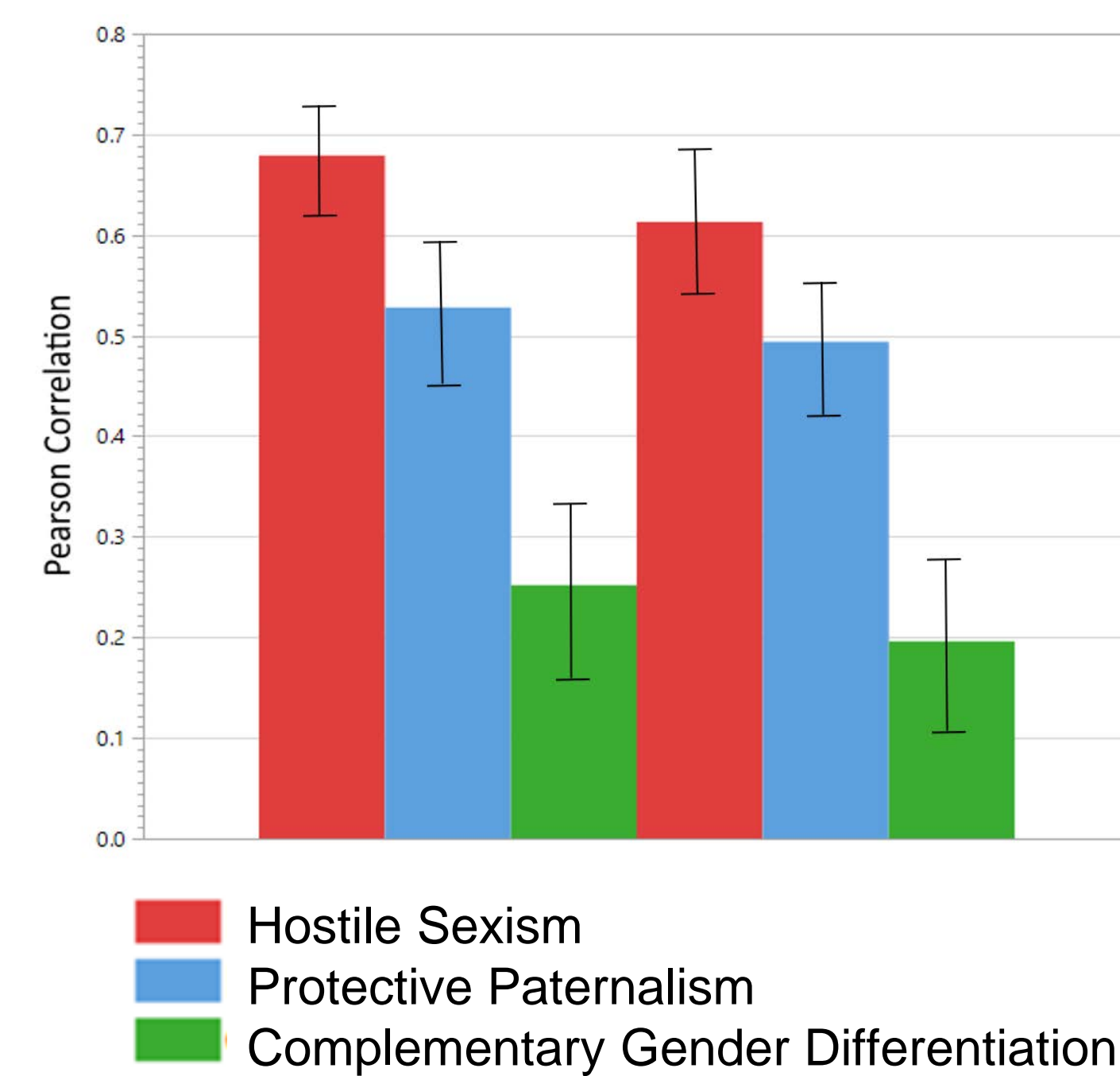
- EASS
- Schedule of Sexist Events

Time Point 2

- EASS
- Satisfaction With Life (SWLS)
- Self-Esteem (RSE)
- Well-Being (MWB)
- Depression (CES-D)
- Gender Identity (GIS)
- Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ)

Results

Divergent Validity: Correlations between Schedule of Sexist Events and EASS



Test-Retest Correlations

EASS Subscale	Time Points 1 & 2
Hostile Sexism	.679**
Protective Paternalism	.625**
Complementary Gender Differentiation	.606**

Internal Consistency

	HS 1	HS 2	PP 1	PP 2	CGD 1	CGD 2
	.919**	.920**	.904**	.913**	.823**	.814**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Experiences with benevolent sexism predict negative outcomes for women, above and beyond mere sensitivity of gender discrimination.

Concurrent Validity

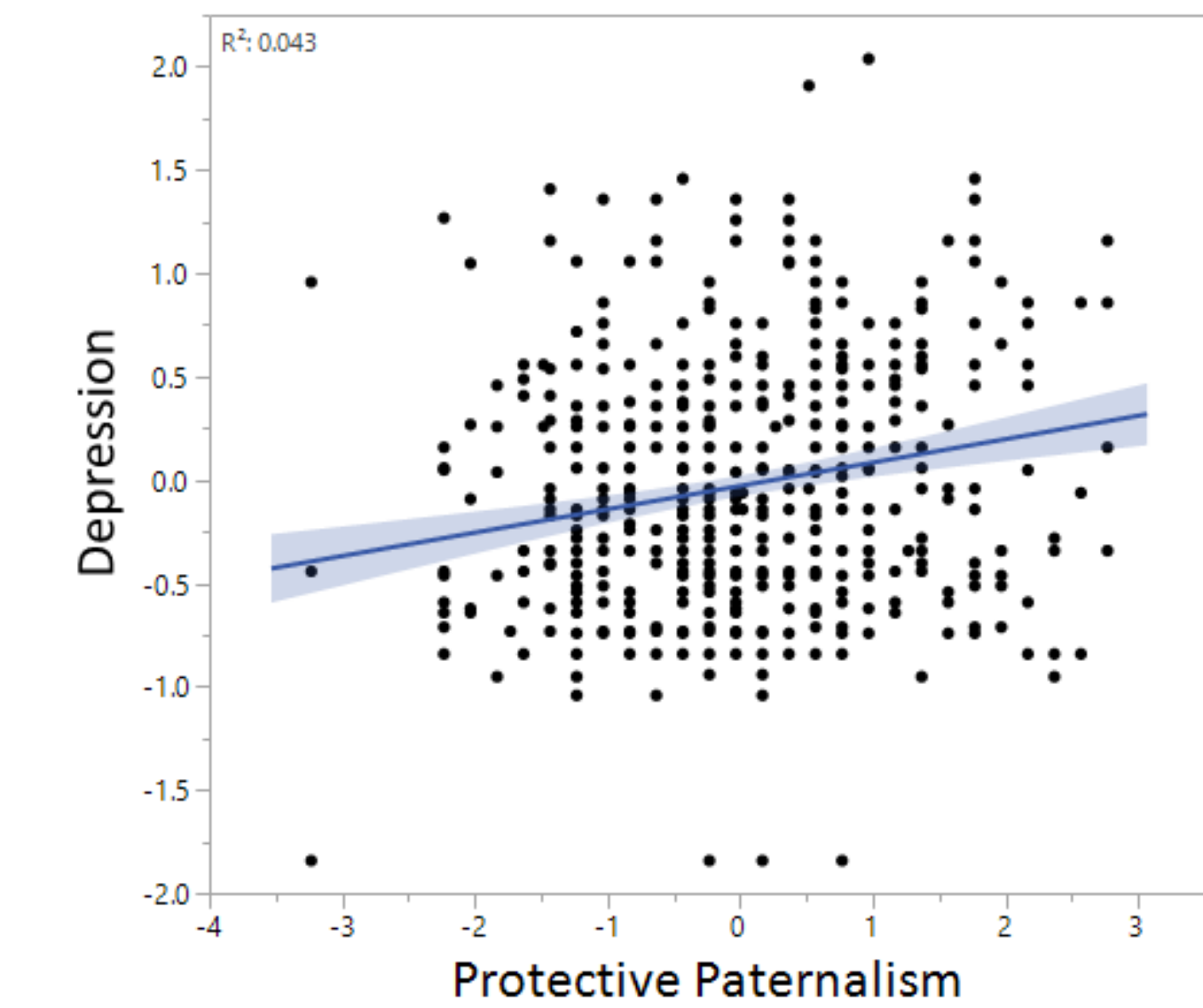
EASS Time point 2	Depression	Satisfaction with Life	Self-Esteem	Mental Well-being	Gender Identity
Hostile Sexism	.215***	-.109*	.153**	-.083	.059
Protective Paternalism	.108*	-.033	.034	-.033	.095*
Complementary Gender Diff	.035	0.067	-.095*	.124**	.135**

Predictive Validity

EASS Time point 1	Depression	Satisfaction with Life	Self-Esteem	Mental Well-being	Gender Identity
Hostile Sexism	.191***	-.141**	.183***	-.043	-.013
Protective Paternalism	.088*	-.107**	.096*	-.053	-.010
Complementary Gender Diff	.013	.026	-.062	.09*	.052

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Additional measures were only assessed at time point 2.

Depression and Experiences of Protective Paternalism



Discussion

- Sensitivity to sexism cannot account for relationships found between benevolent/hostile sexism experiences and well-being measures, as we controlled for stigma consciousness.
- Experiences of both protective paternalism and hostile sexism predict higher depression.
- Women with higher self-esteem may be more likely to experience hostile sexism. Alternatively, women with higher self-esteem may be more likely to interpret behavior as sexist.⁷
- Women with lower self-esteem tend to experience more complimentary gender differentiation (CGD). Alternatively, CGD may function as positive group distinctiveness for women.⁸

Because the EASS assesses benevolent sexism, it captures a more complete view of women's experiences.

Future Research

- Validate EASS using all facets of ASI on MTurk
- Use EASS to predict 1) negative cardiovascular health outcomes, 2) depression/anxiety gender disparities

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