Sexism has typically been described as unitary hostility toward women. However Glick & Fiske (1996, 2001) proposed a more subtle way of sexual discrimination toward women, namely ambivalent sexism and developed the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI). According to Glick and Fiske, there are two complementary forms of sexist attitudes: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Hostile Sexism (HS) can be described as the typical antipathy that is commonly assumed as sexist prejudices. In contrast, Benevolent Sexism (BS) is defined “as a set of interrelated attitudes toward women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restrictive roles, but that are subjectively positive in feeling tone and also tend to elicit behaviors typically categorized as prosocial or intimacy seeking” (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Ahn, Kim, & Ahn (2007) developed a Korean version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (K-ASI) and tested and confirmed the validity of K-ASI. In 2007, K-ASI was revised to extend the range of application for not only adults but also juveniles (Ahn, Paik, Kim, Kim, & Kim, 2007).

The present study investigated how hostile and benevolent sexism predicted the acceptance of rape myth, using the revised K-ASI, and thereby examined the construct validity of the revised K-ASI at the same time.

METHOD

Participants. Respondents were 1500 middle and high school students (men = 750 and women = 750) and 1500 adults (men = 750 and women = 750) from all over the country, Korea. Ages of juveniles ranged from 13 to 18 years and ages of adults ranged from 19 to 69 years.

Materials. To estimate hostile and benevolent sexism of respondents, the revised K-ASI was used. The revised K-ASI is a 24-item inventory measuring individual levels of ambivalent sexism using 4-point likert scales (1: strongly disagree ~ 4: strongly agree). It is a 24-item inventory measuring individual levels of ambivalent sexism using 4-point likert scales (1: strongly disagree ~ 4: strongly agree). It consists of two 12-item subscales (hostile and benevolent sexism) and comprises mainly statements concerning male-female relationship. Examples of items are “Women do not accept differences between the sexes, but they only assert that men and women should be equal” (hostile sexism) and “No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman” (benevolent sexism).

The Rape Myth Scale (Lee, 1999) was used to measure the respondents’ acceptance of rape myth using 4-point likert scales (1: strongly disagree ~ 4: strongly agree). It is a 20-item instrument measuring individual levels of agreement with statements such as “Women often provoke rape through their appearance or behavior.” The present study used 8 of 20 items in the Rape Myth Scale.

Procedure. The respondents were provided with a questionnaire containing the instruction describing that the purpose of this questionnaire was to investigate the relationship between male and female in our society. After reading this part of the questionnaire, respondents were required to complete the revised K-ASI, the Rape Myth Scale and demographic information.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Hierarchical regression analyses were performed to test the impact of hostile and benevolent sexism on the acceptance of rape myth. In the first step, sex, age and economic level of respondents were entered as control variables and then in the second step, the revised K-ASI scores (HS, BS) of respondents were entered as predictors of the acceptance of rape myth.

As shown in Table 1, in the case of adults, the more participants aged, the more they agreed to rape myth. In the case of juveniles, the respondents who lived in Seoul rejected rape myth more than those who did not live in Seoul. As expected, after controlling for the control variables, the respondents who scored high in both HS and BS subscales were more acceptable for the rape myth than the respondents who had low scores of HS or BS. These results that the more participants endorsed BS which comprises the paternalistic and protective attitudes toward women, the more they accepted rape myth, were consistent with the findings of prior studies which showed that BS, although seemingly desirable egalitarian, was a more complicated type of sexism being disguised in subtle and elaborated ways. Furthermore, in both juveniles and adults, the degree of prediction (β) of HS and BS for rape myth acceptance in females was stronger than male’s. One possible explanation of this result is that high BS women compromise and even internalize the preexisting male-dominating social system and sexual norms and as a result they might lead and defend these systems and norms (Kim, Ahn, Ko, Lee, & Choi, 2005).

Meanwhile we divided the respondents into four groups that consisted of high HS and high BS (group 1), high HS and low BS (group 2), low HS and high BS (group 3), and low HS and low BS (group 4) and then compared the mean scores of Rape Myth Scale among these four groups. Interestingly, degree of rape myth acceptance among these four groups were significantly different from each other, F(3,2996)=332.43, p<.001: Group 1 (M=2.55), group 2 (M=2.32), group 3 (M=2.02), and group 4 (M=1.86), in the order of the size of the mean.

REFERENCES


Prediction of Rape Myth Acceptance by the Ambivalent Sexism

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Key words: rape myth acceptance, hostile sexism, benevolent sexism

Table 1. Hierarchical regression analyses of the effects of HS and BS on the acceptance of rape myth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control variable</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Economic level</th>
<th>Residential area</th>
<th>HS</th>
<th>BS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>male(β)</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>-.121**</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>-.436***</td>
<td>.095**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female(β)</td>
<td>.170***</td>
<td>.512***</td>
<td>-.083*</td>
<td>.549***</td>
<td>.174***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male(β)</td>
<td>.321***</td>
<td>.525***</td>
<td>.095*</td>
<td>.808*</td>
<td>.119***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female(β)</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.394</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>.409</td>
<td>.267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001; (β) is standardized regression coefficient.

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459