Results

Model 1 fit the data extremely well, but the covariance between hostile attitudes toward women and belief in adversarial relationships was extremely high (e.g., see Figure 2).

Model 2: The two covariances above were combined into a single item, termed “intense competitive hostility” (ICH). This item also showed excellent fit. See Figure 5.

Model 3: The outcome (i.e., rape-supportive attitudes) was added to Model 2. Once again, model fit was excellent. The cross-path between Ich and callous/impersonal sex attitudes was very strong (R² = .82). See Figure 6.

Model 3: The two covariances above were combined with the much smaller Ich scale. This model showed good fit to the data. The Ich, BM, and EIC were strongly correlated in this model (path coefficients: .23, .24).

Model 4: Ich and BM were combined into a single item (Ich previously called BM). Ich was, again, highly correlated. Ich and BM were still necessary to be quite strongly correlated (.76), but they were left in separate scales in order to keep conceptual predictions and outcome variables separable. See Figure 6.

Discussion

Our results suggest that Polansky and Ward’s (2002) account of the relationship between implicit theories and rape-supportive cognitions might be too complex. These data suggested a simpler model in which many different problematic thoughts and attitudes about women, sex, and relationships seemed to be only loosely related to one another. This type of disorganized pattern or progression between “easy” and “later” cognitions in a commonsense chain. This relatively unfocused structure of cognitions strongly predicts rape-supportive attitudes—in fact, given the non-experimental nature of the study, it seemed plausible after Model 3 that RAJ might simply be one more component of the “BM.”

The addition of MBI and FTI to the P&W model, however, seemed to suggest differentiation—different patterns of covariation between these new concepts and the predictive concepts versus conceptual outcome variables. (MBI and FTI or perhaps gender role conflict more generally conceived) seem to offer unique contributions to the prediction of RAJ.

Limitations & Future Directions

The observational nature of these data limit causations—careful experimental research can clarify the implicit causal relationships. It is also unclear whether self-report survey methods should be expected to replicate these findings. Polansky and Ward’s research, however, largely on such measures, implies this should be possible, but perhaps more advantageous methods are required, such as measures of attitudes or implicit association tests for this type of implicit theory.

References


