



**UNIVERSITY FEDERAL OF PARAIBA
CENTER FOR HUMAN SCIENCES, LETTERS AND ARTS
DEPARTAMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
GRADUATE PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
DOCTORATE IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**BLAMING THE VICTIM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE
COMBINATION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTIM AND THE
OBSERVER**

**CULPABILIZAÇÃO DA VÍTIMA DE VIOLÊNCIA SEXUAL: UMA ANÁLISE
DO EFEITO DA COMBINAÇÃO DE CARACTERÍSTICAS DA VÍTIMA E DO
OBSERVADOR**

LAYANNE VIEIRA LINHARES

João Pessoa - PB

February, 2021

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Thesis submitted to the Graduate Program in Social Psychology at the Federal University of Paraíba, as a partial requirement for obtaining a Doctor in Social Psychology degree.

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BLAMING THE VICTIM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE COMBINATION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTIM AND THE OBSERVER

ABSTRACT

Despite some advances in the fight and awareness about guaranteeing rights and ways of dealing with discrimination and all types of violence against women, the incidence of sexual violence still remains at high levels. The set of studies presented here emerged from the following question: are all women equally blamed for being victims of sexual violence? Thus, the thesis presented here seeks to analyze to what extent the characteristics of women victims of sexual violence, the gender and belief systems (e.g., BJW and ambivalent sexism) of the participants, influence blaming victims for the violence they have suffered. We also seek to analyze how the social representations of university students about women victims of sexual violence are structured. The results of the first article confirmed the proposed hypotheses, indicating that Black women victims of sexual violence tend to be more to blame than White women and that high adherence to BJW contributes to this blaming. Article two analyzed the effect of the combination of the variables, victim characteristics (skin color and normativity), observer's sex, Belief in a Just World, and ambivalent sexism on blaming the victim of sexual violence. The results confirm that the variables that were investigated interact with each other and result in different experiences for the victims. The objective of the third article of this thesis was to investigate what are the social representations of university students about sexual violence against women. The results indicated that most of the social representations shared by students include blaming the victim. Finally, the results of two studies that aimed to validate a revised version of the Belief in a Just World Scale with Popular Sayings, developed by Linhares, Torres and Pereira (2020, in press) are appended. It is

perceived that blaming the woman for the violence she suffered is a multi-causal phenomenon and in our line of research we try to analyze the various factors that can help in understanding this. With that, we emphasize the importance of considering the complexity of the vulnerabilities that women are exposed to for the study of this phenomenon.

Keywords: Blaming the victim, Belief in a Just World, Ambivalent Sexism

CULPABILIZAÇÃO DA VÍTIMA DE VIOLÊNCIA SEXUAL: UMA ANÁLISE DO EFEITO DA COMBINAÇÃO DE CARACTERÍSTICAS DA VÍTIMA E ATRIBUTOS DO OBSERVADOR

RESUMO

Apesar de alguns avanços na luta e conscientização sobre a garantia de direitos e de formas de lidar com a discriminação e todos os tipos de violência contra a mulher, a incidência da violência sexual ainda permanece em níveis elevados. A culpabilização da vítima é um aspecto que merece maior atenção sobre esse tipo de violência. O conjunto de estudos aqui apresentados surgiu do seguinte questionamento: será que todas as mulheres são culpabilizadas de forma igual por terem sido vítimas de violência sexual? Considera-se que existem algumas situações em que as vítimas estão mais vulneráveis a serem percebidas como culpadas pela violência sofrida. Assim, a tese ora apresentada busca analisar em que medida as características das vítimas de violência sexual, o sexo e os sistemas de crenças (e.g. CMJ e sexismo ambivalente) dos participantes, influenciam a culpabilização da vítima pela violência por ela sofrida. Buscamos também analisar como estão estruturadas as representações sociais de estudantes universitários sobre mulheres vítimas de violência sexual. Para tanto, essa tese é composta por quatro artigos que estão apresentados em quatro capítulos. Os resultados do primeiro artigo confirmaram as hipóteses propostas, indicando que as mulheres negras vítimas de violência sexual tendem a ser mais culpabilizadas do que as mulheres brancas e que a alta adesão a CMJ contribui para essa culpabilização. O artigo dois analisou o efeito da combinação das variáveis características da vítima (cor da pele e normatividade), sexo do observador (masculino e feminino), CMJ e o sexismo ambivalente (hostil e benevolente) na culpabilização da vítima de violência sexual. Os resultados confirmam que as variáveis investigadas interagem entre si e resultam em experiências diferentes para as vítimas. O objetivo do terceiro artigo desta tese foi investigar quais são as representações sociais de

estudantes universitários acerca da Violência Sexual contra mulher. Os resultados indicaram que a maioria das representações sociais compartilhadas pelos estudantes englobam a culpabilização da vítima. Por fim, em anexo, encontra-se os resultados de dois estudos que objetivaram validar uma versão revisada da Escala de Crença no Mundo Justo com Ditados Populares desenvolvida por Linhares, Torres e Pereira (2020, no prelo). Percebe-se que a culpabilização da mulher pela violência por ela sofrida é um fenômeno multicausal e em nossa linha de pesquisa procuramos analisar os diversos fatores que podem ajudar a compreendê-lo. Com isso, ressaltamos a importância de considerar a complexidade das vulnerabilidades que as mulheres estão expostas para a investigação desse fenômeno.

Palavras-chave: Culpabilização da vítima, Crença no Mundo Justo, Sexismo Ambivalente.

CULPABILIZACIÓN DE LA VÍCTIMA DE VIOLENCIA SEXUAL: UN ANÁLISIS DEL EFECTO DE COMBINAR CARACTERÍSTICAS DE LA VÍCTIMA Y ATRIBUTOS DEL OBSERVADOR

RESUMEN

A pesar de algunos avances en la lucha y conciencia sobre la garantía de derechos y formas de enfrentar la discriminación y todo tipo de violencia contra las mujeres, la incidencia de la violencia sexual aún se mantiene en niveles elevados. Culpar a la víctima es un aspecto que merece más atención en este tipo de violencia. El conjunto de estudios que aquí se presentan surgió de la siguiente pregunta: ¿se culpa por igual a todas las mujeres por ser víctimas de violencia sexual? Se considera que existen algunas situaciones en las que las víctimas son más vulnerables a ser percibidas como culpables de la violencia sufrida. Así, la tesis aquí presentada busca analizar en qué medida las características de las víctimas de violencia sexual, el sexo y los sistemas de creencias (por ejemplo, CMJ y sexismo ambivalente) de los participantes, influyen en la culpa de la víctima por la violencia sufrida. También buscamos analizar cómo se estructuran las representaciones sociales de los estudiantes universitarios sobre las mujeres víctimas de violencia sexual. Por eso, esta tesis está compuesta por cuatro artículos que se presentan en cuatro capítulos. Los resultados del primer artículo confirmaron las hipótesis propuestas, indicando que las mujeres negras víctimas de violencia sexual tienden a tener más culpa que las mujeres blancas y que la alta adherencia al CMJ contribuye a esta culpa. El artículo dos analizó el efecto de combinar las variables características de la víctima (color de piel y normatividad), el sexo del observador (masculino y femenino), CMJ y el sexismo ambivalente (hostil y benevolente) para culpar a la víctima de violencia sexual. Los resultados confirman que las variables investigadas interactúan entre sí y resultan en experiencias diferentes para las víctimas. El objetivo del tercer artículo de esta tesis fue

investigar cuáles son las representaciones sociales de los estudiantes universitarios sobre la Violencia Sexual contra las mujeres. Los resultados indicaron que la mayoría de las representaciones sociales compartidas por los estudiantes incluyen la culpabilización de la víctima. Finalmente, en anexo, se encuentran los resultados de dos estudios que tuvieron como objetivo validar una versión revisada de la Escala de Creencias del Mundo Justo con Dichos Populares desarrollada por Linhares, Torres y Pereira (2020, en prensa). Se percibe que la culpabilización de la mujer por la violencia sufrida es un fenómeno multicausal y en nuestra línea de investigación tratamos de analizar los diversos factores que pueden ayudar a comprenderlo. Así, enfatizamos la importancia de considerar la complejidad de las vulnerabilidades a las que están expuestas las mujeres en la investigación de este fenómeno.

Palabras clave: Culpabilización de la Víctima, creencia en un mundo justo, Sexismo Ambivalente.

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SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Thousands of women are victims of some type of violence in the world every day (Abrahams et al. 2014). One of the most common forms of violence suffered by women is sexual violence, which is considered a public health problem that affects different types of victims around the world, revealing itself as a serious violation of human rights. Despite some advances in the fight and the awareness about guaranteeing rights and ways of dealing with discrimination and all types of violence against women, the incidence of sexual violence still remains at high levels. One aspect that deserves more attention about this type of violence is the fact that these victims, in addition to physical and psychological consequences, still need to deal with fear and judgments, such as being blamed for the violence they have suffered.

The set of studies presented here emerged from the following question: are all women equally blamed for being victims of sexual violence? This question arose from the need to analyze the vulnerability caused by the accumulation of categorizations of the victims of sexual violence, such as those that accumulate two or more categories that are part of socially devalued groups, such as Black women, who suffer the consequences of gender and skin color discrimination. Similarly, this occurs with women who violate traditional gender role behaviors.

Here it is important to highlight one aspect of the studies that form this thesis. The data was first collected in 2017, with pilot studies that aimed to perfect the scenario that would be used as the guiding thread of the ideas defended here. However, in January 2021, we learned that a situation quite similar to our scenario had occurred with a nursing student at the Universidade Estadual do Maranhão (UEMA) in 2019. This student was raped by a classmate after drinking a large amount of alcohol at a party with colleagues at the university. Her aggressor took advantage of her vulnerability and raped her. The

university took no action and the student had to live with her attacker in coexistence for over a year, when she then abandoned her degree program. Her aggressor continued to live normally¹. The UEMA Dean's Office published a note stating that it only became aware of that fact in January 2021 through publications on social networks².

Studies suggest that several psychosocial factors are related to the propensity of blaming the victim of sexual violence, such that the attribution of guilt can be influenced by a variety of information about the victim and the observer (Landstrom, Stromwall & Alfredsson, 2016; Viki & Abrams, 2002). Several studies have shown the existence of some characteristics that are considered more at-risk for blaming the victim, thus placing them in a situation of greater vulnerability. These findings point to the influence of variables such as the observer's gender (Angelone, Mitchell & Smith, 2018; Hockett et al., 2016), the victim's skin color (Donovan, 2007), and behaviors that violate social norms (Viki & Abrams, 2002). Thus, it is clear that the level of blame may vary depending on the group to which the victim belongs

One of the belief systems that plays an important role in understanding the phenomenon of blaming the victim for her own misfortune is that of Belief in a Just World (BJW), which was proposed by Melvin Lerner, based on the hypothesis that people seek to establish a direct relation between what is done and the results received, resulting essentially in the idea that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner, 1980). The first studies on BJW showed that there is a tendency in individuals to appeal to mechanisms, or strategies, that try to eliminate any type of threat to BJW, such as the injustice and suffering for the victim (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Thus, secondary victimization would be one of these mechanisms, which happens when the individual, in addition to suffering the misfortune, being a victim for the first time, is also

¹ <https://www.instagram.com/p/CKehhJWLXn/>

² <https://www.uema.br/2021/01/nota-de-esclarecimento-caso-caxias/>

responsible for their own misfortune, being a victim for the second time (Rubin & Peplau, 1973).

Most studies that use BJW as an explanatory factor for decision making in situations of injustice have concentrated on the study of the phenomenon of secondary victimization (Aguilar, Vala, Correia & Pereira, 2008; Hafer & Bègue, 2005; Strömwall, Alfredsson & Landström, 2013). According to Correia (2003), three types of secondary victimization have been addressed in the literature: minimization of the victim's suffering, when observers try to minimize the victim's suffering, and may even deny it; avoidance / devaluation of the victim, when avoidance or distancing from the victim takes place, so that the observer tends to avoid contact with the victim and denigrate her; and blaming the victim, when observers will perceive the victim as deserving of that fate. The form of secondary victimization most addressed in the studies is blaming the victim, showing that there is a positive association between BJW and the acceptance or justification of situations of misfortune (Furnham, 2003).

The literature review carried out by Furnham (2003) pointed out that the relation between the BJW and victim blaming has been confirmed in several types of victims, such as, poor, disabled, those who have suffered an accident, cancer victims, AIDS victims, and rape victims. The act of blaming the victim stems from the need to preserve the idea that the world is a fair place. Thus, as the victim's characteristics are used to justify the occurrence of injustice, they are perceived as deserving of that situation and the observer eliminates the possibility of the same happening to them, since they do not have those characteristics (Albuquerque, Torres, Estramiana & Luque, 2019; Furnham, 2003; Hockett et al., 2016). Taken together, these studies demonstrate that the greater the adherence to BJW, the greater the victim blaming is. (Correia, Alves, Moraes, & Ramos, 2015; Hafer & Bègue, 2005).

Likewise, the literature also points out that other belief systems are also relevant in explaining victim blaming, such as ambivalent sexism. This theoretical concept is defined as a union of stereotypes about cognitive, affective, and attitudinal evaluations about the appropriate role in society directed at individuals according to their gender (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism can be easily observed because it presents an explicit and direct inferiority of the female sex, while benevolent sexism maintains gender inequality in a more discreet, cordial, and superficially positive way (Glick et al., 2000).

Thus, ambivalent sexism is understood as a negative attitude towards women due to the fact that they are women, based on their supposed inferiority, which can be accompanied by stereotyped beliefs and discriminatory behaviors. The literature on this topic points out that sexist individuals tend to believe that women who are victims of sexual violence hold a share of guilt for having experienced that situation (Giovannelli & Jackson, 2013). This is due to the fact that these individuals believe that women should base their behavior on certain socially established rules, therefore, those who deviate from these rules deserve to be held responsible.

It is also perceived that victim blaming comes from the acceptance and replication of concepts that normalize sexual violence against women, so that society itself asks questions that put to the test the morality of the assaulted woman, such as: “What was she wearing? What was she doing in that place, at that time? Was she drunk?”, taking the focus off the aggressor and, in a way, legitimizing the victim's guilt. This reality is even worse when it comes to Black women, since these women suffer the consequences of the additive effect of gender and racial discrimination, being doubly discriminated: for being a woman and for being Black. That way, taking into account the skin color criterion, it is clear that the judgment that is made regarding these victims may differ when the victims

are White or Black, with Black women being the most affected (Donovan, 2007; Lewis, Mendenhall, Harwood, & Browne, 2016).

In this context, it is understood that the hegemonic social norms that dictate the rules for men and women, White and Black, are associated with an alarming gender and race inequality. According to Feldman (1991), social norms are rules established by groups in order to regulate the behavior of their members. For Sherif (1966), social norms are patterns of influence that the individual forms in interaction with other people or acquires from groups significant to them. Thus, it is considered that social norms help people understand the social situations in which they are involved, especially in uncertain events (Cialdini & Trost, 1998).

Studies have shown how much patriarchal values still structure society, mainly related to sexual violence against women (Hirt, Costa, Arboit, Leite, Hesler & Silva, 2017; Lermen & Cúnico, 2018). Although there have been some advances regarding the division of gender roles, it is clear that there is still a social representation shared by society that women who attend parties are seen as more accessible and with greater sexual availability (Gunby, Carline, Bellis & Beynon, 2012; Pires, Pereira, Valente & Moura, 2018). It is clear that understanding the way in which the social representations of women victims of sexual violence are constituted is something of great importance for the studies of this theme, since social representations are knowledge constructed and shared socially (Moscovici & Lage, 1976) and function as a system of interpreting reality that organizes the relationships of individuals with the environment, influencing their behaviors (Abric, 1994).

Given the panorama presented, it is considered that there are some situations in which victims are more vulnerable to being perceived as at fault for the violence suffered. Thus, the thesis presented here seeks to analyze to what extent the characteristics of

victims of sexual violence, and the gender and belief systems (e.g., BJW and ambivalent sexism) of the participants, influence blaming the victim for the violence she has suffered. Thus we seek to answer the following research problem: how do these variables combine in order to make people blame the victims of sexual violence?

We therefore propose that the combination of the variables of the victim (skin color and normativity) and the participants (sex, adherence to BJW, and ambivalent sexism) will significantly predict higher levels of blaming the victim of sexual violence. That said, we intend to fill a gap in the literature on this topic, since the effect of the interaction between these variables has not yet been analyzed for blaming the victim of sexual violence.

Concomitantly, we also seek to analyze how the social representations of university students about women victims of sexual violence are structured. For that, this thesis is composed of four articles that are presented in four chapters. The first article is presented in chapter 1 of the thesis, entitled “Blaming the Black victim: victim skin color and belief in a just world”, which included two experimental studies that aimed to analyze how the interaction between the victim's skin color, gender of the participants, and their BJW variables explain the blaming of the victim in a scenario of sexual violence. The results obtained in this article confirmed the proposed hypotheses, indicating that Black women victims of sexual violence tend to be more to blame than White women and that high adherence to BJW contributes to this blaming.

Seeking to advance research on this topic, we add two variables pointed out in the literature that also have a significant influence on blaming the victim: normativity and ambivalent sexism. Thus, we started working on the second article, which comprises chapter 2 of this thesis, entitled “She deserved what happened: Analysis of the processes of blaming the victim of sexual violence”. This article sought to analyze the effect of

combining the victim's characteristic variables (skin color and normativity), observer gender (male and female), BJW, and ambivalent sexism (hostile and benevolent), in blaming the victim of sexual violence, based on the development of three experimental studies. Together, the results of the three studies indicated that the investigated variables interact with each other and result in different levels of blaming, thus being considered fundamental variables for understanding this phenomenon.

Continuing our investigations, and considering the importance of understanding the social representations that are shared by university students about women victims of sexual violence, since they will be the future professionals who are likely to deal with these victims, we developed the third article, entitled: "But she was drunk: Social representations of sexual violence against women". The objective of the third article of this thesis was to investigate what are the social representations of university students about sexual violence against women. To do so, two studies were developed that aimed to analyze how the social representations of university students about women victims of sexual violence are structured (Study 1), and how information about the victim's skin color can affect the judgment that is made of women victims of sexual violence (Study 2). In general, the results of these studies indicated that most of the social representations shared by students include the blaming of the victim, corroborating what has been found in the literature. Regarding skin color, it was observed that when the victim was Black, more offensive words were evoked.

Finally, the results of two studies that aimed to validate a revised version of the Belief in a Just World Scale with Popular Sayings developed by Linhares, Torres and Pereira (2020, in press) are in annex. The analyses carried out allow the conclusion that the new version of the BJWPS scale presented satisfactory psychometric indexes. Thus,

it is considered that the inclusion of these two new items on the BJWPS scale makes it a good alternative to the version initially proposed.

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SECTION II - EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

ARTICLE I

The research presented in this chapter is submitted to the journal Trends in Psychology and is currently being evaluated.

Blaming the victim black: skin color the victim and belief in a just world

Culpabilização da vítima negra: cor da pele da vítima e crença no mundo justo

Culpabilización de la víctima negra: color de la piel y la creencia en el mundo justo

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ABSTRACT

Gender and skin color are recognized factors that influence social judgments. We approach this problem by proposing that the color of the victim's skin and the sex of the observers will influence the blaming of a woman for violence she has suffered, just as the belief in a just world (BJW) will be responsible for predicting greater blaming of the victim. In Study 1 (N=152), after manipulating the victims' skin color, we identified that black women were more to blame and that men blamed them more than women did. Study 2 (N=234) investigated the hypothesis that BJW acts as a moderator of the relationship between the victim's skin color, the participant's gender, and the victim's blame. Although the hypothetical triple interaction was not significant, the paired comparisons showed that among participants with high adherence to BJW, male participants placed more blame than female participants, and this blame was even greater in the condition in which the victim was black. These results are discussed in light of the importance of the studies on blaming women victims of sexual violence, taking into consideration a set of characteristics of the victim as well as more ideological aspects, such as the BJW.

Keywords: Blaming the victim, Belief in a Just World, Sexual violence against women.

RESUMO

O gênero e a cor da pele são reconhecidamente fatores que influenciam nos julgamentos sociais. Abordamos este problema propondo que a cor da pele da vítima e o sexo dos observadores irão influenciar na culpabilização da mulher pela violência por ela sofrida, assim como, a crença no mundo justo (CMJ) será responsável por predizer uma maior culpabilização da vítima. No Estudo 1 (N=152), manipulando a cor da pele das vítimas, identificamos que a mulher negra foi mais culpabilizada e que os homens as culpabilizaram mais do que as mulheres. O Estudo 2 (N=234) investigou se a CMJ atua como moderadora da relação entre a cor da pele da vítima, sexo dos participantes e a culpabilização da vítima. Embora a interação tripla hipotetizada não tenha sido significativa, notou-se que entre os participantes com alta adesão à CMJ, os homens atribuíram mais culpa do que as mulheres, e essa culpa foi ainda maior na condição em que a vítima era negra. Esses resultados são discutidos à luz da importância de os estudos sobre a culpabilização da mulher vítima de violência sexual levar em consideração um conjunto de características tanto da vítima como de aspectos mais ideológicos, como a CMJ.

Palavras-chave: Culpabilização da vítima, Crença no Mundo Justo, Violência Sexual contra a mulher.

RESUMEN

El género y el color de la piel son factores reconocidos que influyen en los juicios sociales. Abordamos este problema proponiendo que el color de la piel de la víctima y el género de los observadores influirán en la culpa atribuida a la mujer por la violencia que sufrió, así como la creencia en el mundo justo (CMJ) será responsable de predecir una mayor culpabilización de la víctima. En el Estudio 1 ($N = 152$), al manipular el color de la piel de las víctimas, identificamos que a las mujeres negras se atribuyó más culpa y que los participantes hombres las culpaban más que las mujeres. El estudio 2 ($N = 234$) investigó si la CMJ actúa como moderador de la relación entre el color de la piel de la víctima, el sexo de los participantes y la culpabilización de la víctima. Aunque la hipotética triple interacción no fue significativa, se observó que entre los participantes con alta adherencia a la CMJ, los hombres atribuyeron más culpa que las mujeres, y esta culpa fue aún mayor en la condición en que la víctima era negra. Estos resultados se discuten a la luz de la importancia de los estudios sobre culpar a las mujeres víctimas de violencia sexual por tener en cuenta un conjunto de características de la víctima y aspectos más ideológicos, como la CMJ.

Palabras clave: Culpabilización de la Víctima, creencia en un mundo justo, Violencia sexual contra la mujer.

Blaming the victim black: skin color the victim and belief in a just world

Although a number of changes have taken place in recent decades regarding the division of socially established roles and activities for men and women, in fact, attributions based on the idea of patriarchy, being culturally established and strengthened in our society, still exist. The historical process of winning women's rights has been marked by intense struggles by feminist movements to guarantee rights and for ways of coping with violence and all forms of discrimination against women.

In this context, among the types of violence against women, one of the most frequent forms is sexual violence. According to the World Health Organization, sexual violence is understood as any coercive act against a person's sexuality, such as harassment, sexual exploitation, and rape. The data on this type of violence indicate that approximately 35% of women suffer physical and/or sexual violence worldwide (WHO, 2013).

According to a study conducted in the United States, approximately 25.5 million women (21.3%) reported having been victims of attempted or actual rape at some point in their lives, being more predominantly black women (22.0%), followed by white women (18.8%) (Black, et al., 2011). In Brazil, data from the Atlas of Violence reports that in 2016, 22,918 cases of rape were registered by the Unified Health System, of which 34% of the victims were white and more than 54% were black (Cerqueira, et al., 2018). Taken together, taking into consideration the criterion of skin color, it is seen that the interaction between the categories race and gender places black women in a condition of greater vulnerability, in Brazil as well as in other countries, to various types of violence, one of the most often reported being sexual violence. That's because, in a context of sexual violence, gender relations assume different acts of domination due to the fact that since

the time of slavery, the woman is seen as a sexual object, thus being exposed to a greater burden of violence (Saffioti, 2015).

Although sexual violence against women, and specifically against black women, has been studied in different aspects, such as the profile of the aggressors (Chehab, et al., 2017; Ribeiro, Leite & Acaciara, 2016) and the mental health consequences (Mgoqi - Mbalo, Zhang & Ntuli, 2017; Spohn, Wright & Peterson, 2017), an important aspect in analyzing violence against women is the phenomenon of blaming them for the violence they themselves have suffered. Thus it is seen that the disparity in the guarantee of rights between men and women, and between blacks and whites, is one of the oldest and, at the same time, most current characteristics of society, and thus the need to analyze the naturalization of violence suffered by those who are at the intersection between gender (women) and skin color (black).

The categorization processes that regulate the relationship between skin color and gender result in a division of the members that are placed in these groups, being responsible for generating discriminatory attitudes. One of the belief systems that support this phenomenon is the Belief in a Just World (BJW), which was proposed by Melvin Lerner based on the hypothesis that people seek to establish a direct relationship between what is done and the results obtained, and thus a motivation exists for believing that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner, 1980).

Lerner's initial studies showed that there is a tendency in individuals to resort to mechanisms or strategies that attempt to eliminate any kind of threat to BJW, such as injustice and the victim's suffering (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). These strategies are associated with what Rubin and Peplau (1973) call secondary victimization, which happens when the individual, in addition to suffering misfortune, being a victim for the first time, is also blamed for his/her own misfortune, being a victim for the second time.

The studies that use BJW as an explanatory factor for decision making in situations of injustice have concentrated on the phenomenon of secondary victimization, mainly because it is one of the most pernicious consequences of this belief system (Mendonça, Gouveia-Pereira, & Miranda, 2016; Strömwall, Alfredsson & Landström, 2013). The secondary form of victimization most often analyzed in these studies is victim blaming, showing that there is a positive association between BJW and the acceptance or justification of situations of misfortune, blaming the victims for their situation. Since the 1970s, some studies on BJW have investigated its importance for the study of skin color and gender inequalities, taking into account the fact that blaming victims for their situations could generate new forms of discrimination to the extent it would encourage the acceptance of social injustices (Rubin & Peplau, 1973), mainly when it comes to minority groups.

Given the above and after conducting a literature review on this topic, we saw that most studies that investigated the role of the victim's skin color in the blame for the violence they suffered were carried out using an interracial scenario, analyzing the interaction between the victim's skin color and the aggressor's skin color (Donovan, 2007). These studies show that black women who are victims of sexual violence are blamed more than white women, especially when the perpetrator was white. Regarding the participant's gender, the studies show that men are more likely to blame the victim than are women (Pinciotti & Orcutt, 2017), and that people with greater adherence to BJW tend to blame the victims of sexual violence more (Furnham, 2003; Strömwall, Alfredsson & Landström, 2013).

Thus, considering that the phenomenon of blaming the victim of sexual violence can be caused by a combination of various factors and that, although there are a considerable number of studies on this topic, a gap has not yet been addressed: how the

variables of the victim's skin color, participant's gender, and participant's BJW combine to explain this phenomenon?

Overview of the studies

This article is composed of two experimental studies intended to analyze how the interaction between the variables of the victim's skin color, participant's gender, and participant's BJW explains blaming the victim in a scenario of sexual violence. In Study 1, we analyze how the victim's skin color, the participant's gender, and the interaction between these variables influence the blaming of the victim in a sexual violence scenario. In Study 2 we test the hypothesis that BJW acts as a moderator of the relationship between the victim's skin color, the participants' gender, and blaming the victim.

Study 1

Based on the debate regarding vulnerability provoked by the accumulation of categories of the victims of sexual violence, such as being a woman and being black, and considering the results of the studies that were previously presented, we hypothesize that:

- H1: the black victim will be blamed more than the white victim, based on the assumption that when adding information about the victim, such as the color of her skin, this can lead to greater blame (Katz, Merrilees, Hoxmeier & Motisi , 2017);
- H2: men will blame the victims more than women will, replicating what has been found in the literature (Ferrão *et al.*, 2016; Pinciotti & Orcutt, 2017);
- H3: men, compared to women, will blame the black victim more than the white victim, since the black victim tends to be seen more negatively by men, reflecting a hierarchical relationship of gender and skin color, which favors the scenario of subordination (Ghavami & Peplau, 2013).

Method

Participants

Initially we defined the sample size using the GPower 3.1.9 program, following the procedures described by Faul, Erdfelder, Lang and Buchner (2007). At least 158 participants were needed to provide an 80% chance of detecting a main effect and interaction effect ($p = .05$). Thus, the participants in this study were 152 university students from a public institution in the city of João Pessoa, PB, of whom 71 were men, 78 women, and 3 did not report their gender. Participant ages ranged from 17 to 29 years, with a mean of 19.7 years of age ($SD = 2.07$). The design used was between participants and the designation of participants for each of the conditions occurred in a random manner.

Instrument

Initially, participants were instructed to read a story about sexual violence and then asked to look at the photo of the girl involved in the situation. The questionnaires were divided into three experimental conditions, in which the color of the girl's skin was manipulated by means of the photos, with one condition using a photo of a white girl, another a photo of a black girl, and one condition without a photo (control condition).

The story was the same in the three conditions:

"Eduardo had just started at the university and decided to go to a freshmen hazing event at a student fraternity, promoted by the upperclassmen from his department. When he gets there, he realizes that most of his classmates have had too much to drink and are quite "happy". Eduardo pays attention to a girl who is quite drunk and is talking to an apparently sober young man. Eduardo notices that the boy is speaking into her ear and pointing out the way to one of the bathrooms in the house. Eduardo realizes that she is resisting entering, but ends up giving in and accompanies the boy walking in a stagger. Minutes

later, Eduardo sees the young man come out of the bathroom alone, in a hurry, closing his pants, and looking from side to side somewhat suspiciously."

Following this scenario, participants answered a question about blaming the victim, adapted from the study by Katz *et al.* (2017): "If the girl hadn't been drinking she probably could have avoided this situation." The participants' task was to indicate the point on the scale that was closest to their opinion, ranging from 1 = totally disagree to 7 = totally agree. Finally, the participants answered a questionnaire containing sociodemographic data, with questions related to gender and age.

Procedures

Participants answered the instrument individually, collectively administered in a classroom, and were randomly assigned to one of the three experimental conditions.

Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted using SPSS *software* (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), version 20. For the comparison between the experimental conditions, was performed an ANOVA in which we specified the victim's blame as a dependent variable, while the victim's skin color, manipulated by means of photos (white girl, black girl, and control condition - no photo), and the participant's gender (male and female), as independent variables.

Results

The results of this analysis indicated a significant main effect for the victim's skin color ($F(2, 151) = 4.79, p = 0.010$), for the participants' gender ($F(1, 148) = 16.84, p = 0.000$), and for the interaction between these two variables ($F(2, 148) = 2.97, p = 0.054$). Regarding the victim's skin color, analyzing the paired comparisons, it was possible to verify that there was a statistically significant difference between the means when comparing the conditions white x black ($p=0.013$) and black x control ($p=0.005$),

indicating that the black woman was more blamed compared to the white woman and the condition without a photo (Figure 1). On comparing the white x control conditions, there was no statistically significant difference between the means ($p=0.753$). The isolated effect of participant gender indicated that male participants ($M = 4.35$; $SD = 0.24$) blamed the victims more than females did ($M = 2.96$; $SD = 0.23$).

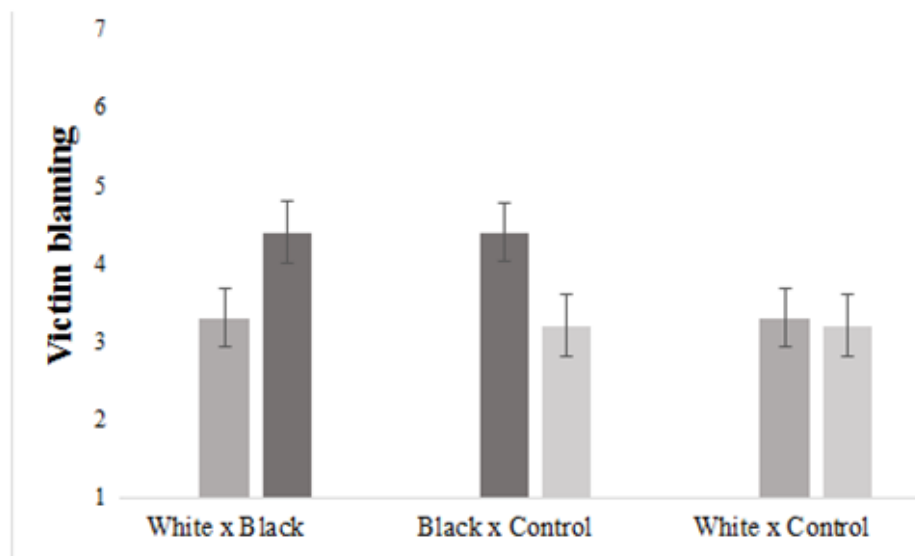


Fig 1. Victim blaming in relation to skin color

The interaction between these two variables indicated that there was only a statistically significant difference in the blame of the victim according to participant gender in the condition in which the victim's skin color was black ($p=.000$), demonstrating that the black woman was blamed more by men than by women. In the condition in which the victim was white ($p=.124$) and in the control condition ($p=.356$) there were no statistically significant differences. The means for each of the conditions are shown in Figure 2.

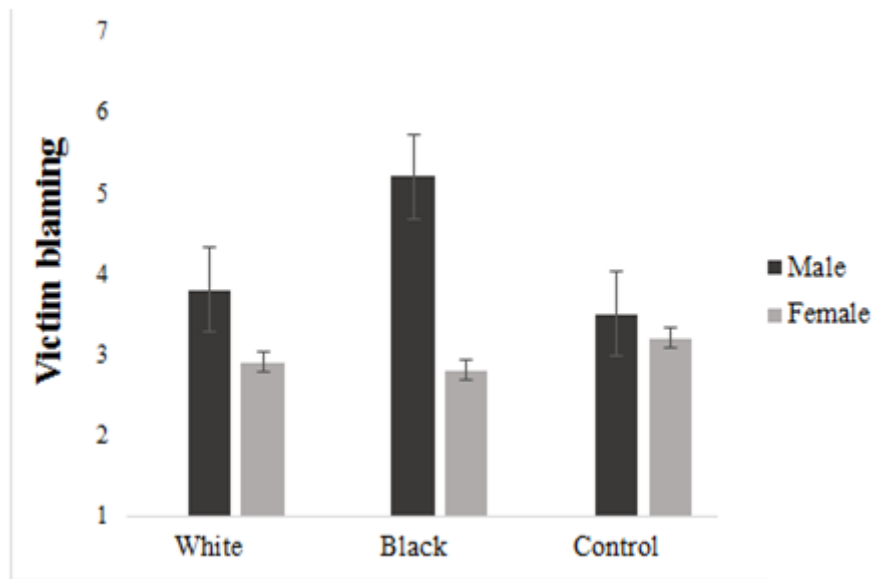


Fig 2. Victim blaming according to the interaction between the victim's skin color and the participant's gender

The results confirmed the three proposed hypotheses, indicating that the victim's skin color and the participant's gender are variables that influence the blame for the sexual violence. Thus, black victims were more often blamed, men blamed the victims more than women blamed them, and the black victims were blamed more by men than by women. In view of these findings and considering the studies that show blaming the victim is an unconscious endeavor motivated by the need to protect and/or restore BJW (Furnham, 2003), we designed Study 2, analyzing the moderating role of BJW in the relationships found here.

Study 2

One of the strategies used to protect the BJW from possible threats is secondary victimization, with blaming the victim being the form most studied by area researchers (Furnham, 2003). This occurs due to the fact that, by blaming the victim for her misfortune, the individual is protecting the idea that similar events will not happen to

him/her (Lerner & Simmons, 1966), thus strengthening the idea that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner, 1980).

Research has shown that BJW is associated with legitimizing inequality between social groups and intensifies discriminatory behavior against Blacks (da Costa Silva, Torres, Estramiana, Luque & Linhares, 2018; Halabi, Statman & Dovidio, 2015). Similarly, various studies have shown that BJW is a strong predictor of blaming the victim of sexual violence (Albuquerque, Torres, Estramiana, & Luque, 2019; Landström, Strömwall & Alfredsson, 2015) and that men with high BJW tend to blame the victims more than women do (Strömwall, Alfredsson & Landström, 2013). Despite these findings, we point out that no studies were found in the literature that analyzed the effect of the interaction between the victim's skin color, participants' gender, and their BJW, on blaming the victim of sexual violence.

In view of the above, this study sought to analyze whether BJW acts as a moderator of the relationship between the victim's skin color, the participant's gender, and the blaming of the victim. Thus, we suggest that the participants with high BJW will blame the black victim more (H1), that men with high BJW will assign more blame than women with high BJW (H2), and that men with high BJW will blame the black victim more than the white victim, compared to women with high BJW (H3). These hypotheses were developed based on the studies discussed so far and also the idea that the accumulation of the categories gender and skin color, together with the need to preserve the BJW, will result in greater blame for the black women. This would occur because the black women suffered from the effect of the intersection between two categories that pertain to minority groups, thus accumulating the consequences of discrimination based on gender and on skin color (Ghavami, & Peplau, 2013).

Method

Participants

The calculation of the minimum sample size for this study was done using the GPower 3.1.9 software, following the procedures described by Faul *et al.* (2007). The results indicated that a sample of 211 participants would be sufficient to provide an 80% chance of detecting a moderating effect ($p=.05$). This study included 234 university students from a public institution in the city of João Pessoa, PB, of whom 111 were men, 120 were women, and 3 did not report their gender. Participant ages ranged from 16 to 28 years, with a mean age of 19.5 years ($SD = 1.98$).

Procedure and instrument

The procedure used in this study was the same as in Study 1. In addition to the item that measures the blame of the victim, in this study the participants also responded to a measure of Belief in a Just World, the Belief in a Just World scale with popular sayings (CMJ-DITPOP) constructed and validated by Linhares, Torres and Pereira (in press). The scale is composed of nine items intended to measure BJW, answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). This scale presented valid and satisfactorily accurate scores ($\alpha=0.80$) and a single factor with a value of 3.50, responsible for explaining 38.95% of the total variance.

Data Analysis

The analyses performed in this study were conducted using the same Software as the previous study. A factorial ANCOVA was done using BJW as a covariate to test the hypothesis that BJW acts as a moderator of victim blame based on the victim's skin color, participant gender, and the interaction of these two variables.

Results

The results of the main effects of the victim's skin color, participant gender, and the interaction between these variables corroborated those of Study 1, indicating a significant effect for the victim's skin color ($F(2, 219) = 3.78, p = 0.024$), for participant gender ($F(1, 219) = 21.45, p = 0.000$), and for the interaction between these two variables ($F(2, 219) = 2.94, p = 0.055$).

The results the interaction indicated a significant effect for the interactions between the victim's skin color and BJW ($F(2, 219) = 4.97, p = 0.002$) and between participant gender and BJW ($F(1, 219) = 3.62, p = 0.058$). The triple interaction between the victim's skin color, participant gender, and BJW, however, was not significant ($F(5, 219) = 1.63, p = 0.153$).

Analyzing the paired comparisons of the interaction between the victim's skin color and BJW, it is seen that for the participants with low adherence to BJW ($-1SD$) no significant differences were observed between the means of any of the conditions. While for the participants with high adherence to BJW ($+1SD$), it was observed that there was only a statistically significant difference when the black x control conditions were compared ($p=.003$). On comparing the conditions white x black ($p=.440$) and white x control ($p=.070$), there was no statistically significant difference (Figure 3). The results of the interaction between participant gender and BJW indicated that there was a statistically significant difference only for participants with high adherence to BJW ($p=.000$), showing that male participants ($M = 5.03; SD = 0.28$) blamed the victim more than did female participants ($M = 3.34; SD = 0.27$).

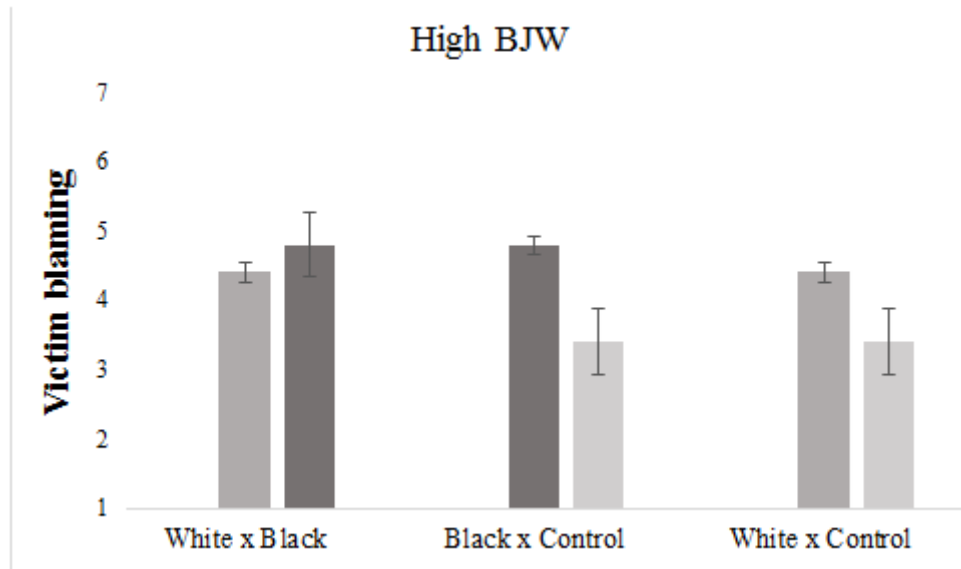


Fig 3. Victim blaming according to the interaction between the victim's skin color and BJW

Although the triple interaction between the victim's skin color, participant gender, and BJW was not significant, according to Judd, McClelland and Culhane, (1995), we can analyze the paired comparisons separately. From these analyses, it was possible to verify a statistically significant difference in the means of the participants with high adherence to BJW in the three conditions: black victim ($p = 0.020$); control condition ($p = 0.002$); and white victim ($p = 0.006$). These results indicated that male participants placed more blame than female participants, and this blame was even greater in the condition in which the victim was black. The means for each of the results are presented in Figure 4. For the participants with low adherence to BJW (-1SD) no significant differences were observed between the means of any of the conditions.

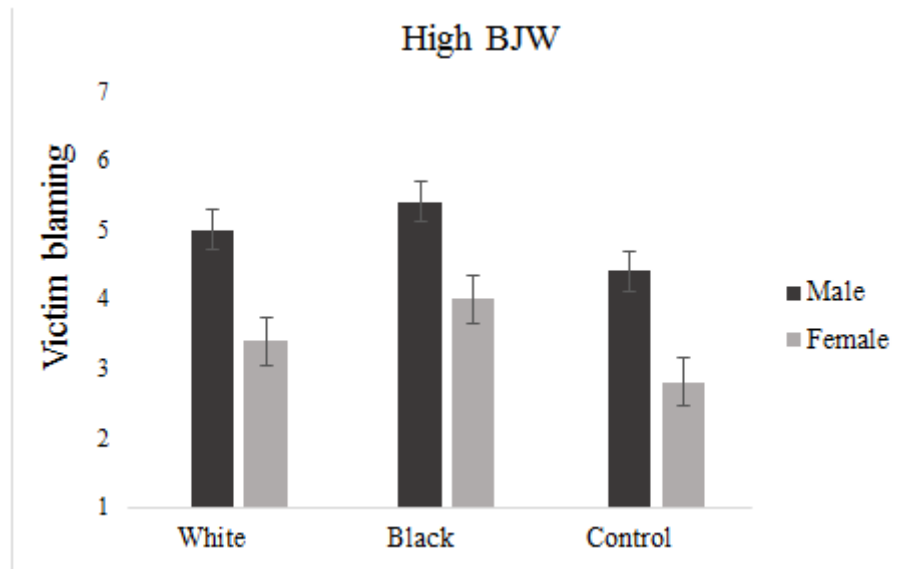


Fig 4. Victim blaming according to the interaction between the participant gender and BJW

The results observed partially confirm the proposed hypotheses, since, although the participants with high adherence to BJW blamed the black victim more (H1), the difference between the means was only significant when compared with the control condition and not with the white victim condition. However, as expected, male participants with high adherence to BJW blamed the victim more than females did (H2), with the black victim being the most blamed (H3).

Discussion

This article sought to analyze how the interaction between the variables of victim's skin color, gender of the participants, and their BJW explains the blaming of the victim in a sexual violence scenario. We presented the results of two studies: the first aimed to analyze how the victim's skin color, the gender of the participants, and the interaction between these variables influence the victim's blame in a sexual violence scenario. The results of this study confirm the hypotheses proposed, indicating that the black woman

was blamed more, the male participants blamed more than the females, and this blame was greater when the victim was presented as black.

These results corroborate those found in the literature, showing that men tend to blame victims more (Ferrão, Gonçalves, Giger & Parreira, 2016; Pinciotti & Orcutt, 2017) and reveals that skin color places black women in an even more vulnerable condition, generating a greater amount of blame for the violence suffered. One striking result is the fact that there are no significant differences between the white woman and the no-photo condition. It appears that, in the absence of skin color information, the generic subject that comes to participants' minds is a white subject. This result is recurrent in other studies (Santos, 2019; Silva, 2018) and seems to indicate, in a certain way, a process of whitening society in the Brazilian imagination, as discussed by Lima and Vala (2004).

In Study 2, we tested the hypothesis that BJW acts as a moderator of the relationship between the victim's skin color, the participants' gender, and the victim's blame. The results corroborate those found in the studies on BJW, indicating that when BJW is threatened by some unjust occurrence, people with high adherence to BJW tend to blame the victim as a way of restoring the idea that we live in a just world (Lerner, 1980). In the same way, this reinforces the idea proposed by the initial studies on BJW and blaming the victim, that BJW could contribute to the increase of discrimination insofar as it promotes the acceptance of injustices, especially when minority social groups are involved (Furnham, 2003). It is thus seen that black women victims of sexual violence, in this specific situation, are the most blamed.

We point out that, despite the result of the triple interaction between the victim's skin color, the participant's gender, and the BJW not having been significant, the proposed hypothesis was confirmed, since there are significant differences in the planned comparisons of participants with high adherence to BJW. These results indicated that, in

all the experimental conditions, men with high adherence to BJW blamed more than women did, and in the condition of black women, the level of blame was even higher. This result can be explained by the fact that women are judging victims from their own group (ingroup), as shown by several studies that analyze BJW in the context of intergroup relations (Albuquerque *et al.*, 2019; Correia, Alves, Morais & Ramos, 2015), showing that participants are more concerned with justice when confronted with victims from the ingroup than with victims from the outgroup.

Final considerations

The literature shows that skin color is a factor that is known to influence social judgments in diverse scenarios (de Lima, Pereira, Torres, de Souza & Albuquerque, 2019; da Costa Silva *et al.*, 2018). However, when it comes to the judgment about blaming the victims of sexual violence, there is a gap when dealing with the relationship between the victim's skin color and blame for the violence suffered. Although there are a number of studies that explore the role of numerous variables in blaming victims of sexual violence, we highlight that no investigation was found in the literature on the interaction between the victim's skin color, the participant's gender, and BJW. Thus, the development of these studies demonstrated an advance in analyzing the effect of the interaction between important variables for understanding the phenomenon of blaming the victim of sexual violence.

In view of these results, we highlight that one of the serious consequences of blaming the victims of sexual violence is the low rate of complaints by the victims. Since the results of our studies indicated that men are more apt to blame the victims than are women, and that black women are blamed more than white women, it is thus necessary to debate and investigate the operation of the reception spaces and the training of

professionals who receive complaints from these victims, since it is known that these spaces are mostly male.

In most cases, when seeking assistance at police stations, these women are faced with disregard in taking their statements, such as insults and even blame (Silva & Krohling, 2019). The propensity to blame victims of sexual violence shifts the focus from blaming the aggressors to the victims, which favors greater tolerance for the crime itself. In this way, it allows men to justify the violence that was committed and women to minimize their personal vulnerability, making victims of sexual violence be seen as guilty for what happened.

Although the results confirm the proposed hypotheses, some limitations must be considered. The sample in both studies relied on the participation of university students with a mean age of 19 years. Possibly, the results observed would vary if a sample from the general population were used, with a higher mean age and various levels of education. Finally, we raise the following questions as directions for future studies: how do the reception spaces for victims of sexual violence work? How and by whom are these women received? Does the service facilitate equal access to justice for all women? We also intend to analyze the effect of combining more variables, such as normativity and ambivalent sexism, to explain the phenomenon of blaming the victim of sexual violence in order to continue with the progress in investigating this topic.

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ARTICLE II

The research presented in this chapter is submitted to the journal Trends in Psychology and is currently being evaluated.

She deserved: Analysis of the processes of blaming the victim of sexual violence

Ella merecía: Análisis de los procesos de culpar a la víctima de violencia sexual

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Abstract

Most studies that investigate the blaming of women who are victims of sexual violence indicate that some characteristics of the victim and the observer are closely related to this phenomenon. The intent of this article is to analyze the effect of the combination of the variables, victim characteristics (skin color and normativity), observer's sex, Belief in a Just World, and ambivalent sexism on blaming the victim of sexual violence. We developed three studies conducted with university students (Study 1, $N=288$; Study 2, $N=226$; Study 3, $N=307$), who were instructed to answer some items about the blaming the victim, Belief in a Just World and Ambivalent Sexism. The analyzes, ANOVA and ANCOVA, have shown that the combination of these variables resulted in greater blame for the Black and counter-normative victim. The results confirm that the variables which were investigated interact each other and result in different experiences for the victims.

Keywords: Blaming the victim, Belief in a Just World, Ambivalent Sexism

Resumen

La mayoría de los estudios que investigan la culpabilización de las mujeres que son víctimas de violencia sexual indican que algunas características de la víctima y del observador están estrechamente relacionadas con este fenómeno. Este artículo propone analizar el efecto de la combinación de las variables características de la víctima (color de la piel y normatividad), el sexo del observador, la Creencia en el Mundo Justo y el sexismo ambivalente en la culpabilización de la víctima de la violencia sexual. Desarrollamos tres estudios realizados con estudiantes universitarios (Estudio 1, $N = 288$; Estudio 2, $N = 226$; Estudio 3, $N = 307$), que fueron instruidos para responder algunos ítems sobre culpar a la víctima, creer en un mundo justo y sexismo ambivalente. Los análisis, ANOVA y los ANCOVA, mostraron que la combinación de estas variables dio como resultado una mayor culpa atribuida a la víctima negra y la contranormativa. Los

resultados confirman que las variables investigadas interactúan entre sí y resultan endiferentes experiencias para las víctimas.

Palabras clave: Culpabilización de la Víctima, Creencia en un Mundo Justo, Sexismo Ambivalente

Introduction

Thousands of women are victims of some kind of violence in the world every day. According to the results of a worldwide survey (Abrahams et al., 2014), around 7.2% of women over 15 years of age reported at least one case of sexual violence during their lifetime. One particularly perverse aspect of this type of violence is the blaming of the woman herself for the violence she has suffered. Most of the studies addressing this phenomenon indicate that the level of victim blame can be influenced by several variables involved in the situation, such as by the gender of the observer (Adams-Clark & Chrisler, 2018; Hockett, Smith, Klausing & Saucier, 2016), by the type of relationship with the perpetrator of the violence (Abrams, Viki, Masser & Bohner, 2003; Murdoch & Gonsalkorale, 2017; Milesi, Süssenbach, Bohner, & Megías, 2020), by the victim's alcohol consumption (Angelone, Mitchell & Smith, 2018), by the type of clothing (Landstrom, Stromwall & Alfredsson, 2016), and by the color of the victim's skin (Lewis, Mendenhall, Harwood, & Browne, 2016).

In addition to these variables, studies show that some characteristics of the victim also influence the blame for the sexual violence. Research on normativity regarding the social expectations of gender roles has investigated the blaming of counter-normative women who are victims of sexual violence. According to Cialdini and Trost (1998), social norms help people understand the situations in which they are involved, being understood as rules that define appropriate or desirable thought and action patterns for the members of a group.

The meta-analysis carried out by Hockett et al. (2016) concluded that negative attitudes towards victims of sexual violence, such as blaming, tend to increase to the extent the victim exhibits behavior that is considered suspect or objectionable. In other words, those who do not violate traditional expectations about the gender role and deviate from normativity. This phenomenon may be related to the fact that people use social norms as a basis for their behavior in certain situations. Thus, the member who violates the rules established for that group is seen as a deviant member and tends to be rejected (Abrams et al. 2003; Hockett et al, 2016; Viki&Abrams , 2002).

According to Glick and Fiske (1996), one of the forms of defining traditional attitudes about gender roles is sexism. These authors defined sexism as the union of stereotypes about cognitive, affective, and behavioral assessments regarding the appropriate role in society, directed at individuals according to their gender. They identify sexism as a construct that can be manifested in a hostile or benevolent form, thus demonstrating an ambivalence (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The studies on sexism point out that this phenomenon is rooted in patriarchal values and traditional norms that sustain gender inequality, and may reflect in a greater blaming of the victim of sexual violence.

Another variable that is also being used in the investigation of blaming the victim of sexual violence is the Belief in a Just World (BJW). The BJW hypothesis was proposed by Melvin Lerner, stating that all individuals have a motivation, even if unconsciously, to believe that the world is a fair place, conveying in essence the idea that everyone gets what they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Lerner's initial studies showed that when the idea of a just world is threatened, for example, when faced with an unjust event, individuals resort to mechanisms or strategies to defend it (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). One of these strategies is blaming the victim, being associated with secondary victimization.

In the context of sexual violence, it is believed that individuals blame the victim as a way to psychologically protect against the idea that similar events could happen to them. For this, they look for characteristics and behaviors of the victim that justify what happened, thus perceiving the victim as deserving of that situation (Hockett et al. 2016). In light of this, various studies have found evidence to support the relationship between BJW and the blaming of victims of sexual violence (Strömwall, Alfredsson & Landström, 2013). Studies that address the relationship between BJW and the blaming of victims of sexual violence show that individuals who adhere more strongly to the idea that the world is a fair place, that is, with high adherence to BJW, tend to blame the victims more (Landström et al. 2016).

It is thus relevant to highlight that, in the context of sexual violence, this reality worsens when the victim's skin color is included, since Black women accumulate two categories that constitute minority groups, thus suffering the consequences of gender discrimination and that due to skin color. Therefore, although some studies have explored the impact of the victim's skin color (Donovan, 2007), the types of behaviors (Hockett et al. 2016), the observer's sex (Adams-Clark & Chrisler, 2018), ambivalent sexism (Abrams et al. 2003), and BJW (Landström et al. 2016) in the process of blaming the victim of sexual violence, it is clear that these variables are being explored in isolation, with no studies having been found that explore the effect of the interaction between them and the blaming of the woman victim of sexual violence.

Therefore, considering that these variables have close relations with the process of blaming the victims, the need to analyze the vulnerability caused by the interaction between them, that is, by the accumulation of categories of victims of sexual violence, stands out. An example of this situation would be women who accumulate two or more categories that are part of socially devalued groups, such as black and counter-normative

women. By analyzing the interaction between these variables, we give visibility to different forms of subordination that these victims are exposed to. That way, we highlight the relevance of the set of studies developed in this article, which analyze how some systems of beliefs and norms, which are widely shared in society, help understand the processes that underlie the blaming of women victims of sexual violence.

Overview of the studies

Considering the importance of discussing the psychosocial processes that contribute to blaming the victim of sexual violence, the intent of this article is to analyze the effect of the combination of the variables, victim characteristics (skin color and normativity), observer's sex, BJW, and ambivalent sexism on blaming the victim of sexual violence. For this, three experimental studies with quantitative approaches were developed. In Study 1, we analyzed how a combination of the victim's characteristics (skin color and normativity), the sex of the observer (male and female), and the interaction between these variables influence the blaming of the victim of sexual violence. In Study 2 we tested whether BJW is responsible for predicting different levels of blaming the victim. Finally, in Study 3, we analyzed how the variables BJW and ambivalent sexism combine to explain the phenomenon of blaming the victim of sexual violence.

Study 1

We believe that, in order to understand the phenomenon of blaming the victim of sexual violence, it is essential to take into consideration the combination of variables such as gender, skin color, and normativity. Therefore, considering that the combinations of these variables can significantly affect the way we think, thus generating different experiences that are not reducible to the original identities that were placed in them, we seek in this study to analyze how the victim's characteristics (skin color and normativity),

the sex of the observer (male and female), and the interaction between these variables influence the blaming of the victim of sexual violence.

Based on the results of studies by Donovan (2009) indicating that the victim's skin color and the observer's sex are responsible for predicting different levels of blaming the victim, as well as those from studies that investigate the influence of information about certain types of behavior of the victim on the blame for the violence she suffered (Hockett et al. 2016), we propose the following hypotheses:

H1a: Black victims will be blamed more than White ones.

H1b: counter-normative victims will be blamed more than normative ones.

H2: men will blame the victims more than women will.

H3: the Black and counter-normative victim will be blamed more.

H4: the Black and counter-normative victim will be blamed more by men.

Method

Participants

To define the sample size we used *GPower* 3.1.9 software (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang & Buchner, 2007), based on a priori analyses. At least 180 participants would be needed to provide a medium effect ($f = 0.25$, $p = .05$, and power = .80). Our sample consisted of 288 university students from a public institution in the city of João Pessoa-PB, of whom 149 were men, 138 women, and 1 did not report their gender, with the majority declared White (45.1%). Participant ages ranged from 18 to 33 years, with a mean of 20.53 years ($SD = 3.36$).

Instruments

The instrument used began with a story in which a situation of sexual violence against a drunk girl was reported. The described story varied with respect to the victim's skin color, manipulated through pictures (White vs. Black) and the victim's normativity,

manipulated through information about the victim's behavior (normative vs. counter-normative behaviors). The photos presented were limited only to the victim's face, with no information about their clothes and accessories, only their stereotypical features such as hair, nose and lips. We also emphasize that the story mentioning that the victim was at a party and had drunk a lot helps reinforcing counter-normative behavior. The added information only contributed to emphasize the counter-normative behavior presented in the situation.

The experimental scenario used was previously tested in a pilot study, with the participation of 10 university students, 5 for each experimental condition (normative x counter-normative behaviors). In this step, we asked the participants, after reading the story, to indicate whether they considered that woman's behavior as socially accepted by society or not and to justify their response. The results showed that all participants had confirmed that the behaviors described in the experimental scenario were consistent with what society considered acceptable or not. The story presented in the normative victim condition is described below:

“Eduardo was invited to a freshman hazing event at a student fraternity, promoted by the upperclassmen from his department, and decided to go. When he gets there, he realizes that most of his classmates have already drunk too much and are quite "happy". Eduardo pays attention to a young lady who is quite drunk and is talking with an apparently sober young man. He sees that the boy is speaking into her ear and pointing out the way to one of the bathrooms in the house. Eduardo notices that she is a little resistant to go, but ends up giving in and accompanies the boy, walking in a stagger. He hears his colleagues talking about this girl, commenting that they had never seen her drinking, as she had never attended class parties and was very discreet about dating.

Minutes later, he observes the boy leaving alone, hurriedly and closing his pants, while also hearing the girl asking for help”.

For the counter-normative victim condition, the characteristics described about the girl were as follows: “He hears his colleagues talking about this girl, commenting that she usually attends many parties, drinks a lot, and that she has already been with almost all the boys in the class”.

Following this scenario, participants were instructed to answer some questions about the situation described. As the dependent variable, an item about blaming the victim was used, adapted from the study by Katz, Merrilees, Hoxmeier and Motisi (2017): “If the girl hadn't been drinking, she probably could have avoided this situation”. The participants' task was to indicate the point on the scale that was closest to their opinion, ranging from 1 = totally disagree to 7 = totally agree. The participants then answered a questionnaire containing sociodemographic data, composed of questions related to gender, age, and skin color.

Procedures

Data collection. The questionnaires were administered in classrooms, collectively. After signing the free and informed consent form, the participants were instructed to respond to the instrument individually, being randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions.

Data Analysis. The analyses were conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), version 20 software. A 2x2x2 ANOVA was run, taking the victim's skin color (White vs. Black), normativity of the victim (normative vs. counter-normative behaviors), and the observer's sex (male vs. female) as independent variables. And the victim's blame as the dependent variable.

Result and Discussion

Initially, we emphasize that analyzes were performed testing the main effect of the participants' sociodemographic variables (gender, age and skin color), which indicated a significant effect only for the gender. Thus, we proceeded with the analyzes using only this sociodemographic variable. The results showed that the main effects of the victim's skin color ($F(1, 287) = 42.28, p = .000$) and the victim's normativity ($F(1, 287) = 26.80, p = .000$), were significant, indicating that Black victims ($M = 3.7; SD = .098$) were blamed more than White victims ($M = 2.8; SD = .096$) and that the counter-normative victims ($M = 3.6; SD = .095$) were blamed more than the normative victims ($M = 2.9; SD = .099$). Likewise, the main effect of the observer's sex was also significant ($F(1, 287) = 3.911, p = .049$), indicating that men ($M = 3.5; SD = .105$) blamed more than women did ($M = 3.1; SD = .109$). These results confirm the proposed hypotheses that the Black victim would be blamed more (H1a), the counter-normative victim would be blamed more (H1b), and that men would blame more than women (H2).

The results of the double interaction between the victim's skin color and normativity indicated that there was no significant effect ($F(1, 287) = .094, p = .760$). Nevertheless, by analyzing the pair comparisons separately (Judd, McClelland & Culhane, 1995), it was possible to verify a statistically significant difference when the means of the two experimental conditions were compared (Figure 1a), indicating that, in both conditions, the counter-normative victims were blamed more. We highlight here that the Black and counter-normative victim was blamed even more, which confirms the proposed hypothesis (H3). Finally, the triple interaction between the victim's skin color and normativity, and the observer's sex, was not significant ($F(4, 287) = 1.353, p = .251$). However, when analyzing pair comparisons, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference only between the means of the normative White woman condition

(Figure 1b). The result found indicated that men blamed more than women in the three experimental conditions, such that the Black and counter-normative victim was blamed more by men, confirming our hypothesis 4 (H4).

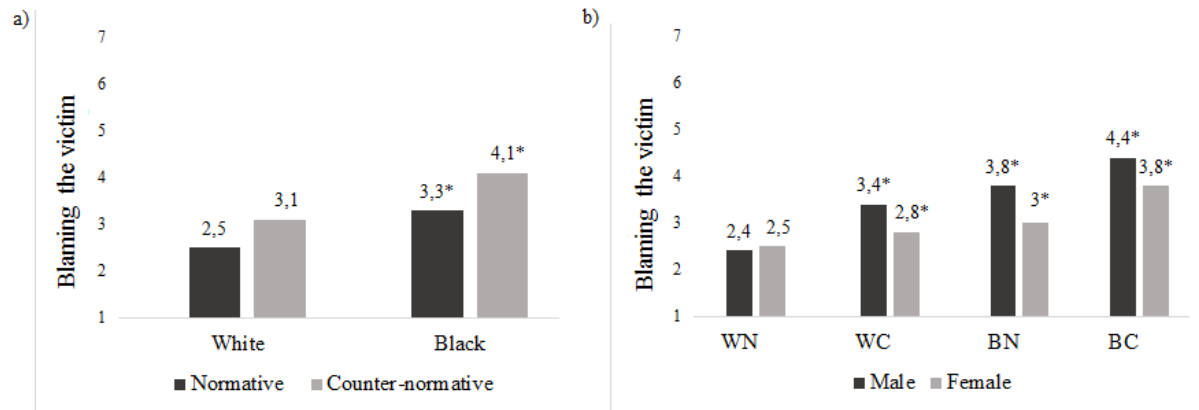


Figure 1. a) Blaming the victim according to the interaction between the victim's skin color and normativity; b) Blaming the victim according to the interaction between the victim's skin color and normativity, and the observer's sex.

Study 2

The intent of this study was to experimentally analyze whether BJW is responsible for predicting different levels of blaming the victim. We examined the following hypotheses:

H4: High adherence to BJW will result in greater blaming of the Black and counter-normative victim.

H5: Men with high adherence to BJW will blame victims more than will women with high adherence to BJW;

H6: The blaming of the Black and counter-normative victim will be greater for men with high adherence to BJW than for women with high adherence to BJW.

These hypotheses were formulated considering that the majority of studies that analyze the relationship between blaming the victim of sexual violence and BJW indicate that the greater the BJW, the greater the blaming of the victim (Landström et al., 2016;

Pinciotti & Orcutt, 2017), that some investigations indicate that the victim's group affiliations are an important variable for explaining blaming based on BJW (Halabi, Statman & Dovidio, 2015; Modesto & Pilati, 2017), that the violation of traditional norms influences the blaming of the woman victim of sexual violence (Hockett et al., 2016), and that men with high adherence to BJW tend to blame the victims more (Landström et al. 2016).

Method

Participants

Following the recommendations of Faul et al. (2007), we justify the number of participants a priori based on the GPower 3.1.9 software. According to the result, a minimum sample size of 214 participants was recommended to provide an 80% chance of detecting a medium moderating effect ($f = 0.25$, $p = .05$, and power = .80). Thus, this study had the participation of 226 university students from a public institution in the city of João Pessoa-PB, of which 106 were men and 120 women, the majority of whom had declared having Brown skin color (52.7%). Participant ages ranged between 18 and 35 years, with a mean of 20.91 years ($SD = 3.51$).

Instruments

In this study, the same questionnaire as in Study 1 was used, with just one additional BJW measure. The measure used was the revised Belief in a Just World scale with Popular Sayings (BJWPS), validated by Linhares, Torres and Pereira (b-submitted). This scale is composed of nine items intended to measure BJW, having as an example the items "what goes around comes around" and "an eye for an eye". The items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). A factor analysis was carried out, corroborating its unifactorial structure, presenting an

eigenvalue of 3.34, responsible for explaining 37.17% of the total variance and a Cronbach's alpha of .78.

Procedures

Data collection and Data Analysis. The same procedure as the previous study was used for data collection. For data analysis, in this study we chose to compose the variable "victim characteristics" from the combination of the two independent variables, victim's skin color (White vs. Black) and normativity (normative vs. counter-normative behaviors), obtaining a categorical variable of four levels: White and normative victim (WN); White and counter-normative victim (WC); Black and normative victim (BN); Black and counter-normative victim (BC), since the main proposed objective is to analyze the effect of the interaction between these variables and not the isolated effects. Then, an Analysis of Covariance - 4x2 ANCOVA was performed, taking the victim's characteristics (WN x WC x BN x BC) and the observer's sex (male vs. female) as independent variables, and blaming the victim as the dependent variable. BJW was used as a moderating variable in this relationship.

Results and discussion

The double interaction between the victim's characteristics and BJW was not significant ($F(3, 216) = 0.183, p = .908$), indicating that there was no statistically significant difference between any of the experimental conditions for the participants with high and low adherence to BJW, thus not confirming our proposed hypothesis (H4). The interaction analyses indicated a significant effect for the double interaction between the observer's sex and BJW ($F(2, 216) = 9.951, p = .000$), indicating that men with high adherence to BJW blamed the victims more than women with high adherence to BJW (Figure 2a). With this result, hypothesis 5 (H5) was confirmed. Among participants with low adherence to BJW, there was no significant difference between the means.

Finally, the results of the triple interaction between the characteristics of the victim, the observer's sex, and BJW were also not significant ($F(7, 216) = 1.415, p = .201$). However, pair comparisons showed that there were significant differences between the means for men and women with high adherence to BJW in all experimental conditions (Figure 2b). There was no significant difference between the means for low adherence to BJW. This result indicated that the men with high adherence to BJW blamed the Black and counter-normative victim more than the women did, confirming our hypothesis 6 (H6).

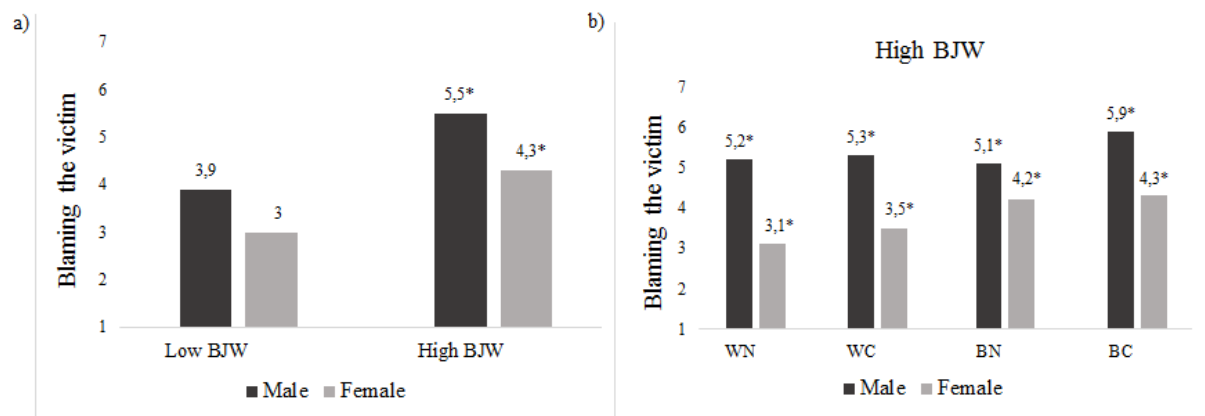


Figure 2. a) Blaming the victim according to the interaction between the observer's sex and BJW; b) Blaming the victim according to the interaction between the victim's characteristics, the observer's sex, and BJW.

Study 3

Since the studies on sexist beliefs confirm that individuals with high adherence to sexism tend to believe that women are to blame for suffering sexual violence (Abrams et al., 2003) we postulate that the combination of such variables can influence blaming the victim. Thus, we seek in this study to analyze how the variables BJW and ambivalent sexism combine to explain the phenomenon of blaming the victim of sexual violence. We believe that the effect of the combination of high adherence to BJW and high adherence

to ambivalent sexism (hostile and benevolent) can indicate a greater tendency to blame the victims more. We thus propose that:

H7: individuals with a high adherence to BJW and high hostile sexism (H7a) and high benevolent sexism (H7b) will blame Black and counter-normative victims more.

H8: men with high adherence to BJW and high hostile sexism (H8a) and high benevolent sexism (H8b) will blame victims more than women with high sexism.

Method

Participants

Following the recommendations of Faul et al. (2007), we justify a priori the number of participants based on the GPower 3.1.9 software. According to the result, a minimum sample size of 269 participants was recommended to provide an 80% chance of detecting a medium moderating effect ($f = 0.25$, $p = .05$, and power = .80). Thus, this study had the participation of 307 university students from a public institution in the city of João Pessoa-PB, of which 129 were men and 178 women, the majority of whom had declared having Brown skin color (51.5%). Participant ages ranged between 17 and 37 years, with a mean of 21.09 years ($SD = 3.69$).

Instruments

The questionnaire used in this study was the same as in Study 2, plus the Glick and Fiske (1996) ambivalent sexism scale adapted to Brazil by Formiga, Gouveia and Santos (2002). This scale is composed of 22 items, being divided into 11 on hostile sexism and 11 on benevolent sexism. Participants were instructed to report how much they agreed with each statement using a seven-point scale, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). A factor analysis was carried out, defining the extraction of two factors that were termed: Hostile Sexism ($\alpha = .89$) and Benevolent Sexism ($\alpha = .82$), the two together explaining 43.2% of the total variance.

Procedures

Data collection and Data Analysis. Data collection followed the same procedure as the previous study. Likewise, the analysis of the results was done following the same procedures explained in study two, adding the ambivalent sexism moderator variable. BJW was then used as the primary moderating variable and ambivalent sexism was used as the secondary moderating variable.

Results and discussion

The result of the triple interaction between the victim's characteristics, BJW, and hostile sexism was not significant ($F(3, 298) = 1.290, p = .278$), indicating that there was no statistically significant difference between the means of the experimental conditions, thus not confirming the proposed hypothesis (H7a). While for the triple interaction between the victim's characteristics, BJW, and benevolent sexism, a significant effect was found ($F(3, 298) = 4.075, p = .007$), showing that there was a statistically significant difference between the means for the participants with high adherence to BJW and high benevolent sexism when compared to the conditions of normative White victim vs. counter-normative White ($p = .042$), indicating that the normative White victim was blamed more than the counter-normative White victim. And between the counter-normative White victim vs. the counter-normative Black victim ($p = .003$), indicating that the counter-normative Black victim was blamed more than the counter-normative White victim (Figure 3). The result of this interaction analysis confirmed our hypothesis (H7b).

Next, the results of the triple interaction between the observer's sex, BJW, and hostile sexism was not significant ($F(1, 298) = .104, p = .747$), which did not confirm the proposed hypothesis (H8a). Likewise, the triple interaction between the observer's sex, BJW, and benevolent sexism was also not significant ($F(1, 298) = 1.280, p = .259$), however, in analyzing the pair comparisons from this interaction, significant difference

was observed between the means for men and women with high adherence to BJW and high benevolent sexism. These results indicated that men blamed more than women did (Figure 4), confirming our hypothesis (H8b).

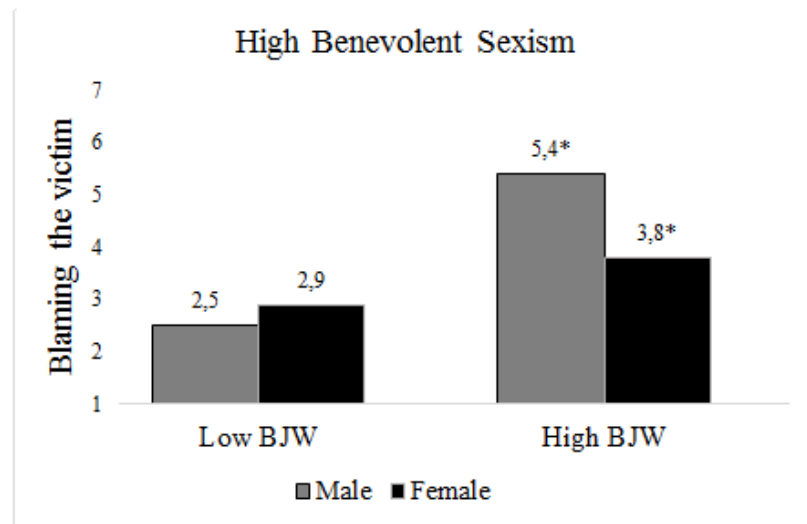


Figure 3 - Blaming the victim according to the interaction between the victim's characteristics, high adherence to BJW, and benevolent sexism.

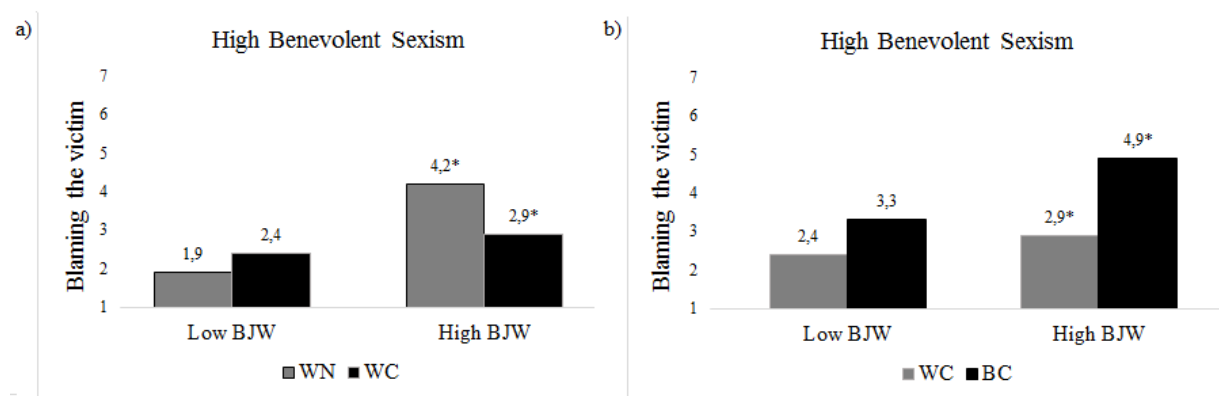


Figure 4. Blaming the victim according to the interaction between the of the observer's sex, high adherence to BJW, and benevolent sexism.

General discussion

This article analyzed the effect of combining the variables, victim's characteristics (skin color and normativity), observer's sex, BJW, and ambivalent sexism on the blaming of the victim of sexual violence. Here we present the results of three experimental studies: Study 1 analyzed how the victim's characteristics (skin color and normativity), the sex of the observer (male and female), and the interaction between these variables influence the blaming of the victim of sexual violence. Study 2 tested whether BJW is responsible for predicting different levels of blaming the victim, and Study 3 analyzed how the variables BJW and ambivalent sexism combine to explain the phenomenon of blaming the victim of sexual violence. Together, the results of the three studies partially confirmed the proposed hypotheses.

In Study 1 we confirmed that the victim's skin color, the victim's normativity, and the observer's sex influence the blaming of the victim of sexual violence. As predicted, Black victims and counter-normative victims were blamed more, and the combination of these variables resulted in greater blame for the Black and counter-normative victim as well. The results of the interaction between the victim's skin color, the victim's normativity, and the observer's sex drew our attention by the fact that only in the condition in which the woman was described as White and normative was there no observed significant difference between the means for blaming by men and women. This result reinforces what was found in the literature review conducted by Hockett et al. (2016) about the existence of a “real” victim, who are those belonging to a majority group and who do not violate the expectations for behaviors socially considered as traditional. However, we also emphasize that the same does not occur with the normative Black victim, thus reinforcing that the combination of the victim skin color and normativity variables affect Black women even more.

Next, the results of Study 2 reinforced that BJW predicts the blaming of the victim of sexual violence (Strömwall et al. 2013), confirming that BJW plays an important role in this relationship, since the participants with high adherence blamed the victims more, and the men with high adherence blamed more than women with high adherence, corroborating what has been found in the literature (Strömwall et al. 2013). We emphasize that one of the proposed hypotheses was not confirmed (H4), as the results of the interaction between the victim's characteristics and BJW were not significant, indicating that, when comparing the experimental conditions, participants with high adherence to BJW blamed the victims in an equal way. Thus, we understand that BJW, despite having a great theoretical value, did little to explain the victim's blame in this scenario, which makes us think that the predictive effect of BJW may vary depending on certain characteristics of the victim and the combination with other variables.

Finally, Study 3 showed that only benevolent sexism, together with BJW, is responsible for predicting the blaming of the victim of sexual violence. These results are in line with what has been produced in the literature on the relationship between ambivalent sexism and the blaming of the victim, that indicates that benevolent sexism is a better predictor than the hostile form (Süßenbach & Böhner, 2011).

The results of the interaction between the observer's sex, BJW, and benevolent sexism indicated that the men with high adherence to BJW and high benevolent sexism blamed the victims more than women did, confirming what has been proposed in the literature regarding sexism and BJW, that men, because they have different socialization processes than women, generally report more sexist beliefs and, consequently, tend to blame the victims more.

Unlike what we expected, upon comparing the experimental conditions of participants with high adherence to BJW and benevolent sexism, normative White victims

were blamed more than counter-normative White victims. This result does not corroborate what is being found in studies on the relationship between benevolent sexism and blaming the victim, since the literature shows that benevolent sexists tend to blame the victims more when they violate traditional gender roles, that is, when they have counter-normative behaviors (Abrams et al. 2003). This is due to the fact that they expect women to conform to the traditional gender roles assigned to them and that those who violate them deserve to be blamed (Glick & Fiske, 2001a).

We believe that a possible explanation for this result may originate from the fact that high adherence to BJW exerts different effects against targets from different groups (Aguiar, Vala, Correia & Pereira, 2008; Modesto & Pilati, 2017). Studies on BJW reveal that, in some cases, a high adherence to BJW results in a greater blaming of victims from the ingroup, since victims from outside groups are not as threatening to maintaining BJW (Lerner & Miller, 1978). Thus, situations of injustice with these groups do not tend to threaten individuals' BJW (Aguiar et al., 2008). Thus, the fact that most of the participants declared themselves to be White may have contributed to this result.

We also suppose that the fact that the experimental setting contains the information that the victim was at a party and had drunk alcohol may have contributed to greater blaming, since benevolent sexists may perceive women who violate any expectation of female innocence as contributing to their own blame (Abrams et al., 2003). On the other hand, on comparing counter-normative victims, Black women were blamed more than White women. Thus, it is understood that for the investigation of this theme, it is necessary to take into consideration the complexity of the vulnerabilities that women are exposed to, as the accumulation of categories turns gender and skin color inequalities more potent.

Final considerations

The set of results presented show that the variables investigated interact with each other and result in different experiences for the victims, thus being considered fundamental variables for understanding this phenomenon. We therefore emphasize that analyzing the intersection between variables regarding the victim and the observer in cases of blaming the victim of sexual violence is an investigation that needs to be expanded, since the literature review demonstrated that the production on this topic is still scarce. We highlight that, although some studies have demonstrated the impact of these variables on blaming the victim of sexual violence, most of the studies analyze them in isolation, and no studies have been found that investigate how these variables combine and contribute to explaining this phenomenon. Thus, we emphasize the theoretical relevance of these studies in analyzing the combination of these variables, contributing to the explanation of the blaming of women who are victims of sexual violence.

We understand that, when we investigate certain variables and how their combinations influence the blaming of the victim, explaining what can make some people blame the victims and others not, we are closer to understanding this phenomenon and helping to combat it. With that, we call attention to the need to give visibility to different forms of subordination added to the women category, highlighting that these investigations can result in the development of more specific and effective public policies to confront sexual violence against women, as well as offer encouragement for these women to seek help and report the violence suffered.

Despite the important results presented here, some limitations must be considered, such as the fact that information about the victim being at a party and having drunk alcohol may somehow have influenced the responses of the participants, causing the victim to be seen as deviating from the norms established by society or reinforcing the

idea that she deserved it, because she was in the “wrong place and doing wrong things”. We point out as future directions, the need to replicate these studies, to test a scenario that does not involve alcoholic beverages, and also analyze the effect of variables such as racism and rape myths on the relationship between skin color, victim's normativity, and the observer's sex in blaming the victim of sexual violence, as well as analyzing the isolated effect of information on the victim's normativity.

Finally, we emphasize that these studies advance in analyzing the combination of important variables that influence the blaming of the victim of sexual violence and contribute to maintaining a scenario of denigration and discrimination against these women. Thus, the set of studies carried out in this article reveals the predictive power of combining these variables to explain this phenomenon.

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“But she was drunk”: Social representations of sexual violence against women

Abstract

Several studies have been demonstrating the importance of patriarchal values in the structuring of society, especially with regard to sexual violence against women, pointing out that women themselves are still blamed for the violence that they suffer. The work presented here falls within this context and analyzes how the social representations of university students about women victims of sexual violence are structured (Study 1; N = 288) and how information about the victim's skin color can affect the judgment that makes women victims of sexual violence (study 2; N = 99). Together, the results indicate that the woman was blamed for the violence she suffered and it gets more evident in the situation in which the woman was black.

Keywords: sexual violence, Social representations, Blaming the victim

According to data from *Atlas da Violência* (the Atlas of Violence) published in 2019, sexual violence cases in Brazil broke the record of 66,041 criminal records in 2018, 81.8% of the victims being women (Cerqueira et al., 2019). A recent event took place in December 2020, when a state congressman from Partido Cidadania touched the breasts of a colleague, a state congresswoman, from PSOL, during a session of the Legislative Assembly of the State of São Paulo. If this type of episode takes place in a public agency, which mission is precisely to legislate, among other things, about violence against women, we can easily imagine the situation in more private places.

Sexual violence is defined as any act or attempted sexual act, comments, attacks or any other forms of harassment given its non-consensual character (WHO, 2017).

According to Bandeira (2014), in the context of violence against women, sexual violence is considered gender violence, having its origin in the imbalance of power and the division of roles between men and women and in the domination of women's body. The concept of gender, on the other hand, was proposed to overcome the biological determinism related to the use of the term sex or sexual differentiation and to highlight the social construction of the identities of men and women, deconstructing the sexual division of roles based on social norms that designate what the supposed roles of men and women are (Pérez, 2017).

Social norms are patterns of influence that the individual builds in interaction with other people or acquires from groups in which they are part of (Sherif, 1966). Thus, it is considered that social norms help people understand themselves in social situations in which they are involved, especially when they are young or uncertain (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Once that, historically, women's social representations have been marked by exclusion and violence (Estramiana & Ruiz, 2006), it is clear that, despite some advances regarding the division of gender roles, there are currently attributions based on the idea of patriarchy being culturally incorporated and reinforced in our society.

Several studies have shown how much patriarchal values still structure society, especially with regard to sexual violence against women (Hirt et al., 2017; Lermen & Cúnico, 2018; Silva & de Oliveira Gomes, 2018), as happens for example, in situations where women themselves are blamed for being sexually assaulted. The study developed by Hockett, Smith, Klausner & Saucier (2016), for example, demonstrated that the blaming of the victim of sexual violence tends to increase as the victim deviates from the stereotype considered to be a “real” victim. The true victim would be the one who had not consumed alcohol, who was raped by a stranger in a quiet public space, who fought against the aggressor and who suffered visible physical and emotional injuries. Thus,

victims who do not fit this stereotype are seen as possibly more guilty for what happened to them.

Thus, it is clear that the victim blaming comes from the acceptance and replication of concepts that normalize sexual violence against women, so that society itself raises questions that test the morality of the raped woman, such as: “What was she wearing? What was she doing at this place, at this time? Was she drunk? ”, Taking the focus off the aggressor and, in a way, legitimizing the victim's guilt. A survey commissioned in 2016 by the Brazilian Public Security Forum (FBSP) to Datafolha identified that 33.3% of the Brazilian population believes that in cases of rape the victims themselves are guilty. In the same direction, the results of the survey “Sexual Violence - Perceptions and behaviors about sexual violence in Brazil”, carried out by the Patrícia Galvão Institute in 2016, indicated that, when asked about the relation between alcohol consumption and sexual violence, 89% of the participants stated that being drunk is not a reason for a man to abuse a woman, but 20% think that having sex with an alcoholic colleague or girlfriend is not sexual violence.

Together, these surveys show that: a) violence against women is currently considered a serious social and public health problem and b) women are still blamed for the violence they suffer. The work presented here falls within this context, unfortunately so frequent in Brazil. Since social representations are defined as knowledge built and shared socially (Moscovici, 1976) and that function as a system of interpretation of reality that organizes the relations of individuals with the environment, influencing their behavior (Abric, 1994), it is understood as of great importance for studies of this theme analyzing the way in which the social representations of women victims of sexual violence are constituted.

In view of the above, this work aims to investigate what are the social representations of university students about Sexual Violence against women. To this end, two studies were developed with quantitative and qualitative approaches that aimed to analyze, in Study 1, how the social representations of university students about women victims of sexual violence are structured and, in Study 2, to investigate how information about the skin color of the victim can affect the judgment of women who are victims of sexual violence.

Study 1

Discussing the issue of violence against women in the university context is relevant because, depending on the major area, these participants will be the future professionals who are likely to deal with these victims. Thus, we chose to have as participants students of the following major areas: physiotherapy, pharmacy, nursing and social work. We used the Theory of Social Representations to support this study because, according to Moscovici (2010), they would have the function of determining the field of values or ideas shared by the groups, as well as enabling the understanding of the meanings that people attribute to the world and to themselves (Almeida, Santos, & Trindade, 2000). Thus, considering that Social Representations are responsible for assigning meaning to the real world and for guiding behaviors (Jodelet, 1984), this study sought to analyze how the social representations of university students about women victims of sexual violence are structured .

Method

Participants

There were 288 university students from a public institution in the city of João Pessoa, PB, which 149 were men, 138 women, and 1 did not report the gender. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 33 years, with an average of 20.5 years of age (SD = 3.36).

Procedure and instrument

Initially, participants were instructed to read a story in which a situation of sexual violence against a young woman was reported. From the data previously presented in the research published by the Atlas of Violence and Patrícia Galvão Institute, the choice of this scenario was due to the fact that in the addressed context this type of violence is, in a way, more naturalized. The participants answered the instrument individually, in collective application in the classroom. The story presented is described below:

"Eduardo had just started at the university and decided to go to a freshmen hazing event at a student fraternity, promoted by the upperclassmen from his department. When he gets there, he realizes that most of his classmates have drunk too much and are quite "happy". Eduardo pays attention to a girl who is quite drunk and is talking to an apparently sober young man. Eduardo notices that the boy is speaking into her ear and pointing out the way to one of the bathrooms in the house. Eduardo realizes that she resists entering, but ends up giving in and accompanies the boy, staggering. Minutes later, Eduardo sees the young man coming out of the bathroom alone, in a hurry, closing his pants, and looking from side to side somewhat suspiciously".

Following this scenario, participants answered a question about blaming the victim, adapted from the study by Katz, Merrilees, Hoxmeier and Motisi (2017): "If the girl hadn't been drinking she probably could have avoided this situation." The participants' task was to indicate the point on the scale that was closest to their opinion, ranging from 1 = totally disagree to 7 = totally agree. Soon after, the participant was asked to justify his / her position on the previous question. Finally, the participants answered a questionnaire containing sociodemographic data, with questions related to gender and age.

Data analysis

Sociodemographic data were analyzed with SPSS software, version 22, using frequency analyses. While the discursive data were processed through textual analysis using the IRAMUTEQ (*Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires*) software, which is a program that allows the analysis of textual data through statistical and graphic resources (Ratinaud, 2009).

The data were analyzed using Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC), a method that classifies small segments of text according to the vocabularies present in it and then breaks them down into their reduced forms, organizing them into Discursive Classes (Camargo & Justo, 2013). We emphasize that the variables used for our analyzes were age and gender of the participants, as well as the attribution of guilt measured by the Likert scale that varied from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree, so that the greater the assent, the greater the blaming.

Results and discussion

The DHC retained 80.19% of the total *corpus*, which was divided into two *subcorporas* composed of six discursive Classes. The first *subcorpora* agglomerated Classes 3 and 2, being called “Women and the ingestion of alcohol”. The second, called “Women: victim or guilty? ”, aggregated Classes 5, 4, 1 and 6 (Figure 1), which subsequently were subdivided into Classes 5 and 4 and, contrary to Classes 1 and 6. Class 1 was the most significant, corresponding to 20% of the *corpus*, being called “No is no”. Class 4 represented 17.6% of the *corpus* and was named “Both have a share of the fault”. Class 2 expressed 16.4% of the *corpus* and was entitled “She was not guilty, but she could have avoided it”. Class 5 also expressed 16.4% of the *corpus* and was named “She is guilty and could have avoided it”. Class 3 expressed 15.3% of the *corpus* and was named

“Nothing justifies it”. Finally, Class 6 represented 14.1% of the *corpus*, the least of which was reduced, named “No victim is guilty”.

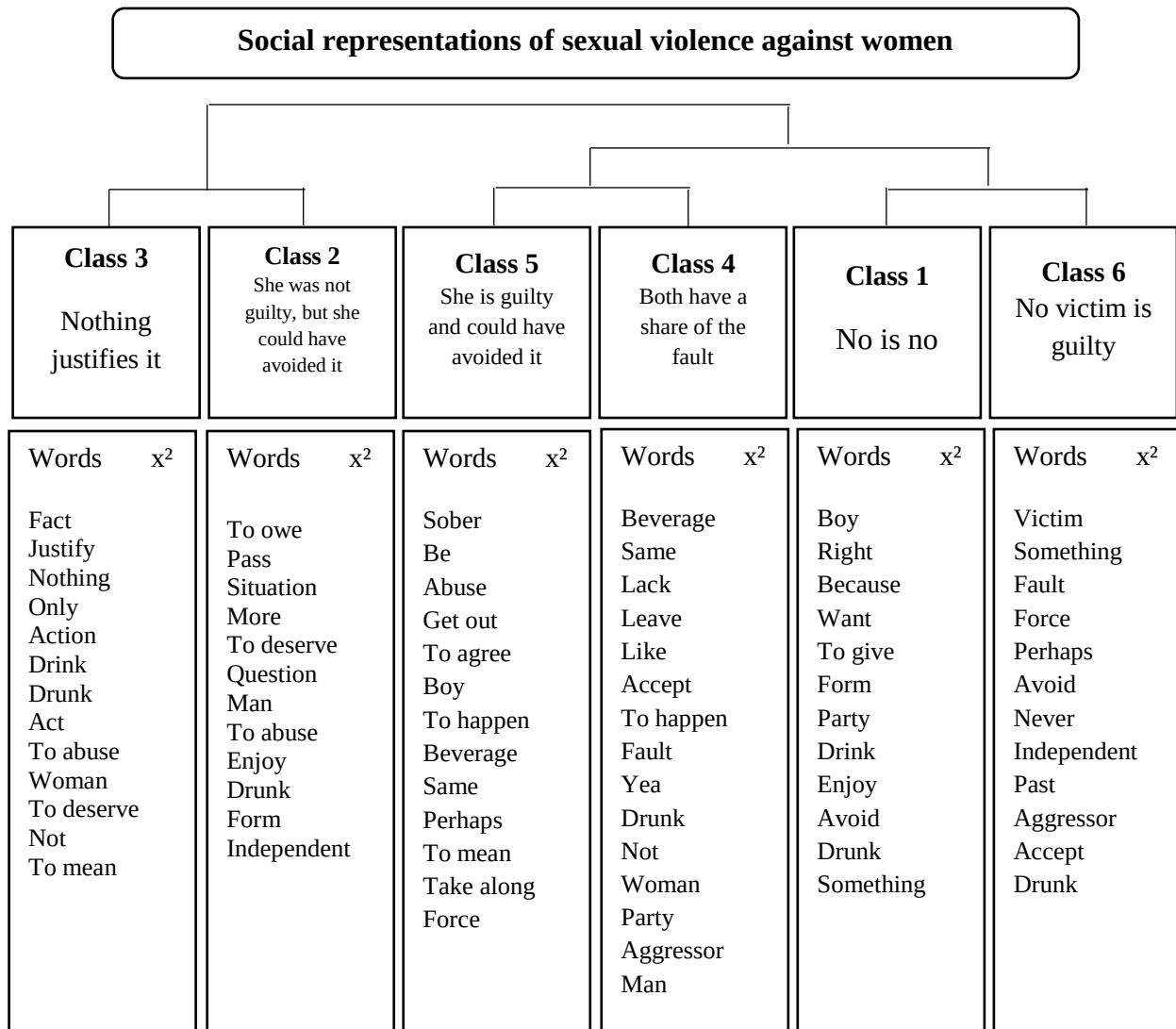


Figure1. Dendrogram of the Descending Hierarchical Classification

Initially, following the *corpus* partition logic, in the first *subcorpora* partition, “Women and the ingestion of alcohol”, we have got a general idea that the victim is not guilty for what happened, although Classes 3 and 2 oppose to it due to the victim's relation to drinking. That is, while Class 3 subtly passes on the idea that drinking facilitated the occurrence of crime and it would had been better avoiding it, Class 2 transmits the idea

that, even though the woman ingested alcohol, it does not justify the crime committed against her and she should not be held responsible for the suffered violence.

Specifically, the analysis of Class 3, named “Nothing justifies it”, brings speeches that emphasize the idea that the fact of the woman having ingested alcohol does not justify the action of the man, which could have happened even though she was sober. Despite this, it should not occur in both circumstances, since it is one of the main forms of violence against women typified by law. In this Class there was a low level of victim blaming, since the most representative variable was the level of attribution of guilt, with level 1 standing out on a Likert scale from 1 to 7. Examples:

"The situation has nothing to do with the girl having drunk or not, the problem in that situation is the boy who abused her. He could have abused her either way, drunk or not." (Male - 21 years old, blaming: 1)

"The girl has nothing to do to experience this situation, whether she drinks or not it does not justify such act". (Female - 23 years old, blaming: 1)

In Class 2, entitled “She was not guilty, but she could have avoided it”, We have statements very close to those of the previous class, differentiating themselves by the fact that, while indicating that the woman was not guilty, it also states that she could have avoided experiencing that situation if she had not ingested alcohol. In this way, there is a blaming of the victim, but in an implicit way since it presents an argument that goes in the direction of control and restriction, that is, that she could have avoided drinking, as it allows a risky situation for other scenarios. Examples:

"The boy is to blame for the incident, but her level of drunkenness has contributed to making her an easier target." (Male - 22 years old, blaming: 2)

"She was not to blame for being in this situation, but if she was aware of what she was doing she could have asked for help before." (Female - 20 years old, blaming: 2)

The general idea in the speeches gathered in the opposite *subcorpora*, called "Women: victim or guilty?", Is the analysis of the situation of blaming the victim itself. In a subsequent subdivision, there is the opposition of Classes 5 and 4, which condense speeches aimed at blaming the victim in an explicit and strong way, while Classes 1 and 6 defend that the guilt is never the victim's, but the aggressor's.

Class 5, as in the other Classes, also emphasized the issue of alcohol ingestion, being called "She was guilty and could have avoided it". However, here the speeches more directly portray the woman's guilt, emphasizing the fact that she could have avoided it if she had been sober or if she had kept an awareness of reality. It is also noteworthy a high rate of blaming the victim, since the variable associated with this class was the level of attribution of guilt, with level 5 standing out on a Likert scale from 1 to 7 (little blame and a lot of blame). Examples:

"If she were sober I believe she would have realized that the boy wanted to hurt her". (Female - 18 years old, blaming: 5)

"In this situation, yes (she is guilty) because if the girl were sober she would know how to make her own decisions". (Male - 23 years old, blaming: 7)

Analyzing the speeches of Class 4, "The fault is of the man", it is clear that the blame is meant for the man, emphasizing that he took advantage of the situation in which the woman was. It is important to point out that, despite the speeches blame men, it is clear that there was a high level of woman blaming. When analyzing the variables associated with this Class, the prevalence of responses from male participants was noted, as well as the level of guilt attributed, highlighting level 6, with the scale being evaluated

in an interval from 1 to 7 (little blame and a lot of blame). Thus, it is understood that the participants indicated a high level of blame for women, but in their speeches this blaming appeared implicitly, justifying with the fact that she should not have ingested alcohol.

Examples:

"I believe the drink left her vulnerable, but she was not to blame for the abuse, he is to blame." (Male - 18 years old, blaming: 6)

"In my view, the boy took advantage of the drunk girl. If she were not drunk, she would never end up in a situation like this". (Male - 22 years old, blaming: 7)

At the other pole, in Class 1, called "No is no", the speeches were based on the idea that, regardless of the situation the woman is in, drunk or not, the right to not want having intimate relations with someone must be respected. They also portray the fact that the man took advantage of the situation in which the woman was under the influence of alcohol to violate her. In addition, they bring the importance of other people's intervention when they perceive the situation, in order to avoid violence. Examples of speeches:

"The fact that she is drunk does not give the boy the right to do what he wants with her" (Male - 19 years old, blaming: 1)

"If the girl in question was in the mood to drink she did not mean that people could take the liberty and take advantage of the situation". (Female - 18 years old, blaming: 1)

Finally, in Class 6, "No victim is guilty", the speeches bring the idea that the victim is never guilty for experiencing a situation of violence, as well as having the right to have their leisure guaranteed without being harassed. Furthermore, the blame of the abusive man was emphasized, who can come to rape a woman regardless of her condition. In this Class there was a low rate of victim blaming, with the level of guilt 2

standing out as an associated variable, on a Likert scale from 1 to 7 (little blame and a lot of blame), as well as the female gender. Examples:

"The aggressor is the one to blame, not the victim, being her at any stage of consciousness." (Female - 19 years old, blaming: 1)

"Being drunk or not, she would never need or deserve to go through such a situation." (Female - 19 years old, blaming: 2)

Study 2

Several studies show that the phenomenon of blaming women for the violence they suffer is more frequent when she is black than when she is white (Donovan, 2007; Kronbauer & Meneghel, 2005; Lewis et al., 2016). According to the Atlas of Violence (Cerqueira et al., 2018), in 2016, 22,918 cases of rape were registered by the Unified Health System (Sistem Único de Saúde - SUS), which 34% of the victims were white and more than 54% were black. Here it is important to note that, historically, in Brazil, black women have always been at the bottom of the social pyramid, either for lower wages (IBGE, 2012) or for being seen as sexual object. In fact, Gilberto Freyre, in his book *Casa Grande e Senzala*, has already pointed out the abuses practiced by white owners against black women, who served both as work and sexual objects for the owners and their children (Freyre, 2000).

In this study we seek to investigate how information about the victim's skin color can affect the judgment that is made of women victims of sexual violence. For that, we used the theory of the central core (or nucleus) proposed by Abric (1994). This theory proposes that all social representation is constituted as an organized and structured set of information, beliefs, opinions and attitudes, composed of two subsystems: the central and the peripheral (Abric, 1994). The choice of this theory is due to the fact that it makes possible to compare social representations between two different groups or from the

same group at two different times. Thus, it can be considered that the representations about that particular object are different if the compositions of the central cores are different (Sá, 1998).

Thus, there would be a central system, formed by the central core of representation, composed of stable elements and of a normative and functional nature (Sá, 1996) and constituting the essential element of representation (Abric, 1994). It is a peripheral system, constituted by more flexible elements, which allow the simpler incorporation of the changes that occur in that context, to the group's representations (Abric, 1994). The central nucleus has the function of generating the basic meaning of representation, determining the organization of all elements and is relatively immune to change (Sá, 1996). The peripheral system is responsible for making the connection between concrete reality and the central system (Abric, 1994). In addition, it would be more sensitive to changes, aiming at adaptations to protect the elements of the central nucleus (Sá, 1996).

Method

Participants

Participants included 99 university students from a public institution in the city of João Pessoa, PB, which 50 were men, 46 women and 3 did not report their gender. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 28 years, with an average of 20.21 years of age ($SD = 2.18$). The sample consisted of students of the following major areas: physiotherapy, pharmacy, nursing and physical education.

Instruments and Procedures

The scenario used in this study was the same as in Study 1, being changed only by using the two experimental conditions where the girl's skin color varied between white and black. After describing the scenario, participants were asked to look at the

photo of the girl involved in the situation and freely write down five characteristics that society would attribute to her. Finally, the participants answered a questionnaire containing sociodemographic data, composed of questions related to gender and age. Participants answered the instrument individually, collectively administered in a classroom, and were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions.

Data analysis

Sociodemographic data were analyzed with SPSS software, version 22, using frequency analyses. While the discursive data were processed through textual analysis using the IRAMUTEQ. The *corpus* was constructed from the transcription of the texts written by the participants and divided into separate files depending on the girl's skin color (black or white). For the analysis of the structure of social representations, Prototypical Analyses were performed (Vergès, 1992), which are based on the calculation of the frequency and order of the evoked words, generating a table with four quadrants divided into Central Nucleus, First Periphery, Second Periphery and Contrast Zone (Wachelke & Wolter, 2011). The structures of the social representations studied will be presented by means of tables, which elements are organized according to frequency and average order of evocations, the frequency (F) represents the number of times a given word was mentioned, and the mean order of recall (MRO) indicates the position in which the term evoked was hierarchized by the participant.

Results and discussion

Condition 1: white girl victim of sexual violence

The words that make up the central core of the social representations of the white girl were those that had the most frequency and were promptly evoked. These words are presented in the upper left quadrant (Table 1). Here the word most often evoked in the first place was "beautiful", followed by the evocations "blonde" and "cheerful". These

elements of the central nucleus were considered by the participants as the most significant in representing the white victim of sexual violence, giving real meaning to the representations. According to Abric (1994), these elements can be considered as consensual, socially shared and stable, and are the ones that most resist changes.

In the second quadrant is the first periphery, located in the upper right corner. Here are the words mentioned with high frequency and average order of evocation, that is, they were mentioned a lot, but were not promptly evoked. In this quadrant the evocations "friendly", "drunk" and "donkey" appear. The "friendly" evocation, although not in the central nucleus, seems to reinforce the idea in it. The words "drunk" and "donkey" refer to the negative characteristics attributed to the girl.

The third quadrant, called the contrast zone and located on the lower-left, is composed of elements with low evocation frequency, but which were readily mentioned. Evocations such as "young", "easy", "smart", "smiling", "careless", and "blameful" appear here. While in the fourth quadrant, called the second periphery, are the words that had a low frequency of evocation and were mentioned later (in a second or third moment). The evocations that mostly stand out are "innocent", "rich", "bitch", "cool", and "vulgar".

Together, the evocations expressed in the condition of the white woman victim of sexual violence, present in the central core, express positive shared characteristics related to the girl. The peripheral and contrast-zone elements present a certain ambivalence, since they either coincide with the central core, reinforcing positive characteristics, or they denote negative attributes. This ambivalence can be a product of the main function of the peripheral elements, which is to protect the central core. Thus, at the same time that it points to common sense and "blames" the victim of sexual violence, since she is white, this victim has her blame mitigated.

Table 1

Prototypical analysis of the social representations of the White girl victim of sexual violence

Central Core			First Periphery		
Frequency ≥ 4.18 e MRO ≤ 2.61			Frequency ≥ 4.18 e MRO ≥ 2.61		
Words	F	MRO	Words	F	MRO
Beautiful	25	1.5	Sympathetic	7	3.4
Blonde	8	2.5	Drunk	6	2.7
Joyful	8	2.5	Dumb	5	2.4
Contrast Zone			Second Periphery		
Frequency ≤ 4.18 e MRO ≤ 2.61			Frequency ≤ 4.18 e MRO ≥ 2.61		
Words	F	MRO	Words	F	MRO
Young	4	2	Innocent	4	3.2
Easy	4	1.2	Rich	4	2.8
Intelligent	3	2	Bitch	4	3
Smiling	3	2	Nice	3	4
Neglected	3	2	Vulgar	3	3.3
Guilty	3	1.5	Idiot	3	2.7

Condition 2: Black girl victim of sexual violence

On analyzing the characteristics that compose the central core of the social representations evoked for the black girl victim of sexual violence (Table 2), the most evoked word was "black", followed by "pretty", "drunk", "poor", and "irresponsible". In the second quadrant, or first periphery, the words "easy" and "blameful" converge. It is seen that, compared to the condition of the white girl, here the central core was composed of more negative than positive evocations, tending to discredit the victim, and the words of the first periphery reinforce these social representations. In the quadrant referring to the contrast zone, evocations such as "dark-skinned", "young", and "vulnerable" appear. In relation to the fourth quadrant, several contradictory evocations appear, some good characteristics such as "nice/friendly" and "curly-haired", and some negative characteristics such as "irresponsible" and "slut".

Table 2

Prototypical analysis of the social representations of the Black girl victim of sexual violence

Central Core			First Periphery		
Frequency ≥ 4.64 e MRO ≤ 2.4			Frequency ≥ 4.64 e MRO ≥ 2.4		
Words	F	MRO	Words	F	MRO
Black	16	1.8	Easy	8	2.5
Beautiful	13	1.6	Guilty	5	3.8
Drunk	11	2			
Poor	7	2			
Irresponsible	7	2			
Contrast Zone			Second Periphery		
Frequency ≤ 4.64 e MRO ≤ 2.4			Frequency ≤ 4.64 e MRO ≥ 2.4		
Words	F	MRO	Words	F	MRO
Brunette	4	1.2	Sympathetic	4	3.2
Young	3	2.3	Inconsequentil	4	4
Vulnerable	2	2	Vagabond	4	2.5
			victim	3	2.7
			naive	3	4
			innocent	2	3.5

In general, most of the evocations attributed to the black girl represent negative characteristics, and an association between skin color, social class, and blame can be observed. Differently than what happened in the previous situation with the white victim, the victim's skin color was the first word that came to participants' minds, with the feature "pretty" being left in second place. It is also seen that, unlike the previous situation, most of the words that compose the central core are characteristics that refer to blame. Another aspect that deserves emphasis is the word "poor" as one of the central elements of representation about the black girl, which alludes to the relation that still exists in the collective imagination between skin color and social class, with black skin color being associated with lower classes and white skin color with upper classes.

General Discussion

This article aims to investigate what are the social representations of university students about women who are victims of sexual violence. We present the results of two

studies, in which Study 1 analyzed how the social representations of university students about women victims of sexual violence are structured. Study 2, on the other hand, made an additional contribution by analyzing the extent to which the color of the skin of a woman victim of sexual violence affects the judgments that are made about her.

The results presented here indicated that, in relation to how social representations are structured, the blaming of the victim of sexual violence appeared either implicitly or explicitly. Analyses based on the victim's skin color indicated that when the victim was white, milder words were evoked. On the other hand, when the victim was black, more offensive words were evoked.

In Study 1, it was evidenced that the social representations of university students about women victims of sexual violence are structured in two axes. The first is aimed at speeches about the relation between sexual violence and alcohol ingestion, so that the speeches differed between agreeing and disagreeing that alcohol ingestion collaborates with sexual violence. The speeches that agreed with this idea, reported that the most sensible thing would be for women to avoid alcohol ingestion, justifying that it leaves them vulnerable to sexual assault. These speeches “subtly” represent the idea that women who consume alcohol and are raped are, in a way, guilty for having experienced that situation, since they could have avoided it if they had not consumed alcohol. The speeches that disagreed, however, emphasized that nothing justifies this type of crime.

The second axis, on the other hand, presents a divergence in relation to blaming the victim. The classes speeches expressed that both the victim and the aggressor were guilty, also using the victim's alcohol consumption as a justification and that, in most cases, men take advantage of situations like these. In the opposite direction, some classes of this axis presented speeches in defense of the victim, emphasizing that in no situation of violence is the victim guilty.

In view of these results, it is clear that most of the representational content combined by students encompasses blaming the victim, corroborating what have been found in the literature (Acosta et al., 2018; de Oliveira, Lima and Gomes, 2018; Lermen and Cúnico, 2018; Narvaz & Koller, 2007). These results are also in line with studies that indicate that there is a shared representation that women attending parties are seen as more accessible and more sexually available (Gunby et al., 2012; Pires et al., 2018). Once that social representations are formed by sets of knowledge that are socially valued and shared (Jodelet, 1989), it is considered that the way students represent sexual violence against women may be related to the mean of positioning themselves against this practice.

The results of study 2 indicated that in the condition in which the victim was white, more positive evocations appeared, such as "beautiful" and "blonde". In the condition that the victim was black, more negative evocations appeared, such as "irresponsible" and "guilty". These results corroborate those found by Batista, Leite, Torres and Camino (2014), whose participants stated that society attributes a greater number of positive adjectives to whites, as happy and friendly, than to blacks. They are assigned more negative adjectives, such as stupid and dishonest.

It is relevant to highlight that the "blameful" evocation is present in both conditions, however, in the condition in which the girl was white, it appeared in the contrast zone, demonstrating that it had a low frequency and a low evocation by the participants. In the condition that the victim was black, that word appeared in the first periphery, which had a high frequency and an average number of evocation.

It is thus relevant to note that the "blameful" evocation is present in both conditions, however, when the girl was white, it appeared in the contrast zone, thus demonstrating that it had a low frequency and a low evocation by the participants. While

in the condition in which the girl was black, this word appeared in the first periphery, indicating that it had a high frequency and an average amount of evocation. This result shows that in the condition of black victim there was a more explicit blaming.

Together, the results of these studies help understand how social representations that are shared by society about women victims of sexual violence are organized. We can consider that social representations differ according to the victim's skin color, since, according to the central nucleus theory, two representations might be judged as distinct if their central nuclei are composed of different evocations (Sá, 1996).

Final considerations

From these results, it is concluded that in social representations about sexual violence against women, the idea that the woman victim of sexual violence is perceived as co-responsible for the violence suffered is perpetuated. It is also understood that the fact that women ingest alcohol might serve as a basis to justify the deserving of the violence suffered and, consequently, their blaming. It is also concluded that the representations of the victims vary depending on their skin color, observing a representation with a negative connotation for the black victim. Thus, it is clear that the analysis of these phenomena is not only based on gender, but also on the color of the skin and the situation in which the victim is, showing that the treatment received by women depends on many variables, ranging from the color of their skin, their social class and the situation in which the violence occurred.

In view of this, it is highlighted the relevance of knowing and analyzing how the social representations of future professionals who will deal directly with these victims are structured, since social representations are manifestations of how social thinking of social groups is organized (Abric, 1998). Thus, these results can provide theoretical subsidies that assist in the construction and development of actions to face and prevent

sexual violence against women. It also highlights the need of training these future professionals based on more effective qualification, including discussions on this topic. As well as a better structure of care services for these victims, providing integrated and quality care. We point out as a limitation the fact that the sample was restricted to a single socio-cultural context, and cannot be generalized to other cultures. With that said, the importance of expanding the sample, aiming to carry out a cross-cultural analysis, points out as future directions.

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SECTION III - GENERAL DISCUSSION AND FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

General discussion and Final considerations

The general objective of the present thesis was to analyze to what extent the characteristics of victims of sexual violence, and the gender and the belief systems (e.g., BJW and ambivalent sexism) of the participants, influence blaming the victim for the violence she has suffered. Additionally, we also sought to analyze how the social representations of university students about women victims of sexual violence are structured. The choice of this research scenario stems from the alarming statistics presented on the world stage (Abrahams et al., 2014) and because it is understood that, in the context addressed, this type of violence has been increasingly naturalized.

To meet these objectives, we developed a research program in which nine studies were carried out, which are organized into four articles. Each of the studies developed in this thesis increased the complexity of the relationship between the variables investigated, always seeking to fill gaps left in previous investigations. Thus, the articles presented brought specific contributions that, in an integrated manner, allowed us to meet the proposed objectives.

Article 1 sought to analyze how the interaction between the victim's skin color, gender of the participants, and the BJW variables explain the blaming of the victim in a scenario of sexual violence. In general, after manipulating the skin color of the victims, we identified that the Black victim was blamed more, confirming that skin color is a factor that influences social judgments (de Lima, Pereira, Torres, de Souza & Albuquerque, 2019; da Costa Silva, Torres, Estramiana, Luque & Linhares, 2018). It was also confirmed that men blamed the victims more than women, and that high adherence to BJW contributes to this blame, corroborating what has been reported in the literature (Abrams et al., 2003; Correia, Alves, Morais, & Ramos, 2015).

Article 2 went further by inserting new variables and analyzed the effect of combining variables, the victim's characteristics (skin color and normativity), the observer's sex, BJW, and ambivalent sexism on the blaming the victim of sexual violence. The main results indicated that the blame was greater for victims who accumulated the characteristics of being Black and counter-normative, reinforcing what was found in the literature review conducted by Hockett et al. (2016) about the existence of a “real” victim, who are those belonging to a majority group and who do not violate the expectations of behaviors considered socially traditional.

This investigation offers contributions in that it demonstrates that high adherence to BJW, when considered together with high benevolent sexism, is responsible for predicting the blaming of the victim of sexual violence, leading to greater blaming of the Black and counter-normative victim compared to the White, counter-normative victim. These results corroborate what was found in the literature, that benevolent sexism is a better predictor of the victim's blame than the hostile type (Süssenbach & Böhner, 2011). They also advance our knowledge by analyzing the effect of the interaction between two belief systems that are widely used and shared by society.

Article 3 brings together two studies that aimed to analyze how the social representations of university students about women victims of sexual violence are structured (Study 1), and how information about the victim's skin color can affect the judgment that is made of women victims of sexual violence (Study 2), were developed. The results of these studies indicated that most of the social representations shared by students include blaming the victim, so that, when analyzing the evocations from the victim's skin color, it was noticed that when the victim was White, more positive words were evoked, contrary to what happened with Black victims.

Finally, the results of two studies that aimed to validate a revised version of the Belief in a Just World Scale with Popular Sayings developed by Linhares, Torres and Pereira (2020, in press) are appended. The analyses carried out support the conclusion that the new version of the BJWPS scale presented satisfactory psychometric indexes.

The set of results presented show that the variables investigated interact with each other, influence the blaming of women victims of sexual violence, and help in understanding the processes that underlie this phenomenon. The results demonstrated that the Black victims and counter-normative victims were blamed more, and the combination of these variables resulted in greater blame for the Black and counter-normative victim as well. Equally important is the fact that men blame them more than women do.

In relation to adherence to BJW, it was noticed that people who adhere to the idea that the world is a fair place, where people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner, 1980), tend to blame victims more, especially when these victims are members of minority groups. In the same direction, it was identified that sexist beliefs, together with adherence to BJW, enhance blaming the victim, indicating that the people who are more sexist and who adhere to the idea that the world is a fair place also blamed the victims more, in particular, Black and counter-normative women.

In addition, the results also progress by demonstrating that the social representations about sexual violence against women are based on the idea that the woman victim of sexual violence is perceived as co-responsible for the violence suffered. As well, it is understood that the fact that women consume alcohol can serve as a basis to justify deserving the violence suffered and, consequently, their blame. It concludes that the representations of the victims vary depending on their skin color, with a representation with a negative connotation for the Black victim. Thus, it can be seen that the analysis of these phenomena is not only done by means of gender, but also with the color of the skin

and the situation in which the victim is, thus showing that the treatment received by the woman depends on many variables, ranging from the color of her skin, her social class, and the situation in which the violence occurred.

It is perceived that the blame of the woman for the violence she suffered is a multi-causal phenomenon and in our line of research we try to analyze the various factors that can help to understand this. The development of these studies demonstrated an advance in analyzing the effect of the combination of important variables that influence the blaming of the victim of sexual violence and contribute to the maintenance of a scenario of devaluation and discrimination against these women, especially for those who belong to minority groups.

Thus, we emphasize the importance of considering, in the investigation of this theme, the complexity of the vulnerabilities that women are exposed to, since the accumulation of categories makes gender and skin color inequalities become more powerful. We therefore reinforce that analyzing the intersection of categories that the victims accumulate and the interaction between variables of the victim and the observer in cases of blaming the victim of sexual violence is an investigation that needs to be increasingly expanded.

Therefore, the set of studies carried out in this thesis reveals the predictive power of combining these variables to explain this phenomenon. Finally, these studies demonstrate the importance of trying to understand the woman's blame for the violence she suffered from factors that are more associated with the ideological level and that have the role of justifying and thus legitimizing this type of violence. With this, we call attention to the need to give visibility to different forms of subordination added to the category of women, highlighting that these investigations may result in the development of more specific and effective public policies to face sexual violence against women, as

well as contribute to encouraging these women to seek help and report the violence suffered.

We point out as future directions, the need to replicate these studies in order to find more evidence about the combinations of these variables, using larger and more diverse samples. We also suggest testing a scenario that does not involve alcoholic beverages and analyzing the effect of other variables, such as racism and rape myths, on the relationship between skin color, the victim's normativity, and the observer's sex, in blaming the victim of sexual violence.

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SECTION IV - ATTACHMENT

ARTICLE ATTACHMENT

The research presented in this chapter is submitted to the journal *Análise Psicológica* and is currently being evaluated.

Revised scale of Belief in a Just World Based on Popular Sayings

Escala Revisada de Crença no Mundo Justo com Ditados Populares

La Escala Revisada de Creencia en el Mundo Justo con Dichos Populares

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Abstract

The just world hypothesis is responsible for supporting the idea that people are motivated to believe that the world is a fair place, such that everyone gets what they deserve and deserve what they get. The development of measures that assess individual differences in the Belief in a Just World plays an important role in advancing research in this area. The intent of this article was to validate a new version of the Belief in a Just World Scale based on Popular Sayings (BJWPS). For this, two studies were developed that sought to present psychometric evidence about the new version of the BJWPS scale (study 1; N=160) and to verify the indexes of fit between the observed data and the proposed model (study 2; N=144), both with a sample of university students. Together, the results allow us to conclude that the constructed scale presented satisfactory psychometric indexes.

Keywords: Belief in a Just World; Popular Sayings; Validity of Tests.

The intent of this article is to validate a new version of the Belief in a Just World Scale based on Popular Sayings (BJWPS). We therefore seek to continue a research program whose main objective is to demonstrate that a set of popular sayings express people's motivation to believe in a just world. Our proposal is that, by using popular sayings as items to measure BJW, one can avoid responses tendentious to social desirability, or counter-normative ones, since individuals will be responding to statements that are used very often in their daily lives. We present here the results of two studies whose main objective was to validate a new version of the BJWPS (scale developed by the authors of this study, submitted), proposing that this measure be an alternative to the scale initially proposed.

We are faced daily with various situations that we consider to be unfair and, in order to find an explanation that helps guide our future behaviors, we tend to attribute a sense of justice to these situations. The just world hypothesis is responsible for sustaining this motivation to seek justice (Lerner, 1980). The initial studies on this topic showed that people are motivated, even though unconsciously, to believe that the world is a fair place, and this phenomenon is metaphorically named Belief in a Just World (BJW) (Lerner, 1980). This concept was introduced by Melvin Lerner in the 1960s and has been extensively investigated ever since.

According to the initial research on BJW, believing that the world is a fair place allows individuals to understand their physical and social environment as safe, since it creates the illusion that the world is stable and orderly (Lerner, 1980). The first studies indicated that there would be a tendency in individuals to resort to mechanisms, or strategies, that tend to eliminate any type of threat to the BJW, such as injustice and the suffering of the victim. These strategies are associated with what is called by Rubin and Peplau (1973) secondary victimization, which happens when the victim, in addition to suffering misfortune, being a victim one time, will even be held responsible for the misfortune itself, being a victim for the second time. In this way, BJW would function as a personal contract, being essential for people to feel secure and optimistic about their future (Hafer & Sutton, 2016).

Lerner proposed that when this worldview is threatened, people need to cognitively restore justice. For example, people would blame innocent victims for their fate when they have no means of helping them (Landström, Strömwall & Alfredsson, 2016; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015). Thus, the idea was established that individuals believe that people not only get what they deserve, but also deserve what they get (Lerner, 1980). Here it is important to note that these results have been confirmed in

almost 40 years of investigations (Bartholomaeus & Strelan, 2019; Donat, Wolgast & Dalbert, 2018; Hafer & Sutton, 2016).

Measurement of BJW

The initial studies on BJW were developed based on an experimental paradigm (Lerner, 1965; Lerner & Simmons, 1966), that investigated mainly how people responded to situations that threatened the idea that the world is a fair place (Ellard, Harvey & Callan, 2016). In the first experimental study conducted by Lerner (1965), participants were invited to judge the effort of two workers, who were confederates of the experimenter. They were informed that, due to lack of resources, only one of the two workers would be paid and that the selection of who would be paid would be random, and the result would be given to the workers at the end of the task. As a result, it was seen that the participants tended to more positively evaluate the effort of the worker who was paid, despite knowing that the pay was obtained randomly.

Whereas the study by Lerner and Simmons (1966) analyzed how people reacted regarding a situation in which a victim would receive electric shocks for having given wrong answers to some questions. In the first condition, participants could choose to transfer victims from a reward condition in which they would receive money instead of shocks. In the second condition, participants were informed that victims would continue to receive shocks for each wrong answer. Then, participants were asked to evaluate the victim. The results showed that the participants evaluated the victims more positively in the first condition. Based on these results, the authors proposed that this was happening as an attempt to avoid an experience of injustice, maintaining the belief that people have get they deserve (Lerner, 1965; Lerner & Simmons, 1966).

Subsequent studies suggested the possibility of BJW being a psychological disposition, considering that there are situational and individual variations in the

perceptions of justice (Rubin & Peplau, 1975). The development of measures that assess individual differences in BJW has played an important role in advancing research in this area (Hafer & Sutton, 2016). As a result, there has been an increase in attempts to provide a reliable and valid measure of BJW, emphasizing the development and use of measures.

The first self-report measure that was proposed to assess individual differences of BJW was that of Rubin and Peplau (1973), the scale of belief in a just world (Just World Scale - JWS). It was initially composed of sixteen items, divided into two subscales: the belief in a just world (nine items) and an unjust world (seven items), of which thirteen were maintained. However, two years later, seven items were added and thus a revised version, consisting of twenty items, was developed (Rubin & Peplau, 1975). This measure became the most widely used for BJW and, despite criticism about its psychometric properties, is still widely used today (Hafer & Sutton, 2016).

The development of further measures took different directions. Initially, researchers created measures psychometrically more solid, based on criticisms about the weak psychometric properties of the Rubin and Peplau scale (Lipkus, 1991) and problems with the assumption of bipolarity, assuming that belief in a just and unjust world are different and relatively independent dimensions (Lipkus, 1991). Then the need also arose to distinguish the facets of BJW, with measures being developed to assess not only the idea of general BJW (Dalbert, Montada & Schmitt, 1987; Lipkus, 1991), but also of personal BJW (Dalbert, 1999). Personal BJW refers to the belief that events in each individual's life are just; while General BJW exceeds the individual, portraying the belief that, in general, the world is a fair place. (Dalbert, 1999). While personal BJW is positively associated with aspects of subjective well-being (Donat, Peter, Dalbert & Kamble, 2016; Johnston, Krings, Maggiori, Meier, & Fiori, 2016),

General BJW is positively correlated with anti-social tendencies (Hafer & Sutton, 2016).

The General BJW scale (General Just World Scale - GJWS) developed by Dalbert, Montada and Schmitt (1987) was created in German and translated into English, and consists of six items combined in a single-factor structure ($\alpha = 0.80$). This measure was proposed as an alternative to the BJW scale of Rubin and Peplau (1975) and aimed to measure the degree to which the individual considers fair the events that occur in the world in general. Also aiming to provide a new scale that could be used as a viable alternative to that of Rubin and Peplau (1975), Lipkus (1991) developed a seven-item scale called the Global Belief in a Just World Scale that presented a single-factor solution ($\alpha = 0.83$). Later, Dalbert (1999) included seven more items to measure personal BJW, finding a single-factor solution ($\alpha = 0.82$). Thus, the new BJW Scale proposed by Dalbert totaled thirteen items that were theoretically distributed into two factors: personal and general BJW.

Seeking to verify the existence of a BJW measure developed in Brazil, a survey was carried out on the Google Scholar and Scielo research platforms with the expression "*Escala de Crenças no Mundo Justo*" ["Scale of Beliefs in a Just World"]. From this research, only one article was identified covering the development of BJW measurement, carried out by Modesto and Pilati (2015). These authors presented evidence of the validity of using the Implicit Association Test (IAT) to measure BJW, developing two IATs, one for the personal dimension ($\alpha = 0.73$) and the other for the global dimension of BJW ($\alpha = 0.70$). Finally, four articles on scale validation for the Brazilian context were also found: the scale by Dalbert et al. (1987), validated by Pimentel et al. (2010), with $\alpha = 0.66$; the Lipkus (1991) scale, validated by Gouveia, Pimentel, Coelho, Maynard and Mendonça (2010) with $\alpha = 0.71$; the Personal scale of

BJW (Dalbert, 1999), validated by Modesto, Figueredo, Gama, Rodrigues and Pilati (2017) with $\alpha = 0.83$; and finally, the Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, 1999), validated by Gouveia, et al. (2018), finding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83 for the personal dimension and 0.69 for the general dimension.

It is clear that the development of measures that assess individual differences in BJW plays an important role in advancing research in this area. However, the use of self-report instruments to measure BJW has been increasingly criticized in recent years. This has been happening due to the fact that BJW can be understood as a “preconscious” phenomenon (Lerner, 2003), that is, not fully accessible to consciousness. Thus, measuring BJW using scales would only assess the conscious dimension of BJW. Furthermore, the scale items are considered limited because they are influenced by social desirability, since the statements in the scales are considered counter-normative (Lerner, 2003).

Study 1

The intent of this study was to analyze the psychometric properties of a revised version of the Belief in a Just Word Scale based on Popular Sayings (BJWPS) through analyses of its factor structure and consistency index.

Method

Participants

The participants consisted of a convenience sample of 160 university students from public universities, of whom 84 of which were female and 76 were male. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 31 years, with a mean 21.29 years ($SD = 2.50$). Inclusion criterion used for the study were students from the first period of their respective courses.

Instruments

BJWPS Scale: After conducting a new search in the literature on popular sayings that might convey the idea that the world is a fair place, we identified two new sayings that had not been included in the original scale validated by the authors of this study (submitted). Participants answered a questionnaire containing nine popular sayings, seven that constitute the original BJWPS and two more popular sayings that were added. The participants' task was to indicate how much they agreed with the content presented, ranging from 1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree, on a five-point Likert scale. Stands out the BJWPS do not use popular sayings specific to the Brazilian context, but rather use popular sayings that carry the idea of justice in the world in their meanings, so as to test their use as an instrument for measuring BJW (Supplemental Material).

Sociodemographic questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two closed questions related to their sex and age.

Data collection and Analysis

The questionnaires were administered in classrooms, collectively. After signing the free and informed consent form, the participants were instructed to respond to the instrument individually, being randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. The data were submitted to an exploratory factor analysis, using the principal axis method, without specifying the number of factors to be extracted. For factor retention, two aspects were observed: 1 - Kaiser's criterion (eigenvalue greater than 1); 2 - Cattell's criterion (graphic distribution of eigenvalues, screeplot). To check the internal consistency of the measure, internal consistency was calculated using Cronbach's alpha index. The information from the sociodemographic questionnaire was analyzed with descriptive statistics.

Result and Discussion

The adequacy of the sample was verified using the significant value of Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2 (36) = 397.80$; $p < 0.001$, and the KMO index (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) = 0.841. The results indicated the presence of only one factor underlying participants' adherence to the nine sayings. This occurred using both the Kaiser and the Cattell criteria. The extracted factor had an eigenvalue of 3.72, explaining 41.42% of the total variance, and all items saturated satisfactorily, that is, greater than 0.40 (Table 1). In order to verify the structure and reliability of this scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated, resulting in an $\alpha = 0.81$.

Table 1
Factor Structure of the BJWPS Scale

Items	Factor Loading	h^2	M	SD
4. The wheels of justice grind slowly but exceedingly fine.	0.78	0.60	3.38	1.43
5. You made your bed. now lie in it.	0.74	0.54	3.79	1.11
8. What goes around comes around.	0.71	0.60	3.28	1.34
6. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.	0.71	0.50	3.17	1.21
9. You reap what you sow.	0.66	0.47	3.77	.933
7. Good things come to those who wait.	0.57	0.60	2.64	1.38
3. After the storm comes a calm.	0.56	0.32	3.70	1.14
1. Live by the sword. die by the sword.	0.52	0.76	3.28	1.28
2. Who sows the wind. reaps the whirlwind.	0.46	0.44	4.39	.728
Eigenvalue			3.72	
Explained variance (%)			41.42	
Cronbach's alpha			0.81	

Notes: h^2 = commonality

In view of the results found, it is concluded that the objective of this study was achieved, since the scale presented satisfactory psychometric indexes of validity and

precision. In order to verify if the single-factor model is really adequate, new analyses were carried out, as described below.

Study 2

The intent of this study was to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the BJWPS scale, seeking to find more evidence to confirm the single-factor structure of the proposed new scale.

Method

Participants

The participants consisted of a convenience sample of 144 university students from public universities, with a mean age of 26.59 years ($SD = 11.40$), being 89 men and 55 women.

Instruments

As in Study 1, participants indicated how much they agreed or disagreed with the content of the items (from 1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree).

Data Analysis

To conduct the CFA, the AMOS 6 (Analysis of Moment Structures) software was chosen. To test the fit of the proposed model, the following indexes were analyzed: CFI (Comparative Fit Index), with a value ranging from 0 to 1, with values equal to or greater than 0.95 indicating a good fit of the proposed model; RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), values below 0.06 indicate good fit of the model; AGFI (Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index), with an acceptance value greater than or equal to 0.80 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 2006).

Results and discussion

The indexes of fit indicate a good fit for the proposed model: χ^2 (df=12; N=241) = 55.59; $\chi^2/\text{df} = 4.63$, $p = 0.000$; CFI = 0.94; AGFI = 0.96; RMSEA = 0.04. It is noteworthy that no high correlations were observed between these residuals, as they are all below .10. Thus, the model's quality of fit indicators can be considered satisfactory, confirming the single-factor model without the need to re-specify the model. Finally, the internal consistency of the scale proved again to be satisfactory ($\alpha = 0.78$). From the CFA, the single dimensionality of the BJWPS scale was evident, showing the quality of the model's fit through satisfactory indexes as indicated by the literature (Hair et al. 2006).

Final considerations

The main purpose of the studies presented here was to validate a new version of the Belief in a Just Word Scale based on Popular Sayings. In Study 1, an exploratory factor analysis and internal consistency analysis were carried out in order to assess whether the psychometric indexes of the proposed new scale were satisfactory. In Study 2, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted, which allowed us to verify whether the observed data were fit by the proposed model and confirm the factor structure of the scale. Thus, it is considered that these objectives have been satisfactorily achieved.

The analyses carried out allow the conclusion that the new version of the BJWPS scale presented satisfactory psychometric indexes. This instrument presented a single-factor structure that assesses BJW, which corroborates the theoretical frameworks of the BJW scales (Dalbert et al., 1987; Lipkus, 1991). The single-factor structure was confirmed by analyzing the criteria chosen to define the number of factors to be extracted (Kaiser criterion and Cattell criterion), and more rigorously through

confirmatory factor analysis. Finally, the internal consistency index (Cronbach's alpha) of the new scale is in accordance with the acceptability criteria.

Thus, it is considered that the inclusion of these two new items into the BJWPS (CMJDP, in portuguese) scale, makes it a good alternative to the version initial. In summary, these results contribute to and continue the line of research inaugurated by the studies developed by the authors of this study (submitted), demonstrating the validity and reliability of the use of the popular sayings proposed to measure BJW.

The development of these studies contributes to the advancement of the literature on BJW measurement, specifically in the Brazilian context. The proposed new scale proves to be advantageous by being a brief and easy-to-apply measure because it uses a common and widely used language in our country, and can be used in different contexts and cover the general population. We emphasize that, despite satisfactory psychometric indexes, it is still necessary that the measure be adapted to other cultures and countries in order to have more evidence about its validity. For upcoming studies, it is believed relevant to consider larger and more diversified samples, including people from different countries and cultures. As well as using this new BJW measure in other studies in order to prove its effectiveness in measuring BJW, correlating it with other constructs and thus contributing to the development of new knowledge in the area of Brazilian social psychology.

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