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Is Chivalry Really Dead? It Depends on When You Ask: Women’s Reception of Benevolent Sexism Changes Across the Menstrual Cycle

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Benevolent Sexism

A type of sexism that focuses on protecting women and placing them “on a pedestal.”

Women endorse benevolent sexism because they see it as beneficial, and men endorse it because it reiterates existing gender inequalities.

Benevolent sexism, however, is damaging to women on a societal level because it supports male dominance (Glick & Fisk, 2001).

Changes in Behavior when Ovulating

Women’s mating behavior and their desire to find a mate increases as women near ovulation.

When ovulating, women report an increased desire to attract a mate, and spend more time on their appearance to appear more attractive to an ostensible mate (Roder, Brewer, & Fink, 2008).

The Present Study

The present study explores why women endorse benevolent sexism, and examines whether women endorse benevolent sexism when ovulating as a mate attraction strategy.

Appearance and behavior modification is proposed as a possible explanation as to why women endorse benevolent sexism when ovulating, and that is because it will increase the likelihood of finding a mate.

Method

University of Dayton undergraduate women will provide reports of their menstrual cycle, benevolent sexism endorsement, and appearances and behavior modification.

Proposed Mediation Model

Applianve and Behavior Modification

Ovulation

Benevolent Sexism

Proposed Results

We will examine whether appearance and behavior modification mediates the association between ovulation and benevolent sexism endorsement.

The figure depicts an association between ovulation and benevolent sexism, suggesting that ovulation leads to appearance and behavior modification which in turns leads to endorsement of benevolent sexism.

The present study expects to find that benevolent sexism will be positively associated with ovulation, suggesting that women who are most fertile will engage in specific behaviors to appear more attractive to a mate.

Conclusion

The present research further examines an evolutionary approach to understanding mate selection by identifying benevolent sexism as a mate attraction strategy which is predicted by ovulation and the amount of time women spend on their appearance.

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