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The Moderating Roles of Gender and Humour Beliefs**



Sexist Humour and the Acceptance of Sexual-Aggression Myths: The Moderating Roles of Gender and Humour Beliefs

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Abstract

Purpose: The present research aimed to explore the impact of sexist humour on the acceptance of sexual aggression myths, with a specific focus on the moderating roles of the joke teller's gender and cavalier humour beliefs (CHB).

Methodology: A quantitative experimental design was used with a 2 (joke type: sexist, neutral) × 2 (joke teller's gender: male, female) fully between subjects structure. A total of 308 Pakistani university students aged 18 to 29 were recruited through convenience and voluntary response sampling. Participants were presented with joke stimuli via an online Qualtrics survey and completed standardized measures assessing their humour beliefs and acceptance of sexual aggression myths.

Findings: Contrary to the original hypothesis, exposure to sexist jokes compared to neutral jokes resulted in lower acceptance of sexual aggression myths. Additionally, participants with medium to high CHB found sexist jokes significantly more amusing when told by a female joke teller. These findings diverge from Western literature that typically reports reinforcing effects of sexist humour, and instead suggest a more complex relationship between humour, identity, and cultural context. In collectivist societies, such humour may activate moral reflection or critique rather than reinforcement of harmful beliefs.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: This research contributes new insights into how humour operates within a South Asian cultural framework. By demonstrating that sexist humour may, under certain conditions, reduce the acceptance of harmful myths, it challenges dominant theories developed in Western contexts. These findings offer practical implications for awareness campaigns and educational efforts in societies where humour is socially embedded. They also inform policy by emphasizing the importance of culturally grounded approaches to combating gender based prejudice.

Keywords: *Sexist Jokes, Rape Myth Acceptance, Cavalier Humour Beliefs, Gender, Sexism, Pakistan.*



INTRODUCTION

Approximately 35% of women globally experience sexual harassment, contributing to a widespread sense of fear among women, with prevalence rates varying across countries (World Population Review, 2020; Senthilingam, 2017). Sexism, which frequently manifests through discriminatory attitudes and behaviors, reinforces traditional gender roles and stereotypes, disproportionately affecting women (Masequesmay, 2009). While cultural contexts differ, women around the world commonly report experiences of harassment and discrimination, shaped in part by gender roles learned during early childhood (Ahmed & Wahab, 2013).

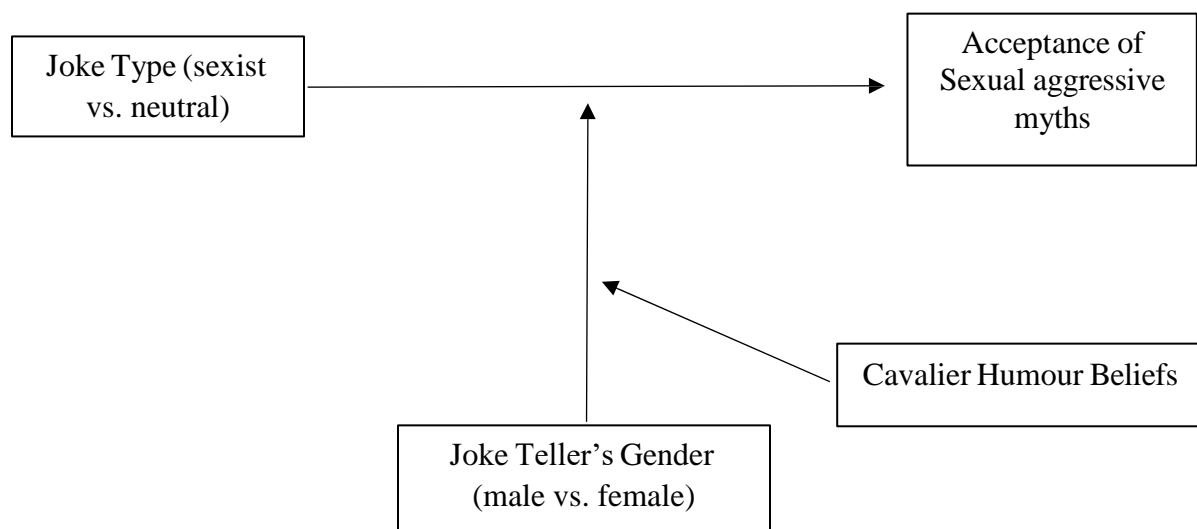
In societies such as Pakistan, deeply rooted traditional gender norms continue to drive sexist attitudes (Ali et al., 2011). Alarming, nearly 90% of the population in Pakistan is reported to hold prejudiced beliefs against women, highlighting the urgent need for research in this area (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). Sexist expression is often communicated through humor, which can normalize harmful stereotypes and objectification while allowing individuals to express prejudiced views with reduced social consequences (Bemiller & Schneider, 2010; Mallet et al., 2016).

This research draws upon the prejudiced norm theory (Ford & Ferguson, 2004) and social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) to examine why offensive humor, particularly sexist jokes, remains socially tolerated. It also investigates the role of media in normalizing sexist humor and explores its correlation with the reinforcement of sexist beliefs and increased acceptance of rape myths.

The discussion extends to how rape is often minimized within society, a tendency reflected in the prevalence of rape myths and resistance to women's advancement in Pakistan (TNS, 2020; Jamshed & Kamal, 2019). Offensive humor, especially of a sexist nature, is shaped by underlying gender dynamics and misogynistic attitudes, including internalized misogyny and cavalier humor beliefs (Hodson et al., 2010; Prusaczyk & Hodson, 2020). Social dominance orientation further contributes to the legitimization of such humor among certain groups.

By focusing on cavalier humor beliefs in Asian populations, this study offers critical insight into how humor influences discrimination tolerance and its broader societal implications.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



This theoretical framework draws inspiration from the prejudiced norm theory (Ford & Ferguson, 2004) and the social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The prejudiced norm theory supports the proposed framework by linking disparagement humor to increased tolerance of prejudicial attitudes. Social dominance orientation, linked to cavalier humor beliefs, similarly fosters prejudice. The study focuses on sexist humor exposure to induce higher acceptance of sexual aggression myths akin to rape myths against women. The joke teller's gender moderate's participant amusement and myth acceptance, with female tellers predicted to evoke more amusement and myth acceptance. Cavalier humor beliefs are expected to further moderate these effects, serving as a secondary moderator. The prejudiced norm theory explains the framework's variables' relationship, highlighting humor's role in discrimination tolerance. Cavalier humor beliefs, strongly correlated with social dominance orientation, differentiate who is influenced by the joke teller's gender (Hodson et al., 2010).

Research Objectives

In correspondence with this study's aims, following are the research objectives:

- To discover the extent to which exposure to jokes (sexist and neutral) affects the acceptance of sexual aggression myths.
- To examine the effects of high cavalier humour beliefs on the amusement from sexist jokes and the acceptance of sexual aggression myths in relation to the joke teller's gender.
- To examine the effects of low cavalier humour beliefs on the amusement of sexist jokes and acceptance of sexual aggression myths in relation to the joke teller's gender.

METHOD

Participants: The population for this study consists of university students in Pakistan. University students are required for this study due to the pervasiveness of sexism reported on university campuses (Dawn News, 2019; Cowan, 2000; Kamal et al., 2010). Sexism in universities may be in

the form of sexist jokes or demeaning comments against women. A convenience and voluntary response sample of 308 individuals responded to an online Qualtrics survey. There were 275 females and 33 males, with ages 18 to 29.

Inclusion Criteria. Students who were meeting the following criteria were eligible to participate in this study:

- Pakistani university students attending classes on campus in Karachi.
- Students ages 18 to 29 years.
- The minimum level of education should be that students were at least enrolled in 1st semester.
- Students who can read and understand English language.
- All genders were included.

Design: This convenient and voluntary quantitative experimental study featured a 2 (joke type: sexist joke vs. neutral joke) \times 2 (joke teller's gender: male vs. female) fully between-subjects design. The independent variable is the joke type (sexist joke vs. neutral joke). The dependent variable is Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA), however as a closer and more valid correlate, it is measured as the Acceptance of Modern Sexual Aggression Myths. The moderator is the joke teller's gender (female joke teller vs. male joke teller), and the moderated moderator is Cavalier Humour Beliefs (CHB).

Procedure: The study, structured as a survey on university students' humor beliefs and social attitudes, conducted a pilot study to select jokes for the main experiment to ensure objectivity and avoid researcher bias in joke selection. This preliminary investigation involved 5 male and 5 female Pakistani undergraduate students aged 18 to 29, randomly sampled to reflect the main study's criteria. Each participant rated a collection of randomized sexists and neutral jokes on a scale of 1(not at all) to 9(extremely) for amusement and perceived sexism. The top 10 highest-rated jokes from each category were chosen for the main experiment, ensuring representation of both sexist and neutral humor (Hodson et al., 2010). The participants of the pilot study did not partake in the main experiment.

For the main experiment participants were recruited from multiple universities in Karachi, Pakistan, to ensure a diverse sample. Utilizing Qualtrics for randomization and data collection ensured accuracy and convenience, with datasets exportable to SPSS (Zikmund & Babin, 2009). After signing a consent form, participants provided demographic information and completed a 6-item Cavalier Humour Beliefs Scale (Hodson et al., 2010). They were then randomly assigned to one of four conditions, exposed to 10 jokes (sexist or neutral, told by male or female), and rated their amusement. Much like the pilot study, they had to rate the jokes on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 9 (extremely) in terms of amusement. Finally, participants completed the 21-item Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression scale (AMMSA; Bohner et al., 2020), assessing beliefs about sexual aggression (Gerger et al., 2007). Upon completion, participants were thanked for their participation.

Materials

Manipulations

Joke type. The participants were in a randomized condition and exposed to either sexist or neutral jokes. Examples of sexist jokes include “If women aren’t meant to cook, then why do they have milk and eggs inside them?” and “How do you get your dishwasher to work? Slap her”. Examples of neutral jokes include “What did the triangle say to the circle? You’re pointless!” and “What did one ocean say to the other? Nothing. It just waved”.

- **Joke Teller’s Gender.** The joke type manipulation was paired with this condition, and participants were exposed to sexist or neutral jokes as told by either a male or a female.

Measures

The following measures were conducted in English only. Participants filled out each form in the given order:

1. **Consent Form.** Participants were required to fill out a consent form, agreeing to participate in this study. They were able to withdraw whenever they desired, facing no consequences. They were also debriefed and informed about their involvement in this study.
2. **Demographic Information Sheet.** This questionnaire included the following details: name (optional), sex, age (18-29), socioeconomic status, name of university, department, and email address if participants wished to be contacted again for the discussion of the results.
3. **Cavalier Humour Beliefs.** Cavalier Humour Beliefs was assessed using the Cavalier Humour Beliefs Scale (Hodson et al, 2010). It is a 6-item scale that uses Likert-style answers 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Participants were asked to answer in terms of their level of agreement or disagreement with a statement. A sample item from this scale is: “Society needs to lighten up about jokes and humour generally.” Higher levels of cavalier humour beliefs are indicated by higher average scores.
4. **Joke Ratings.** A pilot study was conducted on 5 males and 5 females, in which the participants were required to rate a collection of jokes on their level of sexism. The jokes used in this study were selected from previous studies on humour and analyzed by professionals (Hodson & Prusaczyk, 2020; Thomae & Viki, 2013). The randomized jokes were rated in terms of the jokes’ amusement and perceived sexism on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*extremely*), as used in previous research (Hodson & Prusaczyk, 2020). The participants involved in this pilot study did not participate in the original study. For the original study, participants were presented with 10 jokes as selected from the pilot study, either sexist or neutral jokes and told by either a male or a female joke-teller, depending on the randomized condition they were placed in, which they had to rate in terms of amusement on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*extremely*).
5. **Acceptance of Modern Sexual Aggression Myths.** Acceptance of sexual aggression myths was measured using the 21-item Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression Scale (Bohner

et al, 2020). Permission was granted, via email, to use this scale in the thesis by the primary author of the AMMSA-21 scale. This scale is an updated, shortened version of the original 50-item AMMSA (Gerger et al, 2007). The AMMSA is a 21-item self-report scale designed to measure the acceptance of rape myths. It uses Likert-style answers to the statements on a scale of 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). This scale solves the preexisting problem of more traditional Rape Myth Acceptance measures, in which researchers commonly encountered extremely positively skewed distributions of participants' answers and lower RMA scores. Lower RMA scores did not necessarily directly indicate lower acceptance of rape myths, but simply suggested that participants may be more aware of politically correct ways to answer. The current AMMSA shows normal distributions for scores and uses inconspicuous wording regarding myths and sexual aggression. This scale yields high internal consistencies across the studies conducted for its development ($\alpha \geq 0.9$). This scale also has satisfactory test-retest coefficients overall, showing consistent reliability over 3 to 12 weeks, despite being a uni-dimensional attitude measure. It also has high concurrent and predictive validity.

Ethical Considerations: This study adheres strictly to the ethical guidelines outlined by the American Psychological Association's Code of Ethics (American Psychological Association, 2017), ensuring participant welfare and confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to commencement, with assurances of withdrawal rights and confidentiality. Permission to use scales was obtained from original researchers via email, and participant identities remain anonymous. Minimal deception was employed to prevent demand characteristics, and participants were briefed on potential emotional discomfort from joke content. Participants retained the right to withdraw without consequence, and Debriefing will occur post-study, elucidating the true objectives and offering access to results upon request.

RESULTS

Results of this study were computed by using a statistical analysis tool called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 26.0, which is widely known as SPSS. Cell means and standard deviations for all variables are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Cell Means and Standard Deviations for the Dependent Variables by Condition

DV	Sexist Joke		Neutral Joke	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
AMMSA	3.14 (0.91)	3.12 (1.10)	3.44 (1.00)	3.29 (0.88)
Amusement	1.53 (1.39)	2.12 (1.78)	4.96 (1.74)	4.49 (1.57)

Table 2 displays the means and standard deviation of two independent variables i.e. sexist humour

and joke teller gender against dependent variable i.e. Acceptance of Modern Myths About Sexual Aggression Scale and amusement.

Descriptive Analyses: Mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient, skewness, kurtosis, potential and actual ranges of the scale are reported in Table 3. The potential ranges represent the minimum and maximum achievable scores, while the actual range represents the minimum and maximum scores of the participants in this study, on their respective scales.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients, and Univariate Normality of Study Variables (N = 308)

Range

Variable	Items	A	M	SD	SK	K	Actual	Potential
CHB	6	.72	3.65	1.05	-0.45	-0.41	1 – 6.17	1 – 7
AMMSA	21	.90	3.25	0.98	0.06	-0.12	1 – 7	1 – 7
Amusement	10	.71	3.29	2.19	0.60	-0.74	1 – 9	1 – 9

Note. CHB = Cavalier Humour Beliefs, AMMSA = Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression, SK = Skewness, K = Kurtosis.

Table 3 shows normal distribution values of Cronbach alpha, Means, Standard Deviation, Skewness, Kurtosis against Cavalier Humour Beliefs, Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression and Amusement. Cronbach alpha of CHB and amusement is greater than 0.70, which comes under acceptable range, whereas Cronbach alpha of AMMSA is 0.90, which means it has an excellent internal consistency.

Main Analyses

AMMSA

A 2 (joke type: sexist joke vs. neutral joke) \times 2 (joke teller's gender: male vs. female) between-subjects ANOVA on AMMSA scores revealed a significant main effect of joke type, $F(1, 304) = 4.56$, $p = .034$, $\eta p^2 = .015$. Participants exposed to sexist jokes exhibited lower rape myth acceptance than those exposed to neutral jokes. However, the main effect of joke teller's gender, $F(1, 304) = 0.51$, $p = .475$, $\eta p^2 = .002$, and the Joke Type \times Joke Teller's Gender/two-way interaction, $F(1, 304) = 0.33$, $p = .566$, $\eta p^2 = .001$ were non-significant

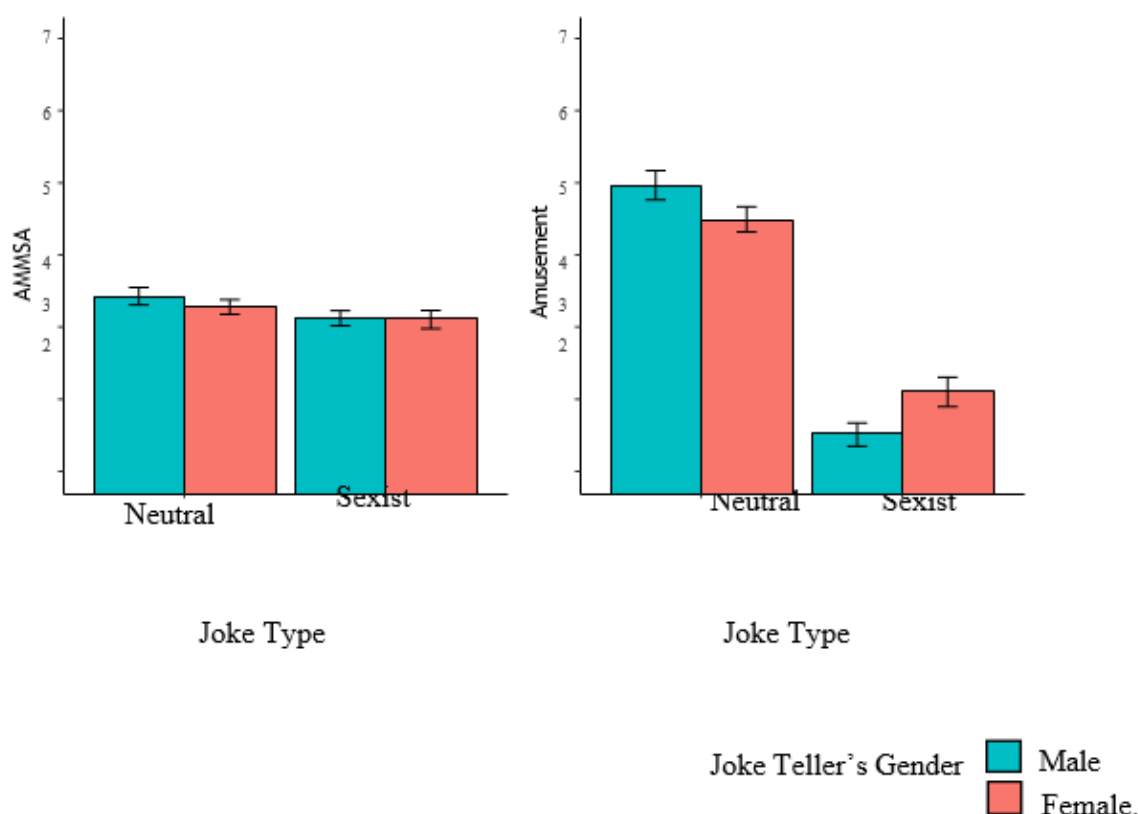
(Figure 1).

Amusement

A 2 (joke type: sexist joke vs. neutral joke) \times 2 (joke teller's gender: male vs. female) between-subjects ANOVA on amusement ratings revealed a significant main effect of joke type, $F(1, 304) = 245.52, p < .001, \eta p^2 = .447$. Sexist jokes were rated as less amusing than neutral jokes. The main effect of joke teller's gender was not significant, $F(1, 304) = 0.10, p = .752, \eta p^2 < .001$. These results were qualified by a significant Joke Type \times Joke Teller's Gender interaction, $F(1, 304) = 8.19, p = .005, \eta p^2 = .026$. Simple main effects analyses were conducted to decompose this two-way interaction. For neutral jokes, joke teller's gender did not significantly affect amusement, $F(1, 304) = 3.28, p = .071, \eta p^2 = .011$. However, sexist jokes made by female joke tellers were rated as significantly more amusing than when they were told by males, $F(1, 304) = 4.99, p = .026, \eta p^2 = .016$. See Figure 1.

Figure 1

Effects of Joke Type and Joke Teller's Gender on the dependent variables



Moderated Moderations

Subjecting H3 to empirical scrutiny, moderated moderation analyses were conducted separately for AMMSA and amusement using Model 3 of Hayes' PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2017).

Specifically, it was examined whether the interaction between joke type and joke teller's gender varied according to participants' cavalier humour beliefs. The model was set up with joke type as the predictor, AMMSA or amusement as the outcome variable, joke teller's gender as the moderator, and CHB as the moderating moderator (Figure 2). Additionally, the Johnson- Neyman (J-N) technique was utilized to identify the level at which CHB becomes a significant moderator of the joke type \times joke teller's gender interaction (Hayes, 2017; Johnson & Neyman, 1936).

AMMSA

The overall model explained 29.3% of the variance ($R^2 = .2934$) and the regression slope was significant, $F(7, 300) = 17.79, p < .001$. However, the three-way interaction between joke type, joke teller's gender, and CHB on AMMSA was non-significant, $b = 0.10, t(300) = 0.53, p = .599$.

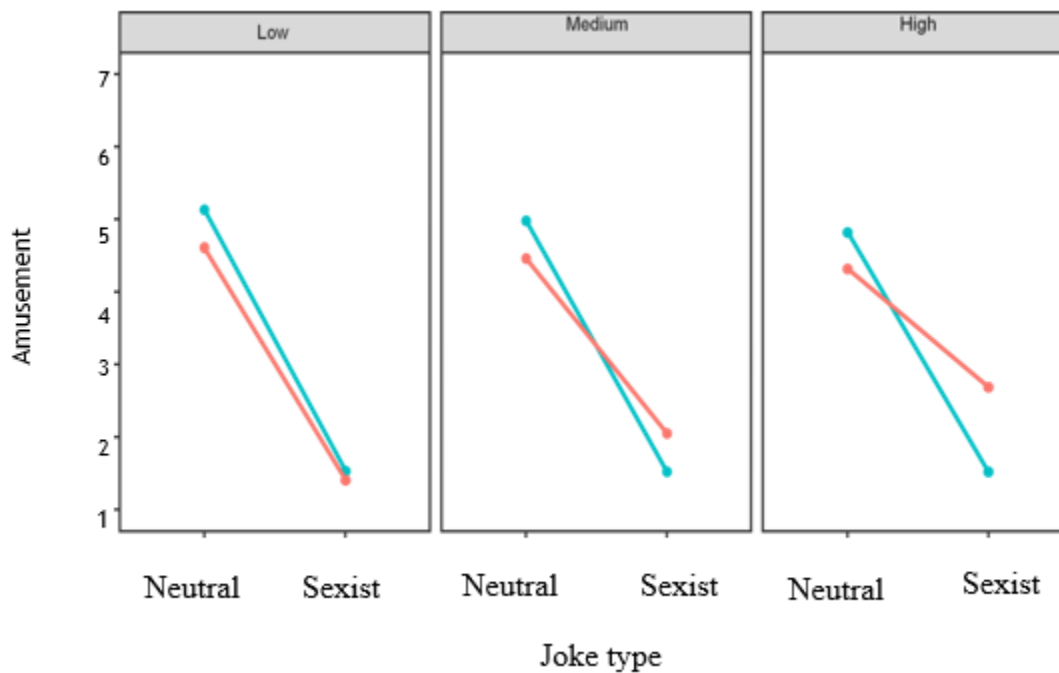
Amusement

The overall model accounted for 47.9% of the variance ($R^2 = .4785$), and the regression slope was significant, $F(7, 300) = 39.32, p < .001$. Notably, there was a three-way interaction trend between joke type, joke teller's gender, and CHB, $b = 0.61, t(300) = 1.73, p = .084$, such that the conditional effect of the joke type \times joke teller's gender interaction on amusement was significant among participants with medium CHB, $b = 1.03, t(300) = 2.82, p = .005$, and high CHB, $b = 1.68, t(300) = 3.22, p = .001$, but not low CHB, $b = 0.40, t(300) = 0.76, p = .447$

(Figure 2). The Johnson-Neyman analysis revealed that this conditional effect transitioned to significance at a CHB score of 3.24, which covered 66.9% of the range of CHB scores, and strengthened as CHB increased (Figure 3).

Figure 2

Three-Way Interactions between Cavalier Humour Beliefs, Joke Teller's Gender, and Joke Type on Amusement

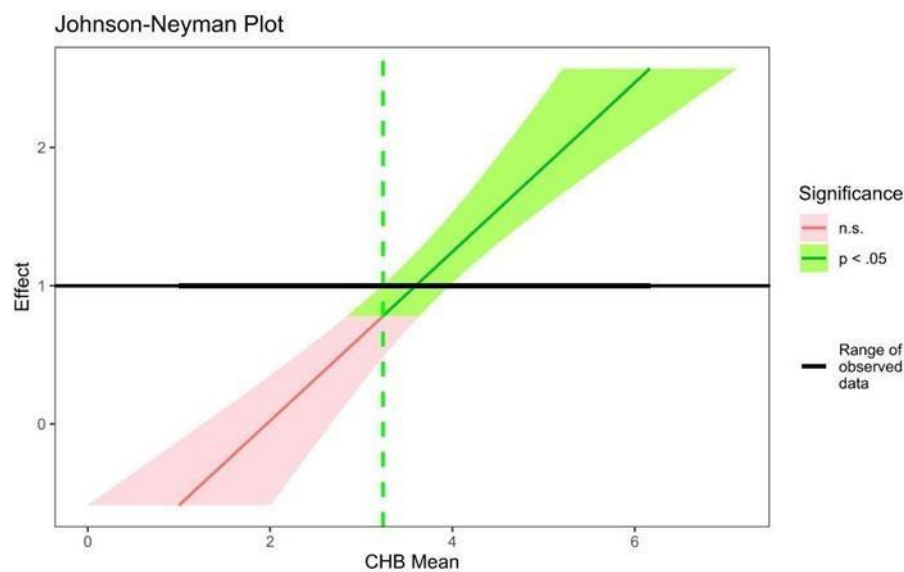


Note.

Low and High CHB are reported at -1 and +1 standard deviations from the mean (Medium CHB), respectively.

Figure 3

Johnson–Neyman plot of the conditional effect of cavalier humor beliefs on the two-way interaction between joke type and joke teller's gender



DISCUSSION

The main study yielded interesting findings that both support and contradict the hypotheses. It was

hypothesized that participants in the sexist joke condition would have a higher acceptance of sexual aggression myths as compared to those exposed to neutral jokes. However, it was found that participants exposed to sexist jokes exhibited lower acceptance of sexual aggression myths than those exposed to neutral jokes. Partial support was found for the hypothesis that participants with high cavalier humour beliefs (CHB) would find sexist jokes more amusing and exhibit higher acceptance of sexual aggression myths when the joke was presented by a female, while participants with low humour cavalier beliefs would not find sexist jokes amusing and exhibit low acceptance of sexual aggression myths, regardless of the gender of the joke teller. Indeed, the results showed that medium and high CHB participants found sexist jokes told by females (vs. males) to be significantly more amusing, and that this interaction effect strengthened with CHB. Conversely, low CHB participants found sexist jokes to be invariably unamusing.

The greater acceptance of sexual aggression myths after reading sexist jokes as compared to neutral jokes runs contrary to past studies in which exposure to sexist situations or jokes led to increased rape myth acceptance (e.g., Sriwattanakomen, 2017; Romero-Sánchez et al, 2010). One possible explanation for this disparity may arise from the difference in the gender makeup of the samples. Most studies on reactions to sexist humour focused almost exclusively on males (cf. Prusaczyk & Hodzon, 2020), whereas the present study featured a preponderance of female participants. Preliminary testing of the Acceptance of Modern Sexual Aggression Myths (AMMSA-21) scale used in this experiment showed significantly lower scores for females than males (Bohner et al, 2020), which may have dampened the observed effect. However, this would not have led to a reversal in the directionality of the main effect. A more promising explanation is that female participants' initial levity towards sexist humour may have threatened their moral identity, which they then sought to assuage (O'Connor, 2010; Tetlock et al., 2000). A common reaction to committing a moral transgression is guilt. This motivates the individual to act in ways that can neutralize this unpleasant feeling and restore their moral image (O'Connor, 2010; Tetlock et al., 2000). Expressing moral outrage is one method by which individuals defend against their own moral failings (Rothschild & Keefer, 2017). Such efforts may be direct or indirect, such as punishing offenders or being more vocal about social issues. In a similar vein, participants in the present study may have expressed a strong rebuke of sexual aggression myths to make amends for laughing at sexist jokes.

Morality is not free from the influence of culture. In fact, culture and societal factors can influence an individual's moral identity as well as how they react to violations of their identity (Jia & Krettenauer, 2017). Asians are said to hold moral values that are fundamentally socially oriented, which encompasses a need to belong and align one's values with that of the collective identity. In comparison, the Western concept of morality is primarily centered on a person's individual perspective and does not have much to do with the collectivistic self. However, due to the majority of theories on morality having been studied in the West (Dien, 1987), it is crucial that researchers pay heed to the impact of Asian cultural attitudes when scrutinizing the findings of this study's research. Thus, they can postulate that the participants expressed amusement in response to the

sexist jokes, given that they had medium or high cavalier humour beliefs. However given the sample population of university students used in this experiment and the fact that most of the participants were female, it is likely that upon reading the statements in the AMMSA-21, they may have experienced guilt upon violating their internal moral standards, and consequently indicated significantly lower acceptance of sexual aggression myths than those who were exposed to neutral jokes, in an attempt to restore their untarnished moral standing. This cultural distinction in moral attitudes may also explains why these findings were not discovered in the majority of studies conducted on sexist humour in the west.

Research suggests that gender can influence moral decision making, specifically where emotions are involved. Females tend to make moral decisions based on their potential for empathy, with a stronger desire to protect people and their social relationships (Fumagalli et al, 2010). This is in line with Friesdorf and colleagues' (2015) findings that women make deontological judgments; decisions on moral conventions of social behaviour that are based on the action itself, rather than the consequence of it. Such decisions may be influenced by women's emotional alliances with others, and their emotional reactions may also be more intense than their male counterparts (Brody & Hall, 2000). This may be why the female respondents felt the need to "protect" and be less critical of the female-incriminating statements in the AMMSA-21 scale. However, it is likely that the discovered results may have been due to other internal factors not directly measured in this study.

One such possibility may be due to the presence of certain personality traits, such as psychopathology which is known to increase the tolerance of sexually abusive behaviour as well as the acceptance of rape myths (Lyons et al, 2021). Psychopathology is regarded as manipulative and extremely impulsive behaviour with little to no regard for others, thus encompassing a lack of empathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Similarly, dispositional characteristics such as hostile sexism may accurately predict prejudiced beliefs towards women when exposed to sexist jokes. Previous findings suggest people high in hostile sexism react favorably to rape myths (Ford et al, 2008), particularly more so when the sexist jokes are told by women (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2016).

In line with previous research, this experiment confirms the casual attitude that people with high cavalier humour beliefs may have towards jokes (Hodson et al, 2010). A fascinating three-way interaction can be seen as illustrated in Figure 2, which shows the effect of the joke type (sexist vs. neutral) and joke teller's gender (male vs. female) on the evoked amusement among participants with medium or high cavalier humour beliefs. The analysis was carried out using the Johnson-Neyman technique, which is used to identify the interaction between predictors and moderators, wherein statistical significance may only be visible above or below certain values (Johnson et al, 1950). The results indicated that the participants with medium cavalier humour beliefs found sexist jokes to be significantly more amusing when told by a female rather than a male. Similarly, this effect is seen to increase even more in participants with high cavalier humour beliefs, with sexist jokes producing more amusement when told by a female.

The difference in amusement shows a stark contrast between participants in low vs. high CHB. Sexist jokes told by a male were not found to be amusing regardless of the participants' cavalier humour beliefs. Neutral jokes were slightly more amusing when told by a male as opposed to a female, however, this remained constant regardless of CHB. Thus, participants with a nonchalant approach to jokes were more tolerant of discriminating humour and found such jokes to be more amusing, as revealed in previous literature (Prusaczyk & Hodson, 2020).

Despite the distorted representation of women in the sexist jokes condition, it may have still been amusing to female participants because of the internalization of patriarchal beliefs that can cause them to laugh at jokes which are primarily targeted towards them (Rashad & Azher, 2018). Such patriarchal beliefs may be instilled by the prevalence of negative stereotypes that are so common in this society (Ali et al., 2011). However, an increment in amusement is only seen when the jokes are told by a female rather than a male.

These results are supported by this study's theoretical explanations, mainly the gender hierarchies as put forward by the Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). This explains why jokes that demean women are more amusing when told by females themselves, as it reduces the seriousness of an otherwise offensive statement (Hodson & MacInnis, 2016; Rouhana & Korper, 1996). It is also interesting to note that despite the harmful nature of the sexist jokes told at the expense of women, the jokes were nevertheless considered amusing to female respondents with medium or high CHB. How well the disparagement humour is received also depends on what source it comes from. Critical comments received from a member of your own social in-group are often better received and far more tolerated than those received from a member of the out-group (Hornsey et al, 2002). This is further evidenced by the fact that the sexist jokes told by females elicited greater amusement than when those exact same jokes were told by males.

Furthermore, the findings support H3, with participants low in CHB not finding the sexist jokes amusing regardless of the gender of the joke teller. Participants low in CHB disagree with the fact that jokes are "just jokes", and believe they need to be taken seriously. They are thus less tolerant of disparaging humour that is directed towards a group.

In accordance with previous literature, cavalier humour beliefs are directly related to and a positive correlate of social dominance orientation (Hodson et al, 2010). Individuals high in social dominance orientation strongly believe in the power and superiority that some groups hold over others, which in turn increases their tolerance of discrimination. Cavalier beliefs and social dominance orientation are therefore analogous concepts as they both function by maintaining the subjugation of disparaged groups in a society. Hence, participants low in CHB do not believe in the superiority of any such social group over others, and therefore did not find the sexist jokes to be as amusing as those with medium or high CHB.

Limitations

The study focused on university students aged 18 to 29 in Karachi, limiting generalization beyond this specific community, especially for older or younger adolescents. Additionally there were

fewer male participants compared to females, and a shortage of working-class respondents, reducing the overall generalizability, particularly for males and the working-class. Moreover, the use of a formal survey protocol like Qualtrics prevented researchers from analyzing qualitative data on participants' expressions and initial reactions to jokes, diminishing the gender effect. Furthermore, the short-term exposure to sexist jokes may hinder drawing causal conclusions, suggesting the need for future studies to explore these factors further.

Implications

This study holds significant implications for social psychology in Pakistan, particularly in the context of limited research on rape myth acceptance and women's attitudes toward sexual matters in Asian countries. Given the collectivist and patriarchal nature of Asian cultures, findings may diverge from those in Western contexts. This research opens avenues for investigating sexual behaviors, attitudes, and gender differences, informing policies in educational institutions and organizations to combat sexual harassment. Awareness campaigns utilizing sexist humor can be employed to address rape myths prevalent in Pakistani media, fostering a safer environment and empowering victims to speak out. It helps to improve behaviours and communications of individuals and creates a safe and secure environment (Iconis, 2008). Sexist humour can be used as a tool for awareness campaigns given the preponderance of it in Pakistani media (Zia, 2007).

Future Recommendations

Future research endeavors should broaden the demographic scope when investigating sexist humor and rape myths, encompassing populations like housewives, high school and middle school students, and organizations, thereby aiding policy formulation. Employing probability sampling methods across diverse demographics, particularly with larger samples of both genders, is advised. Additionally, future studies should assess the influence of dispositional traits like hostile sexism, psychopathology, and social dominance orientation on amusement and acceptance of sexual-aggression myths, alongside examining implicit biases against women. Exploring alternative joke presentation formats, such as live narration or audio-visual clips, can offer insights into the varying impacts of listening or watching compared to reading. While capturing natural reactions to jokes, possibly through social media sharing, is also recommended.

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