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Interactions between Need for Cognition and Ambivalent Sexism in Jurors' Perceptions of Expert Credibility

Trina Iyamuremye Uwineza

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, tuwineza2@huskers.unl.edu

Morgan Hurtz

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, mhurtz@huskers.unl.edu

Laurel Westerman

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, lwesterman2@huskers.unl.edu

Erika Boohar

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, erika.boohar@huskers.unl.edu

Kaela Meyer

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, kaela.meyer@huskers.unl.edu

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Trina Iyamuremye Uwineza, Morgan Hurtz, Laurel Westerman, Erika Boohar, Kaela Meyer, Halleigh Kelchen, Sarah Eagan, and Sarah Gervais



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1) Introduction

Need for Cognition (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982)

- Need for Cognition scores (NCS) measure systematic engagement with complex information and enjoyment of the thinking process.
- Higher intelligence and open-mindedness correlate with perceptions of gender competence (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982).

Ambivalent Sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996)

- Ambivalent Sexism Inventory scores (ASI) measure two orientations towards women.
 - Benevolent Sexism (BS): Positive but patronizing attitudes towards women.
 - Hostile Sexism (HS): Negative and subordinate attitudes towards women.

Witness Credibility (Brodsky, Griffin, & Cramer, 2010)

- Witness Credibility scores (WCS) quantify perceptions of expert witness' confidence, likeability, trustworthiness, and knowledge.
- Depending on gender, perceptions of competence may impact perceptions of credibility (Nagle et al., 2014).

Current Study

- This study analyzes whether Need for Cognition and Ambivalent Sexism interact with one another in civil trial jurors' perceptions of the credibility of a female expert providing scientific testimony.

4) Results

Statistical Test

- A three-way ANOVA was run to examine the interactions of NCS, ASI, and gender with WCS.
- Variables: NFC low<60, high>60; ASI low<2.5, high>2.5; WCS 1-10 Likert scale; gender was binary (1=Female, 2=Male).

Significance to Hypotheses

- (H1) There was a significant three-way interaction of NCS, BS and juror gender on WCS for the female expert witness (**F=7.230, p=.007). Low NCS scores were significantly related to less witness credibility, especially for men high in BS (*F=5.496, p=.020). Also, women with high NCS scores and high BS (*F=4.429, p=.036) were significantly related to more witness credibility.
 - See Figure 1.
- (H2) There was not a significant three-way interaction between NCS, HS and juror gender on WCS (F=.099, p=.753).
 - See Figure 2.

2) Research Question & Hypotheses

Does Need for Cognition and Ambivalent Sexism interact with jurors' perceptions of expert witness credibility?

- (H1) We hypothesized an interaction between benevolent sexism, need for cognition, and participant gender. We expected men who scored low on need for cognition and high on benevolent sexism to perceive the female expert as less credible.
- (H2) We hypothesized an interaction between hostile sexism, need for cognition, and participant gender. We expected men who scored low on need for cognition and high on hostile sexism to perceive the female expert as less credible.

Figure 1. Perceived Credibility Scores and Benevolent Sexism

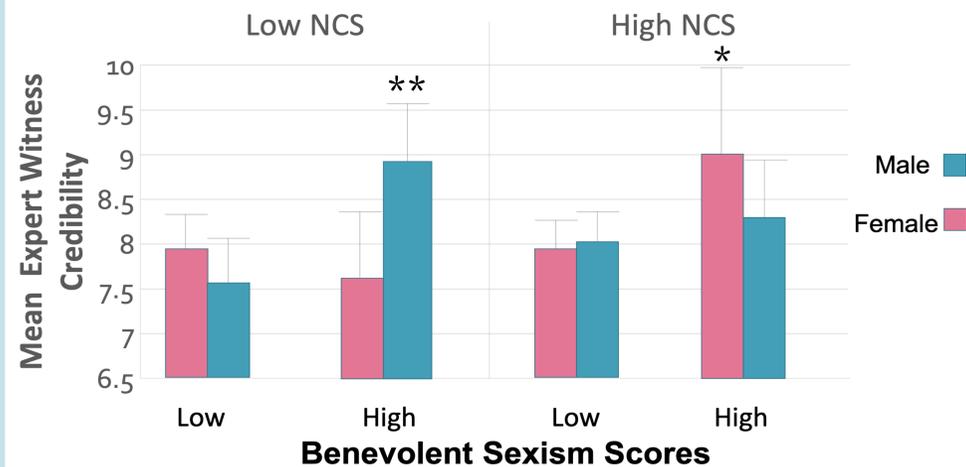


Figure 1: Three-way ANOVA interactions of NCS, BS, and gender with WCS (p < 0.05*, p < .01**, p < .001***)

Figure 2. Perceived Credibility Scores and Hostile Sexism

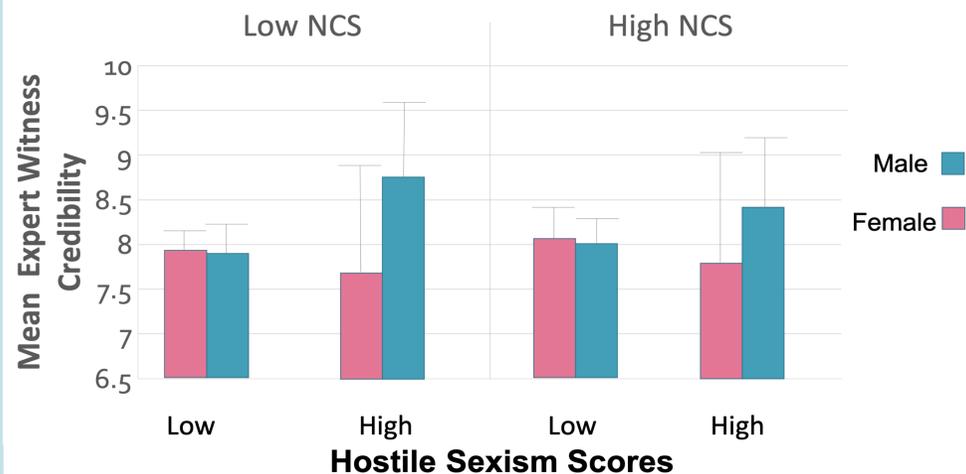


Figure 2: Three-way ANOVA interactions of NCS, HS, and gender with WCS (p < 0.05*, p < .01** p < .001***)

3) Method

Participants

- UNL students, MTurk workers, and non-students (n= 467).
- 52.2% male; (47.8%) female.
- 19 to 70 years old (M=26.35, SD=9.20), 69.9% Caucasian, 9% Black/African American, 9%, Hispanic/Latino, 4.7% Asian American, 4.9% Multiple races, 2.5% Other.

Measures

- **Need for Cognition (NCS; Cacioppo et al., 1984)**
 - Higher scores indicate higher Need for Cognition (NCS).
- **Ambivalent Sexism (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996).**
 - Composed of BS (e.g., women should be protected by men) and HS (e.g., women are inferior to men).
 - Higher scores indicate more sexism (ASI).
- **Witness Credibility (WCS; Brodsky et al., 2010).**
 - Higher scores indicate higher perception of witness credibility (WCS)

Procedure

- Participants completed a pre-trial questionnaire, demographics, and scales for individual difference measures.
- Participants, as mock jurors, watched a civil trial in which a female expert witness gave scientific testimony.
- Mock jurors completed a post-trial questionnaire with perceptions of the expert witnesses (the female scientist and others).

5) Discussion

Study Findings

- Low NCS scores were significantly related to high overall ASI for men (**F=10.021, p=.002), but not for women (F=.390, p=.532).
- High NCS scores were significantly related to high overall ASI for women (*F=4.068, p=.044), but not for men (F=.507, p=.477).
- (H1) Low NCS scores were significantly related to BS, particularly in men. Having low NCS scores, high BS, and being male were all shown to be significantly related to perceiving the female expert witness as less credible.
- (H2) Low NCS scores were not significantly related to HS. NCS scores, HS, and gender were all not significantly related to perceiving the female expert witness as less credible.

Limitations and Future Research

- A goal for future research that investigates the significantly high NCS, high BS, and high WCS perceived credibility among female participants may illustrate the variables that account for these results.
- The current study relied on survey data that found twice as many male participants (67) than female participants (31) with high ASI and high WCS. Explanatory research that includes qualitative data may illustrate underlying causes of this interaction and identify potential implications of high sexism and high credibility perceptions of female expert witnesses.