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A Dangerous World Implicit Theory Scale: Content, Convergent, and Concurrent Validity

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The 'implicit theories' theory has been very influential in providing a framework with which to understand the cognition of individuals who sexually offend against children (Ward, 2000; Ward & Keenan, 1999). The *dangerous world* implicit theory is one of the implicit theories hypothesised by Ward and Keenan (1999). They proposed that some individuals who sexually offend against children have schematic beliefs that the world is an inherently dangerous and hostile place. They hypothesised two versions of this implicit theory. The first involves the belief that it is necessary to punish women and children who are perceived as threatening. The second version focuses on the belief that children are seen as more accepting and dependable than adults where they can understand the offender's need and sexual desires and are happy to gratify them. Ward and Keenan (1999) argued that implicit theories can be held by non-offenders, and that they may be necessary but not sufficient to cause offending.

We are carrying out two studies with community samples recruited through online crowdsourcing to develop an item-based scale to measure holding a dangerous world implicit theory as conceptualised by Ward and Keenan (1999). We aim to factor analyse the dangerous world implicit theory items we developed and to examine the convergent and concurrent validity of the dangerous world implicit theory scale. Study 1 includes 400 participants completing the proposed dangerous world implicit theory scale. In study 2, participants will be asked to complete a number of questionnaires measuring (1) hostile attribution bias, (2) hostile sexism, (3) emotional congruence with children, (4) the children as sexual beings implicit theory and, (5) sexual interest in children and proclivity to engage in sexual activities with children, alongside with the dangerous world implicit theory scale. We expect to find dangerous world implicit theory to have a factor structure of between 2 to 4 subscales. In addition, we expect the dangerous world implicit theory scale to be positively associated with the four constructs mentioned above (convergent validity), which we previously presented at the ATSA conference that the dangerous world implicit theory and these constructs can have similar conceptualisations (Ildeniz & Ó Ciardha, 2017). We also expect that individuals with higher scores on the dangerous world implicit theory scale will also score higher on sexual interest in children and proclivity to engage sexually with children (concurrent validity). Implications of the current findings and the applicability of the dangerous world implicit theory scale will be discussed in the context of research and clinical practice.

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