DEVELOPMENT OF DANGEROUS WORLD IMPLICIT THEORY SCALE PRELIMINARY RESULTS

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DANGEROUS WORLD IMPLICIT THEORY

DANGEROUSNESS

WORLD
EVERYONE

WORLD
ADULTS
CHILDREN

(Ward & Keenan, 1999)
HOW DID IT ALL START?

Dangerous World Implicit Theory (DWIT)

Hostile Attribution Bias
- Biased interpretation of others’ behaviours in ambiguous social situations
  
  (Yeager et al., 2013)

Hostile Sexism
- Negative attitudes towards women
  
  (Glick & Fiske, 1996)

Emotional Congruence with Children
- Cognitive and emotional association with children
  
  (Finkelhor, 1984)

Children as Sexual Beings IT
- Perception of children in a sexualised way
  
  (Ward & Keenan, 1999)
HOW DID WE COME UP WITH A SCALE?

- What does the factor structure look like?
- Is it multi-dimensional?
- How can we measure DWIT?
WHY?

- Testing Ward's theory of implicit theories
- Identifying treatment needs
- A measurement tool for the DWIT
- Developed 32 items depicting the content of the two versions of DWIT

- Strictly based on the original conceptualisation of DWIT by Ward and Keenan (1999)
Dangerous World

This implicit theory is based on the core belief that the world is a dangerous place and that other people are likely to behave in an abusive and rejecting manner to promote their own interests. There are two variations of this implicit theory. The first stipulates that it is necessary to fight back and achieve dominance and control over other people. This involves punishing individuals who appear to inflict harm on the offender and, especially, to ensure that his own position is strengthened. Therefore, if children and/or women are perceived as threats and in need of retribution, they may become victims of sexual abuse. The beliefs and desires of other people are a focus of this implicit theory, particularly those signifying malevolent intentions. Therefore, the content of this theory refers to the desires of other people to dominate or hurt the offender and the beliefs associated with mental states. In addition, the offender views himself as capable of retaliation and asserting his dominance over others. Examples of relevant distortions are, “I did it to get revenge on her and her mother,” “I had to teach her a lesson,” “She had no right to question my authority,” and “It was my way of punishing and controlling her.”

(Ward & Keenan, 1999, p.829)
the world is a dangerous place, people are likely to behave in an abusive and rejecting manner. It is necessary to fight back and achieve dominance and control over other people.

Women are perceived as threats and in need of retribution, they may become victims of sexual abuse. The beliefs and desires of other people are a focus of this implicit theory, particularly those signifying malevolent intentions. Therefore, the content of this theory refers to the desires of other people to dominate or hurt the offender and the beliefs associated with mental states. In addition, the offender views himself as capable of retaliation and asserting his dominance over others. Examples of relevant distress are not unique to her and her mother. "I had to teach her" "It was my way of punishing and controlling..."

“She had no right to question my authority,”

(Ward & Keenan, 1999, p.829)
The second strand is conceptually related to the perception of the world as threatening, but in this form the major focus is on the unreliability of adults and the dependability of children. The core belief is that many people are untrustworthy, rejecting, and will take unfair advantage of (blameless) men. This is particularly evident with adults; children are thought to be more reliable, accepting, and able to be trusted. They can provide offenders with love and caring and will put the offender’s needs before their own. Therefore, the expectation is that offenders’ needs to be loved and cared for can be met by children and that they will never exploit or reject them. They understand the offender’s sexual desires and are happy to satisfy him. The content of this implicit theory will contain assumptions about the desires and beliefs of malevolent adult and (potentially) caring children. In contrast to the above variant, the offender believes that he is incapable of direct retaliation or dominance over other adults. Cognitive distortions likely to be generated by this implicit theory include, “Children can give adults more acceptance and love than other adults,” “Children are innocent and want to please adults,” “You can’t trust adults,” “Kids really know how to love you,” “Sex between children and adults is very loving,” and “Some kids like sex with adults because it makes them feel wanted and loved.”

(Ward & Keenan, 1999, p.829-830)
 SCALE ITEMS

undreliability of adults
dependability of children
untrustworthy, rejecting, and will take unfair advantage of (blameless) men
children are more reliable, accepting, and able to be trusted
They understand the offender’s sexual desires and are happy to satisfy him
“Children are innocent and want to please adults,”
“Kids really know how to love you,” “Sex between children and adults is very loving,”

(Ward & Keenan, 1999, p.829-830)
STUDY I (EFA)

- $N=400$
- Prolific Academic (community sample)
- UK-resident males
- Initial examination suggested a 4-factor model
- Final model with 26 items
4-FACTOR MODEL OF DWIT

**Hostile World**
The world is a hostile and dangerous place.
People are generally abusive and out for themselves.
Most people are welcoming and accepting.
Other people generally want to dominate or hurt me.
Women are trustworthy.
Many people are untrustworthy and rejecting.
I trust children and adults about the same.
You can’t trust adults.
The world is welcoming and nonthreatening.

**Retribution**
I regularly assert my dominance and control over others.
I have no problem disciplining women or children if they have it coming.
If a woman questions a man’s authority, she should be put in her place.
If the women in my life question me, I’ll find a way of controlling or punishing them.
Women have no right to question my authority.
It’s often necessary to fight back, in order to show other people who’s boss.
I’m always ready to strike back when necessary.

**Emotional Congruence**
Children are much more dependable than adults.
Adults are more rejecting and abusive than children.
Children are more caring and loving than adults.
I feel that children really know how to love me.
Children are innocent and want to please adults.
Children are more accepting than adults.
I feel that children will never reject me.

**Children as Sexual Beings**
Under certain circumstances, children can benefit from sex with an adult.
Even young children can understand my sexual desires and are happy to satisfy me.
Some kids like sex with adults because it makes them feel wanted and loved.
Children as Sexual Beings factor was not robust enough

10 new Children as Sexual Beings items

*Touching a child sexually can be a way of showing love and affection*

*In some circumstances, a child could consent to a romantic relationship with an adult*

*Some kids are very mature for their age*
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  - Perception of children in a sexualised way
  - (Ward & Keenan, 1999)
STUDY 2 (CFA & SEM)

- **N = 700**
- **Prolific Academic (independent community sample)**
- **UK-resident males**
- **Homo/Hetero/Bisexuals**

**Measures:**

- **DWIT (+ new items)**
- **Hostile Attribution Bias**
- **Hostile Sexism**
- **Emotional Congruence with Children**
- **Children as Sexual Beings Implicit Theory**

(Coccaro et al., 2009)
(Glick & Fiske, 1996)
(Beckett et al., 1996)
(Gannon, 2009)
4-factor model of DWIT with 30 items
**Property of NOTA 2019**

**HOW DID IT ALL START?**

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STUDY 2

- Emotional Congruence with Children
- Hostile Sexism
- Hostile Attribution Bias

**DWIT**

- Hostile World
- Retribution
- Emotional Congruence
- Children as Sexual Beings

**R²**

- 79%
- 53%
- 26%
- 2%
CONCLUSIONS

DWIT is a multi-dimensional construct

- Considerable similarities between
  - Hostile Sexism & Retribution
  - Emotional Congruence with Children & Emotional Congruence
  - Children as Sexual Being IT & Children as Sexual Beings (particularly)
- **but not** between Hostile Attribution Bias & Hostile World
Can we use this scale?

...Not yet!
IMPLICATIONS

- An alternative framework
  - Building on Ward and Keenan’s (1999) conceptualisation
  - Refining the 2 version model of DWIT

- Treatment targets
  - Identify each aspect of DWIT specifically
THANK YOU

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