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Understanding the Cognitive and Social Foundations of Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence Myth Acceptance

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ABSTRACT

Technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV) is an increasingly prevalent form of gender-based harm, yet little is known about the cognitive and social underpinnings influencing attitudes toward it. Endorsement of sexual violence myths is associated with greater likelihood, or tolerance, of perpetration and more negative responses to victims, contributing to secondary victimisation and reduced reporting. This study examined whether mechanisms of moral disengagement (MMD), belief in a just world (BJW), general victim-blaming attitudes, and understanding of violence against women (UVAW) predicted TFSV myth acceptance (TFSVMA). A community sample of 144 participants completed validated measures of these constructs. Multiple regression analysis showed that the overall model was significant, $F(4, 139) = 27.01, p < .001$, explaining 43.7% of the variance in TFSVMA ($R^2 = .437$, adjusted $R^2 = .421$). As hypothesised, higher levels of MMD ($\beta = .16, p = .036$), BJW ($\beta = .14, p = .044$), and victim-blaming attitudes ($\beta = .34, p < .001$) significantly predicted greater TFSVMA. In contrast, UVAW negatively predicted TFSVMA ($\beta = -.26, p < .001$), indicating that greater knowledge and recognition of violence against women was associated with lower myth acceptance. Victim-blaming emerged as the strongest unique predictor. These findings highlight the importance of moral, cognitive, and attitudinal factors in shaping responses to TFSV, and suggest that prevention and educational interventions should target such beliefs to reduce tolerance of TFSV and mitigate secondary victimisation.

Keywords: attitudes; myth acceptance; sexual violence; victim blaming; technology-facilitated sexual violence