Repositório ISCTE-IUL

1   **Abstract**

2   Child sexual abuse myths legitimize abusive behaviors, involving high levels of victim

3   blame and low levels of offender blame. The present study aims to: (i) adapt a measure of

4   endorsement of child sexual abuse myths to the Portuguese context (i.e., Child Sexual

5   Abuse Myth Scale - CSAMS); and (ii) provide validity and reliability evidence for this

6   measure. A total of 423 adults (66.2% female) filled out a sociodemographic questionnaire,

7   the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, and the CSAMS. The CSAMS validity and reliability

8   results supported the original structure, which comprises three dimensions: Blame Diffusion

9   (e.g., 'Adolescent girls who wear very revealing clothing are asking to be sexually

10   abused'), Restrictive Stereotypes (e.g., 'Most children are sexually abused by strangers or

11   by men who are not well known to the child'), and Denial of Abusiveness (e.g., 'Older

12   children, who have a better understanding of sexual matters, have a responsibility to

13   actively resist sexual advances by adults'). Configural and metric invariance by sex were

14   held, and criterion validity was observed through significant associations between myths,

15   sexism and sex. This study provided evidence in support of the validity and reliability of the

16   Portuguese version of the Child Sexual Abuse Myth Scale.

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18   **Keywords:** child sexual abuse, myths, measurement, psychometrics

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Introduction

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28   Previous research has consistently shown that sexual abuse myth acceptance

29 legitimizes sexual violence (Yapp & Quayle, 2018), which may negatively affect both

30 the judicial decision-making process (Dinos, Burrowes, Hammond, & Cunliffe, 2014;

31 Grubb & Turner, 2012) and the victim's well-being (Greeson, Campbell & Fehler-

32 Cabral, 2016). For instance, rape survivors have reported that when disclosing the

33 sexual abuse to formal support agencies and professionals (e.g., police officers, medical

34 staff or counselors), they often receive inappropriate responses, such as being blamed

35 for the assault (Ahrens, 2006). In addition, rape myth acceptance tends to be associated

36 with lower perceived defendant liability and higher victim blame, especially when the

37 relationship between the victim and the defendant is closer (i.e., stranger *vs.*

38 acquaintance without a sexual relationship *vs.* ex-sexual partners) (Krahé et al., 2008).

39 With regard to Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), negative effects have been reported on

40 social, psychological, and sexual individual functioning (Sanjeevi, Houlihan,

41 Bergstrom, Langley & Judkins, 2018), and there is a need to prevent secondary

42 victimization that might occur through the endorsement and dissemination of myths.

43 Korkman and colleagues (2014) found that even experienced judges often assessed

44 information incorrectly and held false beliefs about CSA, which could arguably

45 compromise how they handled the processes in court. Similarly, professionals who are

46 important for children's development (e.g., teachers) seem to lack specific knowledge

47 about CSA (Márquez-Flores, Márquez-Hernández & Granados-Gámez, 2016). Teachers

48 often consider that CSA necessary involves violent behaviors and hold stereotypes

49 about offenders (e.g., people who have mental disorders; Márquez-Flores et al., 2016).

50 Erroneous beliefs about CSA can also include the assumption that CSA necessarily

51 leaves medical and/or physical evidence (McGuire & London, 2017).

52   Evidence collected systematically in the Portuguese context is scarce, but

53   relevant professionals (e.g., psychologists, health workers) do appear to endorse myths

54   and erroneous beliefs about CSA to a certain extent (Fazenda, 2010; Monteiro, 2018).

55   Teachers in particular seem to present high levels of myths and beliefs about CSA

56   (Sanchez, 2001), particularly with regard to minimizing the consequences of these

57   abusive experiences (Jorge, 2010). These results are troubling given the critical role of

58   teachers as primary educators and agents of child protection (i.e., teachers are key actors

59   for enabling CSA disclosure and prevention; Márquez-Flores et al., 2016). Furthermore,

60   young people who were victims of CSA seem to acknowledge that depreciative social

61   and cultural discourses (e.g., blaming the victim, denying and minimizing abuse,

62   excusing the offender) tend to worsen the negative effects of these abusive experiences

63   for their own psychological functioning (Antunes & Magalhães, 2019).

64   Overall, this backdrop illustrates the need for systematically assessing

65   determinants and consequences of social beliefs and representations of CSA, which

66   firstly requires developing measures that are reliable, valid, and adapted to specific

67   cultural contexts. Assessing CSA myths is important given that dissemination of these

68   myths undermines proper efforts of identification and prevention of CSA. In fact,

69   whereas CSA prevention programs tend to focus mostly on children (i.e., promoting

70   their ability to protect themselves from abusive experiences), other relevant actors (e.g.,

71   parents, teachers, psychologists, general public) should also be included in efforts to

72   prevent CSA (Márquez-Flores et al., 2016; Sanchez, 2001). Presently, even

73   professionals often reveal misconceptions about scientific evidence on CSA, which

74   undermines adequate judgments about the credibility of CSA allegations (Pelisoli,

75   Herman & Dell'Aglio, 2015). As such, to address the need for reliable and valid

76   measures in this focal topic, the present study aims to provide psychometric evidence of

77 the Child Sexual Abuse Myth Scale (Collings, 1997), specifically on construct and

78 criterion-related validity and reliability in the Portuguese context. This will be useful for

79 cross-cultural studies assessing social beliefs and representations of CSA, as well as to

80 identify how to prevent the endorsement and dissemination of myths about this type of

81 abuse in different contexts.

82 **Child Sexual Abuse Myths (CSAM): Theory and Measurement Framework**

83 Sexual victimization myths can be conceptualized as prejudicial and stereotyped

84 beliefs about abusive experiences, victims and perpetrators (Burt, 1980), which are

85 widely accepted in society (Jenkins, 2017; McGee, O'Higgins, Garavan, & Conroy,

86 2011), and deny or dismiss CSA (Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010). Collings (1997), based

87 on the literature in this field, has developed a measurement scale to allow the reliable

88 and valid assessment of myths about CSA (*Child Sexual Abuse Myth Scale - CSAMS*).

89 The CSAMS originally includes three dimensions, referring to: (1) Blame

90 Diffusion, which involves beliefs related to the idea that other people besides the

91 offender (e.g., the child; a non-abusive parent) are guilty or partly guilty for the abusive

92 experience (e.g., "Children who do not report ongoing sexual abuse must want the

93 sexual contact to continue"); (2) Denial of Abusiveness, which includes beliefs that seek

94 to minimize the abusive dimension of CSA, highlighting the consent from the child

95 (e.g., "Sexual contact between an adult and a child, which is wanted by the child and

96 which is physically pleasurable for the child cannot really be described as being

97 'abusive'"); and (3) Restrictive Stereotypes, which includes beliefs that deny the reality

98 of most abusive cases and minimize the negative consequences (e.g., "Child sexual

99 abuse takes place mainly in poor, disorganized, unstable families") (Collings, 1997).

100 Regarding the scale reliability, the full scale scored a .764 *Cronbach* Alpha, which

101 shows an acceptable internal consistency (Collings, 1997). Convergent and discriminant

102   validity were also established, as results showed positive and significant correlations

103   between CSAM scales and rape myth acceptance, as well as with the scores from the

104   Jackson Incest Blame Scale (Collings, 1997).

105   To assess the cross-cultural validity of the CSAMS, Collings and colleagues

106   (2009) focused on examining social attitudes towards sexual abuse using a sample of

107   adolescents and young adults in three countries: South Africa, South Korea and

108   Sweden. The results showed that the CSAMS kept its acceptable values of internal

109   consistency in all cultural groups, and the multidimensional nature of the construct was

110   reinforced, although different factors emerged in the different cultural contexts

111   (Collings et al., 2009). Gender differences were also consistently observed across

112   samples (i.e., male participants scored higher levels in all subscales and in the overall

113   scale compared to female participants) (Collings et al., 2009). South Koreans had the

114   highest scores of CSA myth acceptance, and the authors highlighted important cultural

115   specificities, (Collings et al., 2009) which reinforces the need for valid, reliable and

116   culturally sensitive measures for developing cross-cultural studies on this topic.

117   **Child Sexual Abuse Myths: The Role of Sex and Sexism**

118   Research shows that acceptance and dissemination of sexual abuse myths seem

119   to vary according to respondents' sex. That is, men tend to outscore women on myth

120   acceptance and, consequently, show higher levels of victim blame and tolerance

121   towards sexual harassment (Aosved & Long, 2006; Canan et al., 2016; Davies et al.,

122   2012; Russell & Hand, 2017), further devaluing the experience of sexual victimization

123   (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014). Lonsway and Fitzgerald

124   (1995) propose that differences in rape myth acceptance may be explained theoretically

125   by hostility toward women, especially by men. Internalized cultural beliefs about

126   masculinity (e.g., being heterosexual and strong, being a part of the majority group)

127   may also have a role in these sex differences (Aosved & Long, 2006). Arguably, this

128   means that individuals who internalize these beliefs may also show a higher

129   endorsement of sexual violence myths.

130   Gender roles may also be considered in this context. Some studies suggest that

131   men tend to self-identify more with the offender than with the victim, given that the

132   offender occupies the dominant and power-holding position in the dyad, regardless the

133   offender' sex (Gerber, Cronin & Steigman, 2004). Thus, men have been shown to be

134   more likely to assign higher levels of blame to the victim, whereas women can self-

135   identify more with the victim and assign lower levels blame to the victim, arguably to

136   protect their own role as potential victims (Gerber et al., 2004). Despite these findings

137   and propositions, there is contradictory evidence in this regard. Abeid and colleagues

138   (2015) found that, in a rural community in Tanzania, men showed lower endorsement of

139   myths about sexual violence, compared to women. These results are consistent with

140   other studies on domestic violence conducted in Uganda and in Sub-Saharan Africa,

141   where women showed higher levels of validation and acceptance of wife beating than

142   men (Koenig et al., 2003; Rani, Bonu, & Diop-Sidibe, 2004). These differences may be

143   related with contextual factors such women's occupation status, lower levels of

144   education, increased poverty, and rural residency (Abeid et al., 2015).

145   Similarly, with regard to CSA, female perpetrators tend to be held less

146   accountable (Almeida, 2003), especially when the victim is male (Broussard, Wagner,

147   & Kazelskis, 1991). Furthermore, females tend to describe adult-child sexual

148   interactions as more abusive and as having a more negative impact on the child

149   (Broussard et al., 1991). They also attribute more guilt to the perpetrator and therefore

150   tend to give more credibility to children's abuse disclosures (Alcantara, Shortway &

151   Prempeh, 2019; Cromer & Freyd, 2007; Davies & Rogers, 2009). On the other hand,

152 male participants tend to score higher on CSA myths (Collings, 2003; Collings et al.,

153 2009) and assign greater responsibility/blame to the victim (Back & Lips, 1998). In

154 sum, the literature has mainly shown sex differences regarding myth acceptance for

155 both rape (e.g., Aosved & Long, 2006; Canan et al., 2016; Davies et al., 2012) and

156 sexual abuse (Collings, 2003; Collings et al., 2009), with men outscoring women.

157 However, individual variables, such as respondents' sex, are not the only variables who

158 have an impact in myth acceptance. The dissemination of myths and victim blame

159 attribution processes are described in the literature as potentially explained by sexist

160 attitudes and behaviors (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Attitudes and behaviors that discriminate

161 individuals based on their biological sex are theoretically referred to as sexism (Matlin,

162 2012). Glick and Fiske (1996) distinguish two types of sexism: Hostile and Benevolent.

163 Hostile Sexism is described as involving "beliefs and practices of people who consider

164 women inferior to men, reflecting antipathy and intolerance in relation to their role as a

165 figure of power and decision" (Formiga et al., 2002, p. 106). On the other hand,

166 Benevolent Sexism is more complex and subtle (Magalhães et al., 2007), being an

167 apparently non-prejudiced attitude, but showing the paternalistic perspective (Formiga

168 et al., 2002). Previous research has identified Hostile and/or Benevolent Sexism as

169 predictors of rape and sexual abuse myth acceptance, tolerance towards sexual

170 harassment (Chapleau et al., 2007; Glick & Fiske, 1996).

171   Against this backdrop, the present study aims to provide evidence on the

172 psychometric properties of the Child Sexual Abuse Myth Scale (CSAMS) in the

173 Portuguese context and will assess convergent validity by testing associations between

174 endorsement of myths about CSA and endorsement of sexist beliefs (i.e., Hostile and

175 Benevolent Sexism).

Method

Participants

The sample includes 423 participants, mostly female (66.2%) aged from 18 to 77 years old (M_{age}= 29.30; SD= 12.258). Most participants were single (80.9%), 13.2% were married and 5.9% were divorced. In terms of education levels, 53.7% completed higher education courses, 42.1% completed the high school and 3% concluded the middle school. Finally, 49.9% of the participants were employed, 43.7% were students and 5% were unemployed.

Instruments

Sociodemographic questionnaire. Participants' demographic attributes were assessed with a sociodemographic questionnaire, namely, assessing sex, age, nationality, marital status, together with academic and professional experience (e.g. the last academic degree completed and current professional status).

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The Portuguese version of this scale was used in this study (Magalhães et al., 2007). This scale consists of 22 items organized in two factors: Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism. Participants were asked to score their level of agreement with different statements using a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree). Adequate internal consistency has been provided in both subscales in the Portuguese context: Hostile Sexism (*Cronbach* alpha = .82) (e.g., "Women are too easily offended") and Benevolent Sexism (*Cronbach* alpha =.80) (e.g., "Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess") (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Magalhães et al., 2007). Acceptable internal consistency was also found in this study: Hostile Sexism (*Cronbach* alpha =.79) and Benevolent Sexism (*Cronbach* alpha =.77).

200   *Child Sexual Abuse Myth Scale (CSAMS; Collings, 1997).* This scale allows to

201   assess attitudes towards CSA. It is a 15-item self-report scale, organized in three

202   different factors: (1) Blame Diffusion (e.g., "Adolescent girls who wear very revealing

203   clothing are asking to be sexually abused"); (2) Denial of Abusiveness (e.g., "Older

204   children, who have a better understanding of sexual matters, have a responsibility to

205   actively resist sexual advances by adults"); and (3) Restrictive Stereotypes (e.g., "Most

206   children are sexually abused by strangers or by men who are not well known to the

207   child"). It is answered using a 5-point scale (1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly

208   Agree) (Collings, 1997; Collings et al., 2009). In terms of internal consistency, the full

209   scale in the original study scored a .764 *Cronbach* Alpha, which means it has an

210   acceptable internal consistency (Collings, 1997).

211   **Procedures**

212   *Translation and adaptation of CSAMS.* Firstly, permission to translate and adapt

213   the scale was requested to the author of the original version. Afterward, the process of

214   validation and adaptation of the scale included translation, back-translation and expert

215   review of the items (following the guidelines proposed by Beaton, Bombardier,

216   Guillemin & Ferraz, 2000). A first translation was made by a researcher and

217   subsequently reviewed by three other independent researchers. Three researchers were

218   included in order to make the process of solving translation differences more effective.

219   The translated version was then back translated by a bilingual speaker, the back

220   translated version was compared to the original version, and a Portuguese version was

221   achieved, which was carefully reviewed by the research team.

222   *Data collection and analysis.* This study is part of a broader project, which was

223   approved by the Ethical Committee of the [blinded to ensure anonymity in the review

224   process]. The data was collected *online*, through the *Qualtrics.com* platform ensuring

225   data protection policy consistent with regulation (EU, 2016/679) and disseminated on

226   social media. In order to guarantee participants' anonymity, we ensured it would not be

227   possible under any circumstances to associate individual responses to the respondent

228   identity. Privacy was protected by not collecting identifiable information and removing

229   IP addresses from the database (Roberts & Allen, 2015). Furthermore, to ensure privacy

230   and data confidentiality, the database was stored on password-protected hardware, and

231   access was limited to the research team. The study included a convenience sample (not

232   probabilistic) with two inclusion criteria: (1) all participants were required to understand

233   the Portuguese language; and (2) all participants had to be at least 18 years old.

234   Participation was voluntary and without financial or any other type of reward. An

235   informed consent was provided to participants, which included: a) contact details of the

236   research team, in case participants had any questions or required clarifications; b) a

237   brief description of the study; c) detailed instructions that the participants could stop

238   answering at any point and choose not to answer without having to provide any kind of

239   justification; d) a statement that all data collected was anonymous.

240   After data collection, *IBM SPSS® for Windows* (Version 22.0) was used to

241   analyze participants' descriptive statistics, mean differences, correlational analyses and

242   reliability. Only four missing values were found, and missing imputation by mean was

243   performed. Confirmatory factorial analysis and invariance analysis were performed with

244   *IBM AMOS® for Windows* (Version 25.0). Confirmatory factor analysis was performed,

245   given that the authors of the original version provided evidence for a three-dimensional

246   structure (Collings, 1997; Collings et al., 2009). Also, we adopted the rule thumb for a

247   CFA sample of at least 300 participants, to ensure adequate statistical power (see

248   Kyriazos, 2018). First, multidimensional models, consistent with the results provided by

249   Collings (1997), were tested. Moreover, given that Collings (1997) describes a global

250   value of reliability, suggesting that a global dimension might be considered, one-

251   dimensional models were also tested. The goodness of fit of the models was assessed

252   through the following criteria: a $\chi2/df$ below 3, the CFI approaching 1 (Bentler, 1990),

253   and the RMSEA below .10 (Maroco, 2010). Lower values of AIC and ECVI and higher

254   values of PGFI and PNFI suggest the better model (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schermelleh-

255   Engel, Moosbrugger, & Muller, 2003). As proposed in the literature (Hong, Malik &

256   Lee, 2003; Van de Schoot, Lugtig, & Hox 2012), the measurement invariance was

257   tested considering three sequential steps: configural (i.e., the model fit for women and

258   men separately), metric (i.e., the items are perceived by women and men equally as

259   representing the same latent factor) and scalar invariance (i.e., the same value might be

260   obtained on the latent variables regardless the individual's sex). Based on the literature,

261   we expect to hold configural and metric invariance, but not scalar, as women and men

262   might show different values on the latent variables (Canan et al., 2016; Collings, 2003;

263   Collings et al., 2009; Davies et al., 2012).

264   **Results**

265   **Descriptive Statistics**

266   Preceding the analysis of construct validity, a descriptive analysis of the 15

267   items was performed in order to analyze the symmetry of the items' distribution. The

268   analysis of the absolute values of Skewness allowed the identification of one item (Item

269   6. "A woman who does not satisfy her partner sexually must bear some of the

270   responsibility if her partner feels frustrated and turns to her children for sexual

271   satisfaction") showing a value greater than 3, which was removed from further analyses

272   (Table 1).

273   TABLE 1

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276   **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

277   The factorial structure of the Portuguese version of the CSAMS was tested using

278   a CFA (maximum likelihood estimation). The first three-factor model was tested

279   (Model 1), and all latent factors were allowed to correlate. The overall fit of model 1

280   revealed adequate but not good fit indices. As such, based on modifications indices, the

281   errors of the items 10-11 and 7-13 were allowed to correlate. The overall fit of this

282   second model was generally within the range of a good fit. One-dimensional models

283   were also performed, Model 3 without allowing errors correlations, and Model 4 with

284   errors correlated (Table 2). Based on the fit indices, the second model

285   (multidimensional) should be selected as showing the best fit (unstandardized estimates

286   are presented in the Figure 1).

287   FIGURE 1

288   **Invariance analyses**

289   In order to explore if the factor structure would be invariant across women and

290   men, multiple group analyses were performed. Both women and men samples fulfil the

291   sample/variable ratio of 10:1. First, configural invariance was supported by acceptable

292   model fit indexes that were obtained for each group separately – male ($\chi2$= 147.375,

293   p<.001; CFI = .90; RMSEA = 0.086; CI90% [.066; .106]) and female ($\chi2$= 163.806,

294   p<.001; CFI = .91; RMSEA = .068; CI90% [.054; .081]). Next, metric invariance was

295   tested by constraining factor loadings to be equal across two groups ($\chi2$= 347.454,

296   p<.001; CFI = .89; RMSEA =.054; CI90% [.047; .062]). This model also had good fit

297   indexes and the AIC value decreased, but the fit for this model was not as good as for

298   the baseline model ($\Delta\chi2 = 36.127, p < .001$), indicating that metric invariance did not

299   hold. As such, a *Z* test to the equality of the factor loadings was performed, and we

300   found that the items 9, 11 and 14 (Blame diffusion factor) were significantly different

301 between women and men (respectively, $Z = -2.91$, $p = .004$; $Z = -2.45$, $p=.014$; $Z = 2.41$,

302 $p=.016$). These items were released, and partial metric invariance obtained ($\Delta\chi2 =$

303 6.032, $p=.644$). Finally, scalar invariance was tested and the $\chi2$ difference test was

304 significant ($\Delta\chi2 = 75.409$, $p < .001$), indicating that scalar invariance was not supported.

305 **CSA Myths, Sex and Sexism**

306   Correlations among myths of sexual abuse and sexism reveals that all subscales

307 were positively and significantly correlated: greater sexist attitudes are associated with

308 greater sexual abuse myths (Table 3). Furthermore, the analyses of sex differences among

309 the myth subscales revealed that men significantly outscored women in all subscales

310 (Table 4).

311   TABLE 3 AND 4

312 **Reliability**

313   Reliability was checked calculating *Cronbach*'s Alpha. Results of this analysis

314 indicated adequate reliability evidence for all factors: Blame Diffusion ($\alpha=.81$), Denial

315 of Abusiveness ($\alpha=.64$) and Restrictive Stereotypes ($\alpha=.73$), including the general factor

316 of CSA myths ($\alpha=.86$). Floor and ceiling effects were also described for each subscale

317 and the general factor. Results suggested non-significant ceiling effects (0% for all

318 factors), but floor effects were found for Blame Diffusion and Denial of Abusiveness

319 factors given that more than 15% of our participants reached the lowest possible score

320 (see Terwee et al., 2007) (Table 5).

321   TABLE 5

322   **Discussion**

323   This study aimed to provided evidence on psychometric properties of the Child

324 Sexual Abuse Myth Scale (CSAMS) in the Portuguese context. Sexual violence myths

325 legitimize sexual aggression and violence (Yapp & Quayle, 2018), and there is a need

326   for adapting and validating relevant measures in diverse contexts, to develop cross-

327   cultural studies on the predictors and consequences of endorsing these myths.

328   Confirmatory factor analysis revealed good fit statistics for the three-factor

329   structure, consistent with the original proposal (Collings, 1997). Moreover, considering

330   that the authors of the original version provided a global Cronbach's alpha, suggesting

331   the possibility of considering CSA myths as a one-dimensional construct, we tested a

332   one-dimensional model. However, in the present sample the multidimensional model

333   revealed a better fit, which reinforces the theoretical model including three dimensions:

334   Blame Diffusion, Denial of Abusiveness and Restrictive Stereotypes. In line with the

335   original conceptualization (Collings, 1997), Blame Diffusion refers to the idea that other

336   people besides the offender are guilty or partly guilty for the abuse (e.g., "Children who

337   act in a seductive manner must be seen as being at least partly to blame if an adult

338   responds to them in a sexual way"). Denial of Abusiveness includes beliefs that seek to

339   minimize the abusive dimension of CSA, highlighting some degree of consent from the

340   child (e.g., "Sexual contact between an adult and a child that does not involve force or

341   coercion and that does not involve actual or attempted sexual intercourse is unlike to

342   have serious phycological consequences for the child"). Finally, Restrictive Stereotypes

343   involves beliefs that deny the reality of most abusive cases, seeking to minimize its

344   negative consequences (e.g., "Most children are sexually abused by strangers or by men

345   who are not well known to the child"). Overall, the current findings supported a three-

346   factor solution that reinforces the original conceptualization proposed by Collings

347   (1997). Furthermore, our results supported configural invariance by sex as well as

348   partial metric invariance, which means that this model fits adequately for women and

349   men separately, and these items are perceived by women and men equally as

350   representing the same latent factor. Scalar invariance was not achieved, which is

351   consistent with previous evidence that show men outscoring women in all myths scales

352   (Collings, 2003; Collings et al., 2009) and also with our results.

353   Convergent validity and reliability of the Portuguese version of this scale were

354   also assessed. Convergent validity highlights the trustworthiness of this scale to be

355   applied in the Portuguese context given that all dimensions of the scale (i.e., Blame

356   Diffusion, Denial of Abusiveness and Restrictive Stereotypes) correlated positively with

357   both Ambivalent Sexism Inventory subscales (i.e., Benevolent Sexism and Hostile

358   Sexism). Furthermore, the results showed that male participants outscored female in all

359   subscales, showing higher levels of CSA myth acceptance. Sex differences have been

360   reported in previous studies, with men endorsing more myths (Canan et al., 2016) and

361   more negativity towards those myths when compared to women (Davies et al., 2012).

362   Additionally, regarding sexual abuse, men not only tend to score higher on myth

363   acceptance (Collings, 2003), but those differences are also consistent across cultures

364   (i.e., Sweden, South Africa, South Korea) (Collings et al., 2009). This pattern was

365   consistent in the present study as well. Lastly, reliability evidence was observed with

366   adequate *Cronbach Alpha* coefficients (ranging from .64 to .81). Denial of Abusiveness

367   revealed a coefficient lower than .70, but this dimension is comprised by fewer items.

368   Consistent with the original full scale, which scored .764 (Collings, 1997) and with the

369   Swedish (α=.86) and South Korean (α=.71) versions (Collings et al., 2009), the

370   Portuguese version also showed good reliability (α=.86).

371   A set of limitations of this study should also be noted, such as the use of an

372   online convenience sample. Although online data collection has benefits in terms of

373   costs, time and accessibility (Lages, Magalhães, Antunes, & Ferreira, 2018), future

374   studies should also include participants who do not have access to online platforms, in

375   order to have a more diverse sample. In addition, the present findings should be

376   interpreted with caution given the different numbers of male (N= 143) and female (N=

377   280) participants, with female participants representing more than half of the sample

378   (66.2%). In the future, additional validity and reliability evidence should be provided,

379   namely using longitudinal designs to assess predictive validity as well as reliability

380   based on test-retest approaches.

381   Notwithstanding these limitations, the process of validation and adaptation of

382   this scale followed the international guidelines (i.e.., translation, back-translation and

383   expert review; Beaton, Bombardier, Guillemin & Ferraz, 2000) and the current findings

384   highlighted the construct validity and reliability evidence of CSAMS in the Portuguese

385   context. The present study offers a contribution for forthcoming cross-cultural research

386   on the predictors and consequences of CSA myths, which is a necessary first step to

387   identify how to prevent the endorsement and dissemination of these myths across

388   diverse cultural contexts.

389   **Declaration of interest statement**

390   The authors declare no competing interests.

391

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570 Table 1

571 *Descriptive statistics: Means, Standard deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis*
572

Item	M	SD	Percent of agreement for each item					Skewness		Kurtosis	
			1	2	3	4	5	Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
1. Sexual contact between an adult and a child, which is wanted by the child and which is physically pleasurable for the child cannot really be described as being "abusive" [O contacto sexual entre um adulto e uma criança, que a criança deseja e no qual sente prazer, não pode ser verdadeiramente descrito como sendo 'abusivo']	1.44	0.83	71.6	18.2	6.1	2.8	1.2	2.18	0.12	4.70	0.24
2. Sexual contact with an adult can contribute favorably to a child's subsequent psycho-sexual development [O contacto sexual com um adulto pode contribuir favoravelmente para o subsequente desenvolvimento psicossexual da criança]	1.77	1.25	65.6	11.1	9.0	8.5	5.7	1.41	0.12	0.64	0.24
3. Most children are sexually abused by strangers or by men who are not well known to the child [A maior parte das crianças é abusada sexualmente por estranhos ou por homens que a criança não conhece bem]	2.17	0.93	25.5	41.6	24.8	6.6	1.4	0.58	0.12	0.01	0.24
4. Children who act in a seductive manner must be seen as being at least partly to blame if an adult responds to them in a sexual way [Crianças que se comportam de forma sedutora devem ser vistas como parcialmente culpadas se um adulto lhes responde de forma sexualizada]	1.36	0.71	74.9	16.1	6.9	2.1	0	2.01	0.12	3.42	0.24
5. Sexual contact between an adult and child that does not involve force or coercion and that does not involve actual or attempted sexual intercourse is unlikely to have serious psychological consequences for the child [O contacto sexual entre um adulto e uma criança que não envolve força ou coerção, e que não inclui relação sexual tentada ou consumada, tem pouca probabilidade de ter consequências psicológicas sérias para a criança]	1.48	0.80	68.3	20.1	7.3	3.3	0.9	1.92	0.12	3.45	0.24
6. A woman who does not satisfy her partner sexually must bear some of the responsibility if her partner feels frustrated and turns to her children for sexual satisfaction [Uma mulher que não satisfaz sexualmente o seu companheiro deve assumir alguma responsabilidade se o seu parceiro se sentir frustrado e recorrer aos filhos dela para obter satisfação sexual]	1.14	0.50	91.0	5.4	2.8	0.2	0.5	4.48	0.12	23.47	0.24
7. Child sexual abuse takes place mainly in poor, disorganized, unstable families [O abuso sexual de crianças ocorre principalmente em famílias pobres, desorganizadas e instáveis]	1.86	0.99	48.0	25.8	18.9	6.6.	0.7	0.87	0.12	-0.22	0.24

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Item											
8. It is not sexual contact with adults that is harmful for children. What is really damaging for the child is the social stigma that results once the "secret" gets out [Não é o contacto sexual com adultos que é prejudicial para a criança. O que realmente prejudica a criança é o estigma social que surge quando o "segredo" é revelado]	1.41	0.75	71.6	18.7	7.1	2.4	0.2	1.93	0.12	3.42	0.24
9. Many children have an unconscious wish to be sexually involved with an opposite sexed parent, which leads them to unconsciously behave in ways that make sexual abuse by that parent more likely [Muitas crianças têm um desejo inconsciente de se envolverem sexualmente com o/a progenitor/a do sexo oposto, o que as leva a inconscientemente comportarem-se de uma forma que torna o abuso sexual mais provável]	1.51	0.81	66.6	18.2	12.6	2.6	0	1.41	0.12	0.89	0.24
10. Adolescent girls who wear very revealing clothing are asking to be sexually abused [Raparigas adolescentes que usam roupas reveladoras estão a "pedir" para serem abusadas sexualmente]	1.31	0.66	78.0	15.1	5.2	1.4	0.2	2.40	0.12	6.02	0.24
11. Children raised by gay or lesbian couples face a greater risk of being sexually abused than children raised by heterosexual couples [Crianças que são educadas por casais homossexuais apresentam maior risco de serem abusadas sexualmente do que crianças educadas por casais heterossexuais]	1.35	0.74	77.3	13.0	7.8	1.2	0.7	2.33	0.12	5.51	0.24
12. Boys are more likely than girls to enjoy sexual contact with an adult and are therefore less likely to be emotionally traumatized by the experience [Os rapazes têm maior probabilidade do que as raparigas de desfrutar do contacto sexual com um adulto e por isso é menos provável que fiquem emocionalmente traumatizados pela experiência]	1.49	0.84	69.7	15.8	10.6	3.5	0.2	1.66	0.12	1.85	0.24
13. Child sexual abused is caused by social problems such as unemployment, poverty, and alcohol abuse [O abuso sexual na infância é causado por problemas sociais como o desemprego, a pobreza e o abuso de álcool]	2.08	1.05	40.2	22.9	26.2	10.2	0.5	0.47	0.12	-0.99	0.24
14. Children who do not report ongoing sexual abuse must want the sexual contact to continue [As crianças que não revelam o abuso sexual querem que o contacto sexual continue]	1.26	0.61	82.0	11.6	5.0	1.4	0	2.57	0.12	6.290	0.24
15. Older children, who have better understanding of sexual matters, have a responsibility to actively resist sexual advances made by adults [Crianças mais velhas, que têm uma maior compreensão sobre questões sexuais, têm a responsabilidade de resistir ativamente a avanços sexuais por parte dos adultos]	2.01	1.17	47.4	20.9	17.5	11.4	2.8	0.84	0.12	-0.45	0.24

573   *Note.* 1= *Strongly Disagree*; 2- *Disagree*; 3- *Neither agree nor disagree*; 4- *Agree*; 5= *Strongly Agree*; *SE*= Standard Error; N=423; Portuguese version in square brackets

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575 Table 2
576 *Fit statistics from the Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

	χ^2 *(df)*	χ^2*/df*	*GFI*	*CFI*	*RMSEA [90% CI]*	*AIC*	*ECVI*
Model 1 – 3 factors	270.993 (74)	3.66***	.91	.90	.079[.069;.090]	332.993	.789
Model 2 – 3 factors, correlating errors	171.417 (72)	2.38***	.94	.95	.057[.046;.068]	237.417	.563
Model 3 – 1 factor	345.208 (77)	4.48***	.89	.86	.091[.081;.101]	345.208	.951
Model 4 – 1 factor, correlating errors	216.149 (75)	2.88***	.93	.93	.067[.056;.077]	276.149	.654

578 *Note.* ***p<.001; *GFI*= Goodness of Fit Index; *CFI*= Comparative Fit Index; *RMSEA*= Root Mean
579 Square Error of Approximation; *AIC*= Akaike information criterion; *ECVI*= The Expected Cross
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Table 3

Simple intercorrelations of study variables, mean and standard deviations

Dimension	2	3	4	5	*M*	*SD*
1. Blame Diffusion	.59***	.61***	.36***	.32***	1.36	0.53
2. Denial of Abusiveness	1	.59***	.27***	.31***	1.68	0.72
3. Restrictive Stereotypes		1	.30***	.31***	1.80	0.63
4. Benevolent Sexism			1	.65***	3.31	0.96
5. Hostile Sexism				1	3.50	0.95

Note. ***$p<.001$; *M*=Mean; *SD*= Standard Deviation

606 Table 4
607 *Mean differences based on participants' sex*
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	Sex	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*Cohen's d*
Blame Diffusion	Female	1.24	.40	-5.971	<.001	.66
	Male	1.60	.66			
Denial of Abusiveness	Female	1.53	.63	-5.578	<.001	.60
	Male	1.96	.80			
Restrictive Stereotypes	Female	1.68	.55	-5.085	<.001	.55
	Male	2.03	.72			

609 *Note. M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation*

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632 Table 5

634 *Item-total statistics for each factor and the global factor*

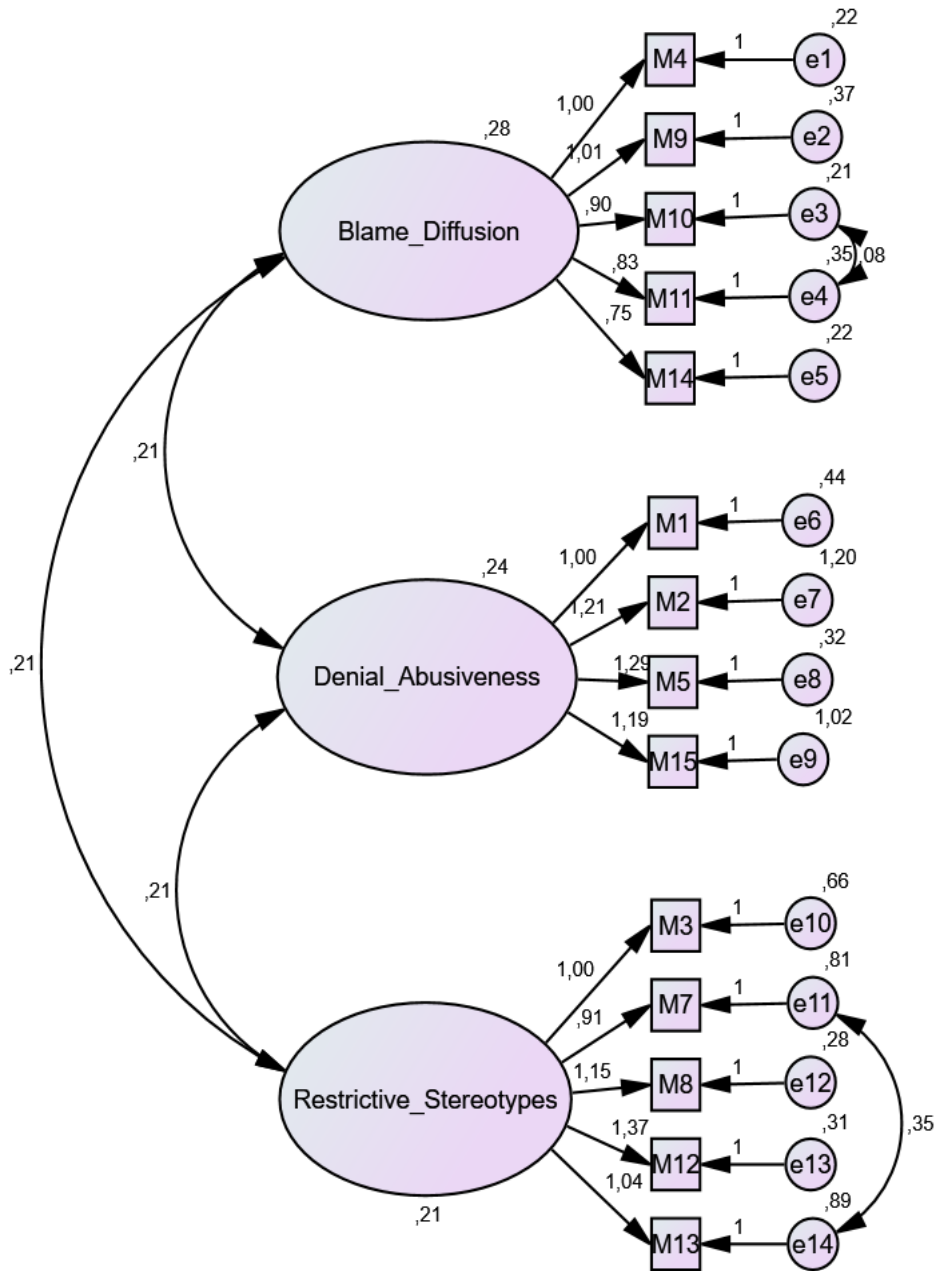| Factors/Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Floor Effect (%)	Ceiling Effect (%)
Blame Diffusion			50.4	0
Item 4	0.626	0.759		
Item 9	0.533	0.793		
Item 10	0.700	0.739		
Item 11	0.566	0.778		
Item 14	0.567	0.778		
Denial of Abusiveness			33.8	0
Item 1	0.494	0.530		
Item 2	0.403	0.587		
Item 5	0.489	0.530		
Item 15	0.345	0.625		
Restrictive Stereotypes			13.2	0
Item 3	0.398	0.713		
Item 7	0.495	0.676		
Item 8	0.480	0.686		
Item 12	0.542	0.660		
Item 13	0.540	0.657		
Global Factor			8.5	0
Item 1	0.500	0.854		
Item 2	0.407	0.864		
Item 3	0.470	0.856		
Item 4	0.624	0.849		
Item 5	0.619	0.848		
Item 7	0.430	0.859		
Item 8	0.617	0.849		
Item 9	0.598	0.849		
Item 10	0.585	0.851		
Item 11	0.532	0.853		
Item 12	0.663	0.845		
Item 13	0.459	0.857		
Item 14	0.533	0.854		
Item 15	0.480	0.857		

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643 *Figure 1.* Confirmatory factor analysis of Child Sexual Abuse Myth Scale – Final Model
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