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Study explores dangers of 'benevolent sexism'

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A new study conducted at the University of Granada revealed that a man who perpetrates violence against a woman is let off the hook if he is kind to his wife, a phenomenon termed as 'benevolent sexism'.

The study explored the negative effects of benevolent sexism, a term used for apparently "positive" ideas and attitudes of men towards women, which are based on the assumption that men must take care of and sacrifice themselves for women.

Six studies were conducted, where more than 700 students aged between 18 and 24 and from different Faculties participated. One of such studies was carried out in collaboration with the University of Kent (United Kingdom).

The results obtained from this study "could be applied for designing and enhancing educational programs in sexual harassment prevention mainly for men—with the purpose of reducing sexual harassment rates—but also for women, to help them become aware of the reality of the problem and help them in identifying what factors could weaken their assertive reactions in such cases".

Mercedes Duran Segura, the author, "the study remarks the negative impact that benevolent sexist attitudes of men towards their couples have on our Society.

However, such protection and affection "are not innocent, since men with benevolent sexist attitudes consider women as inferior to men, and that is the reason why they assume that women need their protection and care".

The results were published in a special issue of the most important journal in this field, Sex Roles.



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