



The Impact of Pluralistic Ignorance on Gender Bias

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Introduction

- **Pluralistic ignorance** (PI) is a phenomenon where a majority of group members privately reject a norm, but incorrectly assume that most others accept it, and therefore go along with it¹.
- PI has been identified as a significant factor contributing to the **persistence of gender bias** in society².
- Studies have also indicated that men are prone to pluralistically ignorant views on gender bias³.
- Studies have indicated that PI affects attitudes and behaviors⁴.
- Accordingly, this study **aims to investigate**:
 - Perception differences across gender and self
 - Pluralistic ignorance across gender
 - The relationship between PI and sexist attitudes

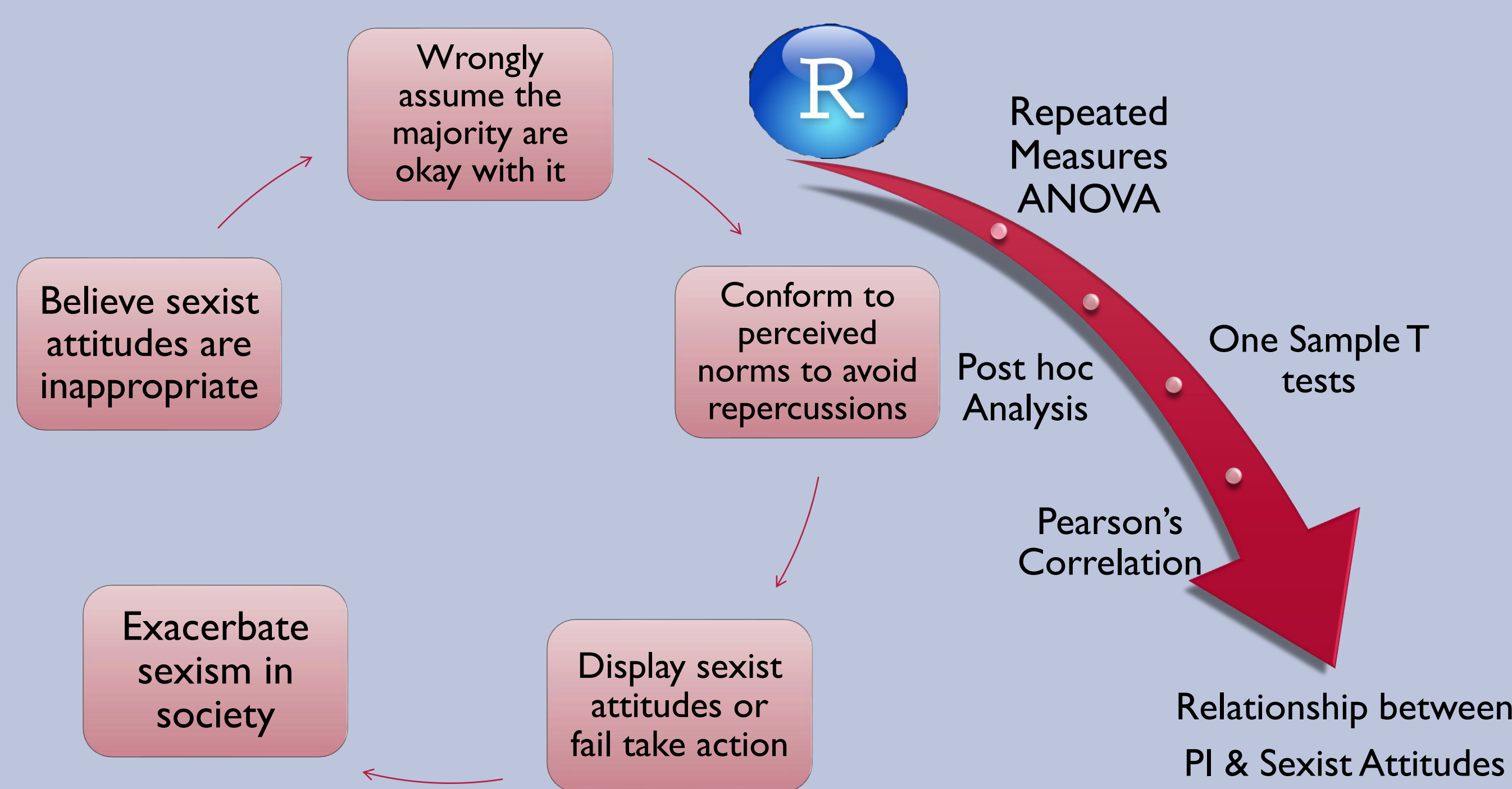


Figure 1: Mechanism of PI on gender bias.

Figure 2: Procedure & data analysis.

Methods

- Survey study; asked participants to rate level of appropriateness of **hypothetical sexist scenarios**.
- The survey employed a rating scale that was adapted from established measures of gender bias and PI.
- Participants rated their responses on a **5-point scale** ranging from 1 (extremely inappropriate) to 5 (extremely appropriate) across **three groups**:
 - Their own perceptions,
 - The average male's perceptions, and
 - The average female's perceptions.

Results

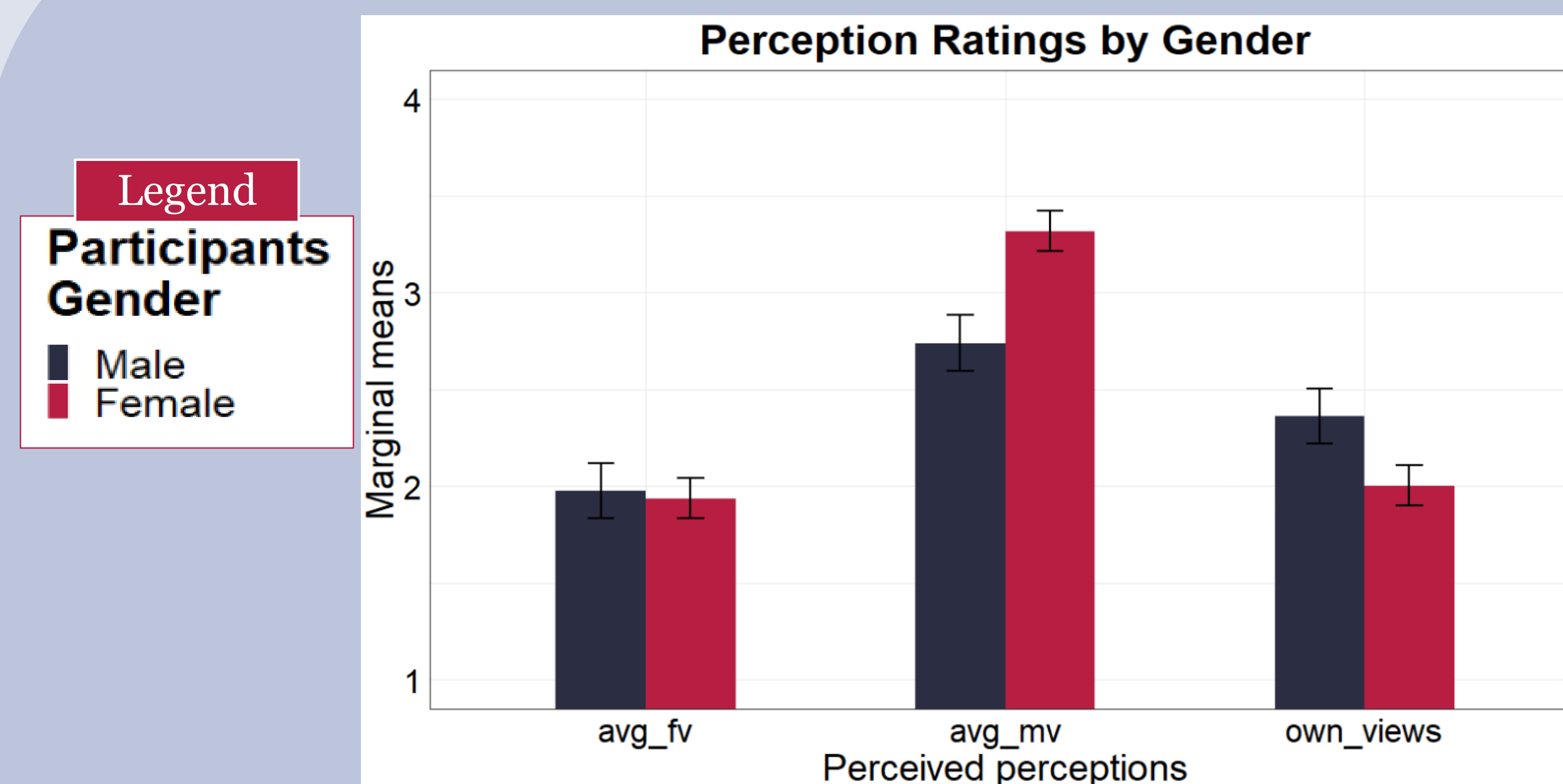


Figure 3: Perceptions for the sexist scenarios for male & female participants' own views, and average male & female views.

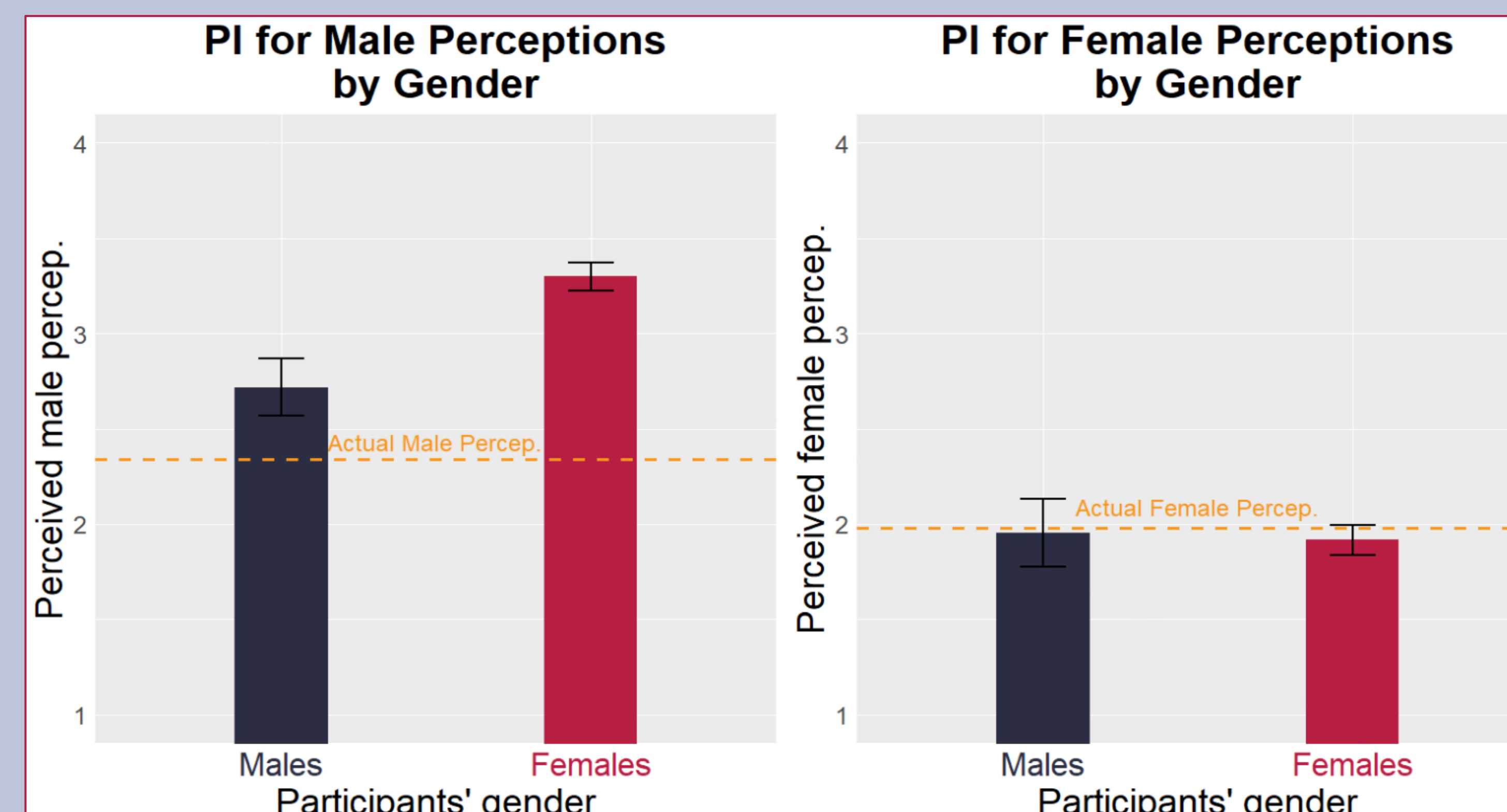


Figure 4: Pluralistic ignorance for participants' perceptions towards sexist attitudes.

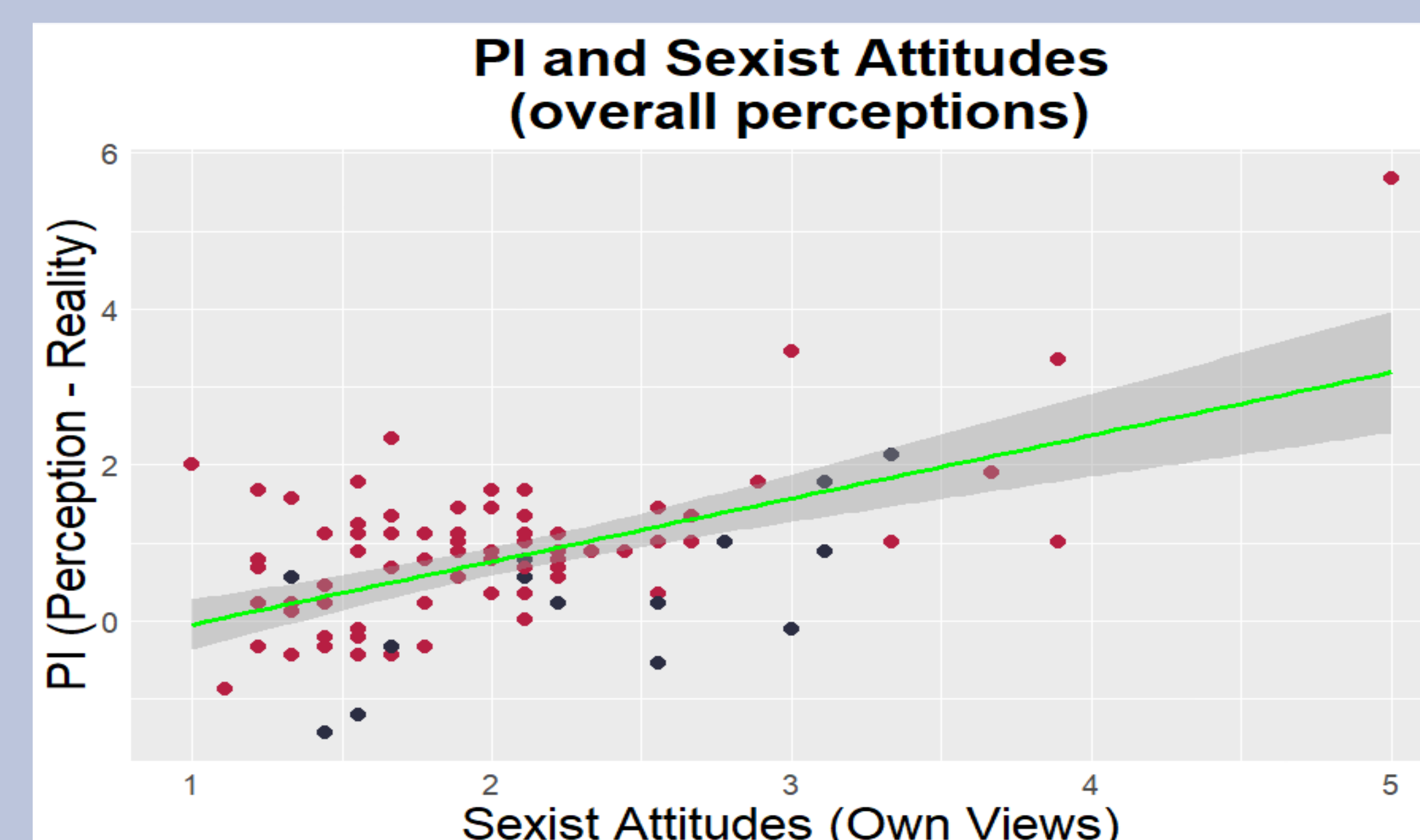


Figure 5: The relationship between pluralistic ignorance & sexist attitudes for overall perceptions.

Conclusion

- **In general**,
 - Both genders assume the average male & female have different attitudes towards gender bias ($F(2) = 10.25, p < .001$).
 - Women assume their views on gender bias are different from the average males' ($p < .001$).
 - Both males & females were accurate in estimating women's' perceptions on gender bias ($p = .885$ males; $p = .403$ females).
 - Both males & females failed to accurately estimate males' perceptions of on gender bias ($p = .026$ males; $p < .001$ females).
 - There is a strong to moderate correlation between PI & sexist attitudes for both genders ($r(86) = 0.56, p < .001$).
- **The results** are consistent with the hypothesis that individuals with PI demonstrate a greater tendency to exhibit sexist attitudes.
- **Misperception of societal attitudes** towards gender bias could exacerbate sexism in society.
- **Raising awareness** about societal norms surrounding gender bias may help reduce PI; and subsequently reducing sexist attitudes.

Discussion

- **Limitations**: include reliance on self-reported data, a small sample size, and a disproportional sample distribution.
- **Future research**: focus on addressing limitations of current study and investigate the relationship between long-term exhibition of sexist attitudes caused by PI and its potential link to normative conformity.

References

- ¹Munsch, C., Weaver, J., Bosson, J., & O'Connor, L. (2018). Everybody but Me: Pluralistic Ignorance and the Masculinity Contest. *Journal of Social Issues*, 74(3), 551-578.
- ²Sobotka, T. (2020). Not Your Average Joe: Pluralistic Ignorance, Status, and Modern Sexism. *Men and Masculinities*, 1097184.
- ³Van Grootel, S., Van Laar, C., Meeussen, L., Schmader, T., & Sczesny, S. (2018). Uncovering Pluralistic Ignorance to Change Men's Communal Self-descriptions, Attitudes, and Behavioral Intentions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1344.
- ⁴De Souza, L., & Schmader, T. (2021). The misjudgment of men: Does pluralistic ignorance inhibit allyship? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2021-04-19.