



Assessment of Distorted Thoughts About Women and Violence of Basque-speaking Secondary School Students

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 31 March 2016

Accepted 15 July 2016

Keywords:

Inventory of distorted thoughts

Basque Country

Adolescents

Validation

Sexism

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to assess distorted cognitions regarding women and violence in a sample of 2,919 Basque-speaking secondary school students (mean age = 14.72; *SD* = 1.51). To this end, the Inventory of Distorted Thoughts about Women and Violence (IDTWV) by Echeburúa and Fernández-Montalvo (1998) was validated. It was translated into Basque using the back translation method. The confirmatory factor analysis data show that the model with the best fit is made up by two factors and 21 items: beliefs about women (F1) and beliefs about the use of violence and abuse against women (F2). The IDTWV correlates with the ambivalent sexism scale (Glick & Fiske, 1996) and the sexual double standard scale (Caron, Davis, Halteman, & Stickle, 1993). Results indicate that, on the whole, girls are less sexist than boys. Also, adolescents tend to express increasingly less agreement with sexist beliefs the older they are, and finally, the social desirability bias was found to influence girls' responses, especially among the younger age groups. In sum, it can be concluded that the IDTWV adapted to the Basque language is a valid and reliable tool.

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Evaluación de pensamientos distorsionados sobre la mujer y la violencia de estudiantes vascoparlantes de enseñanzas medias

RESUMEN

El objetivo del estudio es evaluar las cogniciones distorsionadas hacia la mujer y la violencia en una muestra de 2.919 estudiantes vascoparlantes de enseñanzas medias (edad media = 14.72; *DT* = 1.51). Para ello se valida el Inventario de Pensamientos Distorsionados hacia la Mujer y la Violencia (IPDMV) de Echeburúa y Fernández-Montalvo (1998), traducido al euskera, siguiendo el método de traducción inversa. El análisis factorial confirmatorio demuestra que los datos se ajustan mejor a un modelo formado por dos factores y 21 ítems: creencias hacia la mujer (F1) y hacia el uso de la violencia y el maltrato hacia las mujeres (F2). El IPDMV correlaciona con las escalas de sexismo ambivalente (Glick y Fiske, 1996) y doble estándar sexual (Caron, Davis, Halteman, y Stickle, 1993). Los resultados apuntan a que, en general, son menos sexistas las mujeres que los hombres. Además, en la adolescencia existe una tendencia con la edad a mostrarse menos favorables hacia las creencias sexistas. Se comprueba que la deseabilidad social influye en las respuestas de las chicas más jóvenes. En definitiva, el IPDMV adaptado al euskera supone una herramienta válida y fiable.

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Palabras clave:

Inventario de pensamientos distorsionados

País Vasco

Adolescentes

Validación

Sexismo

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Introduction

Ambivalent sexism is considered one of the principal beliefs which contributes to maintaining inequality and perpetuating the imbalance of power between the sexes (Montañés, Megías, De Lemus, & Moya, 2015). It has a significant effect on women and is associated with a greater probability of becoming a victim of gender-based violence (Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2013). Numerous studies have shown the repercussion of sexism on women's lives and its association with the likelihood of them becoming victims of violence at some point (Nguyen et al., 2013). In Europe, one in 3 women over the age of 15 years suffers some form of physical or sexual abuse, and 43% are victims of psychological violence (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014).

Sexism comprises various different components (Díaz-Aguado, 2006): (a) a cognitive component, which consists of confusing existing social or psychological differences between men and women with sex-related biological differences, in the erroneous belief that the former arise automatically and inevitably as a result of the latter; (b) an affective component, which is rooted in a sexist means of constructing one's identity and which explains the relationship between masculine identity and the violence perpetrated by men, as well as, women's tendency to feel guilty and/or depressed, and (c) a behavioural component, which consists of the tendency to put sexist attitudes into practice through discrimination and violence.

The Inventory of Distorted Thoughts about Women and Violence (IDTWV) is a measurement instrument which assesses the cognitive component of sexism and violence as a problem-solving strategy. It was originally designed by Echeburúa and Fernández-Montalvo (1998, 2009) and Echeburúa, Amor, Sarasua, Zubizarreta, & Holgado-Tello (2016) for clinical practice, although without psychometric guarantees, as part of a cognitive-behavioural programme for treating abusers.

Two studies have since validated this instrument with Spanish sample groups. Firstly, Ferrer, Bosch, Ramis, Torres, and Navarro (2006) administered the IDTWV to 1,395 university students, after modifying the response system (from true-false to a 4-point Likert-type scale). These authors also eliminated 5 items from the original scale and grouped the remaining items into 4 dimensions (D1: belief in women's inferiority to men; D2: blaming the female victims of abuse; D3: acceptance of violence as a valid means of solving problems, and D4: minimising the problem of violence against women and exculpating the abuser), with a Cronbach's alpha of .84. The main limitation of this study was that the sample group was made up exclusively of university students, and almost two thirds were women. Recently, the inventory was validated once again (Loinaz, 2014) with 180 inmates convicted of intimate partner violence. Several items were eliminated due to either their low factor loadings, their scarce contribution to the consistency of the scale or the fact that their wording was confusing. The factor solution is similar to the one proposed by Ferrer et al. (2006), with an alpha of .76. This second study also had a number of limitations: the sample group was comprised exclusively of incarcerated abusers, with no control group, the social desirability bias was not controlled for and nor was the convergent validity established. The IDTWV is currently being used in a large number of studies with aggressors (Boira, López del Hoyo, Tomás-Aragónés, & Gaspar, 2013; Echeburúa, Sarasua, Zubizarreta, Amor, & De Corral, 2010; Fernández-Montalvo, Echaui, Martínez, & Azcárate, 2012; Rodríguez-Espartal & López-Zafra, 2013).

Interventions aiming to redress cognitive distortions are related to gender-based violence prevention in educational contexts, particularly during adolescence, since this is a crucial stage in the socialisation and identity construction process (Díaz-Aguado & Carvajal, 2011). Classroom-based prevention has proven effective at both a national and international level (Fox, Hale, & Gadd, 2014; Garaigordobil &

Martínez-Valderrey, 2014), precisely because of the changes induced on two fronts: gender stereotypes and justification of violence, which have been linked to suffering from or perpetrating gender-based violence (Anderson & Whiston, 2005; Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2011).

In the Basque Country (Spain), violence towards women is increasing, with the number of victims reporting cases of gender-based violence rising from 1,711 in 2002 to 3,732 in 2014 (Saiz de Murieta, Olaizola, & Arrillaga, 2014). In 2013, 36% of victims and 28% of aggressors in the Basque Country were aged between 15 and 30 years (Saiz de Murieta et al., 2014). Given this context, the severe lack of instruments with psychometric guarantees for assessing justification of violence and gender stereotypes among Basque-speaking adolescents is striking.

The aim of this present study was to assess distorted cognitions regarding women and violence among Basque-speaking adolescents. To this end, the psychometric properties of the Basque-language version of the IDTWV were validated in a sample of secondary school students.

Method

Participants

The sample group comprised 2,919 adolescents from 25 different secondary schools (13 public and 12 private ones) in the Basque Country, Spain (1,578 girls and 1,341 boys). All participants were aged between 12 and 18 (mean = 14.72; standard deviation [SD] = 1.51). Given that the total secondary school population (1st year of secondary school to the last year of six-form college) in the Basque Country is 142,975 (Eustat, 2015), and assuming that the population variance for the worst-case p is 50% (hence $q = 50\%$), then the permitted margin of error with a confidence interval of 95% of the sample is 1.80%.

A non-probabilistic, quota-based sampling technique was used. Participants were recruited from schools which agreed voluntarily to take part in the study. The statistical criterion used for the quotas was a proportional selection from each stratum (type of school, school year and sex). Between 15 and 25 students were randomly selected from each year group in each school.

Instruments

Inventory of Distorted Thoughts about Women and Violence

The IDTWV (Echeburúa & Fernández-Montalvo, 1998) comprises 29 items (13 about distorted views of women and 16 about violence) with a 4-point response scale ($\alpha = .84$, Ferrer et al., 2006; $\alpha = .76$, Loinaz, 2014). High scores indicate higher levels of distorted beliefs. The Basque version of the IDTWV was created by following the back translation method (Hambleton & Patsula, 1999).

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Expósito, Moya, & Glick, 1998; Goiburu, 2016) comprises 22 items with a 5-point response scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). High scores indicate a greater degree of ambivalent sexism. The inventory measures 2 types of sexism: hostile sexism (HS) (11 items, unidimensional), and benevolent sexism (BS) (11 items spread across 3 dimensions: protective paternalism, complementary gender differentiation and heterosexual intimacy). The internal consistency scores for the whole scale and the HS and BS sub-scales in the original version are .83, .80 and .77, and in the Spanish version .90, .89 and .86, respectively. In the Basque version, the Cronbach's alphas are also satisfactory (ASI = .85, HS = .83 and BS = .77). The composite reliability (omega coefficient) is .93 for HS, and .91 for BS, and the total average variance extracted (AVE) is .40 (Goiburu, 2016).

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