



Spanish adaptation of the Participatory Behaviors Scale (PBS)



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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to adapt the Participatory Behaviors Scale (PBS) and validate the results for use among the Spanish population. Using snowball sampling methodology, 501 individuals from all areas of Spain were selected to participate in the study. The Participatory Behaviors Scale (PBS) and questionnaires that measure a sense of community, belief in a just world and Machiavellianism were used to analyze the criterion validity of the adapted scale. A confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the items on the questionnaire fit a second-order model with four factors, which corresponded to the four dimensions proposed by the original authors, namely, disengagement, civil participation, formal political participation and activism. Additionally, it has been found that the scale is related to a sense of community, belief in a just world and Machiavellianism. In light of these results, we concluded that the questionnaire is methodologically valid and can be used by the scientific community to measure participatory behavior.

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Adaptación al castellano de la Escala de Comportamiento Participativo (PBS)

RESUMEN

El objetivo del estudio es adaptar y de obtener evidencias de validación al castellano de la Escala de Comportamiento Participativo (PBS). Los participantes fueron 501 individuos de todo el territorio español obtenidos mediante un muestreo de bola de nieve. La Escala de Comportamiento Participativo (PBS) y los cuestionarios de sentido de la comunidad, creencia en un mundo justo y maquiavelismo fueron utilizados para analizar la validez de criterio. El análisis factorial confirmatorio puso de manifiesto la existencia de un modelo de segundo orden con 4 factores, correspondientes a las 4 dimensiones propuestas por los autores originales del estudio (desvinculación, participación civil, participación política formal y activismo). Además, se halló que la escala se relacionaba con las medidas de sentido de la comunidad, creencia en el mundo justo y maquiavelismo. A la luz de los resultados, se concluye que el cuestionario es metodológicamente válido y que puede ser usado en la comunidad científica para medir comportamiento participativo.

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Introduction

Participation can be defined as taking part in an event of public interest (Talò & Mannarini, 2014). Political participation is generally referred to as an interest in political life (Rollero, Tartaglia, De

Piccoli, & Ceccarini, 2009). In addition to voting, political participation includes, for example, actions such as joining a political party or a non-governmental advocacy group, campaigning, and running as an electoral candidate.

In many cases, political participation has been measured by asking participants whether they voted in the last local and/or national elections (see, for example, Rollero et al., 2009) or by asking them to evaluate, through a single item, their level of involvement in community activities (see, for example, Liu & Besser, 2003). Other

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common measures include the political participation index (PPAR) of Davidson and Cotter (1989) and the scale developed by Peterson, Speer and Hughey (2006) that was used to assess civic involvement and participatory behaviors in community action activities. However, these scales do not include different aspects of political participation, according to the taxonomy suggested by Ekman and Amnå (2012).

These authors have developed a typology that intersects two forms of participation, manifest and latent, with two levels of political behavior, individual and collective. In their taxonomy, manifest political behaviors include all actions, either individual or collective, aimed at influencing government decisions and political outcomes, including aim-oriented, rational, observable and measurable actions. Even contact activities, such as writing politicians or officials to report or obtain intervention, are considered forms of formal political participation. At the collective level, a typical example of this category is membership in a political party, trade union or non-governmental organization (NGO). In addition to formal political participation, as they call it, the authors also included extra-parliamentary actions. In the literature, these behaviors are often identified as non-conventional, but Ekman and Amnå (2012) consider the term 'formal political participation' obsolete and have replaced it with the term 'activism' instead. In fact, some of the actions that were previously considered non-conventional, such as strikes and petitions, have become very common among citizens. Hence, the authors prefer the term 'extra-parliamentary' and distinguish between legal and illegal forms. The former include participation in demonstrations and strikes or militancy in feminist organizations and environmental groups, etc. all as examples of collective participation. At the individual level, actions of this type include signing petitions, distributing flyers and boycotting or buying certain products for ideological, ethical or environmental reasons. Other forms of extra-parliamentary actions, however, are illegal, such as violent manifestations, unauthorized demonstrations or riots triggered by ideological reasons, such as racism or extremism. Other examples include irruptions caused by environmentalists in fur stores or in laboratories that test on animals, attacks by Greenpeace on whaling ships, the Pussy Riot protest in Russia and even the hacker attacks by organized groups such as anonymous. An example of individual illegal forms of extra-parliamentary political participation is not paying for a subway ticket to protest against public transportation policy. Ekman and Amnå (2012) also include in their classification latent forms of political participation, labeled by them as 'civil participation', in which the psychological aspect represented by attention and interest in political and societal issues, what they call social involvement, corresponds to, and somehow precedes, the behavioral aspect, which may be referred to as 'disengagement'.

Based on this proposal, Talò and Mannarini (2014) recently developed the Participatory Behaviors Scale (PBS) to measure political participation. This scale includes all the aspects mentioned by Ekman and Amnå (2012): disengagement, civil participation, formal political participation and activism. The authors began with a 28-item baseline model from which they obtained a 16-item scale that maintained a 4:1 ratio between the observed and latent variables. Items were excluded either because of a non-significant factor loading, a low factor loading or low communalities or because they were transversal to other factors or redundant. Only the 16-item version showed good indices of fit.

Political participation is related to other social variables, as the reviewed literature suggests. For example, a sense of community and political participation are positively related, as found by a recent meta-analysis (Talò, Mannarini & Rochira, 2014). Additionally, belief in a just world is related to disaffection and abstention from voting (Echebarria, 2014). Finally, it has been determined

that Machiavellianism is a significant predictor of political participation (O'Connor & Morrison, 2001), and it has been shown that people who preferred a society with more possibilities of participation had lower scores on a Machiavellianism scale (Franco, 1980).

In Spain, there has been, to date, no Spanish-language adaptation of the scale. For this reason, the goal of this research is to obtain evidence of construct validity of a Spanish-language version of the PBS (Talò & Mannarini, 2014). To do so, we first conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to verify the factorial structure proposed by Talò and Mannarini (2014) and then established the psychometric criteria of the PBS to validate the use of this instrument in the Spanish-speaking scholarly community. It is important to note that when there are plausible hypotheses regarding the structure of a model, as in our case, experts recommend the use of confirmatory factor analysis rather than exploratory analysis (Bollen, 1989). We then determined whether any relationships exist between PBS and sense of community, belief in a just world and Machiavellianism.

Snowball sampling was used to complete the sample. Snowball sampling uses a small pool of initial informants, in our case, students from the Spanish Open University (UNED), to nominate, from their social networks, other participants (Atkinson & Flint, 2004). The reason behind this decision is that with snowball sampling, we can reach not only students but also participants from other social strata and with lower educational levels. Snowball sampling allows us to obtain a sample that is as heterogeneous as possible.

Method

Participants

The participants consisted of 501 individuals (56.5% female) aged between 18 and 80 years (mean = 38.62, SD = 12.54). All participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. With respect to education, 54.1% of the sample had a university degree and 25.3% were high school graduates. Regarding employment status, 51.5% were employed, 18.2% were students and 14.6% were unemployed.

Procedure

Information about the study was posted on the virtual courses taught by the researchers of this study wherein they requested participation of interested students from the Spanish Open University (UNED). The students in the final sample completed the questionnaires online. The students were then asked to recruit participants from among their acquaintances.

Instruments

The PBS (Talò & Mannarini, 2014) was adapted to Spanish using the translation/back-translation methodology, as stipulated by many authors (Gudmundsson, 2009), and the norms of the International Test Commission (Hambleton, 2005).

The first Spanish translation of the original scale was performed by one of the authors. This Spanish translation was independently reviewed by an additional evaluator who worked with the main translator to reach an agreed-upon translation of the items, especially those that posed the most difficulty from a semantic and/or grammatical standpoint. Subsequently, a bilingual Italian translator back-translated the agreed-upon Spanish-to-Italian translation with no knowledge of the original Italian scales to preserve the reliability of the back-translation. The scale translated into Italian and the original scale reached 100% grammatical agreement. Items are presented in Table 1.

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