

Psychosocial Intervention

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ISSN: 1132-0559

ISSN: 2173-4712

Colegio Oficial de Psicólogos de Madrid

Ramiro-Sánchez, Tamara; Ramiro, María Teresa;  
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Sexism in Adolescent Relationships: A Systematic Review  
Psychosocial Intervention, vol. 27, no. 3, 2018, pp. 123-132  
Colegio Oficial de Psicólogos de Madrid

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5093/pi2018a19>

Available in: <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=179857580002>

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## Sexism in Adolescent Relationships: A Systematic Review

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 16 July 2018

Accepted 21 August 2018

#### Keywords:

Sexism  
Relationships  
Adolescents  
Theoretical study  
Systematic review

### ABSTRACT

The aim of this theoretical study is to learn which cognitive, emotional, attitudinal, and behavioural variables involved in relationships are related to sexist attitudes by adolescents and how they relate to one another. After searching scientific articles published between 2005 and 2018 on PsycINFO, Psycodoc, PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science databases, 1,170 studies were obtained. After conducting the selection process, 20 were included in the review. The results of these studies show that adolescents who display attitudes that are more sexist have a more positive attitude towards intimate partner violence, greater sexual risk behaviours, greater attraction to sexist partners, greater support for the myth of idealized love and myth of love-abuse link, greater emotional dependence on the partner, and poorer quality in relationships, revealing gender-based differences in some of the mentioned variables. It is concluded that sexist attitudes are related to harmful forms of intimate interaction among teenagers.

### El sexismo en las relaciones de pareja adolescentes: una revisión sistemática

### RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio teórico es conocer qué variables cognitivas, emocionales, actitudinales y conductuales implicadas en las relaciones de pareja se relacionan con las actitudes sexistas por parte de los adolescentes, y cómo se relacionan éstas entre sí. Tras realizar una búsqueda de artículos científicos publicados entre 2005 y 2018 en las bases de datos PsycINFO, Psycodoc, PubMed, Scopus y Web of Science, se obtuvieron un total de 1,170 estudios de los cuales, tras llevar a cabo el proceso de selección, 20 fueron incluidos en la revisión. Los resultados de dichos estudios ponen de manifiesto que los adolescentes que presentan más actitudes sexistas tienen actitudes más positivas hacia la violencia en la pareja, mayores conductas de riesgo sexual, más atracción por parejas sexistas, mayor apoyo hacia el mito idealizado del amor y de vinculación amor-maltrato, mayor dependencia emocional en la pareja y peor calidad en las relaciones de pareja, encontrándose diferencias en función del género en algunas de las variables. Se concluye que el mantenimiento de actitudes sexistas se relaciona con formas perjudiciales de interacción íntima entre adolescentes.

Sexism has been conceptualized in different ways over time. However, there has been a tendency to restrict it to negative attitude towards women (Expósito, Moya, & Glick, 1998). Conceptualizations of sexism can be grouped into two categories: traditional and new forms of sexism.

More traditional conceptions consider sexism as “an attitude of prejudice or discriminatory behaviour based on the supposed inferiority or difference of women as a group” (Cameron, 1977, p. 340). Within this category, the term gender ideology or traditional sexual role could be introduced to designate attitudes that emphasize the difference in roles between both sexes (Moya, Expósito, & Padilla, 2006), as well as the concept of machismo, defined as a set of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that demonstrate the superiority of men

over women in various areas (Gissi, 1978). The hostile sexism, a term proposed by Glick and Fiske (1996), would be also included; its definition is divided into three dimensions: women's inferiority and weakness compared to men, women's relegation to roles of wife and homemaker, and sexual power that women possess that makes them dangerous for men.

On the other hand, most innovative concepts defining new forms of sexism that are expressed in a subtler way can be found. In this category, we can classify benevolent sexism, raised by Glick and Fiske (1996), as a set of attitudes towards women based on a stereotypical and limited view of women, but with a positive emotional tone for the perceiver. This positive emotional tone is attained by emphasizing men's protection of women, the complementarity of the

Cite this article as: Ramiro-Sánchez, T., Ramiro, M. T., Bermúdez, M. P., & Buela-Casal, G. (2018). Sexism in adolescent relationships: A systematic review. *Psychosocial Intervention*, 27, 123-132. <https://doi.org/10.5093/pi2018a19>

Funding: This study has been carried out with the support of a pre-doctoral contract of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport (FPU13/03841), awarded to the first author. Correspondence: [tramiro@ugr.es](mailto:tramiro@ugr.es) (T. Ramiro-Sánchez).

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qualities of women with those of men, and the heterosexual intimacy as a fundamental pillar to achieve true happiness in the couple. Benevolent sexism and hostile sexism, previously defined, make up ambivalent sexism, as well as the concepts of neosexism (Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & Joly, 1995) or modern sexism, covering beliefs as discrimination denial, antagonism to the demands made by women, and resentment about support policies women get (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995).

In other words, both conceptions of sexism share attitudes that emphasize the difference in roles between both sexes and the inferiority of women versus men, and differ in the way they are expressed, the new forms being subtler and undercovered (Rodríguez, Lameiras, Carrera, & Faílde, 2010). Other terms such as gender inequality (Jewkes, Levin, & Penn-Kekana, 2003) or power (Amaro & Raj, 2000) are used to emphasize gender inequality among couples. However, although they share characteristics with sexism, the fact that there is gender or power inequality within a couple does not necessarily imply that partners support sexist beliefs.

Numerous studies show the support for sexist attitudes by adolescents (Carrera-Fernández, Lameiras-Fernández, Rodríguez-Castro, & Vallejo-Medina, 2013; Chahín-Pinzón & Briñez, 2015; Soto et al., 2011) in different countries and cultures (Glick et al., 2000). In addition, there are studies that have shown that maintaining sexist attitudes affect interpersonal relations (Moya et al., 2006) relating to intimate partner violence (Boira, Carbajosa, & Méndez, 2016; Hébert, Blais, & Lavoie, 2017; Sánchez, Muñoz-Fernández, & Vega-Gea, 2017; Vega-Gea, Ortega-Ruiz, & Sánchez, 2016) or sexual risk behaviours (Choi, Bowleg, & Neilands, 2011; Hanson, McMahon, Griesse, & Kenyon, 2014) among adolescents, young people, and adults. Therefore, the study of sexism in adolescence is of the utmost importance for the subsequent development of romantic relationships.

According to the differential socialization theory, people acquire different gender identities involving cognitive, emotional, attitudinal and behavioural styles, and stereotypical rules of behaviour assigned to each sex (Walker & Barton, 1983). This socialization affects relationships and couples, since we learn what falling in love means, which feelings are appropriate, how a relationship should be, and how we should behave in one (Duque, 2006; Ferrer, Bosch, Navarro, Ramis, & García, 2008; Sanpedro, 2005). Therefore, as stated by some authors (Díaz-Aguado, 2002; Díaz-Aguado & Martínez, 2001), if gender identity is constructed in a sexist way, adolescents could identify themselves with the problems traditionally associated with male and female stereotypes – passivity, dependence, and submission, in the case of women, and control, toughness, and use of violence, in the case of men (Merino, Martínez, & Díaz-Aguado, 2010). So, maintaining sexist attitudes in adolescence may affect the behaviour of adolescents within relationships beginning to emerge at this stage of development (García-Vega, Rico, & Fernández, 2017; Sierra, Moyano, Vallejo-Medina, & Gómez-Berrocal, 2018).

Therefore, the overall objective of this systematic review or theoretical study (Montero & León, 2007) is to understand the cognitive, emotional, attitudinal, and behavioural variables involved in relationships which are related to sexism in adolescents, as well as the type of relationships that these variables have with each other. In order to do so, indications of Perestelo-Pérez (2013) were followed.

## Method

### Selection Criteria for Studies

Those studies meeting the following criteria were selected: (a) the relationship between sexism and cognitive, emotional, attitudinal, and behavioural variables involved in a heterosexual relationship was analysed, given that sexism implies an unequal relationship between men and women; (a1) sexism was

considered to be analysed when traditional and new conceptions were used, including sexism, ambivalent sexism, hostile sexism, gender or traditional sexual role ideology, machismo, benevolent sexism, neosexism, and modern sexism; (b) the sample was made up by adolescents with an age range between 10-19 years, following the United Nations definition of adolescence (UNICEF, 2011). Likewise, the origin of the sample (for example, secondary schools, colleges, or first-year university courses and equivalent, depending on the education system of each country) was taken into account when it could be deduced or it was declared that the largest percentage of the sample was made up by adolescents with an age range of between 10-19 years; (c) they were research articles published in scientific journals and peer reviewed; (d) the languages of publication were English, Spanish, or Portuguese; (e) years of publication were from 2005 to 2018; and (f) they were not theoretical studies or reviews.

### Search Strategies and Information Sources

The literature search was conducted until June 2018 in the following primary databases (Perestelo-Pérez, 2013): PsycINFO, Psycodoc, PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science. The following search strategy was used: <<(sexism\* OR sexist\* OR neosexism\* OR machismo\* OR “ideología\* de género” OR “ideología\* de rol sexual” OR “gender ideolog\*” OR “sexual role ideolog\*” OR “ideología\* de gênero” OR “ideología\* de papéis sexuais”) AND (adolescent\* OR teen\*) >>, except for Psycodoc database, in which both the boolean operators (OR by O and AND by Y) and the truncation operator (\* by \$) were replaced, maintaining the same descriptors. These were inserted into the search fields for title, abstract, and keywords. A secondary search was also carried out by reviewing the bibliographic references of the articles that were included. Subsequently, taking into account the inclusion criteria, the following limitations were established: (a) year of publication: from 2005 to 2018; (b) language of publication: English, Spanish, and Portuguese; and (c) type of document/source publication: scientific journal/article, as the database would allow.

### Selection Process for Included Studies

Abstracts of studies resulting from the search were analysed in order to verify compliance with the inclusion criteria, as well as the full text when the summary could not provide all required information.

### Data Analysis and Synthesis

Once the articles meeting the inclusion criteria were selected, the following information for each of them was extracted:

- Author(s) and year of publication.
- Research methodology, following the classification of Montero and León (2007).
- Characteristics of the sample: number of participants, gender, age (range, average, and standard deviation, as the study would report), and background of the sample (origin of the sample and country).
- Assessment instrument for sexism. The instrument used was collected, as well as the reliability of this, if it was reported.
- Cognitive, emotional, attitudinal, and behavioural variables involved in a relationship associated with sexism. Upon analysing the results obtained, they were grouped in seven thematic areas: intimate partner violence, relationship experience (past and present experiences regarding relationships), sexual behaviour, attraction to sexist partners, myths towards love, emotional dependence on the partner, and engagement quality.

- Main results. Relations between sexism and cognitive, emotional, attitudinal and behavioural variables involved in a relationship were highlighted.

## Studies Included

A total of 1,170 articles were obtained, of which 491 were duplicates and 659 were discarded for not meeting the inclusion criteria. The main reasons for exclusion were (by order of frequency): age range of participants, missing analysis of the relationship between sexism and a variable involved in the heterosexual relationship, and the definition of the sexism variable. Thus, 20 articles, which were accordingly reviewed, were selected.

## Characteristics of the Studies

According to the research methodology, 15 (75%) were ex post facto studies, two (10%) were experimental studies, two (10%) were instrumental studies, and one (5%) was a quasi-experimental study. Regarding the country of origin of the sample of adolescents, they were of Spanish origin in 13 studies (65%), they were American in four studies (20%), two studies (10%) shared samples from Bolivia and Ecuador and from Spain, Chile and Colombia, respectively, and Chinese in one study (5%). Regarding gender, 17 studies (85%) included women and men, two (10%) included only men, and one (5%) included only women.

On the other hand, versions and adaptations of five assessment instruments for sexism were used in the studies included: the

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; [Glick & Fiske, 1996](#)), the Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS; [Spence & Helmreich, 1972](#)), the Neosexism Scale ([Tougas et al., 1995](#)), the Sex Role Egalitarian Scale ([King & King, 1990](#)), and the Sexism Detection Scale (DSA; [Recio, Cuadrado, & Ramos, 2007](#)).

Finally, with regard to the thematic areas of the cognitive, emotional, attitudinal, and behavioural variables involved in a relationship associated with sexism, 11 studies were found to include variables related to intimate partner violence, 4 studies were related to relationship experience, 3 studies related to sexual behaviour, and 1 study was concerned with each of the following areas: attraction to sexist partners, myths towards love, emotional dependence on the partner, and engagement quality. The number of studies per thematic area exceeds the 20 studies included since two studies ([Pradas & Perles, 2012](#); [Viejo, Ortega-Ruiz, & Sánchez, 2015](#)) can be classified in more than one thematic area.

[Table 1](#) shows the main features and results collected of the studies included in this theoretical study, organized according to the thematic areas.

## Intimate Partner Violence

The studies reviewed relating sexism with intimate partner violence in adolescent population show conflicting results. Thus, whereas in the study of [Allen, Swan, and Raghavan \(2009\)](#) women with more benevolent sexism report suffering less violence and benevolent sexist men report committing less violence against women; other studies do not find associations with respect to

**Table 1.** Main Features and Results of Studies Analysing the Links Between Sexism and Variables Involved in An Adolescent Relationship, Depending on the Thematic Area (continued)

Thematic area	Author/s and year	Methodology	Sample	Assessment instrument	Main results
Intimate partner violence	<a href="#">Allen, Swan, and Raghavan (2009)</a>	Ex post facto	N = 202 men and women. Range = 18-19 years old. First year university students, predominantly Hispanics (USA).	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; <a href="#">Glick &amp; Fiske, 1996</a> ). Subscale HS $\alpha = .75$ Subscale BS $\alpha = .60$	Significant and negative association between women's BS and the victimization of these. Significant and negative association between men's BS and the perpetration of violence against women. A significant correlation between men's HS and the perpetration of violence against women cannot be found.
	<a href="#">Anaconda, Cruz, Jiménez, and Guajardo (2017)</a>	Ex post facto	N = 815 men and women. Range = 14-18 years old. M = 15.77 years old (SD = 1.21) Secondary Education students. (Spain, Chile and Colombia).	Sexism Detection Scale (DSA; <a href="#">Recio et al., 2007</a> ). Scale AS $\alpha = .93$ Subscale HS $\alpha = .92$ Subscale BS $\alpha = .86$	Positive associations between HS and the frequency of three types of aggressions (psychological, mild physical and severe physical) both perpetrated and suffered, except in the psychological aggressions suffered. BS is only associated with the frequency of mild psychological and physical aggressions perpetrated. In women, only the HS is associated with the severe physical aggressions perpetrated, whereas the BS with the mild physical perpetrated. In males, HS is associated with mild psychological and physical aggressions, whereas SB is associated with psychological ones, both perpetrated and suffered.
	<a href="#">Fernández-Fuertes, Carcedo, Orgaz, and Fuertes (2018)</a>	Ex post facto	N = 1,242 men and women. Range = 15-19 years old. M = 17.03 years old (SD = 0.96) Students of Secondary Education and Professional Training (Spain)	Spanish version of the Ambivalent Sexism Scale ( <a href="#">Expósito et al., 1998</a> ). Subscale HS $\alpha = .86$ Subscale BS $\alpha = .75$	The HS is a significant predictor of the perpetration of sexual violence but not the BS. The HS and the BS were not predictors of the victimization of sexual violence.

**Table 1.** Main Features and Results of Studies Analysing the Links Between Sexism and Variables Involved in An Adolescent Relationship, Depending on the Thematic Area (continuation)

Thematic area	Author/s and year	Methodology	Sample	Assessment instrument	Main results
Intimate partner violence	Garaigordobil and Aliri (2013)	Ex post facto	N = 1,455 men and women. Range = 11-17 years old Secondary Education students. (Spain)	- Ambivalent Sexism Inventory for Adolescents (ISA; De Lemus, Castillo, Moya, Padilla, & Ryan, 2008). Scale AS $\alpha = .86$ - Spanish version of the Neosexism scale (Moya & Expósito, 2001). Scale NS $\alpha = .63$	Significant positive correlations between all types of sexism (HS, BS, AS, NS) and justification of domestic violence were obtained in men and women. Adolescents' HS, BS and NS were predictive variables for justification of domestic violence.
	Lee, Begun, DePrince, and Chu (2016)	Ex post facto	N = 79 women exposed to situations of violence in childhood. Range = 13-20 years old M = 16.08 years old (SD = 1.52) Child Welfare System (USA)	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Scale AS $\alpha = .68$	The HS of women who have been exposed to situations of violence in childhood is associated with the acceptance of violence in the couple, but not the BS.
	Pazos, Oliva, and Hernando (2014)	Ex post facto	N = 716 men and women. Range = 14-20 years old M = 17.39 years old (SD = 2.25) Secondary Education students, students from last year of university, training cycles and first year of university. (Spain)	Sexism Detection Scale (DSA, Recio et al., 2007). Subscale HS $\alpha = .94$ Subscale BS $\alpha = .85$	Significant positive correlations between sexism and committed violence and all its subdomains (sexual, relational, verbal-emotional, physical and threats) were observed in men. The 'sexism' variable only correlated positively and significantly with the relational violence subdimension in women. Sexism was a significant predictor in committed violence in both genders.
	Pozo, Martos, and Alonso (2010)	Ex post facto	N = 962 men and women. Range = 14-18 years old M = 15.44 years old (SD = 1.01). Students from seven Secondary centers and a fine arts center. (Spain)	- Spanish version of the Ambivalent Sexism Scale. (Expósito et al., 1998) Subscale HS $\alpha = .86$ Subscale BS $\alpha = .83$ - Spanish version of the Sex Role Egalitarian Scale (King & King, 1990). $\alpha = .64$	A more traditional sexual role ideology predicts greater acceptance of the use of physical violence by men against women within the couple in both women and men. Unlike men, HS also appears as a factor explaining the acceptance of the use of physical violence against women in the case of women.
	Reyes, Foshee, Niolon, Reidy, and Hall (2016)	Ex post facto Longitudinal	N = 577 men M = 13.90 years old (SD = 0.81) Secondary Education students. (USA)	Attitudes toward Women Scale for Adolescents (AWSA; Galambos, Petersen, Richards, & Gitelson, 1985). $\alpha = .70$	Positive association between traditional gender roles and the perpetration of physical violence towards their partners. Traditional gender role attitudes were associated with an increased risk of perpetration of dating violence 18 months later.
	Rodríguez-Domínguez, Durán-Segura, and Martínez-Pecino (2017)	Ex post facto	N = 223 men Range = 13 y 20 years old. M = 15.88 years old (SD = 1.28) Secondary Education students. (Spain)	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory for Adolescents (ISA; De Lemus et al., 2008). Scale AS $\alpha = .89$ Subscale HS $\alpha = .80$ Subscale BS $\alpha = .76$	Positive and significant association between HS and the perpetration of male cyber-aggression towards their female partners /ex-partners. There is no association between BS and cyber-aggression perpetration.
	Shen, Chiu, and Gao (2012)	Ex post facto	N = 976 men and women. Range = 13-20 years old M = 15.90 years old Secondary Education students. (China)	Chinese version for adolescents of Attitudes towards Women Scale (AWSA; Spence & Helmreich, 1972). $\alpha = .78$	Men and women with traditional beliefs of gender roles have greater justification of violence, and men more perpetration of violence. There are no positive associations with the victimization of violence in the couple. Male support for traditional gender roles predicts the perpetration of male sexual violence against women, but not physical violence. In women there is no association between traditional gender roles and perpetration and victimization of violence.



**Table 1.** Main Features and Results of Studies Analysing the Links Between Sexism and Variables Involved in An Adolescent Relationship, Depending on the Thematic Area (continuation)

Thematic area	Author/s and year	Methodology	Sample	Assessment instrument	Main results
Relationship experience	De Lemus et al. (2008)	Instrumental	$N_1 = 397$ men and women. $N_2 = 419$ men and women. $M_1 = 14.18$ years old ( $SD = 3.77$ ), $M_2 = 14.88$ years old ( $SD = 2.91$ ). Students from two high schools. (Spain)	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory for Adolescents (ISA; De Lemus et al., 2008). Scale AS $\alpha = .81$ Subscale HS $\alpha = .84$ Subscale BS $\alpha = .77$	In the case of women, having been in love has a significant positive relation with all levels of sexism (AS, BS and HS) in the two samples. Having a relationship currently has a significant link with AS in sample 1 and BS in the sample 2. In the case of men, only the having a relationship currently variable maintains a significant relation with AS in sample 1.
	De Lemus, Moya, and Glick (2010)	Ex post facto	$N = 1,447$ men and women. Range = 12-19 years old Students from five high schools. (Spain)	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory for Adolescents (ISA; De Lemus et al., 2008). Subscale HS $\alpha = .83$ Subscale BS $\alpha = .76$	In the case of women, greater relationship experience is associated with higher levels of HS and BS, whereas it is only associated with higher levels of BS in the case of men. Greater relationship experience predicted strong support for BS in men. In addition, it has been found that greater experience in the relationship predicts higher scores on HS only in the younger age group (12-14 years old) but not in the other two groups (14-16 and 16-19).
	Montañés, Megías, De Lemus, and Moya (2015)	Experimental	$N = 111$ men and women. Range = 12-19 years old $M = 14.64$ years old ( $SD = 1.54$ ) Students from a school (Spain)	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory for Adolescents (ISA; De Lemus et al., 2008). Subscale HS $\alpha = .87$ Subscale BS $\alpha = .82$	In the experimental group (who was asked by this current and past relationship experience before filling the sexism questionnaire), informed sexism is greater in the controlled group both in men (BS and HS), and women (BS) (who was not asked about their present and past relationship experience before filling the sexism questionnaire, but later).
Sexual behavior	De Meyer et al. (2014)	Ex post facto	$N = 5,913$ men and women. Range = 14-18 years old. $M = 15.76$ years old Students from 26 high schools. (Bolivia and Ecuador)	Gender Equality Subscale of the Spanish version of the Attitudes toward Women Scale for Adolescents (AWSA; Jaruseviciene et al., 2014). $\alpha = .70$	Sexually active adolescents with a greater traditional gender ideology report less use of contraceptives, more negative experiences in sexual relations, and consider the communication about sex in couple harder compared to those with a more egalitarian gender ideology. In the group of adolescents without sexual experience, traditional gender ideology is associated with more negative thoughts related to sexual experiences, consider more necessary to have sexual relations to keep a relationship, and with difficult communication about sex with their partner, compared to those with a more egalitarian gender ideology.
	Grose, Grabe, and Kohfeldt (2014)	Quasi-experimental	$N = 95$ men and women Range = 12.66-15.48 years old. Students from a high school (USA).	Attitudes toward Women Scale for Adolescents (AWSA; Galambos et al., 1985).	Higher level of traditional gender ideology of adolescents is associated with riskier beliefs about contraceptives.
	Ramiro-Sánchez, Ramiro, Bermúdez, and Buela-Casal (2018b)	Ex post facto	$N = 2,703$ men and women. Range = 14-20 years old $M = 15.89$ years old ( $SD = 1.29$ ) Secondary Education students. (Spain)	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory for Adolescents (ISA; De Lemus et al., 2008). Scale SA $\alpha = .88$ Subscale HS $\alpha = .83$ Subscale BS $\alpha = .81$	Sexual experience (coital and non-coital) is linked with greater adherence to hostile and benevolent sexist beliefs in males. In women, no differences were found in sexual experience and sexist beliefs. In males, a higher BS is associated to vaginal sex initiation at an earlier age, whereas a higher HS with a lower proportion in condom use. In women, a greater HS is linked with a greater number of sexual partners.

**Table 1.** Main Features and Results of Studies Analysing the Links Between Sexism and Variables Involved in An Adolescent Relationship, Depending on the Thematic Area (continuation)

Thematic area	Author/s and year	Methodology	Sample	Assessment instrument	Main results
Attraction to sexist partners	Montañés, De Lemus, Moya, Bohner, and Megías (2013)	Experimental	N = 262 men and women. Range = 12-17 years old M = 15.29 years old (SD = 1.23) Students from a high school. (Spain)	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory for Adolescents (ISA; De Lemus et al., 2008). Subscale HS $\alpha = .86$ Subscale BS $\alpha = .82$	In the case of men and women, high scores in BS predict significantly positive attraction to partners with high BS but not low BS. In the group of men, their HS ideology positively and significantly predicted attraction to partners with high HS, but not HS low. In the group of women, this link (greater hostile ideology - greater attraction to men with high HS) was not significant.
Myths towards love	Rodríguez, Lameiras, Carrera, and Vallejo (2013)	Instrumental	N = 800 men and women. Range = 14-23 years M = 15.98 years old (SD = 1.53) Third and fourth year students from high schools (Spain).	Reduced Spanish version of the Ambivalent Sexism Scale (ASI; Rodríguez, Lameiras, & Carrera, 2009). Subscale HS $\alpha = .81$ Subscale BS $\alpha = .76$	Adolescents' BS is moderately associated with the myth of idealized love whereas HS is associated to a lesser extent. Adolescents' HS obtains a higher correlation compared to BS with the myth of love-abuse link.
Emotional dependence on the partner/Intimate partner violence	Pradas and Perles (2012)	Ex post facto	N = 608 men and women. Range = 14-19 years old M = 16.55 years old (SD = 1.40) Secondary education students, students from last year of university, training cycles and first year of university (Spain).	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory for Adolescents (ISA; De Lemus et al., 2008).	A positive association between sexism and emotional dependence on the partner is observed. Sexism predicts the use of resolution strategies of self-violent conflicts within the couple.
Engagement quality/Relationship experience	Viejo et al. (2015)	Ex post facto	N = 3,258 men and women. Range = 15-21 years old Students from 28 high schools and 20 from last years of high school (Spain).	Sexism Detection Scale (DSA; Recio et al., 2007).	Adolescents with higher levels of sexism reported poorer quality in engagement relationships. In the case of men, the groups with greater relationship experience (with current intimate partner or one in the past) have higher levels of HS than the group with less relationship experience (who have never had an intimate partner), but there are no differences in BS. In the case of women, the groups with greater relationship experience had more BS than the group with less relationship experience, with no differences in HS.

Note. AS = ambivalent sexism; BS = benevolent sexism; HS = hostile sexism; NS = neosexism;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha.

benevolent sexism and the perpetration and victimization of sexual violence (Fernández-Fuertes, Carcedo, Orgaz, & Fuertes, 2018) or the perpetration of cyber-aggression (Rodríguez-Domínguez, Durán-Segura, & Martínez-Pecino, 2017). However, other studies show that both more traditional and benevolent sexism are related to a further justification of domestic violence (Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2013; Shen, Chiu, & Gao, 2012), greater acceptance of the use of physical violence against women by men in relationships (Lee, Begun, DePrince, & Chu, 2016; Pozo, Martos, & Alonso, 2010), and greater violence committed (Fernández-Fuertes et al., 2018; Pazos, Oliva, & Hernando, 2014; Reyes, Foshee, Niolon, Reidy, & Hall, 2016) and suffered (Anaconda, Cruz, Jiménez, & Guajardo, 2017) in couples. In addition, more traditional sexism predicts greater use of violent strategies of conflict resolution within the couple (Pradas & Perles, 2012) and the perpetration of cyber-aggression towards women by men (Rodríguez-Domínguez et al., 2017). Regarding gender differences, there are also contradictory results. The research by Pazos et al. (2014) found that high levels of sexism are associated with greater sexual, relational, verbal-emotional, and physical violence threats in men, whereas it is only associated with greater relational violence in women. However, the study by Anaconda et al. (2017) shows that in women only hostile sexism is associated with severe physical aggressions perpetrated, whereas benevolent sexism is associated with perpetrated mild

physical violence, and in males hostile sexism is associated with mild psychological and physical aggressions, whereas benevolent sexism is linked to both perpetrated and suffered psychological aggression. In addition, in other studies, such as Shen et al.'s (2012), there are no associations between traditional gender roles and perpetration and victimization of violence in women, whereas they predict sexual violence but not physical violence in men.

### Relationship Experience

Regarding the relationship experience of adolescents and sexism, the results of the studies are also contradictory (De Lemus, Castillo, Moya, Padilla, & Ryan, 2008). In relation to women, a study found that greater relationship experience predicts higher levels of benevolent sexism (Montañés, Megías, De Lemus, & Moya, 2015), whereas another study shows that, although it is associated with higher levels of both types of sexism, only predicts higher levels of hostile sexism (De Lemus, Moya, & Glick, 2010). Finally, another study only found positive associations between relationship experience and benevolent sexism (Viejo et al., 2015). With regard to men, whereas a study found out that greater relationship experience predicts higher levels of both types of sexism (Montañés et al., 2015), another one indicates only prediction for benevolent sexism,

and only prediction for hostile sexism when this relationship is mediated by age, only in adolescents from 12 to 14 years of age (De Lemus et al., 2010). On the contrary, Viejo et al. (2015) found that greater relationship experience is associated with greater hostile sexism.

### Sexual Behaviour

With regards to sexual behaviour and sexism in adolescents, based on the results of the reviewed studies, there is a positive association between traditional gender ideology and beliefs about the use of contraceptives that pose a greater risk, such as lesser belief in easy access to contraceptive methods (Grose, Grabe, & Kohfeldt, 2014). Likewise, another study reveals that men with sexual experience (coital/non-coital) demonstrate greater sexist beliefs (hostile and benevolent), compared to those without sexual experience. This difference cannot be found in women (Ramiro-Sánchez, Ramiro, Bermúdez, & Buela-Casal, 2018b). Furthermore, results obtained by De Meyer et al. (2014) indicate that in sexually active adolescents traditional gender ideology is associated with a reduced use of contraceptives, more negative sexual experiences and more difficult communication among partners about sex, compared to those who have a more egalitarian gender ideology. In adolescents without sexual experience, traditional gender ideology is associated with more negative feelings towards sexual experiences, a greater belief that it is necessary to have sexual intercourse to maintain a relationship and more difficult communication among partners about sex, compared to those who have a more egalitarian gender ideology. With regard to gender differences, the study conducted by Ramiro-Sánchez et al. (2018b) demonstrates that in men greater benevolent sexism is associated with vaginal sex initiation at an earlier age and greater hostile sexism is linked to a lesser proportion of condom use. By contrast, benevolent sexism is only associated with a greater number of sexual partners in women.

### Attraction to Sexist Partners

The results regarding the relationship between sexism and attraction to sexist partners reveal that adolescents with higher benevolent sexist beliefs report greater attraction to partners who are benevolent sexists. In terms of gender, hostile sexist men are attracted to women with hostile sexist beliefs, whereas this is not found in women (Montañés, De Lemus, Moya, Bohner, & Megías, 2013).

### Myths towards Love

Regarding the link between sexism and myths towards love, a positive association between benevolent sexism of adolescents and support of the idealized myth of love is shown in the study by Rodríguez et al. (2013), whereas hostile sexism is associated to a lesser extent. Regarding the myth of love-abuse link, hostile sexism is far more associated with it than benevolent sexism.

### Emotional Dependence on the Partner

Regarding sexism and emotional dependence on the partner in the adolescent population, adolescents with higher levels of sexism show more emotional dependence on their partners (Pradas & Perles, 2012).

### Engagement Quality

Regarding links between sexism and engagement quality in adolescents, stronger support for sexist attitudes is associated with

poorer quality in relationships according to the study by Viejo et al. (2015), which means more conflicts, more power imbalance, and more transgressive behaviour within the couple.

## Discussion

First of all, the small number of studies published between 2005 and 2018 in scientific journals analysing the relationship between sexism and cognitive, emotional, attitudinal, and behavioural variables involved in adolescent relationships should be noted; only 20 articles were found. Sexist attitudes were linked to major social problems, such as intimate partner violence (Bringas-Molleda et al., 2017; García-Díaz et al., 2016; Herrera, Herrera, & Expósito, 2018; López-Cepero, Rodríguez-Franco, Rodríguez-Díaz, & Bringas, 2013; López-Ossorio et al., 2018; Moyano, Monge, & Sierra, 2017) or risky sexual behaviours (Kocken, Van-Dorst, & Schaalma, 2006; Nanda, Schuler, & Lenzi, 2013) in adult population. Therefore, it is contradictory to find little research analysing these relationships in adolescent population, since adolescence is a time when gender identities (Walker & Barton, 1983) that influence affective and love relationships begin to emerge (Duque, 2006; Sanpedro, 2005) and when the first sexual intercourse takes place (Ramiro-Sánchez, Ramiro, Bermúdez, & Buela-Casal, 2018a; Teva, Bermúdez, Ramiro, & Ramiro-Sánchez, 2013).

With regard to the characteristics of the studies included in the review, it is noted that the majority (75%) used an ex post facto methodology. This may be due to the fact that the variables studied are difficult to manipulate but, in line with other experimental studies (Montañés et al., 2013; Montañés et al., 2015), it is recommended for experimental designs to be considered in future studies, making it possible to draw causal conclusions. Secondly, regarding the adolescent samples' countries, Spain is the origin in 65% of the studies. Therefore, the results obtained in the studies included in this review have to be taken with caution at the time of generalising results. However, this finding also highlights the significant interest of Spanish researchers in a topic that, although controversial, is of great relevance to the field of romantic relationships among adolescents.

Regarding links found between sexism and intimate partner violence in adolescent population, it is shown in most of the studies reviewed that both more traditional and more benevolent sexism predict further justification of domestic violence (Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2013; Shen et al., 2012), greater acceptance of male use of physical violence against women in relationships (Lee et al., 2016; Pozo et al., 2010), and greater violence committed (Fernández-Fuertes et al., 2018; Pazos et al., 2014; Reyes et al., 2016) and suffered (Anaconda et al., 2017) in couples. Although the magnitude of the relationship between sexism and gender violence is small (see Anaconda et al., 2017; Fernández-Fuertes et al., 2018; Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2013; Lee et al., 2016; Pazos et al., 2014; Pozo et al., 2010; Reyes et al., 2016; Rodríguez-Domínguez et al., 2017; Shen et al., 2012), these data suggest that attitudes emphasizing the difference in roles between genders and the inferiority of women over men, expressed both in a more direct and subtle manner, are associated with more positive attitudes towards violence against women within the couple and the perpetration of violence against the partner among adolescents. However, the results found by Allen et al. (2009), in which benevolent sexism would act as a protector of violence being suffered by women and violence committed by men, as well as the null relationship between benevolent sexism and perpetration and victimization of sexual violence or perpetration of cyber-aggression found in other studies (Fernández-Fuertes et al., 2018; Rodríguez-Domínguez et al., 2017), suggest that the different effects that more traditional and more benevolent sexism can have on variables related to intimate partner violence in adolescent should be further investigated. On the other hand, it is worth highlighting the contradictory results regarding gender differences in the type of violence in the adolescent



population. Pazos et al. (2014) reveal that high levels of sexism are associated in men with greater sexual, relational, verbal, emotional, and physical violence and threats, whereas it is only associated with greater relational violence in women. Furthermore, Anaconda et al. (2017) find that only hostile sexism is associated in women with serious physical assaults carried out, while benevolent sexism is associated with minor assaults carried out and hostile sexism is associated in men with minor psychological and physical assaults carried out, while benevolent sexism is associated with both carried out and suffered physiological assaults. Shen et al. (2012) do not find associations between traditional gender roles and perpetration and victimization of violence in women, whereas they predict sexual violence but not physical violence in men. For this reason, it would be interesting to investigate how the two types of sexism are related to different types of violence in men and women, taking into account cultural aspects of the different countries. In this way, useful information could be obtained for the development of prevention and intervention programs for different types of intimate partner violence (Ferrer-Pérez, Ferreiro-Basurto, Navarro-Guzmán, & Bosch-Fiol, 2016; Martínez-Catena & Redondo, 2017; Sjödin, Wallinius, Billstedt, Hofvander, & Nilsson, 2017).

As for the relationship experience as a predictor of sexism in adolescents, although results are contradictory regarding types of sexism that are predicted in both men and women, the studies reviewed found that a greater relationship experience predicts higher sexist attitudes (De Lemus et al., 2010; Montañés et al., 2015). These results show the importance early experiences in intimate relationships have in the development of sexist attitudes. Therefore, as indicated by authors (Montañés et al., 2015), the approach on sexism in adolescents is particularly important before they start their first intimate relationships.

Despite the fact that very few of the studies reviewed analyse the relationship between sexual behaviour and sexism in adolescents, data suggest that greater levels of sexism are associated with more sexual risk behaviours and beliefs, such as a reduced use of contraceptives (De Meyer et al., 2014), a lesser belief in easy access to contraceptive methods (Grose et al., 2014), vaginal sex initiation at an earlier age, a lower proportion in the use of condoms, and a higher number of sexual partners in women, finding gender-based differences (Ramiro-Sánchez et al., 2018b). It would therefore be important to introduce specific intervention against sexism with sexual education or prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) programs. Some studies incorporating sexism in sex education programs in adolescents (Grose et al., 2014) have noted the positive effects that the incorporation of intervention on sexism has on sexual health.

The results of the studies reviewed indicate that more sexist adolescents are attracted to more sexist partner profiles (Montañés et al., 2013), believe in the durability of romantic and passionate love over time or that love is so powerful that it serves to overcome any obstacles that may arise in a relationship (myth of idealized love), and accept and tolerate violent behaviour in the relationship (myth of love-abuse link) (Rodríguez et al., 2013). They are also more emotionally dependent on their partners (Pradas & Perles, 2012) and their romantic relationships are of worse quality (Viejo et al., 2015). These findings could be showing the importance of sexist attitudes and, thus, the differentiation of gender roles between both sexes in harmful forms of intimate interaction among adolescents, as suggested in other studies with young people and adults (Garrido-Macías, Valor-Segura, & Expósito, 2017; Martín-Fernández et al., 2018; Martínez-Catena & Redondo, 2017; Moral, García, Cuetos, & Sirvent, 2017; Novo, Herbón, & Amado, 2016). Likewise, the fact that sexist adolescents are attracted to sexist partners, as indicated by some authors (Montañés et al., 2013), could be the reason for the persistence of sexist attitudes among adolescents.

## Limitations and Future Research Areas

The limitation of this theoretical study is the fact that the search is limited to the years 2005 to 2018, in order to specify a recent time interval, given the cultural changes that could affect studies on sexism conducted during a different time period (Connor, Glick, & Fiske, 2016). This also means that anything published from 2018 cannot be included. For this reason, as a future line of research, it would be advisable to carry out regular systematic reviews to enable updates on the matter.

## Practical Implications

Regarding the practical implications of this theoretical study, firstly, it is recommended that further research be carried out on how sexist attitudes influence the relationships of adolescents, using an experimental methodology, thus making it possible to draw causal conclusions. Secondly, the results of the studies in this review suggest the need to prevent and intervene in reducing sexist attitudes in adolescent populations. The aim of these interventions would be to prevent harmful forms of intimate interaction among adolescents based on the differentiation of roles (Fernández, Quiroga, Escorial, & Privado, 2016) and the inferiority of women compared to men, highlighting the importance of intervention in positive development in adolescent age (Eichas, Kurtines, Rinaldi, & Farr, 2018). In addition, it is recommended that the existing gender differences are taken into account in order to develop gender-specific interventions. In the same way, an important contribution is related to the clarification between the different conceptions of sexism, which will undoubtedly contribute to the correct use of the term at a practical level.

## Conclusions

In this systematic review, it is concluded that maintaining sexist attitudes is related to harmful forms of intimate interaction among adolescents. Therefore, adolescents with sexist attitudes have more positive attitudes towards intimate partner violence (Anaconda et al., 2017; Fernández-Fuertes et al., 2018; Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2013; Lee et al., 2016; Pazos et al., 2014; Pozo et al., 2010; Reyes et al., 2016; Rodríguez-Domínguez et al., 2017; Shen et al., 2012), greater risky sexual behaviours (De Meyer et al., 2014; Grose et al., 2014; Ramiro-Sánchez et al., 2018b), greater attraction to sexist partners (Montañés et al., 2013), greater support for the myth of idealized love and the myth of love-abuse link (Rodríguez et al., 2013), greater emotional dependence on the partner (Pradas & Perles, 2012), and poorer quality in relationships (Viejo et al., 2015).

## Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare no conflict of interest.

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