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Perceptions of organizational justice and ambivalent sexism: The moderating role of individualism-collectivism¹

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The aim of the present study was to explore the association between perceptions of interpersonal/informational justice and ambivalent sexism among Argentinean employees, and to examine the possible role that collectivism and individualism exert on this association. Participants (128 men and 120 women) completed a battery of instruments to measure the variables of interest. Results showed that perceptions of interpersonal and informational justice were negatively associated with hostile sexism, and that, unexpectedly, perceptions of informational justice were positively associated with benevolent sexism. Vertical collectivism and vertical individualism moderated the relationships between perceptions of interpersonal justice and hostile sexism. Findings are discussed in light of their theoretical and practical implications. Suggestions for future research are provided.

Keywords: Sexism, values, interpersonal justice, informational justice

Percepciones de justicia organizacional y sexismo ambivalente: el rol moderador del individualismo-colectivismo

El objetivo del estudio fue, por un lado, explorar las relaciones entre percepciones de justicia interpersonal/informacional y sexismo ambivalente en empleados argentinos, y, por otro lado, examinar el posible rol que el individualismo y el colectivismo ejercen sobre tales relaciones. Los participantes (128 varones y 120 mujeres) completaron una batería

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de reconocidos instrumentos para medir las variables de interés. Los resultados mostraron que las percepciones de justicia interpersonal e informacional se relacionaron negativamente con sexismo hostil y que, inesperadamente, la justicia informacional se asoció positivamente con sexismo benévolo. Colectivismo vertical e individualismo vertical moderaron las relaciones entre justicia interpersonal y sexismo hostil. Se discuten las implicaciones teóricas y prácticas de estos hallazgos. Se sugieren futuras investigaciones en el área.

Palabras clave: sexismo, valores, justicia interpersonal, justicia informacional

Percepção de justiça organizacional e sexismo ambivalente: o papel moderador do individualismo-coletivismo

O objetivo do presente estudo foi, por um lado, explorar as relações entre as percepções de justiça interpessoal/informacional e sexismo em trabalhadores argentinos, e, por outro lado, examinar o possível papel desempenhado pelo individualismo e coletivismo em tais relações. Os participantes (128 homens e 120 mulheres) completaram uma bateria de instrumentos reconhecidos para medir as variáveis de interesse. Os resultados mostraram que as percepções de justiça interpessoal e informacional foram negativamente relacionadas com o sexismo hostil e, inesperadamente, as percepções de justiça informacional foram positivamente associadas com o sexismo benevolente. O coletivismo vertical e o individualismo vertical moderaram as relações entre justiça interpersonal e sexismo hostil. Discutem-se as implicações teóricas e práticas destes resultados. Sugestões para futuras pesquisas são feitas.

Palavras-chave: sexismo, valores, justiça interpessoal, justiça informacional

Sexism in the workplace continues to be responsible for marked gender inequalities in the 21st century. The International Labor Organization (2014) and the United Nations Development Programme (2014) have recently warned that women, compared with men, still receive lower wages, hold positions of lower rank, are more present in the informal economy, and face gender discrimination at work. Sexism is an evolving phenomenon whose open expressions have become increasingly more subtle, more difficult to recognize, and, therefore, more challenging to eradicate (Lee, Fiske & Glick, 2010; Swim & Hyers, 2009). In order to explain the current configurations of this phenomenon, Glick and Fiske (1996, 2001) proposed their ambivalent sexism theory, postulating the existence of hostile and benevolent attitudes toward women that impact on social cognitions, emotions, and behaviors.

Extensive research (Glick & Fiske, 2012; King et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2010; Zubieta, Beramendi, Sosa & Torres, 2011) has identified both individual and contextual factors that promote ambivalent sexism in different social environments (e.g., personality traits, right wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation). Although this research has provided valuable insight into the study of prejudice and discrimination, crucial limitations still remain in relation to the study of ambivalent sexism. According to specialists (Swim & Hyers, 2009), two main weaknesses are currently widespread: (1) the use of samples composed exclusively of university students, and (2) the lack of exploration of this phenomenon in Latin America, whose sociocultural and labor realities are quite different from those of North American, European, or Asian countries, where most studies have been conducted so far.

Moreover, one area that has received little research attention and warrants further investigation is the role that organizational injustice

and personal values play on ambivalent sexism in the working context. To date, only a handful of studies have focused on examining the interplay between these variables. For example, Krings and Facchin (2009) suggested that justice perceptions in the workplace stand as a promising variable to explain negative interpersonal attitudes at work, including ambivalent sexism. Another body of studies (Feather & McKee, 2012; Formiga & Barros da Silva Neta, 2009) has highlighted the role that personal values such as achievement, individualism, power, security, and universalism play on the development and/or the reinforcement of sexist attitudes. However, specialists (Lee et al., 2010; Krings & Facchin, 2009; Swim & Hyers, 2009) are requiring greater research efforts to unravel the possible relationships between justice perceptions, personal values, and ambivalent sexism in the workplace.

Therefore, in an attempt to fill the existing knowledge gap, the objective of the present study was twofold: (a) to explore the interrelationships between perceptions of organizational justice and ambivalent sexism among Argentinean employees, and (b) to examine the possible role that individualistic and collectivist values play on such relationships.

Theoretical framework and research hypotheses

Ambivalent sexism has been defined as a set of beliefs and ideologies that, at the cultural level, legitimize conventional gender relations and that, at the individual level, promote the adoption of ambivalent attitudes toward men and women (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001). Glick and Fiske postulated ambivalent sexism as a bi-dimensional construct that comprises *hostile sexism* (HS) and *benevolent sexism* (BS). HS refers to negative attitudes and overt intolerance toward women, based on stereotypes about their supposed weakness and inferiority. BS involves sexist attitudes that consider women in a stereotypical way and constrain them to certain roles (mothers, wives, housewives). However, BS has a positive affective tone and tends to elicit prosocial or intimacy-seeking behaviors (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Lee et al., 2010). Although ambivalent sexism has been explored in more than 25 countries, scarce studies have

analyzed these attitudes in relation to perceptions of (in) justice in the workplace.

In regard to the organizational context, during the last decades an important line of research has focused on explaining how different perceptions of organizational justice differentially affect employees' attitudes and behaviors. Since the beginning of the systematic study of organizational justice, researchers have identified four dimensions of this construct: (a) *distributive justice*, namely the fairness of the outcomes that employees achieve, (b) *procedural justice*, or the fairness of the process used to determine the distributions and arrive at decisions, (c) *interpersonal justice*, the fairness that considers the sensitivity, politeness, and respect that people are shown by authority figures during organizational procedures and decisions, and (d) *informational justice*, that is associated with the information or explanations provided by decisions makers in relation to the distribution of outcomes and the decision making process (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013).

Given that interpersonal and informational justice represent the social aspects of fairness, it is reasonable to think that they will present stronger links with discriminatory attitudes and behaviors within organizations. In fact, Liu and Ding (2012) stated that interactional justice perceptions constitute a better predictor of interpersonal deviance behaviors than distributive justice perceptions. Moreover, Krings and Facchin (2009) found that perceived organizational injustice led to increased sexual harassment proclivities toward female coworkers, and that this relation was moderated by HS. The authors suggested that the association between interactional injustice and the likelihood of sexual harassment emerges as a way of displaced, norm-violating aggression perpetrated against women, who are part of a gender group seen as socially inferior by sexist individuals. In a similar vein, other studies (e.g., Blau, Tatum, Ward-Cook, Dobria & McCoy, 2005) have communicated relationships between interpersonal injustice and perceived gender discrimination, revealing that unfair situations in the workplace can lead to a stronger sensitivity to perceive sexist actions.

Taking this empirical evidence into account, it appears that unfair interpersonal situations, together with the lack of information regarding one's own work, promote hostile attitudes and revenge behaviors toward other members of the organization (Krings & Facchin, 2009; Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2012), in a misdirected attempt to restore the lost balance. Hence, based on these antecedents, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: perceptions of interpersonal justice will be negatively correlated with HS (H1a) and with BS (H1b) among Argentinean employees.

Hypothesis 2: perceptions of informational justice will be negatively correlated with HS (H2a) and with BS (H2b) among Argentinean employees.

Since the foundational study of Hofstede, there has been an increasing body of research that explores the impact of values on the formation of social attitudes and behaviors (Matsumoto & Juang, 2013). One of the most influential theoretical proposals applied to psychosocial studies has been the one developed by Triandis and his colleagues (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk & Gelfand, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 2012). In their large program of human values, Triandis posulated a multifactorial model of personal values in which he combined two dimensions originally introduced by Hofstede, individualism-collectivism (related to the integration of individuals into primary groups) and power distance (related to the level of acceptance of human inequalities and hierarchies). In this way, Triandis and his colleagues included the egalitarian (horizontal) and hierarchical (vertical) aspects of social relationships in the analysis of individualism-collectivism, thus establishing a four-factor typology that characterizes different individuals in different contexts, based on whether they presume equal or different status between people: (1) Horizontal individualists (people who present an autonomous self and value equal social status); (2) Vertical individualists (VI; people who have an autonomous self and are fond of social hierarchies, achievement, and power); (3) Horizontal collectivists

(people who have an interdependent self and perceive all members of the collective as the same, emphasizing cooperation and harmony); (4) Vertical collectivists (VC; people who exhibit an interdependent self, appreciate differences in social status, and are guided by the principles of obedience and conformity). Hereinafter the abbreviations VI and VC will be used to refer to either personal values or the individuals that represent them. This multidimensional typology has allowed a better understanding of both cultures and subjects in terms of the predominance of individualism or collectivism in different situations and contexts.

Empirical evidence (Triandis & Gelfand, 2012) shows that the axiological orientation shapes the way people perceive and evaluate the social world. Yet, to date, only a small number of contributions have highlighted the interplay between personal values and sexism, and most of these studies have been carried out within the axiological perspective of Schwartz. For example, while Feather and McKee (2012) reported that HS and BS were positively associated with power and security values among Australians, and Zubieta et al. (2011) found positive correlations between HS and self-enhancement values of Argentinean military trainers, Formiga and Barros da Silva Neta (2009) informed that both types of sexism were related to individualistic values among Brazilians. In line with these findings, Case, Fishbein, and Ritchey (2006) observed that greater tendencies toward collectivism are linked with less prejudice and discriminatory behavior.

These findings suggest that individualism would foster sexist attitudes, while collectivism would act as a protective factor against them. However, in a subsequent study, Case, Fishbein, and Ritchey (2008) stated that collectivism did not explain either prejudice or discrimination against women or gay men. Furthermore, Moya, Páez, Glick, Fernández-Sedano, and Poeschl (2001) conducted a study from the Hofstede axiological perspective to explore the associations between sexism and some cultural indices in samples from 20 countries. They found that individualism was negatively correlated with HS and BS,

whereas power distance was positively associated with sexism among men and women.

Although this evidence indicates that individualism and collectivism are indeed related to ambivalent sexism, no firm conclusion can be drawn from such apparently contradictory data. Maybe because there is an additional factor that influences the links between individualism-collectivism and ambivalent sexism, and both theoretical and empirical evidence point that this factor could be power distance (Moya et al., 2001; Shavitt Torelli & Riemer, 2011; Triandis & Gelfand, 2012). Therefore, the axiological typology proposed by Triandis could stand as a valuable tool to analyze the possible combined effect of individualism-collectivism and power distance on ambivalent sexism in the workplace.

Specifically, a substantial body of research (Shavitt et al., 2011; Triandis & Gelfand, 2012; Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2012) suggests that the vertical dimensions of individualism and collectivism would be mostly related to prejudiced attitudes. Because vertical individuals have a strong preference for hierarchical structures and accept inequalities among people, they would be more prone to prejudices and discriminatory behaviors. In addition to these linear relationships, recent studies (Van Knippenberg, Van Prooijen & Sleebos, 2015; Yu, Chen, Zhang & Jin, 2015) have emphasized that the most significant role of personal values might be to intervene in relations between dispositional and/or contextual variables and different results for the organization or its members. For instance, the literature review shows that individualism moderates the relationship between implicit and explicit self-esteem (Yu et al., 2015), and that, when faced with organizational injustice, employees who are more VI are more likely to engage in revenge behaviors as a mean of restoring their self-esteem (Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2012).

Drawing on these antecedents, we expect that when employees face interpersonal/informational injustice at work, those high in VC or VI will be more likely to strengthen their prejudiced attitudes toward individuals considered in a lower social status, as would occur with ambivalent sexism toward women. Consequently, we postulate that:

Hypothesis 3: VC will moderate the relationship between organizational justice and HS, such that relations of HS with interpersonal justice perceptions (H3a), and with informational justice perceptions (H3b) will be stronger (more negative) for employees high in VC.

Hypothesis 4: VC will moderate the relationship between organizational justice and BS, such that relations of BS with interpersonal justice perceptions (H4a), and with informational justice perceptions (H4b) will be stronger (more negative) for employees high in VC.

Hypothesis 5: VI will moderate the relationship between organizational justice and HS, such that relations of HS with interpersonal justice perceptions (H5a), and with informational justice perceptions (H5b) will be stronger (more negative) for employees high in VI.

Hypothesis 6: VI will moderate the relationship between organizational justice and BS, such that relations of BS with interpersonal justice perceptions (H6a), and with informational justice perceptions (H6b) will be stronger (more negative) for employees high in VI.

Method

Participants

Participants were 248 Argentinean employees (128 men and 120 women) aged between 18 and 66 years (mean age 36.8 years; $SD = 11.2$), with a mean tenure of 12 years ($SD = 11.0$). With respect to their level of education, 62.9% had completed secondary school, and the remaining 37.1% had a higher education level. Concerning their occupational status, 66.5% were permanent employees, 20.2% were temporary employees, and 13.3% held management positions. Since we aimed to collect a heterogeneous sample that included several types of organizational sectors, employees were recruited from 12 different organizations and were distributed as follows: 23.3% in educational institutions, 20.6% in trade/services organizations, 20.1% in public

administration, 18.4% in the financial area, and 17.5% in the industrial sector. Most of the subjects belonged to the public sector (58.1%), and worked in either large (53.6%), medium (19.7%), or small sized (26.7%) organizations.

Measures

The research questionnaire consisted of a set of recognized instruments to explore the following variables of interest:

Ambivalent sexism. The Argentinean adaptation (Vaamonde & Omar, 2012) of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory developed by Glick and Fiske (1996, 2001) was used to assess ambivalent sexism. This self-report instrument comprises 22 items with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agreement*), which explore the two facets of sexism: HS (11 items; e.g., “Women exaggerate problems they have at work”) and BS (11 items; e.g., “Women should be cherished and protected by men”). The construct and predictive validity of the Inventory have been widely demonstrated (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Vaamonde & Omar, 2012), together with its high internal consistency ($\alpha = .88$ for HS; $\alpha = .82$ for BS).

Individualism-collectivism. The Argentinean adaptation (Omar et al., 2007) of the Individualism-Collectivism Scale designed by Singelis et al. (1995) was administered to measure this construct. This self-report version is composed of 32 items with a 5-point Likert scale, anchored by 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 5 (*strongly agree*), which explore each dimension through 8 items. Given the specific purpose of our study, we employed the two subscales that measure the vertical dimensions of these values: VC (e.g., “Children should be taught to place duty before pleasure”) and VI (e.g., “When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused”). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses have provided strong validity evidence in samples of the target population (Omar et al., 2007). The reliability of the VC and VI subscales were satisfactory at $\alpha = .81$ and $\alpha = .79$, respectively.

Organizational justice. The Argentinean adapted version (Omar, Oggero, Maltaneres & Paris, 2003) of the Organizational Justice Scale developed by Colquitt (2001) was administered to assess organizational justice. This self-report measure consists of 20 items with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). On this particular occasion, we used the two subscales that tap into the social aspects of organizational justice: interpersonal justice (4 items; e.g., “The authority figure who enact the procedure treats me with respect”) and informational justice (5 items; e.g., “The explanations regarding the procedures provided by the supervisor are reasonable”). The scale has shown high reliability indices ($\alpha = .92$ for interpersonal justice; $\alpha = .90$ for informational justice) as well as evidence of validity in Latin American countries (Omar et al., 2003; Rodríguez-Montalbán, Martínez-Lugo, & Sánchez-Cardona, 2015).

Control variables. To perform the planned analyses, the effects of some variables were controlled; in particular, variables that, according to previous studies, play an important role in sexist attitudes. In this regard, the effect of gender (1 = *male*; 2 = *female*) was controlled as men generally report higher levels of HS than women, who present similar or higher levels of BS (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Mikołajczak & Pietrzak, 2014). Because sexism is based on maintaining power and patriarchal dominance of men over women, it is expected that the former obtain higher scores than the latter, especially in HS (Lee et al., 2010). As other socio-demographic variables may also play an important role in ambivalent sexism, the effects of the age (measured in years) and the education level of workers (1 = *complete secondary education* to 3 = *complete higher education*) were controlled. In relation to this decision, previous studies reported that adolescents are significantly more sexist than adults (Vaamonde, 2011), and that lower education levels associate with higher levels of sexism (Mikołajczak & Pietrzak, 2014).

Procedure

Participants were approached at work by the researchers, and after informing them of the general purpose of the study, they were invited to answer a questionnaire including a sheet of informed consent and the measures described below. The questionnaire completion took approximately 25 minutes. During the whole data collection process, the fundamental rights of the participants were attended and protected in regard to their anonymity, dignity, privacy, confidentiality, autonomy, self-determination, and physical, mental, and social integrity.

Data analysis

Firstly, we calculated means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations between the study variables. Secondly, in order to test hypothesis 3-6, we performed two moderated hierarchical multiple regression analyses, one for each type of sexism (HS and BS). According to Hayes (2013) recommendations, the analysis for moderation must include a term for the direct effects of the predictor variables, a term for the effects of the moderating variable, and a term for the interaction (or product) between the predictors and the moderator. If the interaction is significant, then a moderating effect on the explored relationships is assumed. In each of the two regression analyses computed, the socio-demographic variables were entered as a block in step 1, so as to control the possible effect of gender, age, and educational level on the dependent variables (HS and BS). Next, perceptions of interpersonal and informational justice were entered in step 2, followed by the moderating variables (VC and VI) in step 3. Finally, the interaction terms (organizational justice x personal values) were entered in step 4. To reduce potential multicollinearity, independent and moderator variables were mean-centred before computing the product terms. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 18.0.

Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations between all variables examined in the study.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables

Variables	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender	---	---								
2. Educational level	---	.25**	---							
3. Age	36.8 (11.2)	-.01	-.09	---						
4. Hostile sexism	2.77 (0.85)	-.41**	-.20**	.03	(.88)					
5. Benevolent sexism	2.88 (0.72)	-.30**	-.34**	.01	.42**	(.82)				
6. Interpersonal justice	3.78 (0.80)	.03	.05	.01	-.24**	.07	(.92)			
7. Informational justice	3.28 (0.95)	-.09	-.05	.02	-.15*	.19**	.65**	(.90)		
8. Vertical collectivism	3.00 (0.76)	-.29**	-.35**	.15*	.32**	.39**	.07	.15*	(.81)	
9. Vertical individualism	2.38 (0.72)	-.15*	-.01	-.08	.36**	.19**	-.11*	-.04	.26**	(.79)

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. Gender was coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Education level was coded 1 = complete secondary education, 2 = complete tertiary education, 3 = complete university education. Internal consistency values (Cronbach's alpha) are depicted in parentheses along the diagonal.

As Table 1 shows, gender was negatively related to both types of sexism, HS ($r = -.41$, $p < .01$) and BS ($r = -.30$, $p < .01$), and also to VC ($r = -.29$, $p < .01$) and VI ($r = -.15$, $p < .05$). Educational level was

negatively related to HS ($r = -.20, p < .01$), to BS ($r = -.34, p < .01$) and VC ($r = -.35, p < .01$), which suggests that people with lower formal education are more prone to sexist attitudes and VC than people with higher education. Age only showed a significant positive association with VC ($r = .15, p < .05$). As far as organizational justice is concerned, interpersonal justice perceptions were negatively related to HS ($r = -.24, p < .01$), but showed no significant associations with BS ($p > .05$). These results support Hypothesis 1a, but not Hypothesis 1b. Also, informational justice perceptions were negatively related to HS ($r = -.15, p < .05$), but positively related to BS ($r = .19, p < .01$). These findings partially support Hypothesis 2, as only Hypothesis 2a is confirmed. With regard to the associations between personal values and sexism, Table 1 shows that vertical values strongly correlate with both dimensions of ambivalent sexism: HS was positively linked to VC ($r = .32, p < .01$) and VI ($r = .36, p < .01$), and, likewise, BS was positively related to VC ($r = .39, p < .01$) and VI ($r = .19, p < .01$).

In order to verify the interrelationships postulated in Hypothesis 3-6, two moderated hierarchical regression analyses were carried out (one for HS and one for BS). Before performing these analyses, the assumptions required for linear regression equation were tested. Problems due to outliers were discarded, since the Cook distances were well below 1.0 in all cases (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Also, the residuals were normally distributed, and the graphics of the regression lines showed no heteroscedasticity problems compared to predicted values. The moderated hierarchical multiple regression analyses performed are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Moderate multiple regression analyses for the effects of organizational justice perceptions and personal values on hostile sexism and benevolent sexism

Variables	Hostile Sexism (HS)				Benevolent Sexism (BS)			
	β Step 1	β Step 2	β Step 3	β Step 4	β Step 1	β Step 2	β Step 3	β Step 4
Gender	-.38**	-.38**	-.30**	-.30**	-.33**	-.31**	-.30**	-.30**
Age	-.03	-.04	-.03	-.05	-.06	-.05	-.05	-.04
Educational level	-.13*	-.11	-.04	-.03	-.12*	-.1	-.06	-.06
Interpersonal Justice		-.23**	-.21**	-.16**		-.10	-.09	-.07
Informational Justice		-.14*	-.12*	-.10*		.20**	.17**	.17**
VC			.18**	.19**			.32**	.30**
VI			.30**	.25**			.16*	.15*
Interpersonal J. x VC				-.17**				.07
Interpersonal J. x VI				-.20**				-.05
Informacional J. x VC				-.06				.08
Informacional J. x VI				-.03				.10
R ²	.16	.23	.33	.39	.15	.20	.29	.29
ΔR^2	.16**	.07**	.10**	.06**	.15**	.05**	.09**	.00
F	15.49**	14.45**	16.88**	13.71**	14.35**	12.10**	14.00**	8.76**

Note: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$. VC: Vertical Collectivism; VI: Vertical Individualism. Standardized regression coefficients are reported. Gender was coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Education level was coded 1 = complete secondary education, 2 = complete tertiary education, 3 = complete university education.

Table 2 summarizes the results of the regression analyses that tested the effects of interpersonal and informational justice perceptions and personal values (VC and VI) on both dimensions of ambivalent sexism (HS and BS). As shown in Steps 1, gender had a significant negative effect on both HS ($\beta = -.38, p < .01$) and BS ($\beta = -.33, p < .01$), and so did educational level on HS ($\beta = -.13, p < .05$) and BS ($\beta = -.12, p < .05$). Age had no effect on either type of sexism. So, regardless of their age, men and participants with lower formal education reported higher levels of sexist attitudes. After accounting for the control variables, results of Steps 2 showed that interpersonal and informational justice were negatively related to HS ($\beta = -.23, p < .01$; $\beta = -.141, p < .05$, respectively). Contrary to our expectations, while interpersonal justice showed no associations with BS ($p > .05$), informational justice was positively related to this dimension of sexism ($\beta = .20, p < .01$). Results of Steps 3 revealed that higher levels of VC were linked to higher HS ($\beta = .18, p < .01$) and higher BS ($\beta = .32, p < .01$). Similarly, higher levels of VI were associated with higher amounts of both HS ($\beta = .30, p < .01$) and BS ($\beta = .16, p < .05$). Results of Step 4 for HS showed significant interactions between interpersonal justice perceptions and VC ($\beta = -.17, p < .01$), and between interpersonal justice perceptions and VI ($\beta = -.20, p < .01$). These interactions are depicted in Figure 1 and 2, respectively. Note that the interaction terms significantly increased the explained variance of HS ($\Delta R^2 = .06, p < .01$). According to Evans (1985, as cited by Chen, Chi & Friedman, 2013), moderator effects explaining as little as 1% should be considered significant. Thus, consistent with Hypotheses 3a and 5a, both VC and VI moderated the relationships between interpersonal justice and HS, such that a decrease in interpersonal justice perceptions was associated with an increase in HS for workers with high levels of VC or VI. In other words, our findings suggest that vertical values strengthen the negative relationship between interpersonal justice and HS. Finally, with respect to the moderating role of VC/VI on the relationship between informational justice and HS, Hypotheses 3b and 5b were not supported by the data. Further, neither VC nor VI interacted with justice perceptions to predict BS, so Hypotheses 4a, 4b, 6a, and 6b were not confirmed.

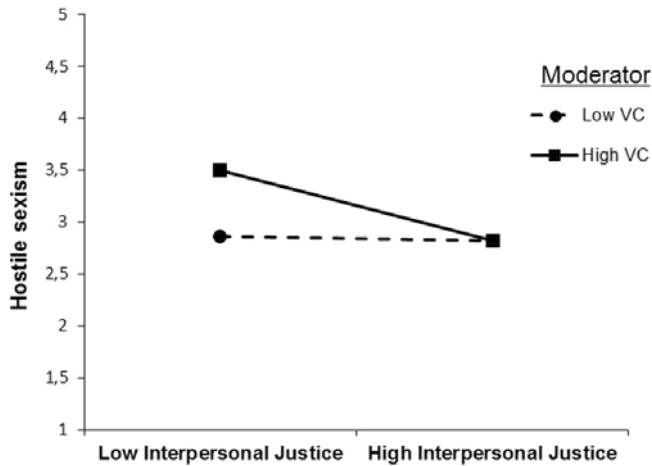


Figure 1. Interaction between interpersonal justice and vertical collectivism (VC) on hostile sexism (HS)

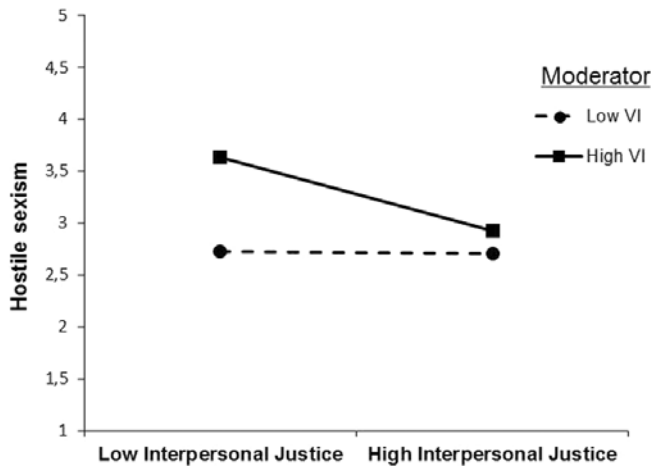


Figure 2. Interaction between interpersonal justice and vertical individualism (VI) on hostile sexism (HS)

Discussion

In industrial/organizational psychology, both perceptions of justice and personal values have proven to be factors that influence attitudes and behaviors of individuals in their workplace (Colquitt et al., 2013; Triandis & Gelfand, 2012; Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2012). However, to date, no study has explored the interplay between ambivalent sexism, individualism-collectivism orientation, and organizational justice perceptions among workers, although theoretical and empirical evidence justifies the need for such exploration (Case et al., 2008; Krings & Facchin, 2009; Swim & Hyers, 2009; Triandis & Gelfand, 2012). Therefore, the aim of the current investigation was, on the one hand, to explore the interrelationships between interpersonal/informational justice perceptions and ambivalent sexism among Argentinean employees, and, on the other hand, to examine the possible role that vertical dimensions of individualism and collectivism play on such relationships. In order to achieve this objective and test the proposed hypotheses, we performed descriptive, correlation, and multivariate analyses on the collected data.

Descriptive findings showed that participants presented nearly equivalent levels of HS and BS. The small difference observed between both dimensions of ambivalent sexism contrasts with results from other countries, where BS tends to be larger than HS (Glick & Fiske, 2012; Lee et al., 2010). This is a surprising result given that Argentina is often included among the Latin American countries with highest gender equality indicators (United Nations Development Programme, 2014); hence, in light of the ambivalent sexism theory, we expected a greater amount of BS than HS. Furthermore, in relation to organizational fairness, and in line with previous studies (Omar et al., 2007), Argentinean employees perceived relatively high levels of interpersonal and informational justice. This finding indicates that, in general terms, respondents receive appropriate and sufficient information in relation to the work they perform, as well as a dignified and respectful treatment by their employers and/or supervisors. With respect to personal values,

participants exhibited moderate levels of VC and smaller amounts of VI, which reflects the Argentinean tendency toward collectivism that had already been reported in previous studies (Matsumoto & Juang, 2013; Omar et al., 2007).

Regarding organizational justice and ambivalent sexism, perceptions of interpersonal and informational justice were negatively related to HS, thereby confirming two of our initial hypotheses (H1a and H2a). It seems that when employees feel unfairly and disrespectfully treated by their supervisor (interpersonal injustice), and/or when they are not provided with adequate and sufficient information about their job (informational injustice), they could try to restore the lost balance by increasing their hostile attitudes toward their female coworkers. This argument is in line with previous research (Krings & Facchin, 2009) which found that unfair treatment and situations can trigger stereotypes and discriminatory behaviors, especially when the targets are people who belong to a group considered socially inferior.

Based on theoretical postulates and recent empirical evidence (Feather & McKee, 2012; Krings & Fachin, 2009; Triandis & Gelfand, 2012; Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2012), we assumed that this relationship between justice perceptions and ambivalent sexism would be moderated by personal values. Specifically, we hypothesized that vertical values (VC and VI) would moderate the negative relations between interpersonal/informational justice perceptions and ambivalent sexism (HS and BS). As expected (H3a and H5a), VC and VI moderated (strengthened) the negative relationship between interpersonal justice perceptions and HS. However, justice perceptions and vertical values did not interact to predict BS in the sample studied (H4a, H4b, H6a, and H6b). These findings can be understood if we consider that vertical value orientations (power distance) promote the existence of inequalities and differences in social status, including prejudiced attitudes (Shavitt et al., 2011; Triandis & Gelfand, 2012). Moreover, the observed relationships between sexism and vertical values are consistent with the study published by Moya et al. (2001), who found that high power distance (high verticalism) was linked to greater levels of sexism.

Similar results were reported by research conducted in other countries (Formiga & Barros da Silva Neta, 2009; Shavitt et al., 2011), indicating the existence of axiological and attitudinal aspects that transcend the regional social and cultural contexts. This interpretation harmonizes with the fact that in relatively non-hierarchical cultures with low power distance, male status striving is minimized, whereas in strongly hierarchical cultures with high power distance, the struggle for status among men is exacerbated, along with their sexism toward women (Glick & Fiske, 2001). In this sense, people oriented toward vertical values (VC or VI) may feel threatened by competent women who break away from traditional gender roles and challenge patriarchy. When faced with such women, VI (who emphasize achievement and power) and VC (who cherish obedience and conformity) could make use of sexist attitudes as a tool of oppression and control against these women. In light of this theoretical and empirical evidence, we can understand the moderating role of VC and VI: when employees perceive interpersonal injustice at work, those high in vertical values could express higher levels of HS. The translation of HS into specific discriminatory, norm-violating behaviors will depend on both contextual (e.g., organizational control and rigid human resource management) and personal factors (e.g., right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, personality traits, etc.).

Interestingly, and contrary to our hypotheses (H1b and H2b), correlation and regression analyses revealed that perceptions of informational justice were positively related to BS. This is a striking result given that injustice perceptions often promote negative attitudes and behaviors toward the organization and/or its members (Omar, 2015; Omar et al., 2007). To interpret this finding, we can resort to the very nature of BS. This dimension of ambivalent sexism constitutes a prejudice that portrays women stereotypically and limited to traditional gender roles. However, in opposition to HS, BS implies a positive emotional valence that promotes pro-social behavior (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001). In the eyes of sexist people, BS is a legitimate, fair, and equitable belief concerning women and their position in the social and labor

system. Therefore, when subjects perceive justice in their workplace, such perceptions may reinforce a set of attitudes they consider positive and desirable, among which may be those of BS. At the same time, the reinforcement of these benevolent attitudes—expected and desired by sexist individuals—might impede the identification of potential sources of labor injustices based on gender, thus maintaining the paternalistic hegemony at work.

Practical implications

Our research presents a number of possible implications for human resource management. First, the results highlight the importance of personal values and their relation to ambivalent sexism in the workplace. Specifically, we observed that VI and VC impact on both HS and BS among Argentinean workers. Applied to the organizational field, this finding suggests that employees oriented toward vertical values—individualists or collectivists who prioritize differences in status—could display more traditional gender stereotypes directed at limiting, controlling and even punishing any woman with possibilities to excel at work. Hence, vertical values may hinder women's career development, relegating them to tasks related to traditional gender roles. This fact is evident in the occupational segregation that still persists in the world and in our region (National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Racism, 2012; International Labor Organization, 2014). For this reason, organizations should take the potential effects of vertical values into account when planning or implementing human resources policies, and especially in everyday treatment of employees.

Second, and considering the results of this study reveal that informational justice perceptions do not always ensure a working environment free from sexism, organizations could design and implement intervention programs aimed, on the one hand, at reducing sexism in the workplace, and, on the other hand, at strengthening perceptions of fairness among employees. Unfortunately, controlling the expression of sexism is not a simple matter. Nevertheless, sexist attitudes, like other prejudices, constitute a contingent variable that can be reduced

by specific actions and interventions in a multiplicity of social settings, including the workplace. For example, human resource managers, supervisors, and counselors can encourage women to seek out group support. "Support seeking has been identified as a means of 'psychological resistance to oppression' [...] and feeling a sense of connection with other women has been found to promote personal empowerment [...]" (DeBlare & Bertsch, 2013, p. 175). Also, it would be important for organizations to establish clear rules and regulations by, for example, formulating written anti-discrimination policy, as well as striving for diversity management and the creation of a more fair, plural, and inclusive working environment (United Nations Development Programme, 2014). Interventions of this kind will not only enhance human relationships, but will also contribute to the perception of a more fair and equitable work environment.

In addition, and in specific relation to organizational fairness, one of the most effective strategies to increase interpersonal/informational justice is the implementation of voice mechanisms to stimulate the expression and feedback from employees. When people have a "voice", when they are offered the opportunity to freely express their opinions and feelings on matters related to their own work, their levels of satisfaction increase along with their perceptions of justice (Omar, 2009, 2015). Organizations may also reduce injustice through explicit policies and procedures for decision-making that, in the best of cases, involve employees in such processes.

Strengths and limitations of the study and future directions

The strengths of the study must be considered alongside its limitations. Among the latter, it should be noted that the convenience sampling method limits the generalization of our findings to the entire population of Argentinean workers. However, given that various organizations were represented in the sample, our results could be considered an approximate reflection of the social and labor situation of the region. Another limitation could be the self-report nature of the instruments used for data collection, which could have generated bias from

common method variance. Future research should consider addressing the problem from a multimethod perspective. Also, the cross-sectional nature of the current study also reduces the extent to which causal inferences can be drawn. To address this issue, further research could implement either experimental or longitudinal designs to examine the interconnections between the study variables. Among the strengths of the study, we must point out that this research work, along with preliminary studies, were first to explore ambivalent sexism with different samples of Argentines, providing valuable empirical evidence on its antecedents within this society. Additionally, suggestions made by other researchers were taken into account in the preparation of this work, including the need for exploration of sexism in the workplace (Krings & Facchin, 2009; King et al., 2012; Swim & Hyers, 2009), its examination in connection with organizational and personal variables (Swim & Hyers, 2009), and the incorporation of more heterogeneous samples comprised not merely by university students (Forbes, Collinsworth, Zhao, Kohlman & LeClaire, 2011).

Suggestions for future research include further exploration of subtle and benevolent forms of prejudice and discrimination, which have proven to lead to exclusion and oppression not only of women, but also of other social groups, including LGBT individuals and indigenous peoples (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Lee et al., 2010; Pérez, Hevia, Pesci & Rabbia, 2015; Pancorbo, Espinosa & Cueto, 2011; Swim & Hyers, 2009). The study of sexism in the workplace and in relation to other organizational variables (e.g., anti-social work behavior, different types of leadership, job stress) also stands as a valuable contribution not only to advance our understanding of the problem, but also to design effective strategies for prevention and intervention in the work context.

Our research may be expanded by examining organizational justice and sexism in other Latin American countries, as a way to build a more representative body of knowledge of these phenomena in the region. Future research will also benefit from the incorporation of contrasting samples in terms of their personal values, in an attempt to more comprehensively understand how the cultural context influences

sexism and perceptions of fairness in organizations. Moreover, although the inclusion of individualism and collectivism, as part of the theoretical framework, is supported by numerous cross-cultural studies that have used these constructs to explain human behavior (Omar et al., 2007; Triandis & Gelfand, 2012), it would be wise to consider other value orientations in the analysis of sexism. Lastly, the use of experimental designs, qualitative approaches and carefully implemented methodological triangulations, will add valuable information to the existing knowledge of sexism, individualism-collectivism and organizational justice perceptions.

Conclusions

One of the greatest desires of people is to have socially responsible managers and supervisors, who contribute to a fair work environment free from prejudice and discrimination of any kind (Krings & Facchin, 2009; King et al., 2012; Swim & Hyers, 2009). However, despite the numerous labor and social gains that women have capitalized in the last decades, sexism against them continues to cause profound inequalities in the workplace. In view of this problematic situation, we sought to explore the relationships between perceptions of organizational justice, personal values, and ambivalent sexism among Argentinean employees. Our main findings indicate that perceptions of interpersonal and informational justice were negatively related to HS, and that informational justice in particular showed positive associations with BS. Also, vertical individualism and vertical collectivism interacted with interpersonal justice to predict HS, thus appearing as significant moderators that strengthen the negative relationship between these variables. Taken together, our results suggest that organizational fairness and value orientations exert considerable influence on workers' sexist attitudes against women, and they should therefore be considered when developing explanatory models or actions against sexism at the organizational level, with the ultimate goal of promoting equality, personal fulfillment and organizational success.

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