Construction and validation of a scale to assess social judgments toward sex work from the Stereotype Content Model

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Keywords: sex work; stereotype content model; attitudes; validation

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Sex workers (SW) are subject to social judgment and the associated attitudes, ranging from admiration to contempt. The presence of stereotypical attitudes towards SW is common and can be analyzed using the Stereotype Content Model (SCM), where the concepts of warmth and competence play a central role. The interweaving of both dimensions allows the identification of four emotions and corresponding political positions towards SW: admiration (non-interventionism), pity (abolitionism), contempt (prohibitionism), and fear (regulationism). From the SCM framework, this study offers the construction, validation and performance of a 25-item scale with a snowball sample of 1,543 participants residing in Spanish-speaking countries. The four-factor hypothesized model yielded adequate values. Internal consistency was sufficient on all factors, as was model-based reliability and convergent validity. The scale also showed measurement invariance between gender and age groups, suggesting that the measure is interpreted in a conceptually similar manner by respondents representing different genders or ages. Further analysis revealed that male participants scored significantly higher on admiration. Baby boomers showed less pity and contempt while Millennials showed more fear and less admiration. SW and those who know or work with SW showed less fear and pity and more admiration. The SCM and the process of developing social judgments offer us a way to understand the differences that underlie irreconcilable policy positions. Overcoming these differences requires mutual understanding from scientific frameworks instead of from ideological perspectives.

Keywords: sex work; stereotype content model; attitudes; validation

Introduction

Sex work, or the exchange of sex for money or other goods and services, has been a reality since ancient times (Benoit et al., 2018; Forro, 2013; Ma et al., 2018). Today it is the subject of heated debate, with positions ranging from full acceptance and support for the practice to total rejection and demands for its prohibition. (Benoit et al., 2017; Bonache et al., 2021; Powers et al., 2023; Valor-Segura et al., 2011). Globally, there are also divergent positions on sex work, with substantial differences in terms of support or repudiation, from a legal, social and cultural, or even religious point of view (Silver et al., 2022; Swathisha & Deb, 2022; Vlase & Grasso, 2021). The debate extends to the very naming of the phenomenon, where some positions defend the use of the term ‘prostitution’ (Farley & Kelly, 2000), while others prefer the term 'sex work' (Comte, 2014).

Beyond the controversy surrounding this phenomenon, it is a reality present in all past and present cultures and in all societies, regardless of their level of development (Sawyer & Metz, 2009b). The personal, economic, health, social and other implications of this activity justify the relevance of its study. Sex work implies a sexual behavior and, as such, understanding it requires analyzing the factors that promote or discourage it. Within the framework of social psychology, the analysis of the visions that different groups have of this activity is a necessary step to move away from the myths that surround it (Weitzer, 2010). Sex work as a risk behavior, especially in relation to HIV, has been the subject of numerous studies (Karamouzian et al., 2020; Martín-Romo et al., 2023; Paz-Bailey et al., 2016; Yuen et al., 2016), however, the social perception of sex work is a little studied topic (Franklin & Menaker, 2015; Ma et al., 2018).

Attitudes and social judgments from the Stereotype Content Model perspective

In general, it is accepted that attitudes are constructs composed of cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions (Bagozzi, 1978). They are also defined as emotionally charged ideas that predispose certain behaviors (Triandis, 1971), and as summary evaluations that stem from affect and cognition associated with the attitudinal object (van Giesen, 2021). In the ABC model (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998) an attitude is defined as an idea (cognitive component or beliefs toward a group, a person or an object) loaded with emotion (affective component or feelings toward a group, a person or an object) that predisposes to certain behaviors (behavioral component or intentions toward a group, a person or an object). As van Giesen, (2021) puts it, attitudes play a major role in everyday life, determining how persons make judgments and decisions. A relevant aspect of attitudes is that they affect not only the persons who hold certain attitudes, but also the attitudinal recipients. For example, negative attitude holders correlate with the attribution of guilt towards those practicing sex work (Franklin & Menaker, 2015). In turn, self-stigma affects sex workers adversely, harming psychological health and acting as a barrier to seeking health care (Huber et al., 2019).

In the field of attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices play an important role. To better understand the complex process of attitude formation, it is relevant to attend to the process of interpersonal perception. This has been defined as the process of gaining orientation in the characteristic features of other persons (Bąk, 2001). It includes three correlated components: (1) the attribution of permanent and temporary characteristics of persons, (2) expectations toward their behavior, and (3) emotions in relation to them. In turn, the process of interpersonal perception results in subjective perception of the social environment (i.e. the others). This interpersonal perception can be affected by stereotypes.

A stereotype is a particular form of social categorization, which is cognitive, emotional, and evaluative in nature. It constitutes an overgeneralization and simplification of a reality and it has a social nature (Bąk, 2001). Stereotypes influence persons' judgments, decisions, and behavior in a stereotype-consistent way (Koch et al., 2016). Typical characteristics of stereotypes (rigidity, overgeneralization, etc.) appear when judging stigmatized groups (Bąk, 2001). From a social–cognitive model of stigma, stereotypes (i.e. negative attitudes about a labeled group) lead to prejudice (i.e. emotional reaction to the group) and discrimination (i.e. behavioral response) (Corrigan, 2018).

Here, according to the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) (Fiske & Cuddy, 2006; Fiske et al., 2002), there are two key dimensions of social judgments about individuals and social groups: warmth (that is, goodness, friendliness, trustworthiness, or kindness), and competence (that is, agency, intelligence, efficacy, or skills) (Abele et al., 2008; Abele & Wojciszke, 2014; Collange et al., 2009; Cuadrado et al., 2016). Warmth has been defined as communality, communion (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Fiske & Cuddy, 2006; Fiske et al., 2002) and morality (Wojciszke, 1994), while competence has been referred to as the ability to carry out our intentions, attainment and agency (Kervyn et al., 2013; Koch et al., 2016).

The SCM dimensions of warmth and competence (Fiske & Cuddy, 2006; Fiske et al., 2002; Kervyn et al., 2012; Kervyn et al., 2013) have an important evaluative aspect: it is better to be competent than incompetent, and it is better to be warm than cold (Kervyn et al., 2013; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). In other words, perceived levels of competence and warmth indicate to what extent a group is, respectively, respected and liked (Collange et al., 2009). Moreover, the primacy of the warmth dimension over the competence dimension has an adaptive role when perceiving or evaluating others'

behaviors (Fiske et al., 2007; Richetin et al., 2012): whether a person is beneficial or harmful (warmth) is more important than how much benefit or harm the person may bring about (competence) (Richetin et al., 2012). Yet, Wojciszke and Abele (2008) showed that, although this pattern is typical for judging distant persons, it is reversed when judging the self or interdependent others. Taken together, these findings underline the importance of considering context in determining which of the two basic dimensions of warmth and competence have greater influence on social judgment (Smith & Semin, 2007). As pointed out by several authors (de Paula Couto & Koller, 2012; Nier et al., 2013; Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2012), high-status groups tend to see themselves as more competent than warm, while the opposite is true for low-status groups (Richetin et al., 2012). The intersection of these two bipolar dimensions may lead to stereotypes consisting of characterizing a social group as cold and competent, cold and incompetent, warm and competent, or warm and incompetent.

The SCM explains how the acceptance and endorsement of societal stereotypes about any specific group on the dimensions of warmth and competence can lead to emotional reactions and to emotion-driven behaviors (Cikara & Fiske, 2012). Whereas positive emotional reactions can lead to helping and supportive behavioral intentions (Becker & Asbrock, 2012), negative emotional reactions can lead to discriminatory behaviors ranging from neglect and abandonment to active harm (Shepherd & Brochu, 2021). The SCM proposes potentially universal principles of societal stereotypes and their relation to social structure, so it can serve as a cross cultural tool for predicting group stereotypes in society (Cuddy et al., 2009). As mentioned, with the intersection between these two dimensions, warm-cold, and competent-incompetent (or agency-powerless), four options are produced to characterize a social group (Cuddy et al., 2009; de Paula Couto & Koller, 2012). Here, sex work is conceived as being one of: warm-

competence; warm-incompetence; cold-competence; and cold-incompetence. These characterizations or stereotypes carry associated emotions: disgust or contempt (when sex work is considered cold - incompetence), admiration or expression of emancipation and empowerment (if sex work is considered warm - competence), pity or protective/paternalistic attitude (if sex work is perceived as a path some persons are driven to take due to circumstances, and is considered something warm - incompetence) and fear (if sex work is considered cold - competence). According to Fiske et al. (2002), paternalized groups elicit pity and sympathy. Such feelings appear when the target group is not perceived as a potential competitor (Collange et al., 2009; Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005; Fiske et al., 2002). Previous studies reveal the existence of gender biases in how we form important impressions of other persons (Oh et al., 2019), as well as gender differences in attitudes towards sex roles (Rodriguez Mosquera, 2011).

The dimensions of warmth and competence seem to be constantly involved when persons form impressions of individuals and social groups (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002; Cuddy et al., 2009; Cuddy et al., 2008; de Paula Couto & Koller, 2012; Richetin et al., 2012). Literature also suggests (Binggeli et al., 2014) that most groups are targets of mixed stereotypes, and that they can be perceived as being more warm than competent or more competent than warm. Consequently, ambivalent feelings are elicited (Dijker et al., 2011). Thus, as pointed out by several authors (Carlsson & Björklund, 2010; Cuddy et al., 2009; Cuddy et al., 2008; Durante et al., 2010), some disadvantaged groups can be perceived as warm and, at the same time, incompetent. But, depending on the degree and type of contact, the same group can, at the same time, admired, feared, reprobated or pitied. For example, sex workers may be the object of contempt (Adeyinka et al., 2023) and, consequently, they may be rejected and their rights denied (Benoit et al., 2018). In other instances, pity or fear associated to health issues, such as HIV, may

appear (Baker et al., 2004; Benoit et al., 2018; Pitpitan et al., 2015). Keeping distant with respect to sex work and those who practice it, helps to explain the development of negative moral judgments towards this group (Mayer, 2011). To the contrary, those who know sex workers have fewer stereotypical attitudes about them (Long et al., 2012). To add more complexity, some studies suggest that men and sexual liberals of either gender are more positive toward sex work. Conversely, those who identify as conservative or support gender equality tend to have more negative attitudes towards it. (Jakobsson & Kotsadam, 2011). Still other studies find that women are more likely to view sex work as reflecting exploitation and subordination (Basow & Campanile, 1990). Conflicting findings could be due to the differences within the feminist movement itself, where sex work is seen as a way of empowering women and also as a violation of women (Comte, 2014; Ma et al., 2018; Serughetti, 2018).

Closely related to stereotyping is the term prejudice (Corrigan, 2018). Here, stereotyping is a disrespectful attitude towards a certain group or attitudinal recipient while prejudice involves agreement with such a stereotype, associated to a negative emotion (Corrigan, 2018). Prejudice can also be defined as an idea or opinion conceived due to personal beliefs and general thoughts, without direct knowledge of facts, persons, and things, such that it strongly influences evaluation and thus leads to error (Travaini et al., 2023). And, as noted by Strathdee et al. (2015), there are many prejudices about sex work and their practitioners. These beliefs denigrate, devalue and marginalize sex workers (Long et al., 2012). They create a "psychological" and, in the long run, "physical" distance. They also justify the persistence of negative stereotypes and discrimination, as well as increase the exclusion of this group. Hence the importance of analyzing these beliefs because if these workers live without fear, aggression, stigma

and violence, that is, live with dignity and respect, they will be in a better position to make decisions for themselves, seek help, or defend their rights (Strathdee et al., 2015).

Political and personal positions on sex work

When determining actions to be taken towards sex workers, it is expected that if they are the object of admiration they will receive active support to continue being and manifesting themselves as they are. If, to the contrary, they are the object of contempt, they will receive rejection, criticism and struggle for their existence. If they arouse pity, they will awaken feelings of protection and if they are feared, they will be subject to actions to control the perceived risk. This psychological perspective allows us to understand the different existing political positions on actions in the field of sex work. Thus, it is possible to identify four political positions on sex work: Non-interventionist, Prohibitionist, Regulationist, and Abolitionist.

(1) The *Non-interventionist* position is also called the pro-rights or decriminalization approach (Comte, 2014; Duggan & Hunter, 1995; Fiske & Cuddy, 2006; Hayes-Smith & Shekarkhar, 2010; Serughetti, 2018). Supporters of this position consider sex work to be a lawful activity, an expression of individual freedom and of emancipation and empowerment. From this perspective, they demand the removal of regulations and the freedom to engage in sex work without any kind of regulation, as the free adults that they are. This is the position held by liberal feminists (Ma et al., 2018; Serughetti, 2018). This position is the opposite pole of the next position.

(2) The *Prohibitionist*, neo-prohibitionist or criminalization position is held by those who consider ‘prostitution’ (for which they use this denomination instead of 'sex work') a reprehensible activity and a social scourge that should be eliminated (Bonache et al., 2021; Weitzer, 2020). This approach is adopted in the USA where sex work is a

punishable activity and both parties, sex workers and clients, are punished. Sex work from this position is considered as an immoral, illicit, and unlawful act that causes moral harm (Vanwesenbeeck, 2017; Weitzer, 2020). From this perspective, there is a tendency to equate sex work with trafficking.

(3) The *Regulationist*, legalizing, or regulatory stance, which implies a moral rejection of an inevitable evil, and leads to the need to regulate it in order to avoid risks. It is characteristic of those who consider sex work as something to be feared, because it is an activity that puts the individuals that engage in this activity and the surrounding environment at risk. It is characteristic of those in favor of promoting regulations to limit spaces and remove this activity from the rest of society (Benoit et al., 2017; Bonache et al., 2021; Vanwesenbeeck, 2017). It is also related to those who consider that this regulation must include legalization, i.e., the regulation of this activity like any other labor activity, as a protection against labor exploitation. As Bonache et al. (2021) state, legalization is often associated to strict regulation, through which the state establishes limits under which sex work can be practiced. These restrictions are often guided by motives of health risk-reduction and tax collection. This is the existing approach in Germany and the Netherlands. It is also the model implemented in Spain at the local level, where municipal put in place regulations to deter or fine sex work in certain public spaces. At national level, sex work is neither regulated, nor prohibited or sanctioned in Spain.

(4) The *Abolitionist* or neo-abolitionist position, which is in force in countries such as Sweden, Iceland and Norway and is commonly referred to as the 'Nordic model', is the posture of those who consider sex work an attack on women, whom they consider defenseless, which leads some to consider it a paternalistic attitude (Serughetti, 2018).

This position promotes punishing the client but not the sex worker, who is considered vulnerable and at a disadvantage. From this perspective, the exchange of sex for money is considered a form of gender violence and is the consequence of an objectifying culture in which women are perceived as objects to be used by men (Benoit et al., 2017; Bonache et al., 2021; Serughetti, 2018). Other authors include this position inside the criminalization measures (Benoit et al., 2017; Bonache et al., 2021). This is the position held by radical feminists (Ma et al., 2018). Some studies have found that prohibition is associated to hostile attitudes and beliefs regarding the behavior of men who resort to sex workers whereas legalization is associated to benevolent attitudes and beliefs towards these men. Furthermore, some results show that a high degree of hostile sexism and the legal stance of prohibition predicts victim-blaming in physical or sexual assault to sex workers (Valor-Segura et al., 2011). Recent studies on attitudes toward different political positions on sex work revealed generational differences that deserve further studies (Powers et al., 2023).

Table 1 depicts the relations between the domains of the stereotype content model, the ABC model component responses, and their associated socio-political positions.

[Please, insert Table 1 about here]

Studies on attitudes toward sex work

Although sex work has received increasing attention, there are few studies assessing social attitudes (Basow & Campanile, 1990; Benoit et al., 2017; Brents et al., 2021; Cotton et al., 2002; Digidiki & Baka, 2017; Firmin et al., 2013; Jonsson & Jakobsson, 2017; Levin & Peled, 2011; Long et al., 2012; Ma & Loke, 2021; Ma et al., 2018; Menaker & Miller, 2013; Einat Peled et al., 2020; E. Peled et al., 2020; Peracca et al.,

1998; Sawyer et al., 2001, 2003; Sawyer & Metz, 2009a, 2009b; Stenersen & Ovrebo, 2020; Stenersen et al., 2020; Valor-Segura et al., 2011). A recent systematic review revealed that there was no general consensus in attitudes towards sex workers. Different stakeholders, including those within the same group, displayed conflicting and inconsistent levels of tolerance and ambivalence and even contradictory attitudes (Ma et al., 2018). Variables such as age (Powers et al., 2023) and gender (Morton et al., 2012), also seem to be associated to differential attitudes toward this group.

Some measures to assess these attitudes have been developed based on empirical data (interviews, observation) rather than on a solid theoretical framework. One of the earliest measures was the Attitudes Toward Prostitution (ATP) (Basow & Campanile, 1990) that consists of 12 items that assess attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes surrounding sex work that has shown its association to feminist positions. Another questionnaire is the Attitudes Toward Prostitution Scale (ATPS), (Sawyer & Metz, 2009b) which is composed of 10 items and assesses men's beliefs about sex work. These two scales have an additional limitation of focusing exclusively on female sex workers. A more recent example is the Attitudes toward Prostitutes and Prostitution Scale, APPS (Levin & Peled, 2011), a 29-item scale that is based on four subcategories placed on a matrix of two conjoining axes: Axis 1 being a continuum ranging from choice to victimization, and axis 2 being a continuum ranging from normativeness to deviance. Other studies have focused on clients rather than sex workers; the Attitudes Toward Men Who Pay for Sex Scale, ARMPS (Peled et al., 2020) has preliminary validation, although further analyses and application in different cultural and linguistic contexts are advisable. Equally recent is the Attitudes Towards Individuals Who Sell Sex Inventory (ATISS) (Stenersen & Ovrebo, 2020), a 21-item scale that has been developed from the ABC

model of attitude (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998). Although further studies are advisable, the initial validation shows adequate psychometric properties.

Despite the later exception mentioned before (Stenersen & Ovrebo, 2020), there are very few studies showing the construction of a scale with a broad and diverse validation sample that includes all those involved (sex workers, consumers, members of associations, persons with no contact). To our knowledge, there are no instruments developed from the SCM that relate this model to the basic emotions they arouse and to the associated political stance. Hence, the present study allows us to take a further step in this direction.

Thus, in the current study, we present the development and validation of a four factors scale derived from the SCM framework. These factors are: (1) *Admiration*: items related to the consideration of sex work as something as acceptable as any other work, performed by persons with full decision-making capacity (i.e. warmth and competence/agency, from the SCM). This factor is associated with political measures tending towards non-regulation and non-intervention. (2) *Pity*: items related to the consideration of sex work as acceptable for persons in need of resorting to this activity (i.e. warmth and incompetence/powerless,). It is associated with policy measures tending to abolish it in order to protect. (3) *Fear*: Items related to the consideration of sex work as a dangerous or risky activity practiced by persons with the capacity to pose a threat to others or to the system (i.e. cold and competence/agency). It is associated with measures tending to regulate this activity by means of segregating, and expelling it from city centers. (4) *Contempt*: items related to the consideration of sex work as something bad or negative, carried out by persons with little decision-making capacity (i.e. cold and incompetence/powerless). This factor is associated with prohibitionist measures, i.e., penalizing all those involved (clients, sex workers, brokers). In all cases,

higher scores indicate a greater adherence to an attitude; contempt, admiration, pity or fear. Also, while pity and fear represent intermediate evaluations or medium levels of respect and approval, admiration and contempt represent the most extreme evaluations, with admiration being the most positive and contempt the most negative. In other words, while an emotion of fear indicates a negative appraisal of sex work but not necessarily of the persons engaged in it, an emotion of contempt indicates a negative appraisal of both the work and the SWs involved.

To summarize, using the definition of attitude according to the ABC model (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998), we propose that the cognitive component is based on the understanding of sex work and those who perform it as something good vs. bad and with agency vs. powerless. This understanding leads to experiencing different emotions (admiration, pity, rejection, or fear) which, in turn, predispose behaviors or intentions of what 'should be done about it': acceptance, protection, segregation, and prohibition,. The political translation of these intentions is reflected in positions towards sex work such as: non-interventionist, abolitionist, regulationist, and prohibitionist, respectively.

The current study

The purpose of this study is to address the lack of reliable and valid tools with a solid theoretical framework for assessing social perceptions of sex work. The study examines the links between attitudes and corresponding positions toward sex work using the SCM. Since previous studies have found differences in attitudes based on proximity (i.e. knowledge, contact, etc.) with the attitudinal reference (SW), as well as on gender and age (Oh et al., 2019; Powers et al., 2023; Rodriguez Mosquera, 2011), we analyzed whether these variables affect attitudes differently.

Specifically, we aim to: (1) develop a tool with appropriate reliability indices and

adequate construct validity by means of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. We expect to find the four basic dimensions towards sex work: admiration, pity, fear, and contempt. (2) Analyze gender and generational differences in the appraisal of sex work, (3) Analyze the judgments that characterize the different social subgroups (sex workers, persons with knowledge of this group, persons who work with this group, persons with no contact). We expect to find: gender differences toward the emotions experienced (hypothesis 1), Generational differences in appraisals (hypothesis 2), Decriminalization and supportive positions among the sex workers and close groups (hypothesis 3), and more pro-abolitionist or pro-regulationist positions among those who are not in contact with this group (hypothesis 4).

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited from social networks, organizations representatives of sexual workers, and general population. An online survey was developed and distributed between the authors of the current study. Participants were recruited through a snowball procedure and their participation was voluntary and anonymous. Informed consent was required to participate in the study. The evaluation protocol complied with the principles of the Helsinki Declaration and was reported favorably (registration number 1105) by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Salamanca. The questionnaire was completed by 1,543 persons of whom 1291 (83.7%) were women and 252 (16.3%) were men. The average age of the participants is 30 years (SD = 10.8) and men and women have similar ages (T = -0.219; df = 1541; p = .827). Most of the participants were from Spain (n = 1,083; 70.2%), followed by Latin America (n = 415; 26.9%). Much lower percentages were from other European countries (n = 38; 2.5%) or

from other regions. As for the country of current residence, the majority were Spain (n = 1,108; 71.8%) and Latin America (n = 383; 24.8%).

Of the participants, 92 persons (6%) were sex workers distributed in similar percentage of men and women (χ^2 = 2.093; df= 1; p = .148). The scale was answered by persons from 17 to 70 years of age (*M* = 30, *SD* = 10.8). The average age of sex workers was 30.9 years (*SD* = 8.7, range: 17 to 55). A total of 469 persons (30.4%) knew or were in contact with sex workers, distributed in similar percentages between men and women (χ^2 = 0.057; df = 1; p = .811). On the other hand, 239 persons (15.5%) reported being involved with some organizations related to sex work, in similar percentages of men and women (χ^2 = 2.338; df = 1; p = .126). In short, the percentage of men and women analyzed is similar in all cases.

Age, as in previous studies (Powers et al., 2023), was operationalized with generations using commonly accepted cutoffs. Generation Z was composed of participants who were born between 1997 and 2012, which corresponds to 18–26 years old. Millennials participants were born between 1981 and 1996 which corresponds to 27–42 years old. Generation X participants were born between 1965 and 1980 (ages between 43 and 58) and Baby boomers were those born between 1946 and 1964 (ages 59 or older).

Instrument

The instrument consists of two sections. The first section gathers sociodemographic information such as gender, age, working as sex worker, working with sex workers, and knowing sex workers, among other questions to help characterize the sample and test the hypotheses. The second section is composed of 25 items where the task is to respond by indicating the degree of agreement with each statement, using the following

scale: 1 = total disagreement to 7 = total agreement. Thus, higher scores on the items or factors indicate a greater adherence to each of the manifestations under assessment: admiration, sorrow, fear, or rejection.

A preliminary version of a 28-item scale was constructed based on judgments drawn from a qualitative study on the image of sex work and its workers (Rodríguez Villoria et al., 2015). This made it possible to identify the beliefs held as to why a person may have entered the world of sex work, as well as beliefs about the risk and protective factors, and the actions to be taken concerning sex work. Content analysis of the opinions expressed led to the selection of items reflecting the opinions of a diverse group of persons, with and without contact with sex work, and belonging to different groups (students, professionals, sex workers).

After the construction of the scale and because the scale was developed in Spanish, all Spanish-speaking sex work associations and those from Latin American contexts were contacted. As mentioned before, a snowball procedure was used to expand the number of persons with possible contact with the group of interest. An online form was developed for the application of the scale using Google Forms, in order to guarantee complete anonymity and confidentiality of the information. Prior to the application of the scale, informed consent had to be given. The data shown here were collected from 2017 to 2021.

The psychometric analysis of the measure was carried out in four phases. In the first phase, we inspected the contribution of each item to its theoretical factor by estimating four one-dimensional factor models, in order to detect and eliminate those indicators with insufficient contribution (i.e., a standardized loading of less than .30).

In the second phase, we estimated an exploratory structural equation model (ESEM) with oblique target rotation (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2009; Marsh et al., 2009).

The first objective of the ESEM analysis was to investigate whether it is possible to recover a configuration of salient loadings consistent with the theoretical structure of the scale. The second objective was to determine to what degree the restrictions on cross-loadings in the confirmatory independent cluster model (ICM-CFA) were introducing bias in the estimation of the parameters of the measurement model (Morin et al., 2016; Morin et al., 2013). ESEM was employed instead of traditional exploratory factor analysis for three reasons: (a) ESEM allows obtaining fit indices directly comparable with nested confirmatory models; (b) target rotation allows specifying an a priori pattern of primary and cross-loadings, allowing the use of ESEM in a semi-confirmatory mode when a prior theoretical model exists, as is the case in this study; and (c) ESEM allows introducing specifications to control for violations of conditional independence, to prevent bias in the estimators of the model parameters (Garrido et al., 2020).

In the third phase, we estimated three confirmatory factor models using all items: (1) a one-dimensional model, which represents the hypothesis of a single attitude dimension explaining the responses to all items; (2) a four-factor correlated model (fear [FEA] (e.g. 'Sex workers are at greater risk of physical violence'), admiration [ADM] (e.g. 'Sex work should not be interfered with; it should be left to individual freedom'), pity [PIT] (e.g. 'Persons engaged in sex work tend to be of low socioeconomic status'), and contempt [CNT]) (e.g. 'Persons engaged in sex work tend to have addictions'), consistent with the theoretical structure of the scale; (3) and a bifactor model with one general factor and four specific factors. The bifactor model is expected to fit better than the other models because it is more parameterized and its greater ability to accommodate small proportions of aberrant and probably invalid response patterns (Murray & Johnson, 2013; Reise et al., 2016). In this case, we estimated the bifactor

model to assess the empirical separability of the theoretical factors by estimating the size of an orthogonal factor that would account for all the variance common to all the items.

In the fourth phase, once the final model was selected, we estimated two sets of measurement invariance models between gender and age groups. The aim of this analysis was to assess to what extent the model parameters (loadings and thresholds) are equivalent between groups, and therefore whether the measure is equally valid for assessing men and women, and persons of different ages. In the case of gender, we compared the fit of a configural model, where it is hypothesized that each group has its own set of loads and thresholds, against a scalar model, where it is hypothesized that loads and thresholds are equivalent in both groups; this way unbiased comparisons are possible (Meredith, 1993; Millsap, 2011). In the case of age, we specify it as a continuous variable in two nested multiple-indicator-multiple-cause models (saturated model and invariant model) (Morin et al., 2016). In the saturated model, we specify the regression path of age as a predictor toward all factors and all items, except for the marker item of each factor. This model expresses the hypothesis that age has an effect on the responses to the items, beyond the effect that the factors may have. In other words, for the saturated model it is hypothesized that the probability of a person being observed in each response category does not depend only on the substantive trait represented by the factor, but also on his or her age, so that scalar invariance is not satisfied. The invariant model specifies the paths of age as a predictor to the factors, and restricts the relationship between age and item variances to zero. This implies that, once the effect of the trait factors is controlled for, the relationship between age and item response is zero, thus fulfilling the basic requirement of scalar invariance.

All factor models were estimated by weighted least squares with adjusted mean and variance (WLSMV), given the ordinal nature of the input data (Beauducel & Herzberg, 2006). To assess fit, conventionally accepted cutoffs were used (i.e., RMSEA < .08; CFI and TLI > .90; (Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Hu & Bentler, 1999). To assess differences in fit between nested models, ΔRMSEA > .10 and ΔCFI/TLI < -.15 were considered substantial misfit (Chen, 2007; Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). The analyses corresponding to phases 1 and 2 were performed on a random subsample containing 50% of the full sample. Phase 3 analyses were performed on half of the sample not used in phase 1. Phase 4 analyses were performed on the full sample.

Additional analyses

In order to analyze the judgments that characterize the different social subgroups in terms of social distance (i.e. sex workers, persons having knowledge of this group for personal, social or other reasons; persons from organizations working with this group, persons without contact), several t-test were run. Specifically, the Welch's t-test was used as the number of samples in each group was different, and the variance of the two data sets was also different (Welch, 1947). The effect size was calculated using Cohen's d. Cohen's d values below 0.20 indicate no effect; values between 0.21 and 0.49 indicate a small effect; values between 0.50 and 0.70 indicate a moderate effect; while values greater than 0.80 indicate a large effect.

Regarding generational differences, a one-way Anova with Welch and Games Howell post hoc tests was performed (Ruxton & Beauchamp, 2008). Eta squared (η^2) values were calculated to estimate how large the effects were for each variable. η^2 = 0.01 indicates a small effect; η^2 = 0.06 indicates a medium effect; η^2 = 0.14 indicates a large effect (Richardson, 2011).

Results

Scale development

Phase 1. Three items were removed from further analysis ('Persons who engage in sex work are usually attractive', 'Persons who engage in sex work are usually young', 'Persons who engage in sex work are usually forced to do so') due to low factor loadings (< .30). After removal of these items, the four factors showed adequate internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values from .75 to .93.

Phase 2. The four-factor correlated ESEM model obtained an acceptable fit (RMSEA = .079; CFI = .972). After inspecting the local fit indicators, four correlations were released between residuals of items with obvious syntactic or content similarities, and modification indices greater than 10 and positive standardized expected change parameters greater than .30 (Saris et al., 2009). The modified model obtained an acceptable fit (RMSEA = .057; CFI = .986). Table 2 shows the standardized factor loadings of the model. The salient loadings were distributed in a manner consistent with theoretical expectations about the structure of the construct. To assess the discriminative ability of each item on its primary factor, we estimated its expected common variance (iECV). The iECV is the common variance captured by the item on its primary factor, against the common variance captured by all cross-loadings taken together. To guarantee a correct discriminative ability of the item, minimum iECV values greater than .50 are expected. The mean of the iECV values was .89, suggesting a high discriminative ability. Only one item showed an iECV below .50 (.39).

[Please, insert Table 2 about here]

Phase 3. Table 3 shows the fit of the confirmatory models and the ESEM model estimated in phase 1. The ESEM model showed the best fit (RMSEA = .055; CFI =

.987), an expected result given the higher parameterization of the model. The one-dimensional model obtained a very poor fit (RMSEA = .162; CFI = .845). The confirmatory model of four correlated factors obtained a significantly better fit (RMSEA = .104; CFI = .938). The bifactor model did not achieve convergence.

[Please, insert Table 3 about here]

Table 4 shows the standardized factor loadings of the multidimensional confirmatory model, and the indicators of internal consistency, reliability, and convergent validity. The loadings ranged from .57 to .96, and were generally high (M = .70; SD = .10). Internal consistency was sufficient on all factors (Cronbach's alpha > .70), as was model-based reliability (McDonald's Omega > .70). The average variances extracted (AVE) were above .50 in all cases, suggesting adequate convergent validity. Table 5 shows the correlations between the factors. The correlations ranged from -.59 (REG-NOI) to .74 (REG-ABO), with signs consistent with theoretical expectations about the relationship between the constructs evaluated. Regarding the AVE values, all were higher than the square of the highest factor correlation, suggesting adequate discriminant validity of the factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

[Please, insert Table 4 about here]

[Please, insert Table 5 about here]

In conclusion to this part of the analysis, we decided to retain the most parsimonious plausible solution (four-factor correlated confirmatory model). However, the RMSEA of the confirmatory model (.101) was higher than the conventionally accepted cut-off (.08). This misfit can be explained by the fact that any confirmatory model with more than two dimensions and more than 20 items will suffer from the accumulation of

irrelevant misspecification errors produced by restricting the cross-loadings to zero, even if the hypothesized structure is essentially true (Morin et al., 2016).

Phase 4. Table 6 shows the fit of the estimated invariance models on the multidimensional confirmatory model. Regarding sex, the scalar model fitted equally or slightly better than the configural model ($\Delta\chi^2$ = -258; ΔRMSEA = -.018; ΔCFI = .008), so we can reject the hypothesis of no measurement invariance between men and women. Regarding age, the saturated model fitted slightly better than the invariant model ($\Delta\chi^2$ = -258) but without exceeding the limits suggested for a clear rejection of the invariance hypothesis ($\Delta RMSEA$ = .002; ΔCFI = -.002). We inspected the individual values of the regression paths of the items, finding that only four were statistically significant (p < .05), albeit of small size (standardized path < .10). Considering the small difference in fit and the size and distribution of the deviations, we conclude that there is insufficient evidence of misfit to reject the measurement invariance hypothesis.

[Please, insert Table 6 about here]

In sum, it is possible to affirm that the analyses carried out confirm the adequate psychometric properties in terms of reliability and construct validity of the proposed model. The scale also shows an absence of bias when evaluating the opinions of men and women of different ages. This allows us to use it in the next phase of the study.

Main outcomes and differences among social groups

First, in order to determine the degree of agreement of the sample as a whole with the different positions on sex work, we analyzed the average scores and their dispersion. It is important to emphasize that the higher the scores, the stronger the emotion elicited. The results showed that the emotion with the lowest score was admiration (M = 3.04, SD = 1.58), followed by contempt (M = 3.59, SD = 1.41), pity (M = 4.56, SD = 1.37),

and fear (M = 5.58, SD = 1.1.18). These findings indicate that the most extreme emotions, both positive (admiration) and negative (contempt), obtained the lowest average ratings. On the other hand, the intermediate emotions (pity and fear) obtained higher scores. Obtaining higher average scores in the fear factor suggests that participants may have a preference for regulationist positions.

Next, a t-test analysis was performed to test for differences between men and women. Table 7 shows that whereas male participants scored significantly higher on admiration, female participants scored significantly higher on fear and pity emotions. However, the largest effects were found on admiration which is experienced by men to a greater extent than by women.

[Please, insert Table 7 about here]

Regarding generational differences, data showed (see Table 8) that Millennials scored higher in fear and lower in admiration than the remaining groups, which suggests a more critical view of sex work. In contrast, Baby boomers scored significantly lower in pity and contempt than the remaining groups, suggesting that this group felt more empathy and closeness toward sex work and sex workers than the remaining groups.

[Please, insert Table 8 about here]

Next, concerning potential differences between sex workers and non sex-workers, Table 9 shows that SW scored significantly higher in admiration while scoring significantly lower in fear and pity. Cohen's d values revealed that the effects were moderate-large between both groups.

[Please, insert Table 9 about here]

Then, the analysis of possible differences between groups depending on whether or not the participants know sex workers revealed that (Table 10) those who know sex

workers scored significantly higher in admiration while scoring significantly lower in fear and pity. Cohen's d values revealed that the effects were small between both groups.

[Please, insert Table 10 about here]

The analysis of possible differences between groups depending on whether or not the participants were involved with organizations related to sexual work revealed that (Table 11) those who were involved scored significantly higher in admiration while scoring significantly lower in fear and pity. Cohen's d values revealed that the effects between both groups were smaller than in previous analyses.

[Please, insert Table 11 about here]

Discussion

The present study is the first to offer a scale that allows assessing, from the SCM framework, attitudes toward sex work and sex workers. A robust scale is presented that satisfies the requirements to demonstrate its reliability and validity. Additional advantages include its proven usefulness for an unbiased assessment of men and women and of different ages. In addition, and unlike other scales, a wide diversity of groups have been included in its validation sample, including sex workers, persons knowledgeable of sex workers, and persons who work with organizations representing this population. This makes the scale more likely to include relevant content for all these groups and it maximizes its generalizability and usability (Cronje et al., 2022).

In the present study, we found that, globally speaking, sex work and sex workers are subject to fear and pity. These are mixed feeling in terms of the SCM. From a political standpoint, attitudes are primarily aligned with regulatory measures, followed by abolitionist measures. These political positions are more prevalent in Spain. These

results can also be explained in light of the composition of the sample, in which a majority is made up of persons without knowledge, direct, or indirect contact with sex workers. As literature suggests (Binggeli et al., 2014), most unfamiliar groups are often subject to mixed stereotypes, which can lead to them being perceived as either being more warmer than competent or more competent than warm. Likewise, the absence of contact with an attitudinal referent of lower status leads to the emergence of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination (Jenaro et al., 2018). Here, listening to the voices of the protagonists (Desyllas, 2013; Dodsworth, 2014) becomes a means for their empowerment (Udeorji, 2011), and for the self-defense of their human rights (Chowdhury, 2006). This way, competence takes precedence over warmth (Richetin et al., 2012). As results show, SW see themselves more worthy of admiration and less subject to pity than out-groups. This view is shared, although to a lesser extent, by groups close to SW, such as those who know or work with this group. Some studies showing that sex workers construct a positive identity based on their role as caring and responsible mothers reflect the benefits of emphasizing facets associated with the perception of competence and dignity (Basu & Dutta, 2011). Worldwide, different agencies are working on capacity building and empowerment of sex workers through leadership and organization building (Chowdhury, 2006; Cornish, 2006). For example, the health care sector is aiming to create a safe, effective, and non-judgmental space as a way to attract sex workers to its services (Richter & Buthelezi, 2021). Understanding the emotions, behaviors and visions of those who are closest to this reality can be a first step toward helping them achieve greater agency.

Data from the current study revealed gender differences concerning attitudes toward SW, with men showing more admiration, less pity and less fear. Since analyses of participant characteristics revealed a similar distribution of men and women among

the groups of SW, persons who know sex workers or who worked with sex workers, those differences cannot be explained by differences in the sample composition. Neither can they be explained by biases in the measuring tool, since its measurement invariance has been proven. Yet, the fact that the majority of sex workers' clients are male may help explain these findings (Brents et al., 2021), since they represent the conception of sex work as a useful service performed by professionals who freely wish to exercise it, that is, a 'free choice market morality' (Pettinger, 2013). In previous studies, male clients of sex workers were identified as showing positive gender role attitudes (Brents et al., 2021), which supports this explanation. Alternative explanations could be related to the interest in maintaining the status quo from hegemonic masculinity (Brents et al., 2021; Otegui, 1999).

Generational differences were also identified in the current study, with Millennnials showing more critical attitudes toward sex work. In contrast, Baby boomers showed less pity and contempt for sex workers than the remaining groups. Previous studies showed that prohibitionist measures, which are associated to more radical and negative attitudes, are the most popular preference by Millennials (Powers et al., 2023), as well. Differences in the cultural, socio-political and economic background and corresponding changes in the differential perception of women and gender may help explain these findings (Valor-Segura et al., 2011; Vlase & Grasso, 2021). Further studies in this regard are advisable.

The scale made it possible to assess the social judgments of different groups of respondents with different social distances from sex workers. These results can be analyzed in the light of associated political positions toward sex work. Thus, the data suggest that sex workers and persons close to sex workers show a significantly higher preference for non-interventionist measures and a significantly lower preference for

regulatory or abolitionist measures. These results coincide with previous studies in which the discourse of SW is more related to empowerment and the defense of freedom of decision when carrying out this activity (Serughetti, 2018). It is a discourse opposed to the prohibitionist approach that considers sex work as immoral, deviant and punishable (Gurd & O'Brien, 2013). It is also distant from those who consider sex work as a form of oppression or violence against women (Serughetti, 2018; Sirvent Garcia del Valle, 2020). Understanding their discourse and the attitudes on which they are based, that is, facing sex work through a scientific versus ideological or political approach, is fundamental to working together and building strength.

Attitudinal differences at the base with respect to sex work and the corresponding differences in terms of the emotions aroused (admiration, pity, fear, rejection), help to explain the consistency with which opinions are held with respect to this activity (Bonache et al., 2021). These differences also help to explain the difficulties in modifying them and the need to foster intergroup contacts in positive contexts (Cabiati & Raineri, 2016; Tropp et al., 2022) to promote lasting changes. The consideration of sex work as something intrinsically unacceptable or negative makes any attempt to bring positions closer impossible and leads to the rejection of the activity as well as of those who perform it. Broad frames of reference are needed to provide a positive context, such as the Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948). This will make it possible to work with this group to guarantee the defense of rights, such as equality in dignity and rights (art. 1), and freedom and security of the person (art. 3), while avoiding situations that put them at risk of being subjected to slavery or servitude (art. 4), degrading treatment (art. 5) or being arbitrarily detained or arrested (art. 9).

This slavery or servitude is an undeniable fact of life for many SW in countries with a low level of development or in at-risk environments; that is, in contexts with very

precarious socioeconomic circumstances (Basu & Dutta, 2011; Brady et al., 2015), where the lack of rights, health and safety guarantees blur the line between trafficking, exploitation or sexual slavery and sex work (Goldenberg et al., 2013; Hodge & Lietz, 2007; Kiernan et al., 2016). In these circumstances, many persons engage in sex work to survive (Basu & Dutta, 2011), while brokers or organized networks earn high incomes (Brady et al., 2015; Rushing et al., 2005). Numerous studies have shown the risks to which these workers are exposed, whether as triggers, correlates, or consequences. (Dalla, 2000; Gorry et al., 2010; Kiernan et al., 2016; Martín-Romo et al., 2023; Su et al., 2014). Many of these risks could be avoided by working from a position of defending rights and fighting against stigma. This rapprochement of positions will make it possible to find solutions to a mainly precarious job, where regulatory, prohibitionist and abolitionist positions lead to greater precariousness.

It is not the mission of this study to judge the appropriateness of one or another political stance towards sex work. However, our objective has been to help to understand the foundations of the different social judgments towards sex work and the importance of closeness to this group as a factor . This closeness helps explain the presence of more defensive and vindictive attitudes on the part of those who are SW or are close to this group. It also allows us to appreciate how greater social distance is associated with greater contempt for both sex work and the persons who perform it. For an issue like sex work, the socio-political point of view also influences proximity. It is therefore possible to predict that in countries with prohibitionist legislation, the SW view would score higher on the contempt factor than was obtained in the present study. This aspect will be left for further work.

As a further contribution, this theoretical framework and the scale's factors can be used to evaluate other attitudinal references related to sexuality research, such as

opinions towards polyamorous relationships, infidelity, or persons with HIV. Understanding the different visions that underlies different attitudes that explain the differences in associated behavior can serve to implement strategies aimed at the cognitive, affective or behavioral components, to promote more inclusive and respectful societies.

Limitations

Despite the contributions of the present study, we would like to point out some limitations. First, the data collection procedure, carried out through anonymous survey, does not guarantee control of social desirability or deception. Although this is a common procedure in this type of study and is a way of collecting information from stigmatized groups who would otherwise be reluctant to participate, the data collected should be considered survey data. In this regard, although we have made an important effort to disseminate the questionnaire to as diverse a population as possible, the survey only collect information from persons with access to the Internet and with sufficient language and reading comprehension skills in Spanish, to answer the questionnaire.

Therefore, further studies carried out in other languages and with support to be able to be answered by a more diverse population are also advisable. In the present study we have not delved into the different profiles of sex workers according to variables such as gender or sexual identity, the place where the work is carried out or the cultural context in which this activity is performed. Although the collection of this information is beyond the scope of this study, further work could delve into these differences and their relationship with stereotypes, associated emotions, and the political actions supported in this regard.

Conclusions

The achievement of full citizenship requires going beyond paternalistic stereotypes and subsequent emotions such as pity (Fiske & Cuddy, 2006; Fiske et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2002). Pity and sympathy are emotions that characterize stereotypes resulting from high warmth and low competence and so, they can bring overprotection behaviors and may result in reduction of rights in order to ensure the safety of target groups. This is a position that is contemptuously rejected by SW themselves who demand to be heard on issues that concern their lives (Oñate, 2009). It also requires moving away from hostile positions that lead to the rejection, blaming and victimization of this group. Obtaining a clear understanding of the psychological bases of the different views of diverse stakeholders based on information extracted from assessment instruments that are simple to apply, reliable, valid and unbiased, will provide policymakers, health care professionals, educators, and social workers with the necessary information to make changes that ensure the dignity of all individuals, and to guarantee the health and safety of sex workers (Ma et al., 2018). Sex work is a multi-faceted reality and it is best understood from a person-first approach in a polymorphous (cultural, social, political) framework, leaving room for a wide variety of experiences and challenges (Sagar et al., 2016).

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Table 1. Association between the SCM dimensions, the ABC model component responses and political positions

SCM dimensions	ABC Model			Political position
	Cognitions	**Emotions**	**Behaviors**	
Warm and Competence	• Lawful Activity • Expression Of Freedom	• Admiration	• Acceptance, • Support	• Non-Interventionist • Pro-rights
Warm and Incompetence	• Violence Against Women	• Pity	• Protection • Punish the client	• Abolitionist
Cold and Competence	• Inevitable • Risky Activity	• Fear	• Segregation • Legalization • Risk-Reduction • Tax Collection	• Regulationist
Cold and Incompetence	• Immoral • Illicit • Unlawful	• Disgust, Contempt	• Removal, • Eradication • Punish all involved	• Prohibitionist

Table 2. Factor loadings from ESEM target model.

Item/factor	FEA	ADM	PIT	CNT	iECV
Sex work has negative consequences for the prostitute.	0.54	-0.28	0.08	0.05	0.77
Sex workers often have family responsibilities (e.g. children who are financially dependent on them).	0.30	0.18	0.23	0.23	0.39
Sex workers risk their physical health.	0.83	-0.11	-0.11	0.10	0.95
Sex workers are more likely to be sexually assaulted.	0.90	-0.01	-0.05	0.05	0.99
Sex workers are at increased risk of family and relationship problems	0.72	0.03	-0.07	0.21	0.92
Sex workers are at greater risk of social exclusion.	0.77	0.11	0.17	-0.07	0.93
Sex workers are at greater risk of physical violence.	0.91	-0.02	0.00	-0.02	1.00
Sex workers are at greater risk of extortion or trafficking (trafficking in women).	0.82	-0.05	0.09	-0.05	0.98
Sex workers are at greater risk of legal problems (arrest, imprisonment, etc.).	0.86	0.09	0.02	-0.14	0.96
Sex workers are at greater risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.	0.78	0.01	0.03	0.12	0.97
Specific spaces or places for sexual sex work should be regulated.	0.17	0.88	-0.03	0.00	0.96
Sex work should be prohibited or eradicated.	-0.23	0.69	-0.03	-0.10	0.88
Sex work is exercised by personal choice rather than forced by circumstances.	0.01	0.69	-0.13	0.13	0.94
Clients of sex work should be fined.	-0.32	0.66	-0.05	0.02	0.80
Sex work should be legalized or eradicated.	0.06	0.69	-0.15	0.04	0.95
Sex work should be legalized or made legal	0.10	0.97	0.10	-0.16	0.95
Sex work and exploitation or trafficking are two different things.	0.15	0.83	0.02	-0.07	0.96
Sex work should not be interfered with (it should be left to individual freedom).	-0.07	0.75	-0.01	0.05	0.99
Sex work is mainly exercised by women	0.22	-0.22	0.37	-0.16	0.53
Sex work is mainly exercised by foreigners.	0.11	-0.15	0.39	0.01	0.82
Persons engaged in sex work tend to be of low socioeconomic status	-0.03	-0.02	0.97	0.00	1.00
Persons engaged in sex work tend to have a low level of education.	-0.03	0.03	0.73	0.24	0.90
Persons engaged in sex work have been exposed to violence or sex work in childhood	0.19	-0.18	0.13	0.48	0.72
Persons engaged in sex work tend to have addictions	0.11	0.08	0.11	0.71	0.94
Persons engaged in sex work are often psychologically maladjusted.	0.05	-0.13	-0.02	0.68	0.96

Note: FEA = Fear; ADM = Admiration; PIT = Pity; CNT = Contempt.

Table 3. Results from factor analysis

Model	par.	df	RMSEA (C.I.)	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Target ESEM	249	201	.055 (.052-.058)	0.987	0.980	0.017
CFA-1 factor	180	270	.162 (.160 - .165)	0.845	0.828	0.108
CFA-4 factors	186	264	.104 (.101-.106)	0.938	0.930	0.060
CFA-bifactor	no convergence					

Note: ESEM = Exploratory structural equation model; CFA = Confirmatory Factor analysis model; par. = free parameters; df = degrees of freedom; RMSEA (C. I.) = Root mean square error of approximation (confidence interval at 95%); CFI = Comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker -Lewis index; SRMR = Standardized root mean squared residual.

Table 4. Parameter estimates (confirmatory oblique model)

Item/factor	FEA	ADM	PIT	CNT
A1	0.80			
A2	0.57			
A3	0.87			
A4	0.88			
A5	0.76			
A6	0.77			
A7	0.91			
A8	0.88			
A9	0.73			
A10	0.85			
B1		0.70		
B2		0.93		
B3		0.67		
B4		0.96		
B5		0.70		
B6		0.82		
B7		0.70		
B8		0.77		
C1			0.78	
C2			0.60	
C3			0.87	
C4			0.79	
D1				0.87
D2				0.71
D3				0.66
Cronbach's alfa	0.92	0.90	0.80	0.76
Md Donald Omega	0.93	0.91	0.81	0.76
AVE	0.65	0.62	0.59	0.56

Note: FEA = Fear; ADM = Admiration; PIT = Pity; CNT = Contempt; all loadings were significant ($p < .01$).

Table 5. Factor correlations and AVE values

Factor	FEA	ADM	PIT	CNT
FEA	**0.65**			
ADM	-0.59	**0.62**		
PIT	0.74	-0.57	**0.59**	
CNT	0.71	-0.46	0.67	**0.56**

Notes: FEA = Fear; ADM = Admiration; PIT = Pity; CNT = Contempt. On the diagonal (bold): factor average variance extracted; under the diagonal: factor correlations

Table 6. Results from invariance analysis.

GV	Model	χ^2 (df)	χ^2 dif (p)	RMSEA (C. I.)	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Gender	Configural	4402 (486)		.102 (.099-.105)	0.943	0.936	0.063
	Scalar	4030 (622)	258 (<.01)	.084 (.082-.087)	0.951	0.956	0.064
Age	Saturated	4698 (265)		.104 (.102-.107)	0.939	0.926	0.057
	Invariant	4887 (286)	189 (<.01)	.102 (.100-.105)	0.937	0.928	0.061

Note: GV = grouping variable; df = degrees of freedom; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; SRMR = Standardized root mean squared residual.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics and significance of differences (t-test with Group Statistics without assuming equal variances) between male and female participants

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE	T	d
FEA						-2.307*	-.16
	Male	252	5.42	1.26	.08		
	Female	1291	5.62	1.17	.03		
ADM						9.801**	.67
	Male	252	3.90	1.52	.10		
	Female	1291	2.88	1.54	.04		
PIT						-4.068**	-.28
	Male	252	4.23	1.38	.09		
	Female	1291	4.62	1.36	.04		
CNT						-.879	-.06
	Male	252	3.51	1.46	.09		
	Female	1291	3.60	1.39	.04		

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Note: FEA = Fear; ADM = Admiration; PIT = Pity; CNT = Contempt

Table 8. Descriptive statistics and significance of differences (one-way Anova with Welch test) among generations

Variables	Generation	N	M	SD	SE	F	η^2
FEA						5.62**	.01
	Baby boomers	25	5.14	1.09	.22		
	Generation X	197	5.64	1.26	.09		
	Millennials	529	5.72	1.18	.05		
	Generation Z	792	5.49	1.16	.04		
ADM						15.32**	.03
	Baby boomers	25	2.85	1.71	.34		
	Generation X	197	3.11	1.67	.12		
	Millennials	529	2.69	1.54	.07		
	Generation Z	792	3.27	1.54	.05		
PIT						3.36*	.01
	Baby boomers	25	3.97	1.18	.24		
	Generation X	197	4.41	1.45	.10		
	Millennials	529	4.54	1.42	.06		
	Generation Z	792	4.62	1.31	.05		
CNT						5.87**	.01
	Baby boomers	25	2.79	1.20	.24		
	Generation X	197	3.51	1.40	.10		
	Millennials	529	3.73	1.47	.06		
	Generation Z	792	3.53	1.35	.05		

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Note: FEA = Fear; ADM = Admiration; PIT = Pity; CNT = Contempt

Table 9. Descriptive statistics and significance of differences (t-test with Group Statistics without assuming equal variances) between sex workers and non-sex workers

Variables	Sex workers	N	Mean	SD	SE	T	d
FEA						4.962**	.58
	No	1451	5.63	1.15	.03		
	Yes	92	4.88	1.41	.15		
ADM						-8.440**	-.94
	No	1451	2.95	1.53	.04		
	Yes	92	4.47	1.68	.17		
PIT						6.407**	.73
	No	1451	4.62	1.34	.04		
	Yes	92	3.58	1.52	.16		
CNT						1.190	.14
	No	1451	3.60	1.37	.04		
	Yes	92	3.37	1.83	.19		

** $p < .01$

Note: FEA = Fear; ADM = Admiration; PIT = Pity; CNT = Contempt

Table 10. Descriptive statistics and significance of differences (t-test with Group Statistics without assuming equal variances) between those who know or do not know sex workers

Variables	Knowledge	N	Mean	SD	SE	T	d
FEA						5.324**	.31
	No	1074	5.70	1.09	.03		
	Yes	469	5.32	1.35	.06		
ADM						-6.609**	-.38
	No	1074	2.86	1.47	.04		
	Yes	469	3.47	1.74	.08		
PIT						5.707**	.33
	No	1074	4.69	1.30	.04		
	Yes	469	4.25	1.46	.07		
CNT						.172	.01
	No	1074	3.59	1.31	.04		
	Yes	469	3.58	1.61	.07		

** $p < .01$

Note: FEA = Fear; ADM = Admiration; PIT = Pity; CNT = Contempt

Table 11. Descriptive statistics and significance of differences (t-test with Group Statistics without assuming equal variances) between those who are involved or not with sex workers' organizations

Variables	Involvement	N	Mean	SD	SE	T	d
FEA						4.156**	.31
	No	1304	5.64	1.14	.03		
	Yes	239	5.25	1.38	.09		
ADM						-3.903**	-.29
	No	1304	2.97	1.53	.04		
	Yes	239	3.45	1.79	.12		
PIT						3.128**	.23
	No	1304	4.61	1.33	.04		
	Yes	239	4.28	1.53	.10		
CNT						1.764	.13
	No	1304	3.62	1.37	.04		
	Yes	239	3.42	1.60	.10		

** $p < .01$

Note: FEA = Fear; ADM = Admiration; PIT = Pity; CNT = Contempt