

Tesis Doctoral Internacional – International PhD Thesis
Programa de Doctorado en Psicología

**ACTITUDES SEXISTAS HACIA LAS MUJERES EN EL ÁMBITO DE LOS
VIDEOJUEGOS: EVALUACIÓN Y ANÁLISIS PSICOSOCIAL DE SU IMPACTO**

**SEXIST ATTITUDES AGAINST WOMEN IN VIDEO GAMING:
ASSESSMENT AND PSYCHOSOCIAL ANALYSIS OF THEIR IMPACT**

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*Para que los videojuegos sigan creciendo y expandiendo
su naturaleza social, deben aportar otros mensajes
y puntos de vista, teniendo en cuenta otras culturas
históricamente silenciadas y humilladas.*

— **Laura Gómez**

*Las mujeres siempre han estado ahí:
detrás de los circuitos, los teléfonos, las pantallas y las mecánicas.
No cabe duda de que ya es hora de pasar el puntero
por encima de sus nombres.*

— **Irene Gil**



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a quien ha formado nuestro gusto o despertado nuestro juicio, a quien nos ha
introducido en nuestra propia vida intelectual, a quien –en suma– debemos todo, parte
o algo de nuestra formación y de nuestra información. A quien ha sido mayor que
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Quizás lo complicado del presente esté en lo simple que ha parecido llegar hasta aquí. Inevitablemente recuerdo momentos vividos a lo largo de estos cuatro años, tan intensos y efímeros. Como un latido. A su vez tan inciertos y pandémicos, como la peor de las pesadillas. Tiempos en los que llegamos a vernos únicamente tras una pantalla, sin saber qué iba a pasar con el mundo ahí fuera. Todo entre demasiadas tormentas desatadas, entre pocas miradas encendidas. Momentos de irrealidad que resultaron determinantes para un inicio de tesis doctoral. ***Hoy son estos los otros tiempos***, como diría Rafael Guillén.

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En este punto de partida aún nos queda mucho por recorrer. *«Juntos, al fin y al cabo, y para siempre»* (Rafael Guillén). Porque la Universidad no era el camino, hoy sé que era el fin en sí mismo.

Otro ciclo se abre. **Ahora es cuando.**

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*¿Por qué es cada cosa siempre única?
No hay nada en esas líneas del instante de hacerlas,
del temblor de la mano al escribirlas.*

— **Tomás Hernández**

*Aunque sé que me dejo algunas cosas,
puedo decir que, de ser algo,
esa es mi patria.
Lo demás son historias.*

— **Karmelo C. Iribarren**

*Un día encontraré las palabras adecuadas
y serán simples.*

— **Jack Kerouac**

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Planteamiento general

No hay nada que sea más real que un videojuego.

— **Jordi Vallverdú y Josuke Nakano**

*La creación de algo nuevo no es un logro del intelecto,
sino el instinto de juego que actúa a partir de una necesidad interior.
La mente creativa juega con los objetos que ama.*

— **Carl Gustav Jung**

Los videojuegos han emergido durante las últimas décadas como una de las formas de entretenimiento con mayor impacto socioeconómico a nivel mundial (Entertainment Software Association [ESA], 2023; Newzoo, 2022). Este fenómeno se manifiesta de forma evidente en el crecimiento exponencial que está viviendo la industria del videojuego en comparación con otros sectores culturales, como la música o el cine (ESA, 2023; Newzoo, 2022; Statista, 2022; Video Games Europe, 2023). Sin embargo, si algo es indudable es que los videojuegos juegan un papel cada vez más relevante en la sociedad contemporánea y que su influencia va más allá de su impacto económico. En un espacio donde la tecnología y la narrativa convergen, los videojuegos no solo entretienen, sino que han logrado trascender su naturaleza puramente lúdica para convertirse en una manifestación sociocultural con una comunidad e identidad propias (Gil, 2020; Molina, 2020).

Definidos como situaciones ficticias basadas en la interactividad inmediata y dirigida de sus participantes (Cerezo, 2020; Molina, 2020), un videojuego es una forma cultural surgida como resultado de aplicar la tecnología al acto de jugar (Amores, 2023; Cerezo, 2020). A través de características propias como la interactividad, la inmediatez y la capacidad de acción, los videojuegos desempeñan un rol crucial en la percepción social que tienen sus jugadores y jugadoras sobre el mundo que les rodea. De hecho, las personas no solo reproducen, sino que también producen formas sociales y culturales a través de sus actos de juego (Henricks, 2015).

El constante crecimiento del sector de los videojuegos también se ha reflejado en las características de sus potenciales consumidores/as. A pesar de que su audiencia ha aumentado considerablemente durante los últimos años, dando mayor cabida a perfiles sociales que tradicionalmente no pertenecían al público objetivo de las empresas desarrolladoras, aún prevalecen diversos mitos dentro la comunidad de usuarios y usuarias

de videojuegos respecto a cómo *debería* ser un jugador (Fox & Tang, 2017). Entre este público subsiste el estereotipo de que los videojuegos son un entretenimiento esencialmente masculino, a pesar de que múltiples estudios evidencian una prevalencia de jugadoras mucho más equilibrada (Asociación Española de Videojuegos [AEVI], 2023; ESA, 2023; Video Games Europe, 2023). De hecho, esta idea errónea tan arraigada de que los videojuegos son «cosas de hombres» afecta negativamente a las experiencias de juego vividas habitualmente por las jugadoras (McLean & Griffiths, 2019). Desafortunadamente, la discriminación o el acoso son manifestaciones habituales para ellas, especialmente recurrentes en el caso de los videojuegos *online*, donde las características propias del entorno virtual facilitan la normalización de actitudes y comportamientos sexistas (Ruvalcaba et al., 2018; Vergel et al., 2023). Todo ello ha provocado que la inclusión de la mujer no esté resultando ni tan sencilla ni tan igualitaria como debería serlo.

Dado el creciente interés y el impacto global suscitado por los videojuegos, la investigación científica ha comenzado a explorar los cambios socioculturales derivados de su aparición y expansión. No obstante, persiste una evidente carencia en el análisis de las actitudes y comportamientos sexistas presentes en el ámbito *online*, a pesar de su mencionada relevancia. Para Flores-Ledesma (2020), posiblemente el mayor avance científico en el ámbito de los videojuegos lo haya supuesto la crítica feminista, ya que cualquier estudio dirigido únicamente hacia el hombre como jugador inevitablemente resultaba inherentemente limitado y sesgado.

Si bien en los últimos años ha aumentado la necesidad de conocer en profundidad cuáles son y cómo se manifiestan las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres en el contexto de los videojuegos, hasta ahora no se disponía de ningún instrumento específico que permitiese evaluar estas actitudes. Las investigaciones previas habían evaluado el sexismo en el entorno

de videojuegos *online* empleando medidas generales de sexismo o sin respaldo empírico sobre las propiedades psicométricas de las medidas empleadas (e.g., Deskins, 2015; McCullough et al., 2020). Este contexto provocaba que fuera necesario desarrollar un instrumento de medida que considerase las particularidades y las características específicas del entorno *online* frente al entorno *offline* (i.e., el anonimato de las interacciones, la competición entre jugadores/as o la desinhibición social; Ruvalcaba et al., 2018). De este modo, dicho instrumento, a través de una definición y evaluación rigurosa del constructo «sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers*», debía incluir los prejuicios sexistas característicos de esta comunidad, el discurso discriminatorio asociado a estas manifestaciones y las áreas de contenido presentes en las expresiones sexistas contra las jugadoras.

Por todo ello, el **objetivo general** de esta tesis doctoral ha sido desarrollar un instrumento de evaluación específico sobre el sexismo contra las mujeres que juegan a videojuegos, considerando las particularidades propias del contexto donde se producen estas actitudes y abordando las deficiencias metodológicas de investigaciones previas en esta área de estudio. El desarrollo de esta medida contribuiría a estudiar con garantías la prevalencia, el contenido y la intensidad con la que se manifiestan dichas actitudes, así como los factores y mecanismos psicosociales implicados en esta nueva forma de discriminación hacia las mujeres.

Con relación a su contenido, la presente tesis doctoral se estructura en un total de cuatro capítulos. En el **primer capítulo** se contextualiza de forma general el entorno de los videojuegos y el perfil de su comunidad de jugadores/as, además de analizar sus antecedentes y el impacto sociocultural que ha tenido hasta la fecha. Posteriormente, se profundiza en la problemática de las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers*, mostrando el papel de la mujer en los videojuegos, la conceptualización teórica de este tipo de actitudes en el entorno

offline, la creciente presencia y perpetuación del sexismo en el entorno *online* de videojuegos, y los comportamientos sexistas a los que se enfrentan habitualmente las mujeres cuando juegan e interactúan con otros hombres *gamers*. Seguidamente, se describen diversos factores relacionados con la percepción de incidentes sexistas ocurridos en videojuegos *online*. Por último, este primer capítulo concluye enfatizando en la importancia de una evaluación rigurosa del sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* como nuevo constructo y presentando la necesidad de desarrollar una medida específica. En el **segundo capítulo** se presentan los objetivos de investigación y las correspondientes hipótesis de los estudios realizados. En el **tercer capítulo** se incluyen los diez estudios empíricos que conforman la presente tesis doctoral. Finalmente, en el **cuarto capítulo** se expone una discusión general derivada de los principales resultados obtenidos, en la que además se muestran las limitaciones detectadas, las futuras líneas de investigación a seguir, las implicaciones prácticas más destacadas y las conclusiones más relevantes de esta tesis doctoral.

Por último, es necesario destacar que, debido a que los estudios empíricos presentes en el tercer capítulo fueron escritos con el objetivo de ser publicados en revistas científicas, a lo largo de la presente tesis se encontrará información reiterada sobre diversos conceptos, teorías y explicaciones. De igual forma, siguiendo las normas del Programa Internacional de Doctorado de la Universidad de Granada, algunas secciones han sido redactadas en español, mientras que otras han sido escritas en inglés, tratando de utilizar un lenguaje inclusivo a lo largo de todos sus capítulos.

Overview

*For most of history,
Anonymous was a woman.*

— **Virginia Woolf**

There is a clear difference between sexist parody and parody of sexism. Sexist parody encourages the players to mock and trivialize gender issues while parody of sexism disrupts the status quo and undermines regressive gender conventions.

— **Anita Sarkeesian**

“I want to destroy the video game industry. Not to see it gone forever, and not to end the medium, but rather to see it rise like a phoenix into a new form that lights up the world with its fury. We have not yet fully realized the potential of video games as a mass medium, and its masculine ownership has only held it back and kept it stagnant. The feminist potential of video games only reveals a hint of what video games can do and be.”

— **Shira Chess**, *Play like a feminist* (p. 39)

Over the recent decades, video games have undergone an evolution, becoming a form of entertainment with profound global socioeconomic implications, evident in their exponential growth compared to other cultural sectors (Entertainment Software Association [ESA], 2023; Newzoo, 2022; Statista, 2022; Video Games Europe, 2023). However, the significance of video games in contemporary society extends well beyond their economic influence. They have transcended simple entertainment, evolving into a sociocultural phenomenon with a distinct community and identity, where technology and narrative intersect (Gil, 2020; Molina, 2020).

A video game, defined as a fictional experience rooted in immediate and interactive participation (Cerezo, 2020; Molina, 2020), emerges as a cultural form through the application of technology to the act of play (Amores, 2023; Cerezo, 2020). With defining characteristics such as interactivity, immediacy, and agency, video games play a crucial role in shaping how players perceive and engage with the world, with individuals reproducing social and cultural norms through their play (Henricks, 2015).

The continuous expansion of the video games is reflected in its ever-growing consumers. Despite the broadening audience, including demographics traditionally outside the target audience of development companies, persistent myths endure within the gamer community regarding the *ideal gamer* (Fox & Tang, 2017). The stereotype that video games are essentially male-oriented entertainment still remains, although numerous studies have demonstrated a more balanced prevalence of female gamers (Asociación Española de Videojuegos [AEVI] 2023; ESA 2023; Video Games Europe, 2023). Unfortunately, this deeply ingrained notion that video games are predominantly a male domain impacts the gaming experiences of women. Discrimination and harassment, particularly in online gaming,

contribute to the normalization of sexist attitudes and hostile behaviors, making the inclusion of women in gaming a complex and unequal endeavor.

Given the profound interest in and impact of video games, scientific research has started to explore the sociocultural changes stemming from their emergence and proliferation. However, there remains an important gap in the analysis of the prevailing attitudes and behaviors within the online environment. According to Flores-Ledesma (2020), feminist criticism has arguably made the most significant improvements in the context of video games, highlighting the limitations and biases inherent in studies solely focused on the male gaming audience. In recent years, there has been a growing need to gain a comprehensive understanding of the sexist attitudes against women. Currently, no instrument is available for evaluating these attitudes. Previous research assessed sexism in online gaming using general measures of sexism, often lacking empirical evidence of the psychometric properties of the measures (e.g., Deskins, 2015; McCullough et al., 2020). Consequently, there is a need to develop an instrument considering the specific characteristics of the online environment (i.e., anonymity of interactions, player-to-player competition, or social disinhibition; Ruvalcaba et al., 2018). This instrument should rigorously define and evaluate the construct “sexism against women gamers,” including the sexist prejudices characteristic of this community, the discriminatory discourse associated with these manifestations, and the specific content areas within sexist expressions aimed at women gamers.

Therefore, the **main objective** of this doctoral thesis is to develop a specific assessment instrument for sexism against women who play video games, addressing the methodological shortcomings identified in previous research in this area. Developing this instrument will enhance studies examining the prevalence, content, and intensity of these

attitudes, and will delve into the psychosocial factors behind this emerging form of discrimination against women.

Structurally, this doctoral thesis comprises four chapters. The **first chapter** contextualizes the video game environment and profiles the gamer community. Subsequently, it delves into the issue of sexist attitudes against women gamers, addressing the role of women in video games, the theoretical conceptualization of such attitudes in offline settings, the increasing sexism in the online gaming, and the sexist behaviors usually experienced by women gamers. Next, various factors related to the perception of incidents occurring in online video games are presented. Lastly, this chapter emphasized the importance of rigorously assessing sexism against women gamers and the necessity of developing a new measure scale. The **second chapter** outlines the objectives and hypotheses of the studies presented. The **third chapter** focuses on ten empirical studies forming this doctoral thesis. Finally, the **fourth chapter** presents a general discussion derived from the main findings, where limitations, future research directions, practical implications, and conclusions are discussed.

Finally, it is important to note that some sections were written in Spanish and others in English, following the standards of the International Doctoral Program of the University of Granada.

Additionally, some concepts, theories, and explanations present in the third chapter were reiterated since the empirical studies were written for the purpose of being published in scientific journals. It is essential to point out that we have tried to use inclusive language throughout the chapters in the writing of this doctoral thesis.

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CAPÍTULOS TEÓRICOS

THEORETICAL CHAPTERS

Capítulo 1. Introducción

Chapter 1. Introduction

1. ANTECEDENTES Y CONTEXTO: CONCEPTUALIZACIÓN DEL ÁMBITO DE LOS VIDEOJUEGOS

1.1. El sector de los videojuegos: auge e impacto sociocultural

En los últimos años, los videojuegos se han consolidado como una de las principales propuestas de entretenimiento a nivel mundial (Entertainment Software Association [ESA], 2023; Video Games Europe, 2023). Además de convertirse en un fenómeno generalizado, el auge de los videojuegos se puede apreciar en varios aspectos, como el económico, el cultural o el social. En términos económicos, la venta de videojuegos superó los 172.800 millones de dólares en 2022, un indicador que refuerza su consolidación frente al descenso de sectores tan arraigados como la música o el cine (ESA, 2023; Newzoo, 2022). A nivel europeo, los videojuegos generaron 24.500 millones de euros en ese mismo año, convirtiéndose en el segundo mercado más importante del mundo después de Estados Unidos (Video Games Europe, 2023). Según datos de la Asociación Española de Videojuegos (AEVI, 2023), este medio de entretenimiento también ha crecido exponencialmente en nuestro país, convirtiéndose en la primera opción de ocio audiovisual y colocándose entre los principales sectores de generación de empleo, lo que sitúa a España en el top 10 de los mercados internacionales más importantes, con una facturación de más de 2.000 millones de euros en 2022.

A nivel social, los videojuegos son una forma de ocio digital que cada vez tiene más adeptos/as en todo el mundo. Según un informe de Statista (2023), la prevalencia de jugadores/as a nivel mundial fue del 70.1% en 2021, reflejando que más de dos tercios de la población mundial juega actualmente a videojuegos. Dentro de Europa (cuya prevalencia es del 67.4%), España se situó por encima de la media con un 69.8%, siendo el séptimo país con

mayor tasa de jugadores/as a nivel europeo. Concretamente, más de 9,5 millones de hombres (53%) y 8,5 millones de mujeres (47%) juegan a videojuegos en España, dedicándoles de media más de 7 horas semanales. Si atendemos al perfil por edad, es probable pensar que el ámbito de los videojuegos está destinado únicamente hacia un público juvenil. Sin embargo, en términos globales, la media de edad de sus usuarios/as es de 32 años, con una experiencia promedio de 21 años jugando a videojuegos (ESA, 2023). En esta línea, un 50% de la población española de entre 6 y 64 años jugaron a videojuegos en 2022, lo que refleja que se trata de un entretenimiento que abarca a personas de todas las edades. A nivel regional, la tendencia es similar, siendo Andalucía una de las comunidades donde más se consolida el mundo *gaming* de nuestro país: la mitad del público *gamer* andaluz dedica entre una y dos horas diarias a los videojuegos, de acuerdo con el estudio III Radiografía del Gaming en España (Vicente, 2023).

Según el informe de Unicef España sobre el impacto de la tecnología en la adolescencia, un 58.7% de los/as jóvenes de entre 11 y 18 años juega habitualmente a videojuegos, siendo alrededor de un 30% los que juegan a diario. Sin embargo, la prevalencia aumenta cuando disminuye el tramo de edad. Según el Anuario del año 2022 sobre la Industria del Videojuego en España realizado por la AEVI (2023), un 79% de niños/as de entre 6 y 11 años juegan a videojuegos actualmente en España, siendo el sector de edad que más los consumen. Además, también existen diferencias evidentes en cuanto al género: el 29.9% de las chicas frente al 86.5% de los chicos recurren a los videojuegos como entretenimiento habitual entre los 11 y los 18 años de edad. Estas diferencias también están presentes a nivel andaluz, en el que, según un estudio realizado por la Consejería de Igualdad, Políticas Sociales y Conciliación de la Junta de Andalucía (2019), un 42.6% de chicos de entre 12 y 13 años juegan diariamente a videojuegos *online*, mientras que un 13.9% de chicas de

esa misma edad son las que lo hacen. Sin embargo, a nivel global, esta brecha se reduce dado que un alto porcentaje de jugadores son mujeres (46%), lo que se traduce en más de un billón de jugadoras, con un crecimiento de un 19% en los últimos años (Newzoo, 2022). Esta creciente incursión de las mujeres en el mundo virtual se traduce en más mujeres *gamers*, más profesionales del sector y más trabajadoras en una industria, la de los videojuegos, dominada esencialmente por hombres, cuya cultura no siempre es sinónimo de un espacio acogedor para ellas (Shaw, 2010).

Pese a constituir prácticamente la mitad del público consumidor habitual de videojuegos, las mujeres aún hoy no tienen un fuerte sentido de identidad como jugadoras ni de pertenencia hacia este entorno (Chess, 2020). En consecuencia, es importante focalizar la atención en este ámbito de entretenimiento desde edades muy tempranas, ya que niñas, jóvenes y mujeres se enfrentan habitualmente a una invisibilización, a unos prejuicios y estereotipos sexistas que han favorecido una evidente masculinización de los videojuegos, dificultando su presencia y, en ocasiones, alejándolas forzosamente de este entorno. Los videojuegos, como medio en constante evolución, están preparados para afrontar y cambiar ese *status quo*, aunque no suceda lo mismo dentro de la comunidad que les rodea.

1.2. El perfil de la comunidad *gamer*

El impacto social de los videojuegos va más allá del simple entretenimiento. La industria de los videojuegos ha logrado una sólida consolidación al combinar las fortalezas de sus competidores: al igual que el cine, cuentan con grandes estudios de diseño y animación que lanzan títulos populares de forma continua; enfatizan el compromiso a largo plazo con sus consumidores/as a través de su fácil acceso y gracias a una variedad inmensa de personajes, historias y géneros; y proporcionan una alta capacidad y calidad de reproducción como ocurre también con las actuales plataformas musicales (Yao, 2018). Además, el ámbito

de los videojuegos ha logrado consolidar su gran impacto cultural. Uno de los fenómenos más relevantes ha sido el desarrollo de una comunidad de jugadores/as que comparten hábitos, comportamientos y actitudes en relación con los videojuegos, denominada cultura *gamer* (Shaw, 2010). Concretamente, un *gamer* es cualquier persona que juega a videojuegos regularmente, con una frecuencia media de ocho horas semanales (Limelight Networks, 2021).

La comunidad *gamer* tiene una gran influencia en la industria del entretenimiento, en la cultura popular y en la sociedad en general. Su perfil es diverso y heterogéneo, pero se pueden identificar algunos rasgos comunes como son la competencia, la cooperación, la creatividad, el aprendizaje y el entretenimiento (Gómez, 2018; Muriel, 2018). En esta línea, es evidente cómo los videojuegos y su comunidad influyen en la construcción de la identidad *gamer*. Desde una perspectiva psicosocial, los videojuegos ejercen un papel muy relevante en la transmisión de valores, estableciendo procesos donde sus *gamers* adoptan roles específicos en función de la competitividad, la estrategia o la narrativa del videojuego, tanto individual como interactuando grupalmente (Gómez, 2018; Granic et al., 2014). No obstante, los videojuegos también pueden generar y mantener la perpetuación de estereotipos (Jenson & De Castell, 2015). Tradicionalmente, el prototipo *gamer* ha sido el de un hombre blanco (Cote, 2017; Gray, 2012; Paaßen et al., 2017), cuya imagen se ha basado en estereotipos de personas solitarias, recluidas y socialmente inadaptadas (Kowert & Quandt, 2018). Ser *gamer* implicaba popularmente una percepción estereotípica de ser adolescente, socialmente ansioso y aislado, mentalmente atormentado y físicamente insano (Kowert et al., 2018), representando el videojuego como un objeto de consumo inmaduro e impulsivo, y vinculando a sus usuarios/as con comportamientos agresivos (Muriel, 2018). Sin embargo, esta representación estereotipada de la figura *gamer* ha sido rechazada por parte de la

comunidad que pretende distanciarse de esta etiqueta, no sintiéndose representada por ese prototipo tan extendido de *nerd* inmaduro y dominante (Paaßen et al., 2017; Taylor, 2012). En contraposición, muchos jugadores masculinos expresan abiertamente una hostilidad evidente hacia quienes no cumplen con ese prototipo *gamer*. De hecho, estos jugadores parecen sentirse amenazados por un movimiento social más amplio e inclusivo, considerando que se les está intentando quitar el espacio y la cultura que, según ellos, han forjado a lo largo del tiempo (Muriel, 2018). En consecuencia, se evidencia una identidad social compartida por este tipo de hombres *gamers* que deriva en una despersonalización particularmente dirigida hacia aquellos/as *gamers* que no se ajustan a las características de ese grupo prototípico. Ese exogrupo acababa siendo estereotipado y discriminado de forma explícita, sobre todo, durante las partidas de videojuegos *online*, lamentablemente acrecentado por el anonimato y la desinhibición presentes en ese entorno. Los resultados de ese tipo de discriminación se manifiestan de manera constante en casos de racismo, homofobia, transfobia o sexismo mientras juegan (Amores, 2023; Cary & Chasteen, 2022; Fox & Tang, 2017a; Vermeulen et al., 2017).

1.3. El entorno normativo e hipermasculinizado de los videojuegos *online*

Es innegable que el desarrollo de Internet ha cambiado la forma de comunicarnos. Los videojuegos han demostrado su capacidad de reforzar unas estructuras sociales, comportamientos, roles y procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje generados durante la interacción de jugadores y jugadoras en este contexto (Molina, 2020). Precisamente, las primeras consolas solo permitían jugadores/as ubicados/as en el mismo lugar, conectados/as a un solo dispositivo (Dunn & Guadagno, 2019). Actualmente, la mayoría de los dispositivos disponen de conexión a Internet, y la expansión de los videojuegos masivos multijugador (MMOG) permite que millones de personas en todo el mundo jueguen de forma simultánea

(Ballard & Welch, 2017; Worth & Book, 2014). Un ejemplo de este desarrollo de los videojuegos *online* es el hecho de que una gran parte de la comunidad *gamer* suele jugar *online* más de 20 horas a la semana (Kowert & Quandt, 2018; Yee, 2006). En este sentido, según la última encuesta de la Entertainment Software Association, alrededor del 83% de *gamers* prefieren jugar habitualmente con otras personas (ESA, 2022). Sin duda, estos datos reflejan cómo los jugadores y jugadoras se han adaptado a esta tendencia con un gran éxito, ya que la popularidad de los videojuegos *online* sigue en continuo crecimiento (AEVI, 2023).

Dado que los videojuegos son eminentemente sociales en cualquiera de sus vertientes (e.g., videojuegos multijugador, en grupo, integrados o debatidos en contextos sociales), también dependerá de quiénes son los «otros» con los que juguemos, cómo suceden las interacciones y cuáles son nuestras percepciones. Como ya ha sido comentado, existe una gran cantidad de mitos dentro de la comunidad *gamer*, donde prevalece aún el estereotipo de que los videojuegos son predominantemente masculinos, a pesar de que la proporción entre jugadores y jugadoras sea realmente similar (Fox & Tang, 2017a).

Investigaciones previas han identificado las características de estas normas masculinas, las cuales integran unos altos niveles de poder, estatus y dominancia, una fortaleza emocional, física y mental, así como una evitación de la feminidad o de las minorías sexuales (Levant et al., 2013; Vescio et al., 2021). La presencia de esta masculinidad en el ámbito de los videojuegos resulta problemática, ya que contribuye a una evidente marginación de las mujeres en este entorno (Blackburn & Scharrer, 2019; Paaßen et al., 2017). Además, dentro de esta problemática es fundamental considerar las características específicas que integran el contexto *online* y que lo distinguen del entorno *offline* a la hora de establecer relaciones y comportarse con los demás, como son el anonimato, la competencia o la desinhibición social (Ruvalcaba et al., 2018). Es por ello por lo que este auge mundial de los

videojuegos *online* ha provocado una creciente preocupación sobre las posibles consecuencias de la discriminación hacia las jugadoras debido a las interacciones producidas dentro de estos espacios sociales; interacciones que pueden dar lugar a diversas formas de sexismo, tales como acoso sexual, comentarios o bromas sexistas contra las jugadoras.

Dado que aún hoy sigue predominando el estereotipo que asocia los videojuegos a un entretenimiento meramente masculino (e.g., Kaye et al., 2019; McLean & Griffiths, 2019; Mendick et al., 2021; Paaßen et al., 2017), los videojuegos *online* también se han descrito como un mundo de hombres (*man's world*; Tosca, 2011), donde las interacciones virtuales con otros jugadores refuerzan dichas normas masculinas (Blackburn & Scharrer, 2019; Seo et al., 2021). En consecuencia, muchas jugadoras también han sido alejadas de la categoría *gamer*. Desafortunadamente, estos esquemas siguen dominando la realidad social dentro del mundo de los videojuegos (al igual que fuera de él), siendo comunes los estereotipos de género y relegando a la mujer a un rol pasivo, tanto como jugadora como trabajadora de la industria (Amores, 2018; Kivijärvi & Katila, 2022; Vanderhoef, 2013). Precisamente, es evidente cómo en la actualidad se visibilizan numerosos casos de acoso y hostilidad cometidos por jugadores masculinos y dirigidos hacia mujeres *gamers*, sobre todo en contextos *online*, los cuales representan un 25% a nivel mundial (ESA, 2022). Ante este contexto, resulta esencial analizar la situación de las mujeres en este ámbito, con el fin de comprender y abordar adecuadamente esta problemática.

2. ACTITUDES SEXISTAS CONTRA LAS MUJERES GAMERS: EVALUACIÓN E IMPACTO PSICOSOCIAL

2.1. El papel de la mujer en el ámbito de los videojuegos

El espacio que ocupan las mujeres en el ámbito de los videojuegos ha sido objeto de debate y reflexión en los últimos años. Como se ha mencionado anteriormente, los videojuegos se han considerado tradicionalmente un territorio dominado por hombres, con normas y estereotipos arraigados que limitan la representación y participación de las mujeres en este medio (e.g., Blackburn & Scharrer, 2019; Salter & Blodget, 2012). Afortunadamente, en las últimas décadas ha habido un incremento significativo de la presencia y participación de mujeres en los videojuegos, desafiando y subvirtiendo estas narrativas establecidas. No obstante, esta incursión no está siendo sencilla. El aumento exponencial de mujeres como jugadoras se ha percibido como una amenaza por parte de gran parte de la comunidad *gamer* masculina, convirtiéndose en un entorno donde muchas mujeres se sienten habitualmente discriminadas y rechazadas (Amores, 2023; International Game Developers Association [IGDA], 2015). Además, a los problemas que encuentran las mujeres para entrar en este medio, se les unen las dificultades que tienen para prosperar una vez que están dentro. Una muestra de ello es cómo las mujeres todavía representan menos del 20% del total de las personas dedicadas en España al desarrollo de videojuegos (AEVI, 2023), no superando el 14% en industrias tan consolidadas como la de Estados Unidos, o Japón, cuya cifra es aún de un 16% (Trivi, 2018).

Esta naturaleza excluyente de la comunidad *gamer* se basa principalmente en los estereotipos y expectativas que sostienen contra las mujeres, algo que además implica consecuencias negativas para ellas (Amores, 2023; Kuss et al., 2022). En este sentido, la

literatura psicosocial ha mostrado que la habilidad y el desempeño de las mujeres en tareas y/o contextos masculinizados se ven mermados por el efecto de la amenaza del estereotipo que recae sobre ellas, el cual alude al efecto negativo que los estereotipos grupales pueden tener en el rendimiento de los miembros del grupo; en este caso, de las jugadoras (e.g., Kaye & Pennington, 2016; Kaye et al., 2017; Vermeulen et al., 2016). Diversos estudios sostienen que evocar estereotipos como «juegas como una niña» o «las mujeres no saben jugar» tiene un impacto negativo en el rendimiento de las jugadoras a lo largo de una partida de videojuegos (Kaye & Pennington, 2016; Vermeulen et al., 2016). En esta línea, un estudio llevado a cabo por Kaye y Pennington (2016) reveló que ser considerada como una «mal *gamer*» conllevaba un peor rendimiento en las jugadoras en la realización de pruebas experimentales de asociación implícita, además de ser percibidas como menos competentes que sus análogos masculinos (Kaye & Pennington, 2016; Kaye et al., 2017). Estos estereotipos, que se ven normalizados desde la infancia, también servirían como una posible justificación en los niños, jóvenes y hombres para perpetrar un trato denigrante y sexista hacia las mujeres a lo largo del tiempo (Amores, 2023).

Esta categorización inferior y la diferenciación de género existentes no solo se refleja habitualmente en cualquier entorno no virtual, sino que también determinan y perpetúan las relaciones establecidas, por ejemplo, durante las interacciones que se producen en cualquier partida *online*, ya que los roles más limitados y pasivos en un videojuego (i.e., apoyo o *support*) suelen estar reservados para las mujeres (Fox et al., 2018; Kuznekoff & Rose, 2013; McLean & Griffiths, 2018; Ruvalcaba et al., 2018; Seo et al., 2021; Tang et al., 2020). Además, se les exige demostrar continuamente una experiencia, interés y conocimiento sobre los videojuegos que no les son exigidos a los hombres (e.g., Amores, 2023; Kelly et al., 2023; Paaßen et al., 2017), siendo denigradas con etiquetas como «falsas chicas *geek*», «musarañas»,

«perras» o «rompepelotas» (*fake geek girls*, *shrew*, *bitch*, o *ballbreaker*; Bertozzi, 2008; Tang et al., 2020) y acusadas de tener motivaciones exclusivamente de índole sexual al pretender participar en este entorno (Richard, 2017).

Todos estos arquetipos en la comunidad *gamer* demuestran cómo este entorno ha adoptado y normalizado las estructuras patriarcales tradicionales (Gray et al., 2017; Paaßen et al., 2017), señalando a las mujeres como una amenaza potencial para el *status quo* masculino (Betts et al., 2019; Jenson & De Castell, 2013). Asimismo, el papel de las mujeres en el mundo de los videojuegos se ve determinado por un entorno hostil donde existe una clara jerarquía de género que las limita y las infravalora. Ante esta situación, el sexismo comienza a ser un problema frecuente en el ámbito de los videojuegos, el cual afecta no solo a las propias jugadoras, sino también a las trabajadoras, a las desarrolladoras o a las creadoras de contenido, quienes se sienten obligadas reivindicar su papel dentro del mundo de los videojuegos y a demostrar continuamente que se desmarcan de todos los estereotipos de género que la comunidad *gamer* les impone (Amores, 2023).

2.2. Conceptualización de las actitudes sexistas en el entorno *offline*

Para una mejor comprensión de cómo las creencias o actitudes sexistas se derivan de roles y estereotipos de género, resulta esencial destacar la perspectiva aportada por la Teoría del Sexismo Ambivalente (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Ramos et al., 2018). El sexismo, tal y como lo conceptualizan Glick y Fiske (1996), se caracteriza por su ambivalencia, ya que alberga una antipatía sexista con sentimientos positivos hacia las mujeres. Esto conduce a la distinción de dos tipos de sexismo claramente diferenciados, pero interrelacionados: el sexismo hostil y el sexismo benévolo. El sexismo hostil se caracteriza por expresar abiertamente afecto negativo y hostilidad hacia las mujeres, principalmente hacia aquellas que no se adhieren a los roles de feminidad impuestos y que, en este sentido, cuestionan la *superioridad* masculina. Esta

hostilidad se estructura en torno a tres ideas: paternalismo dominador (i.e., en el que las mujeres son más débiles e inferiores que los hombres y, por tanto, necesitan ser cuidadas), la diferenciación de género competitiva (i.e., en la que los hombres tienen un mayor estatus y prestigio que las mujeres) y la hostilidad heterosexual (i.e., la cual se basa en que las mujeres son peligrosas para los hombres en función de su sexualidad). En este tercer componente se da una dualidad en la percepción de las mujeres, en la que los hombres experimentan atracción o repulsión según si se las ve como figuras asexuales, como esposas, madres o hijas, o como mujeres que representan un riesgo sexual para los hombres (Moya & Expósito, 2008).

Por su parte, el sexismo benévolo se basa en actitudes condescendientes y aparentemente positivas, en las que las mujeres son percibidas como seres inferiores y débiles a las que hay que proteger (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Aunque se las considera de forma estereotipada y relegadas a ciertos roles, en el sexismo benévolo existe un cierto tono afectivo positivo para el perceptor debido a que estas actitudes suelen suscitar conductas de ayuda o de búsqueda de intimidad (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Moya & Expósito, 2008). Al igual que en el sexismo hostil, dentro del subtipo benévolo, a su vez, se distinguen tres componentes: paternalismo protector (i.e., las mujeres necesitan ser protegidas por un hombre que las cuida), diferenciación de género complementaria (i.e. las mujeres presentan características positivas, incluso más que los hombres, y que se complementan con las de ellos) e intimidad heterosexual (i.e., las mujeres son concebidas como un complemento afectivo y amoroso debido a que los hombres están incompletos sin ellas).

El sexismo hostil se ha asociado con percepciones negativas sobre las mujeres (Glick et al., 1997), con una mayor tolerancia al acoso (Diehl et al., 2012) y con tendencias sexualmente agresivas de los hombres hacia las mujeres (e.g., Durán et al., 2018; Viki et al., 2006). Por su parte, el sexismo benévolo se ha relacionado con la justificación de la violencia

sexual contra las mujeres en algunas circunstancias específicas (e.g., Abrams et al., 2003). En este sentido, cabe destacar que el sexismo está especialmente relacionado con las tendencias sexualmente agresivas de los hombres hacia las mujeres cuando el comportamiento de estas transgrede los roles tradicionales de género (e.g., Abrams et al., 2003; Masser et al., 2006). Así, el sexismo hostil se ha relacionado con actitudes y comportamientos negativos hacia mujeres que no se ajustan a los roles esperados de su género (i.e., mujeres feministas), mientras que el sexismo benévolo se ha asociado con creencias más positivas hacia las mujeres que sí se ajustan a los roles de género tradicionales (e.g., Luna-Bernal & Lacarocena, 2017; Masser & Abrams, 2004; Masser et al., 2006).

Los hallazgos presentados hasta el momento sugieren que las mujeres están expuestas a experiencias especialmente negativas y discriminatorias, diferentes a las que normalmente viven los hombres (Duggan, 2014), simplemente por el género al que pertenecen. Si bien las aproximaciones teóricas planteadas tradicionalmente en el entorno *offline*, como es el caso de la Teoría del Sexismo Ambivalente, pueden ayudar a explicar cómo los roles percibidos de las mujeres en tales contextos contribuyen a las percepciones discriminatorias que se tienen sobre las jugadoras (Kelly et al., 2023), el entorno de videojuegos *online* presenta unas particularidades únicas que le diferencian esencialmente del *offline* (Ruvalcaba et al., 2018). Estas particularidades, como se ha mencionado anteriormente, se derivan de las características propias del entorno de videojuego y pueden limitar la aplicabilidad de dichas teorías en este contexto. Esto enfatiza la necesidad de profundizar en si el sexismo presente en entornos *online*, como es el de los videojuegos, perpetúa el que sufren las mujeres en el contexto *offline* (Fox et al., 2015).

2.3. Actitudes sexistas en el entorno *online*: sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers*

A nivel social, es evidente que el sexismo está presente en cualquier ámbito o contexto en el que nos encontremos, siendo también relevante en el ámbito que nos ocupa, como es el de los videojuegos *online*. El sexismo en los videojuegos *online* se desarrolla principalmente a través de interacciones y comportamientos de hostilidad hacia las jugadoras. Como resultado, esta hostilidad se normaliza como una parte intrínseca de la experiencia de juego y se minimizan las posibles consecuencias que puedan tener para las jugadoras (Vergel et al., 2023; Ratan, 2020). En este sentido, existen numerosos estudios que reflejan la prevalencia del sexismo sufrido por las mujeres *gamers*. Por ejemplo, el estudio llevado a cabo por Brehm (2013) mostró que el 63.6% de las mujeres encuestadas sobre sus experiencias como jugadoras informaron haber experimentado sexismo en el contexto *gamer*. En la misma línea, el 63% de las mujeres *gamers* que participaron en un estudio realizado por Matthew (2012) afirmaron haber sufrido acoso en algún momento mientras jugaban, y el 35,8% de ellas incluso abandonaron temporalmente los videojuegos a causa de estos incidentes sexistas. De acuerdo con estos resultados, se estima que casi la mitad de las jugadoras (49%) han experimentado regularmente sexismo hostil mientras jugaban, incluyendo hechos como ser objeto de discriminación o soportar continuas bromas sexistas (e.g., Gray, 2012; Amores, 2023).

Ante esta preocupante problemática, resulta importante profundizar en las posibles explicaciones sobre la prevalencia de los comportamientos sexistas que sufren habitualmente las mujeres *gamers* en videojuegos *online*, las cuales pueden ser un fiel reflejo de los hallazgos obtenidos en la literatura *offline*. Por un lado, las creencias sexistas que los jugadores masculinos mantienen habitualmente en contextos *offline* pueden reproducirse y reforzarse cuando juegan e interactúan *online* (Jenson & De Castell, 2015; McClintock, 2015; Seo et al.,

2021). Dado que cuando una mujer es jugadora habitual es probable que sea percibida como poco convencional o tradicional, tal y como ocurre en el ámbito *offline*, es plausible que las creencias sexistas actúen como predictor de los actos sexistas que ocurren asiduamente en partidas de videojuegos *online* (Seo et al., 2021). En concreto, los jugadores masculinos con mayores niveles en sexismo hostil mantienen más estereotipos contra la participación de las mujeres en los videojuegos, siendo también un predictor de acoso durante las partidas de videojuegos *online* (Fox & Potocki, 2016). Además, Fox et al. (2015) encontraron que las personas que expresaban un mayor sexismo hostil adoptaban también un comportamiento sexista contra las mujeres en un entorno de videojuegos *online*. De hecho, y en línea con lo planteado anteriormente en la literatura *offline*, existiría una similitud entre el sexismo hostil y el sexismo benévolo en las percepciones de competencia atribuidas a las mujeres *gamers*, ya que ambas formas de sexismo consideran a las mujeres como menos competentes que los hombres, tal y como destacaron Ramos y cols. (2018) siguiendo el modelo de contenido de los estereotipos (SCM). En esta línea, Kelly et al. (2023) examinaron la relación entre el sexismo y la destreza atribuida a jugadoras de videojuegos, encontrando una menor percepción de competencia que los hombres y revelando que, concretamente, el sexismo hostil predecía menores percepciones de calidez sobre las mujeres. Por otro lado, estas creencias, que sirven a los hombres para justificar ese tipo de comportamientos, se apoyan también en las características que definen al entorno virtual, el cual favorece la perpetuación de este sexismo. En línea con lo mencionado anteriormente, hay jugadores que asumen que Internet es un espacio virtual en el que es sencillo crearse un perfil anónimo, encontrar y acosar a cualquier objetivo femenino, con una sensación de impunidad dentro del mundo *gamer* y con una plena normalización de dichos actos que resultan preocupantes (Amores, 2023).

Por todo ello, y a pesar de las similitudes que el entorno *online* comparte con el entorno *offline*, es fundamental analizar las dinámicas específicas que tienen lugar en los contextos *online* que fomentan, posibilitan y perpetúan el sexismo y el acoso contra las mujeres *gamers* (Henry & Powell, 2018). La existencia de estas actitudes sexistas se sustenta en los esfuerzos de los jugadores por preservar la identidad *gamer* masculina y, de esta forma, mantener intactos los límites de la identidad de género en el mundo de los videojuegos (Seo et al., 2021; Vermeulen et al., 2017). En consecuencia, los objetivos planteados en la presente tesis doctoral se dirigen a ampliar el emergente estudio del sexismo en un entorno *online* como es el de los videojuegos, en el que la proliferación de comunidades *gamers* y la creciente participación de jugadoras aportan el contexto de esta problemática (Easpaig, 2018).

2.4. Comportamientos sexistas en el entorno de videojuegos *online*

Como ha sido mencionado, es bastante frecuente la perpetración de comportamientos sexistas contra las jugadoras en el entorno de videojuegos *online* (e.g., Tang et al., 2020). En cierta medida, este tipo de comportamientos se ven impulsados por el anonimato y la desinhibición que ofrece el entorno, lo que desencadena que los jugadores masculinos conciban estos comportamientos como generalizados y aceptables (Ratan, 2020). En este sentido, existen evidencias sobre la prevalencia de los comportamientos más habituales que sufren las jugadoras. Por ejemplo, un 57% de mujeres que juegan habitualmente a videojuegos *online* han sufrido algún tipo de acoso, un 54% recibió peticiones de favores sexuales y el 22.4% de ellas recibió chistes sobre violaciones mientras jugaban (McLean & Griffiths, 2019). Por su parte, Fox y Tang (2017b) entrevistaron a 293 mujeres *gamers* con el objetivo de analizar sus experiencias de acoso mientras jugaban a videojuegos *online* y encontraron que el 10% de los incidentes identificados fueron claramente hostiles (e.g., «vete a la cocina») e incluso calificados como acoso sexual (e.g.,

«enséñame tus pechos»). De forma análoga, otros estudios también pusieron de manifiesto estas experiencias vividas por las jugadoras, las cuales informaban haber recibido comentarios sexistas similares a los anteriormente destacados (e.g., «hazme un sándwich», «es solo una chica»; Harrison et al. 2016; Thacker & Griffiths, 2012). Asimismo, un reciente estudio realizado con 900 mujeres *gamers* en los Estados Unidos, Alemania y China reveló que el 65% de ellas había experimentado *gatekeeping*, es decir, actitudes sexistas y comentarios que sugerían que eran *menos gamers* por ser mujeres (Reach Insights, 2021).

Es necesario resaltar que las consecuencias de los incidentes sexistas sufridos por las mujeres *gamers* van más allá de abandonar una partida o de dejar de participar en videojuegos *online*. Así, la literatura especializada ha mostrado que las jugadoras experimentan ansiedad y síntomas depresivos (Cote, 2017; Fox et al., 2018; McLean & Griffiths, 2019), además de sufrir sentimientos de estrés, soledad y un impacto negativo en su identidad como *gamers* (Kaye & Pennington, 2016; McLean & Griffiths, 2019). Estas experiencias negativas en los videojuegos *online* conllevan también una percepción de indefensión en las jugadoras ante la incesante prevalencia de estos incidentes, las cuales llegan a adoptar estrategias de afrontamiento como ocultar de forma rutinaria su condición de mujer, evitar la comunicación con otros jugadores a lo largo de una partida *online* (Fox & Tang, 2017b; Kwisoon et al., 2020; McLean & Griffiths, 2019; Reach Insights, 2021) o dejar permanentemente de jugar (Cote, 2017; Fox & Tang, 2017b; McLean & Griffiths, 2019).

Una vez que el comportamiento sexista se establece como norma grupal, los miembros del grupo se vuelven insensibles a él y es más probable que muestren comportamientos sexistas para sentirse aceptados y valorados por sus pares, como señala la Teoría de la Identidad Social (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Seo et al., 2021). Es decir, si un hombre *gamer* se identifica como parte de un grupo (i.e., en este caso, de la comunidad *gamer*),

categoriza a las mujeres como individuos extraños y las percibe de forma homogénea, como parte de un exogrupo al que despersonaliza y rechaza debido, precisamente, a esa elevada saliencia de las normas grupales (Tajfel & Turner, 2004; Kordyaka et al., 2019).

Por otro lado, diversas investigaciones sostienen que las características intrínsecas del propio entorno de videojuegos *online* también favorecen la expresión de estas reacciones negativas contra las jugadoras. En concreto, la competitividad inherente a los videojuegos y el anonimato de las interacciones se consideran elementos clave que promueven manifestaciones hostiles hacia las mujeres (Breuer et al., 2015; Ruvalcaba et al., 2018). Es más, el efecto de desinhibición *online* que se produce en este entorno puede manifestarse de forma tóxica, fomentando el sexismo en las interacciones virtuales e incluyendo comportamientos como insultos, troleo y ciberacoso (e.g., Dillon & Bushman, 2015; Vergel et al., 2023).

Asimismo, las actitudes juegan un papel destacado para explicar el origen de comportamientos sexistas, las cuales influyen tanto en la ocurrencia de este tipo de conductas como en los juicios que se emiten sobre incidentes de acoso sexual (Fox & Tang., 2014; Tang et al., 2020). Por ejemplo, en contextos *offline*, la adhesión a creencias sexistas hostiles se ha relacionado con la proclividad de los hombres a cometer agresiones sexuales (Bohner et al., 2022; Eyssel et al., 2009; Masser et al., 2006; Viki et al., 2006). Por lo tanto, es plausible considerar que esta tendencia también podría manifestarse con el apoyo hacia las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers*. De hecho, diversas investigaciones han mostrado la relación existente entre actitudes sexistas en los videojuegos, la elaboración de juicios sobre incidentes de acoso sexual y actitudes de apoyo a la violación (e.g., Burgess et al., 2007; Dill & Thill, 2007; Tang et al., 2020). No obstante, hasta el momento, la investigación en este ámbito es limitada, por lo que resulta necesario considerar los estudios llevados a cabo en el contexto *offline* como punto de referencia.

2.5. Percepción social de incidentes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers*

La influencia de la ideología sexista es sumamente notable en las evaluaciones y juicios que realizan las personas, así como en los comportamientos que posteriormente llevan a cabo. En este contexto, una de las teorías clásicas fundamentales vinculadas al estudio de las actitudes ha sido la Teoría de la Atribución, propuesta por Heider (1958). Esta teoría se centra en analizar cómo las personas buscan explicaciones causales sobre el comportamiento de los demás, considerando factores internos y externos, y cómo estas inferencias impactan en la percepción que tenemos de nuestro entorno. El objetivo principal detrás de esos análisis es lograr una comprensión del mundo y las relaciones que en él se establecen, para así predecirlo y controlarlo (Heider, 1958). Un aspecto que señala Heider es que, si la situación que percibimos es habitual, estos procesos atributivos no se ponen en marcha. En su lugar, actuarían una serie de esquemas y creencias estereotipadas, las cuales guían la respuesta sin necesidad de reflexión, llevando muchas veces a una respuesta inadecuada. Por el contrario, si la situación es incoherente o generadora de incertidumbre, la persona llevaría a cabo un proceso atributivo que le ayude a explicar y comprender la situación para, de esta forma, emitir una respuesta (e.g., Deschamps, 1983; Weiner, 1986).

Siguiendo este análisis, es evidente que tanto las actitudes como los procesos atributivos influirán en la forma de evaluar diversas problemáticas sociales. Por ejemplo, las atribuciones causales que las personas realicen sobre incidentes de índole sexual (i.e., culpabilidad de una víctima de violación o exoneración de responsabilidad al agresor) se verían afectadas en función de sus creencias y actitudes. Para poder constatarlo y así analizar los juicios que las personas realizan ante este tipo de problemáticas sociales, como la violencia sexual, la literatura psicosocial ha hecho uso de la metodología de escenarios (Abrams et al., 2003; Bohner et al., 2009; Bouffard & Miller, 2023; Persson & Dhingra, 2022). En dichos

escenarios se describen episodios ficticios de agresiones sexuales en los que se suelen manipular variables de interés en la investigación, tales como el comportamiento de la víctima y del agresor, o la relación existente entre ambos (e.g., Bieneck & Krahé, 2011; Eyssel & Bohner, 2011; Gravelin et al., 2019; Persson & Dhingra, 2022; Temkin & Krahé, 2008). Estos estudios han obtenido como hallazgos principales la atribución de una mayor culpabilidad a la víctima, una mayor minimización de la violencia ocurrida y una menor responsabilidad del agresor, especialmente en aquellas personas que presentaban una mayor adhesión a actitudes de apoyo a la violación o con puntuaciones más altas en sexismo (e.g., Canto et al., 2014; Duran et al., 2010; Emmers-Sommer, 2017; Gravelin et al., 2019; Persson et al., 2018; Powers et al., 2015; Persson & Dhingra, 2022, Rollero & Tartaglia, 2019; Skinner, 2022; Yamawaki, 2009), además de asociarse a una mayor proclividad a infringir violencia sexual (Abrams et al., 2003; Durán et al., 2018; Thomae & Viki, 2013). De forma análoga, en contextos *online* también se ha aplicado esta metodología, por ejemplo, para el estudio del cibersexismo y del ciberacoso (Becker et al., 2021; Fox et al., 2015; Skinner, 2022). En concreto, en el estudio de Becker et al. (2021), los escenarios describían situaciones de acoso y sexismo *online* de un chico hacia una chica a través de redes sociales, manipulando el grado de relación previa entre ambos (i.e., desde ser desconocidos hasta ser compañeros de trabajo). Los resultados principales mostraron que las personas con mayores puntuaciones en sexismo hostil percibían en menor medida el incidente descrito en términos de cibersexismo o ciberacoso y lo consideraban como socialmente aceptable.

Siguiendo la analogía entre los entornos *offline* y *online*, la percepción de los incidentes sexistas puede verse influida no solo por la ideología del perceptor, sino también por el comportamiento de la víctima del incidente descrito (e.g., Hammond et al., 2011; Leverick et al., 2020). En este sentido, la literatura psicosocial sobre la violencia contra la

mujer en el contexto *offline* ha revelado que las mujeres cuyo comportamiento difiere de los roles tradicionalmente asociados a las víctimas (e.g., víctimas de violación que se encuentran bajo los efectos del alcohol, un hecho que las aleja del estereotipo de una víctima de violación *real*) son más propensas a ser culpabilizadas por la violencia experimentada (e.g., Grubb & Turner, 2012; Romero-Sánchez et al., 2018; Sáez et al., 2020; Simms et al., 2007). Además, se han encontrado resultados similares en los juicios realizados por perceptores ante situaciones en las que la mujer se aleja del prototipo de género asociado a su grupo (Kaiser et al., 2022; Goh et al., 2022). De esta forma, es menos probable que las experiencias de acoso sexual sufridas por las mujeres sean percibidas como tal cuando se alejan del prototipo de feminidad (i.e., rasgos e intereses tradicionalmente femeninos), siendo asignados, a su vez, unos castigos menos severos a sus perpetradores (Goh et al., 2022).

Siguiendo esta línea, es probable que cuando una mujer *gamer* se identifica como feminista y lo demuestra mediante acciones dirigidas a promover la igualdad de género en el ámbito de los videojuegos, esto también la distancie de los estereotipos de feminidad y de los roles tradicionales esperados para su género. De esta forma, la comunidad *gamer* presentaría unas expectativas de género similares a las presentes en el mundo *offline*, de tal forma que se espera que las mujeres *gamers* sean sumisas, adoptando para ello un papel secundario en las partidas en lugar de ser antagónicas o activas en el juego (Ivory, 2014). En línea con estas ideas, investigaciones como las de Gray (2012) y Fox y Tang (2014) han analizado numerosas interacciones ocurridas en el contexto de videojuegos *online* entre jugadores y jugadoras, concluyendo que las mujeres normalmente son consideradas extrañas, considerando su participación como una trasgresión del comportamiento normativo que se espera de ellas, especialmente si no cumplen el rol asignado por los jugadores en el videojuego (Taylor, 2006). En consecuencia, parte de la comunidad *gamer* masculina percibe la desviación de estas

normas como un acto que puede ser castigado (Ivory, 2014). Además, considera que los movimientos feministas para la igualdad de género en los videojuegos son una amenaza y, por ello, ha intensificado los esfuerzos para silenciar a estas mujeres (Buyukozturk, 2022). Asimismo, resulta evidente que el sexismo que esta parte de la comunidad *gamer* inflige a las mujeres se intensifique cuando las jugadoras defienden públicamente sus derechos o expresan críticas feministas (Vermeulen et al., 2017).

La teoría de los estados de expectativa (Berger et al., 2006) sirve como marco de referencia a la hora de analizar las causas por las que dichos comportamientos no normativos a menudo producen consecuencias sociales negativas para las mujeres *gamers* (Taylor, 2006). De acuerdo con esta teoría, los hombres son percibidos generalmente con mayor competencia y estatus que las mujeres debido a los estereotipos socioculturales establecidos, lo que los lleva a manifestar expectativas de dominio y liderazgo, además de anticipar el comportamiento y las interacciones de los demás de forma coherente a los roles tradicionales establecidos (Berger et al., 2006). Siguiendo esta teoría, si una jugadora excede los límites de los roles esperados para ella como mujer, será castigada socialmente por violar dichas expectativas. En este sentido, Salter y Blodgett (2012) señalan que a las *gamers* se les asignan normalmente funciones pasivas y limitadas en entornos de videojuegos *online*, castigándolas cuando no se ajustan a ellas. De hecho, aquellas mujeres que se quejan de este tipo de discriminación suelen ser menospreciadas o acosadas por parte de hombres *gamers*, incluso a través de medidas tan excluyentes como la creación de equipos antifemeninos o la eliminación de espacios seguros para las jugadoras (Salter & Blodgett, 2012).

La constatación de la discriminación sexista que experimentan las mujeres y las actitudes sexistas contra ellas ha conllevado que un número creciente de jugadoras desafíen el *status quo* prevalente en el entorno de los videojuegos (Amores, 2023; Mortensen, 2018).

Por ejemplo, Anita Sarkeesian, conocida comunicadora, jugadora y activista feminista, creó una campaña para visibilizar el sexismo y los prejuicios sufridos habitualmente en el ámbito de los videojuegos. Este movimiento se convirtió en toda una revolución social al poner de manifiesto el persistente sexismo al que suelen enfrentarse las mujeres en el mundo de los videojuegos. Debido a todo ello, Sarkeesian sufrió un acoso incesante y fue atacada por jugadores que creían que era injustamente crítica, recibiendo miles de amenazas de muerte y violación (Burgess et al., 2017). Esta campaña en su contra, conocida como *#Gamergate* (Burgess et al., 2017; Burnay et al., 2019; Givens, 2015; Gray et al., 2017; Mortensen, 2018), se basaba en ideologías antifeministas y sexistas, y no solo tuvo como objetivo a Sarkeesian, sino que se dirigió a todas aquellas mujeres involucradas en la industria y en el análisis de videojuegos cuya opinión difiriera de la corriente tradicionalmente dominante (e.g., Givens, 2015; Rawlinson, 2014; Ringo, 2014; Tsukayama, 2014). En respuesta ante esta persecución, numerosas mujeres se organizaron en asociaciones feministas con el fin de reivindicar su situación, ser visibilizadas y, de esta forma, enfrentarse al sexismo y al acoso ejercidos constantemente contra ellas (Harvey & Fisher, 2015).

De acuerdo con estas iniciativas, la literatura psicosocial ha conceptualizado la realización de demandas grupales y acciones de protesta para responder a situaciones de injusticia, discriminación o trato desigual con el término de acciones colectivas (e.g., Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Estas acciones se definen como cualquier comportamiento voluntario realizado, ya sea públicamente a nivel grupal (e.g., participar en una manifestación contra una situación social injusta) o de forma privada e individual (e.g., firmar una petición para defender a un grupo discriminado) con la intención de subvertir el *status quo* imperante y mejorar las condiciones sociales del grupo oprimido (Radke et al., 2016; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Las acciones colectivas se pueden clasificar en función de

dos dimensiones: (a) si las acciones realizadas se adhieren o no a las normas sociales (i.e., acción normativa vs. no normativa); y (b) si estas acciones involucran o no violencia (Orazani & Leidner, 2019; Shuman et al., 2020; Tausch et al., 2011). En este sentido, las personas con una mayor motivación para participar en acciones colectivas serán, precisamente, las que se identifican en mayor medida con la ideología feminista (Radke et al., 2018; Weis et al., 2018). No obstante, aunque la investigación sobre acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género en el contexto *offline* ha arrojado numerosos resultados en esa línea (e.g., Good, 2019; Orazani & Leidner, 2019; Shuman et al., 2020; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2008), hasta la fecha no se había abordado el estudio de tales acciones en el entorno de videojuegos. Es por ello que la presente tesis doctoral supone un avance en la literatura existente hasta la fecha al analizar la percepción de mujeres *gamers* que se declaran feministas y que, en consecuencia, emprenden acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género.

Las investigaciones previas en contextos *offline* también han encontrado que cuando las mujeres se identifican como feministas se exponen a un rechazo y a una evidente discriminación sexista (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997; Reid & Purcell, 2004). En este sentido, el feminismo se enfrenta frecuentemente a percepciones erróneas basadas en creencias sexistas arraigadas tradicionalmente en nuestra sociedad, en la que la masculinidad hegemónica juega un papel fundamental. Estas interpretaciones perciben el feminismo como una amenaza al orden social establecido, en el que se teme que las mujeres puedan llegar a dominar a los hombres al desafiar su papel tradicionalmente subordinado (Braithwaite, 2014; Connell, 1987; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Esta dinámica también se refleja habitualmente en la comunidad *gamer*: una parte de los jugadores expresa su hostilidad sexista hacia las mujeres que sensibilizan sobre las desigualdades de género presentes en este contexto, o que se identifican con una ideología feminista, etiquetándolas como «feministas aguafiestas» al

pretender sabotear la diversión masculina con este tipo de reivindicaciones (*feminist killjoys*; Braithwaite, 2014). Según esta concepción sexista, el hecho de que una mujer *gamer* se adhiera a la ideología feminista la convierte en una figura de odio por el mero hecho de visibilizar las situaciones de sexismo que sufre y desafiar la corriente masculina imperante. Como resultado, son percibidas como intencionalmente disruptivas y son públicamente denigradas, lo que las lleva, incluso, a sentirse culpables por dañar la imagen de la comunidad *gamer* a la que, en realidad, querrían pertenecer. Una pertenencia que se basase en la libertad, sin este tipo de impedimentos sexistas (Ahmed, 2010; Braithwaite, 2014; Chess & Shaw, 2015).

Los resultados presentados hasta ahora sugieren que las jugadoras, por el solo hecho de ser mujeres, se enfrentan a una serie de incidentes de índole sexista que difieren mucho de la experiencia de juego habitual para los hombres. Además, la percepción de estos incidentes sexistas puede verse influida no solo en función de la ideología del perceptor (por ejemplo, el nivel de adhesión de la persona hacia actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers*), sino también por el comportamiento de la víctima del incidente (por ejemplo, una jugadora feminista que desafía el rol de género que tradicionalmente se espera de ella). En línea con lo que se ha destacado a lo largo de este apartado, la distancia percibida entre el comportamiento de una mujer y lo que se espera de ella según el prototipo de género asociado a su grupo también podría influir en el grado en que se la considera o no víctima de sexismo en el contexto *online* (Kaiser et al., 2022). Esto enfatiza la necesidad de examinar la influencia que tendrían estas actitudes en las percepciones y juicios que se realizan sobre las jugadoras y los incidentes sexistas que sufren (e.g., Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023; Fox & Tang, 2014; Fox & Potocki, 2016) y, en definitiva, dedicar una mayor investigación sobre el sexismo dirigido

hacia las mujeres *gamers*, cuyas formas de evaluación hasta el momento habían sido parciales o escasas, como se detallará a continuación.

2.6. Evaluación de las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers*

Estudios previos han destacado la importancia de analizar el papel de las actitudes en la percepción y realización de conductas sexistas en el ámbito de los videojuegos *online* (e.g., Fox & Tang, 2014; McCullough et al., 2020; Tang et al., 2020). Sin embargo, la mayoría de estas investigaciones han utilizado medidas generales de sexismo para analizar las actitudes en este contexto (e.g., «Inventario de Sexismo Ambivalente» en Tang et al., 2020; «Sex-Role Orientation Scale» en Breuer et al., 2015; o «Internalized Misogyny Scale» en McCullough et al., 2020). Por ejemplo, en un estudio de Stermer y Burkley (2012) se administró el Inventario de Sexismo Ambivalente (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1997) para evaluar el sexismo de los jugadores, mientras que en otra investigación de Fox y Potocki (2016) utilizaron la subescala de sexismo hostil de ese mismo instrumento. En esta línea, estudios más recientes que evaluaban sexismo, acoso y comportamientos tóxicos contra las mujeres en videojuegos *online* (Tang et al., 2020) también han incluido la subescala de sexismo hostil, llegando incluso a administrarse algunos ítems aislados de dichas escalas sin especificar los criterios utilizados para su selección. Por ejemplo, en un estudio longitudinal sobre el uso de videojuegos, Breuer et al. (2015) midieron actitudes sexistas de los jugadores usando únicamente tres ítems reformulados para la traducción al alemán de la Sex-Role Orientation Scale (Brogan & Kutner, 1976). En otra investigación, el sexismo en los videojuegos se evaluó a través de una pregunta general de un solo ítem: «Una mujer está hecha principalmente para hacer y criar niños» (*A woman is made mainly for making and raising children*; Bègue et al., 2017). Estas investigaciones, al hacer uso de ítems que tienen como objetivo evaluar un constructo en un contexto (*offline*) alejado del entorno del que ahora se pretenden aplicar (*online*), introducen

un importante sesgo en la evaluación que, además, podría afectar de manera relevante a los resultados. De hecho, este modo de proceder conlleva una imprecisión conceptual a la hora de definir con rigor el constructo diana y que, en este caso, no es otro que el de «sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers*». En línea con esta cuestión, un reciente estudio cuyo objetivo era evaluar la relación entre actitudes sexistas y la competencia percibida de las jugadoras a lo largo de una partida de videojuegos (Kelly et al., 2023), también destaca las limitaciones que provoca el hecho de usar instrumentos de sexismo *general* en el ámbito de los videojuegos. En concreto, se subraya cómo la medida derivada de la Teoría del Sexismo Ambivalente (Glick & Fiske, 1996), podría suponer una clara falta de sensibilidad a la hora de evaluar el sexismo en un dominio tan específico como es el de los videojuegos.

Por otro lado, cabe señalar también que en los escasos estudios en los que se han utilizado algunos ítems que abordaban el constructo «sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers*» tampoco se ha reportado evidencia empírica de su adecuación psicométrica. Por ejemplo, Fox y Tang (2014) administraron ítems sobre creencias sexistas y acoso en videojuegos extrayendo únicamente indicadores procedentes de recursos virtuales como un *blog*, pero no proporcionaron evidencia alguna de la validez de constructo de sus puntuaciones, ni tampoco sobre otras propiedades psicométricas generales. Además, en cuanto a las evidencias externas de validez, no mencionan si existieron diferencias entre hombres y mujeres en las puntuaciones obtenidas. En esta línea, tampoco aportan información sobre si han realizado análisis de la estructura interna a través de procedimientos confirmatorios, o sobre la invarianza de la medida través de grupos de relevancia, ni otras evidencias al respecto de su adecuación.

En definitiva, como ya se ha mencionado, el contexto *online* —en el cual se integran los videojuegos *online*— tiene características específicas que lo distinguen del entorno *offline*

a la hora de establecer relaciones y comportarse con los demás, como son el anonimato, la competencia o la desinhibición social (Ruvalcaba et al., 2018). Estas importantes particularidades deben tenerse en cuenta a la hora de medir las actitudes sexistas en este contexto, dado que su ámbito de estudio se ha centrado tradicionalmente en el entorno *offline*, por lo que será crucial subsanar las carencias metodológicas de investigaciones previas. Desde un punto de vista psicométrico, los intentos realizados para capturar las actitudes sexistas en los videojuegos *online* no pueden considerarse adecuados, ya que no cuentan con el suficiente respaldo científico y presentan numerosas limitaciones como las que se han destacado hasta el momento. En esta línea, cabe destacar la ausencia de una definición rigurosa del constructo «sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers*» y, por tanto, la carencia de las mínimas evidencias de validez de contenido sobre los ítems utilizados para evaluar dichas actitudes. Esto genera una serie de deficiencias metodológicas desde el inicio del proceso de evaluación que ponen en serias dudas los hallazgos obtenidos, a lo que se le añade la falta de una aplicación rigurosa de procedimientos de análisis dirigidos a esclarecer algunas de las propiedades psicométricas de las puntuaciones proporcionadas por las medidas (e.g., análisis de ítems, estructura interna o invarianza de la medida). De igual forma, hasta ahora no se había analizado en profundidad la posible capacidad de las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers* a la hora de predecir otras variables relevantes en el contexto *online* de videojuegos. Tampoco se había explorado con precisión cómo el sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* se relaciona con otros constructos considerados también relevantes en este entorno según la literatura previa (e.g., orientación a la dominancia social, sexismo hostil, sexismo benévolo, etc.). Además, otro problema a destacar a la hora de considerar los datos proporcionados por las medidas de sexismo previas que han sido aplicadas al contexto de los videojuegos es que las muestras empleadas tampoco se ajustan de forma rigurosa a

jugadores/as habituales. De hecho, en la mayoría de los estudios no se indican qué criterios de inclusión o exclusión se han aplicado para determinar qué participantes son realmente *gamers* o no, algo que supone un impacto directo sobre las conclusiones derivadas de los resultados.

Así pues, la falta de un instrumento adecuado para medir las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers* en un entorno tan específico como lo son los videojuegos *online* requería de un abordaje que posibilitara desarrollar una medida que cubriera las carencias señaladas anteriormente. Teniendo en cuenta dicho objetivo, esta tesis doctoral se ha centrado en el desarrollo de una escala para evaluar el sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* en el entorno de videojuegos *online*. De esta forma, el desarrollo de esta medida permitirá evaluar de forma específica el contenido y la frecuencia de dichas actitudes sexistas, los prejuicios sexistas característicos de esta comunidad, las narrativas asociadas a estas manifestaciones y las áreas de contenido presentes en las expresiones sexistas, además de sus posibles relaciones con otros constructos psicosociales.

Capítulo 2. Objetivos e hipótesis de investigación

Chapter 2. Aims and hypotheses of research

*El feminismo salva,
mientras que el machismo mata.*

— **Ana Bernal-Triviño**

To live a feminist life is to make everything into something that is questionable.

— **Sara Ahmed**

En el capítulo anterior se ha señalado la importancia de evaluar las actitudes sexistas que subyacen al rechazo que sufren las mujeres cuando juegan a videojuegos, destacando cómo las medidas existentes no han considerado las manifestaciones concretas de estas actitudes sexistas contra las jugadoras, ni los factores que caracterizan los contextos *online*. De esta forma, y dada la existencia de investigaciones que han revelado la prevalencia del sexismo en el ámbito de los videojuegos, no solo era precisa la elaboración de un instrumento que permitiera analizar cómo se manifiestan estas actitudes sexistas, sino también estudiar aquellos factores y mecanismos psicosociales implicados en esta nueva forma de discriminación hacia las mujeres. En consecuencia, esta tesis doctoral surge de la necesidad de conocer la magnitud con la que se manifiestan las actitudes sexistas hacia las mujeres *gamers*, así como su relación con otras variables psicosociales implicadas. Para dar respuesta a esta problemática, se plantearon una serie de objetivos de investigación, descritos a continuación.

El **primer objetivo general** de la presente tesis doctoral consistió en el diseño y construcción de un instrumento de evaluación que posibilitara evaluar de manera más precisa las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers* en el contexto de los videojuegos, al que se denominó Escala de Sexismo contra las Mujeres Gamers (SAWGS, por sus siglas en inglés: *Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale*). Para ello se siguieron los estándares internacionalmente aceptados para la construcción de tests psicométricos (American Psychological Association [APA] et al., 2014). Para la consecución de este objetivo general, se llevaron a cabo distintas fases de investigación guiadas por una serie de objetivos específicos, los cuales se englobaron en una primera línea de investigación no experimental (centrada en el desarrollo del instrumento de evaluación):

- Objetivo específico 1.1.: Definir el constructo «sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers*» y desarrollar una primera batería de ítems para su evaluación. Para cubrir este objetivo, en primer lugar, se analizó la información procedente de diferentes entornos web pertenecientes al ámbito de los videojuegos (i.e., foros de jugadores/as, comentarios en páginas webs, blogs, comunidades y revistas especializadas de videojuegos, hilos de discusión presentes en redes sociales y debates propiciados por *streamers* y creadores/as de contenido) para recopilar las afirmaciones sexistas generadas por la comunidad *gamer* y así extraer las áreas de contenido en las que dichas afirmaciones podrían agruparse. En segundo lugar, de la información recabada se realizó un análisis temático de contenido, siguiendo las pautas de Braun y Clarke (2006), con la finalidad de pormenorizar la conceptualización del sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* a partir de sus áreas de contenido. En tercer lugar, se realizaron entrevistas estructuradas a jugadores/as habituales con el objetivo de evaluar la pertinencia de las áreas de contenido delimitadas en la definición del constructo «sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers*». Por último, y haciendo uso del juicio de un grupo de expertos/as, se puso en marcha un estudio de la validez de contenido de la batería inicial de ítems creada para evaluar nuestro constructo diana.
- Objetivo específico 1.2.: Analizar empíricamente los ítems desarrollados y estudiar la estructura interna de las puntuaciones del instrumento (Estudio 1). Para su consecución, en este primer estudio se realizó un análisis de ítems con el objetivo de desarrollar una escala breve unidimensional que cubriera las áreas de contenido que definen al constructo. Posteriormente, y siguiendo una estrategia exploratoria, se aplicaron distintos análisis factoriales para analizar la dimensionalidad de las puntuaciones. Estos análisis derivaron en una versión de la SAWGS integrada por 8

ítems, cuya estructura interna e invarianza considerando género y país (España–Estados Unidos) se vieron posteriormente respaldadas por una serie de análisis factoriales confirmatorios.

- Objetivo específico 1.3.: Proporcionar fuentes de evidencias externas de validez de las puntuaciones en la SAWGS a partir del estudio de relaciones predichas con otros constructos. Para ello, se analizó la relación entre el sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* y otras variables actitudinales de interés (Estudio 2 y Estudio 3). Tal y como sostienen diversos estudios que apuntan a la importancia de las actitudes sexistas en este ámbito (e.g., Gestos et al., 2018; Stermer & Burkley, 2015; Vergel et al., 2023), se esperaba que las puntuaciones en actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers* correlacionarían positivamente con la orientación la dominancia social y otras medidas similares de sexismo (i.e. sexismo hostil, sexismo benévolo, ideología de género tradicional y aceptación de mitos sobre la violencia de género; Hipótesis 1a), serían independientes de las puntuaciones en deseabilidad social (Hipótesis 1b) y correlacionarían negativamente con la identidad feminista (Hipótesis 1c).
- Objetivo específico 1.4.: Proporcionar fuentes de evidencias externas de validez de las puntuaciones en la SAWGS analizando el papel del sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* en la percepción social de incidentes de índole sexista en un contexto de videojuegos *online* (Estudio 2 y Estudio 3). De esta forma, se examinó la relación entre estas actitudes y variables relevantes en el contexto de videojuegos *online*, como el castigo propuesto contra los jugadores tóxicos y la percepción de minimización de los incidentes sexistas ocurridos. Para ello, se siguió una aproximación de validez incremental y en ambos estudios se analizó el poder predictivo de las puntuaciones en la SAWGS sobre estas variables (castigo y minimización), más allá de la varianza

explicada por otras medidas actitudinales señaladas como relevantes por la investigación previa.

- Objetivo específico 1.5.: Desarrollar la versión inglesa de la escala SAWGS y obtener evidencias sobre la capacidad del instrumento para medir el mismo constructo y para reproducir el mismo patrón de relaciones con otras variables en diferentes países (España y Estados Unidos). Para ello, se llevaron a cabo dos estudios en muestras estadounidenses (Estudios 4 y 5), análogos a los realizados anteriormente en España (Estudios 2 y 3) y siguiendo las mismas estrategias metodológicas.

Dado que las mujeres *gamers* se enfrentan constantemente a incidentes sexistas durante el desarrollo de partidas de videojuegos *online* (e.g., Fox & Tang, 2014), resulta de interés analizar la forma en la que dichos incidentes son percibidos, ya que de ello dependerá su aceptación o rechazo por parte de la comunidad *gamer* y la consecuente frecuencia o erradicación de esta forma de prejuicio hacia las jugadoras. Teniendo esto en cuenta, el **segundo objetivo general** de la presente tesis consistió en analizar la relación entre la adhesión a las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers* y la percepción de incidentes sexistas en el contexto de los videojuegos *online*. Tal objetivo se centró en estudiar cómo estas actitudes sexistas pueden desempeñar un rol importante a la hora de juzgar los incidentes (i.e., función cognitiva de las actitudes) y pueden actuar como precursoras de los propios comportamientos sexistas (i.e., función comportamental de las actitudes) a partir de la manipulación experimental de ciertas variables situacionales relevantes de los incidentes sexistas. En esta segunda línea de investigación se esperaba que el sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* moderase la relación entre las variables manipuladas experimentalmente y la percepción de incidentes sexistas en el contexto de videojuegos *online*. Se han llevado a cabo dos series experimentales de estudios bajo el segundo objetivo general descrito:

- Objetivo específico 2.1.: En la primera serie experimental se llevaron a cabo dos estudios para explorar la función cognitiva de las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers*. Para ello, se manipuló experimentalmente la adhesión al feminismo expresada por una jugadora (feminista vs. ausencia de información al respecto) (Estudio 6), además del tipo de acción colectiva por la igualdad de género llevada a cabo por ella en una situación reivindicativa (acción normativa vs. no normativa) (Estudio 7). Tras la manipulación se analizó el efecto tanto de las actitudes sexistas como de las variables manipuladas sobre la percepción de un incidente sexista que sufriría la mujer *gamer* durante una partida de videojuego *online*. Para recoger la percepción del incidente sexista, se evaluó la culpabilidad atribuida a la víctima. Ambos estudios pretendían constatar el papel moderador del sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* en la percepción social de incidentes sexistas en videojuegos *online*. En este sentido, en el Estudio 6 se esperaba que la jugadora descrita como feminista fuera culpabilizada en mayor medida por sufrir un incidente sexista, en comparación a una jugadora de la que no se describía ningún posicionamiento feminista (Hipótesis 2). Además, quienes puntuasen más alto en sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* culpabilizarían en mayor medida a la víctima (Hipótesis 3), planteando también una moderación de estas actitudes sexistas en la relación entre la adhesión feminista de la jugadora y la atribución de culpa a la víctima (Hipótesis 4). Específicamente, se esperaba que los/as participantes con niveles más altos en sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* (frente a los bajos) atribuyeran una mayor culpabilización a la jugadora descrita como feminista. Con el objetivo de replicar y ampliar estos hallazgos, se dio un paso más considerando las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género en el ámbito de los videojuegos (acciones colectivas normativas vs. no normativas). Siguiendo los posicionamientos teóricos sobre acciones colectivas

(Orazani & Leidner, 2019; Tausch et al., 2011), la aplicación de esta perspectiva permitió materializar la adhesión feminista de una jugadora en comportamientos concretos relacionados con este contexto, además de analizar cómo estas manifestaciones podían influir en la atribución de culpa contra ella. De esta forma, en el Estudio 7 se esperaba que la jugadora que realizase acciones colectivas no normativas como miembro de una asociación feminista de videojuegos fuera culpabilizada en mayor medida por sufrir un incidente sexista, en comparación a una jugadora que realizase acciones normativas o ninguna acción (Hipótesis 5). De forma análoga al estudio anterior, quienes puntuasen más alto en sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* serían los que culpabilizarían en mayor medida a la víctima (Hipótesis 6). Finalmente, se esperaba un efecto de interacción entre el tipo de acción colectiva realizada (normativas vs. no normativas o ninguna acción) y el sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* (Hipótesis 7). Concretamente, en la condición de realización de acciones colectivas no normativas (frente a acciones normativas o ninguna acción) se esperaba que los/as participantes con niveles más altos en sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* (frente a los bajos) culpabilizarían más a la jugadora víctima del incidente sexista.

- Objetivo específico 2.2.: En la segunda serie experimental de estudios el objetivo consistió en analizar la función comportamental de las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers*. De esta forma, se estudió el papel predictor de las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers* en la proclividad a ejercer comportamientos sexistas por parte de jugadores masculinos en un contexto de videojuegos *online*. Para la consecución del objetivo planteado se llevaron a cabo tres estudios: en primer lugar, se analizó la prevalencia de comportamientos sexistas realizados por hombres jugadores en el contexto de los videojuegos *online* (Estudio 8). En segundo lugar, y en función de

los comportamientos sexistas más prevalentes detectados en el estudio anterior, se desarrolló un indicador para evaluar la proclividad a ejercer dichos comportamientos sexistas. A continuación, se exploró la relación entre las actitudes sexistas de hombres *gamers* y su tendencia a ejercer comportamientos sexistas en videojuegos *online* (Estudio 9). Finalmente, se planteó un estudio experimental (Estudio 10) en el que se analizó la influencia del posicionamiento de una jugadora con respecto al sexismo que sufren las mujeres *gamers* (oposición al sexismo vs. ausencia de información) en la proclividad de los hombres *gamers* a cometer comportamientos sexistas, teniendo en cuenta el papel moderador de las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers*. Se esperaba que los participantes mostrasen una mayor proclividad a comportarse de forma sexista en videojuegos *online* cuando la jugadora manifestara explícitamente su posicionamiento anti-sexista (Hipótesis 8) y cuando los participantes presentasen mayores puntuaciones en sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* (Hipótesis 9). Finalmente, se predijo un efecto moderador de las actitudes sexistas. De esta forma, el posicionamiento anti-sexista (vs. ausencia de información) defendido por una jugadora influiría sobre la mayor proclividad a cometer este tipo de comportamientos, especialmente en aquellos hombres con mayor adhesión a las actitudes sexistas (Hipótesis 10).

CAPÍTULOS EMPÍRICOS

EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS

Capítulo 3

Chapter 3. *Sexist Attitudes in Online Video Gaming: Development and Validation of the Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (SAWGS) in Spanish and English*

**Sexist Attitudes in Online Video Gaming: Development and Validation of the Sexism
Against Women Gamers Scale (SAWGS) in Spanish and English**

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Abstract

Sexism is an increasingly prevalent problem in the gaming community. However, until now, assessment instruments focused on the construct “sexism against women gamers” are lacking. We present an 8-item self-report scale: Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (SAWGS). We studied the reliability and validity of the scores of Spanish and English versions across five independent samples ($N = 2,437$), with participants from Spain and the United States. Scores on both versions demonstrated high reliability, while exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses supported their unidimensional structure. The analysis established configural, metric, and scalar invariance across gender. SAWGS was invariant at the configural level across countries. SAWGS scores were independent of social desirability, positively correlated with myths about intimate-partner violence against women, sexism, and social dominance orientation, and correlated negatively with feminism. Using two fictitious scenarios of sexism in online gaming, we found that gamers with higher scores on SAWGS showed a greater tendency to downplay a sexist incident and proposed a less severe punishment for toxic gamers. The SAWGS explained additional variance on responses to scenarios beyond that explained by other measures. The detection of sexism should make it possible to develop programs for its eradication and avoid negative consequences for women gamers.

Keywords: sexism, online video gaming, assessment, scale development

Introduction

Sexism is broadly present both in real and online life. Sexism against women in online video game environments is a controversial and divisive problem in the gaming community (Tang et al., 2020). Women gamers regularly suffer harassment, discrimination, and sexist attitudes while playing (Ruvalcaba et al., 2018; Tang et al., 2020). The large number of people who play video games and the fact that these games now constitute the leading form of audiovisual entertainment worldwide (Entertainment Software Association [ESA], 2020; Europe's Video Games Industry [ISFE], 2021) make these findings concerning. In economic terms, video games sales exceeded \$130 billion annually worldwide, an indicator that reinforces their predominance in comparison with the other most prominent entertainment sectors such as music and cinema (ESA, 2021). Today's video game industry combines the strengths of its competitors: like the film industry, it contracts popular titles; prioritizes long-term engagement like TV; and enjoys high replayability, as in the case of music (Yao, 2018). However, unlike these other media sectors, video gaming seems unstoppable. The industry is expected to reach \$180 billion in revenue through 2021 and grow by almost 10.0% from 2020 to 2025 (WePC, 2021).

The expansion of gaming created a global and specialized community of gamers who share habits, behaviors, and attitudes about video games, identified as video game culture (Shaw, 2010), which is defined through who plays, what they play, and how they play in terms of its social practices and a shared identity/community created in the game space (e.g., Shaw, 2010). Over time, the way gamers play evolved. The first video game consoles only allowed for players located in the same place, connected to a single device (Dunn & Guadagno, 2019). Now, most video game consoles have an Internet connection, and the expansion of massively multiplayer online games (MMOG) allows millions of people around

the world to play together (Worth & Book, 2014). An example of this recent online video games expansion is the fact that many gamers usually play online more than 20 hours per week (Worth & Book, 2014). According to the latest United States (U.S.) video game industry survey, around 83.0% of people who play video games prefer to do so with other people (ESA, 2022).

Sociodemographic data from gamers can help identify which groups access video games more than others. For example, in the U.S. player community, approximately 52.0% of gamers identify themselves as men and 48.0% as women, with an average age of 33 years (ESA, 2022). This percentage is similar to those of European countries such as Spain. The Spanish video gamer's profile is 54.1% men and 45.9% women among those between ages 10 and 25 years, with a total of 15.9 million players (AEVI, 2020). This large number of players shows that video games are the first choice for audiovisual and cultural leisure in Spain. In terms of race, in 2020 the U.S. population was 57.8% white, 18.7% Hispanic/Latino, 12.1% African American, and 11.4% other ethnic groups combined (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). The racial/ethnic percentages of U.S. gamers are somewhat similar to those found in the general population (ESA, 2022). Across all players and ages, the most prevalent racial or ethnic group for U.S. gamers is white individuals (71.0%), followed by Hispanic/Latino (10.0%), African American (8.0%), Asian/Pacific Islander (7.0%), and other (4.0%).

Increasingly, a broader range of individuals use video games. Although this form of entertainment is usually associated with a child or adolescent audience, the overall median age of the gaming public is 34 years (ESA, 2021), playing for an average of 8 hours each week (Limelight Networks, 2021). However, one might ask whether men and women play equally. On average, men play almost 8.5 hours a week —only 10 minutes longer than women (Limelight Networks, 2021)—. A high percentage of gamers are women (46.0% worldwide),

translating into up to one billion women gamers, with 19.0% growth in recent years (Newzoo, 2022). This growing incursion of women in the virtual world translates into more women gamers, professionals, and workers in the male-dominated video game industry, whose culture is not always a welcoming space for them (Shaw, 2010).

Sexist Behaviors and Harassment Toward Women in the Gaming Community

Video games have traditionally belonged to the male domain (e.g., Gray, 2012; Kaye & Pennington, 2016; Kuznekoff & Rose, 2013; Salter & Blodgett, 2012). In fact, the traditional gamer prototype has long been a white man (Cote, 2017; Gray, 2012). Online video gaming has been described as a “man’s world” dominated by the masculine discourse (Salter & Blodgett, 2012), where virtual interactions with other gamers reinforce masculine norms (Blackburn & Scharrer, 2019). Masculine ideologies are embodied in cultural norms that proscribe certain gendered attitudes and behaviors. These norms also dictate specific cultural belief systems, values, and attitudes associated with masculinity (Blackburn & Scharrer, 2019; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Previous researchers identified the characteristics of these masculine norms, including high power, status, and dominance; avoidance of femininity; negativity toward sexual minorities; and emotional, physical, and mental toughness (Levant et al., 2013; Vescio et al., 2021). This construction of masculinity based on masculine norms is problematic since it contributes to the marginalization of women (Blackburn & Scharrer, 2019).

As the presence of women in the video game environment expands, the climate is one in which they experience numerous acts of rejection or discrimination against them, because, among other reasons, their greater presence has been perceived as a potential threat to this masculine status quo (Cote, 2017). Women are frequently perceived as intrusive, interfering with the male position, and reorienting the playing space toward stereotypical

female characteristics, such as emotionality or sensitivity (e.g., Kaye & Pennington, 2016). Many examples of this rejection have already been documented, including speculation as to whether women gamers are really playing or if an accomplice is playing instead, with the belief that women are only suitable for support roles. In this regard, women gamers remain all too frequently marginalized because the perceived differences between men and women playing video games are based on a persistent gender myth that focuses on women as casual gamers, with a lack of visible feminine influence (Salter & Blodgett, 2012; Vanderhoef, 2013).

Connected to the climate and influence of gender role stereotypes, women gamers experience harassment and abuse. Given that online video gaming is linked to masculine norms and gender stereotypes, the perpetration of sexist behaviors such as threats, sexual comments, or jokes against women gamers is frequent (e.g., Brehm, 2013; Tang et al., 2020). In one survey of online gamers, 79.0% of participants reported that sexism is prevalent within the online gaming community and 63.3% of women reported being harassed while playing online video games (Matthew, 2012). In a recent report (McBean, 2020), around 58.0% of women gamers have experienced some form of abuse from men gamers while playing online, and 28.0% have suffered sexual harassment from men gamers in the form of objectifying comments or death and rape threats.

In Spain, recently published reports such as “Gender, Gamers and Videogames” (Santana, 2020) described the situation for women as gamers and workers. Their testimonies confirm that the sexism suffered by women in online video games is a type of discrimination much more common in the case of women gamers than in that of men gamers who, when they are especially good at playing, are accused of cheating, using hacking techniques or asking men to play for them (Rubio-Méndez, 2017, as cited in Santana, 2020, p. 15).

In an experimental test of these forms of sexist discrimination, Kuznekoff and Rose (2013) studied how men and women interact while playing an online video game and how gamers reacted according to the gender identified in various pre-recorded voices of man or woman players. Their results revealed that participants reacted more negatively to the woman gamer voice than the male voice, with the female voice receiving three times more negative comments than the male voice or no voice (control condition). Moreover, many of the negative comments directed toward the female voice were based on gender discrimination (for example, a woman's comment of "Hello everyone" elicited the response "Shut up, bitch"). These findings show that interactions and behaviors in online gaming are guided by some of the same gender stereotypes and attitudes that women encounter in real life.

This harassment inflicted on women by the gamer community intensifies when women gamers publicly defend their rights or express feminist critiques (Vermeulen et al., 2017). For example, Anita Sarkeesian, a feminist media critic of video game culture, created a campaign to make visible the sexism and prejudices experienced by women in video games. For this, she was attacked by gamers who believed that she was unfairly critical, receiving thousands of death and rape threats. This campaign against her, which became a revolution that laid bare the sexism that women often suffer in video games, was known as #Gamergate (Burnay et al., 2019; Gray et al., 2017).

The consequences of these and other sexist behaviors by gamers have sparked multiple debates about the hostility of this environment towards women (e.g., Salter & Blodgett, 2012). For many women, this hostility led to expressing less confidence or security compared to men with regard to their ability to play (Kaye & Pennington, 2016). In fact, women gamers claim that they often avoid competitive online video games due to sexual

objectification, unwanted attention from other gamers, and sexist attitudes present in this context (e.g., Ruvalcaba et al., 2018; Salter & Blodgett, 2012). In addition, some women internalize the notion that they do not really belong to this field (Fox & Tang, 2017; Gray, 2012; Kaye & Pennington, 2016). These beliefs about women gamers lead them, in some instances, to avoid playing regularly or to experiment with other game roles (action or fighting video game characters), perpetuating the aforementioned gender stereotypes (Kaye & Pennington, 2016).

The Role of Sexist Attitudes as a Predictor of Sexism in Online Video Games

The findings that women gamers frequently experience sexism and harassment raises the question of what might lead someone to perpetuate such behavior. Certain attitudes and beliefs have been associated with the expression of these manifestations of sexism in online video gaming (Fox & Tang, 2017; Read et al., 2018). For example, Fox and Tang (2014) showed that social dominance orientation predicted the extent to which participants reported making and engaging in some sexist behaviors in the online gaming environment.

Sexist attitudes have also been found to be a predictor of manifestations of sexism in online video gaming (e.g., Fox et al., 2015). Specifically, high adherence to hostile sexism in men gamers is associated with supporting stereotypes against the participation of women in video games and is predictive of harassment in online gaming (Fox & Potocki, 2016). Consistent with these results, it is estimated that almost half of women gamers (49.0%) have regularly experienced hostile sexism during game play, including being the object of discrimination and sexist jokes (e.g., Gray, 2012; Matthew, 2012). Fox and Tang (2017) found that 10.0% of these incidents analyzed involved sexist comments ranging from hostile sexism (i.e., “Go back to the kitchen”) to sexual harassment (i.e., “Show me your boobs”). These findings have also been corroborated by qualitative research exploring gender-based

discourse and experiences in the online gaming community (e.g., Fox et al., 2018; Naidoo et al., 2020).

The Importance of Assessing Sexism Against Women Gamers

In most previous studies examining sexism in online gaming, researchers used general measures of sexism (e.g., Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, Sex-Role Orientation Scale, or Internalized Misogyny Scale –Deskins, 2015; Fox & Potocki, 2016; McCullough et al., 2020; Stermer & Burkley, 2012), or selected some items from these scales without specifying the criteria used for this selection. For example, in a longitudinal study on video game use, Breuer et al. (2015) measured sexist attitudes using three items slightly rephrased for the German translation of the Sex-Role Orientation Scale (Brogan & Kutner, 1976). In other studies, researchers have included four items from the German translation of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Tang et al., 2020). In one instance, sexism in gaming was measured through a general single item question only: “A woman is made mainly for making and raising children” (Bègue et al., 2017).

Thus far, in cases when authors used some items addressing the construct “sexism against women gamers”, they did not report empirical evidence of psychometric adequacy. For example, Fox and Tang (2014) selected specific items about sexist beliefs and harassment in video games, using virtual resources such an online blog, but they did not provide evidence of construct validity or evaluation of psychometric properties. Nevertheless, the online context —similar to online video gaming— has specific characteristics that distinguish it from the offline environment when it comes to establishing relationships and behaving with others, including anonymous participation, player-to-player competition, or social disinhibition (Ruvalcaba et al., 2018). These particularities should be considered when

measuring sexist attitudes in this context and, therefore, address the shortcomings of previous research.

In sum, previous studies have undoubtedly been of value and relevance for the development of research on sexist attitudes in online gaming. However, the lack of a psychometrically tested instrument to specifically measure sexist attitudes against women gamers in an online context requires remediation. With this aim, the present research focused on the development of a specific scale to assess sexism in the online gaming environment. The development of this measure would make it possible to assess the content and frequency of such sexist attitudes and their relations with other psychosocial constructs. A rigorous evaluation of this construct should include the sexist prejudices characteristic in this community, the narratives associated with these manifestations, and the content areas present in sexist expressions (e.g., “In online video games, some women really deserve the insults they receive”).

Overview of the Present Research

The main goal of this research was to develop a specific, concise, and psychometrically supported scale to assess sexism against women gamers, both in Spanish and English. The initial Spanish version of our Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (SAWGS) consisted of 17 items and it was derived from: (a) thematic analysis of gaming experience; (b) semi-structured interviews with gamers; and (c) a content validity study based on expert judgments. From this first version, we used the results of item and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to develop a definitive 8-item scale. We applied the Spanish version of the SAWGS to three independent samples in Spain (Samples 1, 2, and 3) and developed the English version in samples from the U.S. (Samples 4 and 5). Through these broad samples, we analyzed the internal structure of the scale using a confirmatory approach.

At the same time, factorial invariance was studied across gender and countries to draw conclusions concerning the ability of the instrument to measure the same construct in different groups (Vandenberg & Lance, 2000).

We drew on previous research to identify expected patterns in the relations between the SAWGS and sociodemographic variables. Previous research has shown an association between sexist attitudes and gender. In a cross-cultural study that included 15,000 men and women from 19 nations, Glick et al. (2000) showed that men scored significantly higher than women on hostile sexism and that women reject hostile sexism to a greater extent than men, although in some countries women support benevolent sexism more significantly than men. In video game settings, some studies have documented that men gamers are more adherent to hostile sexism than their women counterparts, which has been linked to the normalization of situations of harassment and sexism as harmless components of online gaming (e.g., Dill & Thill, 2007; Fox & Potocki, 2016; Fox et al., 2018). Moreover, men gamers also consider violence against women to be a low-severity problem (Gabbiadini et al., 2016). With regard to age, previous research has shown a U-shaped relation with hostile sexism among men and women (Hammond et al., 2018). Thus, we examined the relation between both gender and age and the SAWGS scores.

To further evaluate the validity of the SAWGS, we tested the association between the SAWGS scores and other relevant constructs (feminist identity, sexist attitudes, social dominance orientation, and social desirability). In terms of convergent validity, we expected scores on the SAWGS to be positively associated with social dominance orientation and other similar measures of prejudiced attitudes toward women, such as sexist attitudes, traditional gender ideology, and myths concerning intimate partner violence (Hypothesis 1). We also expected higher scores on the SAWGS to be associated with lower feminist

identification (Hypothesis 2). Moreover, we proposed that the SAWGS scores would be independent of scores on a social desirability scale, with the expectation that the correlations would be around zero (Hypothesis 3).

Finally, the hostile manifestations (e.g., offensive language, insults, or verbal abuse) adopted by certain players within online video games are considered in this context as toxic behaviors, especially when they are displayed antisocially during a game, creating a climate of tension (e.g., Kwak, 2015; Tang et al., 2020). Some gamers actively confront these toxic behaviors by reporting them or, by going further, and requesting some kind of punishment for the gamer who behaves in such a way (Kwak et al., 2015). Accordingly, we sought to analyze the relation between the SAWGS scores and proposed punishment for toxic gamers and minimization of a sexist incident. Using a fictitious scenario that depicted a case of sexism in online gaming, we tested the relation between the SAWGS and proposed punishment of toxic gamers, as well as the minimization of sexist incidents. In all cases, we examined the additional predictive power of SAWGS on these variables beyond that explained by the other attitudinal and aggression tendencies measures.

Method

Samples

We collected the data needed to carry out the analyses from five independent samples: three Spanish samples and two from the U.S. following the recommendations from the standards for constructing psychometric tests (American Psychological Association [APA] et al., 2014). These independent samples were used to conduct the psychometric analysis and obtain cross-validity evidence of our instrument. All samples were recruited online using social networks (e.g., Twitter and gamers groups from Spain or the U.S. on

Facebook) and forums specialized in video games (e.g., Reddit and gaming magazines forums). The surveys were available at the Qualtrics Version XM 2020 platform.

To avoid response bias, the platform tracked participant IP addresses and limited participants to access the survey only once within as well as across samples. We also inserted attention check questions into the survey to detect inconsistent responses and lack of attention, and we analyzed time data for each response in all of the surveys in order to screen faster or slower participants (Teitcher et al., 2015; Yan & Tourangeau, 2008). Finally, following recommendations regarding methods for detecting and preventing fraud in Internet-based research (e.g., Lukács et al., 2020; Teitcher et al., 2015; Yan & Tourangeau, 2008), the following exclusion criteria were used: (a) failing at least one of the three attention check questions in the survey (Sample 2: $n = 37$, Sample 3: $n = 15$, Sample 4: $n = 36$, Sample 5: $n = 30$); (b) too little or too much time spent on answering the survey ($\pm SD_{\text{time}} = 3$; Sample 2: $n = 6$, Sample 3: $n = 7$, Sample 4: $n = 21$, Sample 5: $n = 13$); and (c) repeated registration of the IP address (Sample 2: $n = 3$, Sample 3: $n = 4$, Sample 4: $n = 4$).

Additionally we used exclusion criteria based on intended participant groups: (a) nationality (In Samples 1–3, participants who did not have a Spanish nationality were excluded [Sample 1: $n = 49$, Sample 2: $n = 69$, Sample 3: $n = 23$], while in Samples 4 and 5, those without U.S. nationality, without English as native language, and whose nation of birth was not the U.S. were excluded [Sample 4: $n = 152$, Sample 5: $n = 79$]); (b) age below 18 years (Sample 1: $n = 35$, Sample 2: $n = 21$, Sample 3: $n = 10$, Sample 4: $n = 6$, Sample 5: $n = 6$); (c) those not playing video games weekly (Sample 1: $n = 23$, Sample 2: $n = 36$, Sample 3: $n = 8$, Sample 4: $n = 63$, Sample 5: $n = 13$); and (d) people who answered “other” to the gender question because these low numbers did not allow using them as a category for the analyses (Sample 2: $n = 5$, Sample 3: $n = 4$, Sample 4: $n = 4$, Sample 5: $n = 7$). Sociodemographic

characteristics of participants in Samples 1 to 5 are presented in Table S1 of the Supplemental Material.

Due to population characteristics, it is not common to ask about race/ethnicity in studies conducted in Spain. To maintain the homogeneity of the surveys across countries, we did not ask for information on these aspects from any of the participants.

Sample 1 (Construction Sample) consisted of 599 Spanish gamers (408 men and 191 women) aged 18–52 years ($M = 26.02$, $SD = 6.03$). Among these, 0.7% reported having a primary education level, 57.3% secondary education, and 42.0% higher-university education. Participants who spent between 1 and 5 hours per week playing video games made up 25.9% of the sample, while 26.4% played between 6 and 10 hours, 28.0% played between 10–20 hours, and 19.7% played for more than 20 hours per week.

Sample 2 included 479 Spanish gamers (272 men and 207 women) aged 18–58 years ($M = 26.09$, $SD = 5.91$). Of these, 0.8% of participants reported having completed primary education, 56.5% secondary education, and 42.6% higher-university education. Among the 479 participants, 23.8% spent between 1 and 5 hours per week playing video games, 24.6% played for between 6 and 10 hours, 26.7% played for 10–20 hours, and 24.8% played for more than 20 hours per week.

Sample 3 was composed of 416 Spanish gamers (215 men and 201 women) aged 18–55 years ($M = 27.01$, $SD = 6.29$). Few participants reported having completed only primary education (1.0%); however, 49.7% and 49.3% completed secondary and higher-university education, respectively. Among the 416 participants, 27.8% spent between 1 and 5 hours per week playing video games, 22.4% played for between 6 and 10 hours, 26.0% played for 10–20 hours, and 23.8% played for more than 20 hours per week.

Sample 4 consisted of 506 individuals (252 men and 254 women) aged 18–66 years ($M = 31.07$, $SD = 8.39$). The participants were native English speakers born in the U.S. Among the participants, 5.0% reported having completed primary education, 16.0% secondary education, and 79.1% higher-university education. Among the 506 participants, 31.0% spent between 1 and 5 hours per week playing video games, 27.1% played for between 6 and 10 hours, 23.5% played for 10–20 hours, and 18.3% played for more than 20 hours per week.

Sample 5 was composed of 437 individuals (221 men and 216 women) aged 18–65 years ($M = 31.04$, $SD = 9.19$). The participants were native English speakers born in the U.S. of whom 6.0% reported having completed primary education, 19.9% secondary education, and 73.7% higher-university education. Among the 437 participants, 33.9% spent between 1 and 5 hours per week playing video games, 23.3% played for between 6 and 10 hours, 22.9% played for 10–20 hours, and 19.9% played for more than 20 hours per week.

Procedure

This research adopted a non-experimental approach undertaken through the administration of online questionnaires, a procedure repeatedly used in video game research (ESA, 2022; Griffiths, 2010; ISFE, 2021). The link was distributed among various target gamer groups. The instructions were the same for all the participants. We explained that it was an anonymous opinion poll focusing on the gamer public's thoughts and attitudes. By not mentioning that the main topic of the study was sexism, we sought to avoid the negative reactions of some participants to these study themes. After obtaining the consent of each participant, we administered the questionnaires to these samples. Finally, the participants' sociodemographic data were collected, and they were redirected to another website where they could participate in a raffle to incentivize participation.

Participation was voluntary and procedures were conducted in accordance with the APA (2017) Ethical Code (Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct) for studies involving human participants and broader professional standards for conducting a research study. The protocol was approved by the ethical committee at the authors' university.

Measures and Materials

Below we describe the instruments used to analyze relations between the measure we developed and several constructs expected to relate to sexism against women gamers. Together, we used these measures to evaluate convergent validity. We also included one measure to evaluate discriminant validity. Details on the development of the measure to assess sexism against women gamers and vignettes appear in the results section detailing the results of the analyses.

Sexist Attitudes. We used the 22-item Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Spanish version by Expósito et al., 1998) to assess hostile and benevolent sexism in Samples 2 and 4. Example items include “Women seek to gain power by getting control over men” (hostile sexism) and “Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste” (benevolent sexism). All of the items are rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (*completely disagree*) to 5 (*completely agree*), with higher scores indicating greater hostile or benevolent sexism. As observed in the original version (Glick & Fiske, 1996; as ranged between .73 and .92) and in the Spanish adaptation (Expósito et al., 1998; as were between .84 and .90), as were good for scores on hostile sexism (Sample 2 = .94, Sample 4 = .92) and for benevolent sexism (Sample 2 = .82, Sample 4 = .85). Convergent validity of scores on the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory were supported by its positive correlations with other measures of sexism and with ambivalent attitudes toward women (Glick & Fiske, 1997).

Traditional Gender Ideology. We used the 13-item short version of the Scale on Gender Ideology (EIG; Moya et al., 2006; α ranged from .70 to .90) in Samples 3 and 5. The short version includes only those items of the Traditional Ideology dimension with a Likert scale between 1 (*totally disagree*) and 7 (*totally agree*). Examples of items in this scale are “A woman should be careful how she looks, for it influences what people think of her husband” and “When a man and woman live together, she should do the housework and he should do the heavier chores”. Convergent validity of scores on the EIG was supported by positive correlations with hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, neosexism, and rape myth acceptance (Expósito et al., 1998; Moya & Expósito, 2001). In the current study, α s were .81 and .82 (Samples 3 and 5, respectively).

Myths about Intimate Partner Violence. We used the 15-item Acceptance of Myths About Intimate Partner Violence Against Women Scale (AMIVAW; Megías et al., 2018; α = .90) in Samples 2 and 4. This instrument evaluates the acceptance of myths about intimate partner violence against women, with a Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). Examples of items in this scale are “Once a complaint for abuse has been filed, men are unprotected by law” and “The State gives too much help to women who report abuse”. Regarding AMIVAW validity, its scores are independent of social desirability, positively correlate with sexism and other attitudes toward sexual violence, and negatively correlate with feminist identification (Megías et al., 2018). In the current study, α s were .89 (Samples 2 and 4 each).

Feminist Identification. We used the 6-item Feminist Identification Scale (Leach et al., 2008; α = 0.87) in Samples 2 and 4. This scale evaluates the degree of personal identification with feminism using a 7-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). Examples of items on this scale are “Being a feminist is

an important part of how I see myself” and “I feel committed to feminist people”. Convergent validity of its scores was supported by its negative correlations with hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, and myths about intimate partner violence against women. In the current study, α was .95 for Sample 2 (Spanish) and .94 for Sample 4 (U.S.).

Social Dominance. We used the 8-item short form of the Social Dominance Orientation scale (SDO; Pratto et al., 1994; Spanish version by Silván-Ferrero & Bustillos, 2007; $\alpha = .90$) in Samples 3 and 5. This instrument evaluates the preference for maintaining social hierarchy and opposition to equality with a Likert scale ranging between 1 (*strongly oppose*) and 7 (*strongly favor*). Example items include “Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups” and “Group equality should not be our primary goal”. Social dominance orientation has shown to be associated with constructs such as hostile sexism, prejudice, and intergroup relationships. In the current study, α s were .83 and .85 (Samples 3 and 5, respectively).

Aggression. We used the 29-item Aggression Questionnaire (AQ; Buss & Perry, 1992; Rodríguez et al., 2002; $\alpha = .88$; Physical aggression, $\alpha = .86$; Verbal aggression, $\alpha = .68$; Anger, $\alpha = .77$; Hostility, $\alpha = .72$), with a 5-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*) in Samples 3 and 5. We used this questionnaire because previous literature about the effects of video games (Anderson & Dill, 2000; Lee et al., 2021) has examined the relation between video game playing habits and real-world aggressive behavior. This instrument assesses aggressive behavior through four dimensions: Physical (expressed by hitting, pushing, and other forms of physical abuse using one’s own body or an external object to inflict injury or damage); Verbal (expressed through insults or threats, and implies sarcasm, ridicule, spreading of rumors, and use of malicious nicknames, and gossip); Anger (the feeling that arises as a consequence of previous hostile attitudes); and Hostility (an

attitude that implies dislike and cognitive evaluation towards others). In the current study, α s were adequate (Sample 3: Physical aggression, $\alpha = .75$; Verbal aggression, $\alpha = .74$; Anger, $\alpha = .78$; Hostility, $\alpha = .73$; Sample 5: Physical aggression, $\alpha = .84$; Verbal aggression, $\alpha = .82$; Anger, $\alpha = .79$; Hostility, $\alpha = .80$).

Social Desirability. We used the 13-item short form of the Marlowe–Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Spanish version by Ferrando & Chico, 2000) in Samples 2, 3, 4 and 5. Example items include “I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable” and “I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone’s feelings”. Response options followed a true or false format, with higher total scores indicating more social desirability. Scores on this scale have been found to negatively correlate with neuroticism, hostility, and impulsivity and to positively correlate with agreeableness and responsibility (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). In the current study, α s were .61, .66, .78, and .69 (Samples 2, 3, 4 and 5, respectively), slightly lower than what was found in the original English (between .75 and .85) and Spanish (.78) versions.

Scenarios. To evaluate the relationship between SAWGS scores and punishments proposed for toxic gamers, we used the responses given to two fictitious scenarios (see Figures S1–S2 of the Supplemental Material) that described a sexist interaction in an online video game between four young gamers, among whom three men were attacking the woman gamer. We designed two scenarios based on the most popular multiplayer online video game at the time we collected the data: League of Legends (Kwak et al., 2015; Schelfhout et al., 2021). To do this, we created screenshots with the same design as the original video game, including sexist comments simulating the chat that gamers use to interact. To make the comments realistic, we consulted gameplay videos and real testimonies of harassment from women gamers who have experienced sexism. Participants’ responses were based on the

extent to which they considered a gamer toxic due to their sexist attitudes towards a woman gamer.

In all samples, participants read the fictitious scenario presenting the sexist incident after completing the SAWGS. Scenario 1, as used with Samples 2 (Spanish version) and 4 (English version), brings into question the competence of a woman gamer after she loses the game. In Scenario 2, used with Samples 3 (Spanish version) and 5 (English version), the woman gamer refuses to perform the support role in the game and her team attacks her for wanting to play as a warrior.

The Spanish versions of both scenarios were developed first. For the U.S. samples, two experts translated the scenarios to English following a similar reverse translation process, as described subsequently in relation to the SAWGS items. Next, we administered 3 questions (Spanish and English versions) relating to the scenario and the proposed punishment (“The team members who made the comments to Lucy should be immediately penalized [e.g., temporary ban or restrictions in the chat]”; “The team members who made the comments to Lucy should be permanently banned”; and “The comments received by Lucy should be reported to the video game’s customer support team”). Two questions were designed to assess minimization of the sexist incident (“Comments such as those received by Lucy are jokes without importance in the online context” and “Only somebody who doesn’t play video games could consider these comments offensive”), and two other questions aimed at discovering the representativeness and frequency of this type of sexist incident (“The situation described happens often in online video games” and “This scenario is representative of what happens in the context of online video games”), all with a 7-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). The internal consistency reliabilities were .66 (Sample 2), .68 (Sample 3), .77 (Sample 4), and .75 (Sample

5) for punishment scores, and .60 (Sample 2), .75 (Sample 3), .69 (Sample 4), and .79 (Sample 5) for scores of minimization of a sexist incident. The sexist incidents described were considered representative in all samples (means > 5.00) and frequent (frequencies > 4.00) in online gaming.

Results

We organize our results conceptually in terms of (a) scale development and internal structure; (b) measurement invariance; and (c) external validity.

Scale Development and Internal Structure

The phases of the SAWGS construction have been structured according to internationally accepted standards for developing psychometric tests (APA et al., 2014). In addition, this research has considered recent references regarding the development of short scales to evaluate psychological constructs (Coelho et al., 2018a, 2018b), ensuring that all the areas of contents are assessed and less time consuming. Specifically, long scales could have a negative influence on the reliability and validity of the scores derived from the instruments (Rammstedt & Beierlein, 2014). As such, it may be considered appropriate for newly developed scales to provide short instruments wherein the different components of the assessed construct are represented. This could facilitate acquiring as much information as possible in reference to the reliability and validity of the scores provided by these short assessment instruments (Rammstedt & Beierlein, 2014). Taking into account these considerations, we started with a short initial 17-item scale.

The development of the SAWGS followed three phases: (a) thematic analysis of gaming environments (forums, gamer communities, and social networks); (b) semi-structured interviews with gamers in order to detect the content areas for the construct sexism against women gamers; and (c) study of the content validity of an initial pool of items.

To evaluate our construct of sexism against women gamers, in the initial phase we conducted a content analysis of the information from sources such as discussion forums, web pages, and blogs belonging to the gamer community. The aim was to collect the sexist statements generated by the gamer community itself in order to extract the content areas into which these statements could be grouped. A codebook was created, and responses were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once the themes were mapped, we selected 12 of the codes collected during the initial phase which served to represent the aforementioned areas. In order to preserve the most representative codes of the gamer community, we decided to keep for each of the themes the most frequent statements (most repeated throughout the different forums, gamer groups, and discussions). Then, the initial battery was established to evaluate sexist attitudes against women gamers based on the followed content areas: (a) rejection of egalitarian positions (e.g., “In the field of video games, encouraging the participation of female-only teams in competitions promotes sexism and discrimination”); (b) lower ability of the woman gamer (e.g., “In general, men play video games better than women”); (c) extreme sensitivity of the woman gamer (e.g., “Female gamers often interpret kindness from male gamers as harassment”); (d) blaming the woman gamer (e.g., “In online video games, some women really deserve the insults they receive”); (e) disregard for women’s interest in video games (e.g., “Many women now play video games just because they are trendy”); and (f) minimization of aggressive manifestations against women gamers (e.g., “The negative comments or threats women receive while playing video games are given much more importance than those received by men”).

Next, three semi-structured online interviews were conducted with the aim of evaluating the relevance of the content areas detected and the sexist statements obtained in the thematic analysis of the websites. Similarly, these interviews sought to detect possible new

sexist statements against women gamers. Two of the interviewees were regular gamers (one woman and one man), according to the usual player criteria established by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA, 2022) and the Spanish Video Game Association (AEVI, 2020). The third interviewee was one of the co-founders and video game designers from the feminist association FemDevs, an organization dedicated to promoting the interest, participation, and presence of women in video games. Considering these interviews, five new statements were included in three areas of content: extreme sensitivity of gamer women (1 statement), disregard of women's interest in video games (1 statement) and inferior capacity of gamer women (3 statements). Then, we created an initial pool of 17 items about sexist attitudes against women gamers.

In order to obtain content validity evidence for the initial pool of items, a group of experts evaluated the 17 items. A total of 7 experts (2 in sexism and 5 in test construction) participated in this research phase. To carry out the content validity task, we defined the construct of sexist attitudes against women who play video games through its content areas. The judges had to indicate the degree to which each of the items was representative, from 1 (*not at all representative*) to 4 (*very representative*) of the assessed construct while reporting on the content area to which they thought each one belonged (calculated as relevance: the number of judges who classify the item in the expected category divided by the total number of judges; Mastaglia et al., 2003). Furthermore, each item was evaluated using a 4-point Likert-type scale (Davis, 1992) ranging from 1 to 4 applied to the following formal criteria (Angleitner et al., 1986): (a) comprehension —“assessment of whether the item is adequately understood,” (1 = *incomprehensible* ; 4 = *clearly understood*)—; (b) interpretation —“judgment on the possibility that the item can be interpreted in various ways,” (1= *it can be interpreted in multiple ways*; 4 = *it has a single interpretation*)—; and (c) clarity —“the degree

to which the item is concise/precise/direct,” (1 = *lacking in conciseness*; 4 = *concise/direct*)—. Two indices were calculated using the judges’ responses (Polit et al., 2007). For the criteria of representativeness, understanding, interpretation, and clarity, the Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated, understood as the number of judges who selected the response option 3 or 4 divided by the total number of judges. Values $> .80$ were considered adequate. The Kappa index was used according to the inter-rater agreement, where the appropriate values are $K > .60$ (Polit et al., 2007). Most items exceeded the cutoff for adequate item-content validity indexes ($I-CVIs \geq .57$; $M = .95$) and inter-judge Kappa agreement ($\kappa \geq .42$, $M = .94$; Polit et al., 2007). Notably, all the SAWGS items were highly accessible, clear, and concise (≥ 3.60). Specific values for the CVI and Kappa index are presented in Table S2 of the Supplemental Material.

Experts also evaluated certain formal wording aspects of all items. Following inspection of the results and the judges’ comments, it was decided to keep all the items, making minor modifications to two items (i.e., we rephrased Item 2 to exemplify the concept of women’s responsibility when exposing themselves to video games, and we included a grammatical subject in Item 11). In addition, after considering the experts’ majority opinion, it was decided to combine two of the content areas (“extreme sensitivity of women gamers” and “minimization of aggressive manifestations against women gamers”) into a single area of minimization of aggressive manifestations against women gamers. After conducting the expert judgment, as well as the previous thematic analysis of gaming environments and the three semi-structured interviews with gamers, we used this 17-item version for the first study.

Item Analysis and Exploratory Factor Analysis

We administered the 17-item SAWGS to Sample 1 (Construction Sample). Participants were instructed to rate each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1

(*totally disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). All the items were scored in the direction of sexism against women gamers with no item reversals. The aim was to develop a brief unidimensional scale that included all the content areas concerning sexism against women gamers with high reliability scores. We selected items with (a) mean scores higher than 1.60 to rule out a floor effect; (b) an adequate variability ($SD > 1.00$); (c) an inter-item correlation $r < .50$ to avoid redundancies (Clark & Watson, 1995); and (d) also ensured that all content areas were represented with 1-2 items. A total of 8 items were selected from the item analysis (see Table S3 of the Supplemental Material). All of them met the criterion of item-total correlation (discrimination index) $> .30$. Next, we conducted an EFA using principal axis factoring to test the dimensionality of scores. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was 0.86, and the Bartlett's test showed statistical significance (χ^2 test = 718.34, $gl = 28$, $p < .001$). Thus, the sample met the standard criteria for interpretation of the factor solutions.

We identified a single factor that explained 42.18% of the total variance, with an eigenvalue of 3.70. The percentage of variance explained by the factor did not reach the recommended minimum (60.0%), according to Hair et al. (2014). However, this percentage is similar to that observed in unidimensional scales related to sexism, such as the Acceptance of Myths About Intimate Partner Violence Against Women (AMIVAW) Scale (Megías et al., 2018), the Spanish-language version of the Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression (AMMSA) scale (Megías et al., 2011), and Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale (ESS; Liss et al., 2011). The factorial weights ranged between .39 and .71.

To allow for a better judgement, we also found that the one-dimensionality of the instrument was supported by parallel analysis (Horn, 1965), and our data again recommended retaining a single factor (see Table 1). We also applied Velicer's Minimum Average Partial (MAP) test to examine a series of matrices of partial correlations. With an

Eigenvalue of 3.55, the number of components according to the Revised MAP test (O'Connor, 2000) was one. The smallest average squared partial correlation was .03. From a conceptual point of view, the scale covers all the content areas proposed in defining sexism against women gamers. Specifically, Items 1 and 8 for *Lower ability of the female gamer* (“In general, men play video games better than women” and “Many female gamers are famous just because they are pretty or because they use their body to make sexual advances”); Item 2 for *Disregard for women’s interest in video games* (“Many women now play video games just because they are trendy”); Item 7 for *Blaming the woman gamer* (“In online video games, some women really deserve the insults they receive”); Items 3 and 4 for *Rejection of egalitarian positions* (“In the field of video games, encouraging the participation of female-only teams in competitions promotes sexism and discrimination” and “In the field of video games there is a community of women who are against male gamers”); and Items 5 and 6 for *Extreme sensitivity of women gamers and minimization of aggressive manifestations against them* (“The negative comments or threats women receive while playing video games are given much more importance than those received by men” and “Female gamers often interpret kindness from male gamers as harassment”).

As displayed in Table 1 (Construction sample), all the items of the SAWGS showed adequate variability ($SD > 1.00$) with mean scores higher than 1.50. The discrimination indices (corrected item-total correlation) ranged from .29 to .59, while internal consistency reliability was $\alpha = .78$. When the reliability analyses were separated according to gender, the resulting values were appropriate for both men ($\alpha = .78$) and women ($\alpha = .79$).

Table 1*Descriptive Statistics and Factor Solutions of the Spanish Version of the SAWGS (Sample 1)*

SAWGS Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	CITC	FL	<i>h</i> ²
1. In general, men play video games better than women.	1.73	1.40	.41	.56	.37
2. Many women now play video games just because they are trendy.	1.77	1.25	.56	.70	.45
3. In the field of video games, encouraging the participation of female-only teams in competitions promotes sexism and discrimination.	3.44	2.25	.29	.39	.26
4. In the field of video games there is a community of women who are against male gamers.	2.03	1.62	.57	.71	.53
5. The negative comments or threats women receive while playing video games are given much more importance than those received by men.	3.62	2.10	.57	.71	.49
6. Female gamers often interpret kindness from male gamers as harassment.	2.30	1.52	.59	.73	.55
7. In online video games, some women really deserve the insults they receive.	1.81	1.44	.53	.68	.45
8. Many female gamers are famous just because they are pretty or because they use their body to make sexual advances.	2.82	1.86	.55	.70	.58

Note. Sample 1 (Construction Sample). Each statement is rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale; CITC = corrected item-total correlation; FL = Factor Loadings; *h*² = communalities. The original items in Spanish can be seen in the Appendix.

The descriptive statistics and reliability results obtained in Sample 1 (Construction sample) were replicated for the other Spanish samples (Samples 2 and 3). As displayed in Table 2, all the items of the SAWGS showed adequate variability (*SD* > 1.00) with mean scores

higher than 1.50. The discrimination indices (corrected item-total correlation) ranged from .35 to .67. Internal consistency reliability according to gender was adequate for men (Sample 2: $\alpha = .75$; Sample 3: $\alpha = .80$) and women (Sample 2: $\alpha = .82$; Sample 3: $\alpha = .82$) and for the total group in both samples ($\alpha = .80$ in Sample 2 and $\alpha = .82$ in Sample 3).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Spanish and English Version of the SAWGS (Samples 2 to 5)

SAWGS Items	Sample 2			Sample 3			Sample 4			Sample 5		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	CITC	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	CITC	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	CITC	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	CITC
1	1.88	1.50	.42	1.82	1.46	.48	2.71	1.97	.59	2.64	1.93	.55
2	1.95	1.32	.53	1.80	1.33	.58	2.55	1.87	.68	2.27	1.61	.61
3	3.40	2.24	.39	3.13	1.95	.35	2.90	1.95	.50	2.82	1.98	.61
4	2.05	1.56	.51	2.05	1.60	.58	2.93	1.78	.58	2.83	1.74	.65
5	3.62	2.04	.59	2.87	2.00	.61	3.66	1.89	.44	3.61	1.98	.56
6	2.44	1.60	.66	1.96	1.40	.67	2.67	1.67	.69	2.69	1.71	.72
7	1.76	1.31	.48	1.59	1.28	.56	2.16	1.76	.60	2.19	1.68	.62
8	2.98	1.82	.56	3.01	1.88	.60	3.38	2.00	.55	3.17	1.89	.66

Note. Sample 1, $N = 599$; Sample 2, $N = 479$; Sample 3, $N = 416$; Sample 4, $N = 506$; Sample 5, $N = 437$. Each statement is rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). CITC = corrected item-total correlation; SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale.

English Version of the SAWGS

Using two samples from the U.S. (Samples 4 and 5), we tried to replicate the results found with the Spanish version of the scale. The English version of the SAWGS was developed in accordance with the guidelines for the successful translation of instruments for cross-cultural research (Brislin, 1970; Hambleton & Li, 2005). We followed the procedure of back-translation using independent translators. Two bilingual professionals translated from the source language (Spanish) to the target language (English). Another professional translator then translated their work back into the source language, and the discrepancies between the original and back-translated items were resolved by joint agreement between the translators and the authors.

Descriptive statistics for the 8-item English version of the SAWGS are shown in Table 2. All the items in the English version of the SAWGS showed adequate variability ($SD > 1.00$) with mean scores > 2.00 . The corrected item-total correlations were acceptable in all cases, ranging from .44 to .69 (Sample 4) and .55 to .72 (Sample 5). Internal consistency was high for scores in the whole sample (Sample 4: $\alpha = .82$; Sample 5: $\alpha = .86$), and when separated by gender (Sample 4 men: $\alpha = .85$; Sample 5 men: $\alpha = .87$; Sample 4 women: $\alpha = .80$; Sample 5 women: $\alpha = .84$).

Internal Structure: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We conducted a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) to confirm the one-dimensionality structure of the instrument (see Table 3). The internal structure of the SAWGS observed in Sample 1 was studied across four different samples (Samples 2, 3, 4, and 5). Maximum likelihood with robust standard errors (MLR) was used as estimator and the model fit was assessed using the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) with 90% confidence interval (CI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Standardized Root Mean

Square Residual (SRMR). Kline (2005) suggested which indices to include and has advocated the use of the Chi-Square Test, RMSEA, CFI, and SRMR, and threshold levels were assessed by Hu and Bentler (1999) and endorsed by Brown (2006). *P*-values associated with the Chi-Square test were not reported because they are not robust for small sample sizes and not robust with respect to violations of the distributional assumptions (McHugh, 2013). Cutoffs for CFI ($> .90$) and SRMR ($< .08$) indicate an acceptable fit, and values greater than .95 for CFI and values less than .05 for SRMR are considered levels of good fit (Hooper et al., 2008; Hu & Bentler, 1999). For the RMSEA estimates, we considered that the model presents an acceptable fit when values are lower than .08. Values of less than .05 indicate a good fit (Hair et al., 2010; Awang, 2012) and lower than .03 represent an excellent fit (Hooper et al., 2008). These indices have been reported because they are more insensitive to sample size, model misspecification, and parameter estimates (Hooper et al., 2008).

The single-factor model showed an adequate fit in Sample 2, $\chi^2(20) = 59.50$; CFI = .95, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = .06, 90% CI [.05, .08]; Sample 3, $\chi^2(20) = 54.29$; CFI = .95, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = .06, 90% CI [.04, .09]; Sample 4, $\chi^2(20) = 48.60$; CFI = .97, SRMR = .03, RMSEA = .05, 90% CI [.03, .07]; and Sample 5, $\chi^2(20) = 76.10$; CFI = .94, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = .07, 90% CI [.06, .10]. Standardized factor loadings of this one-factor model are shown in Table 3.

Table 3*Standardized Factor Loadings in Confirmatory Factor Analyses of the SAWGS*

SAWGS Items	Spanish Version (Sample 2)	Spanish Version (Sample 3)	English Version (Sample 4)	English Version (Sample 5)
1	.47	.53	.67	.58
2	.59	.64	.77	.64
3	.42	.37	.55	.66
4	.60	.67	.64	.69
5	.67	.68	.48	.62
6	.77	.76	.76	.78
7	.55	.64	.66	.68
8	.63	.65	.59	.71

Measurement Invariance of SAWGS

After confirming the unidimensional structure of SAWGS in the different samples, we studied measurement invariance across gender and country. Before exploring measurement invariance, we conducted CFA by groups. We formed two samples, separated into Spanish samples (Samples 2 and 3) and U.S. samples (Samples 4 and 5). The Spanish samples comprised 895 participants (408 women and 487 men), and the U.S. samples contained 943 participants (470 women and 473 men). Fit indices (Table 4) showed an adequate fit of the unidimensional structure of SAWGS for gender and country groups.

We used Mplus 8.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) with maximum likelihood estimation to conduct multi-group CFAs in order to test measurement invariance of the SAWGS model fit. Measurement invariance was assessed using a series of increasingly stringent model comparisons (configural to metric to scalar) based on changes in fit index and Yuan-Bentler scale-corrected chi-square difference tests. Likelihood ratios (Dc^2) assessed whether constraining specified model parameters across groups resulted in a significant improvement

or worsening of model fit. Change in model fit was evaluated by the same fit indices used in the previous CFAs. A change in CFI (DCFI) lower than .010, a change in RMSEA (DRMSEA) lower than .015, and a change in SRMR (DSRMR) lower than .030 suggest no meaningful decrease in model fit and support measurement invariance (Chen, 2007). When analyzing invariance, we placed the emphasis on model fit change given the sensitivity of chi-square tests to sample size (Chen, 2007).

Table 4

Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the SAWGS for Gender and Country Groups

Samples	$\chi^2(df)$	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]
Spanish Version ($N = 895$)				
Total Sample	94.37(20)	.95	.03	.06 [.05, .08]
Men	57.94(20)	.95	.04	.06 [.04, .08]
Women	48.35(20)	.95	.03	.05 [.04, .08]
English Version ($N = 943$)				
Total Sample	110.74(20)	.95	.03	.06 [.06, .08]
Men	68.65(20)	.95	.03	.07 [.05, .09]
Women	69.12(20)	.94	.04	.07 [.05, .09]

Note. The Spanish version of the SAWGS was administered in Samples 2 and 3. The English version of the SAWGS was administered in Samples 4 and 5. CFI = Comparative Fit Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CI = confidence interval; SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale.

Fit statistics for the invariance tests are shown in Table 5. The configural model had a good fit to the data across the country and gender groups. The configural model was compared to the metric model that constrained factor loadings across both groups. The metric model had a good fit to the data and the changes in fit indices indicated no meaningful decrement in fit from the configural to the metric model for gender groups (see Table 5). In the metric model, despite having a good fit to the data for country groups (see

Table 5), the changes in fit index indicated a meaningful decrement from the configural to the metric model ($\Delta\text{CFI} = -.019$, $\Delta\text{RMSEA} = .030$, $\Delta\text{SRMR} = .006$). Given the lack of invariance at the factor-loading level, scalar invariance was not tested for country groups (Millsap & Yun-Tein, 2004).

Table 5

Goodness of Fit Indicators for Structural Equation Modeling for the SAWGS across Gender and Country

Samples/Groups	χ^2	<i>df</i>	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]
Spanish sample: Gender					
Configural model	105.57	40	.947	.038	.061 [.047, .075]
Metric model	112.14	47	.944	.046	.056 [.042, .069]
Scalar model	147.33	54	.935	.052	.062 [.050, .074]
U.S. sample: Gender					
Configural model	137.77	40	.945	.038	.072 [.059, .085]
Metric model	147.99	47	.944	.044	.068 [.056, .080]
Scalar model	188.61	54	.935	.050	.073 [.062, .084]
Total sample: Country					
Configural model	204.80	40	.947	.035	.067 [.058, .076]
Metric model	276.65	47	.928	.065	.073 [.065, .081]
Scalar model	435.307	54	.900	.070	.088 [.080, .095]
Model comparison	$\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df)$	<i>p</i>	ΔCFI	ΔSRMR	ΔRMSEA
Spanish sample: Gender					
Configural vs. Metric	7.22(7)	.410	-.003	.008	-.005
Metric vs. Scalar	39.56(7)	<.001	-.009	.006	-.006
U.S. sample: Gender					
Configural vs. Metric	7.81(7)	.348	-.001	.006	-.004
Metric vs. Scalar	44.64(7)	<.001	-.009	.006	.005
Total sample: Country					
Configural vs. Metric	73.96(7)	<.001	-.019	.030	.006
Metric vs. Scalar	186.63(7)	<.001	--	--	--

Note. $\Delta\chi^2$ = Yuan-Bentler scale-corrected chi-square difference test. CFI = Comparative Fit Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CI = confidence interval; ΔCFI = change in CFI; ΔSRMR = change in SRMR; ΔRMSEA = change in RMSEA.

We proceeded to compare the metric model to the scalar model that constrained factor loadings and thresholds across the gender groups. The scalar model had a good fit to the data for gender groups, and the changes in fit index indicated no meaningful decrement in fit from the metric to the scalar model using equal thresholds (see Table 5). Overall, we decided to accept our results as evidence for strong measurement invariance between women and men, as changes in CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR across the increasingly constrained models did not indicate any meaningful decrement in model fit (Chen, 2007).

In the case of the country groups (Spain vs. the U.S.), the multigroup CFA confirmed the configural invariance, suggesting that the SAWGS items are clustered around the same factor for Spanish and U.S. participants. However, when all factor loadings were constrained equally across countries, the changes in fit index indicated a meaningful decrement in fit from the configural to the metric model. Despite the fact that SAWGS items are grouped in the same factor for Spanish and U.S. participants, we are unable to conclude that the factor loadings of the items on the latent factor and the item intercepts are equal across these countries.

External Validity: Demographics and Psychosocial Variables

We conducted several analyses to obtain external validity evidence for the SAWGS scores (APA et al., 2014) for both the Spanish and English versions.

Associations with Gender and Age

In the current research, using Samples 1–5, we found, as expected, that men scored significantly higher than women on the SAWGS. The effect sizes associated with the comparisons, Cohen's d , were small to medium in Samples 2 to 4 (see Table 6). In contrast, in all our samples, correlations between age and SAWGS were around zero ($.04 < r < .09$).

Table 6*Descriptive Statistics and Gender Differences in SAWGS Scores*

Samples	Total Sample		Men		Women		<i>t</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Sample 1	2.44	1.08	2.53	1.10	2.24	1.01	−3.07*	0.29
Sample 2	2.51	1.09	2.77	1.04	2.51	1.09	−6.44***	0.62
Sample 3	2.28	1.08	2.55	1.10	2.28	1.08	−5.50***	0.56
Sample 4	2.87	1.93	3.26	1.37	2.49	1.07	−7.01***	0.62
Sample 5	2.78	1.30	2.92	1.38	2.63	1.21	−2.40*	0.30

Note. Sample 1, *N* = 599; Sample 2, *N* = 479; Sample 3, *N* = 416; Sample 4, *N* = 506; Sample 5, *N* = 437. The Spanish version of the SAWGS was administrated in Samples 1–3. The English version of the SAWGS was administrated in Samples 4 and 5. SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale.

p* < .05. **p* < .001.

Psychosocial Correlates

We tested the relations between SAWGS and other relevant variables. The correlations among all psychosocial measures are shown in Table 7 (for Samples 2 and 4) and Table 8 (for Samples 3 and 5). Due to the multiple contrasts carried out, the *p*-value cutoff was adjusted through the Bonferroni correction (total number of pair correlations between SAWGS scores and the rest of the attitudinal variables in each sample [Samples 2 and 4: $.05/4 = .013$; Samples 3 and 5: $.05/3 = .016$]). In accordance with Hypothesis 1 (i.e., that SAWGS scores would correlate positively with measures of social dominance and prejudices towards women), the SAWGS scores positively correlated with scales measuring similar constructs, including hostile sexism, social dominance orientation, acceptance of myths about intimate partner violence against women, traditional gender ideology, and benevolent sexism. As predicted,

scores on the SAWGS were also negatively correlated with feminist identification (Hypothesis 2) but were independent of social desirability (Hypothesis 3).

Table 7

Intercorrelations between the SAWGS, Sexist Attitudes, Feminist Identification, Myths about Intimate Partner Violence Against Women, and Social Desirability (Samples 2 and 4)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. SAWGS	---	.77***	.53***	-.40***	.75***	.03
2. Hostile sexism	.77***	---	.59***	-.57***	.77***	.01
3. Benevolent sexism	.38***	.49***	---	-.31***	.62***	.05
4. Feminist identification	-.47***	-.58***	-.28***	---	-.36***	-.09
5. AMIVAW	.69***	.75***	.49***	-.49***	---	.08
6. Social desirability	-.02	-.07	-.06	-.14**	-.15**	---

Note. Spanish version (Sample 2) correlations below diagonal ($N = 479$); English version (Sample 4) correlations above diagonal ($N = 506$). SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale; AMIVAW = Acceptance of Myths about Intimate Partner Violence Against Women. The p -value cutoff was adjusted through the Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons ($p < .013$); however, items significant at the adjusted p -value and a slightly more conservative p -value (i.e., $< .01$) did not differ.

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 8

Intercorrelations between the SAWGS, Social Desirability, Social Dominance, and Gender Ideology (Samples 3 and 5)

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. SAWGS	---	.02	.60***	.65***
2. Social desirability	.03	---	.02	-.11
3. Social dominance orientation	.52***	.04	---	.61***
4. Traditional gender ideology	.57***	.03	.45***	---

Note. Spanish version (Sample 3) correlations below diagonal ($N = 416$); English version (Sample 5) correlations above diagonal ($N = 437$). SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale. The p -value cutoff was adjusted through the Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons ($p < .016$); however, the items identified as significant at the adjusted p -value and a very conservative p -value did not differ.

*** $p < .001$.

External Validity: Punishment for Toxic Gamers and Minimization of Sexist Incidents

As noted previously, we used scenarios related to punishment for toxic gaming behavior to further evaluated external validity. Due to the difference in the content of the two scenarios, Tables 9, 11, and 12 show the results for Samples 2 and 4 (Scenario 1, based on the competence of a woman gamer) and Tables 10, 13, and 14 show the results for Samples 3 and 5 (Scenario 2, based on the influence of the role of a woman gamer). The data show the expected relations, with higher scores in SAWGS associated with greater minimization of a sexist incident and less severe punishment of toxic gamers in the Spanish and U.S. samples.

Table 9

Correlations Between Participants' Judgements for the Sexist Incident Based on the Influence of the Competence of a Woman Gamer in Scenario 1 and the SAWGS and Measures Supporting Convergent Validity (Samples 2 and 4)

Variables	Proposed punishment for toxic gamers		Minimization of sexist incident	
	Sample 2	Sample 4	Sample 2	Sample 4
SAWGS	-.23 ^{***}	-.33 ^{***}	.38 ^{***}	.63 ^{***}
Hostile sexism	-.20 ^{***}	-.28 ^{***}	.45 ^{***}	.61 ^{***}
Benevolent sexism	-.07	-.07	.30 ^{***}	.41 ^{***}
Feminist identification	.23 ^{***}	.26 ^{***}	-.27 ^{***}	-.27 ^{***}
AMIVAW	-.13 ^{**}	-.18 ^{***}	.41 ^{***}	.63 ^{**}
Social desirability	-.02	.00	.00	.03

Note. Spanish version (Sample 2, $N = 479$); English version (Sample 4, $N = 506$). SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale; AMIVAW= Acceptance of Myths about Intimate Partner Violence Against Women.

^{**} $p < .01$. ^{***} $p < .001$.

Table 10

Correlations Between Participants' Judgements for the Sexist Incident Based on the Influence of the Role of a Woman Gamer in Scenario 2 and the SAWGS and Measures Supporting Convergent Validity (Samples 3 and 5).

Variables	Proposed punishment for toxic gamers		Minimization of sexist incident	
	Sample 3	Sample 5	Sample 3	Sample 5
SAWGS	-.32 ^{***}	-.34 ^{***}	.46 ^{***}	.52 ^{***}
Social desirability	.05	-.01	-.04	.12 [*]
Social dominance orientation	-.21 ^{***}	-.39 ^{***}	.34 ^{***}	.52 ^{***}
Traditional gender ideology	-.33 ^{***}	-.22 ^{***}	.52 ^{***}	.56 ^{***}

Note. Spanish version (Sample 3, $N = 416$); English version (Sample 5, $N = 437$). SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale.

^{*} $p < .05$. ^{***} $p < .001$.

Hierarchical regression analyses were used to analyze the predictive capacity of SAWGS on punishment and minimization scores for the incident presented, examining the incremental validity of the instrument. Concerning the sexist incident depicted in Scenario 1, as used with Samples 2 and 4 (see Tables 11 and 12), the results showed that scores on the SAWGS accounted for a percentage of the variance of both criteria variables beyond that explained by the other predictive variables considered for the U.S. sample. The p -value cutoff and confidence intervals (CI) were adjusted through the Bonferroni correction (total number of predictive variables in each sample [$\text{Samples 2 and 4: } .05/5 = .01$]). In Step 1, we controlled for sociodemographic variables (gender and age). Male participants minimized the sexist incident to a greater degree than women participants in both samples (explaining 3.0% of the variance for Sample 2, and 6.3% of the variance for Sample 4). In Step 2, hostile

sexism contributed significantly to the prediction of proposed punishment for toxic gamers (explaining 3.5% and 9.8% of additional variance for Sample 2 and Sample 4, respectively) and minimization of a sexist incident (explaining 18.6% and 32.5% of additional variance in Sample 2 and Sample 4, respectively). In Step 3, SAWGS scores accounted for incremental variance in both criteria variables for the U.S. sample, accounting for 3.9% of additional variance in punishment for toxic gamers and 5.8% of additional variance in minimization of a sexist incident. For the Spanish Sample, the addition of the SAWGS scores in Step 3 did not meaningfully account for incremental variance in punishment or minimization.

Table 11

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Minimization of Sexist Incident based on the Influence of the Competence of a Woman Gamer by Socio-Demographics and Sexist Attitudes Measures

Predictors	Minimization of sexist incident						
	Sample 2				Sample 4		
	ΔR^2	β	99% CI		ΔR^2	β	95% CI
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>			<i>LL</i> <i>UL</i>
Step 1: Socio-demographics							
Model 1	.030***				.063***		
Gender		-.325**	-.544	-.105		-.501**	-.730 -.289
Age		.011	-.012	.032		.006	-.009 .021
Step 2: Sexist attitudes							
Model 2	.186***				.325***		
HS		.406**	.240	.571		.553*	.412 .702
BS		.097	-.032	.248		.073	-.045 .204
Step 3: Sexism against women gamers							
Model 3	.002				.058***		
SAWGS		.077	-.116	.291		.384**	.232 .540
Total R ²	.218***				.446***		

Note. Spanish version (Sample 2; $N = 479$); English version (Sample 4; $N = 506$). β indicates the standardized regression weights. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively. Gender: men = 0, women = 1. HS = Hostile Sexism; BS = Benevolent Sexism; SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale. The p -value cutoff and confidence intervals (CI) were adjusted through the Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons ($p < .01$).

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 12

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Proposed Punishment for Toxic gamers based on the Influence of the Competence of a Woman Gamer by Socio-Demographics and Sexist Attitudes Measures

Predictors	Proposed punishment for toxic gamers							
	Sample 2				Sample 4			
	ΔR^2	β	99% CI		ΔR^2	β	95% CI	
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Step 1: Socio-demographics								
Model 1	.018				.001			
Gender		.166	−.012	.347		.015	−.207	.230
Age		−.018	−.039	.002		−.003	−.020	.012
Step 2: Sexist attitudes								
Model 2	.035***				.098***			
HS		−.218**	−.400	−.072		−.385**	−.542	−.238
BS		.057	−.106	.195		.137	.027	.288
Step 3: Sexism against women gamers								
Model 3	.013**				.039***			
SAWGS		−.181	−.426	.017		−.315**	−.529	−.101
Total R ²	.067**				.140***			

Note. Spanish version (Sample 2; $N = 479$); English version (Sample 4; $N = 506$). β indicates the standardized regression weights. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively. Gender: men = 0, women = 1. HS = Hostile Sexism; BS = Benevolent Sexism; SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale. The p -value cutoff and confidence intervals (CI) were adjusted through the Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons ($p < .01$).

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Concerning the sexist incident depicted in Scenario 2, as used with Samples 3 and 5 (see Tables 13 and 14), our results also showed that SAWGS explained incremental variance in both criteria variables. In Step 1, gender and age did not contribute to the prediction of either criteria (p -value cutoff was also adjusted through the Bonferroni correction: total number of predictive variables in each sample [Samples 3 and 5: $.05/9 = .006$]). In Step 2, aggression scores explain a significant amount of additional variance in minimization of a sexist incident across both samples though the sub-domains that significantly uniquely related to minimization differed across the two samples. In Step 3, adding social dominance orientation and traditional gender ideology to the model explained a significant increase in variance for both outcomes for both samples (the pattern of significant relations differed across outcomes and samples). Finally, in Step 4, SAWGS scores were a significant predictor (beyond sociodemographic, aggression, and attitudinal variables) of punishment for toxic gamers in the U.S., explaining an additional 2.9% of the variance. However, SAWGS scores did not significantly accounted for incremental variance in both criteria variables for the Spanish sample or in minimization criterion in the U.S. sample (although the addition of the SAWGS to the model increased the variance explained in both outcomes for both samples, only one instance met the modified cutoff for significance).

Table 13

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Minimization of Sexist Incident Based on the Influence of the Role of a Woman Gamer by Socio-Demographics, Aggression, Gender and Dominance Attitudes Measures

	Minimization of sexist incident						
	Sample 3				Sample 5		
Predictors	ΔR^2	β	99.4% CI		ΔR^2	β	99.4% CI
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>			<i>LL</i> <i>UL</i>
Step 1: Socio-demographics							
Model 1	.015				.018		
Gender		-.203	-.470	.078		-.194	-.358 .038
Age		.011	-.013	.041		.010	-.005 .027
Step 2: Aggression							
Model 2	.036**				.158***		
AQ V		.074	-.052	.222		.017	-.152 .175
AQ P		-.023	-.175	.145		.378**	.219 .561
AQ A		-.013	-.230	.174		-.126	-.294 .066
AQ H		.173**	.032	.329		.159	-.001 .322
Step 3: Gender and dominance attitudes							
Model 3	.254***				.201***		
SDO		.134	-.013	.297		.270**	.081 .428
EIG		.454**	.245	.713		.343**	.172 .579
Step 4: Sexism against women gamers							
Model 4	.024***				.015***		
SAWGS		.206	-.009	.431		.177	-.011 .387
Total R ²	.328***				.392***		

Note. Spanish version (Sample 3; $N = 416$); English version (Sample 5; $N = 437$). β indicates the standardized regression weights. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively. Gender: men = 0, women = 1. SDO = Social Dominance Orientation; EIG = Gender Ideology (traditional); AQ P = Physical aggression; AQ V = Verbal aggression; AQ A = Anger; AQ H = Hostility; SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale. The p -value cutoff and confidence intervals (CI) were adjusted through the Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons ($p < .006$).

** $p < .006$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 14

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Proposed Punishment for Toxic Gamers Based on the Influence of the Role of a Woman Gamer by Socio-Demographics, Aggression, Gender and Dominance Attitudes Measures

Predictors	Proposed punishment for toxic gamers							
	Sample 3				Sample 5			
	ΔR^2	β	99.4% CI		ΔR^2	β	99.4% CI	
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Step 1: Socio-demographics								
Model 1	.013				.002			
Gender		.132	-.164	.425		.080	-.166	.381
Age		.015	-.043	.007		-.003	-.019	.011
Step 2: Aggression								
Model 2	.014				.027			
AQ V		-.097	-.267	.049		-.106	-.279	.112
AQ P		-.051	-.235	.098		-.123	-.306	.046
AQ A		.069	-.125	.306		.161	-.045	.395
AQ H		-.062	-.233	.101		-.093	-.280	.081
Step 3: Gender and dominance attitudes								
Model 3	.103***				.138***			
SDO		-.081	-.252	.077		-.428**	-.606	-.209
EIG		-.292**	-.532	-.104		.027	-.185	.217
Step 4: Sexism against women gamers								
Model 4	.018***				.029***			
SAWGS		-.177	-.410	.020		-.246**	-.452	-.017
Total R ²	.147***				.196***			

Note. Spanish version (Sample 3; $N = 416$); English version (Sample 5; $N = 437$). β indicates the standardized regression weights. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively. Gender: men = 0, women = 1. SDO = Social Dominance Orientation; EIG = Gender Ideology (traditional); AQ P = Physical aggression; AQ V = Verbal aggression; AQ A = Anger; AQ H = Hostility; SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale. The p -value cutoff and confidence intervals (CI) were adjusted through the Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons ($p < .006$).

** $p < .006$. *** $p < .001$.

Discussion

The main objective of this research was to develop a specific and psychometrically adequate instrument to assess sexism against women gamers. Our findings show that SAWGS is a suitable scale for measuring these sexist attitudes in an online context. The specificity of this environment can provide a series of manifestations that go beyond those included in some of the most popular current scales of sexism, such as remarks about the inferior ability of women to play videogames or using sexual attractiveness to their advantage in games (e.g., Deskins, 2015; Fox & Potocki, 2016; McCullough et al., 2020; Stermer & Burkley, 2012). Moreover, this research has considered recent proposals regarding the benefits of developing short scales to evaluate psychological constructs (Coelho et al., 2018a, 2018b). This brevity provides ease of administration compared to measures traditionally used to assess sexism, being less time consuming and, in addition, providing an evaluation of the specific component of sexism in video games.

We applied various methodological approaches to independent samples from two different cultural contexts that were heterogeneous concerning sociodemographic variables. Following psychometric analyses, we proposed an 8-item scale that reliably and validly captured sexism against women gamers with both its Spanish and English versions.

An exploratory study (Study 1, Sample 1) using qualitative data from platforms and interviews with gamers followed by quantitative ratings from experts led to a short unidimensional 8-item scale. Subsequently, we confirmed the one-dimensional structure, as shown by EFAs and CFAs, in four more samples of gamers from Spain (Samples 2 and 3) and the U.S. (Samples 4 and 5). The SAWGS maintained a stable structure and high internal consistency reliability of scores (α 's between .78 and .86) in the five samples used.

Invariance tests across genders showed that the scale was invariant at the configural metric, and scalar levels. However, CFA confirmed the configural invariance across countries only, suggesting that SAWGS items for the U.S. are more closely associated with their intended latent factor. Therefore, we cannot conclude that factor loadings on the latent factor and the item intercepts are equal between Spain and the U.S. (metric and scalar invariance). Only when the unit and the origin of the scale were identical could the SAWGS means be compared between countries. One possible explanation for this result may be related to item bias. The item bias in a cross-cultural assessment is generally caused by poor item translation. To avoid this problem, it is recommended to consider theoretical and linguistic aspects in back-translation procedures (Brislin, 1970; Hambleton & Li, 2005). However, the English version of SAWGS was derived from a back-translation procedure conducted by independent experts, following the indicated recommendations (Brislin, 1970; Hambleton & Li, 2005). Furthermore, the discrimination index of each item allows us to rule out this explanation. Finally, this result could be related to the construct bias across cultures, usually when the definition of the construct is not identical across different countries, or a partial overlap is found in the definitions. Nevertheless, we applied a convergence approach to avoid this problem (van de Vijver & Leung, 2000), using the same instruments in both countries to study whether the relations were comparable, and the definition of the construct was equivalent. As we have observed in this research, the patterns of these relations are similar, and it can be concluded that the definition of the construct “sexism against women gamers” is similar in both countries. It is possible that there are specific cultural differences in the understanding of the elements or in the different representations of the latent variable in the two countries, which could help to explain the results obtained. In this respect, future

research should continue to systematically explore cross-cultural aspects of sexist attitudes against women gamers.

Moreover, we also analyzed the relation between SAWGS and the gender and age of participants. Scores on the SAWGS were significantly higher for men than women in all samples, which is consistent with our hypothesis and with the findings of related studies (e.g., Fox et al., 2015; Glick et al., 2000). In all samples, correlations between SAWGS and age were around zero, although a U-shaped relation might be expected based on previous results on hostile sexism (e.g., Hammond et al., 2018). This discrepancy might be due to the differences in age range between our participants and those included in the study by Hammond et al. (2018). Additionally, the correlations between SAWGS and other constructs allowed us to establish convergent validity. Convergent validity was supported by positive correlations across nationality of samples with similar constructs, including endorsement of myths about intimate partner violence against women, hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism. Validity was also supported by a negative correlation between the SAWGS and adherence to feminist identification in both Spanish and U.S. samples. These findings are consistent with previous offline research showing a marked negative relation between sexist attitudes and feminist identity (e.g., Riquelme et al., 2021). In line with our results, social dominance orientation has also been found to be a predictor of hostile sexism and tolerance of sexual harassment in offline contexts (Feather & McKee, 2012) and online gaming (Fox & Tang, 2017). Finally, SAWGS scores did not significantly correlate with social desirability for any sample.

Based on two hypothetical scenarios describing a sexist incident in which a group of men gamers denigrated their female playing partner, we assessed the participants' proposed punishment for these toxic gamers and their possible minimization of the sexist incident. In both scenarios, constructed around different features of a woman gamer (competence and

role in gaming), significant correlations emerged. The pattern of findings after adjusting for the number of analyses was generally consistent with expectations. Specifically, participants' scores on the SAWGS correlated positively with minimization of a sexist incident and negatively with proposed punishment of gamers, providing additional support for the external validity of the scale. Moreover, for U.S. samples we observed that SAWGS scores predicted both criteria (minimization and punishment) beyond what was predicted by measures of traditional sexism (i.e., Ambivalent Sexism Inventory and Traditional Gender Ideology), aggression tendencies (AQ), and social dominance orientation (SDO). The pattern was similar for the Spanish samples in all but one instance (we did not find evidence of supporting incremental validity, after accounting for variance explained by traditional measures of sexism and feminist identity, in one analysis with this sample). Concerning the findings of incremental validity, we argue that general measures of sexism should not be replaced. Indeed, general sexism still needs to be evaluated, and SAWGS would serve to complement these measures due to its specificity and because it includes elements of online gaming not previously considered.

Practice Implications

From a practical point of view, SAWGS provides an appropriate psychometric measure, and it could be used in a new field of research, that is, the sexism directed towards women in online gaming. SAWGS presents a specific empirical and conceptual entity that is distinct from other manifestations of sexism (i.e., hostile sexism and benevolent sexism). The existence of this scale shows promise for providing a greater and deeper understanding of this issue. In particular, this scale fills a gap in the literature pertaining to the measurement of sexist attitudes endorsed in the specific context of online gaming, which is important since online video games have become the main enjoyment worldwide (ESA, 2022; ISFE, 2021).

Moreover, this new scale will prove useful to researchers interested in learning more about the intersection of interactions in online gaming and sexism. Being able to measure gamers' endorsement of these sexist attitudes will allow researchers to investigate how these are related to the many aspects of sexism against women, including assessment of victims and perpetrators, the proclivity of some gamers to engage in sexist behaviors, and the consequences for women gamers. In this sense, SAWGS may be used to study the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functions of sexist prejudices in the gaming community.

As shown in the present research, it is important to continue investigating social interactions in online gaming in order to help deter the normalization of sexist attitudes. Given that video games are the leading form of audiovisual entertainment in our society (ESA, 2022; ISFE, 2021) and this mode of entertainment presents an environment that promotes and normalizes gender stereotypes and the perpetration of sexist behaviors, SAWGS can be a very useful tool for programs focused on preventing sexism. For example, it can be used to evaluate the efficacy of modifying sexist attitudes in the online context or as a guide for informing the development of program content. Thus, interventions can be based on strategies aimed at reducing everyday sexism, increasing sensitization towards sexist attitudes, educating about the consequences produced both in the online and offline environments, and raising awareness about the current prevalence of sexist beliefs (Becker & Swim, 2011).

In addition, all this information will increase society's knowledge about the discrimination against women in the world of video games. In particular, women gamers may feel more confident in gaming environments. As previous research points out, learning about gender role stereotypes is associated with higher feelings of self-efficacy for women (Zawadzki et al., 2012) and has far-reaching practical implications (i.e., playing video games

may reduce biases in their own social environments; Schrier, 2018). However, these practical implications are not limited to women gamers. Education and awareness aimed at the gaming community will contribute to highlighting the background of discrimination against women in video games. In fact, video games have long been considered an effective educational tool (Ho et al., 2022). In a teenage audience, it is possible that raising awareness about these sexist attitudes present in an environment so close to them, such as video games, may cause gamers to reflect on issues related to discrimination, sexualization, and gender stereotypes in a way that may not otherwise be possible, all of which may encourage them to reject sexism in real life. For example, in a virtual world that illustrates real-world problems, gamers also learn about environmental issues and the solutions to address or mitigate them (e.g., Ho et al., 2022; Meya & Eisenack, 2018). In other words, reducing this gender inequality will benefit society as a whole.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our research provides a suitable instrument for measuring sexism against women in the context of video gaming. However, certain limitations must be considered. The use of online surveys can, for example, result in fewer control elements in the responses, even though this form of administration is the most suitable in video game research (ESA, 2022; Griffiths, 2010; ISFE, 2021). To minimize this limitation, we inserted attention check questions in each scale, analyzed the IP address of each participant to avoid duplicate answers, and analyzed time data for each response in order to identify whether participants had submitted their responses too quickly or too slowly, as recommended in web surveys and attitude questionnaires for the detection of response bias (Rogelberg & Stanton, 2007; Yan & Tourangeau, 2008). Moreover, the compliance found regarding the assumptions for conducting regression analyses may be taken to indicate good quality in the participants'

responses. In addition, it is possible that self-report measures could elicit socially desirable responses. To minimize this risk, the participants were blinded to the study purpose, and we found null correlations with social desirability. In addition, the SAWGS should be tested in experimental settings in order to allow a greater understanding of the causes and consequences associated with adherence to this form of sexism against women gamers. Our results were all based on correlational data, wherein variables are only observed, and it is therefore not possible to infer causality. Thus, it would be of interest for future research to adopt a different methodological approach and carry out experimental studies that would simultaneously yield new validity evidence for the instrument. For example, by using hypothetical scenarios, some personal characteristics of the woman gamer could be experimentally manipulated, such as her feminist identification or her tendency to take collective action for gender equality in video games. This experimental design would allow us to analyze the influence of the information provided on the perception of a sexist incident she experiences when gaming online. In this regard, it would also be interesting to explore the possible moderating role of SAWGS in the social perception of various sexist incidents, or the role of this measure as a predictor of sexist behaviors suffered by women gamers. Future research should also investigate if sexism against women gamers has become normative in online video gaming.

Due to the low reliability obtained from the SDS scores, in future research we should use other measures of social desirability above the adequate cut-off of .70. Moreover, the test-retest approach is also recommended for reliability analysis. We will consider applying this strategy and expanding the samples used (e.g., including adolescents and sexual minority groups) in the future. Using adolescent samples would allow us to detect this type of sexism at earlier ages, with the aim of raising awareness and making visible the discrimination that

women still suffer in this setting. The inclusion and representation of sexual and gender minorities might also be of great interest to the extent that they also do not belong to the gamer prototype. Well-educated individuals (e.g., tertiary education or post-secondary education; Lambert, 2020; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2022) were also overrepresented in the U.S. samples, and evaluation of the psychometric properties of the measure in populations with less formal educational experience are important. A final limitation is that we did not gather data on race and ethnicity from our participants. Thus, we are limited in knowing exactly with whom the psychometric findings from the present study may most directly relate. In future studies it will be important to collect this information and explore measurement invariance in order to determine the extent to which our findings can be generalized across various population groups.

Conclusion

This research advances our understanding and measurement of the construct of sexism against women gamers. We successfully developed a short 8-item unidimensional scale that covers all the proposed content areas for defining this construct, including minimizing the situation, underestimating women's abilities and interest in video games, blaming women gamers, and rejecting egalitarian positions in the gamer community. We also demonstrated support for the reliability, internal structure validity, measurement invariance, and external validity of scores in both the Spanish and English versions of the SAWGS. Our findings also revealed that individuals with higher adherence to SAWGS are more sexist, are less supportive of feminist ideology, and, in some cases, are more likely to minimize sexist incidents and support less severe punishment for sexist comments directed at women gamers. Certainly, given the specific characteristics of the online gaming environment, the SAWGS

makes it possible to measure a series of manifestations and components that go beyond the current scales evaluating sexism (e.g., Fox & Potocki, 2016). Our research indicates that sexist attitudes—present in many domains of society—also play an important role in videogaming. Given that virtual contexts continue to acquire greater social relevance, the SAWGS could be of use in assessments and subsequent studies relating to sexism in the online environment representative of video games. Being able to detect specific sexism against women gamers in these video game contexts represents a first step toward helping politicians and professionals to develop programs for its eradication. Such interventions will ultimately ensure that women can freely express their desire to play video games in the same conditions of safety and well-being as those enjoyed by their men counterparts.

Declarations

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Conflicts of interest/Competing interests

The authors declare no financial or conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The procedures used in collection of data conform to current APA ethical standards for the protection of human subjects. All participants voluntarily participated in the survey and provided their informed consent at the beginning of the study. These procedures were in accordance with ethical standards of the University of Granada (# 962/CEIH/2019).

Transparency on Material

We confirm that this article is original, and we also certify that the manuscript is not under review elsewhere and has not been previously published elsewhere in whole or in part.

Availability of data and material

The data that support the findings of this research are available upon request from the corresponding author.

Authors' contributions

All listed authors have agreed to manuscript authorship and the authorship order, and the corresponding author confirms that all who deserve authorship are listed. The authors made substantial contributions to the work including the study conception, design of the work, and interpretation of data. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Appendix

Spanish Version of Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (SAWGS)

1. En general, los hombres juegan mejor que las mujeres a los videojuegos.
2. Ahora muchas mujeres juegan a videojuegos simplemente por moda.
3. En el ámbito de los videojuegos, alentar la competición de equipos únicamente femeninos fomenta el sexismo y la discriminación.
4. Existe una comunidad de mujeres dentro del ámbito de los videojuegos que está en contra de los hombres *gamers*.
5. Se les da mucha más importancia a los comentarios negativos o amenazas que reciben las mujeres mientras juegan a videojuegos que a los que reciben los hombres.
6. Las mujeres *gamers* interpretan frecuentemente la amabilidad de los hombres *gamers* como acoso.
7. En los videojuegos *online* hay mujeres que se ganan a pulso los insultos que reciben.
8. Muchas mujeres *gamers* son famosas simplemente porque son guapas o porque usan su cuerpo a modo de insinuación sexual.

Capítulo 4

Chapter 4. *Gaming With a Feminist: Sexism and Perception of Sexist Incidents In Online Settings*

Gaming with a Feminist: Sexism and Perception of Sexist Incidents in Online Settings

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Abstract

Video games remain a male-dominated environment where sexism persists. Although women make up almost half of the gamer community, this representation is currently biased by the gender discrimination, anti-feminist themes, and sexist attitudes that they are confronted with, especially when participating in online games. As a result, both sexism against women during online video games and how their participation is perceived by other gamers have become relevant. We conducted two experiments to analyze the influence of the adherence of a woman gamer to feminist identity and the type of collective action for gender equality performed on the perception of a sexist incident during an online video game, considering participants' sexism against women gamers using an 8-item self-report scale: Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale. In Study 1 (145 women and 146 men), we presented a woman gamer described as feminist and compared her perception with that of another woman described just as a regular gamer. In Study 2 (168 women and 232 men), we manipulated the type of collective action for gender equality (normative vs. non normative vs. control) performed by a woman gamer defined as a feminist. Results showed that participants with higher sexism against women gamers attributed more blame to the feminist woman gamer who was a victim of a sexist incident (vs. the regular woman gamer) and to a woman gamer who performed non-normative collective actions (vs. normative vs. control). Both studies confirm the relevance of the interaction between sexist attitudes and certain characteristics of women gamers for the perception of sexist incidents. These findings are an important step towards understanding these issues and would prevent negative experiences for women in online gaming.

Keywords: Sexism, online video gaming, feminist identity, victim blame, SAWGS.

Introduction

Currently, sexism is still present in the daily life of women (Good et al., 2019); it is also present in many online environments such as video games and gamer communities, which often perpetuate the prejudices and hostile attitudes that occur in the offline context (Fox et al., 2015). Video games have become the main form of audiovisual entertainment worldwide (Entertainment Software Association [ESA], 2020; Spanish Video Game Association [AEVI], 2022); they connect millions of people worldwide every day to play together in a common virtual environment (Betts et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2015). Through the use of the Internet, the development of MMOGs (massively multiplayer online video games) makes it possible to promote social interactions as part of the game dynamics (Fox & Potocki, 2016). In fact, such a widespread use of video games has also led to a change in the characteristics of their users. Although video games have traditionally been associated with men (e.g., Gray, 2012; Kaye & Pennington, 2016; Kuznekoff & Rose, 2013), currently a high percentage of gamers are women (46% worldwide), which translates into one billion women gamers and with 19.0% growth in last years (Newzoo, 2022).

However, this increased presence of women in the world of video games has not brought about a shift in the attitude of the male gamer community about what this participation entails. In other words, women are not always welcomed and accepted by a large sector of the video gamer community (e.g., Fox & Tang, 2017; Kuznekoff & Rose, 2013), which continues to perceive them as “outsiders” and only grants them a secondary and expendable role (Breuer et al., 2015; Gray, 2012; Kuznekoff & Rose, 2013; Ruvalcaba et al., 2018).

In this regard, certain researchers argue that the intrinsic characteristics of the online video game environment itself encourage the expression of these negative reactions against

women. Specifically, the player-to-player competitiveness inherent to video games and the anonymity of interactions are considered key elements that promote hostile manifestations towards women (Breuer et al., 2015; Ruvalcaba et al., 2018). This online disinhibition effect can manifest itself in the form of *toxic disinhibition*, which encourages sexism in online interactions, including behaviors such as insults, trolling, and cyberbullying (e.g., Dillon & Bushman, 2015). In this vein, research such as that of Lien (2013) has revealed that the video game industry also promotes the construction of a masculinized gamer identity in which the prototype gamer is traditionally male. Moreover, the gamer community has adopted and normalized traditional patriarchal structures (Gray et al., 2017), singling out women as a potential threat to the male status quo (Betts et al., 2019). Women gamers are perceived as intruders who interfere with the male position and reorient the gaming environment towards stereotyped female traits, such as emotionality or sensitivity (e.g., Kaye & Pennington, 2016). In short, although women are clearly interested in the online world and frequently play video games as ‘hardcore gamers’, the culture of video games is not always a safe space for them (Shaw, 2010).

As previously noted, this masculinized environment encourages the manifestation of sexist behaviors (Duggan, 2014; Tang et al., 2020). For example, 63% of the women gamers interviewed in a study conducted by Matthew (2012) reported experiencing harassment at some point while playing, and 35.8% of them even temporarily abandoned video games because of these sexist incidents. Fox and Tang (2014) interviewed 293 women gamers to analyze their experiences of harassment while playing online video games and found that 10% of the incidents identified were clearly hostile (e.g., “go back to the kitchen”) and even qualified as sexual harassment (e.g., “show me your breasts”). A recent study conducted by Reach3 Insights (2021) with 900 women gamers in the United States, Germany and China

revealed that 65% of them had experienced 'gatekeeping,' that is, sexist attitudes and comments suggesting that they were "lesser gamers" for being women. As a result of this, up to 59% of women gamers have come to routinely conceal their female status when playing online to avoid exposure to this type of sexist discrimination.

The results presented so far suggest that women gamers, just for being woman, are exposed to particularly negative and discriminatory experiences that differ from those normally experienced by men (Duggan, 2014) and are characterized by their sexist nature. This emphasizes the need for further research on sexism against women gamers (e.g., Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023; Fox & Tang, 2014; Fox & Potocki, 2016). It should be noted that, although this type of sexism replicates the type endured by women in the offline context (Fox et al., 2015), it also has its own particularities due to the characteristics of the video game environment. As a result, previous studies have highlighted the importance of analyzing the role of sexist attitudes against women gamers in the perception of sexist behaviors (Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023; Fox & Tang, 2014). The present research corresponds precisely to the area of study concerned with exploring the relationship between sexism against women gamers and sexist behaviors.

Sexism against women gamers

Previous research conducted in the field of video games has uncovered various beliefs and attitudes related to the expression of sexist manifestations in online video games, such as social dominance orientation (SDO), hostile sexism, and identification as a gamer (Fox & Tang, 2017; Read et al., 2018). In this regard, Fox and Tang (2014) found that participants with higher SDO and who self-identified as gamers exhibited more sexist behaviors and also perceived these behaviors as less offensive. Other studies (e.g., Fox & Tang, 2017) have also found that the highest opposition to the participation of women in video games comes from

male gamers with a high adherence to sexist attitudes. Higher levels of hostile sexism have also been associated with a greater tendency towards harassing behaviors in online video games (Fox & Potocki, 2016) and with a higher misogyny in this environment (Blackburn & Scharrer, 2019; McCullough et al., 2020).

Despite the evidence shown so far on the relevance of sexist attitudes in the online video game environment, it must be noted that the aforementioned studies only used traditional sexism scales such as the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory or the Sex-Role Orientation Scale (Deskins, 2015; Fox & Potocki, 2016; McCullough et al., 2020; Stermer & Burkley, 2012), or some isolated items from these scales (Deskins, 2015; Fox & Potocki, 2015; Stermer & Burkley, 2012). However, none of these instruments takes into account the particular characteristics of sexism in an environment as specific as that of video games.

Recently, Bustos-Ortega et al. (2023) have developed the Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (SAWGS), an instrument specifically aimed at evaluating sexism against women video game players that is the first to be extensively validated in independent samples. The results obtained so far support the reliability, structural validity, measurement invariance, and external validity of the instrument's scores. Studies conducted to develop the SAWGS have shown that people with higher scores in this scale also have higher sexist ideology, tendencies towards social dominance and acceptance of myths about gender violence, a more traditional gender ideology and a lower feminist identity. These individuals are also more likely to minimize sexist incidents in the online video game environment and to punish those responsible for such incidents to a lesser extent.

Perception of sexist incidents in online video games

As previously discussed, the current predominant stereotype in the field of video games still associates the gamer identity with being male (Paaßen et al., 2017), even though

almost half of the gamers in this field are women (ESA, 2022). This exclusion of women is usually the result of undervaluing both their real interest in video games and their participation in them, giving them passive roles and perceiving them as casual gamers. As opposed to this category of players, hardcore gamers are considered to have challenging roles and a greater knowledge of video games and to play for long periods of time (Vanderhoef, 2013). These stereotypes, traditionally present in video games, can influence the judgments that male gamers make about women. Such judgments are therefore essential to gain insight into intergroup prejudice and sexism in online environments (Jagayat & Choma, 2021).

Considering the aforementioned results (Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023), the perception of sexist incidents may be influenced not only by the ideology of the perceiver (e.g., adherence to sexist attitudes against women gamers) but also by the behavior of the victim of the incident (e.g., a woman gamer who challenges the gender role traditionally expected of her), or by the interaction between both sets of factors. In line with this approach, psychosocial literature on violence against women in the offline context has revealed that women whose behavior differs from the roles traditionally associated with victims (e.g., rape victims who were under the influence of alcohol, which distances them from the stereotype of a “real rape” victim) are more likely to be blamed for the violence experienced, especially by individuals higher in benevolent sexism (e.g., Frese et al., 2004; Yamawaki, 2007).

The distance perceived between a woman's behavior and what is expected of her according to the gender prototype associated with her group could also –depending on the case– influence the degree to which she is considered or not a victim of sexism in the online context (Kaiser et al., 2022). In this regard, the fact that a woman gamer declares herself a feminist and proves it by performing collective actions seeking to achieve gender equality in

the online environment is likely to distance her from the prototype of femininity and the roles expected from her gender (Kaiser et al., 2022).

Women gamers against sexism (i.e., feminists) and collective actions

Recently, a major public confrontation of sexism has been taking place in many sectors of society (Good et al., 2019). The realization of the sexist discrimination experienced by women gamers and the sexist attitudes against them has pushed a growing number of women gamers to challenge the status quo that also prevails in the video game environment (Gray, 2016; Mortensen, 2018). However, in parallel, part of the male gamer community sees this as a threat and has intensified efforts to silence these women (Buyukozturk, 2022). An example of this rejection is the #GamerGate movement, a cyberbullying social network campaign directed against women in the video game industry driven by gamers who believed in a feminist conspiracy and argued that video games should remain a male-dominated environment (Chess & Shaw, 2015; Mortensen, 2018; Paaßen et al., 2017; Wingfield, 2014). This movement of the male gamer community was manifested in numerous cases of harassment in social media against women gamers who defended their rights and in real-life threats of rape and violence (Chess & Shaw, 2015). Faced with this, numerous women gamers organized themselves into feminist associations to make women visible and confront the sexism and harassment present in this setting (Harvey & Fisher, 2015).

The specialized literature identifies the undertaking of group demands and protest actions to respond to situations of injustice, discrimination or unequal treatment as “collective actions” (e.g., Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2008). These actions are defined as any voluntary behavior performed, both publicly in a group (e.g., participating in a demonstration against an unfair social situation) or privately and individually (e.g., signing an online petition to defend a group subjected to discrimination) with the intention of

subverting the status quo and improving the social conditions of the oppressed group (Radke et al., 2016; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

Although research on collective actions for gender equality in the broader offline context has yielded numerous results (for a review, see Good, 2019; Orazani & Leidner, 2019; Shuman et al., 2020; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2008), the study of such actions in the video game setting has not yet been addressed. Taking this perspective on collective actions for gender equality as a theoretical basis, it is therefore relevant to analyze how women gamers who declare themselves feminists and undertake such actions are perceived in this context. Collective actions can be classified according to two dimensions: (a) whether or not the actions taken adhere to social norms (i.e., normative vs. non-normative action); and (b) whether or not these actions involve violence (Orazani & Leidner, 2019; Shuman et al., 2020; Tausch et al., 2011). ‘Normative action’ refers to any socially accepted, non-violent action that keeps within legal norms, such as peaceful demonstrations or signature collections. These types of actions are likely to be viewed more positively by the advantaged group (Orazani & Leidner, 2019), as opposed to other more disruptive measures such as ‘non-normative actions’ (either violent or non-violent), which upset the usual functioning and cooperation of society (e.g., sit-ins, public denunciations, or destruction of property) (Tausch et al., 2011). Taking into account these two dimensions, it would also be interesting to further explore the collective actions for gender equality undertaken by the feminist movement within the gamer community. In our research, we decided to analyze to what extent the perception of sexist incidents experienced by women gamers is also influenced by the type of collective action in which they engage.

Additionally, it is known that when women identify as feminists in offline contexts they are often confronted with rejection and sexist discrimination (Henderson-King &

Stewart, 1997; Reid & Purcell, 2004). A similar phenomenon seems to happen in the gamer community: a part of the male gamer community expresses its sexist hostility towards women who raise awareness on the gender inequalities present in this context, or who identify with a feminist ideology, by labeling them as ‘feminist killjoys’ (Chess & Shaw, 2015). According to this sexist conception, the fact that a woman gamer adheres to feminist ideology turns her into a hate figure who kill other people’s joy by pointing out moments of sexism. The feminist subject in the room hence brings others down by talking about unhappy topics such sexism, and feminists might be strangers (Ahmed, 2010, p. 582). As a result, women gamers who hold feminist views are perceived as intentionally disruptive and are publicly denigrated, which pushes them to feel guilty for harming the image of the gamer community that they want to join (Ahmed, 2010; Braithwaite, 2014; Chess & Shaw, 2015).

In the same vein, studies such as that of Yoshioka et al. (2001) concluded that certain people justify violence against women if the victims constantly complain, or if their behavior is considered to have challenged their partner (e.g., Obeid et al., 2010). All of this suggests that when the victim's behavior does not comply with what is socially expected of her, she is blamed to a greater extent while the perpetrator is exonerated from responsibility (Attreed & Kozlowski, 2018). Overall, these findings support the need to further study the factors related to the perception of sexist incidents towards women gamers, given the growing presence of them who identify as feminists and take part in collective actions for gender equality in the field of video games (e.g., Cote, 2021; Lindvall, 2018; McCullough et al., 2020; Paaßen et al., 2017; Wingfield, 2014). These facts linked to the feminist movement could be perceived as a threat by men in general, and sexist men in particular. This is why they could somehow be used as a justification for violence against women of egalitarian/feminist ideology (Vidal-Fernández & Megías, 2014).

Overview of the Present Research

As noted above, women gamers in the video game environment are often confronted with sexist incidents and behaviors (e.g., Fox & Tang, 2014; Gray, 2012). The way these incidents are perceived will determine to what extent they are accepted or rejected by the gamer community and will consequently influence whether their frequency increases or decreases until they are eradicated. Taking the previous literature as a base, we hypothesized that this perception depends on the interaction between gamers' own adherence to sexist attitudes (a factor of an individual nature) and certain situational factors, namely some behaviors and attitudes adopted by women gamers. To this end, we assessed the role of sexism against women gamers (SAWG) using a recently developed scale –the Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (SAWGS; Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023)– which, compared to general sexism scales, has the advantage of capturing specific sexist attitudes toward women gamers. Through experimental manipulation, we tested to what extent the perception of sexist incidents also depended on whether women gamers were more or less committed to gender equality in this area and, therefore, identified with feminism. To this end, we used a scenario methodology presenting an alleged case of a sexist incident experienced by a woman gamer, which allowed us to conduct our experimental manipulation. First (Study 1), we manipulated information about the membership (vs. non-membership) of the victim of this incident in a feminist video game association, following previous research that revealed the rejection of this ideology by the gamer community (Ahmed, 2010; Braithwaite, 2014; Chess & Shaw, 2015). In Study 2, we manipulated the information provided about certain behaviors of the woman gamer victim of the sexist incident. Specifically, participants were informed that this woman was involved in non-normative (vs. normative) collective actions for gender equality

(Orazani & Leidner, 2019; Shuman et al., 2020; Tausch et al., 2011). In both studies, we explored how sexist attitudes against women gamers moderated these effects.

Study 1

In Study 1, we analyzed how the information provided about the characteristics of a woman gamer who is a victim of sexist behaviors, and participants' sexism against women gamers, affected participants' perception of a fictional sexist incident. Specifically, we assessed the extent to which participants consider a woman who has been a victim of sexist behaviors deserves such behaviors (i.e., victim blame). As the existing literature shows, feminist women are seen by part of the male gamer community as intentionally disruptive and, consequently, potentially damaging to the public image of the male gamer (Chess & Shaw, 2015; Vermeulen et al., 2017). This perception is supported by the rejection of male gamers towards feminist movements aiming to dedicate safe spaces or to promote actions for the inclusion of women in this context (Chess & Shaw, 2015). In this study, we compared a feminist woman gamer belonging to an association advocating gender equality in video games (FWG condition) with another women described only as a regular gamer (Non-FWG condition). We expected the woman gamer described as feminist (FWG) to be blamed to a higher extent in an online video gaming sexist incident, compared to a regular woman gamer (Non-FWG) who did not belong to any association (Hypothesis 1). Considering previous results (Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023), we expected to find that participants with higher SAWG would be more likely to blame the victim than participants with lower SAWG (Hypothesis 2). We also hypothesized that SAWG would moderate the relationship between woman gamer feminist adherence (FWG vs. Non-FWG) and the attribution of victim blame (Hypothesis 3). Specifically, we expected participants higher in SAWG (vs. lower) to attribute greater blame on the woman gamer in

an online video gaming sexist incident when she was described as a member of a feminist video game association (FWG).

Method

Sample

We calculated a sample size of 128 for a small-to-medium effect size of $f = .25$, a significance level of $\alpha = .05$ and a power of .80 (two groups, between-subject design) using G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009). Moreover, considering SAWG as a moderator in our analyses, minimum sample size requirements were based on a goal of 50 participants per cell to test the predicted interactions. The sample consisted of regular video gamers of both genders recruited online via social networks (e.g., Twitter and gamer groups on Facebook) and forums specialized in video games (e.g., Reddit and gaming magazine forums). Following recommendations on methods for the detection and prevention of fraud in Internet-based research (Teitcher et al., 2015; Yan & Tourangeau, 2008), the following exclusion criteria were applied: (a) failing at least one of the three attention check questions in the survey ($n = 34$); (b) time spent responding to the survey ($\pm SD_{\text{time}} = 3$; [$n = 3$]); and (c) repeated registration of the IP address (we controlled the number of times that participants could access the survey [i.e., one time]; $n = 3$). Additionally, we used exclusion criteria based on intended participant groups: (a) nationality (participants who did not have a Spanish nationality were excluded [$n = 58$]); (b) age below 18 years ($n = 12$); (c) those not playing video games weekly ($n = 7$); and (d) people who answered “other” to the gender question ($n = 4$) because these low numbers did not allow using them as a category for the analyses.

The final sample consisted of 291 participants, of which 145 were women (49.8%) and 146 were men (50.2%), with an age range between 18 and 52 years ($M = 25.67$, $SD = 5.99$). Of these, 31.3% of participants reported having primary education, 18.9% secondary

education, and 49.8% university education. Among the 291 participants, 31.6% spent between 1 and 5 hours per week playing video games, 22.7% played for between 5 and 10 hours, 22.7% played for 10–20 hours, and 23.0% played for more than 20 hours per week.

Procedure and materials

This study used an experimental design through the administration of online questionnaires, available in the Qualtrics Version XM platform (2020). The online approach was adopted because the electronic administration format is a procedure frequently used in video game research (ESA, 2020; Griffiths, 2010; Interactive Software Federation of Europe [ISFE], 2021). Once the survey was prepared, the link was distributed among different target gamer groups. The instructions were the same for all participants: we explained that the survey was an anonymous opinion poll focusing on the gamer public's thoughts and attitudes. Next, we informed participants of the voluntary nature of the study. By not mentioning that the main topic of the study was sexism, we sought to avoid the negative reactions of some participants to these study themes. Once they had expressed their consent, we administered the questionnaires, always in the following order: (1) the questions on the frequency of video game use and identification as a gamer (Ewell et al., 2018), (2) the Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (SAWGS; Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023), (3) the Social Desirability Scale (SDS; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Ferrando & Chico, 2000), and (4) finally participants were exposed to one of the experimental conditions. To conclude, participants were asked to provide basic sociodemographic data (i.e., age, nationality, gender, and level of education), and they were redirected to another website where they could participate in a raffle to incentivize participation.

Participation was voluntary and procedures were conducted in accordance with the APA Ethical Code (Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct) for studies involving

human participants (APA, 2017) and broader professional standards for conducting a research study. The protocol was approved by the ethical committee at the authors' university.

Experimental Manipulation. For each condition (FWG vs. Non-FWG) we used a fictitious scenario (see Appendix A, see original version in Spanish in Figure S3 of the Supplemental Material) that described a sexist interaction in an online video game between four young gamers (one woman and three men) in which all men ridiculed the women gamer. In the FWG condition, we described a woman who regularly plays video games and who is actively committed to feminism and belongs to a feminist association that fights for gender equality in video games. By contrast, in the Non-FWG condition, we only described the woman as a regular gamer. Both conditions described an online game in which she made a mistake in one move and her team lost the game. Next, the woman gamer received sexist comments from her partners. After that, participants responded to a manipulation check item (i.e., “Which of the following statements about Lucía is made in the text you read? (a) She is a feminist and an advocate of equality in the field of video games; (b) She is an animal advocate; (c) None of the above is true.”).

Subsequently, we administered 5 questions to assess victim blame (e.g., “Lucía deserved the comments she received from her teammates”), and two other questions aimed to assess representativeness (i.e., “This scenario is representative of what happens in the context of online video games”) and frequency (i.e., “The situation described happens often in online video games”) of this type of sexist incident with a 7-point Likert response scale ranging from 1 (*Totally disagree*) to 7 (*Completely agree*). The internal consistency of victim blame scores was .75. Moreover, the sexist incident described was considered representative ($M = 5.08$, $SD = 1.73$) and frequent ($M = 5.45$, $SD = 1.68$) in online gaming.

Social desirability. We used the 13-item short form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Spanish version by Ferrando & Chico, 2000). Examples of items include “I am always courteous, even to people who are unpleasant” and “I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone’s feelings”. Response options followed a true or false format, with higher total scores indicating more social desirability. Scores on this scale have been found to negatively correlate with neuroticism, hostility, and impulsivity and to positively correlate with agreeableness and responsibility (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). In the current study, internal consistency reliability was 0.64, slightly lower than what was found in the original English (between .75 and .85) and Spanish (.78) versions.

Sexism Against Women Gamers. We assessed participants’ sexism against women gamers using the Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023), an 8-item self-reported instrument. Participants responded on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Examples of items are “In general, men play video games better than women” and “In the field of video games there is a community of women who are against male gamers”. An overall mean score of SAWGS was used ($\alpha = 0.78$).

Results

Preliminary analyses

To verify that there were no differences in sexist attitudes in both experimental conditions, we performed a 2 (gender: men vs. women) x 2 (type of women gamer feminist adherence: FWG vs. Non-FWG) one-way ANOVA on participants’ scores in the SAWGS. For this ANOVA, estimates of effect size were calculated using partial eta-squared ($\eta_p^2 \geq .01/.06/.13$ indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988). Results showed that sexist attitudes against women gamers did not differ between experimental conditions, $F(1, 287) = 3.44, p = .06$. Participants in the FWG condition ($M = 2.60, SD = 1.10$) and the Non-FWG

condition ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.09$) were equally sexist. We have also performed an equivalence test to contrast the homogeneity across conditions. Using the TOST procedure for Welch's t test for independent samples (with equivalence bounds of $\Delta L = -0.46$ and $\Delta U = 0.46$), we found that the sexism in both groups is statistically equivalent, because the larger of the two p values is less than .05, $t_{289} = -2.04$, $p = .02$. SAWG was higher among men ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.15$) than women ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 0.92$), $F(1, 287) = 3.44$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. No interaction was detected between gender and the type of feminist adherence of the woman gamer, $F(1, 287) = 1.35$, $p = .25$.

Hypothesis testing

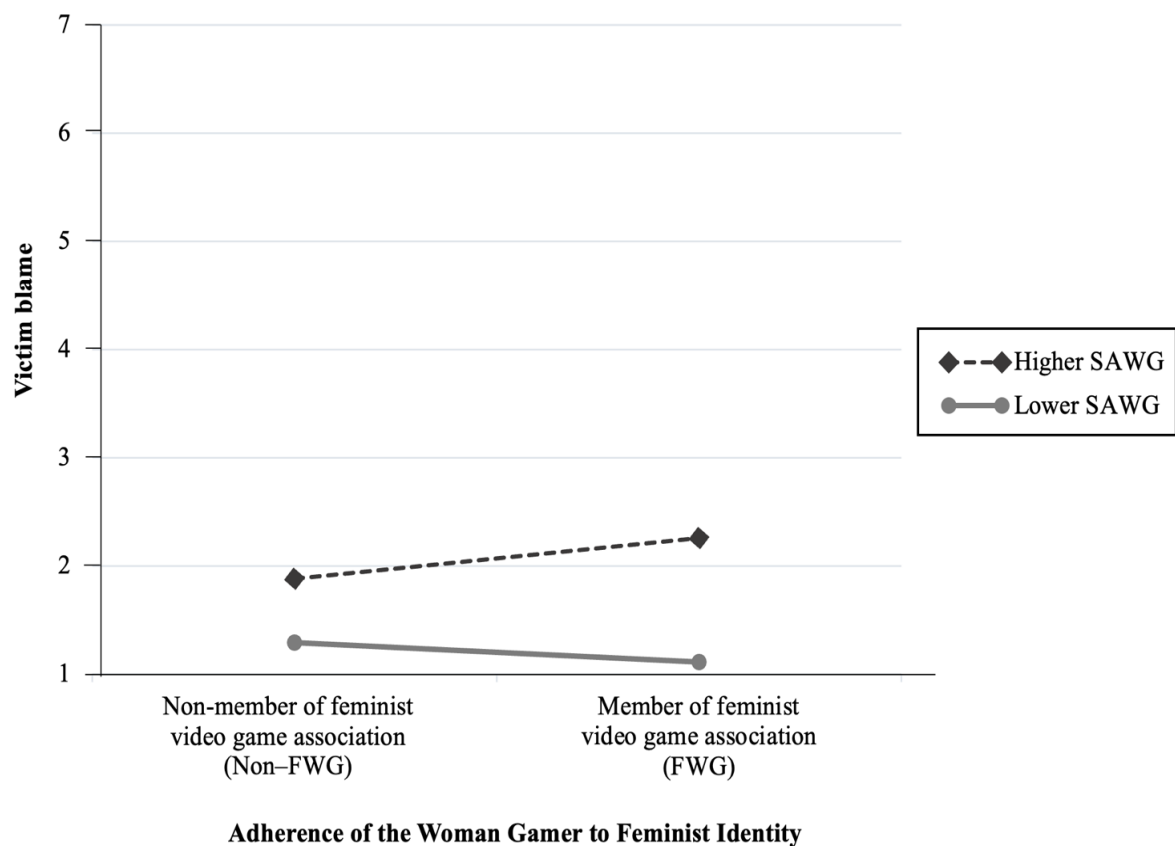
To test our predictions, we applied a moderation analysis with the PROCESS 4.0 macro for SPSS, developed by Hayes (Model 1, 2013). We studied the moderating role of SAWG (scores mean centering) in the relationship between gamer feminist adherence (independent variable) and victim blame (dependent variable), with gender as a covariate. We calculated the standardized effect size f^2 for the interaction between woman gamer feminist adherence and SAWG. This value provides information on the magnitude of the interaction based on the change in R^2 (Δf^2) ($\geq .02/.15/.35$ indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988). For the main effects, we consider partial eta-squared as the effect size calculation ($\eta_p^2 \geq .01/.06/.13$ indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988).

Regarding Hypothesis 1, results showed no significant main effect of woman gamer feminist adherence on victim blame ($b = .10$, $SE = .08$, $t_{286} = 1.23$, $p = .22$, 95% CI $[-.0610, .2651]$). In line with Hypothesis 2, results showed a main effect of SAWG on blaming the woman gamer ($b = .27$, $SE = .05$, $t_{286} = 4.90$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[.1607, .3762]$, $\eta_p^2 = .30$). As predicted in Hypothesis 3, we found a statistically significant interaction between women gamer feminist adherence and SAWG ($b = .26$, $SE = .08$, $t_{286} = 3.38$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[.1068,$

.4052]), $\Delta f^2 = .03$. As shown in Fig. 1, this interaction indicated that participants lower SAWG (-1 SD below mean) (vs. higher, $+1$ SD above mean) were not affected by the feminist adherence of the woman gamer, keeping their attribution of victim blame constant ($b = -.18$, $SE = .12$, $t_{286} = -1.52$, $p = .13$, 95% CI $[-.4097, .0520]$). However, participants with higher SAWG blamed the woman gamer to a higher degree when she was described as a member of a feminist video game association (vs. Non-FWG) ($b = .38$, $t_{286} = 3.25$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[.1517, .6141]$).

Figure 1

Effects of the feminist adherence of the woman gamer and SAWG on the attribution of victim blame, Study 1.



Discussion

The results of Study 1 extend the findings of previous correlational research by providing experimental support for our hypotheses. First, this study showed no differences in the attribution of victim blame in an online video gaming sexist incident whether the victim was described as a member of a feminist videogame association or not, contrary to Hypothesis 1. As expected, participants with higher SAWG were more likely to blame the woman gamer than those with lower SAWG (Hypothesis 2). Interestingly, a statistically significant interaction between feminist adherence and SAWG emerged. This suggested that high levels in sexism against women gamers affected participants' attribution of victim blame when the gamer was a member of a feminist video game association (Hypothesis 3). This reinforces the importance of attitudinal variables to support our hypotheses and is linked to previous research that has shown the rejection of the gamer community towards the feminist movement and feminist people (Chess & Shaw, 2015). The fact of being a member (or not) of a feminist video game association did not generate an effect on the perception of the participants by itself. However, when participants' attitudes were taken into account, the fact of belonging or not belonging to a feminist association became relevant. Thus, the feminist adherence of the woman gamer had an effect on the social perception of a sexist incident only if participants were sexist, which emphasizes the importance of simultaneously taking into account both individual factors (i.e., sexist attitudes against women gamers) and situational factors (i.e., feminist adherence) when trying to understand participants' responses. With the goal of replicating and extending the findings of Study 1, we conducted a second study considering the behaviors of a feminist woman, such as her defense of gender equality. To this end, we manipulated the type of collective action (normative vs. non

normative) performed by the woman gamer defined as a feminist, and also included a control condition in which no collective action was mentioned.

Study 2

In Study 2, our main goal was to analyze the influence of performing collective actions for gender equality and of the type of action (normative vs. non-normative) by the woman gamer in the context of video games. We expected the woman gamer to receive more blame in an online video gaming sexist incident when she was described as performing non-normative actions as a member of a feminist video game association, compared to normative actions or no action (Hypothesis 1). Normative collective action refers to any socially accepted, nonviolent action that keeps within legal boundaries, such as peaceful demonstrations or petitions. Therefore, this type of action is likely to be viewed more positively by the members of the advantaged group (Orazani & Leidner, 2019), compared to other more disruptive measures such as “non-normative actions” (violent vs. nonviolent), which upset established cooperative relationships within society (e.g., sit-in protests and public denunciations with the aim of sabotaging, or destruction of property; Tausch et al., 2011). We also hypothesized that participants with high SAWG would be more likely to blame the victim than participants with lower in SAWG (Hypothesis 2). Finally, we expected to find an interaction effect between the type of collective action performed (normative vs. non-normative) and SAWG (Hypothesis 3). Specifically, in the non-normative action condition (vs. normative action, or no action), we expected participants with higher SAWG (vs. lower) to blame the woman gamer more.

Method

Sample

As in Study 1, we calculated a sample size of 159 for a small-to-medium effect size of $f = .25$, a significance level of $\alpha = .05$ and a power of .80 (three groups, between-subjects design) using G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009). Again, considering SAWG as a moderator in our analyses, minimum sample size requirements were based on a goal of 50 participants per cell to test the predicted interactions. The sample consisted of regular gamers of both genders, who were recruited in the same way as in Study 1.

Initially, the total sample consisted of 545 participants, of which 145 were excluded from the analysis: 71 participants reported that they were not Spanish; 27 participants were under the age of 18; 11 participants did not regularly play video games; 34 participants failed the control questions; and 2 participants exceeded the response time limit ($\pm SD_{\text{time}} = 3$).

The final sample consisted of 400 gamer participants, of which 168 were women (42%) and 232 were men (58%), with ages ranging between 18 and 54 years ($M = 25.9$, $SD = 5.65$). Of these, 30% of reported having completed primary education, 22% secondary education, and 49% university education. Participants who spent between 1 and 5 hours per week playing video games made up 24.3% of the sample, while 22.8% played between 6 and 10 hours, 30.1% played between 10–20 hours, and 22.8% played for more than 20 hours per week. The present study was also conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of our university Ethics Committee for studies involving human participants.

Procedure and materials

We used the same procedure as in Study 1. Data were collected via Qualtrics Version XM (2020) and the survey link was distributed among different target gamer groups. Once participants had read the study information and indicated their voluntary consent, we

administered (1) the questions on the frequency of video game use and identification as a gamer (Ewell et al., 2018), (2) the Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (SAWGS; Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023), and (3) the Social Desirability Scale (SDS; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Ferrando & Chico, 2000), and (4) assigned participants to one of the three experimental conditions (normative action vs. non-normative action vs. control condition). Finally, the participants' sociodemographic data were collected, and they were redirected to another website where they could participate in a raffle to incentivize participation.

Experimental manipulation. For each condition (normative action vs. non-normative action vs. control condition) we used a fictitious scenario (see Appendix B, see original version in Spanish in Figure S4 of the Supplemental Material) that described a sexist interaction in an online video game between four young gamers (one woman and three men), as in Study 1. In the “normative action” condition we described a woman who regularly plays video games. She belongs to a feminist association that fights for gender equality in video games with actions such as signing a petition, taking part in a peaceful demonstration or in debates in social media to report discrimination against women in video games. In the non-normative action condition, we included other tactics within the feminist position (e.g., crashing an event's website because none of the speakers were women, blocking ticket sales or chaining oneself to the venue's entrance). By contrast, in the control condition, we described the woman as a regular gamer. All conditions described an online gaming scenario in which she made a mistake in one move and her team lost the game. Next, the woman gamer received sexist comments from her teammates.

Following this, to evaluate their perception of the normativity and legality of the collective actions, participants responded to a manipulation check with two items (“The actions that Lucía took are legal” and “The actions that Lucía took comply with social norms

for expressing protest and discontent”), with a 7-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (*Totally disagree*) to 7 (*Completely agree*).

Next, we administered the same 5 questions as in Study 1 regarding victim blame, and the same two questions aimed to assess the representativeness and frequency of the sexist incident, all with a 7-point Likert response scale ranging from 1 (*Totally disagree*) to 7 (*Completely agree*). The internal consistency reliability of victim blame was .76. The sexist incident described was considered as representative ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 1.79$) and frequent ($M = 5.33$, $SD = 1.69$) in online gaming. The measures used were the same as in Study 1, that is, the Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Ferrando & Chico, 2000) ($\alpha = 0.63$), and Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023) ($\alpha = 0.78$).

Results

Preliminary analyses

To verify that there were no differences in sexist attitudes between experimental conditions, we performed a 3 (type of collective action: normative vs. non-normative vs. control) $\times$ 2 (gender: men vs. women) ANOVA on participants' scores in the SAWGS. As in Study 1, estimates of effect size were calculated using partial eta-squared ($\eta_p^2 \geq .01/.06/.13$ indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988). In keeping with the pattern observed in Study 1, there were no significant differences in SAWGS scores, $F(2, 394) = 0.55$, $p = .58$. Also, consistently with the findings of Study 1, men showed higher sexism against women gamers ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 1.21$) than women ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 1.01$), $F(1, 394) = 39.63$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. No significant interaction was found between the type of collective action and gender, $F(2, 394) = 0.68$, $p = .51$.

Subsequently, we conducted an ANOVA on the legality and normativity scores, considering the type of collective action as the between-groups factor (normative vs. non-

normative conditions). We found that normative collective actions were perceived as more legal ($M = 6.46$, $SD = 1.10$), $F(1, 262) = 261.77$, $p < .001$, and more normative ($M = 6.36$, $SD = 1.11$), $F(1, 262) = 117.99$, $p < .001$, than the non-normative collective actions (legality: $M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.99$; normativity: $M = 4.16$, $SD = 2.05$).

Hypothesis testing

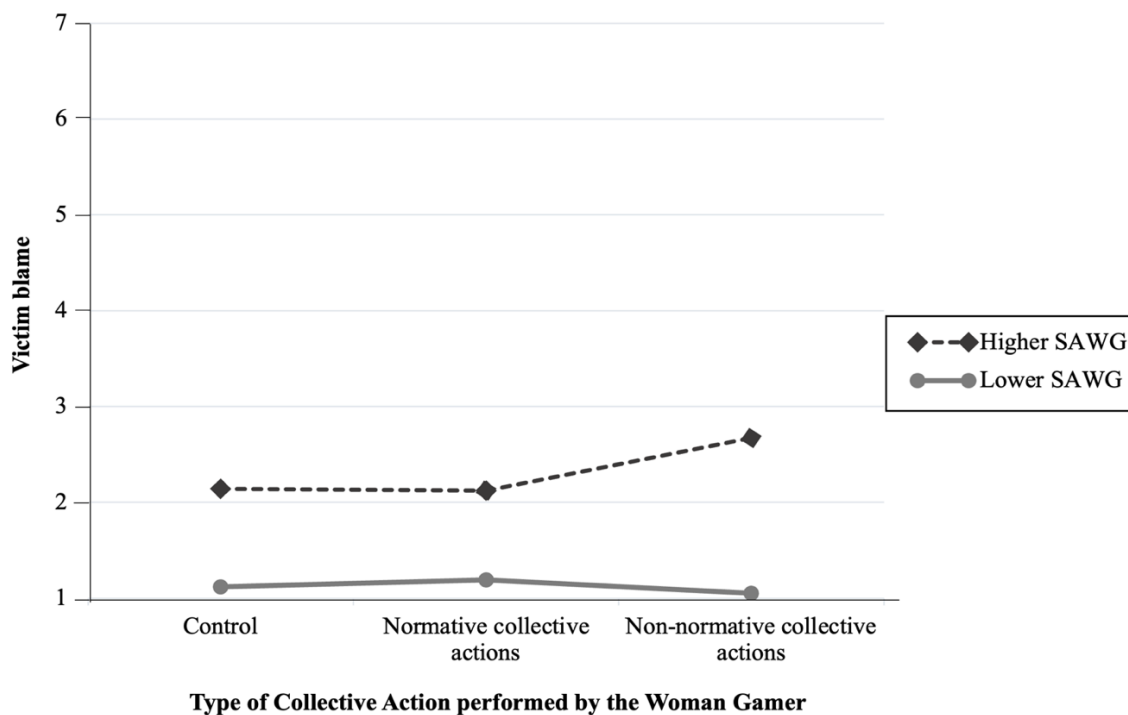
To test our predictions, we conducted a similar moderation analysis as we did in Study 1 using PROCESS 4.0 macro for SPSS (Model 1, 2013). We studied the moderating role of SAWG in the relationship between type of collective action (independent variable) and victim blame (dependent variable), with gender as a covariate. The first contrast, C1, compared the normative collective action condition, codified as 1, with the other conditions (control condition and non-normative collective action), codified as 0. The second contrast, C2, compared the non-normative collective action, codified as 1, with the other conditions (control and normative collective action), codified as 0. We calculated the standardized effect size f^2 for the interaction between SAWG and the type of collective action performed by the woman gamer. For the main effects, estimates of effect size were calculated using partial eta-squared ($\eta_p^2 \geq .01/.06/.13$ indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988).

As expected, results showed a main effect of the type of collective action on victim blame attribution. The first contrast, C1, was not statistically significant ($b = .02$, $SE = .08$, $t_{393} = .27$, $p = .78$, 95% CI $[-.1438, -.1914]$). However, the second contrast, C2, had a significant effect on victim blame ($b = .19$, $SE = .08$, $t_{393} = 2.27$, $p < .05$, 95% CI $[.0258, .3610]$). It showed that participants exposed to an online video gaming sexist incident where a woman gamer conducted non-normative collective actions reported a higher attribution of victim blame (Hypothesis 1). In line with Hypothesis 2, results also showed a main effect of SAWG on victim blame ($b = .38$, $SE = .05$, $t_{393} = 7.55$, $p < .001$, CI 95% $[.2819, .4803]$, $\eta_p^2 = .39$). As

predicted in Hypothesis 3, we found a statistically significant interaction between non-normative collective actions and SAWG. Specifically, no interaction was found between contrast C1 and SAWG ($b = -.04$, $SE = .07$, $t_{393} = -.55$, $p = .58$, CI 95% $[-.1827, .1023]$); however, the interaction between contrast C2 and SAWG was statistically significant ($b = .25$, $t_{393} = 3.55$, $p < .001$, CI 95% $[.1123, .3901]$), $\Delta f^2 = .03$. In accordance with Hypothesis 3, this interaction suggests that participants with lower SAWG (-1 SD below mean) were not affected by the fact that the woman gamer performed non-normative collective actions, keeping their attribution of victim blame constant ($b = -.10$, $SE = .12$, $t_{393} = -.85$, $p = .39$, 95% CI $[-.3399, .1333]$). However, participants with higher SAWG ($+1$ SD above mean) ($b = .49$, $SE = .12$, $t_{393} = 4.14$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[.2576, .7227]$) attributed greater blame to the woman gamer who carried out non-normative collective actions (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Effects of the type of collective action performed by the woman gamer and SAWG on the attribution of victim blame, Study 2.



Discussion

Our findings show that the woman gamer was blamed to a greater extent in an online video gaming sexist incident when she performed non–normative actions as a member of a feminist video game association (Hypothesis 1). As expected, SAWG also showed a main effect on victim blame, as participants with higher SAWG blamed the victim to a greater extent (Hypothesis 2). Finally, a statistically significant interaction was found between the type of collective action and SAWG (Hypothesis 3), showing that information about the victim (i.e., whether she performed non–normative actions) affected participants' attribution of victim blame when they exhibited higher SAWG. These findings again reveal the important role of SAWG in online video game contexts (Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023) and seems to confirm the negative image of a woman gamer who performs non–normative collective actions.

General Discussion

In the present research, we conducted two experimental studies aimed at exploring the role of sexist attitudes against women gamers in the perception of sexist incidents occurring in the environment of online video games. In both studies, we manipulated certain personal characteristics of the woman gamer and analyzed the effect of this on the attribution of victim blame. Specifically, Study 1 analyzed the influence of information referring to the identity traits of a woman gamer (identified as a feminist vs. no information provided in this regard). Study 2, on the other hand, explored the effect of the woman gamer's involvement in collective actions for gender equality (normative vs. non–normative).

In keeping with previous correlational work (Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023), participants with higher SAWG blamed the woman gamer victim of a sexist incident to a greater extent

(Study 1 and Study 2). These findings highlight the importance of considering the sexist attitudes directed at women gamers when analyzing the perception of sexist incidents occurring in the environment of video games. Previous research conducted in this field has not explored in depth the influence of sexist attitudes specific to the online video game context, resorting instead to general sexism scales or items such as the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory or the Sex-Role Orientation Scale (e.g., Deskins, 2015; Fox & Potocki, 2016; McCullough et al., 2020; Stermer & Burkley, 2012). Our research therefore expands the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the specific role of sexism against women gamers; more specifically, on its role in the attribution of blame to the victim of a sexist incident in an online setting.

The similarity between previous research in both the offline and online settings should be noted. In fact, our results agree with those of extensive previous research in offline contexts, in which sexist attitudes (e.g., Persson et al., 2018; Canto et al., 2014; Yamawaki, 2007) and rape myth acceptance (e.g., Emmers-Sommer, 2017; Powers et al., 2015) have both been found to influence the attribution of blame to female victims of violence or sexist incidents. However, despite the similarities, it is essential to analyze the specific dynamics that take place in online contexts that encourage, enable and perpetuate sexism and harassment against women gamers (Henry & Powell, 2018). Consequently, these results contribute to the emerging study of sexism in an online environment such as video games, in which the proliferation of gamer communities and the growing participation of women gamers give context to this issue (Easpaig, 2018).

More importantly, the results of our research highlight the moderating role of sexist attitudes against women gamers in the relationship between the experimentally manipulated variables (feminist identity in Study 1, and collective actions in Study 2) and the attribution

of victim blame. Previous research has revealed that feminist women are perceived by part of the gamer community as intentionally disruptive and publicly harmful to the image of the male gamer (Chess & Shaw, 2015; Vermeulen et al., 2017). This is consistent with the results that we obtained in Study 1, namely that participants with higher sexism against women gamer blamed the woman gamer described as a feminist to a greater extent. However, if we consider the isolated main effect of the manipulated variable (adherence to feminism of the woman gamer), no significant results were obtained. This finding is consistent with previous literature on the social perception of violence against women in the offline context, which has shown that the mere presence of contextual variables (e.g., characteristics of the victim or the aggressor) does not always lead to a direct effect on the perception of the incident (e.g., Temkin & Krahé, 2008; Vidal-Fernández & Megías, 2014). Such studies have found that, instead, it is necessary for perceivers to hold a series of beliefs – in this case, sexist attitudes in the context of video games.

These findings were extended in a second study, in which we manipulated the type of collective action for gender equality (normative vs. non–normative) taken by a woman gamer described as a feminist who ended up being the victim of a sexist incident. Replicating the results of Study 1, participants' level of sexism against the woman gamer moderated the effect of the type of collective action on the social perception of a sexist incident. Specifically, the woman gamer who performed non–normative collective actions was blamed to a greater extent by those participants with higher sexism against women gamers. By contrast, no differences were found between normative or non–normative collective actions in gamers with lower sexism against women gamers. In this regard and in line with previous literature (Shuman et al., 2020; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2008), non–normative collective actions are perceived as extreme and socially improper forms of action (Tausch et al., 2011).

Therefore, this type of behavior could condition the perception of victim blame among individuals with stronger sexist views. In other words, those with higher sexism against women gamers are likely to consider it more negative for a feminist woman to also perform extreme or non-normative behaviors to achieve gender equality in the field of video games: this would lead them to punish her more by blaming her for the sexist incident and would generate a greater rejection towards this ideology, as is already usually the case in the gamer community (Chess & Shaw, 2015).

In short, both studies provide the first experimental evidence to date that those certain characteristics of women gamers (such as their adherence to feminist ideas and actions) may favor their being blamed to a greater extent when they are victims of a sexist incident while playing online, especially by individuals with stronger sexist beliefs. In keeping with the existing literature (Kaye et al., 2017; Tang et al., 2020), these findings are consistent with the deep-seated sexism found in the environment of video games.

Although women have gradually entered the world of video games and despite the fact that currently a high percentage of gamers are women (46% worldwide), their participation in this field is not well accepted. The prevailing patriarchal structure in the gamer community (Gray et al., 2017) leads women to be perceived as a potential threat to the male status quo (Betts et al., 2019). In this regard, the women gamers represented in our research pose a double threat to the hegemonic gamer, both because of their gender and because they identify themselves as feminists. When culturally accepted masculinity is jeopardized, it is to be expected that gamers in general, and those with sexist views in particular, perceive a certain threat from the feminist movement that leads them to take action against women gamers (e.g., blaming them for the incidents suffered). This is reflected in previous research that reveals the rejection of feminist ideology by the gamer community,

which expresses its hostility towards women who expose the gender inequalities in this context or who identify themselves as feminists, by defining them as “feminist killjoys” (Chess & Shaw, 2015).

Precisely because of the flagrant discrimination and exclusion faced by women in the field of online video games, it is worth noting that our findings provide a first empirical contribution to the study of how certain traits of a woman gamer (e.g., her adherence to feminist ideas and actions) can influence the social perception of sexist incidents, especially when the sexist attitudes of the participants are taken into account.

Limitations and future research directions

Despite the relevance of our findings, certain limitations of the present research should be taken into account. Regarding the administration of both studies, the fact of using online surveys may entail less control over participants' responses. However, we attempted to minimize that limitation by following recommendations from previous studies on the detection of response bias in online surveys. This was done interspersing control items in both studies to identify random response patterns; analyzing each participant's IP address to avoid duplicate responses; and examining response time to detect participants who responded too slowly or too quickly (Teitcher et al., 2015; Yan & Tourangeau, 2008).

Moreover, scenario methodology is widely used in psychosocial research for introducing experimental manipulations (e.g., Bieneck & Krahé, 2011; Eyssel & Bohner, 2011; Temkin & Krahé, 2008). Its use offers a degree of control over extraneous variables that would be difficult to achieve in real-life situations, which are determined by a multitude of factors (Temkin & Krahé, 2008). However, this procedure shows certain limitations regarding its external validity, which could undermine the credibility of the information presented in both studies (e.g., the artificiality of the scenarios due to their being fictitious hypothetical

situations, or a lack of realism in the elements presented in the manipulation, as it is not possible to describe interactions or situations that include all of the aspects present in a real-life game). This was addressed by designing screenshots similar to those that could be found in the video game described in the scenario, to better simulate the sexist comments received by the woman gamer. Even so, future research should consider other methods such as the behavior of players in a real-time game, or the recording and subsequent analysis of data provided by the online game itself (McCreery et al., 2012). Given the relevance that sexist attitudes have been shown to have in the perception of incidents in the video game environment, future research should further investigate the role of such attitudes. Similarly, to the analysis of the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional functions of myths in the study of sexual violence (Bohner et al., 2009), the functions of sexist attitudes against women gamers could also be analyzed. Regarding the cognitive function, given this research showed that the interpretation of the information received about the victim was influenced by sexist attitudes, as a general knowledge schema. Thus, existing knowledge could be expanded by manipulating other characteristics of the woman gamer (e.g., her behavior with the other players, playing an active role during the game) or of the situation (e.g., previous contact between the woman gamer and the player responsible for the sexist incident). Similarly, exploring the behavioral function of sexism against women gamers (e.g., the influence of sexist attitudes on self-reported proclivity towards certain behaviors) would represent a step forward in the analysis of sexism in the field of video games. From an experimental approach, it would be interesting to analyze the influence of a woman gamer's behavior on the proclivity of her fellow players to engage in sexist behaviors, examining how sexism against women gamers justify these behaviors in gamers.

Practice implications

This research has a series of relevant implications. First, our results broaden the analysis of the influence of sexism to other settings, such as the offline context. Although the video game environment may seem very different from the offline context, the findings of both studies show the similarity and the extent that violence and sexism against women can have in any environment. The expression of this sexism implies that many women distance themselves or are forced not to play in this type of environment. In fact, many women gamers routinely state that sexist behaviors in the gaming community are the main obstacle to actively taking part in an online video game (Fox & Tang, 2014; Ruvalcaba et al., 2018). As this research shows, it is essential to continue analyzing this type of social interactions, which occur in the context of online video games, to discourage the normalization of sexist attitudes and behaviors against women gamers. Otherwise, many women gamers will continue to suffer from discrimination in this environment and will continue to be forced to participate passively. Consequently, another implication derived from these results could have a place in the online video game environment itself, by raising awareness of this problem and taking additional measures to turn this environment into a safe space for women gamers and other discriminated minorities (e.g., more efficient reporting systems, moderators who censor this type of sexist attitudes and behaviors). In this regard, the findings of both our studies could be used in programs for the prevention or modification of sexist attitudes, raising awareness on gender inequality and the relevance and severity of sexism in the field of video games.

Conclusion

The present research confirms the relevance of sexist attitudes against women gamers in the social perception of sexist incidents in online video games. Using two studies, we empirically showed the influence of certain characteristics of a woman gamer (i.e., being described as a

feminist or performing non–normative actions for gender equality) on the blame attributed to her for experiencing a sexist incident in an online game. Moreover, these results were moderated by the perceivers' sexist attitudes towards women gamers. These findings suggest that the gamer community still has a troubling perception of women gamers, who are judged more harshly simply because of their gender and the feminist claims that they might make. In sum, these sexist manifestations are a harsh reality for women who play online, still evidencing a wide digital gender gap and generating inequality. Studies like this one serve to highlight the importance of bringing attention to sexist attitudes against women gamers. The results of this research open new avenues to understand the effects of sexism and situational factors in online environments, promoting a more inclusive gaming culture. A better understanding of these effects could facilitate the perception of sexism as a phenomenon that conditions the participation of women gamers and makes it invisible. It becomes increasingly evident that sexism is not merely an isolated incident but a pervasive force that influences the experiences of women gamers. These experiences should also be addressed through different public actions (i.e., awareness campaigns, initiatives between gaming platforms or institutional and social support against sexism). This research breakthrough not only sheds light on the dynamics of sexism within online gaming but also marks a crucial step towards fostering a gaming culture that truly embraces inclusivity. As we continue to delve deeper into this research area, we pave the way for a significant reduction in the frequency of sexist behaviors within gaming communities. Moreover, it enables us to challenge the pervasive tendency to blame and stigmatize women who defy traditional gender roles in gaming. Further progress in this line of research would contribute to reduce the occurrence of sexist behaviors and the attribution of blame towards women who dare to transgress certain roles, preventing the normalization of gender stereotypes still present in video games.

Declarations

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Conflicts of interest/Competing interests

The authors declare no financial or conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The procedures used in collection of data conform to current APA ethical standards for the protection of human subjects. All participants voluntarily participated in the survey and provided their informed consent at the beginning of the study. These procedures were in accordance with ethical standards of the University of Granada (# 962/CEIH/2019).

Transparency on Material

We confirm that this article is original, and we also certify that the manuscript is not under review elsewhere and has not been previously published elsewhere in whole or in part.

Availability of data and material

The data that support the findings of this research are available upon request from the corresponding author.

Authors' contributions

All listed authors have agreed to manuscript authorship and the authorship order, and the corresponding author confirms that all who deserve authorship are listed. The authors made substantial contributions to the work including the study conception, design of the work, and interpretation of data. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Scenario based on the feminist adherence of the woman gamer, Study 1

Member of feminist video game association condition (FWG condition)

Lucía is a regular video game player and is very committed to the visibility of women gamers. She belongs to a feminist association that fights for gender equality in video games and denounces the harassment and disadvantages suffered by female gamers within the gamer community. Lucía normally plays online multiplayer video games, especially League of Legends. Last week she joined a team to play a game of League of Legends, participating in the strategy organized by her group. However, while casting a flash spell she misdirected the cursor and moved away from her opponent. Although she later tried to correct her mistake, her team ended up losing the game.

After her team's defeat, Lucía began to receive the following comments from her teammates (see screenshot below):

[All] jose89: I knew you couldn't trust girls for LoL...

[All] IVAN: yeah, they want to be treated the same and want us to let them play hahaha

[All] xavi: well, but it's normal, that pc is the one that requires more skill

[All] jose89: you didn't play badly for a girl...

[All] xavi: if you want let me know next time so we can teach you xd

Non-member of feminist video game association condition (Non-FWG condition)

Lucía is a regular video game player. Normally, Lucía plays online multiplayer video games, especially League of Legends. Last week she joined a team to play a game of League of Legends, participating in the strategy organized by her group. However, while casting a flash spell she misdirected the cursor and moved away from her opponent. Although she later tried to correct her mistake, her team ended up losing the game.

After her team's defeat, Lucía began to receive the following comments from her teammates (same as the previous condition).

[All] jose89: I knew you couldn't trust girls for LoL...

[All] IVAN: yeah, they want to be treated the same and want us to let them play hahaha

[All] xavi: well, but it's normal, that pc is the one that requires more skill

[All] jose89: you didn't play badly for a girl...

[All] xavi: if you want let me know next time so we can teach you xd

Appendix B

Scenario based on the feminist behavior of the woman gamer in gaming context, Study 2

Normative collective actions condition

Lucía is a regular video game player and is very committed to the visibility of female gamers. She belongs to a feminist association that fights for gender equality in the video game environment. In fact, in addition to having participated in various demonstrations against the prevailing male chauvinism in the gamer environment, she has been involved in several actions aimed at claiming gender equality in video games. For example, she has recently promoted an online petition on Change.org along with several colleagues to protest against a gamer event directed mainly at men. She has also organized debates on social networks about the discrimination experienced by female gamers, designed T-shirts with protest messages, and participated in a poster campaign with images of female gamers.

Regarding her favorite genres, Lucía likes to play online role-playing video games, especially League of Legends. Last week she joined a team to play a game of League of Legends, participating in the strategy organized by her group. However, while casting a flash spell she misdirected the cursor and moved away from her opponent. Although she later tried to correct her mistake, her team ended up losing the game. After her team's defeat, Lucía began to receive the following comments from her teammates (same as the previous conditions).

[All] jose89: I knew you couldn't trust girls for LoL...

[All] IVAN: yeah, they want to be treated the same and want us to let them play hahaha

[All] xavi: well, but it's normal, that pc is the one that requires more skill

[All] jose89: you didn't play badly for a girl...

[All] xavi: if you want let me know next time so we can teach you xd

Non–normative collective actions condition

Lucía is a regular video game player. She belongs to a feminist association that fights for gender equality in video games. In fact, in addition to having participated in various sit-ins against the prevailing male chauvinism in the gamer environment, she has been involved in several actions aimed at claiming gender equality in video games. For example, she recently promoted, together with several female colleagues, a massive spamming campaign through various video game forums to protest against a gamer event aimed mostly at men. She also organized a boycott against that event, hacking its website to the point of collapse and blocking the sale of tickets, and chaining herself at the entrance to impede access to the speakers.

Regarding her favorite genres, Lucía likes to play online role-playing video games, especially League of Legends. Last week she joined a team to play a game of League of Legends, participating in the strategy organized by her group. However, while casting a flash spell she misdirected the cursor and moved away from her opponent. Although she later tried to correct her mistake, her team ended up losing the game. After her team's defeat, Lucía began to receive the following comments from her teammates (same as the previous conditions).

[All] jose89: I knew you couldn't trust girls for LoL...

[All] IVAN: yeah, they want to be treated the same and want us to let them play hahaha

[All] xavi: well, but it's normal, that pc is the one that requires more skill

[All] jose89: you didn't play badly for a girl...

[All] xavi: if you want let me know next time so we can teach you xd

Control condition

Lucía is a regular video game player. Regarding her favorite genres, Lucía likes to play online role-playing video games, especially League of Legends. Last week she joined a team to play a game of League of Legends, participating in the strategy organized by her group. However, while casting a flash spell she misdirected the cursor and moved away from her opponent. Although she later tried to correct her mistake, her team ended up losing the game. After her team's defeat, Lucía began to receive the following comments from her teammates (same as the previous conditions).

[All] jose89: I knew you couldn't trust girls for LoL...

[All] IVAN: yeah, they want to be treated the same and want us to let them play hahaha

[All] xavi: well, but it's normal, that pc is the one that requires more skill

[All] jose89: you didn't play badly for a girl...

[All] xavi: if you want let me know next time so we can teach you xd

Capítulo 5

Chapter 5. *The Role of Sexism Against Women Gamers in Men's Proclivity to Engage in Sexist Behaviors in Online Gaming*

**The Role of Sexism Against Women Gamers in Men's Proclivity to Engage in
Sexist Behaviors in Online Gaming**

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Abstract

Online gaming has become a cause for concern due to the prevalent occurrence of sexist behaviors against women gamers, contributing to an unwelcoming community marked by hostility and hypermasculinity. Despite its significance, research in this area remains limited. We conducted three studies to investigate the prevalence of such behaviors and empirically assessed how a female gamer's conduct impacts men's proclivity to commit sexist behaviors, as well as the moderating role of sexism against women gamers. In Study 1 ($N = 472$), we examined the prevalence of specific sexist behaviors commonly experienced by women in online gaming. In Study 2 ($N = 510$), we developed a measure to assess the men's proclivity to commit sexist behaviors in online gaming, aiming to explore the behavioral function of sexism against women gamers. The results revealed an increased proclivity among male gamers, particularly those with higher sexism against women gamers (SAWG). In Study 3 ($N = 209$), we sought to analyze the impact of a woman gamer's anti-sexist position on male participants' proclivity to commit sexist behaviors in online gaming, considering the moderating effect of their sexist attitudes against women gamers. Male gamers with higher SAWG showed more proclivity to commit sexist behaviors when interacting with a woman gamer who openly expressed her anti-sexist position. These findings have extended our understanding of the functions of sexist attitudes against women gamers, providing the first data on their relationship with male proclivity to commit sexist behaviors. Further research is needed to address this issue and mitigate the perpetuation of sexist behaviors in online video games.

Keywords: sexism, online video gaming, sexist behaviors, proclivity, SAWGS.

Introduction

Online video games attract millions of people worldwide, resulting in a significant increase in the presence and participation of women. Contrary to the misconception that gaming is primarily a male-dominate activity (Austin, 2022), the reality is quite different. Nowadays, a high percentage of gamers are women, reaching 46% of American and the 46.7% of European gamers (Entertainment Software Association, ESA, 2023; Video Games Europe, 2023). However, this increased female representation in online gaming does not necessarily translate into how women are treated while playing (Kivijärvi & Katila, 2022). Unfortunately, online gaming has evolved into a hostile space for women, where unwanted behaviors and negative attitudes occur, such as prejudice, jokes, offensive comments, or harassment and sexism persist (Jagayat & Choma, 2021; Kordyaka et al., 2019).

Online harassment, sexism, and hostility toward women represent pervasive issues within gaming cultures and gameplay (Tang et al., 2019). Alarming, about 40% of women gamers experience harassment, and roughly 73% of gamers witness such incidents (Burgess et al., 2017; Duggan, 2014). An extensive study involving 2,849 men and women gamers regarding online harassment found that, compared to other online platforms (e.g., social networking sites, dating sites, forums), the gaming environment was perceived as the most discriminatory in its treatment of women (Duggan, 2014). In that sense, a notable 38% of women reported enduring sexist harassment within multiplayer gaming spaces, among other forms of discrimination (Glaze, 2018). Similarly, women gamers experienced more sexism when their opponents could hear them and thus became aware of their gender (Choe et al., 2020). This aligns with the findings of Kuznekoff and Rose (2013), which revealed that female voices received three times more direct negative comments during gameplay compared to male voice and silence conditions. In sum, it is worth noting that sexism is a

prevalent phenomenon in the context of online video games (Lopez-Fernandez et al., 2019). Furthermore, these sexist behaviors are frequently justified because they are carried out online, leading to the mistaken belief that there are no real-world consequences for the victims (Jagayat & Choma, 2021).

These behaviors have given rise to a dynamic in which women gamers –and the men who support their presence in video games– have been silenced within a part of the gaming community marked by hostile and hypermasculine gamers (Fox & Tang, 2017). Many gamers, especially males, commonly perceive sexism and toxic behavior as a key part of the gaming experience (Assunção, 2016; Hilvert-Bruce & Neill, 2020). This normalization and justification of sexist behaviors are often closely linked to the adherence to myths or sexist attitudes (Fox & Tang, 2017; Read et al., 2018). For instance, research has shown that sexist attitudes serve as predictive factor for harassment in online gaming (Fox & Potocki, 2016), including instances of sexual harassment (Fox & Tang, 2017).

Despite the acknowledged relevance of sexist attitudes and behaviors against women in online gaming, research on these aspects is still weak. Moreover, and surprisingly, in most previous studies investigating sexism in online gaming, researchers used general measures of sexism, overlooking the specificity of this context (Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023). However, the recent development of the Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (SAWGS; Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023) now facilitates a more precise and suitable assessment of the sexist attitudes experienced by women in these settings. In this regard, Bustos-Ortega et al. (2023) showed that gamers scoring higher on the SAWGS exhibited a greater tendency to downplay sexist incidents and propose less severe punishment for toxic sexist gamers.

Despite the fact that sexist acts in online gaming reproduce the sexism suffered by women in offline life (Fox et al., 2015), they present specific peculiarities due to the

characteristics of the online gaming that have not been sufficiently considered. These distinctive features include anonymous participation, player-to-player competition, and social disinhibition (Ruvalcaba et al., 2018). Consequently, it is essential that we undertake more rigorous research to understand the connection between specific sexist attitudes directed at women gamers and the manifestation of sexist behaviors within online gaming.

Perpetration of Sexism Behaviors: Proclivity

As previously mentioned, a considerable number of gamers commonly gamers perceive the manifestation of sexist behaviors as an intrinsic aspect of the gaming experience (Hilvert-Bruce & Neill, 2020). This perspective may be closely linked to their adherence to myths or sexist attitudes against women gamers. For example, in offline contexts, adherence to these prejudices has been linked to men's proclivity toward sexual aggressions (Bohner et al., 2022; Eyssel et al., 2009). Specifically, research indicates that hostile sexism among men predicts their self-reported proclivity to sexual aggressions in dating and acquaintance rape situations (e.g., Masser et al., 2006; Viki et al., 2006). Additionally, benevolent sexism has been associated with justifying sexual violence against women in certain circumstances (e.g., Abrams et al., 2003). Moreover, sexism is particularly linked to men's sexually aggressive tendencies toward women when their behavior challenges traditional gender roles (e.g., Abrams et al., 2003; Masser et al., 2006). For instance, hostile sexism has been linked to negative attitudes and behaviors directed at non-traditional women (i.e., feminist and career women), while benevolent sexism has been associated with positive perceptions towards women conforming to traditional gender roles (e.g., Masser & Abrams, 2004; Masser et al., 2006).

In line with these studies carried out in offline context, it is essential to highlight that the behavioral function of sexism against women gamers has not been extensively explored

within the context of online gaming. Similar to research conducted in the offline settings, it is crucial to investigate how aspects of sexism against women gamers, such as the proclivity of some gamers to engage in sexist behaviors, are intertwined with their endorsement of these sexist attitudes. In this sense, the Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale can serve as a valuable tool for examining the behavioral function of sexist prejudices in online gaming. To study this behavioral aspect, it is necessary to clearly identify the specific sexist behaviors that women gamers commonly encounter while playing. As far as we know, there is currently no study that has conducted a representative and comprehensive selection of such behaviors and their prevalence. Consequently, we propose a first study aimed at identifying the most prevalent sexist behaviors experienced by women gamers (Study 1). Based on these findings, a second study is proposed, in which a measure proclivity to commit sexist behaviors in online gaming will be developed using scenario methodology (Study 2) to analyze the relationship between sexism against women gamers and this behavioral tendency.

Confronting Sexism in Online Gaming Setting: The Role of Sexist Attitudes

Hypermasculinity hierarchies are prominently evident in video games (Amores et al., 2023; Blackburn & Scharrer, 2019; Paaßen et al., 2017). As previously emphasized, women often face various forms of harassment and misogyny in online gaming, spanning from skepticism about their gaming skills to sexualized comments (Kowert & Quandt, 2018; Ochsner, 2019). The consequences that derive from this harassment and sexism are multiple, including anxiety, loneliness, reduced sense of security and diminished confidence in playing abilities compared to male gamers (Kaye & Pennington, 2016). In response to these challenges, women gamers frequently adopt various avoidance strategies. These may involve playing alone, concealing their gender identity, blocking potential interactions, avoiding competitive or violent online video games, or changing their gaming groups (e.g., Cote, 2017;

Kwisson et al., 2020; Vergel et al., 2023). Additionally, some women internalize the belief that they do not truly belong to the gaming community (Fox & Tang, 2017; Gray, 2012; Kaye & Pennington, 2016). Consequently, many women ultimately decide to leave the gaming space and its toxic environment altogether (Austin, 2022). However, what happens when women gamers decide to confront this sexism or openly express an anti-sexist position?

Previous literature in offline context indicates that, generally, men respond unfavorably when confronted by women about sexism (Czopp et al., 2006; Diebels & Czopp, 2011; Dray et al., 2022; Shelton & Stewards, 2006). In this regard, Dodd et al. (2001) found that perpetrators confronted about their sexism perceive their confronters unfavorably. Indeed, women who confront sexist events are often viewed as hypersensitive and complainers, discouraging future attempts to change stereotypes (Diebels & Czopp, 2011). Simon and O'Brien (2015) found that men rated a woman who confronted them for making a sexist comment as less competent and typically chose to avoid her in future interactions. This resulted in her being perceived as deviating from the gender prototype associated with her (Kaiser et al., 2022; Goh et al., 2022). Moreover, as women's feminist identity increases, so does their likelihood of confronting sexism (Ayres et al., 2009; Good et al., 2019). Feminist identity is also associated with behaviors that promote feminism (Yoder et al., 2011; Weis et al., 2018), an activist orientation that predicts public confrontations against sexism, mirroring the demands made by many women across different sectors of our society (Hyers, 2007; Good et al., 2019).

In offline settings, an anti-sexist position is perceived as a threat to masculinity and male sexuality (Burgess et al., 2017). A woman advocating for gender equality disrupts the idealized expectations of the femininity and challenges the status quo of traditional gender

roles (Kaiser et al., 2022). Anti-sexism has also received a negative reputation within the gaming community, resulting in hostile and violent reactions against feminist discourse in recent years. Women gamers, as well as developers or feminists, who spoke out against gender discrimination or declared themselves as feminists—such as in the #Gamergate campaign (Burgess et al., 2017; Burnay et al., 2019; Dowling et al., 2020; Gray et al., 2017; Mortensen, 2018)—, became the targets of a terrifying verbal attacks by members of the gaming community, including harassment, rape and death threats (Burgess et al., 2017; Chess & Shaw, 2015; Tang et al., 2019). Another highly publicized and contentious event, “Gaming Ladies,” aimed exclusively at women creators, developers and fans of video games, faced numerous threats and pressures leading up to its 2017 celebration (Amores, 2023). Since then, sexism in the video games has remained the focus of this movement, becoming a well-documented, highly debated, but apparently immovable issue (Kaplan, 2014).

Braithwaite (2014) illustrated how gaming communities perpetuate various anti-feminist themes, often portraying feminists as killjoys who sabotage men’s enjoyment of their online domain. In a recent study by Uttarapong et al. (2021) focusing on the experiences of feminist women gamers and streamers, many reported receiving sexist insults, such as being called “feminazi” or “SJW” (i.e., “social justice warrior”, an acronym used pejoratively to describe women who are seen as overreacting to sensitive topics on the Internet, particularly feminism). These findings highlight the prevalence of hate speech in online settings, where “people just love to hate because they don't like the (feminist) message I am sending.” (p. 11). In fact, feminist individuals are seen as intentionally disruptive and are, therefore, made to feel guilty for damaging the image of the male gamer (e.g., Braithwaite, 2014; Chess & Shaw, 2015).

Consistent with these results, previous research conducted in offline settings has noted the rejection and sexist discrimination faced by women who identify as feminists (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997; Reid & Purcell, 2004). This pattern is equally observable within traditionally masculine contexts, as exemplified by women gamers seeking to confront the conventional gender role paradigm. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume a connection between sexist attitudes encountered in online gaming and corresponding manifestations of sexist behavior, mirroring the trends witnessed in offline scenarios. Furthermore, the behavioral function of sexist attitudes or adherence to myths appears to share similarities across both virtual and physical spheres (as proposed in Study 2). Given that women who voice dissent against sexism or confront discriminatory situations inherent in their daily lives (e.g., Czopp et al., 2006; Diebels & Czopp, 2011; Shelton & Stewards, 2006), it is conceivable that this phenomenon also extends into the online gaming, an assumption that is intended to be tested in Study 3.

Overview of the Present Research

As we have highlighted, women gamers frequently experience sexist behaviors while playing. While the existing data yield conclusive insights, there remains an evident gap in our understanding when contemplating the sexist ordeals endured by women gamers. Specifically, a comprehensive investigation into how sexist attitudes directed at women gamers precipitate the perpetuation of these behaviors is visibly absent. Previous research in the realm of video games has showed correlations between various beliefs and attitudes, including Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), hostile sexism, and gamer identification (Fox & Tang, 2017; Read et al., 2018), and the manifestation of behaviors within this setting. For instance, higher levels of hostile sexism have been linked to an increased propensity for harassment in online gaming (Fox & Potocki, 2016) and misogyny (Blackburn & Scharrer,

2019; McCullough et al., 2020). Notably, Fox and Tang (2017) discerned that the most vehement opposition to women's involvement in video games emanated from male gamers with a high adherence to sexist attitudes.

However, it is essential to underscore that despite the extant evidence on the salience of sexist attitudes within the online video game settings, previous studies have predominantly employed conventional sexism assessment scales like the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory or the Sex-Role Orientation Scale (Deskins, 2015; Fox & Potocki, 2016; McCullough et al., 2020; Stermer & Burkley, 2012) or created isolated items therefrom without specific criteria (Deskins, 2015). Regrettably, none of these instruments capture the characteristics of sexism particular to the online video game environment.

In the present research, our methodology unfolds as follows: firstly, we will ascertain the most distinctive sexist behaviors experienced by women gamers, along with their prevalence, drawing upon prior qualitative research (e.g., McLean & Griffiths, 2019) (Study 1). Subsequently, employing a non-experimental approach (Study 2), we will delve into the association between sexist attitudes against women gamers and the inclination of men gamers to engage in such sexist behaviors, herein referred to as the “proclivity to commit sexist behaviors during an online video game.” To this end, utilizing available data from Study 1 on the frequency of each sexist behavior, we will create an indicator to assessment this proclivity, analogous to similar research on proclivity towards sexual assaults in offline settings (e.g., Abrams et al., 2003; Bohner et al., 2006; Masser et al., 2006; Pina et al., 2021). Finally, we will examine how the sexist attitudes held by men concerning women gamers can serve as a precursor to their proclivity for engaging in sexist behaviors, particularly when precipitating factors align with their entrenched sexist beliefs. In this investigation, we aim to assess whether the anti-sexist position of a woman gamer influences the proclivity of male

participants to commit sexist acts. Concurrently, we will explore whether this association can be moderated by the sexist attitudes against women gamers of the participants (Study 3).

Study 1

The purpose of this study was to identify which is the prevalence of specific sexist behaviors commonly experienced by women while they play video games online. This is a first step to subsequently analyze the relationship between them and the adherence to sexist attitudes of male gamers. We followed the thematic analysis on experiences of harassment, sexism, and discrimination of 271 women gamers published by McLean & Griffiths (2019). While most of the previous research on online gaming primarily addresses harassment and cyber-aggression targeting women gamers, we chose this qualitative study as reference due to its specific focus on documenting a broader range of sexist behaviors. Moreover, this initial step proves indispensable in quantifying the magnitude of this problem faced by women. Thus far, the most research in this domain has predominantly adopted a qualitative approach or have focused solely on documenting gamers' experiences, without providing a more specific vision of how sexist behaviors are manifested within online video games and how these, in turn, are related to sexist attitudes directed toward women gamers.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of women who regularly play video games. Initially, the sample composed 501 participants. A total of 29 women gamers were excluded: 4 participants were under-age 18; 3 participants did not regularly play video games; 14 participants did not identify with the female gender; and 8 participants exceeded the survey response time limit ($\pm SD_{\text{time}} > 3$; Teitcher et al., 2015; Yan & Tourangeau, 2008). Thus, the final sample was

comprised of 472 women gamers, with an age ranged from 18 to 58 years old ($M = 25.9$, $SD = 5.5$). A total of 51.1% reported university education, 24.2% higher education, 23.8% secondary education, and 0.9% primary education. Among them, 73.3% identified themselves as gamers.

Procedure and Materials

The online questionnaire was disseminated among women gamers using Qualtrics Version XM platform (2020). The electronic administration format is a procedure repeatedly used in video game research (ESA, 2021; Griffiths, 2010; Video Games Europe, 2021). To avoid response bias, the platform tracked participant IP addresses and controlled the number of times that they could access the survey (one time) in all samples (Studies 1, 2, and 3). Once the survey was prepared, the link was distributed among different target online gaming groups. They were recruited using social networks (e.g., Twitter and gamers groups on Facebook) and forums specialized in video games (e.g., Reddit and gaming magazines forums).

The instructions were the same for all the participants. We explained that it was an anonymous opinion poll focusing on the gamer public's attitudes. Next, we informed about the voluntary nature of the study. When participants accepted to participate, they answered: (1) the questions on the frequency of video game use and identification as a gamer (Ewell et al., 2018), (2) the list of sexist behaviors, and (3) one open question: each participant could explain if she had suffered any other sexist behavior. To finish, participants answered about their basic sociodemographic data (i.e., age, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, profession, and educational level) and they were directed to another website where they entered in a drawing for €50 for full completion in compensation.

The protocol for all studies was approved by the ethics committee at our university for studies involving human participants. Procedures were conducted in accordance with the APA Ethical Code (Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct) for studies involving human participants (APA, 2017) and broader professional standards for conducting a research study.

List of sexist behaviors. A total of seven behaviors were chosen following McLean and Griffiths (2019). McLean and Griffiths' research was structured in four central themes from the 1043 post collected of 271 women gamers. We focused on the category "experiences of social support in online interactions" because the testimonies coded in this theme included the toxic and sexist behaviors that women gamers received the most during an online game. Example items included situations as "Usually don't respond to me when I say something, or they straight up just talk over me" or "They always fact checked me against other men in the group." The instructions and the response format used for this measure belong to the adaptation of Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire for studies of cybervictimization and cyberbullying in online video games (Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Ballard & Welch, 2017). Participants had to indicate the frequency with which they had suffered each of the sexist behaviors shown to them, marking one of the available response options: *never, 1 or 2 times a month, 2 or 3 months a month, once a week, or several times a week.*

Results

The size of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy ($KMO = .90$) and Barlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2 = 1271.04$, $df = 21$, $p < .001$, suggested that the scores were suitable for a factor analysis. We used principal axis factoring (PAF) and the analysis yielded one factor-solution, which explained 55.54% of the variance. The scores were reliable, $\alpha =$

.87. Factor loadings were between .70 and .77. The factor obtained was labeled as sexist behaviors suffered by women gamers. As we can see in Table 1, more than 20% of women responded that they have suffered them at least once or twice a month. Of the seven behaviors, it stands out how item 7 (“The boys do not give importance to the complaints of the players regarding the jokes we receive during the game”) occurs mostly with a frequency of several times a week (32%). Except for items 2 and 6, the rest exceeded the frequency of 50% in suffering at least once a month from the aforementioned sexist behaviors. In addition, analyzing the open question, the testimonies provided by the women gamers did not indicate new behaviors that were not already included in the other items.

Table 1*Frequency of sexist behaviors in online video games.*

Items	Never		1 or 2 times a month		2 or 3 times a month		Once a week		Several times a week	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1. When I am playing an online game and asking questions, they ignore me more than if I were a boy.	192	40.7	122	25.8	60	12.7	49	10.4	49	10.4
2. When I am playing an online game and selecting an important character for the team, they ask me to give that role to a boy.	256	54.2	93	19.7	54	11.4	34	7.2	35	7.4
3. Normally, they prefer to follow the strategy, or any suggestion proposed by a partner during the game before mining.	139	29.4	126	26.7	77	16.3	53	11.2	77	16.3
4. They generally tend to compare my way of playing with that of the other boys.	173	36.7	76	16.1	71	15.0	59	12.5	93	19.7
5. I am often offered learning or gifts during a game.	158	33.5	110	23.3	65	13.8	71	15.0	68	14.4
6. Normally when I'm on a team they don't address me by my name and, instead, use expressions like "the girl" or "the new one."	243	51.5	80	16.9	58	12.3	40	8.5	51	10.8
7. The boys do not give importance to the complaints of the players regarding the jokes we receive during the game.	90	19.1	85	18.0	83	17.6	63	13.3	151	32.0

Note. *N* = 472 women.

Discussion

The results of this study show that sexist behaviors against women gamers are highly prevalent, in line with McLean and Griffiths' study (2019). Most female gamers were aware of the need to remain anonymous and conceal their identity and spoke about their recognition of the need to do so or suggested it as a tactic to cope with negative online behavior. The experiences of women gamers in this study were found to be like those in the research by Fox and Tang (2017), which explored women's experiences of harassment and their perceptions of minimization and unresponsiveness towards them. Related to ours, a study by Vella et al. (2019) also highlighted about women experience toxicity and performance pressure in online gaming communities: women gamers reported the impacts of misogynistic targeting and stereotype threat, wishing to avoid these tensions by masking their gender.

Once these data on the prevalence of sexist behaviors experienced by women gamers have been obtained, these behaviors will be used to develop scenarios that allow evaluating the proclivity to commit them and to study the behavioral function of sexist attitudes, following research on the proclivity to sexual assaults in offline environments (e.g., Bohner et al., 2009; Temkin & Krahé, 2008). Once this indicator is developed, we will be able to study the relationship between sexist attitudes of the participants and their tendency to commit sexist behaviors.

Study 2

Using two independent samples and following a non-experimental approach, this study analyzes the relationship between the men's sexist attitudes against women gamers and their tendency to commit a sexist behavior within online gaming. In pursuit of this aim, the study proceeds in two steps. In a first step (Sample 1), the proclivity to commit sexist behaviors in online video games is measured. This is achieved by creating five hypothetical scenarios, each narrating instances of sexist incidents targeting a woman gamer. Using the scenario method, these fictitious sexist incidents were developed based on the most prevalent sexist behaviors identified in Study 1. It is worth noting that the scenario methodology adopted here finds precedent in numerous studies exploring the proclivity towards sexual assault in offline setting (e.g., Temkin & Krahé, 2008). Subsequently, participants evaluated the representativeness, frequency of occurrence, and perceived sexism of each of the five scenarios. After knowing these three characteristics, in the second step (Sample 2) we explored the possible behavioral function of sexist attitudes against women gamers (Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023). We seek to substantiate our hypothesis suggesting a positive correlation between these sexist attitudes and the proclivity to commit sexist behaviors in online video games.

Method

The Sample 1 consisted of 212 gamers adults (108 women [50.9%] and 104 men [49.1%]). Ages ranged from 18 to 49 ($M = 28.29$, $SD = 7.03$). Of these participants, 52.4% reported university education, 21.7% higher education, 25% secondary education, and 0.9% primary education. Among women, 72.3% identified themselves as gamers, compared to 67.3% of men. We previously excluded 41 participants from the study: 17 participants did not regularly play video games, and 24 participants did not have Spanish nationality.

The Sample 2 consisted of only men gamers adults ($N = 298$). Ages ranged from 18 to 51 ($M = 24.66$, $SD = 5.98$). Of these participants, 40.9% reported university education, 18.8% higher education, 39.6% secondary education, and 0.7% primary education. Regarding gamer identity, a total of 72.3% identified themselves as gamers. We previously excluded 41 participants from the study: 13 participants did not regularly play video games, 3 participants were under 18 years old, 16 participants did not identify with the male gender, and 59 participants did not have Spanish nationality.

Procedure and Materials

The online questionnaire was disseminated among women and men gamers using Qualtrics Version XM platform (2020). Once the survey was prepared, the link was distributed among different target online gaming groups as in Study 1. The instructions were the same for all the participants. We explained that it was an anonymous opinion poll focusing on the gamer public's attitudes. Next, we informed about the voluntary nature of the study. When participants accepted to participate, they received the questions about the frequency of video game use and identification as a gamer (Ewell et al., 2018), and the rest of the measures. To finish, participants answered their basic sociodemographic data, and they were directed to another website where they entered in a new drawing for €50.

Proclivity to commit sexist behaviors in online gaming. To assess proclivity, we developed five fictitious sexist incidents based on the most prevalent sexist situations identified in Study 1 (see Appendix A). Each scenario described an interaction between a woman and several men gamers, such that during the game one male gamer engages in sexist behavior towards the woman (e.g., “Marta regularly plays online video games. During a game of Apex Legends, Jose, one of his teammates, organized the strategy and assigned Marta the support role of the game, because according to him, “she still doesn’t play like as men” and

“also you learn from those who really play well.””). In Sample 1, after reading each scenario, participants were asked to respond to a series of items expressing their evaluation of frequency (“The situation described happens often in online video games.”), representativeness (“The situation described is representative of what happens in the context of online video games.”), and perceived sexism (“The situation described showed a discriminatory behavior towards the gamer due to the fact that she is a woman.”). Each question was answered on a 7-point, Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1 (*Totally disagree*) to 7 (*Totally agree*). In Sample 2, for each scenario participants had a distracting question (“Imagine that you are in the same situation as the gamer described in the story. To what extent do you think you would be attentive in a game like the one described?”), and they were asked to indicate if they would have behaved like the men gamer (perpetrator) with the following question: “In a similar situation, do you think you would have behaved in the same way as the player described?”. This question was answered on a 7-point, Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1 (“I’m sure I wouldn’t have behaved the same way”) to 7 (“I’m sure I would have behaved in the same way”). Participants’ mean scores of this item across all the scenarios were used to measure their proclivity to commit sexist behaviors in online gaming. Higher scores indicated higher proclivity.

Social desirability. We used the 13-item short form of the Marlowe–Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Spanish version by Ferrando & Chico, 2000) in Sample 2. Examples items include “I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable” or “I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone’s feelings.” Response options followed a true or false format, with higher total scores indicating more social desirability. Scores on this scale have been found to negatively correlate with neuroticism, hostility, and impulsivity and to positively correlate with agreeableness and

responsibility (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). In the current study, internal consistency reliability was .64, slightly lower than what was found in the original English (between .75 and .85) and Spanish (.78) versions.

Sexism against Women Gamers Scale (SAWGS). We assessed in Sample 2 participants' sexist attitudes against women gamers using the 8-item self-reported instrument Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023). Participants responded on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Example items include "In general, men play video games better than women" and "In the field of video games there is a community of women who are against male gamers." An overall mean score of SAWGS was used ($\alpha = .83$).

Results

Descriptive statistics and gender differences

Descriptive statistics and differences between men and women gamers regarding their assessments of the frequency, representativeness, and perceived sexism in each sexist scenario are presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4. Considering the total sample (Table 2), the scores for frequency of occurrence ranged between 4.92 (Scenario 3) and 5.32 (Scenario 4). Representativeness scores ranged between 4.87 (Scenario 3) and 5.29 (Scenario 4), while the perceived sexism varied from 5.53 (Scenario 2) to 6.79 (Scenario 3). These mean scores reflect the prevalent consensus that the scenarios were considered highly frequent, representative, and sexist. Furthermore, for all scenarios, it was noted that women showed statistically higher scores than men in frequency, representativeness, and perceived sexism (Table 3). This trend persists when considering the total average score across the five scenarios, as detailed in Table 4.

Table 2

Means scores and standard deviations on frequency, representativeness, and perceived sexism of the hypothetical scenarios used to recreate the online gaming.

Items	SCE_1		SCE_2		SCE_3		SCE_4		SCE_5	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. The situation described frequently occurs in online gaming.	5.17	1.73	5.14	1.61	4.92	1.87	5.32	1.72	4.93	1.87
2. The situation described is representative of what happens in online gaming.	5.01	1.79	5.21	1.63	4.87	1.87	5.29	1.75	4.92	1.85
3. The situation described shows discriminatory behavior towards the woman gamer based on her gender.	6.66	1.00	5.53	1.97	6.79	0.79	6.69	0.94	6.58	0.99

Note. $N = 212$ (Men = 104; Women = 108).

Table 3

Means scores and standard deviations by gender on frequency, representativeness, and perceived sexism of the hypothetical scenarios used to recreate the online gaming.

Items	SCE_1					SCE_2					SCE_3					SCE_4					SCE_5				
	M		W		<i>t</i>	M		W		<i>t</i>	M		W		<i>t</i>	M		W		<i>t</i>	M		W		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
1	4.75	1.84	5.56	1.52	3.51*	4.56	1.69	5.69	1.32	5.46*	4.30	1.94	5.52	1.59	5.03*	4.75	1.82	5.87	1.42	4.98*	4.41	1.95	5.43	1.64	4.08*
2	4.45	1.84	5.56	1.58	4.68*	4.62	1.73	5.79	1.30	5.56**	4.14	1.91	5.56	1.55	5.93*	4.63	1.79	5.93	1.46	5.74*	4.30	1.87	5.51	1.63	5.03
3	6.52	1.29	6.79	0.60	1.94**	5.02	2.24	6.02	1.54	3.78**	6.65	1.05	6.92	0.37	2.42**	6.50	1.24	6.88	0.45	2.95**	6.45	1.21	6.71	0.70	1.93**

Note. *N* = 212. SCE = Scenario. W = Women (*N* = 108); M = Men (*N* = 104).

Table 4

Descriptive statistics and differences by gender for scores on frequency, representativeness, and perceived sexism in hypothetical scenarios.

	Women		Men		Total		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Perceived sexism	6.66	0.55	6.23	1.09	6.45	0.88	3.69**
Representativeness	5.67	1.28	4.43	1.60	5.06	1.57	6.24*
Frequency	5.61	1.24	4.55	1.59	5.09	1.52	5.41*

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$. $N = 212$ (Men = 104; Women = 108).

Proclivity measure

In Sample 2, a factor analysis was performed with the aim of exploring the structure of proclivity's measure (i.e., the answers to the question about proclivity to commit sexist behaviors). The size of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy ($KMO = .80$) and Barlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2 = 528.08$, $df = 6$, $p < .001$ were appropriate. The factor loadings were between .42 and .70 and the analysis yielded a one factor-solution, with explained 59.96% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 2.40. Moreover, the items showed excellent discrimination indexes ($\geq .60$) with a high value of internal consistency ($\alpha = .84$). Scores distributions suggest average scores ($1.37_{[SCE1]} \leq M \leq 2.08_{[SCE2]}$) in line with previous research in proclivity (e.g., Bohner et al., 2006; Bohner et al., 2010; Chiroro et al., 2004), and adequate variability ($SD \geq 1.01_{[SCE1]}$)¹.

We also performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) including the item score of proclivity for each scenario. We used the robust maximum likelihood estimator (MLR) and

¹Except in the Scenario 3, eliminated from subsequent analyzes due to presenting a variability < 1 ($M = 1.22$, $SD = 0.87$).

we report the robust RMSA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), CFI (Comparative Fit Index) and TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) as fit indices. Cutoffs for CFI ($>.90$) indicate an acceptable fit, and values greater than .95 for CFI. For the RMSEA estimates, we considered that the model presents an acceptable fit when values are lower than .08. Values of less than .05 indicate a good fit (Hair et al., 2010; Awang, 2012), and those lower than .03 represent an excellent fit (Hooper et al., 2008). These indices have been reported because they are more insensitive to sample size, model misspecification, and parameter estimates (Hooper et al., 2008). The results revealed an acceptable model fit $\chi^2(6) = 244.84, p < .001$; CFI = .99, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .07, 90% CI [.00, .15], confirming a one-factor of proclivity to commit sexist behaviors during an online video game.

Relationship between sexist attitudes against women gamer (SAWG) and proclivity

We analyzed partial correlation coefficients controlling for social desirability. As expected, sexist attitudes against woman gamers were highly correlated with proclivity of the men gamers to commit in sexist behaviors in online gaming ($r = .63, p < .001$; $r_{[SCE1]} = .54, p < .001$; $r_{[SCE2]} = .49, p < .001$; $r_{[SCE3]} = .53, p < .001$; $r_{[SCE4]} = .56, p < .001$; $r_{[SCE5]} = .54, p < .001$). Scores on social desirability were not significantly correlated neither with SAWG ($r = .05, p = .40$) nor with the proclivity measure ($r = -.06, p = .25$).

Discussion

After analyzing the prevalence of the sexist behaviors most suffered by women gamers, a measure of proclivity to commit sexist behaviors during an online video game by men was developed. It is noteworthy that the scenarios included into this proclivity measure got assessments from gamer participants as being both illustrative and indicative of the frequent occurrence of such behaviors, as well as clearly sexist ($M > 4.8$; Sample 1). Furthermore, the findings showed a greater proclivity to commit sexist behaviors among

male gamers with higher sexism against women gamers scores (Sample 2). The results obtained are in the same direction as previous studies in the offline context, where the relationship between sexist attitudes and rape proclivity has been analyzed (Abrams et al., 2003; Masser et al., 2006).

Study 3

In the realm of online gaming, prevailing masculine norms exert pressure on women to conform to gender-stereotypical behaviors, and any deviance from these norms can result in punishment (Ivory et al., 2014). More specifically, when women confront sexist behaviors they suffer, men with greater adherence to sexist attitudes are more inclined to rationalize hostile actions against them, thus exhibiting a higher predisposition for sexist behavior (Oliveira-Laux et al., 2015). The aim of this third study is to analyze whether this pattern is also present in the online gaming context, wherein gamers who defend an anti-sexist position. Using an experimental approach, we analyzed how the anti-sexism position of a woman gamer (Yes vs. No) influences in the proclivity to commit sexist behaviors against her. Central to our research, we will study how this relationship might be moderated by sexist attitudes against women gamers.

Therefore, we expected a higher level of proclivity among male gamers to commit in sexist behaviors when the woman gamer makes explicit her anti-sexist position (versus No) (Hypothesis 1), and when the participants presented higher scores in sexism against women gamers (Hypothesis 2). Moreover, we also expected to find interaction effects between the anti-sexism position (Yes vs. No) and sexism against women gamers (Hypothesis 3). Specifically, we predict that when a woman overtly expresses her anti-sexist position (versus

No), participants with higher scores in sexism against women gamers (versus lower) will show a more pronounced tendency to manifest sexist behaviors while playing online.

Method

Sample

We calculated a sample size of 128 for a small or moderated effect size of $f = .25$, a significance level of $\alpha = .05$ and a power of .80 (two groups, between-subject design) using G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009). Moreover, considering sexism against women gamers as a moderator in our analyses, minimum sample size requirements were based on a goal of 50 participants per cell to test the predicted interactions (Simmons et al., 2011). A sensitivity analysis revealed that such sample size could detect smaller-to-medium effect ($f^2 \geq .02$) assuming a power of .08 and a significance level $\alpha = .05$ (two groups, between-subjects). The sample consisted of 209 men gamers. Ages ranged from 18 to 54 ($M = 24.55$, $SD = 5.12$). Of these participants, 41.6% reported university education, 22% higher education, 35.9% secondary education, and 0.5% primary education. Previously, we excluded 125 participants from the study: 42 participants did not have Spanish nationality; 5 participants did not regularly play video games; 6 participants were under-age 18 years old; 52 participants did not regularly play online video games; 5 woman participants; 12 participants failed at least one of the three control questions; and 3 participants exceeded the survey response time limit (Teitcher et al., 2015; Yan & Tourangeau, 2008; [$\pm SD_{\text{time}} > 3$]).

Procedure and Materials

We used similar procedure as in previous studies. Data collection took place on Qualtrics Version XM platform (2020) and the survey link was spread among different target gamer groups. After reading the study information and indicating voluntary consent, we administered: 1) the questions on the frequency of video game use and identification as a

gamer (Ewell et al., 2018), (2) the Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (SAWGS; Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023), (3) Social Desirability Scale (M-C SDS; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Ávila & Tomé, 1989; $\alpha = .60$), (4) and finally they were exposed to one of the two experimental conditions (feminist behavior of the woman gamer vs control). To conclude, participants indicated their sociodemographic data, and they were directed to another website where they entered in another drawing for €50 for full completion in compensation.

Experimental Manipulation. In both experimental conditions, participants encountered a text featuring a woman who was an avid video gamer and acquainted with a male gamer. Subsequently, both ended up meeting to play an online group gaming. In the condition where the woman gamer explicitly express her anti-sexist position, a message is presented wherein she communicates with her teammates before starting the game. In this message, she references previous sexist situations during her gaming experiences, cautioning her teammates that she is unwilling to tolerate or endure any further sexist behavior (versus the situation in which the woman gamer does not give any warning before starting the game). Following this manipulation, participants were required to respond to a manipulation check item assessing their comprehension of the information presented in their assigned condition (“In the information you just read about Javi and Lucía, what happens before starting the game?” with response options of “1. Lucía commented about the sexist situations that women suffer when playing / 2. Lucía did not comment about the sexist situations that women suffer when playing”). Next, all participants had to read the four scenarios used (Scenario 3 was excluded from the study due to low variability score in previous study) to evaluate the proclivity to commit sexist behaviors during an online video game. These scenarios were adapted to reference both protagonists of the manipulation (Lucía y Javi). Within these scenarios, one male gamer ultimately perpetrates a sexist act against the woman

gamer. For each of these situations, participants were tasked with indicating whether they could behave similarly to the gamer who committed the sexist behavior (perpetrator), answering the following question: “In a similar situation, do you think you would have behaved in the same way as the player described?” Their responses were rated on a 7-point Likert-type rating scale, ranging from 1 (“I’m sure I wouldn’t have behaved the same way”) to 7 (“I’m sure I would have behaved in the same way”). The scenarios adapted to the experimental manipulation can be seen in Appendix B.

Participants’ mean scores of this item across all the scenarios were used as a measure of their proclivity to commit sexist behaviors during an online video game (higher scores indicate higher proclivity). The internal consistency of the proclivity scores was .78. Measures of Social Desirability (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Ferrando & Chico, 2000; $\alpha = .60$) and Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale (Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023; $\alpha = .72$) were the same as those in Study 2.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

We performed an ANOVA on participants’ SAWGS scores showing that there was no significant difference in SAWG scores between both conditions, $F(2, 207) = 1.45, p = .23$.

Hypothesis Testing

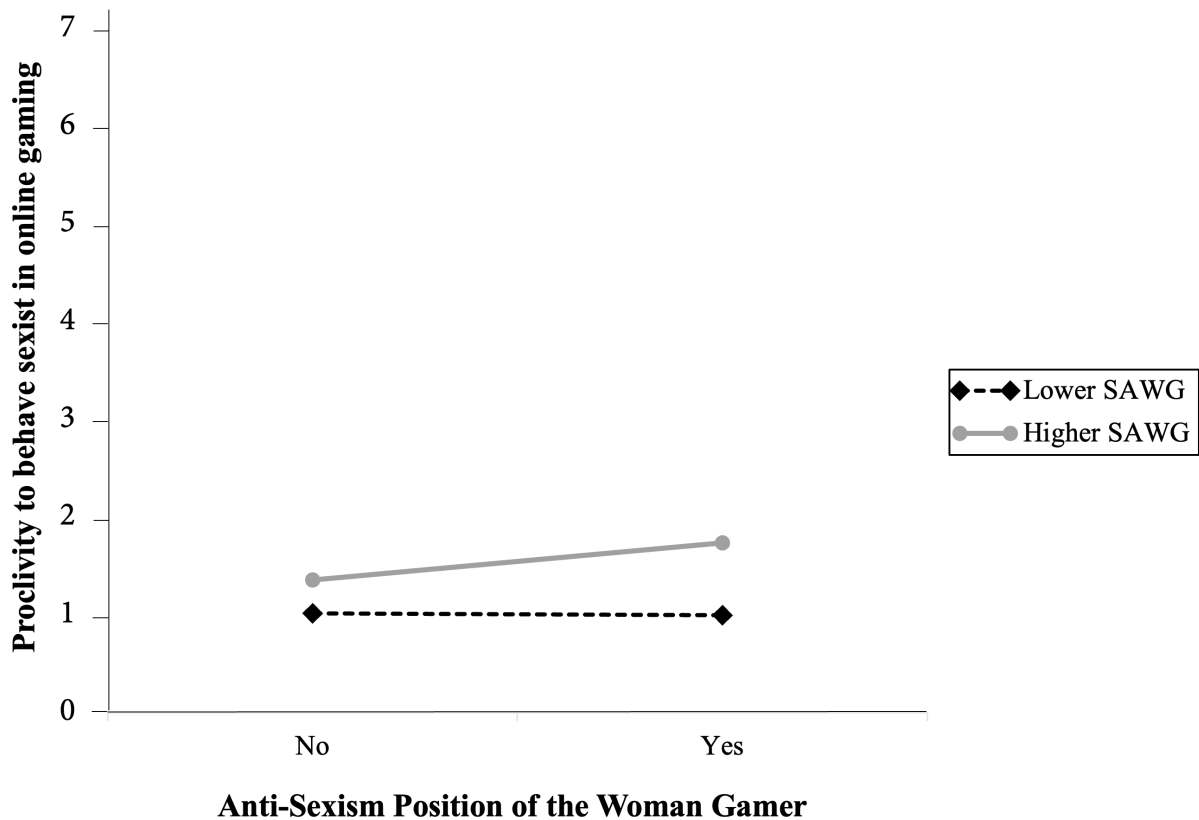
To test our predictions, we applied a moderation analysis with the PROCESS 4.0 macro for SPSS, developed by Hayes (Model 1, 2013). We studied the moderating role of SAWG in the relationship between anti-sexist position –Yes vs. No– (independent variable) and the proclivity to commit sexist behaviors during an online video game (dependent variable). We calculated the standardized effect size, f^2 , for the interaction between woman gamer behavior and SAWGS. This value offers information on the magnitude of interaction

based on the change in R^2 (Δf^2) ($\geq .02/.15/.35$ indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988).

Regarding Hypothesis 1, results showed significant main effect of anti-sexist position on proclivity scores ($b = -.13$, $SE = .06$, $t_{205} = 2.10$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [.0077, .2431]). This result indicates that when women make explicit her anti-sexism position (vs. No) participants showed higher scores in proclivity to commit sexist behaviors during an online video game (Yes: $M = 1.36$, $SD = 0.73$; No: $M = 1.18$, $SD = 0.33$). In line with Hypothesis 2, results showed a main effect of SAWG on proclivity scores. Specifically, participants with higher sexist attitudes against women gamers reported a greater level of proclivity to commit sexist behaviors ($b = .20$, $SE = .06$, $t_{205} = 3.53$, $p < .001$, CI 95% [.0901, .3179]). As also predicted in Hypothesis 3, we found a statistically significant interaction between anti-sexist position and SAWG when predicting proclivity ($b = .30$, $SE = .07$, $t_{205} = 4.24$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.1631, .4460]), $\Delta f^2 = .05$. As shown in Fig. 1, this interaction indicated that participants lower in SAWG (vs. higher) were not affected by the anti-sexism position of the woman gamer, keeping constants their responses in proclivity ($b = -.14$, $SE = .08$, $t_{205} = -1.64$, $p = .10$, 95% CI [-.3088, .0231]). However, participants with higher SAWG showed higher levels of proclivity when the woman made explicit her anti-sexism position, compared to the control condition ($b = .39$, $SE = .09$, $t_{205} = 4.47$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.2185, .5639]).

Figure 1

Effects of the Anti-Sexism Position of the Woman Gamer and SAWG on the Men' Proclivity to commit a sexist behavior in online gaming, Study 3.



Discussion

The results of Study 3 showed that when women make explicit her anti-sexism position (vs. No) participants showed higher proclivity to commit sexist behaviors in online gaming, in line with the Hypothesis 1. As expected, participants with higher SAWG scores were more likely to behave in a sexist manner (Hypothesis 2). Interesting, a statistically significant interaction between anti-sexism position of the woman gamer and SAWG emerged, suggesting that high level on sexism against women gamers affected participants' proclivity when the woman make explicit her anti-sexism position (Hypothesis 3). This reinforces the importance of attitudinal variables to support our hypotheses and it is linked to previous research related with rejection towards the feminist movement by gamer

community (Amores, 2023; Braithwaite, 2014; Chess & Shaw, 2015). In sum, this study highlights the importance of simultaneously considering individual (i.e., sexist attitudes against women gamers) and situational factors (i.e., woman gamer behavior) when trying to understand the sexist responses in online video game contexts.

General Discussion

Women gamers usually encounter instances of sexism, harassment and other negative behaviors while playing online (Gray et al., 2017; McLean & Griffiths, 2019). However, until recently, the role of women in online gaming and their experiences have been relatively underreported. Throughout a series of three studies, the current research confirms that sexist behaviors are prevalent and noteworthy. Furthermore, our results establish a connection between sexism and men's inclination to engage in sexist behaviors directed at women gamers in online gaming environments.

Given the existing gaps in research within the online gaming context, Study 1 aimed to shed light on the frequency of undesirable experiences suffered by women gamers. Our results showed the pervasive prevalence of adverse experiences encountered by women during online gaming. Perhaps unsurprisingly, all behaviors examined in this study were reported by more than 20% of women gamers, who indicated experiencing them at least once or twice a month (i.e., "Usually don't respond to me when I say something, or they straight up just talk over me."). Furthermore, over 30% of women gamers expressed that men gamers minimize their negative experiences while playing.

These results are consistent with the prevalent of harassment and sexist experiences collected in previous literature (Fox & Tang, 2017; McLean & Griffiths, 2019). Due to the need for more research in gaming area to date, our first study highlighted the frequency of

undesirable experiences suffered by women gamers. These findings allowed us to establish a starting point in the research of the proclivity to perform this type of behavior against women gamers.

To further the analysis and understanding of these behaviors, in Study 2, we employed the scenario methodology to generate a set of fictional scenarios, which were then used to develop a self-report measure of proclivity to commit sexist behaviors in online gaming. In the Sample 1, the results once again showed the high frequency of these negative situations against women gamers. Scenarios included in the proclivity measure were evaluated by gamer participants as representative, frequent, and sexist ($M > 4.8$). Specifically, women perceived the scenarios as more sexist, more representative, and more frequent than men. Notably, these results revealed the high degree of sexism perceived in this type of behavior commonly suffered by women gamers. This important finding helped us to determine that these negative incidents against women gamers are really sexist.

This proclivity measure showed suitable psychometric properties and offers the promise of application in future research endeavors exploring the predisposition for engaging in sexist conduct within online gaming environments. Furthermore, in Study 2 we analyzed how the scores in the SAWGS act as justification in male gamers to carry out this type of behavior (Sample 2). As a result, sexism against women gamers was found to correlate positively with self-reported proclivity to commit a sexist behavior by men gamers. The findings of this study deep into the role of sexist attitudes, and also provided the first data on the positive correlation between the male tendencies to commit sexist behaviors and SAWGS scores within online gaming. As previously highlighted, we can also find this similar tendency in the literature pertaining to offline sexual assault, where rape myths and rape

proclivity are traditionally associated (e.g, Abrams et al, 2003; Bohner et al., 2006; Bohner et al., 2009; Chiroro et al., 2004).

Study 3 enriched our understanding of this relationship between sexist attitudes against women gamers and the manifestation of sexist behaviors. Following an experimental approach, we created a hypothetical situation intended to amplify the potential for attitudes to serve as justifications for sexism against women gamers. As anticipated, we observed interaction effects between the anti-sexism position of the woman gamer (Yes vs. No) and the levels of sexism against women gamers (SAWG) among the study participants. In accordance with our hypotheses, we detected a heightened proclivity to commit sexist behaviors when the woman gamer explicitly expressed an anti-sexism position (H1), and when the participants presented higher scores on sexist attitudes against women gamers (H2). Remarkable, a statistically significant interaction between the anti-sexism position (Yes vs. No) of the woman gamer and SAWG scores emerged, suggesting that high level on sexism against women gamers exerted a significant influence on participants' proclivity when the woman gamer took an anti-sexism position (H3). This study contributes to an expanding body of literature that indicates how sexist attitudes are a useful tool for predicting proclivity, especially in offline research where hostile sexism is linked to rape proclivity (Masser et al., 2006) and the adherence to rape myths has been linked to the rationalization of sexually aggressive behavior (Bohner et al., 2009). These outcomes also reinforce the findings that underscore the resistance within the gaming community toward the feminist movement and individuals advocating feminist ideals (Chess & Shaw, 2015).

Furthermore, they extend the results provided by Bustos-Ortega et al. (2023) by incorporating data pertaining to the behavior of women gamers. In this regard, it is noteworthy to emphasize the similarity between research conducted in offline and online

contexts. Notably, studies have consistently shown that men with greater adherence to sexist attitudes report higher tendencies toward rape proclivity (e.g., Bohner et al., 2022; Romero-Sánchez et al., 2010; Süssenbach et al., 2013). Nevertheless, despite the similarities, our results are particularly relevant due to the unique online gaming environment in which they unfold. Importantly, our study reaffirms the behavioral function of sexist attitudes within the online gaming, wherein they serve as rationalizations for the sexist behaviors committed by men. To achieve this, it has been essential to analyze the specific dynamics that take place in online contexts that encourage, facilitate, and perpetuate sexism and harassment directed at women gamers (Henry & Powell, 2018).

Consequently, our results contribute to the emerging study of sexism in an online environment such as video games, where the growing participation of women gamers and the corresponding surge in sexist behaviors against them contextualize to this problem (Easpaig, 2018). These effects of sexist attitudes can be construed as a legitimization of the prevailing male power hierarchy, which necessitates constant defense and social validation to sustain its prominence (e.g., Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

While the integration of women into the world of video games emerged gradually, resulting in a substantial 46% women gamers worldwide, their participation has encountered resistance. Within the context of the patriarchal structure prevalent in the gamer community (Gray et al., 2017), women are conceived as potential disruptors of the established male-dominated status quo (Betts et al., 2019). In our research, women gamers represented a dual threat to the prevailing men gamer hegemony: their gender and their alignment with an anti-sexism position.

This problem is in line with previous research that shows the refusal of feminist ideology by the gamer community, expressing its hostility towards those women who make

visible the gender inequalities present in this context or who openly identify as feminists, labeling them as "feminist killjoys" (Braithwaite, 2014; Chess & Shaw, 2015).

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The present research has also certain limitations that should be taken into consideration. One such limitation pertains to the control participants responses. The use of online surveys inherently entails a degree of reduced control. Nevertheless, we attempted to minimize this issue by following the established recommendations of previous research (Teitcher et al., 2015; Yan & Tourangeau, 2008) for detecting response bias in online studies. This involved the incorporation of control attentional items throughout each study to identify random response patterns, scrutiny of participants' IP addresses to prevent duplicate responses, and analysis of response times to identify individuals who answered either too slowly or too quickly.

Another potential limitation revolves around the sincerity of participant responses, particularly when addressing sensitive topics such as admitting a willingness to engage in socially inappropriate behavior. It is conceivable that male participants, in an effort to preserve their self-image, may have attempted to conceal or falsify their answers. However, it is noteworthy that we did not detect significant social desirability effects, so it is plausible that the fictitious scenarios used in our research faithfully mirror the online gaming context. In this line, it is essential to acknowledge that scenario methodology does possess certain limitations concerning its external validity. The scenarios, being hypothetical and fictitious, may lack the realism and authenticity of interactions and situations present in actual online video games. To address this concern, we designed screenshots similar to those that could usually be found in the video game described in each scenario. This approach allowed for a more realistic simulation of the sexist behaviors experienced in online gaming. Nevertheless,

it is important that future research consider alternative methodologies, such as observing gamers' behavior in real-time gameplay, harnessing virtual reality technology to immerse participants and shape the natural mapping in online video games research (VR games), or capturing and subsequent analyzing data provided by the online game system (McCreery et al., 2012).

Despite these limitations, our research contributes valuable insights into the prevalence of online sexist incidents within a Spanish gaming community. Furthermore, our studies explore the relation between sexist attitudes against women gamers and the proclivity to commit sexist behaviors while playing online video games. Notably, and perhaps most relevant: a high level on sexism against women gamers significantly influenced participants' proclivity when they play with a woman who expressed an anti-sexism position. Future research should expand upon this topic, exploring it across different gaming genres, sexual minorities groups, and various types of behaviors. Additionally, the exploration of more potential predictors or moderators for these experiences is warranted, as well as further experimental investigations aimed at facilitating positive experiences and mitigating negative ones. Online video games have the potential to serve as positive and inclusive social spaces, and researchers may play a role in helping the online gaming community realize this potential.

Practice Implications

The present research underscores a series of relevant and practical implications. Firstly, our results reaffirm the prevalence of sexist experiences within online gaming, alongside the negative perceptions held by sexist men toward woman who is a gamer and, moreover, openly shows an anti-sexism position. In addition, this research extends the analysis of the influence of sexism into other areas, such as the online context. Although the

environment provided by video games may appear to be very different from the offline context, the findings of our studies show the similarity and significance that violence and sexism against women can have in any space. As shown in this research, it is essential to continue analyzing this type of social interaction, which occurs in the context of online video games, to dissuade the normalization of sexist attitudes and behaviors against women gamers. Otherwise, many women gamers will continue to be discriminated in this context and will continue to be forced to participate in a passive role, as reflected in the strategies used by the women gamers (seen in their testimonials from Study 1). Consequently, another important implication of this research is the urgent need to raise awareness about this problem and implement additional measures to make video games a safe space for women gamers and other discriminated groups (e.g., more efficient reporting systems, moderators who oversee not tolerate this type of sexist attitudes and behaviors...). Although men and women experience toxicity and performance pressure in online gaming communities, both experiences are different because the nature of them may differ. For this reason, it is important to implement design strategies that specifically facilitate the incursion of women players, in particular, to engage in social interactions in an inclusive gaming environment (Vella et al., 2020). In this sense, our findings could serve as valuable tools in programs aimed at preventing or modifying sexist attitudes. These programs can play a crucial role in raising awareness about gender inequality and the relevance of sexism within the sphere of video games.

Conclusion

The present research confirms the deep impact of sexist attitudes against women gamers on the proclivity of men to engage in sexist behaviors proclivity within the context of online video games. Through three studies, we have clarified the prevalence of such

behaviors and empirically examined the influence of a women gamer's behavior on proclivity, particularly her expression of an anti-sexism position. Furthermore, these results were moderated by the level of sexist attitudes against women gamers among the participating male gamers. Our findings indicate that there is still a worrying perception of women gamers within the gaming community, who are judged more harshly simply because of their gender and the feminist claims they may make. A more comprehensive understanding of these effects holds the potential to shed light on sexism as a phenomenon that makes the participation of women gamers nearly invisible. Continuing to advance in this line of research would contribute to reducing the perpetration of sexist behaviors and combating the normalization of gender stereotypes that persist, even in the present day, within the context of video games.

Declarations

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Conflicts of interest/Competing interests

The authors declare no financial or conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The procedures used in collection of data conform to current APA ethical standards for the protection of human subjects. All participants voluntarily participated in the survey and provided their informed consent at the beginning of the study. These procedures were in accordance with ethical standards of the University of Granada (#962/CEIH/2019).

Transparency on Material

We confirm that this article is original, and we also certify that the manuscript is not under review elsewhere and has not been previously published elsewhere in whole or in part.

Availability of data and material

The data that support the findings of this research are available upon request from the corresponding author.

Authors' contributions

All listed authors have agreed to manuscript authorship and the authorship order, and the corresponding author confirms that all who deserve authorship are listed. The authors made substantial contributions to the work including the study conception, design of the work, and interpretation of data. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Hypothetical scenarios administered in Study 2

Scenario 1. Alba, 25 years old, has been a keen video game player since her teenage years. Currently, League of Legends is the online game she dedicates most of her time to. One day, while in a game, Alba suggested a specific strategy to her teammates. However, when Iván realized she was a woman, he disregarded her suggestion and instead began explaining certain game rules to her.

Scenario 2. Ana is a student and a passionate video game enthusiast. While playing a group game of Valorant, she suggested a character distribution and a specific route on the map, but her teammate Javi decided to organize the agents according to his preferences and lead the team through a different area—a strategy the other players agreed with and followed.

Scenario 3. María is a female gamer who regularly plays video games. One day, while she was playing League of Legends, Miguel, a teammate, suggested laning with her because, in his opinion, "Girls need a man to lane with them to increase their chances of winning."

Scenario 4. Paula is a woman who frequently plays video games. In one of her recent online Valorant matches, Raúl, a teammate, jokingly commented: "Women don't know how to play real video games." Paula expressed her displeasure and told Raúl that she was tired of such jokes when playing with male teammates. However, Raúl and the other male gamers on the team mocked her frustration, responding with "You women are too sensitive."

Scenario 5. Marta is a regular player of online video games. In a game of Apex Legends, Jose, one of his teammates, took charge of the strategy and assigned Marta the support role of the game, reasoning that "she doesn't play as well as men" and adding that "you can learn from those who really play well."

Appendix B

Hypothetical scenarios adapted to the experimental manipulation in Study 3

Scenario 1. During an online game of League of Legends, Lucía asked her team if they agreed to organize a particular strategy. However, Javi disregarded her question solely because Lucía had asked it, and he began explaining certain game rules to her.

Scenario 2. While playing a group game of Valorant, Lucía suggested a character distribution and a specific route on the map, but Javi decided to organize the agents according to his preferences and lead the team through a different area. This strategy was accepted and followed by the other gamers.

Scenario 3. In the online game of Fornite, Javi jokingly told Lucía: “women don't know how to play real video games.” Lucía expressed her displeasure and told Javi that she was tired of such jokes, but Javi mocked her frustration, responding with: “You women are too sensitive.”

Scenario 4. During a game of Apex Legends, Javi took charge of the strategy and assigned Lucía the support role of the game, reasoning that “she still doesn't play as well as men,” and adding that “she can learn from those who really play well.”

Capítulo 6. Discusión general

Chapter 6. General discussion

Discusión general

La presente tesis doctoral se ha centrado en el análisis de las actitudes sexistas que sufren las mujeres que juegan habitualmente a videojuegos. Dada la escasez de evidencia científica previa con respecto a su evaluación y a los factores que refuerzan esta forma de discriminación tan relativamente reciente, resultaba esencial investigar esta problemática social que afecta directamente a las mujeres partícipes de este entorno. Los hallazgos presentados a lo largo de esta tesis muestran cómo la *Escala de Sexismo contra las Mujeres Gamers* (SAWGS) es un instrumento adecuado para evaluar este tipo de actitudes, lo que contribuye al avance en la comprensión del sexismo arraigado en el ámbito de los videojuegos.

En esta línea, y de acuerdo con el contexto teórico y empírico proporcionado en los capítulos iniciales de esta tesis, el sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* es un fenómeno complejo que alberga creencias y manifestaciones discriminatorias tan específicas como comentarios que cuestionan la habilidad de las mujeres para jugar a videojuegos, actos de ciberviolencia durante las partidas *online*, así como juicios sobre la supuesta utilización del atractivo sexual como una potencial estrategia de juego (e.g., Fox & Potocki, 2016; McCullough et al., 2020; Ruvalcava et al., 2018; Vergel et al., 2023). En consecuencia, resulta evidente cómo estas actitudes favorecen y perpetúan la discriminación de género, generando una comunidad *gamer* caracterizada por un ambiente hostil y excluyente hacia las mujeres (Amores, 2023; Buyukozturk, 2022; Chess & Shaw, 2015). A los problemas que las mujeres se encuentran para entrar en el medio, también se les suman las dificultades que tienen para prosperar dentro de la industria una vez consiguen entrar (Amores, 2018), algo que no se diferencia del sexismo que también prevalece en otros entornos laborales (Becker et al., 2014, Dray & Sabat, 2022; Vergel et al., 2023). De esta manera, y aunque el sexismo es una

problemática predominante en múltiples ámbitos de la sociedad, se ha remarcado cómo su prevalencia es especialmente notoria en el entorno de los videojuegos *online*, generando numerosas consecuencias negativas sobre las mujeres (Cary, 2017; McLean & Griffiths, 2019; Vergel et al., 2023).

Debido a la discriminación existente y a la creciente necesidad de analizar la situación de la mujer en este ámbito, la presente tesis doctoral ha pretendido analizar en profundidad la magnitud con la que se manifiesta el sexismo hacia las mujeres *gamers*. Se partió de la premisa inicial de elaborar un instrumento específico, conciso y psicométricamente adecuado que evaluara las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres en el ámbito de los videojuegos, ya que se trata de un contexto cuyas particularidades van más allá de las escalas actuales que evalúan sexismo y que han sido utilizadas tradicionalmente en investigaciones sobre esta temática (e.g., Fox & Potocki, 2016; McCullough et al., 2020). Teniendo en cuenta dichas limitaciones metodológicas previas y la falta de funcionalidad de otros instrumentos para evaluar este tipo de actitudes en un dominio tan específico como el de los videojuegos, esta tesis doctoral ha intentado solventar esa carencia en la literatura científica a través de un total de diez estudios, desarrollados a lo largo de su parte empírica.

Los cinco primeros estudios se centraron en la conceptualización y evaluación del constructo «sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers*» a través del desarrollo de un instrumento de evaluación específico que permitiera evaluar de forma rigurosa las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers* en el contexto de los videojuegos (SAWGS, *Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale*; Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023). La consecución de este primer objetivo general de la presente tesis doctoral se materializó a lo largo de una primera serie empírica de estudios no experimentales. Primeramente, utilizando los datos cualitativos de plataformas web, entrevistas con jugadores/as y evaluaciones cuantitativas de expertos/as, se

elaboró la definición del constructo «sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers*» y se desarrolló una primera batería de ítems para su evaluación. Con el objetivo de analizarlos empíricamente, así como estudiar la estructura interna de las puntuaciones, se planteó un primer estudio exploratorio con los ítems iniciales obtenidos en esas fases preliminares de desarrollo. Tras analizar la estructura interna del instrumento, a través de la evaluación de sus propiedades psicométricas, se propuso una escala breve de 8 ítems que constató la entidad empírica del sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* y su diferenciación con otras manifestaciones de sexismo (i.e., sexismo hostil y sexismo benévolo), tanto en su versión original en español como en su versión posteriormente traducida al inglés. Su brevedad está sustentada en propuestas recientes que apoyan la idoneidad de desarrollar escalas cortas para evaluar constructos psicológicos (Coelho et al., 2018a; 2018b), en comparación con las medidas tradicionalmente utilizadas para evaluar el sexismo. De hecho, aporta una serie de ventajas como es el hecho de requerir un menor tiempo de administración, o proporcionar una evaluación específica de estas actitudes sexistas presentes en el ámbito de los videojuegos (e.g., Inventario de Sexismo Ambivalente, Glick & Fiske, 1996; Internalized Misogyny Scale, IMS; Piggot, 2004). Asimismo, se confirmó su estructura unidimensional, tal y como demostraron los análisis factoriales exploratorios (EFAs) y confirmatorios (CFAs) realizados en otras cuatro muestras de jugadores/as de España (Estudios 2 y 3) y Estados Unidos (Estudios 4 y 5). La escala SAWGS mantuvo una estructura estable y una elevada consistencia interna de las puntuaciones en las primeras cinco muestras utilizadas (α entre .78 y .86). Además, una vez desarrollada la versión inglesa de la escala, las pruebas de invarianza por género mostraron que la escala era invariante en los niveles configural, métrico y escalar, siéndolo a nivel configural entre países (España y Estados Unidos). Aunque podemos concluir que la definición del constructo es similar en ambos países, es posible que existan diferencias

culturales específicas en la comprensión de los ítems o en las diferentes representaciones de la variable latente, algo que ayudaría a explicar los resultados obtenidos a nivel métrico y a nivel escalar.

Con el fin de obtener las primeras fuentes de evidencias externas de la validez de las puntuaciones, se analizó la relación entre el sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* y otras variables actitudinales de interés a través del Estudio 2 y del Estudio 3. Se obtuvieron correlaciones positivas con otros constructos similares, como el sexismo hostil, el sexismo benévolo, la orientación a la dominancia social o el apoyo hacia los mitos sobre la violencia de género (Hipótesis 1a), además de mostrarse independiente de la deseabilidad social (Hipótesis 1b) y de correlacionar negativamente con la adhesión a la identidad feminista (Hipótesis 1c), tanto en muestras españolas como estadounidenses. Estos hallazgos fueron consistentes con investigaciones anteriores, tanto en el ámbito *offline*, que muestran una marcada relación negativa entre las actitudes sexistas y la identidad feminista (e.g., Riquelme et al., 2021), como en el ámbito *online*, en el que actitudes como el sexismo hostil y la orientación a la dominancia social se han relacionado con la práctica de conductas sexistas (e.g., Fox & Tang, 2017) y con una mayor misoginia (Blackburn & Scharrer, 2019; McCullough et al., 2020). Por otra parte, las puntuaciones en SAWGS fueron significativamente más altas para los hombres que para las mujeres en todas las muestras, siendo también consistente con hallazgos previos de otros estudios relacionados (e.g., Fox et al., 2015; Glick et al., 2000).

Atendiendo a la posible relación entre el sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* y la percepción social de incidentes de índole sexista en el contexto de videojuegos (Estudio 2 y Estudio 3), se examinó la relación entre estas actitudes y variables relevantes en el contexto de videojuegos *online*, como el castigo propuesto contra los jugadores tóxicos y la percepción

de minimización de los incidentes sexistas ocurridos. Se encontró que las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers* influían en la valoración realizada sobre un incidente sexista ocurrido en una partida de videojuegos *online*. A través de dos escenarios hipotéticos que describían un incidente sexista en el que un grupo de jugadores denigraban a su compañera durante una partida, se evaluaba el castigo propuesto contra esos jugadores y la posible minimización del incidente ocurrido. Los resultados mostraron que las puntuaciones de los participantes en sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* correlacionaban positivamente con la minimización de un incidente sexista y negativamente con el castigo propuesto contra los jugadores que proferieron comentarios sexistas, lo que brindó una nueva fuente de evidencia sobre la validez externa de las puntuaciones de la escala. En cuanto a los hallazgos de validez incremental, las puntuaciones en SAWGS predijeron tanto la minimización como el castigo hacia los jugadores más allá de la varianza explicada por otras medidas actitudinales relevantes en este entorno, como las medidas de sexismo tradicional (i.e., Inventario de Sexismo Ambivalente, Ideología de Género Tradicional), las tendencias de agresión y la orientación a la dominancia social, con resultados similares tanto en Estados Unidos como en España. En este sentido, SAWGS serviría para complementar las medidas generales de sexismo previamente existentes debido a su especificidad, ya que incluye elementos característicos del contexto de videojuegos *online* no considerados anteriormente por otros instrumentos de evaluación.

En resumen, los resultados obtenidos en estos cinco primeros estudios han contribuido significativamente a la comprensión y medición del constructo «sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers*», una forma de discriminación hacia las mujeres tradicionalmente arraigada en nuestra sociedad que, sin embargo, presenta particularidades únicas dado el contexto tan innovador en el que se produce.

Una vez alcanzada la consecución del primer objetivo general de la presente tesis doctoral, se pretendió abordar el segundo objetivo, es decir, analizar el papel que desempeñan las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers* en la percepción de incidentes sexistas en el contexto de los videojuegos *online*, ya sea a la hora de juzgarlos (i.e., función cognitiva de las actitudes) o como precursoras de comportamientos sexistas (i.e., función comportamental), siguiendo una metodología experimental en la que se manipularon variables situacionales relevantes en este contexto. Para la consecución de este segundo objetivo se elaboraron dos series experimentales de estudios. La primera serie experimental confirmó la función cognitiva de las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers*. De esta forma, se corroboró la influencia de la adhesión feminista expresada por una jugadora (Estudio 6) y del tipo de acción colectiva por la igualdad de género (Estudio 7) sobre la percepción de un incidente sexista ocurrido durante una partida de videojuego *online*. Concretamente, en el Estudio 6, pese a no encontrar un efecto principal significativo de la adhesión feminista de la jugadora (donde se manipulaba su pertenencia a una asociación feminista de videojuegos) en la culpabilización de la víctima (Hipótesis 2), los participantes con mayores puntuaciones en sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* culpabilizaron en mayor medida a la jugadora víctima de un incidente sexista (Hipótesis 3), de acuerdo con los estudios correlacionales realizados previamente (Bustos-Ortega et al., 2023). El hecho de que la víctima perteneciera (o no) a una asociación feminista de videojuegos no generó por sí mismo un efecto en la percepción de los participantes. Sin embargo, cuando se tuvieron en cuenta sus actitudes, la adhesión feminista de la jugadora adquirió relevancia. Por lo tanto, dicha adhesión tuvo un efecto en la percepción social del incidente sexista cuando los participantes eran sexistas, lo que enfatiza la importancia de tener en cuenta simultáneamente tanto los factores individuales (i.e., actitudes sexistas hacia las jugadoras)

como los factores situacionales (i.e., adherencia feminista) a la hora de comprender las respuestas de los/as participantes. Este hallazgo es consistente con la literatura previa sobre la percepción social de la violencia contra las mujeres en el contexto *offline*, que ha demostrado que la mera presencia de variables contextuales (i.e., características de la víctima o del agresor) no siempre conduce a un efecto directo sobre la percepción del incidente (e.g., Temkin & Krahé, 2008; Vidal-Fernández & Megías, 2014). Estos estudios revelaron que, en esta línea, lo que resulta necesario es que los perceptores mantengan una serie de creencias y actitudes (en este caso, actuarían las actitudes sexistas hacia las jugadoras). De hecho, tal y como se hipotetizó, el sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* actuó como moderador en la relación entre las variables mencionadas y la percepción social de este tipo de incidentes sexistas (Hipótesis 4). Los resultados obtenidos son consistentes con investigaciones previas que han revelado que parte de la comunidad *gamer* percibe a las mujeres feministas como intencionalmente disruptivas y dañinas para la imagen prototípica del jugador masculino (Chess & Shaw, 2015; Vermeulen et al., 2017). Como también sostiene recientemente Amores en su libro *Play Like a Girl* (2023), la industria de los videojuegos muestra habitualmente una clara resistencia y hostilidad ante la presencia e inclusión de las mujeres, tanto en la experiencia de juego como en sus prácticas laborales, pero especialmente ante aquellas que lo hacen desde una perspectiva feminista y que, por tanto, no se adaptan al *status quo* imperante. Una idea que también defendía Chess en su obra *Play Like a Feminist* (2020), para la que jugar siendo feminista «es una práctica disruptiva que empodera y perturba al resto al exceder los límites de género tradicionalmente establecidos» (Chess, 2020, p. 27).

Retomando los hallazgos obtenidos en el apartado empírico, en el Estudio 7 se pudieron corroborar los resultados obtenidos en el estudio anterior. Específicamente, la jugadora que realizaba acciones colectivas no normativas como miembro de una asociación

feminista de videojuegos fue culpabilizada en mayor medida por sufrir un incidente sexista, en comparación a una jugadora que realizase acciones normativas o ninguna acción (Hipótesis 5). De forma análoga al estudio anterior, también los que puntuaron más alto en sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* fueron los que más culpabilizaron a la jugadora víctima del incidente sexista (Hipótesis 6). Además, se volvió a obtener un efecto de interacción, en el que los participantes con mayores puntuaciones en sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* culpabilizaron en mayor medida a la jugadora que realizaba acciones colectivas no normativas (vs. normativas) por la igualdad de género (Hipótesis 7). Ambos estudios volvieron a evidenciar la influencia de que una jugadora sea descrita como feminista a la hora de culpabilizarla por recibir comentarios sexistas tras perder una partida, reflejando, además, la importancia del papel moderador del sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* en la percepción social de incidentes sexistas en videojuegos *online*. En esta línea, y en consonancia con la literatura previa (Shuman et al., 2020; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2008), las acciones colectivas no normativas suelen ser percibidas como formas de actuación extremas y socialmente inapropiadas (Tausch et al., 2011). Es por ello por lo que este tipo de acciones influirían en la percepción de culpabilización de la víctima en aquellas personas con mayores creencias sexistas. Es decir, aquellas personas con mayores puntuaciones en sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* probablemente perciban de forma más negativa el hecho de que una mujer jugadora y feminista realice también conductas no normativas por la igualdad de género en el ámbito de los videojuegos. Esto los llevaría a castigarla y culpabilizarla más por el incidente sexista sufrido y, por tanto, les generaría un mayor rechazo hacia el feminismo, como ya suele ocurrir de forma inherente en la comunidad *gamer* (Amores, 2023; Chess & Shaw, 2015).

Por su parte, la segunda serie de estudios experimentales confirmó el papel predictor de las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers* en la proclividad a ejercer comportamientos sexistas por parte de jugadores masculinos en un contexto de videojuegos *online* (i.e., función comportamental de las actitudes). Dado que hasta la fecha no se habían investigado de manera exhaustiva su prevalencia en el ámbito *gamer*, el primer paso consistió en estudiar dicha prevalencia para posteriormente desarrollar una medida de proclividad a ejercer comportamientos sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers*. De esta forma, mediante metodología de escenarios, y basándonos en las conductas sexistas más frecuentes informadas por jugadoras en el estudio de prevalencia previo, se analizó la influencia del sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* en la proclividad que muestran los jugadores masculinos a ejercer comportamientos sexistas contra ellas.

Los resultados del Estudio 8 confirmaron la existencia y prevalencia de experiencias negativas para aquellas mujeres que juegan a videojuegos *online*, de acuerdo con la literatura previa (e.g., Fox & Tang, 2017; McLean & Griffiths, 2019). Específicamente, más del 20% de las jugadoras entrevistadas respondieron que sufrían estos comportamientos al menos una o dos veces al mes. Además, más del 30% de las participantes consideró que los jugadores masculinos restan importancia a las experiencias que ellas sufren habitualmente mientras juegan. Estos primeros hallazgos permitieron corroborar la especificidad de los comportamientos negativos sufridos habitualmente por las jugadoras, estableciendo, además, un punto de partida en la investigación sobre la tendencia a realizar este tipo de conductas contra las jugadoras, en analogía con las investigaciones pertenecientes al ámbito *offline* (e.g., estudios centrados en agresión sexual; Abrams et al., 2003; Bohner et al., 2022).

Los resultados del Estudio 9 (Muestra 1) demostraron nuevamente la elevada frecuencia de situaciones sexistas sufridas por las jugadoras. Además, la obtención de las

situaciones más prevalentes permitió la creación de una medida de proclividad a ejercer este tipo de comportamientos sexistas, utilizando para ello una metodología de escenarios, ampliamente usada en contextos de investigación *offline* (e.g., Abrams et al., 2003; Bieneck & Krahé, 2011; Bouffard & Miller, 2023; Eyssel & Bohner, 2011; Persson & Dhingra, 2022; Romero-Sánchez et al., 2018; Sáez et al., 2020; Temkin & Krahé, 2008). Los escenarios incluidos en esta medida de proclividad fueron percibidos como representativos y frecuentes, así como claramente sexistas. No obstante, el hallazgo más significativo fue corroborar la relación positiva entre la proclividad a realizar comportamientos sexistas por parte de los hombres *gamers* y su adhesión a actitudes sexistas (Estudio 9, Muestra 2). Como mencionábamos anteriormente, estos resultados irían en la misma dirección que estudios previos realizados en el ámbito *offline*, en los que también se analizó la relación entre actitudes sexistas y la proclividad a cometer agresiones sexuales (e.g., Abrams et al., 2003; Masser et al., 2006).

Partiendo de la idea de que las actitudes justificadoras de la violencia emergen especialmente en aquellas situaciones en las que las mujeres realizan conductas que desafían sus roles tradicionales de género, como es el caso de mujeres que confrontan actos sexistas o que defienden explícitamente un posicionamiento anti-sexista (e.g., Czopp et al., 2006; Diebels & Czopp, 2011; Shelton & Stewards, 2006), se analizó si esa tendencia también estaría presente en el contexto *gamer* cuando las jugadoras mostrasen una clara oposición al sexismo ante las discriminaciones que sufren habitualmente (Amores, 2023). En este sentido, el Estudio 10 proporcionó información adicional sobre la relación existente entre el sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* y los comportamientos sexistas que padecen, confirmando de nuevo las hipótesis planteadas. En particular, los hallazgos obtenidos revelaron que los hombres *gamers* tienden a comportarse de forma sexista durante una partida *online* cuando

las jugadoras expresan explícitamente su oposición al sexismo (en comparación a cuando no lo hacen) (Hipótesis 8). Además, corroborando los resultados del estudio anterior, aquellos jugadores masculinos con mayores puntuaciones en sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* también mostraron una mayor proclividad a comportarse de esa forma (Hipótesis 9). Como también se esperaba, se obtuvo una interacción estadísticamente significativa entre el posicionamiento anti-sexista de la jugadora y el sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* (Hipótesis 10), lo que sugiere que una mayor adhesión a estas creencias sexistas afectó a la proclividad de los hombres *gamers*, especialmente cuando la jugadora manifestaba su oposición al sexismo.

Estos resultados refuerzan nuevamente la importancia de considerar las variables actitudinales y factores situacionales a la hora de comprender las posibles conductas sexistas de los hombres *gamers*. En esta línea, resulta evidente que las mujeres representan una doble amenaza para los jugadores: por una parte, debido al hecho de ser una mujer y, por otra parte, por ser una jugadora que, además, expresa abiertamente una posición anti-sexista en el contexto de los videojuegos. Estos hallazgos se vinculan, una vez más, con investigaciones previas que manifiestan una evidente hostilidad por parte de la comunidad *gamer* hacia movimientos feministas y hacia las mujeres que los respaldan (Amores, 2023; Braithwaite, 2014; Burgess et al., 2017; Chess & Shaw, 2015). Concretamente, se confirma el rechazo hacia posicionamientos igualitarios y hacia aquellas mujeres que visibilizan las desigualdades de género presentes en este ámbito, a las que, incluso, se las ha etiquetado habitualmente de forma despectiva como «aguafiestas», «feminazis» o «SJW» (siglas de *Social Justice Warrior*; Braithwaite, 2014; Uttarapong et al., 2020).

Limitaciones e investigaciones futuras

Pese a la relevancia de la investigación realizada en la presente tesis doctoral, en la que proporcionamos un instrumento de evaluación adecuado para medir un constructo hasta ahora inexplorado como ha sido el «sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers*», cabe destacar una serie de limitaciones. En primer lugar, la forma de administración de los estudios de la presente tesis ha sido vía *online* a través del uso de plataformas de encuestas (i.e., Qualtrics). Aunque esta vía es la más adecuada y predominantemente utilizada en la investigación referente a videojuegos y entornos *online* (ESA, 2022; Griffiths, 2010; ISFE, 2021), su uso puede incurrir en un menor control en las respuestas de los/as participantes. No obstante, en todos los estudios realizados se han incluido elementos de control para minimizar esta limitación. Tal y como recomiendan investigaciones previas sobre la detección de sesgos de respuesta en estudios *online* (Rogelberg & Stanton, 2007; Teitcher et al., 2015; Yan & Tourangeau, 2008), hemos intercalado ítems de control atencional para identificar patrones de respuesta aleatorios, hemos analizado la dirección IP de cada participante para evitar respuestas duplicadas y hemos examinado el tiempo de respuesta de cada participante para identificar posibles patrones de respuesta automáticos.

En cuanto a las respuestas de los/as participantes, una limitación a destacar es el nivel de sinceridad en sus respuestas. Sin embargo, a lo largo de los estudios no encontramos efectos de deseabilidad social. Es posible que esta limitación también se haya atenuado debido a que los escenarios ficticios utilizados hayan sido recreados de la forma más realista posible al contexto del videojuego *online* empleado, tal y como también reflejaban los/as participantes en sus respuestas sobre la percepción de representatividad de los mismos.

Por otro lado, la metodología de escenarios, pese a ser una técnica ampliamente utilizada en la investigación psicosocial a la hora de plantear manipulaciones experimentales

(e.g., Bieneck & Krahé, 2011; Eyssel & Böhner, 2011; Temkin & Krahé, 2008), cuenta con ciertas limitaciones relacionadas con su validez externa que podrían restar credibilidad a la información presentada en nuestros estudios (e.g., artificialidad de los escenarios al ser situaciones hipotéticas ficticias o una posible falta de realismo en los elementos presentados en la manipulación, ya que no es posible describir interacciones o situaciones que incluyan todos los aspectos presentes en un videojuego *online* real). No obstante, esto se ha intentado mitigar diseñando capturas de pantalla similares a las que habitualmente se pueden encontrar en el videojuego utilizado para cada estudio, simulando fielmente las interacciones que podrían darse en cualquier partida *online*. Igualmente, en futuras investigaciones se deberían tener en cuenta otros métodos, como el comportamiento de los jugadores en un juego en tiempo real, el uso de tecnología de realidad virtual para dar forma al mapeo natural en la investigación de videojuegos *online* (videojuegos VR) o el registro y posterior análisis de los datos proporcionados por la interfaz del sistema de juego (McCreery et al., 2012). También sería preferible utilizar en futuros estudios otras medidas de deseabilidad social o un enfoque test-retest a la hora de analizar la fiabilidad de las puntuaciones, ya que la Escala de Deseabilidad Social utilizada en nuestros estudios (SDS, Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Ferrando & Chico, 2000) no supera el límite recomendado de .70.

Por último, las investigaciones futuras deberían tener en cuenta la problemática identificada en esta tesis doctoral para continuar el estudio del sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* en otros grupos de edad o minorías étnicas y sexuales. Utilizar muestras de adolescentes permitiría detectar la presencia de este sexismo específico en edades más tempranas, con el objetivo de concienciar y visibilizar la discriminación que aún sufren las mujeres en este entorno. La inclusión y representación de minorías sexuales y de género también podría ser de gran interés en la medida en que tampoco han sido tradicionalmente

identificadas con el prototipo de jugador. Por todo ello, será primordial recopilar esta información y explorar la invariancia de nuestra medida para determinar hasta qué punto nuestros hallazgos pueden generalizarse a diferentes grupos de población.

Siguiendo en esta dirección, futuras investigaciones también podrían profundizar de manera sistemática en los aspectos transculturales relacionados con las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers*, extendiendo la posible adaptación y validación de este instrumento de evaluación a un conjunto más amplio de países, además de la versión inglesa desarrollada con muestra estadounidense. Es relevante destacar que esta línea de estudio ya se está abordando en diferentes grupos de investigación, como es el caso de la Universidad de Dalhousie (Canadá) o de la adaptación al alemán iniciada en la Universidad de Münster (Alemania).

Por otra parte, y dada la prevalencia de experiencias sexistas sufridas por las jugadoras dentro de videojuegos *online*, también será importante investigar cómo las mujeres experimentan y afrontan este tipo de comportamientos que sufren habitualmente mientras juegan. De hecho, la posibilidad de evaluar este constructo de forma adecuada y rigurosa permitirá establecer conclusiones oportunas sobre su prevalencia real, además de que sus manifestaciones sean integradas en modelos que puedan predecir consecuencias negativas para las mujeres *gamers*. Debido a la importancia que tienen las variables ideológicas o las creencias previas de cada persona a la hora de procesar este tipo de situaciones, será importante analizar si las actitudes sexistas también juegan un papel moderador, tal y como hemos sostenido a lo largo de esta tesis doctoral. Indagar en más predictores o moderadores potenciales para estas experiencias y continuar en esta línea de estudios experimentales será clave para determinar las consecuencias de este sexismo para las jugadoras, favoreciendo que los videojuegos *online* se conviertan en espacios sociales más positivos e inclusivos.

Implicaciones prácticas

La presente tesis doctoral conlleva una serie de implicaciones prácticas relevantes en el campo de estudio de los videojuegos. En primer lugar, este trabajo ha establecido los primeros pasos sobre el estudio de las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers*. El desarrollo de la *Escala de Sexismo contra las Mujeres Gamers* (SAWGS) proporciona una medida psicométrica adecuada para un nuevo ámbito de investigación tan prometedor como son los videojuegos *online*, cuya repercusión ha generado un profundo impacto en la forma en la que las personas se conectan e interactúan a nivel global (AEVI, 2023; ESA, 2022; ISFE, 2021; Newzoo, 2022). De igual modo, este instrumento de evaluación llena un vacío existente en la investigación sobre el sexismo que tiene lugar en ese entorno, siendo útil, además, para establecer diferencias con otras formas de sexismo más tradicionales y, por ende, proporcionar una comprensión más profunda de este fenómeno. La existencia de esta escala será de gran utilidad para investigadores/as que quieran centrar sus estudios en este ámbito, permitiendo investigar cómo se relaciona el respaldo de los/as *gamers* hacia estas actitudes sexistas con otros factores relacionados (i.e., percepción de las víctimas y sus perpetradores, proclividad a ejercer comportamientos sexistas, consecuencias del sexismo para las jugadoras que lo sufren, etc.).

En este sentido, los resultados obtenidos en la presente tesis doctoral amplían el análisis de la influencia del sexismo a nuevos entornos, como es el caso del contexto *online*. Aunque el entorno de los videojuegos pueda parecer muy diferente del ámbito *offline* en el que interactuamos habitualmente, los hallazgos obtenidos muestran la similitud y el alcance que la violencia, la discriminación y el sexismo contra las mujeres pueden tener en cualquier entorno. De hecho, muchas jugadoras afirman habitualmente que el sexismo es el principal obstáculo para ejercer una participación activa en los videojuegos (Fox & Tang, 2014;

Ruvalcaba et al., 2018). Esta tesis subraya la importancia de visibilizar esta discriminación, ya que los hallazgos aportados proporcionarán un mayor conocimiento sobre el sexismo sufrido por las mujeres en general y en el mundo de los videojuegos en particular, contribuyendo a percibir el sexismo como un fenómeno que silencia las experiencias de las jugadoras.

En consecuencia, visibilizar la problemática que sufren las jugadoras podría fomentar varias líneas de acción a considerar. Por un lado, el hecho de seguir investigando las interacciones sexistas producidas en el contexto de videojuegos *online* favorecería la creación de campañas más eficaces y realistas sobre la concienciación y visibilización del sexismo existente en este ámbito. Además, una mayor implicación y apoyo institucional e industrial por parte de las plataformas, empresas y desarrolladoras de videojuegos podría disuadir la normalización de ese tipo de actitudes y comportamientos con la puesta en marcha de medidas adicionales más eficientes para hacer de los videojuegos un espacio más seguro para las jugadoras y otros grupos sociales discriminados (e.g., sistemas automatizados de denuncia o *player ban system*, moderadores/as que censurasen este tipo de actitudes y comportamientos sexistas, etc.). Como señalan investigaciones previas, aprender sobre los estereotipos de roles de género se asocia con mayores sentimientos de autoeficacia en las mujeres (Zawadzki et al., 2012). Dado que los videojuegos se consideran desde hace tiempo una herramienta educativa eficaz (Ho et al., 2022) y, además, tienen implicaciones prácticas de gran alcance, el hecho de jugar a videojuegos en un entorno de concienciación puede reducir también los prejuicios en sus propias relaciones sociales (Schrier, 2018) y favorecería que las jugadoras se sintiesen más seguras mientras juegan.

Por otro lado, las implicaciones de esta tesis pueden extenderse a la educación y la intervención social de esta problemática a través de la implementación de programas de

prevención y modificación de actitudes sexistas, además de favorecer la sensibilización en cuanto a la discriminación de género y a la gravedad del sexismo en todas sus formas. Por ejemplo, SAWGS puede ser una herramienta muy útil en programas centrados en la prevención del sexismo, utilizada, por ejemplo, para evaluar la eficacia de la modificación de estas actitudes. Asimismo, una intervención eficaz se basará también en ofrecer estrategias dirigidas a reducir el sexismo cotidiano, a fomentar la comprensión sobre las actitudes sexistas, a concienciar sobre la prevalencia actual de estas creencias y a educar sobre las consecuencias acaecidas en los contextos *offline* y *online* (Becker & Swim, 2011). En un entorno virtual que refleja los problemas del mundo real, la inclusión y la diversidad hacia cualquier jugador o jugadora son elementos claves para promover una cultura de respeto en la comunidad *gamer*. No podemos entender el acto de jugar a videojuegos como una actividad aislada, sino como una cultura que se extiende mucho más allá de una pantalla (Crawford, 2012). Jugar es también una identidad y una práctica fundamentalmente social, por lo que los videojuegos constituirán una pieza clave del cambio estructural necesario para que las mujeres puedan sentirse libres y seguras.

Conclusiones

A lo largo de estas páginas se ha avanzado en la comprensión y en la medición de un nuevo constructo, escasamente explorado hasta la fecha en la literatura científica. Los distintos apartados y estudios empíricos que componen la presente tesis doctoral respaldan la importancia y la entidad del constructo «sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers*» como objeto relevante de estudio. Su operativización, evaluación y diferenciación frente a otros constructos similares se han sustentado mediante el desarrollo de la *Escala de Sexismo contra las Mujeres Gamers* (SAWGS). Nuestros hallazgos muestran que SAWGS es un instrumento adecuado para medir las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres que juegan habitualmente a

videojuegos en un contexto *online*. En primer lugar, hemos aportado evidencias sobre su estructura interna y la validez externa de sus puntuaciones, así como la invarianza de la medida y la adecuada fiabilidad de estas puntuaciones en muestras independientes, tanto en España como en Estados Unidos. En segundo lugar, hemos demostrado empíricamente que las personas con un mayor respaldo hacia las actitudes sexistas contra las mujeres *gamers* son más sexistas, apoyan en menor medida la ideología feminista y, en ciertos casos, minimizan los incidentes sexistas ocurridos en videojuegos *online*, respaldando castigos menos severos hacia los jugadores que infrinjan comentarios sexistas contra las jugadoras. En tercer lugar, hemos confirmado la relevancia de este tipo de actitudes en la percepción social de los incidentes sexistas que sufren las mujeres mientras juegan *online*, mostrando la influencia de ciertas características de una jugadora a la hora de establecer esos juicios (i.e., ser feminista y realizar acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género en los videojuegos). Por último, hemos contrastado la prevalencia de los comportamientos sexistas más habituales ejercidos por los hombres *gamers*, ratificando también cómo la posición igualitaria de una jugadora influye en la proclividad de los jugadores masculinos a cometer actos sexistas. En esta línea, también corroboramos el papel moderador del sexismo contra las mujeres *gamers* a la hora de analizar dicha proclividad, siendo los jugadores masculinos con mayores puntuaciones en SAWGS aquellos que mostraron una mayor tendencia a comportarse de forma sexista con otras jugadoras al jugar *online*.

En definitiva, todos estos hallazgos sugieren que todavía existe una percepción preocupante de las jugadoras dentro de la comunidad *gamer*, siendo invisibilizadas, culpabilizadas y juzgadas con mayor dureza simplemente por su género y, en ocasiones, también por el apoyo que muestran hacia una ideología más igualitaria. Considerando que este entorno sigue ganando una creciente relevancia social, las evidencias aportadas en esta

tesis doctoral abren nuevas vías para comprender los efectos del sexismo en entornos *online*, siendo el punto de partida para fomentar una cultura de juego verdaderamente inclusiva. Desafiar la tendencia generalizada de culpar y estigmatizar a las mujeres, sin importar cuál sea el ámbito, será crucial para evitar la normalización de esta desigualdad de género tan persistente en nuestra sociedad.



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Material suplementario

Supplemental material

Material suplementario del Capítulo 3

*Supplemental material for Chapter 3***Table S1***Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants in Samples 1 to 5*

	Sample 1		Sample 2		Sample 3		Sample 4		Sample 5	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender										
Women	191	31.9	207	43.2	201	48.3	254	49.8	216	49.4
Men	408	68.1	272	56.8	215	51.7	252	50.2	221	50.6
Sexual orientation										
Straight	432	72.1	341	71.2	274	65.9	374	73.9	301	68.9
Gay/Lesbian	48	8.0	26	5.4	32	7.7	26	5.1	27	6.2
Bisexual	101	16.9	100	20.9	101	24.3	89	17.6	70	16.0
Other	18	3.0	12	2.5	9	2.2	17	3.4	39	8.9
Highest educational level										
Primary	4	0.7	4	0.8	4	1.0	25	5.0	28	6.4
Secondary	343	57.3	271	56.5	207	49.7	81	16.0	87	19.9
Higher-University	252	42.0	204	42.6	205	49.3	400	79.1	322	73.7
Time spent playing video games										
1-5 h per week	155	25.9	114	23.8	116	27.8	157	31.0	148	33.9
6-10 h per week	158	26.4	118	24.6	93	22.4	137	27.1	102	23.3
10-20 h per week	168	28.0	128	26.7	108	26.0	119	23.5	100	22.9
> 20 h per week	118	19.7	119	24.8	94	23.8	93	18.3	87	20.0

Note. Sample 1, $N = 599$; Sample 2, $N = 479$; Sample 3, $N = 416$; Sample 4, $N = 506$; Sample 5, $N = 437$.

Table S2*CVI and Kappa values for each item of SAWGS*

SAWGS	Relevance			Representativeness			Comprehensiveness			Interpretation			Clarity		
Items	I-CVI	p_c	k^*	I-CVI	p_c	k^*	I-CVI	p_c	k^*	I-CVI	p_c	k^*	I-CVI	p_c	k^*
1	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00
2	0.86	.055	0.85	1.00	.008	0.85	1.00	.008	1.00	0.86	.055	0.85	0.86	.055	0.85
3	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00
4	0.71	.164	0.65	0.86	.055	0.85	1.00	.008	1.00	0.71	.164	0.65	0.71	.164	0.65
5	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	0.86	.055	0.85	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00
6	1.00	.008	1.00	0.71	.164	0.65	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00
7	0.86	.055	0.85	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00
8	1.00	.008	1.00	0.86	.055	0.85	1.00	.008	1.00	0.86	.055	0.85	0.86	.055	0.85
9	0.86	.055	0.85	0.57	.280	0.40	0.86	.055	0.85	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00
10	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00
11	0.86	.055	0.85	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00
12	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00
13	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00
14	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	0.86	.055	0.85
15	1.00	.008	1.00	0.86	.055	0.85	0.86	.055	0.85	1.00	.008	1.00	0.86	.055	0.85
16	1.00	.008	1.00	0.86	.055	0.85	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	0.86	.055	0.85
17	0.86	.055	0.85	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00	1.00	.008	1.00

Note 1. CVI: average score of the values of the Content Validity Index; p_c : probability of agreement by chance; k^* : modified kappa coefficient obtained by all the agreements; the standards described in Fleiss (1981) and Cicchetti and Sparrow (1981) are assessment criteria of k^* , being > 0.74 excellent; $0.61-0.74$ good; $0.42-0.60$ moderate; < 0.41 light/bad, as cited in Polit, D. F., Beck, C. T., & Owen, S. V. (2007). Is the CVI an acceptable indicator of content validity? Appraisal and recommendations. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 30(4), 459–467 (<https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.20199>).

Note 2. We decided to keep the items 4, 6, and 9 despite CVIs below .80 and/or Kappa below .60. This decision was made because we considered it important to agree with the experts' majority opinion: they considered more appropriate to combine two of the content areas ("extreme sensitivity of women gamers" and "minimization of aggressive manifestations against women gamers") into a single area of "minimization of aggressive manifestations against women gamers" (as also described in the manuscript). After combining both categories and recalculating item-content validity indexes from the expert judgment, CVI and Kappa were above the established cut-off point values.

Table S3

Descriptive Statistics of the 17 items Spanish Version of the SAWGS, Sample 1.

SAWGS Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	CITC	FL
1. In general, men play video games better than women.	1.73	1.40	.47	.54
2. If women freely expose themselves to an environment such as the video game one, then it is their responsibility whether they endure insults, negative comments, etc. ^{1a}	1.57	1.39	.40	.45
3. Many women now play video games just because they are trendy.	1.77	1.25	.59	.66
4. If the use of video games by women has increased, it will mean that playing is not as dangerous for them as they say. ^{1d}	2.82	2.10	.37	.53
5. In the field of video games, encouraging the participation of female-only teams in competitions promotes sexism and discrimination.	3.44	2.25	.30	.34
6. There is a particular radical group of feminists who play video games and try to curtail the freedom of the male-gamer population. ^{1c}	1.95	1.66	.71	.76
7. In online video games, it seems that any man's comment to a woman is already sexist. ^{1c}	2.27	1.62	.66	.73
8. Women exaggerate the number of times they are threatened or insulted in online video games. ^{1c}	1.98	1.47	.70	.76
9. In the field of video games there is a community of women who are against male gamers.	2.03	1.62	.65	.71
10. The negative comments or threats women receive while playing video games are given much more importance than those received by men.	3.62	2.10	.59	.65
11. Female gamers often interpret kindness from male gamers as harassment.	2.30	1.52	.66	.73
12. In online video games, some women really deserve the insults they receive.	1.81	1.44	.59	.66

13. Women who say they play video games do so to please some man. ^{1ab}	1.35	0.87	.42	.50
14. In the video game environment, if a player with a female name is very good, the person who is actually playing is likely a man. ^{1a}	1.46	1.05	.44	.52
15. Many female gamers are famous just because they are pretty or because they use their body to make sexual advances.	2.82	1.86	.54	.61
16. Women who are known or stay professionally in the video game world are usually relevant male gamers' girlfriends/sisters/wives. ^{1a}	1.58	1.06	.37	.45
17. Women gamers are too sensitive to the comments they receive in video games. ^{1c}	1.82	1.37	.69	.75

Note. Sample 1 (Construction Sample). Items selected for the final 8-item version of the SAWGS appear in bold font. Each statement is rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (completely agree). SAWGS = Sexism Against Women Gamers Scale; CITC = corrected item-total correlation; FL = factor loadings. ¹ Items removed from the final version: ^a Items with mean scores less than 1.60 were eliminated to avoid a floor effect (items 2, 13, 14 and 16) and ^b poor variability ($SD < 1.00$; item 13), ^c as well as those overlapping with other items (inter-items correlations between .51 and .67; items 6, 7, 8 and 17). ^d Item 4 was eliminated to avoid overrepresentation of the content area “minimization of aggressive manifestations against women gamers”; it showed the lowest CTIC and the worst content validity indices of the three items (4, 10 and 11) that fulfilled the other three criteria.

Figure S1.1.

Scenario based on the influence of the competence of a woman gamer in online video gaming —included in Sample 4 (English version)—

Anne is a regular video game player. Last week she joined a team to play League of Legends online. She doesn't usually play online and, when she does, she normally disables the chat feature and the microphone because she receives friendship requests that she prefers not to accept. This time she decided not to disable them to be able to plan a strategy with her team. Anne participated actively in the game supporting her allies and blocking the powers of their rivals, preventing them from being effective. At the end of the game, her team won. Despite this, she could hear laughs and started to receive comments from the players in her team.

The next image shows a screenshot of the comments Anne received after winning the game:

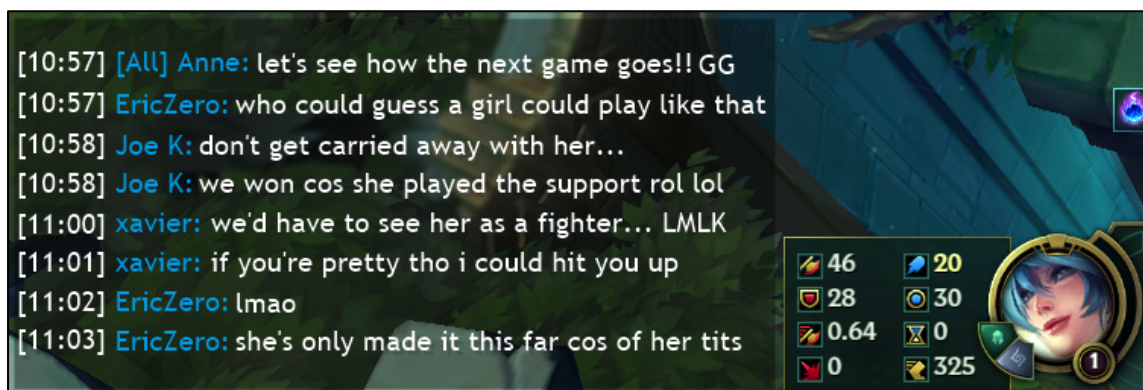


Figure S1.2.

*Scenario based on the influence of the competence of a woman gamer in online video gaming
—included in Sample 2 (Spanish version)—*

Ana es una jugadora habitual de videojuegos. La semana pasada se unió a un equipo para jugar online al videojuego League of Legends. Ana no suele jugar en modo online y, cuando lo hace, suele desactivar tanto el chat como el micrófono porque recibe peticiones de amistad que prefiere no aceptar. En esta ocasión, decidió activarlos para poder planificar una estrategia con su equipo. Ana participa activamente en el juego apoyando a sus aliados y bloqueando los poderes de sus rivales, impidiendo que fueran efectivos. Cuando acaba la partida, su equipo es el ganador. Pese a ello, se escuchan risas y comienza a recibir comentarios por parte de los jugadores de su propio equipo.

En la siguiente imagen puedes ver una captura de pantalla de los comentarios que recibió Ana tras ganar la partida:

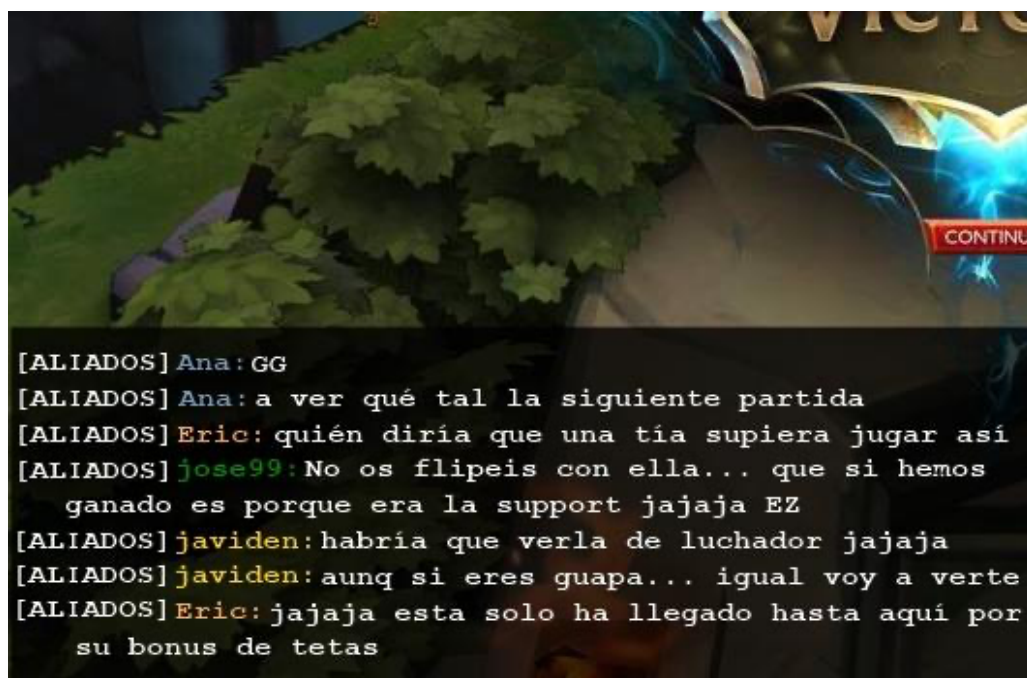


Figure S2.1.

Scenario based on the influence of the role of a woman gamer in online video gaming — included in Sample 5 (English version)—

Lucy is a regular video game player. Last week she joined a team to play League of Legends online, using the Discord Chat App to communicate with the other members. When planning a strategy, her team proposes that Lucy plays the support role in the first round, giving her this role. However, she is not happy with this, as she usually plays tank or DPS characters. She answers that she is better as attacking than warding, insists that she should play an attack character and refuses to play the group's support.

The next image shows a screenshot of the comments Lucy received after refusing to play the support role:

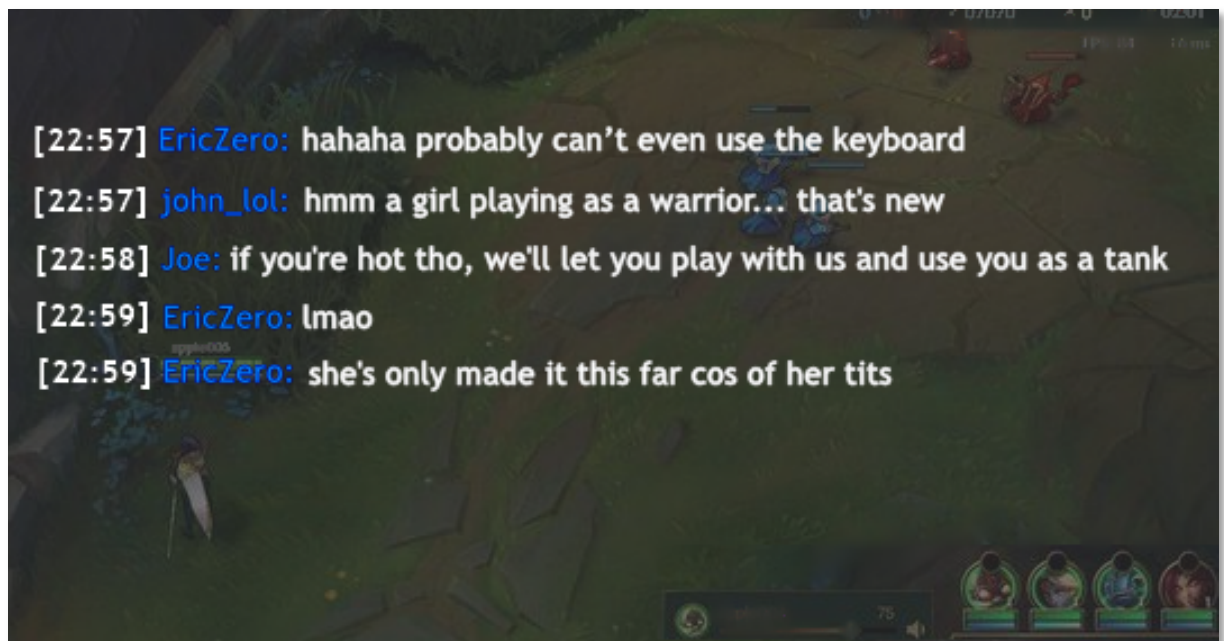
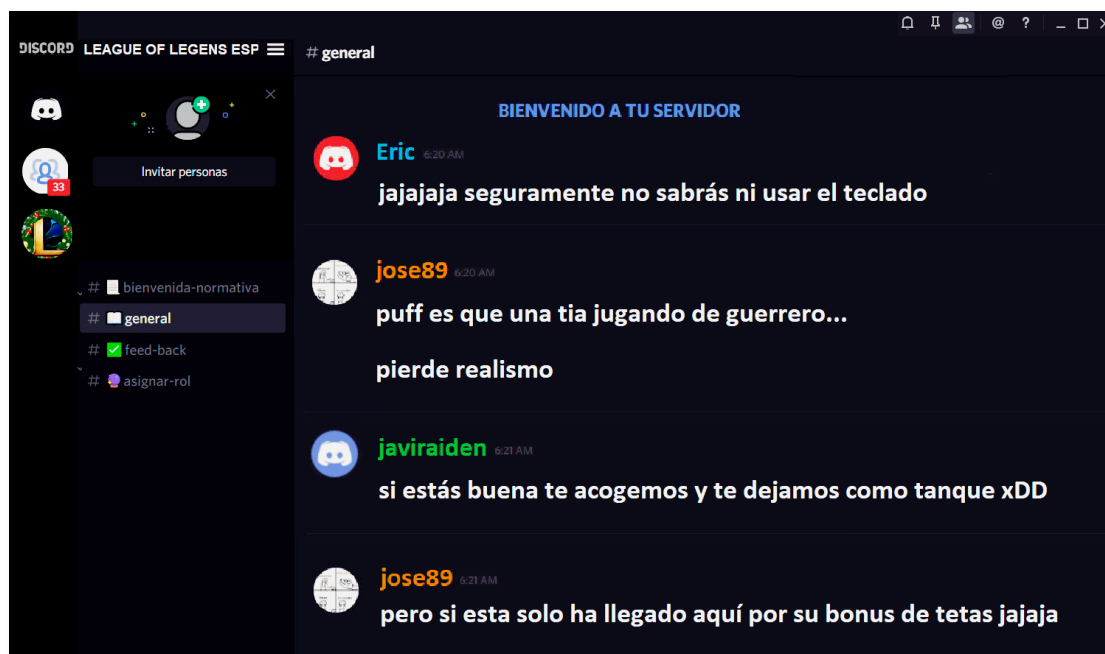


Figure S2.2.

Scenario based on the influence of the role of a woman gamer in online video gaming — included in Sample 3 (Spanish version)—

Lucía es una jugadora habitual de videojuegos. La semana pasada se unió a un equipo para jugar online a League of Legends, utilizando el chat de Discord para comunicarse. A la hora de planificar una estrategia, su equipo propone que Lucía sea la support en la primera partida, asignándole ese rol. Sin embargo, Lucía no está conforme con ejercerlo, ya que habitualmente juega con personajes tanques o DPS. Responde que se le da mejor atacar que wardear, reafirmando en usar un personaje de ataque y rechazando ser la support del grupo.

En la siguiente imagen puedes ver una captura de pantalla de los comentarios que recibió Lucía tras rechazar ser la *support*:



Material suplementario del Capítulo 4

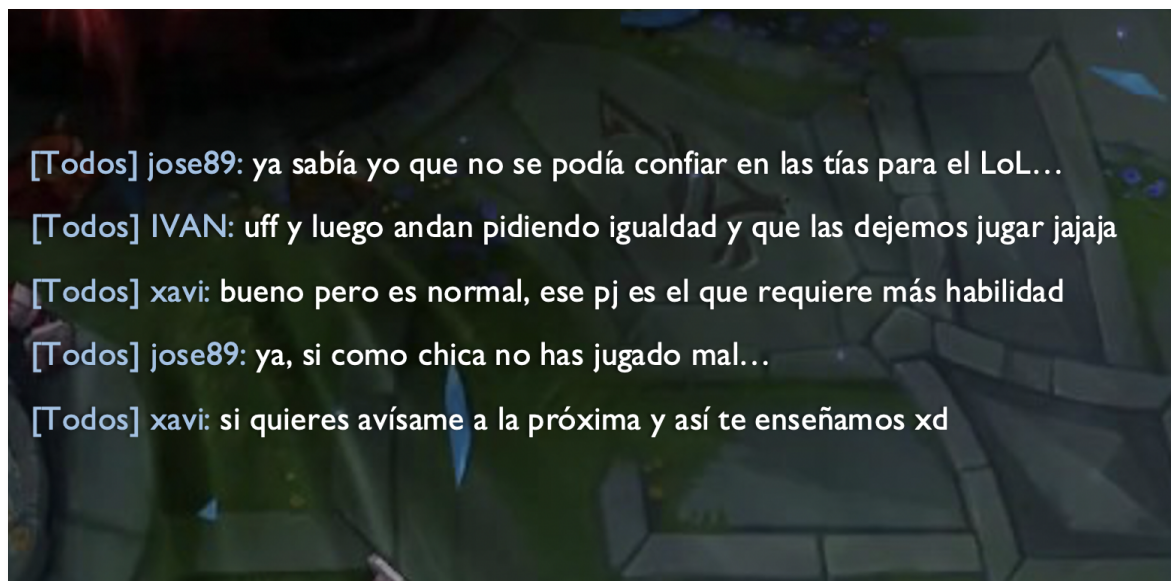
*Supplemental material for Chapter 4***Figure S3**

Original version of the Scenario based on the feminist adherence of the woman gamer, Study 1

Condición experimental: jugadora miembro de una asociación feminista

Lucía es una jugadora habitual de videojuegos y es una chica muy comprometida con la visibilización de las mujeres gamers. Pertenece a una asociación feminista que lucha por la igualdad de género en los videojuegos y que denuncia el acoso y las desventajas que sufren las jugadoras dentro de la comunidad. Normalmente, Lucía juega de forma online a videojuegos multijugador, sobre todo a League of Legends. La semana pasada se unió a un equipo para jugar una partida a ese videojuego, participando en la estrategia organizada por su grupo. Sin embargo, mientras lanzaba un hechizo destello dirigió mal el cursor y se alejó de su rival. Aunque después intentó arreglar su error, su equipo acabó perdiendo la partida.

Tras perder, Lucía comenzó a recibir los siguientes comentarios por parte de los jugadores de su equipo:



Condición experimental: jugadora no miembro de una asociación feminista

Lucía es una jugadora habitual de videojuegos. Normalmente, Lucía juega de forma online a videojuegos multijugador, sobre todo a League of Legends. La semana pasada se unió a un equipo para jugar una partida a ese videojuego, participando en la estrategia organizada por su grupo. Sin embargo, mientras lanzaba un hechizo destello dirigió mal el cursor y se alejó de su rival. Aunque después intentó arreglar su error, su equipo acabó perdiendo la partida.

Tras perder, Lucía comenzó a recibir los siguientes comentarios por parte de los jugadores de su equipo:

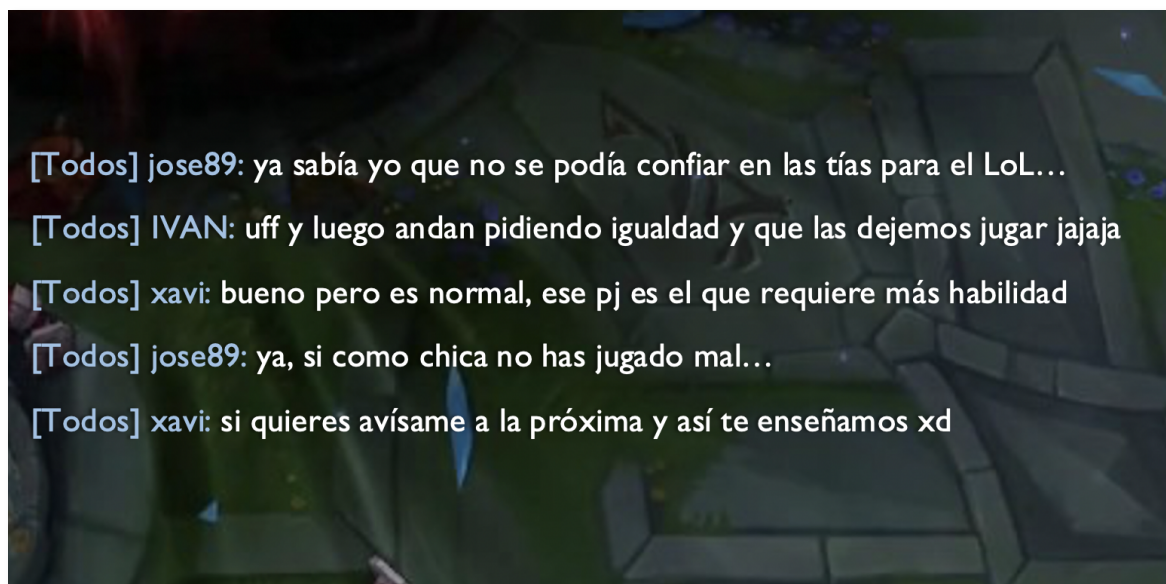


Figure S4

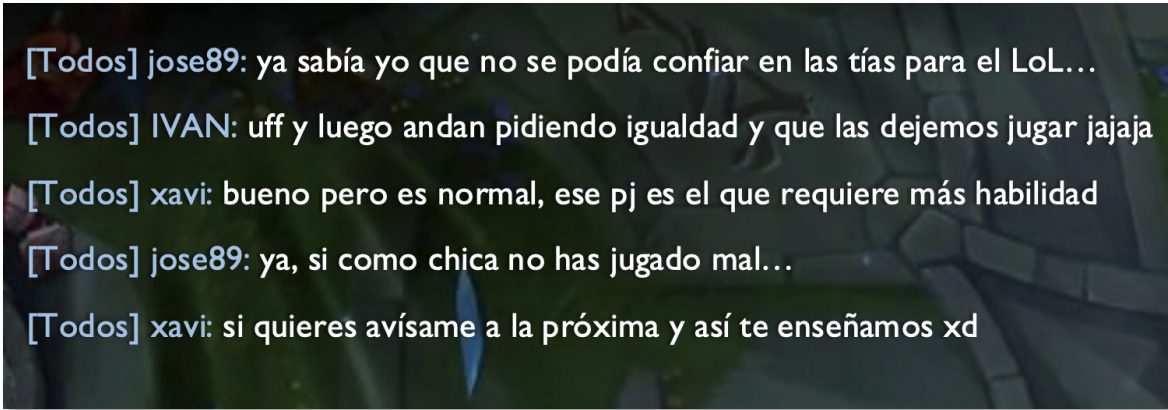
Scenario based on the feminist behavior of the woman gamer in gaming context, Study 2

Condición experimental: acciones colectivas normativas

Lucía es una jugadora habitual de videojuegos y es una chica muy comprometida con la visibilización de las mujeres gamers. Perteneció a una asociación feminista que lucha por la igualdad de género en los videojuegos. De hecho, además de haber participado en distintas manifestaciones en contra del machismo imperante en el mundo gamer, ha estado implicada en varias acciones dirigidas a reivindicar la igualdad de género en los videojuegos. Por ejemplo, recientemente ha impulsado junto a varias compañeras una recogida de firmas en Change.org para protestar contra un evento gamer dirigido mayoritariamente a hombres. También ha organizado debates en redes sociales sobre la discriminación que sufre la mujer gamer, ha diseñado camisetas reivindicativas o ha participado en una pegada de carteles con imágenes de jugadoras.

En cuanto a sus géneros favoritos, a Lucía le gusta jugar online a videojuegos de rol, sobre todo a League of Legends. La semana pasada se unió a un equipo para jugar una partida a ese videojuego, participando en la estrategia organizada por su grupo. Sin embargo, mientras lanzaba un hechizo destello dirigió mal el cursor y se alejó de su rival. Aunque después intentó arreglar su error, su equipo acabó perdiendo la partida.

Tras perder, Lucía comenzó a recibir los siguientes comentarios por parte de los jugadores de su equipo:



[Todos] jose89: ya sabía yo que no se podía confiar en las tías para el LoL...

[Todos] IVAN: uff y luego andan pidiendo igualdad y que las dejemos jugar jajaja

[Todos] xavi: bueno pero es normal, ese pj es el que requiere más habilidad

[Todos] jose89: ya, si como chica no has jugado mal...

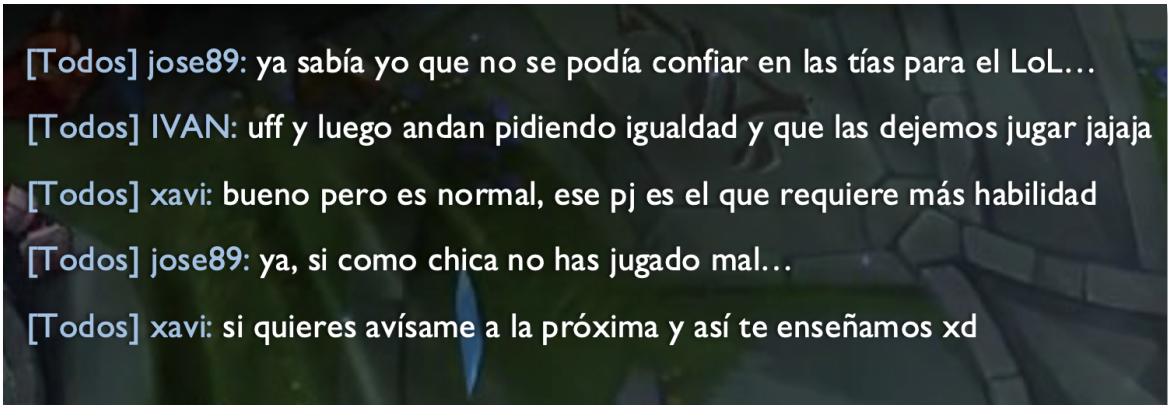
[Todos] xavi: si quieres avísame a la próxima y así te enseñamos xd

Condición experimental: acciones colectivas no normativas

Lucía es una jugadora habitual de videojuegos. Pertenece a una asociación feminista que lucha por la igualdad de género en los videojuegos. De hecho, además de haber participado en distintas sentadas en contra del machismo imperante en el mundo gamer, ha estado implicada en varias acciones dirigidas a reivindicar la igualdad de género en los videojuegos. Por ejemplo, recientemente ha impulsado junto a varias compañeras una campaña de envío masivo de spam por diversos foros de videojuegos para protestar contra un evento gamer dirigido mayoritariamente a hombres. También ha organizado un boicot contra un evento de este tipo, pirateando su web hasta colapsarla y bloquear la venta de entradas, y encadenándose en la entrada impidiendo el acceso a los ponentes.

En cuanto a sus géneros favoritos, a Lucía le gusta jugar online a videojuegos de rol, sobre todo a League of Legends. La semana pasada se unió a un equipo para jugar una partida a ese videojuego, participando en la estrategia organizada por su grupo. Sin embargo, mientras lanzaba un hechizo destello dirigió mal el cursor y se alejó de su rival. Aunque después intentó arreglar su error, su equipo acabó perdiendo la partida.

Tras perder, Lucía comenzó a recibir los siguientes comentarios por parte de los jugadores de su equipo:



[Todos] jose89: ya sabía yo que no se podía confiar en las tías para el LoL...

[Todos] IVAN: uff y luego andan pidiendo igualdad y que las dejemos jugar jajaja

[Todos] xavi: bueno pero es normal, ese pj es el que requiere más habilidad

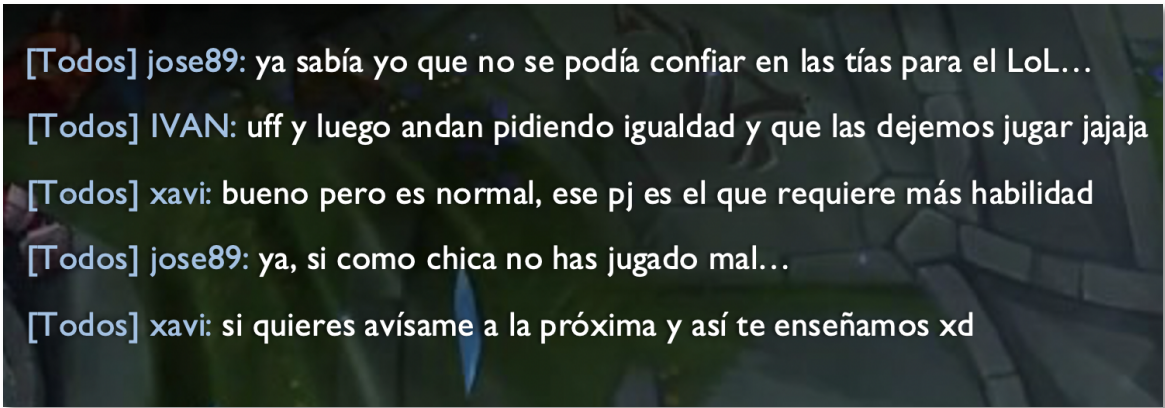
[Todos] jose89: ya, si como chica no has jugado mal...

[Todos] xavi: si quieres avísame a la próxima y así te enseñamos xd

Condición experimental: control

Lucía es una jugadora habitual de videojuegos. En cuanto a sus géneros favoritos, a Lucía le gusta jugar online a videojuegos de rol, sobre todo a League of Legends. La semana pasada se unió a un equipo para jugar una partida a ese videojuego, participando en la estrategia organizada por su grupo. Sin embargo, mientras lanzaba un hechizo destello dirigió mal el cursor y se alejó de su rival. Aunque después intentó arreglar su error, su equipo acabó perdiendo la partida.

Tras perder, Lucía comenzó a recibir los siguientes comentarios por parte de los jugadores de su equipo:



[Todos] jose89: ya sabía yo que no se podía confiar en las tías para el LoL...

[Todos] IVAN: uff y luego andan pidiendo igualdad y que las dejemos jugar jajaja

[Todos] xavi: bueno pero es normal, ese pj es el que requiere más habilidad

[Todos] jose89: ya, si como chica no has jugado mal...

[Todos] xavi: si quieres avísame a la próxima y así te enseñamos xd

¿Cómo renacer después del final de las cosas?

— **Rosa Berbel**

Todo, curiosamente, se va ajustando, serenando.

*Las incógnitas sombrías que se alzaron al comienzo del viaje
se han ido despejando hasta llegar al escueto panorama presente.*

— **Rodolfo Serrano**

En el sitio donde el sueño tropezaba con su realidad.

Allí, mis pequeños ojos.

— **Federico García Lorca**

Todas las cosas son las últimas cosas.

— **Roberto Juarroz**

*Todo es resultado de una serie de conocimientos, de vivencias, de encuentros,
de aprender de las propias torpezas cometidas en un momento determinado.*

— **Leonardo Padura**

Las sendas de la verdad son esencialmente las sendas del error.

— **Jacques Lacan**
