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TESIS DOCTORAL

**El Proceso de Toma de Decisión de la Mujer: Variables
Asociadas y Consecuencia Para su Bienestar**

The Women's Decision-Making Process: Associated
Variables and Consequences for Women's Well-Being

MENCIÓN DE DOCTORADO INTERNACIONAL

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Así mismo los estudios desarrollados en esta tesis cuentan con la aprobación del Comité de Ética en Investigación de la Universidad de Granada (nº: 1062/CEIH/2020).

A mi familia

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Abstract

Resumen

Resumen

En las últimas décadas se ha producido un incremento progresivo de la participación laboral femenina, sin el consecuente incremento de la implicación masculina en las responsabilidades familiares en el ámbito privado. Esta situación ha colocado a las mujeres, a diferencia de los hombres, ante el dilema de decidir entre invertir más en el trabajo o la familia. Las cifras estadísticas y numerosas investigaciones empíricas han demostrado que, cuando las mujeres se enfrentan a este dilema, suelen inclinarse por la familia. Esta decisión no resulta sorprendente, dado que cuando las personas toman decisiones, sus percepciones y comportamientos tienden a estar sesgados por los esquemas sociales existentes, tales como los roles de género. A pesar de los avances en materia de igualdad, la socialización de género está presente en la sociedad actual, prescribiendo que los comportamientos de las mujeres deben orientarse al cuidado de los y las demás, mientras que los hombres lo hagan a la consecución de sus propias metas u objetivos. Esta tesis doctoral contribuye a extender la literatura existente sobre los roles de género, analizando su influencia en el proceso de toma de decisión. Concretamente, se ha tomado como punto de partida la necesidad de analizar cómo determinadas variables (contextuales e interpersonales), derivadas de los roles de género, están asociadas a las diferencias en el patrón de decisión de hombres y mujeres; donde a diferencia de los hombres, las mujeres parecen guiarse más por lo que *deben* que por lo que *quieren* hacer. Así mismo, se analiza cómo el hecho de que las mujeres tomen decisiones acordes con lo que se espera de ellas influye en su bienestar.

La estructura de la tesis doctoral comienza con un capítulo introductorio, que recoge las diferentes aproximaciones teóricas que sustentan el marco de la tesis doctoral, las diferentes etapas del proceso de toma de decisión, así como las diferencias de género en el patrón de decisión de hombres y mujeres. En los Capítulos 2 al 7 se presentan diversos estudios empíricos que contribuyen a la comprensión de cómo determinadas variables, predeterminadas por los roles de género, están asociadas al proceso de toma de decisión, y al bienestar de las mujeres. En el último capítulo, se discute la integración e implicaciones de los principales resultados reportados en los capítulos anteriores.

Resulta necesario señalar que, en el Capítulo 1 se desarrolla el marco conceptual de la presente tesis de manera general, mientras que, en cada uno de los capítulos

empíricos, presentados como artículos de investigación, se ofrece de manera más detallada el marco teórico acorde a la pregunta de investigación analizada en dicho capítulo. Por esta razón, es posible que parte de la información expuesta en cada una de las secciones resulte redundante, pedimos disculpas por ello. Así mismo, de acuerdo con los requisitos del Doctorado Internacional de la Universidad de Granada algunas secciones están escritas en español, otras en inglés, y otras en ambos idiomas.

Abstract

In the last few decades, female labor participation has increasingly progressed, but there has not been a subsequent increase in male participation in family responsibilities in the private sphere. Because of this situation, women, unlike men, must choose between investing more in work or in the family. Statistical data and extensive empirical research have shown that when women face this dilemma, they tend to choose the family. This decision is not surprising, given that when people make decisions, existing social schemas, such as gender roles, tend to make their perceptions and behaviors biased. Despite progress in equality, gender socialization is present in current society, prescribing that women's behaviors should be oriented toward caring for others, while men should be oriented toward achieving their own goals or objectives. This doctoral dissertation extends the existing literature on gender roles, analyzing their influence on the decision-making process. Specifically, it is a starting point in analyzing how certain variables (contextual and interpersonal) derived from gender roles are associated with the differences in men's and women's decision-making patterns where, unlike men, women seem to be guided more by what they *should* do than by what they *want* to do. Likewise, we analyze how when women make decisions in accordance with what is expected of them, their well-being is affected.

This doctoral dissertation begins with an introductory chapter, which includes the different theoretical approaches that support the dissertation's framework, the different stages of the decision-making process, and the gender differences in men's and women's decision-making patterns. Chapters 2 to 7 present several empirical studies that contribute to understanding how certain variables, which gender roles predetermine, associate with the decision-making process and women's well-being. The last chapter discusses the integration and implications of the main results reported in the previous chapters.

It is necessary to point out that Chapter 1 presents this dissertation's conceptual framework in a general way, while in each of the empirical chapters, which we present as research articles, the theoretical framework is offered in more detail according to the research question analyzed in that chapter. For this reason, it is possible that some of the information presented in each of the sections may be redundant, for which we apologize. In addition, in accordance with the requirements of the International Doctorate of the

Abstract

University of Granada, some sections are written in Spanish, others in English, and others in both languages.

Chapter 1: Introduction (In Spanish)

Introducción

1. (Des)igualdad de Género

1.1. Estadísticas

El avance de la sociedad ha supuesto un aparente aumento de la igualdad de género. El último informe sobre la brecha de género del *World Economic Forum* (WEF, 2022), donde se analiza la brecha de género en 156 países teniendo en cuenta el ámbito político, económico/laboral, educativo y de salud, refleja que en 2021 se alcanzó un índice de igualdad de género a nivel mundial de 68%. España se situó en el puesto 14 de 156 países con un índice de igualdad de género de 78%, encontrándose por encima del valor promedio mundial. No obstante, un análisis comparativo de los informes de los últimos 15 años refleja que la brecha mundial se ha reducido solo en 0.24 puntos porcentuales al año. Teniendo en cuenta este avance, tal y como se indica en el informe, serían necesarios 135.6 años para cerrar la brecha de género.

Si se atiende a los diferentes ámbitos que componen el índice global de igualdad a nivel nacional, se observa una considerable brecha de género en el empoderamiento político (50.9%) seguido de participación económica y oportunidades laborales (30.1%), mientras que en el ámbito de salud (3.5%) y educativo (0.2%) la brecha de género es notablemente menor. Esta disparidad refleja cómo la desigualdad de género sigue estando presente en los ámbitos predominantemente masculinos de acuerdo con los roles de género, como son el político y el laboral. En el *ámbito laboral*, esta desigualdad se ve reflejada principalmente en el trabajo a tiempo parcial, donde las mujeres representan el mayor porcentaje, con la disparidad de ingresos que esto supone. Aunque los valores sean inferiores que en el resto de Europa, en España las mujeres constituyen el 74.7% de la jornada a tiempo parcial (Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social, 2021). Pese a la mayor cualificación de las mujeres respecto a los hombres, éstas no se sienten tan libres a la hora de elegir el trabajo o no tienen las mismas oportunidades que los hombres (Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económicos [OECD], 2022). Tanto es así que, a diferencia de los hombres, cuando las mujeres se enfrentan a la posibilidad de recibir un ascenso u obtener un puesto con mayor responsabilidad, anticipan mayores resultados negativos (e.g., conflictos y sacrificios; Gino et al., 2015). De acuerdo con el WEF (2022), el estrés relacionado con las presiones familiares supone un desafío laboral mayor para las mujeres. Pese a que los hombres han aumentado su dedicación al trabajo no remunerado, estas responsabilidades siguen recayendo desproporcionadamente sobre

las mujeres. Uno de los principales factores de la desigualdad de género en el ámbito laboral son las responsabilidades familiares, donde las mujeres dedican el doble de tiempo que los hombres a estas tareas (OECD, 2022; Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social, 2022). Tal y como se refleja en el WEF (2022), el solapamiento de las responsabilidades familiares y laborales se ha intensificado durante la pandemia, siendo las mujeres especialmente afectadas debido al cierre de centros escolares y de trabajo. Con respecto al *ámbito político*, existen altas discrepancias de género, habida cuenta de que las mujeres difícilmente encuentran trabajos a jornada completa y estables, y menos aún promocionar, lo que se refleja también en la esfera política. La brecha existente en el ámbito político no hace más que reflejar la dificultad de las mujeres para acceder a dominios estereotípicamente masculinos (i.e., puestos de liderazgo y toma de decisiones), no solo por la dificultad de promocionar sino también por el propio miedo a recibir evaluaciones negativas si se desvían de su rol tradicional (Moss-Racusin y Rudman, 2010).

1.2. Percepción Social

Aunque las estadísticas hacen explícita la desigualdad de género existente, hay una discrepancia en cómo esta desigualdad es percibida por la sociedad. Las cifras muestran que, a nivel mundial, las mujeres perciben en mayor medida que debería ser una prioridad eliminar la brecha de género (41% mujeres vs. 31% hombres), mientras los hombres consideran que reducir esta brecha no es tan importante (11% hombres vs. 5% mujeres; Statista, 2021). En la misma dirección, las estadísticas a nivel nacional muestran que el 71% de la población española percibe que se ha avanzado lo suficiente en materia de igualdad de género, siendo esta creencia más predominante entre los hombres (Statista, 2020a).

Pese a tales discrepancias, tanto unas como otros están de acuerdo en que las mujeres serían más felices en su rol laboral (i.e., vida profesional) que en su rol familiar (i.e., maternidad). Ambos géneros consideran que para las mujeres sería más difícil tener una carrera profesional exitosa ya que tendrían que sacrificar una parte de su vida familiar (Statista, 2020b). Es decir, las personas —los hombres en mayor medida— consideran que la igualdad ya se ha alcanzado, sin embargo, siguen pensando que la mujer no pueda avanzar profesionalmente debido a las responsabilidades familiares derivadas de su rol de género. Esta percepción de igualdad podría estar sesgada por el incremento real de mujeres en el ámbito público, que puede dar una visión apartemente de igualdad, sin serlo

de facto. Podría considerarse como una “igualdad irreal”, dado que el progreso en el ámbito público no se ha visto acompañado de un avance en el ámbito privado, normalizando y legitimando que sean las mujeres quienes se hagan cargo, mayoritariamente, de las responsabilidades familiares. Estas afirmaciones pueden corroborarse empíricamente con el trabajo de Yu y Lee (2013), quienes encontraron que, incluso en sociedades más igualitarias donde se proporciona mayores oportunidades educativas y económicas para las mujeres, las personas se percibían como más reacias a erradicar la desigualdad de género en la esfera privada, sin percibir esta situación como una barrera real para el desarrollo profesional de las mujeres. Así mismo resulta interesante señalar que, un 53% de mujeres y hombres percibieron que si una mujer quiere ser una buena madre tiene que aceptar sacrificar parcialmente su carrera profesional, mientras que un 47% no estuvieron de acuerdo (Statista, 2020b). Este dato refleja el dilema trabajo–familia al que se enfrentan muchas mujeres hoy en día, dado que incluso socialmente no está claro que éstas pueden ser buenas madres sin tener que sacrificar su carrera profesional, lo que lleva a las propias mujeres a no sentirse libres de elegir el trabajo en la misma medida que los hombres (OECD, 2022).

En conjunto, estos datos reflejan el hándicap que las mujeres tienen para progresar profesionalmente, encontrando en los roles de género el principal obstáculo para ello. La presente tesis doctoral ha tomado como punto de partida la necesidad de analizar cómo la socialización de género influye en las decisiones de las mujeres y cómo su bienestar se ve afectado en este proceso.

2.1.Aproximaciones Teóricas: Roles y Estereotipos de Género

La investigación sobre los roles de género ha contribuido al desarrollo de la *teoría del rol social* (Eagly, 1987; Eagly y Wood, 2012). Una fundamentada teoría que surge con el objetivo de explicar cómo la socialización de género influye de forma diferencial en el comportamiento de mujeres y hombres. Esta teoría se ha consolidado con innumerables investigaciones de carácter empírico y, ha permitido la formulación de nuevas teorías como el *modelo del contenido del estereotipo* (Fiske et al., 2002), cuyo objetivo es analizar cómo los estereotipos son el reflejo de los roles sociales preestablecidos. Ambas teorías constituirán el marco teórico principal de la presente tesis doctoral, siendo la teoría del rol social la base predominante.

2.1. Teoría del Rol Social

La *teoría del rol social* fue desarrollada por la investigadora Alicie Eagly (1987; Eagly y Wood, 2012) con el fin de analizar las diferencias de género en el comportamiento de las personas. De acuerdo con esta teoría, el origen del comportamiento diferencial de género viene derivado de las diferencias físicas existentes entre mujeres y hombres. Estas diferencias han sido la causa de la *división de tareas* por género, asociándose actividades reproductivas para las mujeres (cuidadoras o “caregivers”) y de fuerza para los hombres (proveedores o “breadwinner”). Las actividades reproductivas y de cuidado requieren mucho tiempo y energía, lo que impide la participación de las mujeres, a diferencia que los hombres, en tareas de actividad ininterrumpida o viajes lejos del hogar, como puede requerir el trabajo remunerado. Las diferencias físicas no solo conllevan una distribución diferencial de tareas, sino que además han desencadenado una *jerarquización de género o patriarcado*, proporcionándole socialmente mayor poder o estatus a los hombres, como por ejemplo una mayor autoridad para tomar decisiones y acceso a los recursos económicos. Aunque la división de tareas es menos extrema en las sociedades actuales, siguen existiendo diferencias de género, tal y como se ha recogido en los datos estadísticos del apartado previo. A pesar del aumento de mujeres en el ámbito público, éstas tienen peores condiciones laborales, y suelen ocupar puestos de trabajo relacionados con el cuidado de las personas, siendo menos frecuente encontrarlas en niveles altos de las organizaciones, cuyos cargos requieren más responsabilidades e involucración en procesos de toma de decisión.

La división de tareas entre mujeres y hombres ha supuesto que las personas observen diferentes comportamientos entre ellos. Los comportamientos comúnmente observados en el género femenino están relacionados con el cuidado y afecto, mientras que entre el género masculino pueden observarse comportamientos relacionados con la toma de decisión y el liderazgo. Así mismo, estos comportamientos diferenciales son percibidos como inherentes a la propia naturaleza de género, llegándose a normalizar. El comportamiento que se observa en mujeres y hombres ha desencadenado que las personas infieran diferentes rasgos en función del género, derivándose en lo que se conoce como *roles de género*. Los rasgos observados en las mujeres se denominan comunales, los cuales hacen referencia a los comportamientos que facilitan las relaciones interpersonales

(e.g., calidez, amabilidad y, solidaridad). Mientras que los rasgos observados en los hombres se denominan agénticos, esto es, aquellos comportamientos asertivos relacionados con el dinamismo y la toma de decisión (e.g., competitividad, asertividad, y seguridad). Por ende, de acuerdo con la división de tareas, las mujeres ocupan roles que requieren comportamientos de carácter comunal, que a su vez tienen asociados unos rasgos o atributos que originan los estereotipos de las mujeres, constituyéndose así lo que se denomina el rol de género femenino. A su vez, los hombres ocupan roles donde realizan comportamientos de carácter agéntico, que están asociados con los rasgos correspondientes, convirtiéndose en los estereotipos de los hombres y constituyéndose así el rol de género masculino. Así, los roles de género surgen de las actividades que llevan a cabo las mujeres y hombres en los roles que les han sido preestablecidos por la división de tareas.

Una de las características predominantes de los roles de género es su capacidad para *influir en el comportamiento de las personas*. Esta capacidad viene derivada de la percepción de atributos inherentes a mujeres y hombres y del consenso colectivo existente, que les lleva a realizar conductas de reforzamiento para mantener dichos atributos entre hombres y mujeres. En este sentido, un aspecto clave en la teoría del rol social es el reforzamiento que se lleva a cabo por parte de las y los demás. Cuando las personas se comportan de acuerdo con lo que se espera de ellas (i.e., rol social de género), reciben aprobación social. Aquellas personas que se desvían de su rol de género son sancionadas socialmente por medio de conductas discriminatorias. En consecuencia, tanto mujeres como hombres son conscientes de los costes que les supone desviarse de su rol de género tradicional, por lo que su comportamiento está dirigido hacia lo que se espera de ellas y ellos socialmente. Si bien es cierto que, tanto mujeres como hombres reciben evaluaciones negativas si se desvían de su rol, son las mujeres las que son percibidas más negativamente si se comportan de manera contraestereotípica (e.g., Sutherland et al., 2015). Considerando lo anteriormente expuesto, los roles de género son una parte importante del mantenimiento de la cultura y estructura social, que parece afectar en mayor medida a las mujeres, limitando su comportamiento al rol de género tradicional, obstaculizando así su avance profesional.

2.2. Estereotipos de Género

2.2.1. Modelo del Contenido del Estereotipo

Pese a las numerosas investigaciones sobre los estereotipos, no fue hasta el año 2002 cuando la investigadora Susan Fiske y su grupo de investigación desarrollaron el *modelo del contenido del estereotipo*. El objetivo de este modelo fue analizar cómo los estereotipos varían en función del grupo social al que pertenece las personas. Según el modelo, los estereotipos se agrupan en dos grandes dimensiones: *competencia*, la cual hace referencia a las características asociadas con la habilidad de alcanzar metas; y la *calidez o afectividad*, que hace referencia a las características asociadas con la sensibilidad. Estas dimensiones permiten a la persona clasificar a los y las demás de acuerdo con sus intenciones. En particular, se percibe más competencia entre los grupos que tienen mayor poder o estatus, como es el caso de los hombres en comparación con las mujeres, lo que justifica el estatus quo del sistema de género. Por otra parte, se percibe más calidez entre los grupos que no compiten con el grupo al que pertenece la persona. Es decir, se percibe más calidez en aquellos grupos que no suponen ninguna amenaza, tal y como ocurre con el grupo de las mujeres respecto al de los hombres. De acuerdo con este modelo, a las personas de un grupo se les categoriza en base a la combinación de ambas dimensiones, dando lugar a cuatro categorías diferentes (alta competencia y alta calidez, alta competencia y baja calidez, baja competencia y alta calidez, baja competencia y baja calidez). Si se atiende al género, a través de varios estudios de corte experimental, Fiske y colaboradores/as encontraron que a los hombres se les categorizaba con una alta competencia y baja calidez, mientras que a las mujeres se les categorizaba con una baja competencia y alta calidez. Más aún, encontraron que, dentro del grupo de las mujeres, se percibía de forma negativa a aquellas con un trabajo o carrera profesional dado que se les percibían como altamente competentes y poco cálidas, considerándolas una amenaza. Por su parte, a las mujeres amas de casa se les percibía de manera positiva por su falta de competencia y alta calidez, y no suponer una amenaza para el grupo de los hombres. Este modelo teórico refleja que, en base a los estereotipos, las personas evalúan y juzgan a los miembros de un grupo social, manifestando en consecuencia comportamientos favorables o desfavorables hacia las personas. Si bien es cierto que, existen estereotipos asociados a cada uno de los grupos de nuestra sociedad, si atendemos al género es el grupo de las mujeres el que se ve más perjudicado.

2.2.2. Dimensión Descriptiva y Prescriptiva de los Estereotipos

Según Burgess y Borgida (1999) existen otras dos dimensiones en los estereotipos de género denominadas: descriptiva y prescriptiva. La dimensión *descriptiva* hace referencia a cómo consideran las personas que son las mujeres y hombres. Esta dimensión organiza la información que se recibe diariamente sobre las personas, simplificando el procesamiento de la información a través de los estereotipos. Los estereotipos dan información sobre el comportamiento esperado de una persona, lo que reduce el esfuerzo cognitivo que conllevaría procesar toda la información que se recibe del entorno. Por su parte, la dimensión *prescriptiva* recoge cómo deben comportarse las mujeres y los hombres. Esta dimensión sirve para reforzar, mantener o justificar el estatus quo existente en la sociedad, donde los hombres se encuentran en situaciones de poder y las mujeres de subordinación. El papel de esta dimensión puede observarse en la aprobación que reciben las mujeres que se comportan de acuerdo con lo que se espera de ellas tradicionalmente, y en la discriminación a través de sanciones sociales que reciben al desviarse de su rol de género. El origen de esta discriminación suele estar precedida por los hombres al percibir una amenaza en las mujeres, permitiéndoles así mantener la desigualdad de poder a su favor. Así, esta última dimensión justifica la resistencia al cambio que existe en nuestra sociedad. En definitiva, estas aproximaciones no hacen más que reflejar que, los estereotipos de género son un mecanismo de control que definen lo que es normal, aceptable y lo que se desvía de la norma social, con las consecuencias que ello conlleva.

Varias investigaciones han demostrado que las aproximaciones teóricas mencionadas son interdependientes. En concreto, los trabajos empíricos de la investigadora Alicie Eagly han señalado que, el contenido de los estereotipos de género está determinado por las observaciones de las mujeres y hombres en sus roles sociales. Por ejemplo, dado que se observa a las mujeres en mayor medida que a los hombres en roles relacionados con el cuidado, las personas perciben que las mujeres poseen rasgos comunales (i.e., sensibilidad, calidez...), lo que se asocia con comportamientos específicos en ellas (i.e., comportamientos estereotipados). Por ende, la *teoría del rol social* es útil para entender los estereotipos de género en los grupos sociales, dado que cada rol va acompañado de ciertas expectativas, normas y comportamientos dentro de un contexto social determinado (Koenig y Eagly, 2014). De esta forma, el contenido de los estereotipos de género no hace más que reflejar el posicionamiento de los grupos en la

sociedad, tal y como se definen en sus roles sociales (Koenig y Eagly, 2019). No obstante, parece que el hecho de que los hombres aumenten su presencia en roles de género asociados a la mujer no cambia el contenido de los estereotipos asociados a su grupo. Un estudio reciente sobre la evolución de los estereotipos a lo largo de 30 años (Moya y Moya-Garófano, 2021) ha demostrado que a pesar de que las mujeres han incrementado su presencia en roles masculinos y los hombres en roles femeninos, los rasgos comunales siguen atribuyéndose a las mujeres en mayor medida que los hombres, reflejando la resistencia al cambio social. Así mismo, este estudio encontró que los rasgos agénticos se han asociado en mayor medida a mujeres y hombres en los últimos años. Tal y como concluyeron Koenig y Eagly (2019) puede ser que las mujeres se hayan adaptado a los nuevos roles, pero siguen realizando la mayor parte de las tareas domésticas, lo que parece ser una de las causas de la escasa disminución de los rasgos comunales asociados a ellas. Si se tiene en cuenta que se espera que las personas se comporten de acuerdo con su rol, y considerando los resultados de las investigaciones previas, es lógico que actualmente se espere que las mujeres no solo lleven a cabo sus tareas en el ámbito laboral (dominio masculino), sino que sigan desempeñando sus comportamientos estereotípicamente femeninos, esto es, las responsabilidades familiares. Mientras que, en los hombres, independientemente del género del rol que ocupen, se espera que sigan comportándose de acuerdo con su rol de género tradicional.

Estas aproximaciones teóricas han sido utilizadas por una gran variedad de investigaciones empíricas para explicar cómo los roles de género influyen en el comportamiento social. Específicamente, sostienen que los comportamientos que llevan a cabo las personas, sobre todo las mujeres, están determinados en mayor medida por las evaluaciones sociales. Así, la manera en que las mujeres toman una decisión va a depender de cómo la sociedad valore que la decisión es congruente o no con su rol de género. Más aún, las mujeres guiarán sus decisiones por las consecuencias que ellas mismas han experimentado a lo largo de los años al desviarse de su rol. Por ejemplo, situaciones en las que las mujeres deciden sacrificar su progresión profesional en pro de su familia, dado que si no lo hacen pueden llegar a ser percibidas como “malas madres o esposas”, lo que en definitiva limita su avance y perpetuar su estatus quo. Partiendo de esta fundamentación teórica, la presente tesis doctoral pretende analizar el papel que tienen los roles de género en las decisiones que toman las mujeres, para tratar de visibilizar el conflicto entre el deber y querer al que están expuestas.

3. La Toma de Decisión

3.1. El Proceso de Toma de Decisión

El proceso de toma de decisión es una parte fundamental de la vida de las personas. Las personas cotidianamente se enfrentan a decisiones que varían en función de su grado de complejidad, desde las decisiones más simples en las cuales no se requiere un análisis previo hasta las más complejas. De acuerdo con Lunenburg (2010), el proceso de toma de decisión consta de seis pasos: (a) identificación del problema, (b) búsqueda de alternativas, (c) evaluación de las alternativas, (d) elección de una alternativa, (e) toma de decisión y, (f) evaluación de la efectividad de la decisión.

El primer paso que lleva a las personas a iniciar el proceso de toma de decisión es la *identificación del problema*, a través del cual se detecta una situación conflictiva o problemática que requiere una solución. Una vez el problema identificado, hay que *buscar alternativas* que supongan una posible resolución del mismo. La búsqueda de alternativas depende de la relevancia de la decisión, los costes asociados, y del número de personas que se vean afectadas por ésta. De modo que, cuanto más peso tengan estos factores más tiempo se invertirá en la búsqueda de las alternativas. El siguiente paso es la *evaluación de las alternativas*, es decir, la evaluación de cada una de las posibilidades generadas en el paso anterior. Lunenburg (2010) propuso varias preguntas a considerar una vez alcanzado este paso: ¿Es viable la alternativa?, es decir, en qué medida puede llevarse a cabo; ¿Es una alternativa eficaz?, esto es, en qué medida resuelve el problema identificado; y, por último, ¿Qué impacto tendría en las y los demás? La alternativa que se considere debe ser aceptable para las personas que se vean afectadas por las consecuencias de la decisión a adoptar. La realización de este tercer paso es fundamental para que en el proceso de toma de decisión resuelva el problema identificado con éxito. A continuación, se debe *elegir una alternativa* entre las evaluadas en el paso previo. La evaluación de las alternativas descartará algunas de éstas, no obstante, habrá que elegir entre las dos o más restantes. Una vez que se ha elegido la mejor alternativa, es el momento de *tomar la decisión*. El último paso de este complejo proceso es la *evaluación de la efectividad de la decisión* tomada. Si al evaluar la decisión tomada no se obtienen los resultados esperados puede deberse a varias causas: una incorrecta definición del problema, evaluación o aplicación. Acorde con el autor, el error más común es no realizar una correcta identificación del problema. En consecuencia, la alternativa seleccionada, y

por ende ejecutada, no originará los resultados que se esperaban. Tras este último eslabón de la secuencia, se valorará si es necesario tomar una nueva decisión y con ello volver a empezar el proceso.

3.2. Procesamiento de la Información de Mujeres y Hombres

Tal y como se ha expresado en el apartado anterior, previo a la toma de decisión las personas tienen que detectar el problema o la situación controvertida, buscar alternativas y evaluarlas en función de la información que les llega. ¿Existen diferencias de género en la manera en que mujeres y hombres procesan la información a la hora de tomar una decisión? Fue en el año 1989 cuando la investigadora Joan Meyers-Levy desarrolló la *teoría de selectividad del procesamiento de la información* para argumentar que las mujeres y los hombres procesan la información de forma diferencial. Según la investigadora, los hombres procesan la información de manera selectiva u objetiva, es decir, tienen en cuenta fundamentalmente información que esté relacionada con sus alternativas u opciones; mientras que las mujeres procesan la información de manera global, esto es, integran toda la información del contexto, incluyendo tanto la información subjetiva como la objetiva.

Una amplia evidencia empírica ha demostrado que, efectivamente, existen discrepancias en cómo mujeres y hombres manejan la información del contexto al tomar una decisión. Por ejemplo, Zhang et al. (2017) analizaron las diferencias de género a nivel neurológico en el procesamiento de la toma de decisión en una interacción social, y encontraron que durante dicho proceso se activaban diferentes regiones cerebrales en función del género de la persona. En las mujeres se activaban zonas que están involucradas en la “red social del cerebro”, teniendo en cuenta las acciones e intenciones de los y las demás; mientras que en los hombres se activaban zonas de control ejecutivo como la inhibición y regulación del comportamiento, permitiéndoles esto focalizarse en sus objetivos. Los resultados de esta investigación mostraron como las mujeres toman decisiones procesando toda información social y no social de la que disponen, mientras que los hombres toman sus decisiones basadas en un procesamiento más cognitivo y menos social, permitiéndoles dirigir sus decisiones hacia sus metas u objetivos. En esta misma línea, Byrne y Worthy (2015, 2016), demostraron que las mujeres se ven más afectadas por la información externa adicional, y no se centran tanto en la información relacionada con sus objetivos, a diferencia de lo que hacen los hombres. Concretamente,

sus resultados mostraron que, las mujeres dieron más importancia a los costes inmediatos de su decisión más que a los beneficios esperados a largo plazo; mientras que los hombres fueron capaces de ignorar o soportar los costes y centrarse más en los beneficios a largo plazo. El hecho de que las mujeres no sean capaces de centralizar la información que les llega, y contemplen toda la información del contexto (i.e., costes), les conduce a tomar peores decisiones. De hecho, estos autores (Byrne y Worthy, 2015, 2016) mostraron que cuando desaparecía la información externa sobre los costes, las mujeres tomaban mejores decisiones. Estos resultados revelan que, en situaciones de incertidumbre, a diferencia de los hombres, las mujeres toman decisiones con cautela, siendo más sensibles a las sanciones o costes que pueden acarrear su decisión. Por ejemplo, cuando las mujeres tienen que decidir entre beneficiar a los y las demás (comportamiento estereotípico) o a ellas mismas (comportamiento contraestereotípico), no es sorprendente encontrar que opten por beneficiar a los y las demás, dado que lo contrario supondría más costes o sanciones, y su procesamiento ejecutivo es más sensible a esta información.

3.3. Diferencias de Género

El proceso de socialización de género se encuentra tan arraigado que puede verse reflejado en multitud de comportamientos, como es el proceso de toma de decisión. Las mujeres ocupan roles caracterizados por el cuidado de los y las demás, que exigen comportamientos comunales como decidir sacrificar los intereses propios en beneficio de los y las demás. Por su parte, los roles que ocupan los hombres están caracterizados por comportamientos dirigidos hacia la consecución de objetivos, dirigiendo su toma de decisión hacia comportamientos que les benefician a sí mismos. Estas diferencias de género han sido evidenciadas por múltiples investigaciones en el ámbito de la toma de decisión.

De manera general, existe un patrón diferencial por género cuando se trata de decisiones arriesgadas, siendo las mujeres las que toman decisiones menos arriesgadas que los hombres (van den Bos et al., 2013). Estos resultados corroboran la concepción de que las diferencias entre hombres y mujeres en la toma de decisión están supeditadas a los roles de género, dado que tomar decisiones arriesgadas es parte del dominio estereotípicamente masculino (Morgenroth et al., 2018). Por el contrario, las mujeres son más propensas a tomar decisiones más sociales y menos deliberadas (Mieth et al., 2017). Estos resultados han sido corroborados empíricamente mediante estudios con

neuroimagen en los que se observa mayor nivel de activación cerebral en las mujeres ante situaciones que implican la ayuda a los y las demás; mientras que en los hombres la activación se observa cuando se decide “no” ayudar a los y las demás (Loke et al., 2011). Estos estudios muestran cómo las mujeres toman decisiones dirigidas a facilitar las relaciones interpersonales, acorde a su rol social. De hecho, Traut-Mattausch et al. (2011) mostraron que las mujeres tienen un menor sesgo de confirmación al tomar decisiones interdependientes, es decir, aquellas decisiones que les involucra a ellas y a su pareja (motivación social); mientras que los hombres el sesgo menor lo tienen ante decisiones independientes, es decir, aquellas decisiones que les involucra solo a ellos (motivación egoísta). Tanto mujeres como hombres tienen una mayor tendencia a buscar información consistente con sus propias creencias para evitar la disonancia cognitiva (sesgo de confirmación). Por tanto, para ambos será más fácil tomar decisiones acordes con su rol social (menor sesgo de confirmación), dado que si toman decisiones contraestereotípicas existirá una mayor disonancia entre su rol y su comportamiento. Una de las posibles consecuencias de este sesgo en la toma de decisión y que está relacionado con el objetivo de esta tesis, puede verse reflejado en el hecho de que las mujeres tiendan a hacer más sacrificios por sus parejas, llegados el caso, en comparación con los hombres (Ahmed y Shaheen, 2013). De manera más específica, ateniendo al dominio del trabajo y la familia —ambos mutuamente incompatibles en cuanto a dedicación y esfuerzo (Greenhaus y Beutell, 1985)— la literatura señala que son las mujeres quienes deciden invertir en la familia en mayor medida, mientras que los hombres lo hacen en el trabajo, tal y como se espera socialmente (e.g., Dahm et al., 2019; Hochschild y Machung, 2012; Xue et al., 2020).

En conjunto, estos resultados reflejan que las personas toman decisiones congruentes con la norma social asociada a su género. Es decir, cuando las mujeres toman una decisión consideran el beneficio que supondrá para otros, mientras que los hombres considerarán el beneficio que les supondrá a sí mismos. Si bien es cierto que la socialización de género dirige la toma de decisión de mujeres y hombres, las consecuencias para ambos no son las mismas. Tal y como se ha reflejado en los apartados previos, son las mujeres las que se ven perjudicadas en mayor medida debido a las decisiones guiadas por su rol de género, viéndose sometidas a situaciones de desigualdad de género con los consecuentes obstáculos para su desarrollo personal, laboral y social.

Por ello, el objetivo de la presente tesis fue analizar las variables implicadas en la toma de decisión de las mujeres como grupo social.

3.4. Variables Implicadas en el Proceso de Toma de Decisión

Una de las principales razones por las que las personas se ajustan a los roles de género es el reforzamiento que se recibe por ello (Eagly y Wood, 2016). Existe una prescripción o norma social sobre cómo deben comportarse las personas en función de su género, lo cual es reforzado por la promesa de recompensas sociales si sus comportamientos son congruentes con su rol, o por la amenaza de posibles sanciones si se desvían de él. El reforzamiento de la conducta a través de las sanciones y recompensas pueden ser recibido por la sociedad o, incluso por la propia persona al interiorizar la norma (Kerr et al., 1997), como en este caso sería la interiorización de los roles de género. Partiendo de esta base, a continuación, se recogerán algunas variables contextuales e interpersonales, derivadas de la socialización de género, que podrían actuar como reforzamiento del proceso de toma de decisión de las personas y, en concreto de las mujeres, nuestro objeto de interés.

Variables Contextuales

A pesar de que tanto las mujeres como los hombres son sancionados socialmente si se desvían de su rol tradicional, la evidencia empírica ha demostrado que las sanciones son mayores para el grupo de las mujeres (Sutherland et al., 2015), posicionándolas y manteniéndolas en situaciones de desigualdad (Rudman et al., 2012). Este reforzamiento también ha sido observado en el ámbito de la toma de decisión, guiando la decisión de las mujeres hacia el beneficio de los y las demás. Por ejemplo, Mieth et al. (2017) analizaron experimentalmente cómo se sancionaba a las personas en función de su cooperación. Los resultados mostraron que las personas sancionaron más a las mujeres que decidían no cooperar en comparación con los hombres. Estas sanciones también han sido encontradas en las decisiones arriesgadas —un dominio estereotípicamente masculino— donde se ha demostrado que aquellos que toman decisiones arriesgadas reciben consecuencias positivas, mientras que las mujeres reciben consecuencias negativas al hacerlo (Morgenroth et al., 2022). Tanto es así que, de manera más específica, Gino et al. (2015) encontraron que, a diferencia de los hombres, las mujeres consideraron que promocionar laboralmente estaría más asociado con consecuencias negativas para ellas (e.g.,

conflictos). Por tanto, es lógico encontrar que las mujeres eviten tomar decisiones contraestereotípicas o incongruentes con su rol dado que, en base a su experiencia, involucrarse en comportamientos estereotípicamente masculinos supone consecuencias negativas para ellas.

Teniendo en cuenta los factores contextuales (i.e., sanciones sociales) a los que se ven expuestas las mujeres, se considera necesario evaluar cómo la amenaza del estereotipo influye en el proceso de toma de decisión de éstas. La amenaza del estereotipo ocurre cuando una persona es consciente del estereotipo negativo asociado a su grupo de pertenencia, y por el miedo a confirmarlo, tiende a disminuir su rendimiento en aquellas tareas asociadas a dicho grupo (e.g., las mujeres son peores en matemáticas, dominio estereotípicamente masculino; Spencer et al., 1999). Múltiples investigaciones han demostrado que la constante sensación de amenaza experimentada por las mujeres no solo disminuye el rendimiento de éstas en tareas de matemáticas, sino que este temor se extiende hacia otros dominios como el aprendizaje, las funciones ejecutivas, la habilidad verbal, e incluso la aversión al riesgo (Beilock et al., 2007; Carr y Steele, 2010; Rydell y Boucher, 2017; Rydell et al., 2014). Estas situaciones pueden generalizarse a multitud de situaciones y contextos, y suponen en todo caso situaciones de discriminación que pueden afectar a los objetivos o metas de las mujeres, disminuyendo su confianza para lograr metas personales y profesionales (von Hippel et al., 2011). Un estudio reciente ha demostrado que las mujeres esperan tener menores éxitos en su trabajo como consecuencia de las situaciones de discriminación experimentadas en su día a día, lo que, les lleva a tener una menor disposición de sacrificar en beneficio de su trabajo y por ende de su progresión profesional (Meeussen et al., 2021).

La sensación o percepción de amenaza puede verse reflejada en el miedo a la evaluación negativa que sufren las mujeres en mayor medida que los hombres (e.g., Biolcati, 2017). De acuerdo con Leary (1983), el miedo a la evaluación negativa hace referencia a los pensamientos que las personas experimentan ante la sensación de ser evaluadas negativamente por los y las demás. En este sentido, son las mujeres quienes sienten en mayor medida miedo a la evaluación negativa, dado que son las están expuestas a mayores evaluaciones sociales. Este miedo podría deberse a la preocupación de las mujeres por no alcanzar los estándares sociales de feminidad (Leary, 1992), dado que, si se involucran en dominios estereotípicamente masculinos, su comportamiento podría ser

percibido como baja feminidad (i.e., amabilidad, preocupación por los y las demás, afectividad), y en consecuencia podrían recibir mayores sanciones. De hecho, algunos estudios han encontrado que mujeres con un mayor miedo a la evaluación negativa disminuyen su participación en dominios estereotípicamente masculinos (e.g., Yi-Hsiu y Chen-Yueh, 2013). Si se tiene en cuenta las investigaciones hasta ahora expuestas, es lógico esperar que las mujeres —quienes se suelen identificar con la feminidad en mayor medida (Ward y King, 2018), sientan mayor miedo a la evaluación negativa, dado que son conscientes de las consecuencias asociadas a los comportamientos contraestereotípicos. En consecuencia, este miedo puede guiar su proceso de toma de decisión; ya que las personas con mayor miedo a la evaluación negativa tienden a comportarse de manera que eviten la posibilidad de ser evaluadas negativamente, a preocuparse por causar buenas impresiones y buscar la aprobación social (Leary, 1983); tomando decisiones acordes con su rol de género.

Las mujeres son conscientes de los estereotipos de género prescriptivos, y de los costes que supone violarlos, por lo que se comportan conforme a lo que se espera de ellas (Brescoll, 2011). Por ende, tanto la amenaza del estereotipo como el miedo a la evaluación negativa podrían ser algunas de las variables contextuales que expliquen las diferencias de género en el proceso de toma de decisión. Estas variables podrían disminuir la confianza de las mujeres en sus decisiones, decantándose por lo más seguro e intuitivo, esto es, aquellas decisiones que benefician a los y las demás, que sean menos arriesgadas, y en las cuales no reciban sanciones (e.g., elegir la familia en lugar del trabajo). Esto podría llevar a una menor participación de las mujeres en puestos de responsabilidad, o de liderazgo, perpetuando la infrarrepresentación de éstas en el ámbito público y legitimando la desigualdad de género en el ámbito privado.

Variables Interpersonales

No solo resulta necesario destacar el papel de variables contextuales a la hora de analizar las discrepancias de género en el proceso de toma de decisión, sino que también hay que considerar el papel de las variables interpersonales dada la importancia que supone el cuidado de los y las demás para las mujeres. De acuerdo con la literatura existente, las relaciones de pareja son una de las fuentes más importantes de bienestar para las personas (Robles et al., 2014). En concreto, son las mujeres quienes consideran en mayor medida que las relaciones interpersonales son una parte importante de su

autoconcepto, sintiéndose responsables de las necesidades y preocupaciones de los y las demás (Gore y Cross, 2011). En este sentido, el apoyo de la pareja parece ser un factor determinante en las decisiones que las mujeres toman respecto a su progresión profesional (e.g., Jakubiak y Feeney, 2016; Moya et al., 2000; Rosta-Filep et al., 2022). Aunque las mujeres tiendan a priorizar las necesidades de los y las demás a las suyas propias a la hora de tomar una decisión (i.e., apostar por la familia), si además cuentan con el apoyo de su pareja, éstas podrían centrarse en mayor medida en sus objetivos profesionales (i.e., trabajo) lo que permitiría avanzar en el camino hacia la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres. En este sentido, ¿Qué ocurre cuando las mujeres tienen que decidir entre el trabajo y la familia? ¿Es posible que la pareja apoye el hecho de que ella persiga sus metas profesionales o que se decante por la familia? Consideremos una relación de pareja con hijos o hijas en la que ambos miembros trabajan a jornada completa. Los horarios de cada uno de ellos son incompatibles con sus responsabilidades familiares, por lo que alguno de los dos tendrá que sacrificar sus objetivos profesionales en beneficio de la familia, ¿Quién es más probable que tome esta decisión o realice este sacrificio? En situaciones de este tipo, son las mujeres las que tienen una mayor probabilidad de sacrificar el trabajo (i.e., reducir sus horas de trabajo, decidir ser ama de casa, pedir una excedencia...; Sandberg, 2013; Xue et al., 2020). La principal razón es que, a pesar de los avances en materia de igualdad, los roles de género siguen siendo prescriptivos para los hombres y las mujeres en el ámbito privado (Arias-de la Torre et al., 2019; Lyu y Fan, 2020), guiando su toma de decisión, tal y como refleja la literatura descrita en el apartado anterior.

Como se ha indicado, el reforzamiento es una de las principales razones por las que las mujeres siguen comportándose de acuerdo con su rol de género. Además de que las mujeres guían sus decisiones, en parte, por las presiones o sanciones sociales a las que se ven sometidas, también se suma el efecto del reforzamiento que reciben en sus relaciones de la pareja cuando se comportan tal y como se espera que hagan. En este sentido, Kogan y colaboradores/as (2010) encontraron que, cuando una persona se comporta fiel a sí misma (i.e., autenticidad) tras realizar un sacrificio siente mayor cercanía de su pareja, esto es, se siente más apreciada por su pareja tras la decisión tomada. Si se tienen en cuenta estos resultados, es esperable encontrar que cuando las mujeres decidan sacrificar su trabajo se sientan más auténticas o fieles a sí mismas porque estarían siendo coherentes con su rol de género, lo que le llevaría a percibir más aprecio por parte de su pareja, siendo este un reforzador del comportamiento estereotipado de la

mujer. Es decir, aunque las mujeres sacrifiquen su trabajo, el hecho de que su pareja aprecie esta decisión podría mitigar los costes, percibiéndose esta decisión como más beneficiosa. De hecho, un estudio reciente ha demostrado que sentir el aprecio de la pareja compensa los costes de la división injusta de las responsabilidades familiares en el ámbito privado (Gordon et al., 2022).

Por otro lado, también es fundamental considerar el comportamiento que las propias mujeres tienen dentro de sus relaciones. Si bien es cierto que, la respuesta de la pareja actúa como reforzamiento de la conducta de las mujeres, parece que el hecho de que las mujeres inviertan más en sus relaciones (Ahmed y Shaheen, 2013) influye en sus decisiones. De hecho, las personas con un mayor compromiso y mayor satisfacción en su relación de pareja parecen tener una mayor tendencia a realizar sacrificios por su pareja (Righetti y Impett, 2017; van Lange et al., 1997). En este sentido, es esperable encontrar que las mujeres con un mayor compromiso y satisfacción en su relación decidan invertir más en su familia que en el trabajo, si se encuentran en la disruptiva. De esta forma, estarían alimentando una parte importante de su autoconcepto, las relaciones interpersonales (Gore y Cross, 2011), dado que, al realizar este sacrificio, estarían satisfaciendo las necesidades de su pareja frente a las suyas propias. Así mismo, el sacrificio está caracterizado por una motivación comunal, que hace referencia a la preocupación por el bienestar de los y las demás, y la motivación por satisfacer las necesidades de su pareja sin esperar reciprocidad (Clark y Mills, 2011). Las personas con mayor motivación comunal tienden a disfrutar de sus sacrificios (Kogan et al., 2010), y muestran mayores conductas de mantenimiento dentro de las relaciones (Joel et al., 2018). Teniendo en cuenta que, todas las formas de motivación comunal son mayores en las mujeres que en los hombres (Le et al., 2018), es esperable encontrar que aquellas con una mayor motivación comunal perciban más beneficios al invertir en su familia en lugar de en el trabajo.

En definitiva, la literatura expuesta refleja cómo la interiorización de los roles de género modula el comportamiento, y en concreto, la toma de decisión de las mujeres, a través de variables contextuales e interpersonales. Las mujeres podrían decidir en beneficio de los y las demás, no solo por el reforzamiento que reciben de la sociedad y de su pareja, sino incluso del autoreforzamiento al interiorizar la norma social existente.

3.5. Consecuencias: Evaluación de las Decisiones

El último paso del proceso de la toma de decisión, de acuerdo con Lunenberg (2010), es la evaluación de las decisiones. No cabe duda de que, las decisiones de las mujeres están guiadas, por lo que *deben hacer*—ya sea por la influencia que ejerce el reforzamiento social, el de la pareja o ellas mismas, esto es, tomar aquellas decisiones que no supongan un coste para los y las demás de acuerdo con su rol de cuidadora. Ante esta situación, la presente tesis doctoral quiso dar respuesta a las siguientes cuestiones ¿Obtienen las mujeres los resultados que esperaban tras tomar su decisión? ¿Volverían a tomar la misma decisión?

El hecho de que los hombres no hayan incrementado su participación en el ámbito privado, en condiciones reales de igualdad, ha situado a las mujeres en el dilema de tener que decidir entre invertir en el trabajo o en la familia. Las mujeres quieren progresar profesionalmente, pero a su vez tienen que seguir ocupándose de las responsabilidades familiares, lo que se denomina como “doble presencia” (Torns et al., 2002). No obstante, esta doble carga o presencia es insostenible, dado que no solo ambos dominios son incompatibles (Greenhaus y Beutell, 1985), sino que las responsabilidades familiares suponen una alta sobrecarga para las mujeres (Naujoks y Hamjediers, 2022) que puede interferir con las tareas en el otro dominio. Todo ello sitúa a las mujeres ante el dilema, trabajo-familia. Debido a la socialización de género, y algunas variables derivadas de este proceso expuestas anteriormente, las mujeres apuestan por invertir en la familia más que en el trabajo. Además, las mujeres podrían considerar que esta decisión, a priori, disminuiría su sensación de sobrecarga. De hecho, reorganizar los recursos en ambos dominios parece reducir la sensación de sobrecarga (Matthews et al., 2014).

Sacrificar una de las opciones puede provocar sentimientos de malestar, como el arrepentimiento de sus decisiones. Es posible que las mujeres se arrepientan más de sus sacrificios, dado que ambos dominios (trabajo y familia) son relevantes para ellas. Tanto es así que, parece ser que son las mujeres quienes experimentan en mayor medida arrepentimiento sobre sus decisiones (van de Calseyde et al., 2018). En la presente tesis doctoral se ha considerado el arrepentimiento como reflejo del bienestar de las mujeres en la toma de decisión, dado que éste se considera una emoción negativa de autoculpabilidad que las personas experimentan cuando perciben que el resultado de la otra elección habría sido la mejor opción (Zeelenberg y Pieters, 2007).

Ante tal dilema, las mujeres pueden elegir la familia porque es la opción socialmente más segura. Esta decisión parece estar condicionada en la mayoría de los casos por un *deber* más que por un *querer*, dado que los comportamientos de las mujeres están más orientados por los ideales o expectativas (Johnston y Diekman, 2015). Pero ¿Es esto lo que realmente quieren? Cuando se les pregunta de manera cualitativa qué estrategias llevan a cabo para combinar el trabajo y la familia, las propias mujeres afirman que dejan su trabajo para centrarse en el hogar, algo que nunca pensaron que harían (Horne y Breitreuz, 2018). El simple hecho de ser mujer y el miedo a ser juzgada por la sociedad puede hacer que algunas mujeres decidan en beneficio de los y las demás con los costes que ello supondría para ellas (e.g., sacrificar sus aspiraciones profesionales). Una vez tomada la decisión, pueden percibir que la decisión que tomaron de sacrificar sus aspiraciones profesionales por el cuidado de los y las demás no les benefició tanto como esperaban, conduciéndoles a experimentar un mayor arrepentimiento. Este argumento puede ser validado por el propio discurso de las mujeres (Horne y Breitreuz, 2018). Algunas de ellas verbalizan que, aunque sacrificar el trabajo fue beneficioso para los y las demás, esta decisión supuso altos costes para ellas mismas. Narran que, tras este sacrificio, se sintieron aisladas y que su sacrificio no fue reconocido, promoviendo en ellas las ganas de volver a trabajar. También señalan que quieren ser algo más que una madre o cuidadora, quieren volver al trabajo, tener un lugar para sí mismas donde se sentían seguras (Horne y Breitreuz, 2018). Considerando estos discursos, donde se reflejan los costes experimentados de sus decisiones, no sorprende que muchas mujeres se arrepientan a largo plazo de haber priorizado la familia, lo que afecta de manera negativa a su bienestar (Newton et al., 2012). Así mismo, la sensación de sobrecarga puede conducir a un mayor arrepentimiento de su decisión. Y es que cuando se experimenta sobrecarga laboral, reasignar recursos del dominio familiar al laboral reduce dicha sobrecarga, sin embargo, en el caso de la sobrecarga familiar, el hecho de reasignar los recursos del dominio laboral al familiar no disminuye ésta (Matthews et al., 2014). Por lo tanto, las mujeres podrían haber decidido también sacrificar el trabajo para disminuir su sensación de sobrecarga familiar sin conseguirlo, por lo que se encontrarían en la misma situación que al principio, pero con un retroceso en el ámbito público.

En definitiva, las mujeres parecen tener una mayor disposición a llevar sus decisiones o sacrificios al extremo, focalizándose tanto en las demás personas que se descuidan a sí mismas (e.g., sacrificando algún aspecto esencial para ellas, como podría

ser su progresión profesional; Impett y Gordon, 2008). Así, cuando realizan una evaluación de sus decisiones, son conscientes de los costes que le supusieron, lo que podría conducirles a experimentar un mayor arrepentimiento, lo que se ha relacionado con un menor bienestar (Moyano-Díaz et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2002). En consecuencia, este proceso, desencadenado por los roles de género, podría ser uno de los factores explicativos por los que las mujeres, en comparación con los hombres, presentan un menor bienestar general (Batz y Tay, 2018).

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The Present Dissertation

La Presente Tesis Doctoral

La Presente Tesis Doctoral

La revisión de la literatura expuesta pone de relieve la importancia de analizar cómo la socialización de género influye en el comportamiento de las personas, y en concreto en el proceso de toma de decisión de las mujeres, por las consecuencias que conlleva para ellas. La evidencia empírica acumulada muestra cómo las decisiones de los hombres están más orientadas hacia la consecución de sus propios objetivos, mientras que las decisiones de las mujeres lo están hacia el cuidado de los y las demás. El hecho de que exista una mayor expectativa social acerca del comportamiento de las mujeres limita su capacidad, dirigiendo su toma de decisión a lo que es correcto. Esta situación contribuye a colocar a las mujeres en situaciones de desigualdad aparentemente invisibilizadas. A pesar de la amplia evidencia empírica acerca de las diferencias de género en el proceso de toma de decisión, son pocas las investigaciones que han ido más allá de estas diferencias, tratando de analizar las variables asociadas. Así mismo, aunque diversos estudios han investigado de manera cualitativa cómo se sienten las mujeres tras decidir invertir más en los y las demás que en ellas mismas, los efectos en el grado de arrepentimiento y su relación con el bienestar han recibido escasa atención empírica.

La presente tesis doctoral surgió con el interés de hacer explícita la desigualdad invisibilizada en el proceso de toma de decisión de la mujer, analizando los efectos de la socialización de género en dicho proceso. Sobre esta base, el objetivo general de esta tesis doctoral es analizar cómo determinadas variables (contextuales e interpersonales), derivadas de los roles de género, están asociadas con las diferencias en el patrón de decisión de hombres y mujeres; donde a diferencia de los hombres, las mujeres parecen guiarse más por lo que deben hacer que por lo que quieren hacer. Además, se analiza cómo el hecho de que las mujeres decidan invertir más en los y las demás que en ellas mismas, afecta a su bienestar. Con el fin de alcanzar dicho objetivo, la tesis doctoral se ha estructurado en seis capítulos de carácter empírico. En el Capítulo 1 se ha hecho un breve recorrido teórico por los ámbitos objeto de interés y las variables relacionadas en dicho proceso. En los Capítulos 2, 3 y 4 se recogen los estudios en los que se han analizado cómo determinadas variables contextuales están asociadas con las diferencias de género en el patrón de toma de decisión en general. En los Capítulos 5 y 6 se examina el papel de determinadas variables interpersonales en el proceso de toma de decisión, contextualizándose en las decisiones relacionadas con el trabajo y la familia (i.e.,

sacrificios). Por último, en los Capítulos 4 y 7 se analizan cómo los roles de género influyen en el bienestar de las mujeres a través de sus decisiones. Aunque estos capítulos se han focalizado en el bienestar, cabe señalar que este objetivo también es abordado indirectamente en capítulos previos.

Es necesario señalar que, al plantear el objetivo de esta tesis se pretendió utilizar una misma medida de toma de decisión para poder homogeneizar la estructura de la parte empírica. No obstante, no fue posible encontrar una medida adecuada a los objetivos planteados. Aunque este hándicap dificultó el progreso esperado de la presente tesis, también permitió ir abordando el proceso de decisión de manera diferencial en función de los hallazgos que se fueron obteniendo. Por esta razón, la manera en la que el proceso de decisión ha sido evaluado a lo largo de los capítulos, refleja cómo se ha ido variando el instrumento de medida progresivamente en función de los resultados encontrados en los capítulos previos. Por ello, entre cada capítulo empírico se ha incluido un breve resumen argumentativo con la finalidad de facilitar la comprensión entre capítulos.

A continuación, se presenta un breve resumen de cada uno de los capítulos empíricos. Cada uno de ellos representa un artículo científico independiente que ha sido publicado (Capítulos 2, 3, 4) o en vías de publicación (Capítulos 5, 6, 7).

Resumen de los Capítulos Empíricos

Capítulo 2: Gender Differences in Decision-Making: The Effects of Gender Stereotype Threat Moderated by Sensitivity to Punishment and Fear of Negative Evaluation

El Capítulo 2 examina la influencia de la amenaza del estereotipo en el proceso de toma de decisión. En concreto, analiza cómo las diferencias de género en la toma de decisión de unas y otros están predeterminadas por la amenaza del estereotipo. Además, considera la sensibilidad al castigo y el miedo a la evaluación negativa como posibles moderadores de esta relación. Los resultados revelaron que la amenaza del estereotipo afecta al proceso de toma de decisión de las personas. Las mujeres bajo condiciones de amenaza del estereotipo toman decisiones menos arriesgadas que los hombres en la misma condición, o incluso que las mujeres en condiciones de no amenaza. Así mismo, los resultados indicaron que el miedo a la evaluación negativa moderaba dicha relación,

mientras que la sensibilidad al castigo no tuvo efecto alguno. En concreto, las mujeres en la condición de amenaza del estereotipo con mayor miedo a la evaluación negativa parecían tomar decisiones menos arriesgadas que el resto de los grupos de comparación.

Capítulo 3: Spanish Women Making Risky Decisions in the Social Domain: The Mediating Role of Femininity and Fear of Negative Evaluation

El Capítulo 3 se centra en analizar el papel que los roles de género, medidos a través de feminidad, tienen en la toma de decisión de las mujeres y hombres. Concretamente, se analiza cómo los roles de género a través del miedo a la evaluación negativa influyen en la toma de decisión en el ámbito social. Los hallazgos mostraron que, las mujeres (en comparación con los hombres) se identifican a sí mismas con una mayor feminidad, lo que les conduce a un mayor miedo a la evaluación negativa, y en consecuencia a asumir menor riesgo en este ámbito. Los resultados demostraron que, independientemente de los roles de género, las mujeres en comparación con los hombres toman decisiones más arriesgadas en el ámbito social, tal como “Mudarte a una ciudad lejos de tu familia”. No obstante, cuando las mujeres han interiorizado en mayor medida los roles de género, sus decisiones se tornan más conservadoras, (asumen menos riesgo), en parte por el miedo a ser evaluadas negativamente.

Capítulo 4: Are Gender Roles Associated With Well-Being Indicators? The Role of Femininity, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and Regret in Decision-Making in a Spanish Sample

El Capítulo 4 analiza el papel que los roles de género, medidos a través de la feminidad, tienen en el arrepentimiento de las decisiones de las mujeres, así como las consecuencias para su bienestar. Además, se analiza el contenido de las decisiones más importantes que las personas dicen tomar a lo largo de su vida. Los resultados mostraron que las mujeres (en comparación con los hombres) se identifican más con la feminidad, conduciéndole a experimentar en mayor medida miedo a la evaluación negativa, lo que le lleva a arrepentirse más de sus decisiones, y como consecuencia a experimentar un menor índice de bienestar general. Por su parte, el análisis de contenido llevado a cabo reveló que las mujeres consideraban que sus decisiones eran más difíciles en comparación con las de los hombres. En el caso de las mujeres, estas decisiones afectaban principalmente al trabajo y la familia, seguidas de las relaciones personales; mientras que

las de los hombres hacían referencia al trabajo principalmente seguido de las relaciones personales. En el contexto de las relaciones personales, las decisiones que concernían a la relación de pareja fueron las más comunes. En lo que al ámbito laboral y familiar se refiere, los resultados mostraron que las decisiones de las mujeres estaban más relacionadas con cambiar o dejar un trabajo para estar con la familia, mientras que las decisiones de los hombres lo estaban con estar lejos de la familia por motivos laborales.

Capítulo 5: Work and Family Sacrifices, a Double-Edged Sword: The Role of Authenticity and Partner Appreciation in Perception of Benefits and Costs

El Capítulo 5 se centra en analizar el papel de los roles de género, medidos a través de la fuerza comunal, en la percepción de costes y beneficios al realizar sacrificios laborales (i.e., decidir dejar el trabajo para estar con la familia) y familiares (i.e., decidir invertir más tiempo en el trabajo que en la familia). Además, analiza el papel de la autenticidad y el aprecio de la pareja en esta percepción. Los resultados mostraron que, en las mujeres, una mayor fuerza comunal estaba asociada con mayores beneficios al realizar sacrificios laborales. Además, esta relación estuvo mediada por el sentimiento de autenticidad y la percepción de apreciación de su pareja tras hacer el sacrificio. De modo que, las mujeres con una mayor fuerza comunal percibieron más beneficios derivados de hacer sacrificios laborales porque se sentían fieles a sí mismas, y además su pareja reforzaba este comportamiento. En los hombres, la fuerza comunal no predijo la percepción de beneficios. No obstante, los resultados mostraron que aquellos hombres que se sentían más fieles a sí mismos tras hacer sacrificios familiares percibían más beneficios de hacerlos al sentir el aprecio de su pareja.

Capítulo 6: How do Women and Men Perceive the Sacrifice of Leaving Work for Their Families? A Cost–Benefit Analysis

En el Capítulo 6 se analiza de manera más exhaustiva las diferencias de género en la percepción de beneficios y costes al realizar sacrificios laborales y familiares. Además, se tienen en cuenta cómo las variables interpersonales (i.e., compromiso y satisfacción con la relación) influyen en esta percepción, y por ende en el bienestar de las mujeres y hombres. Los resultados mostraron que, tanto las mujeres como los hombres percibían el sacrificio laboral como más costoso para los hombres y más beneficioso para las mujeres, así como que las mujeres se sentían más auténticas al realizarlo. No se encontraron

resultados significativos para el sacrificio familiar. Así mismo, para las mujeres (pero no para los hombres) un mayor compromiso, así como una mayor satisfacción con la relación se asociaron con una mayor percepción de beneficios al realizar sacrificios laborales, y en consecuencia con una mayor satisfacción con la vida.

Capítulo 7: It Was Not the Best Option: Family-Role Overload and Regret About Making Work Sacrifices

En el Capítulo 7 se examina si las mujeres (en comparación con los hombres) con una mayor sensación de sobrecarga familiar se arrepienten más después de analizar los costes derivados de su sacrificio laboral. Así mismo, se analiza el papel de variables interpersonales (i.e., ideología de rol de la pareja) como predictor de este modelo; y cómo las variables de este modelo predicen el bienestar de las mujeres. Los resultados indicaron que, las mujeres (pero no los hombres) con una mayor sensación de sobrecarga familiar se arrepienten más de sus sacrificios laborales al percibir más costes derivados de esta decisión. La ideología de rol tradicional de la pareja predijo la sobrecarga familiar de las mujeres, y por ende la percepción de costes y arrepentimiento tras realizar sacrificios laborales. Finalmente, el hecho de que las mujeres se sintieran más sobrecargadas en el ámbito familiar estuvo relacionado con una menor satisfacción con sus vidas debido a la percepción de mayores costes al hacer sacrificios laborales y a un mayor arrepentimiento.

The Present Dissertation

The above literature review highlights the importance of analyzing how gender socialization influences people's behavior, and in particular women's decision-making process, due to the consequences it entails for them. The evidence shows that men's decisions are more oriented toward achieving their own objectives, while women's decisions are more oriented toward caring for others. The greater social expectation about women's behavior limits their capacity directs their decision making to what is right. This situation places women in seemingly invisible situations of inequality. Despite extensive empirical evidence about gender differences in the decision-making process, few studies have explored beyond these differences, trying to analyze the associated variables. Likewise, although several studies have qualitatively investigated how women feel after choosing to invest more in others than in themselves, the effects on the degree of regret and its relationship with well-being have received little empirical attention.

This doctoral dissertation arose with the interest of making explicit the invisibilized inequality in women's decision-making process, analyzing the effects of gender socialization in this process. On this basis, this doctoral dissertation generally aims to analyze how certain variables (contextual and interpersonal) derived from gender roles associate with differences in men's and women's decision-making patterns, where, unlike men, women seem to be guided more by what they should do than by what they want to do. In addition, we analyze how when women make decisions in accordance with what is expected of them, their well-being is affected. To achieve this objective, the dissertation is structured in six empirical chapters. Chapter 1 provides a brief theoretical background on the areas of interest and the variables related to this process. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 include studies that analyze how certain contextual variables associate with gender differences in decision-making patterns in general. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the role of certain interpersonal variables in the decision-making process, contextualized in work- and family-related decisions (i.e., sacrifices). Finally, Chapters 4 and 7 analyze how gender roles affect women's well-being through their decisions. Although these chapters focus on well-being, it should be noted that this objective is also addressed indirectly in previous chapters.

It is necessary to indicate that, when establishing the objective of this thesis, the intention was to use the same measure of decision making to homogenize the structure of the empirical part. However, it was not possible to find a measure suitable for the objectives proposed. Although this handicap hindered the expected progress of the present dissertation, it made it possible to approach the decision-making process in a differential manner according to the findings we obtained. For this reason, the way in which the decision process has been evaluated throughout the chapters reflects how the measurement instrument has been progressively varied according to the results found in the previous chapters. For this reason, a brief overview has been included between each empirical chapter to facilitate understanding between the chapters.

A brief summary of each of the empirical chapters follows. Each chapter represents an independent scientific article that has been published (Chapters 2, 3, and 4) or is in the process of publication (Chapters 5, 6, and 7).

Summary of Empirical Chapters

Chapter 2: Gender Differences in Decision-Making: The Effects of Gender Stereotype Threat Moderated by Sensitivity to Punishment and Fear of Negative Evaluation

Chapter 2 examines the influence of stereotype threat on the decision-making process. Specifically, it analyzes how stereotype threat predetermines gender differences in decision making. In addition, it considers how sensitivity to punishment and fear of negative evaluation possibility moderate this relationship. The results revealed that stereotype threat affects people's decision-making process. Women under stereotype threat conditions make less risky decisions than men do in the same condition or even than do women in non-threat conditions. Likewise, the results indicated that fear of negative evaluation moderated this relationship while sensitivity to punishment had no effect. Specifically, women in the stereotype threat condition with a greater fear of negative evaluation appeared to make less risky decisions than the rest of the comparison groups did.

Chapter 3: Spanish Women Making Risky Decisions in the Social Domain: The Mediating Role of Femininity and Fear of Negative Evaluation

Chapter 3 focuses on analyzing how gender roles, measured through femininity, affect women's and men's decision making. Specifically, it analyzes how, through fear of negative evaluation, gender roles influence decision making in the social domain. The findings showed that women (compared to men) identify themselves with a greater femininity, which leads to a greater fear of negative evaluation and consequently to take less risk in this area. The results showed that regardless of gender roles, women compared to men take riskier decisions in the social sphere, such as, "Moving to a city far away from your family." However, when women internalize gender roles to a greater extent, their decisions become more conservative (they take less risks), partly because of the fear of being negatively evaluated.

Chapter 4: Are Gender Roles Associated With Well-Being Indicators? The Role of Femininity, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and Regret in Decision-Making in a Spanish Sample

Chapter 4 analyzes how gender roles, measured through femininity, influence women's decision regret as well as the consequences for their well-being. In addition, we analyze the content of the most important decisions that people report making throughout their lives. The results showed that women (compared to men) identify more with femininity, leading them to experience a greater fear of negative evaluation, which leads them to regret their decisions more, and consequently to experience a lower general well-being level. In turn, the content analysis carried out revealed that women considered their decisions to be more difficult compared to those of men. In the case of women, these decisions mainly concerned work and family, followed by personal relationships, while those of men referred mainly to work followed by personal relationships. In the context of personal relationships, decisions concerning relationships were the most common. Regarding work and family, the results showed that women's decisions related more to changing or leaving a job to be with the family, while men's decisions related to being away from the family for work reasons.

Chapter 5: Work and Family Sacrifices, a Double-Edged Sword: The Role of Authenticity and Partner Appreciation in Perception of Benefits and Costs

Chapter 5 focuses on analyzing how gender roles, measured through communal strength, influence the perception of costs and benefits of making work sacrifices (i.e., deciding to leave work to be with the family) and family sacrifices (i.e., deciding to invest more time in work than in the family). In addition, it analyzes the roles of authenticity and partner appreciation in this perception. The results showed that, for women, greater communal strength associated with greater benefits from making work sacrifices. Moreover, the feeling of authenticity and the perceived appreciation of their partner after making the sacrifice mediated this relationship. Thus, women with higher communal strength perceived more benefits from making labor sacrifices because they felt true to themselves, and their partners reinforced this behavior. For men, communal strength did not predict perceived benefits. However, the results showed that the men who felt more faithful to themselves after making family sacrifices perceived more benefits from making them because they felt their partners' appreciation.

Chapter 6: How do Women and Men Perceive the Sacrifice of Leaving Work for Their Families? A Cost–Benefit Analysis

Chapter 6 analyzes more exhaustively the gender differences in the perception of benefits and costs of making work and family sacrifices. In addition, we consider how interpersonal variables (i.e., commitment and relationship satisfaction) influence this perception, and thus women's and men's well-being. The results showed that both women and men perceived work sacrifice as more costly for men and more beneficial for women, and that women felt more authentic in making work sacrifice. We found no significant results for family sacrifice. Likewise, for women (but not for men) greater commitment as well as greater relationship satisfaction associated with greater perceived benefits of making work sacrifices and consequently greater life satisfaction.

Chapter 7: It Was Not the Best Option: Family-Role Overload and Regret About Making Work Sacrifices

Chapter 7 examines whether women (compared to men) with a greater sensation of family overload have more regret after analyzing the costs derived from their work sacrifice. We also analyze the role of interpersonal variables (i.e., partner role ideology) as a predictor of this model and how the variables in this model predict women's well-being. The results indicated that women (but not men) with a greater sense of family overload regretted their work sacrifices more because they perceived more costs derived from this decision. Traditional partner role ideology predicted women's family overload, and thus perceived costs and regret after making work sacrifices. Finally, that women felt more overloaded in the family sphere related to lower satisfaction with their lives due to the perception of higher costs of making work sacrifices and greater regret.

Empirical Studies

Estudios Empíricos

Chapter 2

*Gender Differences in Decision-Making:
The Effects of Gender Stereotype Threat
Moderated by Sensitivity to Punishment
and Fear of Negative Evaluation*

**Gender Differences in Decision-Making: The Effects of Gender Stereotype Threat
Moderated by Sensitivity to Punishment and Fear of Negative Evaluation**

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Abstract

Research has demonstrated gender differences in the decision-making process, showing that women make more disadvantageous risk decisions than men. However, these differences have not been examined in terms of psychosocial or sociostructural variables, such as the gender stereotype threat. We conducted an experimental study ($Ns = 105$) to test the well-established stereotype threat effect on decision-making through the Iowa Gambling Task and the possible moderation of this effect by sensitivity to punishment and fear of negative evaluation. The results revealed that women under a stereotype threat condition make more disadvantageous risk decisions than men in the same conditions or women in the nonstereotype threat condition. Moreover, women greatly fearing negative evaluation seemed to make more disadvantageous risk decisions compared with other groups. These findings highlight the relevance of psychosocial variables that legitimize gender inequality, such as the stereotype threat and fear of negative evaluation, in women's decision-making process.

Keywords: stereotype threat, decision-making, Iowa gambling task, fear of negative evaluation, gender differences

Gender Differences in Decision-Making: The Effects of Gender Stereotype Threat Moderated by Sensitivity to Punishment and Fear of Negative Evaluation

Every day, people are involved in a multitude of social interactions through which they are exposed to possible positive or negative evaluations that can affect their cognitive processes. Indeed, it has been found that situations involving social evaluative or stereotype threats undermine performance on cognitive tasks (Baumeister et al., 2002; Schmader et al., 2008). These threats differ in nature: a stereotype threat occurs when a person is aware of a negative stereotype about their social group and is concerned about confirming it, which undermines their performance on stereotype tasks (e.g., women in math, Black people on standardized tests, or White males in athletics; Spencer et al., 1999; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Stone, 2002, respectively). According to Schmader et al. (2008), a social evaluative threat occurs when a person believes they will perform poorly on a task due to expectations that others could have for their performance (e.g., a 5-min speech in front of an evaluative audience: Brown et al., 2012). In this sense, the manipulations of stereotype threats are designed to remember the negative stereotype about one's group (e.g., Spencer et al., 1999), whereas those in social evaluative are designed to create a sense of public criticism through a social presence or a negative social evaluation (Dickerson & Kemeny, 2004). Another significant difference is that a stereotype threat increases one's motivation to do something well to try to disconfirm the negative stereotype, while this motivation is not clearly related to social evaluative threats (Schmader et al., 2008). Therefore, the threats are different from each other. On this basis, this research aims to investigate how belonging to a stigmatized group (stereotype threat) can affect individual performance. Specifically, we analyze how the gender stereotype threat can affect women's cognitive processes, such as decision-making.

The stereotype threat experienced by women in the science domain is triggered by negative stereotypes about their mathematical ability (Steele, 1997). Socially, women are not considered competent in stereotypical masculine domains (e.g., mathematics), and consequently, feeling threatened leads to a decrease in their performance (e.g., Spencer et al., 1999). Research has demonstrated that women constantly experience this sensation of threat, which could extend over other domains, such as decision-making (Carr & Steele, 2010). Decision-making is one of the most important components of executive function (Bechara et al., 2000a); therefore, it is important to understand the possible

factors that affect it. The stereotype threat could explain gender differences in decision-making; women (vs. men) require more effort and time to make decisions (e.g., Evans & Hampson, 2015; van den Bos et al., 2013), increasing gender inequality situations. For instance, it has been shown that the stereotype threat decreases women's risk-aversion behavior (Carr & Steele, 2010), which could lead to women's decreased participation in stereotypically masculine domains (e.g., leadership positions), maintaining their underrepresentation and therefore legitimizing gender inequality. That is why we propose broadening empirical evidence through the Iowa Gambling Task (IGT), shown to be able to predict real-life decision deficits (Bechara et al., 1994). The IGT was created to evaluate a person's ability to make decisions in non-clinical and clinical samples (e.g., Bechara et al., 1994; Weller et al., 2010). The IGT score has been associated with people's tendency to take risks (e.g., Weller et al., 2010); a higher IGT score is associated with more advantageous risk decisions. The IGT is a computer task in which participants must learn about gains and losses progressively using four decks of cards (A, B, C, and D). Two are “bad choices” (A and B), which provide immediate, high gains but great long-term losses, and two are “good choices” (C and D), which provide immediate, low gains but small long-term losses. Subjects are not aware of the decks' characteristics until they choose an option; then, the computer gives them feedback on the consequences of their choice. Specifically, this research could add to knowledge about how the stereotype threat affects decisions in a more realistic way, given that IGT findings have been shown to be generalizable outside the laboratory. In fact, it was designed to assess real-life decision making in individuals with lesions of the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, showing that they made disadvantageous risk decisions in this task (Bechara et al., 1994; Bechara et al., 2000a; Bechara et al., 2000b). In addition, the IGT has been associated with disadvantageous risk decisions in individuals with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (e.g., Dekkers et al., 2018), sexual risk behaviors (e.g., Hardy et al., 2006), alcohol abuse (e.g., Kovács et al., 2017), or even in individuals with excessive social network sites use (Meshi et al., 2019). Further, to our knowledge, no research has been done on stereotype threats related to IGT; thus, this work would contribute to knowledge in this field.

Stereotype Threat

Each group in society is associated with positive or negative stereotypes depending on their characteristics. According to the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002), stereotypes are captured by two dimensions—competence and warmth—through which differences between groups are established, legitimizing the social status of each one. Regarding gender, men have been characterized by high competence and low warmth, whereas women have been characterized by a lack of competence and high warmth. Fiske et al. (2002) indicated that competence differentiates between groups to a greater extent, showing public signs such as performance on tasks. Indeed, it has been established that in tasks requiring high competence, such as mathematics, women do not perform as well as men (e.g., Spencer et al., 1999).

In this respect, it seems that referring to gender differences in math tasks triggers a threatening environment in which women may fear being judged due to their gender (for a review, see Spencer et al., 2016). Indeed, Spencer et al. (1999) were the main authors in the stereotype threat field who demonstrated that referring to gender differences in math tasks triggered a stereotype threat in women (vs. men). Researchers studying the gender stereotype threat have suggested that for women, the activation of negative stereotype in math undermines their performance because they feel threatened and are afraid to confirm the stereotype, in contrast to women who do not feel threatened or men (e.g., Spencer et al., 1999). This also seems to occur with other stereotypes, such as the racial stereotype threat (i.e., black people have lower intellectual ability than White people; Steele, 1997). There is empirical research showing that the activation of negative stereotypes related to intellectual ability undermines the performance of Black people on standardized academic tests compared with White participants and others who are not threatened (e.g., Ho & Sidanius, 2010; Steele & Aronson, 1995). To try to explain how the stereotype threat undermines performance in stigmatized individuals, Schmader et al. (2008) developed an integrated process model of the stereotype threat. According to their model, the stereotype threat activates three processes: the physiological stress response, such as increased activation of the sympathetic nervous system (Murphy et al., 2007); monitoring the self-relevance of performance, such as increased motivation to do well (Schmader et al., 2008); and suppression of thoughts or emotions, such as feeling self-doubt and worry or having a scattered mind (Beilock et al., 2007; Mrazek et al., 2011;

Steele & Aronson, 1995). This model explains that these mechanisms, triggered by the stereotype threat, can interrupt the working memory of the stigmatized individual (e.g., women in math) that is essential for achieving difficult cognitive tasks (e.g., decision-making).

Thus, the stereotype threat should be considered, as it causes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral consequences among women. The activation of negative stereotypes in math (i.e., women are bad at math) among women causes consequences in stereotypically masculine domains (e.g., mathematics), and these effects spill over into other domains, such as verbal ability (Beilock et al., 2007), perceptual learning (Rydell & Boucher, 2017), basic executive functions (Rydell et al., 2014), and decision-making (Carr & Steele, 2010), giving rise to what is known as stereotype threat spillover (Inzlicht & Kang, 2010; Rydell & Boucher, 2017). On this basis, we propose broadening the research on the stereotype threat and decision-making, because is one of the most important components of executive functions (Bechara et al., 2000a).

Decision-Making

Decision-making is an individual process that can determine a person's life course. When people make decisions, they assess the advantages and disadvantages of options and the costs and benefits associated with them (Bechara, 2005). Literature on decision-making has found gender differences: in general, women carry out integrated information processing, using all available information in an environment, even when this information may lead them to make disadvantageous decisions. Men process information selectively, using specific information that benefits their decisions (Byrne & Worthy, 2016). That is, men make decisions based on a goal-oriented performance, being able to ignore environmental information (e.g., consequences or risks of a decision) to achieve their goal, whereas women take all environmental information into account, focusing their attention on all details (e.g., benefits and consequences of a decision). Therefore, men do not mind making decisions that involve great risks as long as they achieve their goal, whereas women consider the risks of these decisions which seem to influence their final decision. This gender difference can be observed in risk decisions: men make riskier decisions than women do through explicit (Domain-Specific Risk-Taking scale: Lozano et al., 2017) and implicit measures (Cambridge Gambling Task: Deakin et al., 2004; IGT: van den Bos et al., 2013). Although many implicit risk-taking tasks have been used to test

gender differences (e.g., Balloon Analogue Risk Task: e.g., Lighthall et al., 2012; Columbia Card Task: Buelow & Cayton, 2020; Game of Dice Task: e.g., Zhang et al., 2017), only the Cambridge Gambling Task and IGT found significant differences.

Based on this range of tasks, we decided to use an implicit measure (IGT or Cambridge Gambling Task) instead of an explicit measure (Domain-Specific Risk-Taking) because it has been shown that implicit measures better predict intuitive decision-making than explicit measures (Richetin et al., 2007). Participants cannot control their answers in implicit measures as much as in explicit measures, removing any possible social desirability bias. Specifically, we used the IGT instead of the Cambridge Gambling Task because we considered it more appropriate to measure risk-taking for several reasons. A test–retest reliability of the decision-making tasks indicated that the IGT is the only task that assesses the decision-making process in its entirety (ambiguity and risk; Buelow & Barnhart, 2018). Furthermore, Buelow and Blaine's (2015) factor analysis found that the IGT is not comparable with other risk-taking tasks; in the IGT, participants must learn through exploration to differentiate advantageous from disadvantageous options as a function of risks and benefits (e.g., van den Bos et al., 2013). Therefore, the main difference between IGT and other tasks is the learning process in decision-making: participants make decisions based on their experiences (i.e., past outcomes), so it is considered to more closely resemble real-life decisions (Bechara et al., 1994). In this sense, Bishara et al. (2009) found a change in decision consistency over time in the IGT response, which reflects how people change their decisions based on their experience, such as in real-life situations. Lastly, research has demonstrated greater gender differences in IGT results than in other measures (for a review, see van den Bos et al., 2013). The IGT may be best suited for detecting gender differences because in contrast to the Cambridge Gambling Task, where participants must select among different boxes without any information; in the IGT, participants receive information about gains and losses associated with each decision. Therefore, participants can make their decisions based on the information provided to them, where gender differences can be reflected. It has been shown that men process information selectively to make decisions, whereas women take all environmental information into account (Byrne & Worthy, 2016; Meyers-Levy, 1989), being more sensitive to losses than wins (Garrido-Chaves et al., 2020).

Gender differences in the IGT have suggested that women make more disadvantageous risk decisions than men (e.g., Singh et al., 2020; van den Bos et al., 2013). The explanations for these differences have been limited to stress (e.g., Santos-Ruiz et al., 2012), anxiety (e.g., Zhang et al., 2017), or information processing (e.g., Byrne & Worthy, 2016); there is not enough evidence regarding psychosocial or socio-structural variables, such as the stereotype threat. Research has shown that the stereotype threat could explain gender differences in decision-making (Carr & Steele, 2010), but to our knowledge, no study has tried to explain these differences using the IGT for decision-making assessment. Carr and Steele (2010) investigated the effect of the stereotype threat on risk-aversion behavior—measuring it through loss aversion and risk aversion (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), finding that women under the stereotype threat condition were more risk- and loss-averse than men in the same condition and women in the nonstereotype condition. These differences could be due to the stereotype threat triggering several processes that interrupt working memory (e.g., stress, hypervigilance, or worry), which is essential for achieving cognitive tasks (Schmader et al., 2008). Indeed, women under stereotype threat conditions showed lower working memory than men in the same conditions and women under nonstereotype conditions (e.g., Schmader & Johns, 2003). These findings could be associated with decision-making, given that several studies on the IGT have shown that decision-making is significantly associated with working memory (for a review, see Woodrow et al., 2019). Participants with low working memory capacity seem to make disadvantageous risk decisions than those with high capacity (Bagneux et al., 2013; Duarte et al., 2012). Considering the stereotype threat and the IGT, it could be said that the stereotype threat would decrease women's working memory by causing constant worry about their performance under threat situations, consequently causing them to make more disadvantageous risk decisions during the IGT than others. Based on this reasoning, we expected women under the stereotype threat condition to score lower on the IGT (make more disadvantageous risk decisions) than men in the same condition or women and men in the nonstereotype condition.

It is noteworthy that the effect of the stereotype threat on decision-making could be moderated by sensitivity to punishment or fear of negative evaluation (FNE). Women have higher context sensitivity than men (Miller & Ubeda, 2012); that is, they seem to be more sensitive to signals (e.g., threats, punishments, and negative social evaluations) and consequently could modify their behavior in accordance to what is expected of them (i.e.,

being warm and incompetent and therefore not making risky decisions). Could these variables help us explain how the stereotype threat affects women's decision-making process, as they assess how people fear failing or being evaluated and punished?

Sensitivity to Punishment and Fear of Negative Evaluation

Sensitivity to punishment measures the functioning of the behavioral inhibition system—the cognitive processes triggered by the threat of failure or punishment (Torrubia et al., 2001). It assesses an individual's ability to detect cues that indicate failure or punishment. Gender differences have shown that women exhibit more sensitivity to punishment than men (Castellà & Pérez, 2004; Torrubia et al., 2001). Therefore, it seems that women have higher context sensitivity than men do, being more sensitive to contextual signals (e.g., stereotype threat). Indeed, it was found that sensitivity to punishment, that is, a hypervigilant personality style, seems to affect people (e.g., anxiety or depression; Katz et al., 2020) through an attentional bias toward threatening information (Hundt et al., 2007). In this sense, women who score higher on sensitivity to punishment could decrease their performance due to stereotype threat to a greater extent, given that they would have a greater sensitivity and would look for information (e.g., cues that indicate potential failure) to confirm or disprove negative stereotypes about their group (Schmader et al., 2008). Regarding decision-making, it has been found that women make decisions on the basis of integrating and understanding all information in an environment (Byrne & Worthy, 2016), and therefore, their decisions are determined by context to a great extent (Miller & Ubeda, 2012). This cognitive pattern can be observed in the IGT (van den Bos et al., 2013), which has demonstrated that men's abilities to make decisions are based more on goal-oriented performance and the ability to ignore environmental information (e.g., losses). In contrast, women focus their attention on details (e.g., losses). As a result, men tend to attempt to maximize long-term gains, and women focus on maximizing short-term gains without perceiving the significant losses such decisions might incur. If it is taking into account the sensibility to punishment and the IGT; it has found that people with high sensitivity to punishment score lower on the IGT (make disadvantageous risk decisions; Davis et al., 2007). Therefore, women's performance in terms of maximizing short-term gains (making disadvantageous risk decisions) could be explained by their greater sensitivity to punishment. Specifically, under stereotype threat conditions this sensitivity could increase women's perception of

this threat because they could consider losses in the IGT as a sign of stereotype confirmation and try to avoid them, *a priori* selecting the option that presents fewer losses. It should be noted that we have considered punishment as the number of losses that women receive as feedback after their decision. Therefore, we expected sensitivity to punishment to moderate the effect of the stereotype threat in the IGT; that is, that women in the stereotype threat condition with high sensitivity to punishment would score lower on the IGT than others.

Beyond the aforementioned, the fear of negative evaluation (FNE) could also be a variable moderator. FNE refers to the sensation that a person experiences when they fear they could be evaluated negatively by others (Gallego et al., 2007). It has been found that women score higher on FNE than men (e.g., Biolcati, 2017). This sensation can be said to resemble the concern that women under threat conditions feel about their performance in terms of avoiding confirmation of negative stereotypes. Maresh et al. (2017) found that participants with high levels of FNE in threat conditions showed greater difficulty to perform tasks effectively than in nonthreat conditions. Although we did not find studies that tested the moderator effect of FNE together with gender stereotype threat, this is one of the studies indicating that FNE could explain the individual performance under threatening conditions. In this sense, it is expected that the performance of participants with high levels of FNE—usually women—under stereotype threat conditions is affected to a greater extent. Regarding the relationship between FNE and decision-making, Maner et al. (2007) found a relationship between FNE and risk-taking (measured through the Balloon Analog Risk Task; Lejuez et al., 2003), indicating that FNE is linked to a tendency to make less risky decisions. Concerning the IGT, we could not find any studies have assessed both constructs, and neither under the stereotype threat. Considering the empirical evidence, we expected FNE to moderate the effect of the stereotype threat in the IGT; that is, that women in the stereotype threat condition with high FNE would score lower on the IGT than others.

Based on this theoretical conceptualization, this research aims to analyze the effect of the gender stereotype threat in decision-making—measured through IGT—and the possible moderation of this effect by sensitivity to punishment and FNE. Specifically, we expected that women in the stereotype threat condition would score lower on the IGT (make more disadvantageous risk decisions) than: men in the stereotype threat condition

(Hypothesis 1), women in the nonstereotype threat condition (Hypothesis 2), and men in the nonstereotype threat condition (Hypothesis 3). Furthermore, we expected sensitivity to punishment and FNE to moderate the effect of the stereotype threat in IGT: in other words, that women in the stereotype threat condition with high sensitivity to punishment would score lower (make more disadvantageous risk decisions) on the IGT than others (Hypothesis 4) and that women in the stereotype threat condition with high FNE would score lower on the IGT than others (Hypothesis 5).

Preliminary Study

Given the importance that the manipulation work as we intended, we decided to carry out a preliminary study to test the effect of Carr and Steele's manipulation (Carr & Steele, 2010), because their study was one of the first to find that the stereotype threat decreased women's risk-aversion behavior in decision-making. Participants were told that they would complete a task of mathematical, logical, and rational reasoning (stereotype threat condition) or that they would complete a puzzle-solving task (nonstereotype threat condition). Following Carr and Steele's procedure, participants also had to indicate their gender before beginning the task, whereas in the nonstereotype threat condition, they indicated it after completing the questionnaire. After this manipulation participants completed the corresponding measures (IGT, sensitivity to punishment and fear of negative valuation). Results demonstrated that, with our sample, Carr and Steele's manipulation (Carr & Steele, 2010) was not effective in eliciting a real threat in women (see Supporting Information). This manipulation could not work in this study due to women being unaware or not worrying about negative stereotypes associated with their performances in math (Steele, 1997). Perhaps it is necessary to refer to gender differences in math tasks to trigger the stereotype threat—making the threat explicit to remind women of the negative stereotype associated with their group. It would generate a threatening environment in which women may fear being judged in relation to their gender (Spencer et al., 2016). Referring to gender differences in math tasks to develop a stereotype threat condition was the manipulation used by Spencer et al. (1999), who performed the main research on the stereotype threat and women's math performance. Therefore, based on this preliminary study, we decided to use the classic manipulation developed by Spencer et al. (1999) to carry out the present study.

Main Study

Method

Participants

A convenience sample of 110 undergraduate psychology students (62 women and 48 men; ages 18–37, $M_{\text{age}} = 21.49$, $SD = 2.74$) from the University of Granada took part in the study voluntarily and without financial compensation. Familiarity with the task was an exclusion criterion. Five participants failed to pass an attention check, therefore they were removed, leaving a sample of 105 undergraduate psychology students (58 women and 47 men; ages 18–37, $M_{\text{age}} = 21.51$, $SD = 2.77$). Using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007), we conducted a sensitivity power analysis ($1 - \beta = 80\%$; $\alpha = .05$; $N = 105$), which revealed that that the design could detect a sufficiently acceptable¹ effect size of $f = 0.28$ using a two-way ANOVA with four groups and one degree of freedom.

Procedure and Design

This was an experimental 2 (gender: male vs. female) $\times 2$ (stereotype threat: stereotype threat vs. nonstereotype threat) between-group design with IGT total score as the dependent variable and sensitivity to punishment and FNE as moderators. Participants were randomly assigned to experimental conditions (stereotype threat condition: 21 men and 31 women; nonstereotype threat condition: 26 men and 27 women).

To carry out the study participants were seated in separate cubicles equipped with computers. Before starting the experiment, we informed them about the aim of the study (evaluating how people make decisions) and about the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses, asking them to sign the informed consent form if they agreed after reading it (“After being informed of the above, I agree to participate in the study”). Once they accepted it, the experimental manipulation was presented to them. Participants then received the instructions for performing the computer task. When they completed the task, we administered the questionnaire with the rest of the measures. They performed the

¹ To determine that this effect size was sufficiently acceptable we referred to previous literature. Carr and Steele (2010) tested the effect of the gender stereotype threat on decision-making, and obtained effect sizes of $f = .10$ and $f = .12$. Moreover, a review of social psychology studies (Richard et al., 2003) found an average effect size of .21 in general, and an average of .12 for gender differences. Lastly, Cohen (1969) defined a value of $f = .25$ as a medium effect.

experiment without the female experimenter present. The approximate duration of the experiment was 20 min. We conducted this study following the recommendations of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Granada and protected the collected data under the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki.

Measures

Stereotype Manipulation (stereotype threat vs. nonstereotype threat)

In alignment with Spencer et al. (1999), the main researchers of the stereotype threat and women's math performance as well as other studies (e.g., Beilock et al., 2007; Rydell et al., 2014), the negative stereotype of women in the domain of mathematics was manipulated through a brief text. In the stereotype threat condition (*threatening to women*), we told participants that there were gender differences on a mathematics test:

There are empirical studies that show that women perform worse than men in tasks of mathematical, logical, and rational reasoning. This research aims to investigate the reasons for these differences and the factors involved in the development of these tasks.

In the nonstereotype threat condition (*nonthreatening to women*), we did not refer to gender differences:

There are empirical studies that show that some people perform worse than others in tasks of mathematical, logical, and rational reasoning. This research aims to investigate the reasons for these differences and the factors involved in the development of these tasks.

Furthermore, Danaher and Crandall (2008) demonstrated that inquiring about gender at the end of a test (versus at the beginning) decreases gender differences in the results. Thus, in the stereotype threat condition, we told participants to indicate their gender before beginning the task, whereas in the nonstereotype threat condition, they indicated it after completing the questionnaire (Carr & Steele, 2009, 2010).

Next, participants completed the following measures:

Iowa Gambling Task

This measure implicitly simulates the decision-making process in everyday life through the evaluation of gains and losses under conditions of uncertainty or risk (Bechara et al., 1994; Bechara et al., 2000b). Participants must choose between four decks of cards: two of them are “bad choices” (A and B), which provide immediate, high gains but great long-term losses, and the other are “good choices” (C and D), providing immediate, low gains but small long-term losses. After the participant chooses a deck, the program gives feedback (gains or losses), based on which participants must decide on the best options. The end goal is to try to win as much money as possible. The dependent variable was measured by the overall IGT score after 100 trials, which, according to the authors, is the difference between the number of advantageous and disadvantageous choices. A higher IGT score indicates advantageous risk decisions, whereas a low IGT score indicates disadvantageous risk decisions.

Control Question

In the following measures, an extra control question was included to identify subjects not paying attention (e.g., “If you are reading this question, answer with 3”; Lozano et al., 2017).

Fear of Negative Evaluation

The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation scale (Leary, 1983), adapted into Spanish by Gallego et al. (2007), was used. Twelve items assess the degree to which people experience fear of being evaluated negatively by others through 5-point Likert-type statements (e.g., “I am frequently afraid of other people noticing my shortcomings”; 1= *not at all characteristic of me*, 5 = *extremely characteristic of me*). Average scores were calculated: a higher score means a greater tendency to be afraid in situations in which one can be evaluated by others. This scale revealed adequate psychometric properties in the original measure ($\alpha = .90-.91$) and in its validation for the Spanish population ($\alpha = .90$). In this sample, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .89.

Sensitivity to Punishment

The subscale of the Punishment Sensitivity and Reward Sensitivity Questionnaire developed by Torrubia et al. (2001) was used. It consists of 24 dichotomous items (*Yes/No*) measuring individual differences in the functioning of behavioral inhibition systems (cognitive processes triggered by the threat of failure or punishment; e.g., “Generally, do you pay more attention to threats than to pleasant events?”). The total score was obtained through the sum of affirmative answers. The original measure revealed acceptable reliability and validity properties ($\alpha = .82 - .83$). With this data, the internal consistency was .82.

Results

Data Analysis

We tested the effects of the stereotype threat condition (stereotype threat vs. nonstereotype threat) on the IGT with a two-way ANOVA between groups (see Figure 1). Then, to test the possible moderation of these effects by sensitivity to punishment or FNE, a moderation analysis was performed with the PROCESS (Model 3; Hayes, 2017) macro for SPSS (version 3.4.1) with 10,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals. To calculate the magnitude of the interaction ($\geq .02/.15/.35$ indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988), we determined the standardized effect size f^2 on the basis of the change in R^2 (Δf^2). Post hoc tests were calculated by simple slope tests (see Figure 2; Dawson, 2014). We performed the analyses with IBM SPSS Statistics version 22.0.

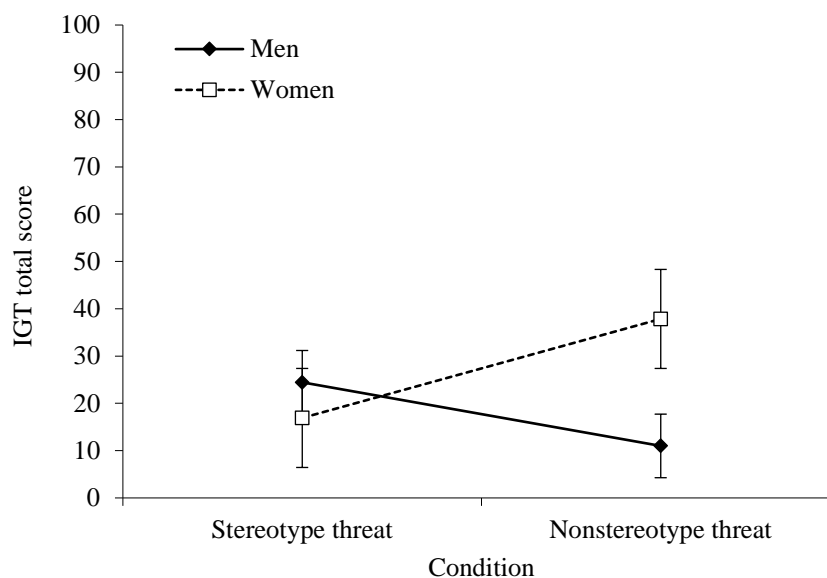
Effects of the Stereotype Threat on Decision-Making

We conducted a two-way ANOVA to test if women in the stereotype threat condition would score lower on the IGT than: men in the stereotype threat condition (Hypothesis 1), women in the nonstereotype threat condition (Hypothesis 2), and men in the nonstereotype threat condition (Hypothesis 3). The experimental condition (0 = stereotype threat; 1 = nonstereotype threat) and gender (0 = male; 1 = female) were introduced as independent variables and the IGT total score as dependent variable. The results revealed the predicted gender-by-condition interaction, $F(1, 101) = 19.39, p <$

.001, $\eta_p^2 = .16$ (see Figure 1).² That is, women assigned to the stereotype threat condition ($M = 11.03$, $SD = 26.74$) scored lower on the IGT than men in the stereotype threat condition, $t(50) = 2.39$, $p = .02$, 95 CI [2.39, 27.93], $d = .65$, ($M = 26.19$, $SD = 19.08$), and women assigned to the nonstereotype threat condition, $t(55) = -4.32$, $p < .001$, 95 CI [-39.27, -14.37], $d = 1.13$, ($M = 37.85$, $SD = 20.46$); no gender differences were found in men assigned to the nonstereotype threat condition ($p = .99$, 95 CI [-14.66, 14.59]). These findings supported Hypotheses 1 and 2, but not 3.³

Figure 1

Effect of Gender-by-Condition Interaction Over the Iowa Gambling Task



Note. IGT total score: the difference between the number of advantageous and disadvantageous choices. Error bars show \pm standard error of the mean.

Sensitivity to Punishment

To analyze whether women in the stereotype threat condition with high sensitivity to punishment would score lower on the IGT than others (Hypothesis 4), we performed a moderation analysis. We took the condition (0 = stereotype threat; 1 = nonstereotype threat) as the predictor variable, sensitivity to punishment and gender (0 = male; 1 =

² The power was calculated using G*Power, obtaining a value of 99% and an effect size of $f = .44$.

³ Under the nonstereotype threat condition, women scored higher on the IGT than men: $t(46) = -3.98$, $p < .001$, 95 CI [-40.44, -13.26], $d = 1.09$, ($M_{women} = 37.85$, $SD = 20.46$; $M_{men} = 11.00$, $SD = 27.96$).

female) as moderators, and IGT total score as the criterion variable. The results showed that the three-way interaction between Gender \times Condition \times Sensitivity to Punishment was not significant ($b = 1.02$, $SE = 2.09$, $t = 0.49$, $p = .625$, 95 CI $[-3.12, 5.17]$, $\Delta f^2 = .002$).

Fear of Negative Evaluation

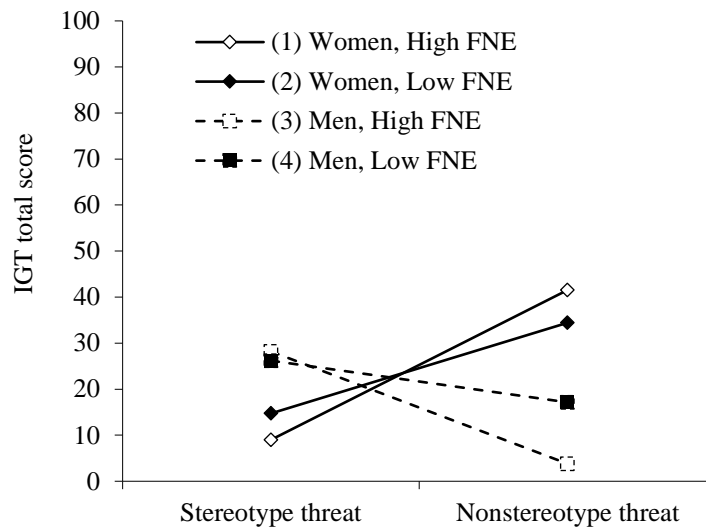
Lastly, we tested whether women in the stereotype threat condition with high FNE would score lower on the IGT than others (Hypothesis 5). We followed the same steps as in the previous moderation analysis, considering FNE as the moderator. The results revealed the significant three-way interaction predicted by Gender \times Condition \times FNE ($b = 26.60$, $SE = 12.87$, $t = 2.07$, $p = .04$, 95 CI $[1.06, 52.14]$, $\Delta f^2 = .03$).

To ease the interpretation of the three-way interaction effect, we illustrated the results in Figure 2 and examined the plausible differences between groups using simple slope tests. According to Dawson (2014; Dawson & Richter, 2006) this analysis checks whether the difference between slopes is statistically significant. As shown in Figure 2, in the stereotype threat condition, women high in FNE (+1 *SD*) seemed to score lower on the IGT than others. In contrast, in the stereotype threat condition, women low in FNE (–1 *SD*) seemed to score higher on the IGT than others. This observation can be supported by simple slope tests, as there was a significant difference between the slopes; that is, women high in FNE (1) scored lower on the IGT than women low in FNE (2), $t = 2.04$, $p = 0.04$; men high in FNE (3), $t = 2.24$, $p = 0.03$; and men low in FNE (4), $t = 2.164$, $p = 0.03$.⁴

⁴ Simple slope tests showed significant differences between slopes (2) and (4), $t = 2.47$, $p = 0.02$, but not between (2) and (3), $t = 0.77$, $p = 0.44$, or (3) and (4), $t = 1.94$, $p = 0.06$.

Figure 2

Interaction of Stereotype Threat, Gender, and Fear of Negative Evaluation on the Iowa Gambling Task



Note. High: + 1 *SD*; low: –1 *SD*; IGT total score: the difference between the number of advantageous and disadvantageous choices.

Discussion

This research aims to investigate the effect of the gender stereotype threat in decision-making —measured through IGT— and the possible moderation of this effect by sensitivity to punishment and FNE. The results observed showed that women under a stereotype threat condition scored lower on the IGT than men in the same condition, and women in the nonstereotype threat condition. Additionally, women with higher FNE scored lower on the IGT than others. These findings highlight the importance of the stereotype threat and FNE (psychosocial variables) in decision-making, explaining gender differences in this process. Research using the IGT has demonstrated that gender differences in decision-making exist; women make more disadvantageous risk decisions than men (e.g., Singh et al., 2020; van den Bos et al., 2013). These differences have been attributed to stress (e.g., Santos-Ruiz et al., 2012), anxiety (e.g., Zhang et al., 2017), or information processing (e.g., Byrne & Worthy, 2016). Nevertheless, previous research has not taken psychosocial or socio-structural variables into account regarding the stereotype threat to try to explain these gender differences. Empirical evidence has shown the effect of the gender stereotype threat on decision-making (Carr & Steele, 2010) as one

of the possible factors of the persistence of gender inequality. Nevertheless, so far, this effect has not been evaluated with the IGT, one of the most common tasks used to measure decision-making.

Regarding the effect of the stereotype threat on decision-making, findings showed that women under the stereotype threat condition scored lower on the IGT; that is they made more disadvantageous risk decisions than men in the same condition and women in the nonstereotype threat condition. These findings are in line with empirical evidence (Carr & Steele, 2010), showing that women under a stereotype threat condition were more averse to risk than men in the same condition and women in a nonstereotype condition. This could indicate that the gender stereotype threat affects women's decision-making process. Women are aware of negative stereotypes about their social group and are concerned about confirming negative stereotypes about their group when they perform a task (Steele & Aronson, 1995). As a result, under stereotype threat situations, women report monitoring their performance (for a review, see Spencer et al., 2016), worrying more about it (Beilock et al., 2007), feeling self-doubt (Steele & Aronson, 1995), or having a scattered mind (Mrazek et al., 2011). All of these cognitive activities interrupt working memory (Schmader et al., 2008), which is essential for good performance on difficult tasks (Régner et al., 2010). This could apply to decision-making (Woodrow et al., 2019), leading to women making more disadvantageous risk decisions.

Concerning the effect of the stereotype threat on decision-making, we have considered sensitivity to punishment and FNE as possible moderators to help explain gender differences. Firstly, we expected that individuals with high levels of sensitivity to punishment—usually women—would be more affected by threatening information (Hundt et al., 2007), such as stereotype threat, which might have interfered in their IGT performance because they would look for information (e.g., cues that indicate potential failure) to confirm or disprove negative stereotypes about their group (Schmader et al., 2008). Nevertheless, we did not find significant effects of sensitivity to punishment as a moderator of decision-making. Our results may be due to the measure of sensitivity used: Because it was an explicit measure (e.g., “In tasks that you are not prepared for, do you attach great importance to the possibility of failure? or Generally, do you pay more attention to threats than to pleasant events?”), participants could have answered as a function of social desirability. Perhaps an implicit measure would be necessary to detect

the level of sensibility to punishment for women under stereotype threat conditions. Regarding the FNE, the results showed that women high in FNE scored lower on the IGT than others; that is, they made more disadvantageous risk decisions when they were fearful of being evaluated. These results are in line with and expand on those of previous studies that indicated that people high in FNE showed greater difficulty to perform tasks effectively (Maresh et al., 2017) and a tendency to make less risky decisions (Maner et al., 2007).

Our findings could be framed in the *integrated process model of the stereotype threat* (Schmader et al., 2008). The stereotype threat seems to trigger a fear of being negatively evaluated by others (FNE) in women under the stereotype threat condition. This sensation could be similar to the concern that threatened women feel about their performance in terms of avoiding confirming negative stereotypes (e.g., Beilock et al., 2007). Consequently, threatened women may try to suppress their thoughts or emotions, a process that, according to Schmader et al. (2008), could interrupt working memory, which is necessary to achieve cognitive tasks such as decision-making. Indeed, it has been shown that decision-making is significantly associated with working memory (for a review, see Woodrow et al., 2019). Considering the stereotype threat and IGT, it could be said that the stereotype threat would affect women's working memory negatively through constant exposure to the FNE under threat situations, and consequently, they would make more disadvantageous risk decisions than others. This study contributes to Schmader et al.'s model of how the stereotype threat could influence stigmatized individuals (i.e., women). To support these findings, it would be interesting to take working memory into account as a control variable. Régner et al. (2010) found that the decrease in women's performance triggered by the stereotype threat could be related to working memory, supporting Schmader et al. (2008). Specifically, they found that stereotype threat patterns emerged among women with low levels of working memory, who underperformed to a greater extent; we discuss this further in the limitations section.

Regarding the nonstereotype threat condition, it should be noted that although Carr and Steele (2010) found no significant differences between women under a stereotype threat condition and men assigned to a nonstereotype threat condition, they obtained different results in terms of tendencies: Women were more averse to risk than men under the nonstereotype threat condition (see Footnote 3). We discuss plausible

explanations below. On one hand, the IGT was described as a mathematical task; thus, it ought not to have produced a perception of threat in men, given that mathematical domains are perceived as masculine and languages as feminine (Chaffe et al., 2019). The nonstereotype threat condition was designed to not threaten women, but it could have worked as a threat to men's gender identity. Even though we did not refer to gender differences in this condition, we mentioned that "some people have worse performance than others in mathematical, logical, and rational reasoning tasks". According to a stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002) men should perform better than women because math requires high competence. Men could have felt pressured to answer correctly or feared obtaining a worse score than women, according to what is expected of them. Therefore, men could have perceived this condition as a threat to their gender identity, consequently undermining their performance, as occurs with women in stereotype threat situations (Schmader et al., 2008). On the other hand, when women make decisions, they consider all signals of the environment (e.g., Byrne & Worthy, 2016; Miller & Ubeda, 2012). In this condition, apparently, there were not any cues or information that threatened women, which could have increased their ability to make decisions. Therefore, the condition could have worked as a safe environment for women, showing that they have sufficient skills to make decisions. Both the plausible threat to men's gender identity and benefits to self-confidence for women could explain the larger gender differences in this condition. The gender differences in the threat condition could have been smaller because although the stereotype threat undermines women's performance, this effect could be decreased due to lower gender inequality in society.

Last, we would like to indicate that FNE seems to have various roles across genders and conditions. The stereotype threat could have triggered FNE in women, interfering in their capacity to achieve a cognitive task. In a similar way, perhaps men in the nonstereotype threat condition felt threatened and had a high FNE, which could have undermined their performance, as occurs with women in stereotype threat situations (Schmader et al., 2008). By contrast, when there is not a threat, FNE could have worked as a motivation to do well.

Limitations, Future Research, and Implications

This research has important limitations that will be addressed in subsequent studies. First, the participants were psychology students, which could undoubtedly produce biased results due to their having knowledge of the processes involved in tasks of this type. To improve the generalizability of the research results, studies based on the general population should be carried out. Second, it is necessary to include an implicit measure of sensitivity to punishment to avoid possible biases. Third, to support that the stereotype threat undermines IGT performance by affecting working memory, we recommend that future researchers consider working memory as a control or moderating variable. Lastly, although incentives could improve or worsen performance (or neither; Camerer & Hogarth, 1999), Fryer et al. (2008) found that women in stereotype threat conditions without financial incentives performed better than women in other conditions. Future research could analyze how real incentives might affect women's performance in IGT under stereotype threat conditions, contributing to this field. Furthermore, we would like to note that our results shed light on how stereotype threat manipulation can affect women, but this result cannot be generalized, as it was not designed to create a threat perception in men. Lastly, although the interaction term Gender \times Condition \times FNE was statistically significant, caution is warranted in the interpretation of this finding because the effect size was small (Cohen, 1988). In this sense, and given that it is a preliminary finding, it would be convenient for future studies could replicate it, strengthening the preliminary findings with a greater significance and effect size.

Despite the fact that literature on decision-making shows gender differences explained by stress or anxiety, the influence of psychosocial variables on this process has scarcely been studied. The results highlight the importance of the stereotype threat and FNE in decision-making as being able to explain gender differences in this process. Overall, this research raises important social psychology insights, highlighting the importance of women's identities and how they affect the individual process of decision-making. Research has shown that the stereotype threat affects women's goals or objectives, undermining their confidence in achieving their professional goals (von Hippel et al., 2011). If the FNE is added to these consequences, women could have more difficulty reaching their objectives, given that they would focus their attention on signals that indicate failure. The effects of both variables spill over into the decision-making

domain and could affect any decision that involves some risk. Indeed, this may be extrapolated to decisions that women might consider risky in everyday life, like leaving or staying with their partner, choosing one career over another, or choosing to accept a promotion, and so on.

It is necessary to establish an effective intervention to reduce the concerns caused by the stereotype threat, and this finding can be generalized to other domains (Shapiro et al., 2013). Organizations' implementation of family-work conciliation policies does not improve the family-work conflict, perhaps because these policies do not address the threat of stereotype (Miller, 2019). It is essential to decrease the occurrence of stereotype threats through safe environments in which women do not feel threatened (Spencer et al., 2016) and, therefore, do not feel overloaded or pressured when making decisions. Holding onto a stereotype threat may handicap women by limiting their capacities to make decisions, legitimizing gender inequality in society. In sum, the findings of this research highlight the importance of considering the psychosocial variables of an environment and how their effects can spill over into women's decisions. These effects could be decreased if they are considered in the educational field in terms of creating safe environments. Rosenthal (1994) showed that teachers' beliefs that boys are better than girls at math undermine girls' learning, as these teachers generate threatening situations. An egalitarian belief is necessary to avoid this type of situation. Teachers may show students role models who have overcome these stereotypes, such as Maryam Mirzakhani, the first woman to be awarded a Fields Medal in mathematics. Moreover, they can teach students about the stereotype threat, which has been shown to decrease its effects (Johns et al., 2005). Likewise, it has been found that several educational methods, such as collaboration, can decrease the stereotype threat. Students who complete tests collaboratively show better performance than those who complete the same tests individually (Pociask & Rajaram, 2014). In this sense, Pociask and Rajaram (2014) found that the effects of completing the collaborative test spilled over to a second individual test for girls. Thus, addressing the stereotype threat in education can help keep it from affecting girls' behavior for the rest of their lives.

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Supplemental Material

Gender Differences in Decision-Making: The Effects of Gender Stereotype Threat
Moderated by Sensitivity to Punishment and Fear of Negative Evaluation

Preliminary Study

Method

Participants

An initial convenience sample of 121 undergraduate psychology students (73 women and 48 men; ages 17–34, $M_{\text{age}} = 21.45$, $SD = 2.61$) from the University of Granada took part in the study voluntarily and without financial compensation. Familiarity with the task was an exclusion criterion. Furthermore, six participants were removed because they failed to pass an attention check, leaving a final sample of 115 undergraduate psychology students (68 women and 47 men; ages 17–34, $M_{\text{age}} = 21.56$, $SD = 2.64$). Using G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007), we conducted a sensitivity power analysis ($1 - \beta = 80\%$; $\alpha = .05$; $N = 115$). It revealed that the design could detect an effect size of $f = 0.26$ using a two-way ANOVA with four groups and one degree of freedom.

Procedure and Design

This was an experimental 2 (gender: male vs. female) x 2 (stereotype threat: stereotype threat vs. nonstereotype threat) between-group design with IGT total score as the dependent variable and sensitivity to punishment and FNE as moderators. Participants were randomly assigned to experimental conditions (stereotype threat condition: 22 men and 37 women; nonstereotype threat condition: 25 men and 31 women).

Participants were seated in separate cubicles equipped with computers. We informed them about aim of the study (how people make decisions) and about the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses, asking them to sign the informed consent form if they agreed after reading it (“After being informed of the above, I agree to participate in the study”).

Participants were presented the experimental manipulation after the instructions for performing the computer task. Once they completed the task, we administered the questionnaire with the rest of the measures. They performed the task without the female experimenter present. The approximate duration of the experiment was 20 min. We conducted this study following the recommendations of the Human Research Ethics

Committee of the University of Granada and protected the collected data under the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki.

Measures

Stereotype Manipulation (stereotype threat vs. nonstereotype threat)

In this study, we used the manipulation of Carr and Steele (2010) because they found that the stereotype threat decreased women's risk-aversion behavior in decision-making. Participants were told that they would complete a task of mathematical, logical, and rational reasoning (*stereotype threat condition*) or that they would complete a puzzle-solving task (*nonstereotype threat condition*).

Furthermore, Danaher and Crandall (2008) demonstrated that inquiring about gender at the end of a test (versus at the beginning) decreases gender differences in the results. Thus, in the stereotype threat condition, we told participants to indicate their gender before beginning the task, whereas in the nonstereotype threat condition, they indicated it after completing the questionnaire (Carr & Steele, 2009, 2010).

Next, participants completed the following measures:

Iowa Gambling Task

This measure implicitly simulates the decision-making process in everyday life through the evaluation of gains and losses under conditions of uncertainty or risk (Bechara et al., 1994; Bechara, Tranel, & Damasio, 2000). Participants must choose between four decks of cards: Two of them are "bad choices" (A and B), which provide immediate, high gains but great long-term losses, and the other are "good choices" (C and D), providing immediate, low gains but small long-term losses. After the participant chooses a deck, the program gives feedback (gains or losses), based on which participants must decide on the best options. The end goal is to try to win as much money as possible. The dependent variable was measured by the overall IGT score after 100 trials, which, according to the authors, is the difference between the number of advantageous and disadvantageous choices. A higher IGT score indicates advantageous risk decisions, whereas a low IGT score indicates disadvantageous risk decisions.

Control Question

In the following measures, an extra control question was included to identify subjects not paying attention (e.g., “If you are reading this question, answer with 3”; Lozano et al., 2017).

Fear of Negative Evaluation

The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation scale (Leary, 1983), adapted into Spanish by Gallego et al. (2007) was used. Twelve items assess the degree to which people experience fear of being evaluated negatively by others through 5-point Likert-type statements (e.g., “I am frequently afraid of other people noticing my shortcomings”; 1 = *not at all characteristic of me*, 5 = *extremely characteristic of me*). Average scores were calculated: a higher score means a greater tendency to be afraid in situations in which one can be evaluated by others. This scale revealed adequate psychometric properties in the original measure ($\alpha = .90 - .91$) and in its validation for the Spanish population ($\alpha = .90$). In this sample, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .91.

Sensitivity to Punishment

The subscale of the Punishment Sensitivity and Reward Sensitivity Questionnaire developed by Torrubia et al. (2001) was used. It consists of 24 dichotomous items (*Yes/No*) measuring individual differences in the functioning of behavioral inhibition systems (cognitive processes triggered by the threat of failure or punishment; e.g., “Generally, do you pay more attention to threats than to pleasant events?”). The total score was obtained through the sum of affirmative answers. The original measure revealed acceptable reliability and validity properties ($\alpha = .82 - .83$). With this data, the internal consistency was .85.

Data Analysis

To check the effects of the stereotype threat condition (stereotype threat vs. nonstereotype threat) on the IGT, we performed a two-way ANOVA between groups. Then, to test the possible moderation of these effects by sensitivity to punishment or FNE, a moderation analysis was performed with the PROCESS (Model 3; Hayes, 2017) macro for SPSS (version 3.4.1) with 10,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples and 95%

confidence intervals. To calculate the magnitude of the interaction ($\geq .02/.15/.35$ indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988) we determined the standardized effect size f^2 on the basis of the change in R^2 (Δf^2). We performed the analyses with IBM SPSS Statistics version 22.0.

Results

Effects of the Stereotype Threat on Decision-Making

We conducted a two-way ANOVA to test if women in the stereotype threat condition would score lower on the IGT than: men in the stereotype threat condition (Hypothesis 1), women in the nonstereotype threat condition (Hypothesis 2), and men in the nonstereotype threat condition (Hypothesis 3). The experimental condition (0 = stereotype threat; 1 = nonstereotype threat) and gender (0 = male; 1 = female) were introduced as independent variables and the IGT total score as dependent variable. The results did not reveal a significant gender-by-condition interaction ($p = .95$), which does not support Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3.

Sensitivity to Punishment

To analyze whether women in the stereotype threat condition with high sensitivity to punishment would score lower on the IGT than others (Hypothesis 4), we performed a moderation analysis. We entered condition (0 = stereotype threat; 1 = nonstereotype threat) as the predictor variable; gender (0 = male; 1 = female) and sensitivity to punishment as moderators, and IGT total score as the criterion variable. We found that the three-way interaction of Gender \times Condition \times Sensitivity to Punishment was not significant ($b = .46$, $SE = 2.06$, $t = 0.22$, $p = .826$, 95 CI $[-3.63, 4.54]$, $\Delta f^2 = .0004$), which did not support Hypothesis 4.

Fear of Negative Evaluation

We analyzed whether women in the stereotype threat condition with high fear of negative evaluation would score lower on the IGT than others (Hypothesis 5). We followed the same steps as the previous analysis, with fear of negative evaluation as the moderating variable. The three-way interaction was not significant, either ($b = 4.00$, $SE = 12.91$, $t = 0.31$, $p = .757$, 95 CI $[-21.58, 29.59]$, $\Delta f^2 = .0008$), which did not support Hypothesis 5.

Chapter 3

*Spanish Women Making Risky Decisions
in the Social Domain: The Mediating Role
of Femininity and Fear of Negative
Evaluation*

La medida de toma de decisión usada en el Capítulo 2 fue creada en origen para medir la capacidad de las personas en el proceso de toma de decisión (Bechara et al., 1994). Según los autores, una mayor tendencia a tomar decisiones arriesgadas indicaba una mayor habilidad para tomar decisiones en general. Los resultados de nuestro estudio revelaron cómo las situaciones de discriminación de género, como es el caso de la amenaza del estereotipo afectaban a la capacidad de toma de decisión de las mujeres. En concreto, encontramos que las mujeres bajo condiciones de amenaza del estereotipo tomaron decisiones menos arriesgadas que los hombres en la misma condición, y que las mujeres y hombres en la condición control. No solo el contexto de amenaza pareció afectar a la toma de decisión, también los pensamientos que experimentan ante la sensación de ser evaluadas negativamente por los y las demás (i.e., miedo a la evaluación negativa). Los resultados mostraron que el proceso de toma de decisión de las mujeres se ve afectado en condiciones de amenaza del estereotipo, cuando sienten un mayor miedo a la evaluación negativa. Los resultados permitieron dar un paso más para conseguir el objetivo de analizar la influencia de las variables contextuales en el proceso de toma de decisión.

Continuando con esta línea, en el Capítulo 3 se aborda cómo los roles de género, medidos a través de la feminidad, influyen en la toma de decisión de las mujeres a través del miedo a la evaluación negativa. Si en el capítulo anterior, el miedo a la evaluación negativa fue considerada como una variable moderadora, en este capítulo empírico ha sido considerada como variable mediadora en la relación entre los roles de género y el proceso de toma de decisión. El motivo de este cambio fue el deseo de examinar si los roles de género podrían ser posibles antecedentes del miedo a la evaluación negativa, dado que como señala la literatura, las mujeres son las que sufren mayores sanciones sociales por su comportamiento. En consecuencia, el Capítulo 3 analiza cómo el miedo a la evaluación negativa, desencadenado por los roles de género, limita la toma de decisión de las mujeres.

Además, en este Capítulo se trata de acercar la variable toma de decisión al contexto social, de modo que el instrumento de medida empleado en este estudio fue la subescala del dominio social de la escala de toma de riesgos en dominios específicos (DOSPERT-30; Blais y Weber, 2006).

The decision-making measure used in Chapter 2 was originally created to measure people's ability in the decision-making process (Bechara et al., 1994). According to the authors, a greater tendency to make risky decisions indicated greater decision-making ability in general. Our study's results revealed how gender-discriminatory situations, such as stereotype threat, affected women's decision-making ability. Specifically, we found that women under stereotype threat conditions made less risky decisions than men did in the same condition and less than women and men did in the control condition. Not only did the threat context seem to affect decision making but also the thoughts they experienced when faced with the feeling of others negatively evaluating them (i.e., fear of negative evaluation). The results showed that women's decision-making process was affected under conditions of stereotype threat when they felt a greater fear of negative evaluation. The results allowed us to take a further step toward the goal of analyzing the influence of contextual variables on the decision-making process.

Following this line, Chapter 3 discusses how gender roles, measured through femininity, influence women's decision making through fear of negative evaluation. If in the previous chapter, fear of negative evaluation was considered as a moderating variable, in this empirical chapter, it is considered as a mediating variable in the relationship between gender roles and the decision-making process. We made this change to examine whether gender roles could be possible antecedents of fear of negative evaluation, given that, as the literature points out, women suffer the greatest social sanctions for their behavior. Consequently, Chapter 3 analyzes how fear of negative evaluation, which gender roles trigger, restricts women's decision making.

In addition, this chapter aims to bring the decision-making variable into a social context, thus the measurement instrument used in this study was the social domain subscale of the domain-specific risk-taking scale (DOSPERT-30; Blais & Weber, 2006).

**Spanish Women Making Risky Decisions in the Social Domain: The Mediating
Role of Femininity and Fear of Negative Evaluation**

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Abstract

Authors have empirically evidenced that cultural stereotypes influence gender-typed behavior. With the present work, we have added to this literature by demonstrating that gender roles can explain sex differences in risk-taking, a stereotypically masculine domain. Our aim was to replicate previous findings and to analyze what variables affect women making risky decisions in the social domain. A sample composed of 417 Spanish participants (281 women and 136 men), between 17 and 30 years old ($M = 22.34$, $SD = 3.01$), answered a set of self-report measures referring to femininity, fear of negative evaluation, and social risk-taking. According to the main results, sex indirectly linked to risk-taking in the social domain, through femininity and fear of negative evaluation. Specifically, women (vs. men) self-reported higher feminine traits, which were associated with increased fear of negative evaluation, which in turn was associated with less risky decisions in the social domain. Thus, we have showed the relationship between gender roles and women's behaviors in a stereotypically masculine domain (risk-taking). Our findings highlight the necessity of considering a gender-based perspective in the field of risk-taking, showing that not all women make more risky decisions in the social domain.

Keywords: risk-taking, femininity, fear of negative evaluation, gender roles, sex differences, gender stereotypes

Spanish Women Making Risky Decisions in the Social Domain: The Mediating Role of Femininity and Fear of Negative Evaluation

Notwithstanding an increase in women and men occupying nontraditional domains, gender stereotypes are still present in society and influence women's and men's behaviors (Eagly & Wood, 2016). Gender stereotypes have sustained gender inequality (Ellemers, 2018), limiting women to stereotypically feminine activities (i.e., the private sphere; Eagly & Wood, 2016) and discriminating against them if they do not carry out these types of activities (Rudman et al., 2012). In this respect, empirical evidence has shown sex differences in decision-making (a stereotypically masculine domain; Morgenroth et al., 2018), namely that women make fewer risky decisions than men (e.g., Figner & Weber, 2011; van den Bos et al., 2013). Nevertheless, when some real-life domains of risk-taking are taken into account, researchers have demonstrated that men make more risky decisions in all domains except the social domain, where women make more risky decisions (e.g., Blais & Weber, 2006; Lozano et al., 2017; Morgenroth et al., 2018).

Recent studies have tried to explain these differences, demonstrating that they should be interpreted with caution. For example, Rolison and Shenton (2020) indicated that these differences could be due to item bias. In this study, from a gender-based perspective, we proposed that these differences could be due to the influence of other variables, such as femininity and fear of negative evaluation. In this sense, previous research has shown traditional gender roles (femininity) increase the preference for stereotypically feminine domains (e.g., Dinella et al., 2014). Furthermore, femininity seems to restrict social behavior; Cella et al. (2013) found that femininity increased social insecurity. Hence, persons who identify themselves as more feminine – usually women – seem to be concerned about others' expectations of them, given that they have to behave in a manner consistent with their gender role (Eagly, 1987). Consequently, their behavior seems to tend to avoid the prospect of being evaluated negatively, decreasing their participation in stereotypically masculine domains, such as sports (e.g., Yi-Hsiu & Chen-Yueh, 2013). In this respect, the sensation people experience at the prospect of being evaluated negatively by others has been specified as fear of negative evaluation (FNE; Leary, 1983). In this study, we proposed broadening the research on women, gender stereotypes, and FNE in another stereotypically masculine domain: risk-taking. We have

reported a gender-based perspective on how, through femininity and fear of negative evaluation, women make decisions in the stereotypically masculine domain of risk-taking.

The Importance of Gender Stereotypes to Women

By social role theory (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Eagly, 1987; Eagly et al., 2000), people learn that they have to behave consistently with their gender role, given that women and men are socialized into different values starting from their childhood. A prescription exists for what women and men are expected to do: Women have to behave in accordance with a communal dimension – maintenance of relationships – and men in accordance with an agency one – goal achievement and task-functioning. Despite an increase in women and men in nontraditional domains in recent years, traditional beliefs and lifestyles have not changed. Haines et al. (2016) compared the 1980s to the 2nd decade of the 21st century and did not find a decline in the traditional gender beliefs about women and men in several domains (traits, physical characteristics, occupations, gender roles, etc.). Those who hold such traditional beliefs continue to associate women with being primary caregivers and men with being primary family providers (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Eagly & Wood, 2016). In this way, gender roles maintain the hegemony of patriarchy and justify the subordination of women (Ellemers, 2018), obstructing their personal and professional development (Craig & Mullan, 2011; Llinares-Insa et al., 2018). Hence, women are the main group affected by this patriarchal system in which gender roles limit their behavior and therefore interfere with their full progress and well-being.

Literature has respectively equated communal and agency dimensions with femininity (i.e., friendliness, concern for others, and expressiveness) and masculinity (i.e., mastery, independence, and competence; Bem, 1974; Abele & Wojciszke, 2014) – both gender stereotype traits. Men and women thus integrate masculinity or femininity self-concepts into themselves and self-regulate their behaviors according to them. In this regard, empirical evidence has demonstrated that women score significantly higher on self-report scales of feminine traits than men, and men higher on masculine traits than women (Kamas & Preston, 2012; López-Zafra et al., 2012; Mueller & Dato-On, 2013). Accordingly and in line with social role theory (Eagly, 1987), sex predicts feminine and masculine gender roles (e.g., Powell & Greenhaus, 2010; Ward & King, 2018; Howard

& Fox, 2020); that is, persons who identify themselves as more feminine – usually women – may be expected to engage in activities related to housework, childcare, or social relationships. By contrast, persons who identify themselves as more masculine – usually men – may be expected to perform behaviors related to physically demanding or decision-making tasks (e.g., Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). Given this difference, women were our research object, and owing to gender roles affecting their personal and professional development, we used the variable of femininity as a trait that reflects women's gender roles and so could help explain how gender roles affect their behavior in stereotypically masculine domains.

A large body of research has shown that femininity entails what women self-perceive as less competence, perpetuating gender roles in the private and public spheres (i.e., stereotypically feminine domains). Specifically, femininity predicts a family role (Powell & Greenhaus, 2010), increased interest in feminine careers or traditionally feminine jobs (Weisgram et al., 2011; Dinella et al., 2014), and decreased entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Mueller & Dato-On, 2013). At the same time, femininity affects well-being by increasing body dissatisfaction, body image concern, and depersonalization (Cella et al., 2013) as well as levels of spillover (Powell & Greenhaus, 2010). Indeed, it can affect types of strategies for managing social conflicts and increase sensibility to the needs of others, rather than decisiveness or selfishness (Keener & Strough, 2017). In line with the prior literature, we considered femininity as a possible predictor of sex differences in stereotypically masculine domains (e.g., risk-taking).

Femininity and Fear of Negative Evaluation

Eagly and Wood (2016) argued that one of the main reasons people continue to conform to their gender roles is the negative social evaluation they could receive if they were to disregard them. Indeed, if women violate gender roles, they are perceived more negatively than a stereotypical male or female (e.g., Sutherland et al., 2015). Consequently, they fall victim to social and economic penalties (what is known as backlash; e.g., Rudman et al., 2012), such as prejudice and discrimination (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 1997; Rudman & Phelan, 2008), and even they can be perceived as lesbian regardless of sexual orientation (e.g., Salvati et al., 2019). In this sense, we propose that women who self-report greater feminine traits could experience more FNE, for if they were to deviate from their femininity, they could experience negative sanctions.

Specifically, it has been found that people with higher FNE tend to behave in a manner to avoid the prospect of being evaluated negatively, to be more concerned about making good impressions, and to seek social approval (Watson & Friend, 1969; Leary, 1983). This sensation (FNE) could be experienced by feminine women to a greater extent and could, therefore, be a variable limiting their behavior. In this sense, Cella et al. (2013) showed that femininity restricts social behavior, increasing avoidance or social insecurity.

Most studies on women, gender stereotypes, and FNE have been in the stereotypically masculine domain of sports (e.g., Yi-Hsiu & Chen-Yueh, 2013; for a review, see Chalabaev et al., 2013). It has generally been found that women experience higher FNE than men (e.g., Piqueras et al., 2012; Biolcati, 2017), decreasing or avoiding participation in masculine sports (e.g., Yi-Hsiu & Chen-Yueh, 2013). These findings could owe to women's concerns about not achieving social standards of femininity (Leary, 1992), given that if they were involved in stereotypically masculine domains (i.e., sports, work, decision-making...), their participation could be perceived as a deficiency in femininity, and they could receive negative sanctions. Similarly, in other stereotypically masculine domains, such as negotiations, Amanatullah and Morris (2010) demonstrated that fear of social costs affects women's strategic responses, representing a form of backlash.

Femininity, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and Risk-Taking

With this frame of reference, we propose broadening the research on women, gender stereotypes, and FNE in another stereotypically masculine domain: decision-making. Due to gender roles, women continue to take primary responsibility for family and childcare tasks, whereas men assume decision-making tasks (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). In fact, empirical evidence has shown sex differences in decision-making, namely that women make fewer risky decisions than men do (e.g., Figner & Weber, 2011; for a review, see van den Bos et al., 2013). Researchers have explained these differences by anxiety (e.g., Panno et al., 2018), stress (e.g., Santos-Ruiz et al., 2012), and even the type of information processing (e.g., Byrne & Worthy, 2016).

Specifically, the literature has also found sex differences in some real-life domains of risk-taking. These differences have appeared on the Domain-Specific Risk-Taking Scale (DOSPERT; Blais & Weber, 2006), a measure and one of the most effective clinical

instruments for assessing the tendency to make risky decisions across real-life domains (ethical, health, recreational, social, and financial; Harrison et al., 2005). Researchers have demonstrated that sex predicts risk-taking (e.g., Gowen et al., 2019). Specifically, men make more risky decisions in all domains except the social domain in which women make more risky decisions (e.g., Blais & Weber, 2006; Lozano et al., 2017; Morgenroth et al., 2018). Recent studies have tried to explain these sex differences on the DOSPERT scale, demonstrating that they must be interpreted with caution. On one hand, Rolison and Shenton (2020) through two studies argued that these differences could owe to the way the domains are represented. In their first study, they asked participants to report some activities in each of the domains – that is, participants had to think about and write activities, instead of answering to the original items. In their second study, they asked participants to indicate the likelihood that they would engage in each of the activities that other participants described in the first study. Their findings indicated that in the social domain, women perceived greater risk than men; in other words, they had a lower tolerance for risk. On the other hand, Zhang et al. (2019) pointed out that risk-taking in the social domain functions differently across groups. Furthermore, other authors have argued that there is a gender confirmation bias in risk-taking due to its traditional association with stereotypically masculine activity (Morgenroth et al., 2018), which could affect women’s behavior. Therefore, sex differences in the social domain (DOSPERT) should be exhaustively analyzed, given that there is controversy around this finding. Further, not all women could make more risky decisions in the social domain.

The Current Research

The present study aims to replicate previous findings and broaden the research on women, gender stereotypes, and risk-taking. The literature has indicated that women rate themselves more likely to make risky decisions in the social domain (e.g., Figner & Weber, 2011). Nevertheless, there is controversy around this finding (Zhang et al., 2019), which may cause confusion because people who identify themselves as more feminine – traditionally women – are conditioned to be more cautious, whereas those who identify themselves as more masculine – traditionally men – are conditioned to be riskier (Carver et al., 2013). In this sense, the social domain (e.g., “speaking your mind about an unpopular issue in a meeting at work” or “moving to a city far away from your extended family”) is a context in which women could experience more FNE if they were to make

risky decisions, given that they would deviate from their traditional role (Rudman et al., 2012). Moreover, researchers have demonstrated that women make decisions taking into account all information in an environment (e.g., social sanctions), even when this information could lead them to make bad decisions (e.g., Byrne & Worthy, 2016; Meyers-Levy, 1989). Hence, women who report greater feminine traits should experience higher FNE and thus make fewer risky decisions, because if they were to be involved in stereotypically masculine domains, they could be perceived as having a deficiency in femininity and could receive negative sanctions.

On the basis of prior studies' findings, we proposed that this gender confirmation bias in risk-taking (Morgenroth et al., 2018) could be explained through gender roles (femininity) and FNE. In this research, we replicated previous findings as well as tried to increase the knowledge on the implications of femininity for FNE in risk-taking in the social domain. The general purpose of this work is to analyze how women make risky decisions in the social domain through femininity and FNE. Specifically, we predicted that women in comparison to men would self-report greater feminine traits (Hypothesis 1a), would experience higher FNE (Hypothesis 1b), and would take greater risks in the social domain (Hypothesis 1c). Concerning correlation between variables, we hypothesized that femininity in women would be associated positively with FNE (vs. men; Hypothesis 2a) and negatively with risk-taking in the social domain (vs. men; Hypothesis 2b). We also expected that FNE would be negatively associated with risk-taking in the social domain in women (vs. men; Hypothesis 3). Finally, through a serial mediation model, we predicted that women (vs. men) would be associated with more femininity, which we expected to be associated with more FNE, which would in turn be associated with less risk-taking in the social domain (Hypothesis 4).

Material and Methods

Participants

We collected data from 502 students at the University of Granada in southern Spain. The inclusion criterion was being a student of the University of Granada. Among the participants who accessed the survey, eighty-five were excluded (14 did not complete it and 71 failed to pass an attention check item), leaving data from 417 participants (281 females and 136 males). Participants ranged in age from 17 to 30 ($M = 22.34$, $SD = 3.01$).

A priori power analysis of G*Power (Faul et al., 2009; Faul et al., 2007) revealed that we had to recruit at least 120 participants to conduct a correlation statistical test with a medium effect size of $d = .25$ ($1 - \beta = 80\%$; $\alpha = .05$).

Procedure

We invited participants to take part in the study through the university mailing list for students. In the email, participants received a questionnaire link and instructions to take part by an online platform. We obtained informed consent from participants before they began the study, telling them about the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses and allowing them to agree or decline to answer the survey (“After being informed of the above, I agree to participate in the study.”). If participants agreed, they could begin to answer the measures. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. The study is part of a broad project approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Granada.

Measures

Femininity

For femininity, we used the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974), adapted to the Spanish population by López-Sáez and Morales (1995, see also López-Sáez et al., 2008). The inventory assesses the extent to which people have incorporated feminine or masculine traits into their self-concepts. In particular, we administered the femininity subscale (e.g., “Sensitive to needs of others,” “childlike,” and “compassionate”). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which items described them (1 = *never or almost never true*, 7 = *almost always true*). In the present study, the internal consistency was 0.73, similar to administrations of the measure in other Spanish samples ($\alpha = 0.72$ –0.76, López-Sáez et al., 2008; López-Zafra et al., 2012).

Fear of Negative Evaluation

For FNE, we used the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (Leary, 1983; Spanish adaptation of Gallego et al., 2007), which consists of 12 items that identify the sensation people experience at the prospect of being evaluated negatively by others. Examples of items include “I am afraid that others will not approve of me” and “I often

worry that I will say or do the wrong thing” (1 = *not at all characteristic of me*, 5 = *extremely characteristic of me*). The Spanish adaptation showed a Cronbach’s α of 0.90. In this data set, averages scores showed an internal consistency of 0.87, similar to other Spanish samples ($\alpha = 0.91$, Piqueras et al., 2012).

Social Risk-Taking

We used the DOSPERT scale (Blais & Weber, 2006) to evaluate the likelihood of people making risky decisions within different domains of life (ethical, financial, health, recreational, and social). Lozano et al. (2017) adapted the scale to the Spanish population. We specifically administered the social subscale, which comprises six items (e.g., “Moving to a city far away from your extended family”; 1 = *extremely unlikely*, 7 = *extremely likely*). In the original version of the scale, the Cronbach’s α coefficient ranged between 0.57 and 0.79. The Spanish adaptation of the DOSPERT obtained an internal consistency of 0.64 (Lozano et al., 2017). With this sample, the subscale showed a Cronbach’s α of 0.65.

Attention Check

We included several extra attention check items among the scales to identify subjects not paying attention to the task (e.g., “If you are reading this question, answer with 3”; Lozano et al., 2017).

Results

Statistical Analysis Strategy

Before performing the main analysis, we checked data for testing assumptions of normality and multicollinearity. We then carried out the main analyses. To corroborate if the means of women and men were significantly different from each other in the study variables, we performed an independent samples t-test analysis using sex as the independent variable, and femininity, FNE, and social risk-taking as dependent variables (see Table 1). Additionally, to determine the association between the study variables, we carried out a bivariate correlation analysis as a function of sex (see Table 2). Lastly, we followed Hayes’s recommendations (2017) for testing indirect effects with serial mediators. In particular, we conducted analysis to determine whether femininity and FNE

mediated the relationship between sex and social risk-taking (see Figure 1; Table 3). In particular, we used model 6 of the PROCESS macro for SPSS version 3.4.1. We performed all analyses using version 22.0 of IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows.

Preliminary Analysis

Skewness and kurtosis values were reported in Table 2. According to Blanca et al., (2013) the values were < 1.0 and thus the assumption of normality was fulfilled. As can be observed in Table 2, correlations ranged from $r = .03$ to $r = .32$, and thus they were not greater than .70–.80, indicating that there was no multicollinearity (Slinker & Glantz, 1985).

Sex Differences

We conducted an independent samples *t*-test analysis to test whether women compared to men would self-report greater feminine traits (Hypothesis 1a), experience higher FNE (Hypothesis 1b), or score higher on risk-taking in the social domain (Hypothesis 1c). We used sex (0 = male; 1 = female) as the independent variable and femininity, FNE, and social risk-taking as dependent variables. As can be observed in Table 1, women self-reported greater feminine traits (Hypothesis 1a) and social risk-taking than men did (Hypothesis 1c). Conversely, with respect to FNE, the results did not show statistically significant differences based on participants' sex and thus did not support Hypothesis 1b.

Table 1*Sex Differences in Femininity, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and Social Risk-Taking*

	Men <i>M (SD)</i>	Women <i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI	Cohen's <i>d</i>
1. Femininity	4.57 (.82)	4.88 (.83)	-3.65	< .001	[-.486, -.146]	.38
2. FNE	2.99 (.78)	3.02 (.79)	-.24	.815	[-.180, .142]	.03
3. Social risk-taking	5.29 (.88)	5.63 (.79)	-3.99	< .001	[-.511, -.174]	.41

Note. FNE = fear of negative evaluation.

Correlations Across All Measures

To check associations between study variables, we performed a bivariate correlation analysis as a function of sex. In Table 2, correlations for women are shown above the diagonal, whereas those for men are shown below the diagonal. The results revealed that in women (vs. men), femininity was related positively to FNE ($r = .20$, $p < .01$; Hypothesis 2a) and negatively to social risk-taking ($r = -.13$, $p < .05$; Hypothesis 2b). Further, FNE in women was negatively associated with social risk-taking ($r = -.32$, $p < .01$; Hypothesis 3). In men, there were no significant correlations between variables. We used Fisher's r -to- z transformation for independent samples to determine whether there was a significant difference between correlation coefficients (Edi, Gollwitzer, & Schmitt, 2011). The results showed that the differences between femininity and FNE ($z = -2.22$, $p = .013$), femininity and social risk ($z = 2.51$, $p = .006$), and FNE and social risk-taking ($z = 1.73$, $p = .042$) were statistically significant. Therefore, these findings support Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 3, in that women who self-reported greater feminine traits experienced more FNE and make fewer risky decisions in the social domain.

Table 2*Correlations and Descriptive Statistics Across All Measures*

Variables	<i>n</i>	1.	2.	3.
1. Femininity	417	–	.20**	–.13*
2. Fear of negative evaluation	417	–.03	–	–.32**
3. Social risk-taking	417	.14	–.15	–
Range		(1–7)	(1–5)	(1–7)
Observed range		(2–6.56)	(1.08–5)	(2.67–7)
Mean (<i>SD</i>)		4.78 (.84)	3.01 (.78)	5.52 (.84)
Skewness / Kurtosis				
Women		–.324/.011	.111/–.767	–.499/–.287
Men		–.194/–.345	.166/–.581	–.379/.413

Note. Correlations for women are above the diagonal. Correlations for men are below the diagonal.

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

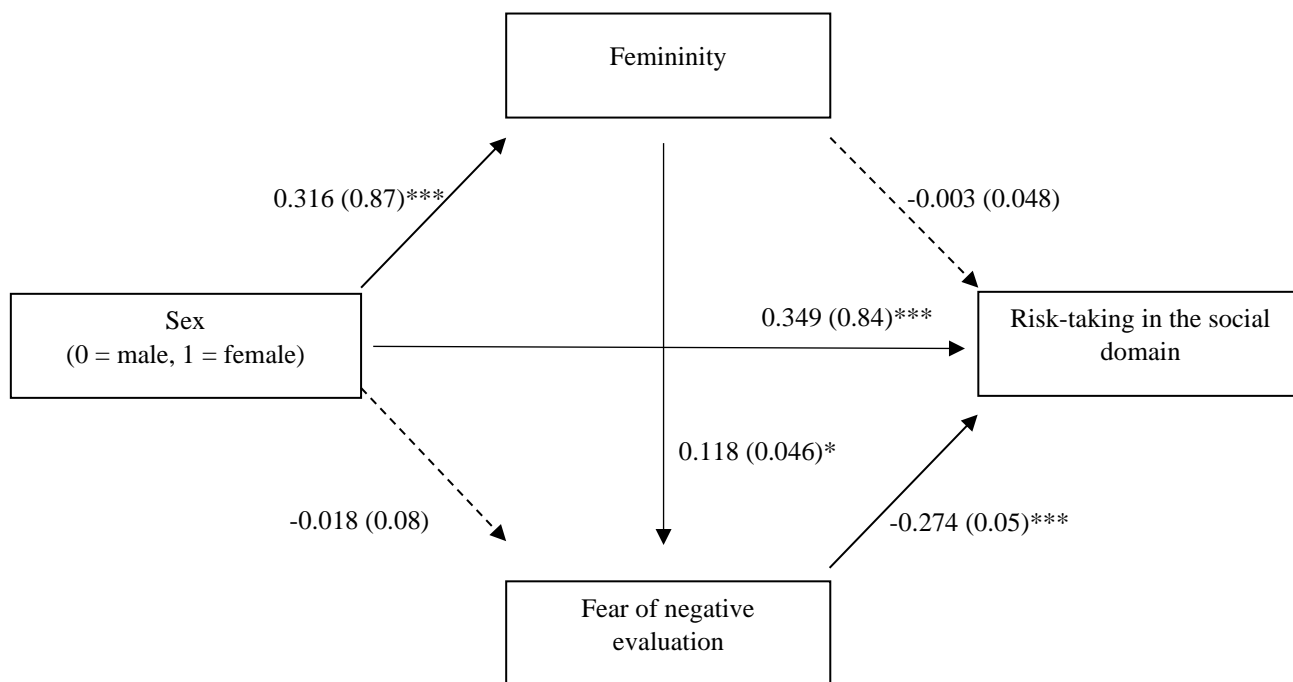
Indirect Effects of Sex on Social Risk-Taking Based on Femininity and Fear of Negative Evaluation

To test whether femininity and FNE mediated the association between sex and social risk-taking (see model 1, Figure 1), we followed the recommendations of Hayes (2017) for testing indirect effects with serial mediators. It is necessary to consider that a significant total effect is not required to obtain a significant indirect effect (Hayes, 2009). According to Hayes (2017), an indirect effect can be interpreted as statistically significant if zero falls outside of a confidence interval. To check our prediction, we used model 6 of the PROCESS macro for SPSS version 3.4.1, with 10,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals. We entered sex (0 = male, 1 = female) as the predictor (X), femininity (M1) and FNE (M2) as the mediating variables, and risk-taking in the social domain as the criterion variable (Y). The results showed that the indirect effect was significant, given that the 95% confidence interval around the indirect effect did not contain zero ($B = -0.010$, $SE = 0.006$, 95% CI $[-0.023, -0.002]$), supporting Hypothesis 4. That is to say, sex (0 = male, 1 = female) was indirectly linked to risk-taking in the social domain, through femininity and FNE. In particular, women (vs. men)

self-reported greater feminine traits, which were associated with higher FNE, which in turn was related to making less risky decisions in the social domain (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Serial Mediation Model Depicting Indirect Effect Sex (0 = Male, 1 = Female) on Social Risk-Taking Through Femininity and Fear of Negative Evaluation



Note. Unstandardized beta coefficients reported, with standard errors within parentheses.

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

It is worthwhile to point out that the pathways through each of the mediators notably were not significant, given that the 95% confidence interval around the indirect effect contained zero in both cases: (a) the indirect effect of sex on social risk-taking through femininity ($B = -0.001$, $SE = 0.017$, 95% CI $[-0.033, 0.035]$), and (b) the indirect effect of sex on social risk-taking through FNE ($B = 0.005$, $SE = 0.023$, 95% CI $[-0.042, 0.049]$). Therefore, femininity and FNE are essential for these pathways to unfold, and the association between them is relevant in this process. Furthermore, as can be observed in Table 3, it should be noted that both mediators accounted for 10% of the variance in the inclination to social risk-taking, instead of 3% or 1% if they were considered independently.

Discussion

In the present research, we aimed to analyze what variables affect women making risky decisions in the social domain. The findings provide an explication from a gender-based perspective of why there are sex differences in social risk-taking, a controversial question that should be analyzed from this perspective (Zhang et al., 2019). The results show that gender roles (femininity) and FNE—psychosocial variables—are plausible explanatory factors in the relation between women and higher risk-taking in the social domain. Although the majority of research conducted on gender roles and the FNE phenomenon has focused on the sports domain (for a review, see Chalabaev et al., 2013), our work extends a growing body of literature considering risky decision-making as another stereotypically masculine domain (e.g., Cerrato & Cifre, 2018; Morgenroth et al., 2017) in which these variables could determine women's behavior.

Our findings revealed that women compared to men self-reported greater feminine traits (Hypothesis 1a). This disparity is consistent with social role theory (Eagly, 1987) as well as other studies (e.g., Mueller & Conway, 2013), showing that in spite of an increase of women and men in nonstereotypical domains, gender inequality remains in societies (Haines et al., 2016). Indeed, women still consider themselves as primarily responsible for housework and childcare, spending more time on these tasks compared to men, who consider primarily responsible for decision-making tasks (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). One of the main reasons women continue conforming to their gender roles (femininity) in their behavior is social sanctions that they could receive (Eagly & Wood, 2016; Rudman et al., 2012). Women evaluate themselves positively to the extent that they conform to gender roles or negatively to the extent that they deviate from them, because if they show nonstereotypical behavior, they might experience social sanctions. Indeed, empirical evidence has shown that femininity affects social behavior, increasing avoidance or social insecurity (Cella et al., 2013). In this sense, our results align with previous studies, as femininity was positively associated with FNE (Hypothesis 2a). According to our findings, women who self-reported more feminine traits had more FNE, which could owe to the level of pressure women feel to conform to their gender roles (Dinella et al., 2014) as well as concern about not achieving social standards of femininity (Leary, 1992). For example, women who do not fulfill the role of a mother can experience fear of being evaluated by others as a “bad mother or bad woman” (Liss et al., 2013).

Women are constantly evaluated by society, given that they should not disregard their traditional role (i.e., the private sphere) to maintain gender inequality situations.

By contrast, concerning FNE, the results did not show statistically significant differences based on sex, which does not support Hypothesis 2b. This result is not consistent with empirical evidence, whereby women have reported experiencing more FNE (e.g., Biolcati, 2017). Nevertheless, it should be noted that although there were no significant differences, our averages notably showed that women reported more FNE. This pattern of results could be explained by social desirability bias, which can lead women to want to appear good to others (Paulhus, 1984). Currently, women could want to be perceived as feminists given an expansion of the feminist movement in Spain, which has been encouraging women to be nontraditional. Feminist women are seen as more competent (masculinity) and less warm (femininity; Meijs et al., 2019), and so women could feel social pressure to appear more masculine and not show FNE to others.

Concerning social risk-taking, empirical evidence has found differences between the sexes: Women in other studies have made more risky decisions in this domain than men (Blais & Weber, 2006; Lozano et al., 2017; Morgenroth et al., 2017), which our study also found (Hypothesis 1c). Studies have argued that these differences should be interpreted with caution (Zhang et al., 2019) and as according with gender stereotypes, given that risk-taking is traditionally associated with stereotypically masculine activity (Morgenroth et al., 2017). Nevertheless, to our knowledge, there are no studies that have tried to explain these differences through a gender-based perspective. Our findings indicate that in women, femininity and FNE are negatively associated with social risk-taking (Hypotheses 2b and 3). Despite the scarce existing literature that associates femininity or FNE with social risk-taking, these findings could be mainly explained by social role theory (Eagly, 1987) and backlash effect (Rudman et al., 2012). Traditionally, women are conditioned to be more cautious and men to be riskier (Carver et al., 2013); thus, if women are involved in a stereotypically masculine domain (risk-taking) they could be concerned about not achieving social standards of femininity (Leary, 1992). Specifically, nonstereotypical women are perceived more negatively than stereotypical men or women (Sutherland et al., 2015) and are more likely to receive social sanctions (Rudman et al., 2012). These differences could also be explained by information processing (e.g., Bryne & Worthy, 2016; Meyers-Levy, 1989): Men process information

selectively to make decisions, using specific information that benefits their decisions, whereas women use integrated information processing, taking into account all information in an environment (i.e., social sanctions), even when information can lead them to make bad decisions. The impact of sex on information processing maintains some parallelism with the effect of power (structural variable) on strategies people adopt to achieve their objectives (Schmid et al., 2015). Powerful people—usually men—focus their attention on achieving their goals, regulating their behavior towards them (e.g., Guinote, 2017). By contrast, powerless people—usually women—have a constant need for control, directing their attention to different sources of information (Keltner et al., 2003). Everything being taken into account, men’s behavior could be said to depend only on them, whereas women need the approval of others to carry out their behavior—even more so if their behavior is nonstereotypical. In line with this reasoning, given that women use all information in a context, they could consider the possibility of receiving social sanctions if they do not conform to traditional gender roles and could consequently limit their behavior to their traditional role. In this sense, FNE could be a variable that reflects the fear of social sanctions in feminine women and therefore leads them to make less risky decisions.

Extending prior research that showed that gender stereotypes and FNE can explain women’s behaviors in stereotypically masculine domains (e.g., Chalabaev et al., 2013), such as risk-taking (Morgenroth et al., 2017), we found that women in general make greater risk decisions in the social domain than men do (Hypothesis 1c), in line with previous studies (Blais & Weber, 2006; Lozano et al., 2017; Morgenroth et al., 2017). To explain these sex differences from a gender-based perspective, we tested an integrated serial mediation model that considers both femininity and FNE as explicative variables of social risk-taking. The main findings demonstrate that the association between sex and social risk-taking is mediated by femininity and FNE (Hypothesis 4). That is, women (vs. men) self-reported greater feminine traits, which were associated with higher FNE, which in turn was related to making less risky decisions in the social domain. These results expand the literature on sex differences in social risk-taking by demonstrating a gender confirmation bias in women’s answers. Although women want to make risky decisions in the social domain, such as “moving to a city far away from your extended family,” they fear being judged by others for deviating from their traditional role (femininity). Therefore, until gender roles (femininity) weaken, beliefs about what women should do

to will not disappear, and neither, therefore, will the negative sanctions women receive if they deviate from those roles. Hence, this work expands evidence on risk-taking in women through social role theory (Eagly, 1987), confirming that gender roles can limit women to stereotypically feminine activities (i.e., in the private sphere). In sum, not all women make more risky decisions in the social domain but those who do not have gender roles more internalized.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Even though the present work contributes to a better understanding of risk-taking by women in the social domain—measured through the DOSPERT scale—it has some limitations that need to be reported. Despite our sample being large, it cannot be regarded as representative of all women, given that the participants were undergraduates. To improve the generalizability of the research results, researchers will need to complete studies based on the general population. Furthermore, participants were not asked to provide their sexual orientation. We recommend future researchers consider sexual orientation as a control variable, given that previous research has related it with femininity (e.g., Salvati et al., 2018). It would be interesting for future studies to analyze how women self-report feminine traits as a function of sexual orientation and the relationship between those traits and behavior in stereotypically masculine domains. Lastly, the amount of unexplained variance in social risk-taking may suggest that it depends on other variables as well. We recommend future researchers consider including other gender variables, such as sexism attitudes, that are associated with highly traditional roles (e.g., Becker, 2009) and could decrease the likelihood to engage in social risk-taking. Likewise, feminist identity could be another explanatory variable for social risk-taking in women. Indeed, feminist women are seen as more competent (masculine) and less warm (feminine; Meijs et al., 2019), which could be associated with less FNE and more risky decisions in the social domain. Feminist women want to confront traditional roles (Weis et al., 2018) and so should not experience fear of social sanctions. Thus, from a gender-based perspective, feminist identity could be a valuable topic in future research on social risk-taking.

Conclusion

Empirical evidence and theories have demonstrated that cultural stereotypes influence gender-typed behavior. The present work contributes to improvement knowledge of the stereotypes and risk-taking fields, demonstrating that gender roles could explain sex differences in risk-taking, a stereotypically masculine domain. The results confirm that women make more risky decisions in the social domain than men, but they also add a plausible explanation for this sex-based relation. This study provides evidence that women (vs. men) identify themselves as more feminine, which is associated with higher FNE and in turn with making less risky decisions in the social domain. Thus, it seems that those women who have gender roles more internalized make less risky decisions in the social domain. Findings underscore the importance of femininity and FNE to social risk-taking among women. These psychological variables lead to maintaining gender inequality in society—as can be observed in our findings—which decreases the likelihood of women behaving in stereotypically masculine domains.

Furthermore, we agree with previous studies, which indicated that DOSPERT's sex differences should be interpreted with caution because they could be biased due to gender stereotypes. In this sense, through a gender-based perspective, we have added a plausible explication of these differences through femininity and FNE.

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Chapter 4

Are Gender Roles Associated With Well-Being Indicators? The Role of Femininity, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and Regret in Decision-Making in a Spanish Sample

En el Capítulo anterior se puso de manifiesto cómo los roles de género dirigen la toma de decisión de las mujeres. Así, aquellas mujeres que interiorizan en mayor medida los roles de género tradicionales incrementan su miedo a ser socialmente evaluadas, lo que en consecuencia parece limitar su toma de decisión en el contexto social (e.g., “Mudarse a una ciudad lejos de tu familia”). Estos resultados reflejaron como el proceso de toma de decisión de las mujeres parece estar mediado por la evitación de evaluaciones negativas, dejándose llevar por lo que *deben hacer*, disminuyendo así su participación en dominios estereotípicamente masculinos.

Teniendo en consideración el objetivo de la presente tesis, en el que se pretendía analizar cómo el hecho de que las mujeres tomen decisiones acordes a lo que se espera de ellas afecta a su bienestar, en este nuevo Capítulo empírico se ha optado por incorporar al modelo testado en el Capítulo 3, una nueva variable, el arrepentimiento, junto con satisfacción con la vida y felicidad subjetiva. La evidencia empírica señala que las personas con mayor miedo a la evaluación negativa parecen pensar más en sus acciones pasadas de lo que quisieran (Makker y Grishman, 2011), lo que mantiene cierto paralelismo con el sentimiento de arrepentimiento que puede surgir tras tomar una decisión. De hecho, Cheeck y Goebel (2020) encontraron que este miedo a la evaluación negativa parecía incrementar el arrepentimiento que sienten las personas sobre sus decisiones. El hecho de ser mujer y el miedo a ser juzgada por la sociedad puede hacer que éstas decidan de acuerdo con lo que se espera de ellas socialmente, asumiendo incluso los costes que dichas decisiones supondría a medio y largo plazo. Una vez tomada la decisión, las mujeres pueden evaluar que los resultados de su decisión no fueron los esperados, experimentando un mayor arrepentimiento. Así mismo, el arrepentimiento parece estar relacionado con un menor bienestar (Moyano-Díaz et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2002), lo que podría ser una de las causas por la que las mujeres informan de menores niveles de bienestar que los hombres (e.g., Batz y Tay, 2018).

Sobre esta base, en el Capítulo 4 se ha querido analizar cómo el hecho de que las decisiones de las mujeres estén orientadas por la interiorización de los roles de género afecta a su bienestar, lo que permitiría explicar las diferencias de género alrededor de esta última variable. Además, se ha llevado a cabo un análisis cualitativo de las decisiones más importantes de las personas, a través del cual se planteará la medida de toma de decisión de los estudios siguientes.

In the previous chapter, we showed how gender roles guided women's decision making. Thus, those women who internalize traditional gender roles to a greater extent increase their fear of being socially evaluated, which consequently limits their decision making in the social context (e.g., "Moving to a city far away from your family"). These results reflected how avoiding negative evaluations mediated women's decision-making process, allowing themselves to be led by what they should do, thus decreasing their participation in stereotypically male domains.

Considering the aim of the present dissertation, which was to analyze how women making decisions in accordance with what is expected of them affects their well-being, in this new empirical chapter, we have chosen to incorporate new variables, regret, along with life satisfaction and subjective happiness, into the model tested in Chapter 3. Empirical evidence indicates that people with greater fear of negative evaluation seem to think more about their past actions than they would like to (Makker and Grishman, 2011), which maintains some parallelism with the feeling of regret that may arise after making a decision. Indeed, Cheeck and Goebel (2020) found that this fear of negative evaluation increased the regret people felt about their decisions. The fact of being a woman and the fear of society judging them may make them choose in accordance with what is socially expected of them, even assuming the costs that such decisions would entail in the medium and long term. Once the decision has been made, women may evaluate the results of their decision were not as expected, experiencing greater regret. Likewise, regret relates to lower well-being (Moyano-Díaz et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2002), which could be why women report lower levels of well-being than men do (e.g., Batz and Tay, 2018).

On this basis, in Chapter 4 we sought to analyze how internalizing gender roles orients women's decisions and affects their well-being, which would allow us to explain the gender differences around this last variable. In addition, a qualitative analysis of people's most important decisions has been carried out, through which the decision-making measure of the following studies will be proposed.

**Are Gender Roles Associated With Well-Being Indicators? The Role of Femininity,
Fear of Negative Evaluation, and Regret in Decision-Making in a Spanish Sample**

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Abstract

Gender roles operate as a social schema through which people learn how they must behave and make decisions; that is, socially, what women and men are expected to do is pre-established. This gender socialization is such a deep-rooted process that people may not aware of how they have been socialized, which is thus often is difficult to analyze in people's discussions of their own decision-making. On this basis, this research examines whether endorsing gender roles could be related to women's decisions (regret), as well as the possible consequences for their well-being. Moreover, we analyzed the content of the most important decisions that people make throughout their lives. Therefore, this research aimed to understand the meaning of gender and how its internalization seems to be related to sex differences in decision-making and well-being. In a sample of the Spanish general population ($N = 203$; $M_{\text{age}} = 41.70$, $SD = 10.93$; range from 20 to 65 years old), results showed that women (vs. men) had a greater internalization of gender roles (i.e., femininity), which was associated with higher fear of negative evaluation. This, in turn, was associated with experienced regret in decision-making, which finally seemed to lead to lower well-being. Analysis of the content of decisions showed that women's decisions were based mainly on work and family domains, whereas men's decisions were based on work to a greater extent.

Keywords: femininity, decisions, life satisfaction, subjective happiness, sex differences

Are Gender Roles Associated With Well-Being Indicators? The Role of Femininity, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and Regret in Decision-Making in a Spanish Sample

People daily make a wide variety of decisions, from the easiest (e.g., choosing what to have for breakfast) to the most difficult (e.g., choosing whether to leave a job or what career to pursue). When people make decisions, their perceptions and behaviors tend to show the biases developed by cognitive or social schemas (Augoustinos et al., 2014), such as gender roles. According to Eagly and Wood (2016), gender roles are a prescriptive guide for what women and men are expected to do; women should be concerned about caring for others and men about achievement of their goals. This prescriptive guide seems to lead unconsciously to people behaving and making decisions congruent with their social schema. Indeed, women make decisions directed toward caring for other people, and men make self-oriented decisions, both congruent with social expectations (Fumagalli et al., 2010). These behaviors or decisions are legitimized by society, especially in women, because if they deviate from their traditional gender roles, they could be perceived negatively (e.g., Sutherland et al., 2015). In this respect, recently, Villanueva-Moya and Expósito (2020) showed that women (vs. men) have a greater internalization of gender roles (i.e., femininity), which leads them to make fewer decisions inconsistent with their traditional role due to fear of negative evaluation (FNE). Therefore, for fear of being evaluated negatively, women act in a manner consistent with their traditional role. This pattern can be reflected in family–work decisions, where Dahm et al. (2019) found that women made decisions orientated toward family (e.g., “Let your job be ‘secondary’ to your spouse/partner’s for a period of time” or “Take a job closer to home”) and men orientated toward work (e.g., “To travel out of town for work” or “To stay late, go in early, take work home”). Although women make decisions according to what is socially expected, it does not mean they agree with these decisions, because in the long term, they seem to regret prioritizing family, which is negatively associated with well-being (Newton et al., 2012). Hence, although men and women have similar decision-making processes, when decisions that can be affected by gender prescriptions to a greater extent are considered (i.e., family and work), they can trigger dilemmas in women themselves, such as long-term regret or fear of rejection, with consequences for their well-being. In this vein, we aimed to understand the meaning of gender and how its internalization seems to be related to sex differences in decision-making and well-being.

Women and Gender Roles

There is empirical evidence both for and against the fact that gender roles have changed today. For example, in the United States, it has been found that gender roles have not changed in recent decades: people have maintained the same beliefs about women and men despite society's progress (Haines et al., 2016). That is, women continue to be regarded as more communal (i.e., warm, friendly, and supportive), and men as more agentic (i.e., assertive, competitive, and independent). In a meta-analysis Eagly et al. (2020) revealed that women have come to be regarded as even more communal over time, but the men advantage in agentic traits showed no change. In Spain, Moya and Moya-Garófano (2021) showed that communal traits were attributed more to women than men over time, and there were no differences in agentic traits. They also found that agentic traits were more associated with women and men in 2018 than in 1985. However, communal traits for women and men were perceived similarly over time. Although there might be a small change in beliefs about gender roles, in general, it can be observed that the traditional role of women (communality) has endured over time. Indeed, women are still considered to be the main caregivers, whereas men are considered to be the main breadwinners (e.g., Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). This reaffirms the social role theory (e.g., Eagly & Wood, 2016), which postulates that women and men's behavior is socially pre-established as a function of gender roles and the characteristics associated with them. Women are socially expected to be communal, consistent with their caregiver role; that is, they should be concerned about caring for others. By contrast, men are expected to be agentic, consistent with their provider role, and therefore they should be concerned about their goal achievements. Both domains (communal and agentic) have been broadly equated with femininity and masculinity self-concepts, respectively (Bem, 1974). Thereby, people integrate femininity or masculinity into their own self-concepts and self-regulate their behaviors according to them. Empirical evidence has shown that sex predicts masculine and feminine gender roles (e.g., Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020; Ward & King, 2018): Women seem to self-report higher feminine traits, and men seem to score higher masculine traits. Therefore, those who self-report more feminine traits (usually women) are expected to participate in activities related to housework, childcare, or social relations.

Fear of Negative Evaluation, Regret, and Well-Being

Gender roles affect women's behavior to a greater extent than men's behavior because if women's behavior is inconsistent with their feminine traits, they could be socially discriminated, which is a way of limiting women's behavior and therefore maintaining gender inequality (Eagly & Wood, 2016; Rudman et al., 2012). Women are often victims of gender discrimination when they deviate from their traditional role, hence it is not surprising to find that women (self-reporting femininity) have a greater concern about being socially rejected (i.e., FNE) than men, which could cause women to act in a manner consistent with their traditional role (e.g., decision-making; Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020).

FNE refers to the thoughts people experience at the prospect of being judged or viewed negatively by others in social interactions (Leary, 1983). People with higher FNE seem to tend to care more about seeking social acceptance, trying to leave a good impression (Leary, 1983). Although women seem to report higher FNE than men did, some studies have shown that these differences are significant (Biolcati, 2017), while others have not (Gallego et al., 2007; Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020). Considering the aforementioned, experiencing FNE could be a form of negative thinking in women triggered by gender roles, which, in turn could influence their decision-making process (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020). In this sense, FNE has been positively associated with negative thoughts after an event (Makker & Grishman, 2011); that is, individuals with high FNE seem to remember past failures or think about past events more than they want to. This post-event processing could be similar to feeling regret after making a decision. Indeed, Cheek and Goebel (2020) recently found that FNE seems to lead to significant regret about choices. *Regret* is an emotion associated with making decisions that arises when one realizes or imagines that another choice would have been better than the choice made (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2007). That is, when person is becoming aware of a better alternative after he or she has made some decision (e.g., as it could be choosing work instead of family for women). This unpleasant emotion has been widely examined in consumption and purchasing decision contexts (e.g., Moyano-Díaz et al., 2014), where sex differences are not usually the focus of study. No sex differences have been reported in regret (e.g., Schwartz et al., 2002), or it has found that women scored higher than men did on regret (van de Calseyde et al., 2018). Despite there being no specific evidence,

based on previous literature, we propose that endorsing gender roles could lead to women experiencing regret, through FNE. In many cases, women find themselves in uncertain situations because they would like to progress at work, but at the same time, they feel responsible for the family domain (Campillo & Armijo, 2017), and they could be discriminated if they deviate from it (Eagly & Wood, 2016). Additionally, they would have to choose the domain in which to invest more, because combining family life with employment is problematic for women given that both domains require energy and time, being incompatible with each other in most cases, which can trigger dilemmas (Hochschild & Manchung, 2012). Consequently, they might not be sure if it is better to prioritize a career or family, and they could experience regret about their decisions. Newton et al. (2012) demonstrated that women reported regret about prioritizing family over work or prioritizing work over family. That is, whatever they decided, they seemed to regret it, because both domains are relevant to them. This could be explained by the role of FNE, which could lead women to make decisions based on what is expected of them. On the other hand, considering femininity and regret, Ward and King (2018) found that sex was related to regret through femininity; that is, they found that women (vs. men) self-reported more feminine traits, and consequently, they seemed to regret their decisions. In line with our approach and previous literature, we propose that femininity would lead to higher FNE (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020), both being mediator variables between sex and regret in decision-making.

Lastly, it should be noted that regret in decision-making has been associated with negative consequences for well-being, such as depression, guilt, shame, or lower life satisfaction and happiness (Moyano-Díaz et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2002). In this research, we focused on subjective happiness and life satisfaction, both well-being indicators (Diener et al., 2009); according to these authors to obtain a whole picture of an individual's evaluation of their life more than one component must be measured. Given that this research aimed to analyze how the internalization of gender roles could have consequences for women's well-being, both indicators were considered. Additionally, sex differences have been found in these well-being indicators: Men reported higher scores on subjective happiness and life satisfaction than women did (e.g., Batz & Tay, 2018). We propose that the differences in well-being could be explained by the regret experienced by women due to their internalization of gender roles. Considering these variables, we expected that sex would indirectly be related to subjective well-being

(subjective happiness and life satisfaction) through femininity, FNE, and regret in decision-making.

Research Overview

Gender roles influence people's behavior, but to what extent might gender roles lead to sex differences in decision-making and well-being? Villanueva-Moya and Exposito (2020) demonstrated that women (vs. men) have a greater internalization of gender roles (i.e., femininity), which seems to limit their decisions through the FNE. We took a step in this direction and analyzed how the FNE not only limits women's behavior but also makes them doubt their decisions.

The current social situation—the progress of women in the public sphere—has given women the opportunity to make decisions related to work (and not only to the family) and progress professionally. Consequently, women (but not men) find themselves in uncertain situations because they would like to progress at work, but at the same time, they feel responsible for the family domain. If the fear of being judged socially is added to this situation of uncertainty—in which women might not be sure if it is better to prioritize career or family—it is expected that they will not feel confident in making their decisions. Hence, regardless of the decision they make, they will regret it, which affects their well-being (Newton et al., 2016). If women made their decisions faithfully, that is, without their decisions being subject to social influences, they would have no reason to regret their decisions, and there would be no sex differences in well-being.

Based on this theoretical conceptualization, in this research, we aimed to understand the meaning of gender and how its internalization seems to be related to sex differences in decision-making and well-being. Specifically, we measured femininity, fear of negative evaluation, regret, and well-being (subjective happiness and life satisfaction). We expected that women (vs. men) would self-report greater feminine traits, lower subjective happiness, and lower life satisfaction (Hypothesis 1). Because empirical evidence is not conclusive regarding sex differences in FNE and regret, we did not expect sex differences in FNE and regret. Additionally, we hypothesized that: femininity would be positively related to FNE (Hypothesis 2); FNE would be positively related to regret (Hypothesis 3); regret would be negatively related to subjective happiness (Hypothesis 4a) and life satisfaction (Hypothesis 4b). Lastly, we examined whether endorsing gender

roles could be related to women's decisions (regret), as well as the possible consequences for their well-being. Specifically, we expected that sex (0 = male, 1 = female) would indirectly be related to subjective happiness (Hypothesis 5a) or life satisfaction (Hypothesis 5b) through femininity, FNE, and regret in decision-making.

Finally, we were interested in analyzing sex differences in the most important decisions people make throughout their lives (Hypothesis 7). Women may find both work and family decisions relevant to their life because they would like progress at work but at the same time feel responsible for the family domain (Campillo & Armijo, 2017). We consider that analyzing the content of the most important decisions is relevant because it allows us to determine under what circumstances the proposed model can be contextualized.

Method

Participants

The study sample included 216 Spanish participants (123 women and 93 men; $M_{\text{age}} = 41.43$, $SD = 10.89$). We excluded thirteen participants because they did not follow instructions. That is, they indicated that they had written about a decision that they were in the process of making instead of writing about a decision they had already made. This allowed us to exclude those participants who did not pay enough attention. The remaining 203 participants (116 women and 87 men) ranged in age from 20 to 65 years old ($M = 41.70$, $SD = 10.93$). Most participants ($n = 90$, 44.3%) had a university degree, followed by high school ($n = 71$, 35%), secondary education ($n = 15$, 7.4%), and primary education ($n = 11$, 5.4%). A majority of participants were employed ($n = 135$, 64.5%), followed by unemployed ($n = 37$, 18.2%), housewives ($n = 12$, 5.9%), and retirees ($n = 7$, 3.4%). These data do not represent the full percentage because 16 participants did not report both variables. A sensitivity power analysis (G*Power; Faul et al., 2009) for a linear multiple regression test ($1 - \beta = 80\%$; $\alpha = .05$; $N = 203$) revealed that the sample size was sufficiently large enough to detect effects of at least a small size of .06.

Procedure

Participants were invited to take part in the study through ads placed on social networks (e.g., Facebook) and personal approach. Interested participants were directed to

the questionnaire. The inclusion criteria were to be Spanish and to be at least 18 years of age. Before they completed the questionnaire, participants were informed of the general aim (“To analyze possible factors associated with the decision-making process”) and the instructions to take part through an online platform. Informed consent was obtained from all participants; they were told about the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses and could decline or agree to answer the questionnaire (“After being informed of the above, I agree to participate in the study”). Once they accepted, they could begin to respond to the measures. Finally, all participants were thanked for their participation and were fully debriefed. This research is part of a broad project approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Granada. Participation was voluntary, and no monetary incentives were provided.

Measures

Femininity

Participants completed the femininity subscale of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974; Spanish adaptation of López-Sáez & Morales, 1995). Nine items assessed the extent to which people incorporate feminine traits into their self-concepts (e.g., “Sensitive to needs of others”; 1 = *never or almost never true*, 7 = *almost always true*). This subscale has shown adequate psychometric properties in Spanish populations ($\alpha = .73$; Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020). In the current study, the subscale demonstrated an adequate internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .76$).

Fear of Negative Evaluation

Participants completed the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation scale (Leary, 1983; Spanish adaptation of Gallego et al., 2007). Twelve items assessed the sensation of being evaluated negatively by others. Examples items include “I am usually worried about what kind of impression I make” and “I often worry that I will say or do the wrong thing” (1 = *not at all characteristic of me*, 5 = *extremely characteristic of me*). Cronbach’s alpha was .88 with this sample, similar to the Spanish adaptation ($\alpha = .90$).

Decisions

Participants were asked to “Describe a decision that you have already made, which has a significant impact on your life,” which was adapted from Cross et al. (2000). They were encouraged to write in essay style, without a word limit (the first page was used for this). Participants also rated how important the decision was to them (“To what extent was this decision important for you?” 1 = *not all important*, 7 = *very important*) and its difficulty (“To what extent was this decision difficult for you?” 1 = *not at all difficult*, 7 = *very difficult*). In this way, we wanted to ensure that participants responded to the following measures while thinking of a relevant decision for them.

Regret in Decision-Making

Participants rated five items developed by Schwartz et al. (2002; Spanish adaptation of Moyano-Díaz et al., 2014) to assess the possibility of regretting a decision once made (e.g., “Once I make a decision, I don’t look back”; 1 = *completely disagree*, 7 = *completely agree*). Cronbach’s alpha was .67 in the original study, and .69 in the Spanish adaptation. In the current study, it was .61.

Subjective Happiness

Participants completed the Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), adapted into Spanish by Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal (2014). Four items subjectively assessed the extent to which people self-rated as happy (e.g., “Compared to most of my peers, I consider myself”; 1 = *less happy*, 7 = *more happy*). With this sample, the scale showed a Cronbach’s alpha of .82, similar to the Spanish adaptation ($\alpha = .81$).

Life Satisfaction

Participants completed the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985; Spanish adaptation of Atienza et al., 2000). Five items assessed the global judgment that people made about satisfaction with their life (e.g., “In most ways my life is close to my ideal”; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The Spanish adaptation obtained a Cronbach’s alpha of .84. The scale demonstrated an adequate Cronbach’s alpha in the current study ($\alpha = .83$).

Sociodemographic Data

We included questions about age, sex, educational level, and employment.

Decision Check

Participants were asked if the decision they had written about was one they had already made or were in the process of making. Participants who indicated that they were in the process of making the decision were removed.

Results

Statistical Analysis Strategy

Prior to carrying out the main analyses, we examined data for normality and multicollinearity (see Table 1). Regarding sex differences, we conducted independent samples *t*-test analyses using sex as the independent variable and femininity, subjective happiness, life satisfaction, FNE, and regret as dependent variables respectively (see Table 1). Next, we investigated the associations across study variables through correlation analyses (see Table 1). We then carried out two hierarchical regressions analyses to test the initial prediction regarding the effect of sex on well-being indicators through study variables (see Table 2 and 3). We included sex in Step 1, femininity in Step 2, FNE in Step 3, regret in Step 4, and subjective happiness and life satisfaction as the dependent variables, respectively. These statistical analyses were conducted via SPSS (Version 22.0). In order to verify the fitness of the model, a path analysis was performed using maximum likelihood (ML) as the estimator (with 10,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples; Mplus version 8). The model fit was assessed using the root mean square of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), with a RMSEA and SRMR below .08, and CFI and TLI above .90 indicated good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Specifically, we examined the indirect effects of sex (0 = male, 1 = female) on subjective happiness or life satisfaction (respectively) through femininity, FNE, and regret. For indirect effects, significance was considered if the 95% confidence interval (CI) from the bootstrap examination did not include zero.

Finally, we used the ATLAS.ti 7 software to examine differences in decisions participants had made throughout their lives (see Table 4 and Figure 2). We first created the hermetic unit and generated the main document containing the decisions literally described by the participants. Second, we codified the decisions and classified them according to the categories of Cross et al. (2000): personal relationships, family, academic, housing, work, or other. To ensure multiple perspectives, the decisions were analyzed and codified by two researchers. Furthermore, we carried out an independent *t*-test analysis to analyze sex differences in difficulty and importance of participants' decisions.

Preliminary Analyses

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and correlations. As can be observed, there was no problem of multicollinearity because correlations between measures were less than .80 (Shrestha, 2020). Regarding normality, the skewness and kurtosis values for all variables ranged from -0.77 to 0.33 , within acceptable limits of ± 2 , indicating a normality of distribution (see Table 1; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014).

Table 1*Correlations and Descriptive Statistics Across All Measures*

Measures	<i>n</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Sex ^a	203	–					
2. Femininity	203	.27**	–				
3. Fear of negative evaluation	203	.07	.25**	–			
4. Regret	203	.10	.09	.45**	–		
5. Subjective happiness	203	–.20**	.03	–.41**	–.43**	–	
6. Life satisfaction	203	–.27**	–.08	–.25**	–.29**	.63**	–
Range							
Potential			(1–7)	(1–5)	(1–7)	(1–7)	(1–7)
Actual			(2.67–6.89)	(1.33–4.58)	(1–7)	(1–7)	(1–7)
Mean (<i>SD</i>)			5.12 (0.82)	2.84 (0.75)	4.33 (1.20)	5.12 (1.24)	4.63 (1.35)
Women (<i>SD</i>)			5.31 (0.65)	2.88 (0.79)	4.44 (1.19)	4.91 (1.32)	4.32 (1.32)
Men (<i>SD</i>)			4.86 (0.94)	2.78 (0.70)	4.19 (1.20)	5.40 (1.08)	5.05 (1.29)
Sex difference <i>t</i>			–3.99**	–0.94	–1.48	2.83**	3.96***
Cohen's <i>d</i>			0.56	0.13	0.21	0.40	0.56
Skewness/Kurtosis			–0.57/0.10	0.31/–0.54	–0.33/0.11	–0.77/0.33	–0.50/–0.15

Note. ^a0 = male, 1 = female.

** $p > .01$. *** $p > .001$.

Sex Differences in Study Variables

Results showed that women (vs. men) scored higher on all study variables, except well-being indicators (see Table 1). The independent samples *t*-test analysis showed that, as expected, women (vs. men) self-reported greater feminine traits, lower subjective happiness and life satisfaction (Hypothesis 1). By contrast, the results did not show statistically significant differences in FNE and regret.

Correlations Among Study Variables

As can be observed in Table 1, femininity was positively related to FNE (Hypothesis 2); FNE was positively related to regret (Hypothesis 3). Lastly, regret was negatively related to subjective happiness (Hypothesis 4a) and life satisfaction (Hypothesis 4b).

Indirect Effect of Sex on Well-Being Based on Femininity, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and Regret

Prior to conduct the serial mediation analyses to examine the indirect effects, we carried out two hierarchical regressions analyses prior to test the initial prediction regarding the effect of sex on well-being indicators through study variables. Results showed that the model was significant with subjective happiness, $F(1, 198) = 17.42, p < .001$, with an explained variance of 30% (see Table 2). Likewise, results showed that the model also was significant with life satisfaction, $F(1, 198) = 7.08, p = .008$, with an explained variance of 16% (see Table 3).

Table 2*Effect of Sex on Subjective Happiness Through Femininity, Fear of Negative Evaluation and Regret*

Predictor	<i>Model 1</i>		<i>Model 2</i>		<i>Model 3</i>		<i>Model 4</i>	
	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI
<i>Step 1</i>								
Sex ^a	−0.491**	[−0.832, −0.149]	−0.554**	[−0.908, −0.199]	−0.558**	[−0.876, −0.239]	−0.497**	[−0.801, −0.190]
<i>Step 2</i>								
Femininity			0.140	[−0.074, 0.355]	0.311**	[0.112, 0.509]	0.293**	[0.102, 0.484]
<i>Step 3</i>								
FNE					−0.740***	[−0.949, −0.531]	−0.531***	[−0.755, −0.301]
<i>Step 4</i>								
Regret							−0.290***	[−0.426, −0.153]
<i>R</i> ² (adj <i>R</i> ²)	0.04 (0.03)		0.05 (0.04)		0.23 (0.22)		0.30 (0.28)	

Note. ^a0 = male, 1 = female.

* $p > .05$. ** $p > .01$. *** $p > .001$.

Table 3*Effect of Sex on Life Satisfaction Through Femininity, Fear of Negative Evaluation and Regret*

Predictor	<i>Model 1</i>		<i>Model 2</i>		<i>Model 3</i>		<i>Model 4</i>	
	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI
<i>Step 1</i>								
Sex ^a	-0.732***	[-1.097, -0.367]	-0.725***	[-1.105, -0.345]	-0.728***	[-1.096, -0.359]	-0.682***	[-1.047, -0.317]
<i>Step 2</i>								
Femininity			0.014	[-0.24, 0.22]	0.089	[-0.141, 0.319]	0.076	[-0.151, 0.302]
<i>Step 3</i>								
FNE					-0.450***	[-0.692, -0.208]	-0.292*	[-0.557, -0.026]
<i>Step 4</i>								
Regret							-0.219**	[-0.381, -0.057]
<i>R</i> ² (adj <i>R</i> ²)	0.07 (0.08)		0.07 (0.06)		0.13 (0.12)		0.16 (0.14)	

Note. ^a0 = male, 1 = female.

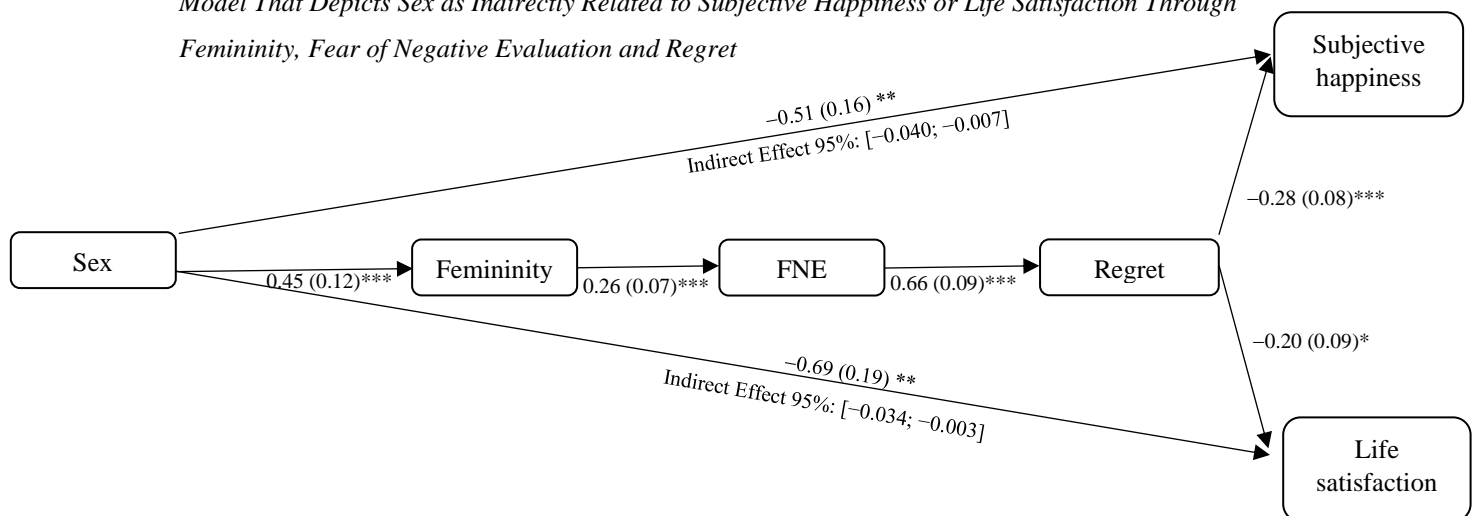
* $p > .05$. ** $p > .01$. *** $p > .001$.

The path model as displayed in Figure 1 showed a good fit to the data (RMSEA = 0.00, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00, SRMR = 0.00). The indirect effect of sex (0 = male, 1 = female) on subjective happiness based on femininity, FNE, and regret was significant ($b = -0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI $[-0.040, -0.007]$). Thus, Hypothesis 5a was supported.¹ That is, sex (0 = male, 1 = female) was associated with an increase in feminine traits, which was associated with increased FNE. This, in turn, was associated with experienced regret, which seemed to lead to lower subjective happiness. The variables included in the model increased the explained variance of subjective happiness (30%).

Regarding to the indirect effect of sex on life satisfaction, the results also showed an indirect effect of sex (0 = male, 1 = female) on life satisfaction through femininity, FNE, and regret ($b = -0.015$, $SE = 0.010$, 95% CI $[-0.034, -0.003]$). Thus, Hypothesis 5b was supported (see Figure 1).² Nevertheless, the explained variance of life satisfaction did not increase.³

Figure 1

Model That Depicts Sex as Indirectly Related to Subjective Happiness or Life Satisfaction Through Femininity, Fear of Negative Evaluation and Regret



Note. ^a Sex is coded 0, “male” and 1, “female”; ^b FNE = Fear of negative evaluation. Unstandardized beta coefficients reported, with standard errors within parentheses.

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

¹ Indirect effect of sex on subjective happiness based on femininity, $b = 0.138$, $SE = 0.057$, 95% CI $[0.044, 0.192]$; indirect effect of sex on subjective happiness based on femininity and FNE, $b = -0.056$, $SE = 0.028$, 95% CI $[-0.089, -0.015]$. The other effects were not significant.

² The other effects were not significant.

³ [Femininity ($R^2 = .074$); FNE ($R^2 = .062$); regret ($R^2 = .225$), subjective happiness ($R^2 = .300$), life satisfaction ($R^2 = .161$).

Qualitative Analysis of Decisions

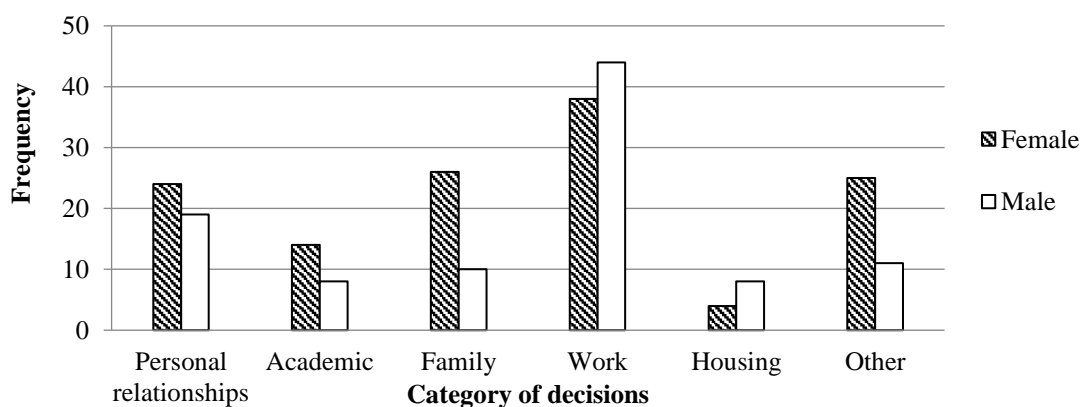
Before codifying the decisions, we evaluated the importance and difficulty of the decisions that participants made. These data could reflect the relevance of the decisions to participants. The results showed that, in general, participants considered their decisions important ($M = 6.76$, $SD = 0.63$). Thus, the decisions participants described seemed to reflect their most important decisions. No significant sex differences were found in relation to the importance of the decision, $t(201) = -0.23$, $p = .821$, 95% CI $[-0.195, 0.154]$, Cohen's $d = .04$ ($M_{\text{women}} = 6.77$, $SD = 0.66$; $M_{\text{men}} = 6.74$, $SD = 0.59$). Regarding difficulty ($M_{\text{general}} = 5.33$, $SD = 1.81$), we found that women perceived their decisions as more difficult than men did, $t(201) = -2.07$, $p = .040$, 95% CI $[-1.039, -0.024]$, Cohen's $d = 0.29$ ($M_{\text{women}} = 5.57$, $SD = 1.70$; $M_{\text{men}} = 5.04$, $SD = 1.89$).

We then evaluated the occurrences of decision codes. A decision could be codified with one or more codes given that a decision could include multiple categories (e.g., "Leaving paid work to have more time to take care of my family" could include both the work and family categories). In this respect, Poelmans (2005) pointed out that decision-making in one domain can be affected by factors in another domain. As can be observed in Table 4 (see also Figure 2), the most frequent codes for women were work (24%), family (21%), other (20%), personal relationships (18%), academic (11%), and housing (3%). In relation to men, the most frequent codes were work (35%), personal relationships (17%), other (10%), family (9%), housing (9%), and academic (8%).

Table 4*Description of Decisions: Frequencies and Percentage*

Decisions codes Category	Frequency (%)	
	Women (n = 118)	Men (n = 90)
Personal relationships	24 (18%)	19 (17%)
Family	4 (3%)	4 (4%)
Partner	16 (12%)	14 (14%)
Others (coworkers, friends...)	4 (3%)	1 (1%)
Academic	14 (11%)	8 (8%)
Family	26 (21%)	10 (9%)
Work	38 (24%)	44 (35%)
Housing	4 (3%)	8 (9%)
Buy a house	3 (2%)	6 (7%)
Move alone	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
Others (medical treatment, travel, pets...)	25 (20%)	11 (10%)

Next, we carried out an analysis based on the categories. Regarding the code *others*, decisions included moving to another town or country (4% men and 8% women), pets, and medical treatment, among others. In relation to the code *housing*, decisions included buying a house (7% men and 2% women) or moving alone (2% men and 1% women). Furthermore, the frequencies of the code *personal relationships* were similar for both women (18%) and men (17%). Specifically, decisions related to a romantic partnership were the most common (see Table 4). Thus, romantic partnerships seem to be an important part of people's lives.

Figure 2*Frequency of Codes as a Function of Sex*

Furthermore, considering that participants seemed to have reflected on the most important decisions they made in their lives, it seemed that women's decisions were based mainly on *work* (24%) and *family* (21%), whereas men's decisions were based on *work* (35%) to a greater extent. After observing these results, we conducted a deeper analysis with respect to the following domains.

We found that 16% of men's decisions versus 7% of women's decisions were related to *changing or leaving a job to improve their working conditions*.

Woman: "I worked in the family store. Then, the opportunity to start working in an office presented itself. However, the coworkers were men and it was frowned upon for a woman to work. So I did not tell anyone and signed the contract. My father, who I thought would not tolerate it, was glad that I signed without paying attention to what others would think."

Man: "I left my job at a company to start my own company. I made this decision because I wanted to grow on the job and my only option was to go to other companies where I had to follow someone else's ideas."

Likewise, we found that 1% of men's decisions versus 9% of women's decisions were related to *changing or leaving a job to stay with family*.

Woman: "I gave up a better paying job to stay with my son. My son was becoming very unstable because of the life we had, since during the day he was in three different places with different rules. The option was to look the other way [reject a better job] and continue in my current job."

Man: "I had to leave my job at the bank because they wanted to move me from town and I would have had to leave my family and my house."

Lastly, only men (6%) made decisions related to *being away from family for work*.

Man: "After several years working as a programmer, one day the opportunity came to fill a vacancy at a secondary school. However, it was very far from my house, my daughter, and my family. It would be a risky opportunity, but it would be worth it. That year, I learned a lot and really discovered my true vocation. A

year later, I passed the exams, and since then, I have been a teacher. Thanks to that decision, my life took a turn that today I appreciate.”

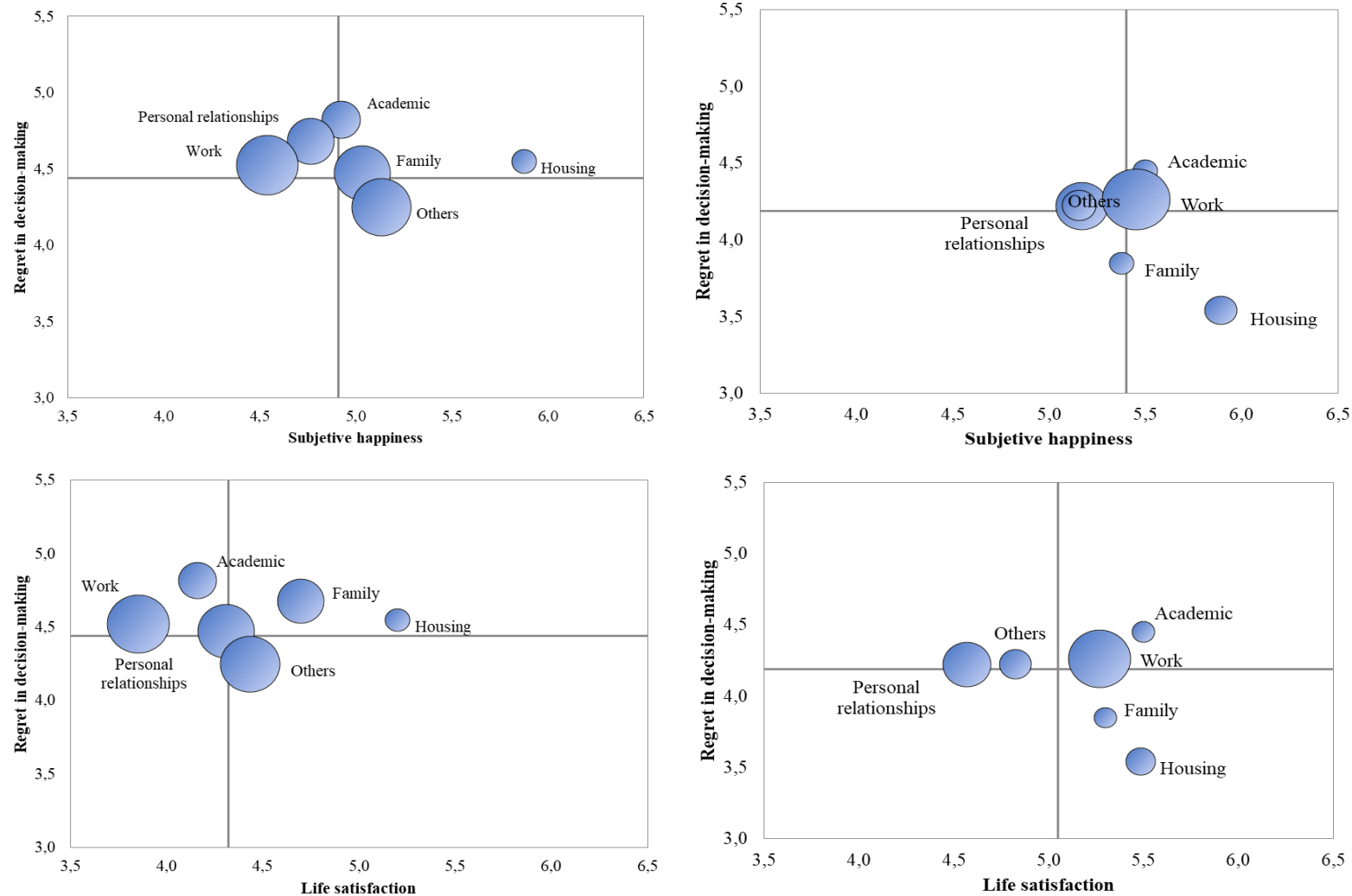
It seemed that women’s decisions were usually between work and family, prioritizing family. On the other hand, men’s decisions seemed to reflect that they did not have to decide between work and family.

Auxiliary Analyses

Regarding the qualitative analysis, discriminant function analyses were used to examine whether categories of decisions could predict participants’ regret and well-being as a function of sex. Although the results were not significant (see Supplemental Material), the trends can be seen in the Figure 3.

Figure 3

Frequency of Categories of Decisions and Effects on Regret in Decision-Making and Subjective Happiness or Life Satisfaction



Note. The left column depicts the scores for women, and the right column depicts the scores for men. The crossing horizontal and vertical lines represent the mean for regret and subjective happiness or life satisfaction in the sample (women or men). The size of the bubble area represent the frequency of occurrence.

Discussion

Gender roles seem to operate as a social schema through which people learn how they must behave; that is, socially, what women and men are expected to do is pre-established (Eagly & Wood, 2016). Gender socialization is such a deep-rooted process (Haines et al., 2016) that it is difficult to show its impact on day-to-day issues such as decision-making. Prior research has found that women (vs. men) self-reported more feminine traits, and consequently they experienced more FNE (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020) and more regret in decision-making (Ward & King, 2018). The current research is the first to examine whether femininity together with FNE could add explained variance of the regret variable, extending previous research. Furthermore, we analyzed the relationship of regret with well-being indicators (subjective happiness and life satisfaction). In this sense, the present research adds to the growing literature on gender roles, showing that they seem to be related to the decision-making process. Specifically, women (vs. men) displayed a greater internalization of gender roles (i.e., femininity), which seemed to increase their tendency to experience higher regret in decision-making because gender roles seemed to increase their FNE. Moreover, this process seems to lead to decreased well-being. Therefore, this research aimed to understand the meaning of gender and how its internalization seems to be related to sex differences in decision-making and well-being, perpetuating gender inequality. The current research is framed by social role theory (e.g., Eagly & Wood, 2016), which points out that women are expected to be feminine; that is, women should be concerned about caring for others and men about the achievement of their goals. In line with this theory and previous studies (e.g., Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020), the results of sex differences revealed that women self-reported more feminine traits than men did. In an increasingly egalitarian society, the difference in these traits should decrease; however, this does not seem to be happening. This result seems to indicate that in spite of women's progress in the public sphere, traditional beliefs have been sustained over the years (Haines et al., 2016). Eagly and Wood (2016) argued that women seem to behave according to their traditional role (i.e., feminine) due to the fear of being negatively socially evaluated, given that if they behave nonstereotypically (i.e., in a masculine way), they could be perceived negatively by men and other women (e.g., Rudman et al., 2012). This conceptualization is supported by previous research (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020) and our study, in which we found that femininity seemed to be positively associated with FNE. Furthermore, in line

with previous research, we did not find significant sex differences in FNE; however, women seemed to report higher FNE than men did (e.g., Gallego et al., 2007; Villanueva-Moya & Exposito, 2020). FNE might be triggered by the pressure that women feel if they disregard traditional gender roles (Dinella et al., 2014). Given that, as indicated in the social role theory, gender roles influence women and men's behavior and consequently could limit their behavior (Eagly & Wood, 2016). It should be noted that the evolution of stereotypes has not been the same for women as for men, who are the highest status group and are not judged in the same way as women are, as a subordinate group (Fiske et al., 2002); therefore, women feel more socially pressure.

This fear triggered by feminine roles could influence women's behavior, such as decision-making. In particular, the results showed that FNE seemed to lead to an increase in experiencing regret (Cheek & Goebel, 2020). Furthermore, extending previous research (Ward, & King, 2018), the current research adds FNE together with femininity as a possible mediator variable in the relationship between sex and regret in decision-making. Auxiliary analyses showed that sex indirectly linked to regret in decision-making, through femininity and FNE, such that women (vs. men) self-reported higher feminine traits, which were associated with increased FNE (see Supplemental Analyses). This, in turn, was associated with more regret. This finding seems to show that gender roles may develop uncertain situations (through FNE) in which women are not sure whether they should make another decision. In this respect, for women (vs. men), the level of FNE triggered by femininity may lead to a decision-making process that is more stressful, leading to greater decision difficulty and thus to experiencing more regret, with the consequent impact of this disruption on their well-being. Indeed, when we analyzed the content of the most important decisions that people made throughout their lives, the findings showed that women perceived their decisions as being more difficult than men did. Gender roles prescribe that, women, should be focused on family (i.e., as caregivers) and men on work (i.e., as providers; Eagly & Wood, 2016). Nevertheless, the increase of women in the workplace has led them to focus on work, too (Campillo & Armijo, 2017), so it is reasonable to think that their decisions are focused in both domains, one for being what is socially expected by gender roles (family) and the other because they want to progress professionally (work). In this sense, as can be observed in the findings of the qualitative analysis, women's decisions are based mainly on the work and family domains, whereas men's decisions are based on the work domain (Hochschild &

Manchung, 2012). That is to say, women are encouraged to occupy work positions but without abandoning the family (their gender role) because otherwise they would be socially sanctioned. While men are encouraged to maintain their work role and when they take on family role they are positively viewed for it. This pattern of results seems to reflect that, traditional attitudes are maintained and reinforced; that is, women's decisions are directed toward caring for others as caregivers, and men's decisions are directed toward goal achievement as providers. Therefore, it can be appreciated that the progressive advance toward gender equality in the public sphere (with an increase of women in the work domain) has not spilled over to the private sphere in the same way (with an increase of men in the family domain). Indeed, women continue spending more than twice as much time on family responsibilities than men do (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). Hence, women may find themselves in uncertain situations because they would like to progress at work, but at the same time, they feel responsible for the family domain (Campillo & Armijo, 2017). This can be seen reflected in the level of difficulty that women perceived in their decisions compared with men given that women have to consider more factors when making a decision. Consequently, women might not be sure if it is better to prioritize work or family, and they might experience more regret. Indeed, in our results, women scored higher than men did on regret (van de Calseide et al., 2018). Newton et al. (2012) demonstrated that whatever women decided, they reported regret (prioritizing family over work or prioritizing work over family), because both domains are relevant for them (Campillo & Armijo, 2017). Men seemed not to have to decide between work and family, and consequently, their decisions were more focused on achieving their goals (i.e., work), with a lower probability of regret because they did not have to consider other options. Specifically, in the work category, men's decisions were related to *changing or leaving a job to improve their working conditions* or even to *being away from family for work*, whereas women's decisions were related to *changing or leaving a job to stay with family* followed by *changing or leaving a job to improve their working conditions*. This analysis indicates that women's decisions are between both domains, whereas men's decisions seemed to reflect that their decisions are mainly based on one domain. This dilemma can lead to women being forced to sacrifice one of their options, which can result in feelings of discomfort for the women themselves, such as regret in decision-making. When women are faced with this dilemma, they may choose the family because it is the socially safer option and because women's behaviours are orientated by ideals or expectations (Johnston & Diekman, 2015), but is this really what women want? The simple fact of

being a woman and the fear of being judged by others may cause women to decide for the benefit of others (i.e., their traditional role) with the costs that this would entail for their satisfaction. Once the decision is made, with its consequences, women may perceive that the decision they made to sacrifice their career aspirations for the caregiving of others did not benefit them as much as they had hoped, and therefore they regret it.

Previous research has shown that regret in decision-making is associated with life satisfaction and subjective happiness (Moyano-Díaz et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2002), both well-being indicators (Diener et al., 2009). Researchers have found sex differences in both indicators, with women scoring lower than men (e.g., Batz & Tay, 2018). Could these differences be explained by the regret experienced by women due to gender roles? In the present study, we tested two serial mediation models that depicted sex as indirectly related to subjective happiness or life satisfaction through femininity, FNE, and regret. Specifically, women (vs. men) displayed a greater internalization of gender roles (i.e., femininity), which was associated with increased FNE. This, in turn, was associated with experienced regret in decision-making, which seemed to lead to lower levels of well-being (life satisfaction and subjective happiness). Hence, levels of well-being might be explained by the level of uncertainty in women's decisions due to gender roles. In other words, the negative feeling of not knowing if what you have decided is right or wrong because the decision could not be congruent with gender role expectations seems to lead to lower well-being in women.

It should be noted that only the indirect effect with subjective happiness as a criteria variable increased the explained variance. Therefore, although the indirect effect was statistically significant with life satisfaction as a criteria variable, caution is warranted in the interpretation of this finding. This could be due to subjective happiness being associated with changes from day to day, whereas life satisfaction is more constant and general (Diener et al., 1997). When an individual makes a decision, the consequences of this decision can change according to daily circumstances and events, which, in turn, can result in regret or not. That is, subjective happiness can change over time, whereas life satisfaction is more consistent. In this sense, the drop in variance in life satisfaction seems to indicate that other possible variables should be considered. Women who are more adherent to gender roles may feel caught between what they want to do and what they should do and may feel regret consistently throughout their lives. Women may feel that

this state will not change in the future, given that whatever they choose, they will tend to regret; hence, they do not make an overall negative life appraisal (i.e., life satisfaction). Likewise, it could be said that life satisfaction depends more on what women have achieved throughout their lives and to what extent they have conformed to what is expected (i.e., they behave according to what is socially expected of them in order to feel greater satisfaction despite the regrets they may feel). For example, it is common to hear women say, “I can’t complain about my life; I have a family, a job, a good house...,” but one might ask whether these women are really happy. Subjective happiness seems to be more circumstantial and variable and, therefore, may vary depending on the choices one makes. For example, the decision to take a six-month leave of absence to care for her baby may affect a woman’s happiness (because it is circumstantial), but it may not affect her more consistent perception of her well-being (i.e., life satisfaction). In fact, a woman is socially expected to make this decision because she would be behaving in accordance with the expectations society has established for her.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite this study’s contribution to the gender role and decision-making literature, it has several limitations that are necessary to consider. The study sample cannot be considered representative of Spanish people as it was a convenience sample. Our findings are preliminary, so their generalizability to the general Spanish population must be tested in future research. This research involved cross-sectional data, which limit strong causal conclusions. Future research could complement these findings by using experimental procedures, where the fear of negative evaluation could be manipulated in a sample of women with high femininity. For example, tell participants that they will be given three minutes to prepare a speech to be presented in front of an audience (Durlik et al., 2014). Future researchers might replicate the current findings with other populations or conditions (e.g., research institutes) to analyze these associations in more detail and help define the phenomenon. Based on previous studies (e.g., Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020), we did not assess masculinity. We recommend future researchers consider masculinity as a control variable, given that recent research has found agentic traits to be associated more with women and men nowadays (Moya & Moya-Garófano, 2021). Likewise, it would be interesting to include personality variables. For example, it has been found that women scored higher than men in neuroticism (Murphy et al., 2021),

which was positively related to femininity and the FNE (Hazel et al., 2014; Zheng & Zheng, 2011). It might be interesting to control for this variable, because neuroticism assesses the tendency of people to experience negative emotions or related processes (e.g., anxiety) when they perceive threat. Additionally, we recommend that future researchers analyze the degree of regret regarding a decision related to work and/or family (the most relevant domains) and not regarding decisions in general. For example, researchers could ask participants to describe a decision and indicate their level of regret based on that decision. Furthermore, it might be interesting to ask participants to describe the consequences they perceive of these decisions. Lastly, it would also be interesting to carry out a longitudinal study and to analyze whether gender roles fluctuate or whether women sustain their level of regret.

Conclusion

Gender roles seem to work like a social schema through which women and men learn how they must behave (e.g., decision-making). This gender socialization is such a deep-rooted process that people may not awareness of how they have been socialized, which is thus often is difficult to analyze in people's discussions of their own decision-making. On this basis, the current research is one of the first to investigate whether gender roles are related to decision-making factors. Specifically, we investigated whether femininity together with FNE could add explained variance of regret in decision-making. Additionally, we analyzed the possible relationship of regret with well-being indicators (subjective happiness and life satisfaction). The results showed that women (vs. men) had a greater internalization of gender roles (i.e., femininity), which was associated with higher FNE. This, in turn, was associated with experienced regret in decision-making, which seemed to lead to lower well-being. That is, it seems to reflect the relationship between sociocultural variables (gender roles) and individual well-being in women. Specifically, these findings underscore the importance of gender roles to trigger regret in decision-making, which is considered a negative emotion that happens when individuals harm themselves (Berndsen et al., 2004). Overall, this study expands evidence on regret in decision-making through social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 2016), indicating that gender roles can influence women's decisions and well-being, thus maintaining gender inequality. Moreover, the content analysis seems to reflect that although men and women have similar decision-making processes, the content of decisions is determined by the

meaning of gender. Therefore, this research tries to understand the meaning of gender and how its internalization seems to increase sex differences in decision-making and well-being.

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Chapter 5

Work and Family Sacrifices, a Double-Edged Sword: The Role of Authenticity and Partner Appreciation in Perception of Benefits and Costs

Los resultados del Capítulo 4 revelaron que la interiorización de los roles de género parece ser una de las principales causas que ejerce de manera diferencial en el bienestar de hombres y mujeres. Los roles de género parecen desencadenar situaciones de ambivalencia en el proceso de toma de decisión, en las que, a diferencia de los hombres, se han de definir entre diferentes roles. El análisis del contenido de las decisiones que aportaron los y las participantes del estudio puso de manifiesto que la ambivalencia a la que se enfrentan las mujeres gira en torno al trabajo y la familia; mientras que esta situación no se observa en los hombres, en quienes prevalece el rol de proveedor de manera generalizada en sus decisiones, principalmente relacionadas con el trabajo. El conflicto por tanto solo se da en las mujeres, que tienen que elegir entre dos ámbitos, dado que se enfrentan con frecuencia a la decisión de comportarse de acuerdo con lo *deben hacer* (i.e., familia) o con lo que *quieren hacer* (i.e., progresar profesionalmente). La interiorización de los roles de género y las presiones sociales parecen dirigir la decisión de las mujeres hacia lo que es socialmente correcto, esto es la familia, sin tener en cuenta las consecuencias que ello supone para su bienestar. Tras su decisión, las mujeres pueden valorar el hecho de que sacrificar su trabajo por el cuidado o bienestar de otras personas no fue tan beneficioso como ellas esperaban, por lo que se arrepienten de su decisión, con las consecuencias que esto acarrea para su bienestar.

Por otra parte, el análisis de contenido realizado con las decisiones registradas por los y las participantes, mostró que, para las mujeres y los hombres, además de las decisiones relacionadas con el trabajo y la familia, aquellas relacionadas con las relaciones interpersonales formaban parte de las decisiones más importantes de sus vidas. Concretamente, entre las decisiones que involucraban relaciones interpersonales, el dominio relativo a la pareja fue la que tuvo mayor peso. Por esta razón, los estudios posteriores se centrarán en estudiar cómo las variables interpersonales afectan a las decisiones de las mujeres. Además, en línea con el análisis cualitativo previo, en los siguientes capítulos se analizará el proceso de toma de decisión en el contexto trabajo-familia, midiéndose a través del sacrificio de un dominio sobre otro. Además, y dado que las mujeres no detectan generalmente estas decisiones como un sacrificio al ser lo que se espera de ellas (Impett & Gordon, 2008), los sacrificios serán evaluados en términos de costes y beneficios.

Por otro lado, al focalizar los siguientes estudios en las relaciones interpersonales, se consideró necesario redirigir la manera en la que se midieron los roles de género. Concretamente en el Capítulo 5 se han usado las medidas de motivación comunal y autenticidad como reflejo de los roles de género. Tal y como definió en el marco conceptual, el concepto de motivación comunal hace referencia a la motivación por satisfacer las necesidades de los y las demás (Clark y Mills, 2011), lo cual es congruente con lo que se espera de las mujeres, y a su rol de cuidadora. De la misma manera, se ha utilizado la variable autenticidad para evaluar la interiorización de los roles de género de las mujeres. Las mujeres con una mayor motivación comunal se sentirán más auténticas o fieles a sí mismas, dado que se estarían comportando de acuerdo con su rol de género. Por último, en este Capítulo empírico se analiza el papel reforzador que tiene la pareja (i.e., apreciación) sobre los sacrificios de las mujeres. Específicamente, se analiza el papel de los roles de género, medidos a través de variables interpersonales como la motivación comunal y autenticidad, en la percepción de costes y beneficios al realizar sacrificios laborales (i.e., decidir dejar el trabajo para estar con la familia) y familiares (i.e., decidir invertir más tiempo en el trabajo que en la familia).

The results of Chapter 4 revealed that the internalization of gender roles seems to be a main factor that affects men's and women's well-being in a differential way. Gender roles trigger situations of ambivalence in the decision-making process, in which, unlike men, women have to define themselves between different roles. The analysis of the content of the decisions the study participants provided showed that the ambivalence women faced revolves around work and family, while this situation was not observed in men, in whom the role of provider prevails in a generalized manner in their decisions, mainly related to work. Therefore, the conflict only occurs in women, who have to choose between two spheres, given that they are often faced with the decision to behave in accordance with what they *should* do (i.e., family) or with what they *want* to do (i.e., professional advancement). The internalization of gender roles and social pressures direct women's decisions toward what is socially correct, that is, family, without considering the consequences for their well-being. After their decision, women may appreciate that sacrificing their work for the care or well-being of others was not as beneficial as they had hoped for, thus they regret their decision because of the consequences for their well-being.

In contrast, the content analysis carried out with the decisions the participants reported showed that, for both women and men, in addition to decisions related to work and family, those related to interpersonal relationships were among the most important decisions in their lives. Specifically, among the decisions involving interpersonal relationships, the domain related to the partner was the one that held the greatest weight. For this reason, subsequent studies will focus on exploring how interpersonal variables affect women's decisions. Furthermore, in line with the previous qualitative analysis, the following chapters will analyze the decision-making process in the work–family context, measured through the sacrifice of one domain over another. In addition, and given that women do not generally detect these decisions as a sacrifice because of what is expected of them (Impett & Gordon, 2008), the sacrifices will be evaluated in terms of costs and benefits.

Furthermore, by focusing the following studies on interpersonal relationships, we considered it necessary to redirect the way in which we measured gender roles. Specifically, in Chapter 5, measures of communal motivation and authenticity have been used as reflections of gender roles. As defined in the conceptual framework, the concept

of communal motivation refers to the motivation to meet others' needs (Clark and Mills, 2011), which is congruent with what is expected of women and their role as caregivers. Similarly, the authenticity variable has been used to assess women's internalization of gender roles. Women with a higher communal motivation will feel more authentic or true to themselves, given that they would be behaving in accordance with their gender role. Finally, this empirical chapter analyzes the partner's reinforcing role (i.e., appreciation) on women's sacrifices. Specifically, we analyze how gender roles, measured through interpersonal variables such as communal motivation and authenticity, influence the perception of costs and benefits when making work sacrifices (i.e., choosing to leave work to be with the family) and family sacrifices (i.e., choose to invest more time in work than in the family).

Work and Family Sacrifices, a Double-Edged Sword: The Role of Authenticity and Partner Appreciation in Perception of Benefits and Costs

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Abstract

This research examines the perception of costs and benefits of making work and family sacrifices, considering individual and relationship variables. Study 1 ($N = 123$) showed that women high in communal strength perceived greater benefits (personal and relationship well-being) of making work sacrifices. This process was mediated by the sense of authenticity and the perception of their partners' appreciation. Women high in communal strength who felt more authentic experienced greater partner appreciation, which, in turn, predicted higher perceptions of benefits of making work sacrifices. Study 2 ($N = 117$) showed that men who felt more authentic after making a family sacrifice experienced greater partner appreciation, which, in turn, predicted a higher perception of benefits. These findings suggest that both women and men make sacrifices in accordance with their gender roles because they authenticate their identity, and the relationship reinforces this behavior, improving the individuals' and the relationship's well-being (i.e., benefits).

Keywords: communal strength, work, family, sacrifices, romantic relationship

Work and Family Sacrifices, a Double-Edged Sword: The Role of Authenticity and Partners Appreciation in the Perception of Benefits and Costs

In couple relationships, situations can often arise in which the preferences or goals of one partner are in conflict with those of the other partner. For example, one partner wants to work in another city but the other does not, or one partner wants to live closer to work but the other does not. Situations also can arise where both people want to keep their full-time jobs, but this situation is incompatible with family responsibilities, so one person has to sacrifice their goals for the benefit of the other. In such situations, one partner decides to sacrifice for their partner or for the relationship. Sacrifice has been defined as foregoing one's immediate self-interest to promote the well-being of a partner or a relationship (Righetti et al., 2022; van Lange et al., 1997). One partner subordinates their personal goal to provide a benefit to their partner, accumulating personal costs in the process (Day & Impett, 2016; Killen & Turiel, 1998). Sacrifice is often inevitable and necessary because partners must coordinate their personal interests to develop their lives together. Sacrifice is characterized by a communal motivation (referred to as communal strength in romantic relationships), that is, a strong concern for the well-being of others, and the motivation to meet a partner's needs and do so without the expectation of reciprocation (Clark & Mills, 1979, 2011). Kogan et al. (2010) found that communally motivated people tend to enjoy making daily sacrifices for their partners because they feel more authentic. This literature on sacrifice has focused on daily sacrifices and the ways partners influence this process. No study to date has documented findings on major sacrifices, such as leaving a job to take care of the family or moving to another city for a partner's job. These types of sacrifices can be denominated work sacrifices because individuals, usually women (Dahm et al., 2019), decide to sacrifice their work to attend to family needs.

Based on social role theory (Eagly, 1987), according to which women's social role is to take care of others and maintain relationships, we investigated whether women high in communal strength, who are particularly motivated to meet their partners' needs, would perceive more benefits of making work sacrifices. Second, we tested the hypothesis that women high in communal strength would perceive more benefits of making these sacrifices because they feel more authentic when behaving according to social expectations.

Although women's participation in the public sphere has increased in recent years, traditional patterns can still be observed in their incorporation in the labor market. For example, most part-time workers are female, with the main reasons being childcare, adult care, and other family obligations (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy, 2020). Social role theory explains this behavior, saying women's and men's behaviors are socially preestablished as a function of gender roles and their associated characteristics. Specifically, women are socially expected to be communal; that is, they should be concerned about caring for others (i.e., caregiver role). Men are expected to play the provider role; therefore, they should be concerned about their goal achievements. Although it has been found that agentic traits have more often been assigned to women in recent years, the traditional role of women (communality) has endured over time (Eagly et al., 2020; Moya & Moya-Garófano, 2021). Gender roles can be reflected in the type of sacrifice. Women are more likely to sacrifice in the career domain, adopting their goals to their partners' needs (Impett & Peplau, 2006). Moreover, women's decisions weigh work and family, prioritizing family, whereas men's decisions focus mainly on work. For example, men are likely to change or leave a job to improve their working conditions, and women are likely to change or leave a job to care of their family (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2022). In this sense, Dahm et al. (2019) found that women made more work sacrifices, whereas men made more family sacrifices.

Considering gender roles, not surprisingly, all forms of communal motivation tend to be higher in women than men (Le et al., 2018). When communally oriented individuals make decisions, they take into account less about what is the best for them and more about what is best for the relationship. Communally oriented individuals have their needs (the well-being of themselves, their relationship partner, and the relationship) fulfilled through giving care to others (Le et al., 2013; Le et al., 2018), and experience greater positive emotions when they make sacrifices (Kogan et al., 2010). Likewise, communally strong individuals report greater maintenance behaviors (Joel et al., 2018), even in the face of inequity (Stafford, 2020), such as having to give up or reduce work, as in the case of women. Specifically, Villanueva-Moya and Expósito (2020) found that when women identified with their communal roles, they behaved as was socially expected of them. We expected that communally oriented women would perceive more benefits of making work sacrifices because their gender roles more internalized and because they sacrifice according to what is best for the relationship. For them, making this kind of sacrifice

could be a sign of love and care. In contrast, we did not expect that communally oriented women would perceive more costs of making work sacrifices given that they could underestimate the costs (Visserman et al., 2020) by focusing on what is gained rather than lost (Impett et al., 2005). Moreover, this behavior is inherent to their social role as caregivers, so they would not perceive it as costly.

Kogan et al. (2010) found that the higher partners were in communal strength, the more authentic they felt when they made sacrifices, which, in turn, was associated with positive outcomes for them and for the relationship. This literature allowed us to hypothesize that women who are high in communal strength would perceive more benefits of making work sacrifices because such sacrifices authenticate their sense of self. That is, women would affirm their traditional perceptions through their sacrifices. The perception of self-authenticity is an important factor that could affect women's perceptions, but the partner also could play an important role. The feelings of authenticity an individual has after making sacrifices for their partner are linked with their feelings of closeness to their partner (i.e., partner appreciation; Kogan et al., 2010). Moreover, there are ways in which partners can facilitate these feelings. For example, Visserman et al. (2021) found that when a partner receives a sacrifice, they show care for and understanding of the sacrificer's needs. Likewise, people have a willingness to express positive emotions toward their partners when they perceive communal strength in them (von Culin et al., 2018). It is to be expected that communally oriented women who feel more authentic in sacrificing work for family will feel greater appreciation from their partners, both because they have greater feelings of closeness to their partners and because they perceive their partners' behaviors toward them for the sacrifices they have made. Thus, the individual variable (authenticity) triggered by both communal strength and partner appreciation could increase the perception of the benefits (personal and relationship well-being) of making work sacrifices in communally oriented women.

Research Overview

In this study, we tried to replicate the findings of Kogan et al. (2010) by considering the social role theory in regard to major sacrifices (family and work). In two studies, we set out to examine the perceived benefits and costs of a sacrifice: work sacrifices for women and family sacrifices for men according to social role theory (Dahm et al., 2019). In Study 1, we sampled women to analyze whether communally oriented

women perceive more benefits of making work sacrifices because they are more sensitive to social evaluations—when women deviate from their traditional role, they are negatively evaluated—and because they sacrifice according to what is best for their relationships. However, we did not expect that women high in communal strength would perceive more costs because according to social role theory, this behavior is inherent. Furthermore, we expected women high in communal strength would perceive more benefits of making these sacrifices because they could feel more authentic, and they perceived more partner appreciation of making work sacrifices. Next, in a sample of men (Study 2), we examined how feelings of authenticity from making family sacrifices and greater perceptions of their partners' appreciation of their making these sacrifices would lead to higher perceptions of benefits (but not costs).

Study 1

Method

Participants

Originally, we recruited 156 Spanish women ($M = 47.88$; $SD = 8.42$). We removed 10 participants because they had another sexual orientation, six because they were divorced, one because she was single, nine because they failed the attention check (i.e., “If you are reading this question, answer with 3”), and seven because they gave incoherent responses to an open-ended question about their sacrifices. The final sample consisted of 123 women ($M = 48.41$; $SD = 7.57$). Their romantic involvements ranged from 3 months to 47 years ($M_{months} = 270.16$; $SD = 133.22$). More than half of the participants were married (78.9%), 13% were currently living with their partners, and 8.1% were maintaining dating relationships. Most participants (87.8%) had children. A post hoc power analysis for mediation using Monte Carlo simulations (5,000 replications and 20,000 draws; Schoemann et al., 2017) was used to detect the indirect effect with two serial mediators (which is the focus of this study). The power analysis indicated that this sample could detect the indirect effect with 80% accuracy.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through the online platform LimeSurvey. Informed consent was obtained from participants prior to their completion of the measures.

Participants were first asked to complete relationship measures, and next they were asked to think of the most recent work sacrifice they made to attend to family needs. They then completed a series of measures regarding the sacrifice they had recalled, and sociodemographic variables. Participants did not receive monetary compensation.

Measures

Communal Strength

It was measured with 12 items developed by Mills et al. (2004) assessing the degree of a person's motivation to respond to a communal partner's needs (Spanish version by Ramírez-Fernández et al., 2019). Participants were asked to rate these items with their romantic partners in mind (Joel et al., 2018; Kogat et al., 2010). Example of item is "How much would you be willing to give up to benefit your partner?" (1 = *not at all*, 10 = *extremely*).

Relationship Satisfaction

It was assessed with the respective subscale of the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998; Spanish version by van der Drift et al., 2014). It consists of five items (e.g., "I feel satisfied with our relationship"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

Inclusion of Other in the Self

Inclusion of other in the self was assessed with the one-item Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) scale (Aron et al., 1992; Spanish version by Gómez et al., 2011). Previous authors have used this scale in the context of romantic relationships (Kogat et al., 2010; Impett et al., 2014). Participants were presented a pictorial scale with a series of seven pairs of circles, in which one circle represented them and the other circle represented their partner. Each set depicted the circles with different degrees of overlap (1 = *totally independent* to 7 = *almost completely overlapping*), and participants were asked to choose the model that best represented their romantic relationships.

Work Sacrifice

To ensure that participants understood the meaning of “sacrifice,” they were given the instructions provided to participants by Day and Impett (2016). Then participants recalled the most recent work sacrifices they had made (see Supplemental Material). They then answered the next items with the work sacrifice in mind. First, they rated how authentic they felt while making the sacrifice with the item “I felt authentic (true to myself) while making this sacrifice” (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) based on the work of Impett et al. (2013). We assessed the perception of their partners’ appreciation for the sacrifice with the item “My partner really appreciated my making this sacrifice” (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) based on the work of Kogan et al. (2010). Finally, participants rated the benefits and costs of their sacrifices. Based on the work of Visserman et al. (2020), we used three items to assess the benefits (“How beneficial would the sacrifice be for you?”, “How positively would you feel about this sacrifice?”, and “How beneficial would you feel this sacrifice would be for your relationship?”; 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*) and three to assess the costs (“How costly would the sacrifice be for you?”, “How big would the sacrifice be for you?”, and “How hard would you find it to make this sacrifice?”; 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*). Following the procedure of Visserman et al., we created a composite score for each variable (benefits and costs). Though it was not our object of study, we also asked the women to describe a family sacrifice (i.e., the last time they sacrificed some aspect of their family to attend to work life) and to answer the items described above. Both conditions (work and family sacrifices) were counterbalanced to avoid response bias.

Sociodemographic Variables

Data were collected regarding participants’ ages, relationship statuses, relationship lengths, and whether they had children.

Results

Analysis Strategy

Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach’s alpha reliabilities for all variables appear in Table 1 along with correlations among all variables. Independent hierarchical regression analyses were performed to test the predictive contribution of communal

strength to the perceptions of benefits and costs, controlling for having children, IOS, and relationship satisfaction. Having children, IOS, and relationship satisfaction were entered in Step 1, and communal strength was included in Step 2 of the regression model. We ran two serial mediation analyses using PROCESS (Version 3.4, Model 6; Hayes, 2018) to test the mediator roles of authenticity and feeling appreciated between communal strength and the perception of benefits and costs, individually. Communal strength was included as the predictor (X), authenticity (M1) and feeling appreciated (M2) as the mediating variables, and perception of benefits and costs (Y) as criteria variables (see Figure 1). Having children, IOS, and relationship satisfaction were introduced as covariates in these models. Following Hayes' (2018) procedures, a confidence interval (CI) that does not include zero indicates a statistically meaningful association. Variables were centered. Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 21.

Table 1*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables in Study 1*

Measures	<i>n</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Having children ^a	123	–	–.00	–.13	–.08	.03	–.10	–.02	–.02
2. IOS	123		–	.54**	.33**	.25**	.25**	.20*	–.09
3. Relationship satisfaction	123			–	.26**	.16	.35**	.24**	–.25**
4. Communal strength	123				–	.26**	.19*	.25**	–.20*
5. Authenticity	123					–	.49**	.59**	–.22*
6. Partner appreciation	123						–	.54**	–.05
7. Perception of benefits	123							–	–.30**
8. Perception of costs	123								–
Range									
Potential		0–1	1–7	1–7	1–10	1–7	1–7	1–7	1–7
Real		0–1	1–7	1.60–7	4.70–9.90	1–7	1–7	1–7	1–7
Mean (<i>SD</i>)		–	4.85 (1.49)	5.12 (1.23)	7.44 (1.08)	5.37 (1.94)	5.14 (2.20)	5.05 (1.64)	3.71 (1.82)
α Reliability		–	–	.84	.75	–	–	.80	.87

Note. ^a 0 = No, 1 = Yes; IOS = Inclusion of other in the self.

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

Does Communal Strength Predict Benefits and Costs of Work Sacrifices in Women?

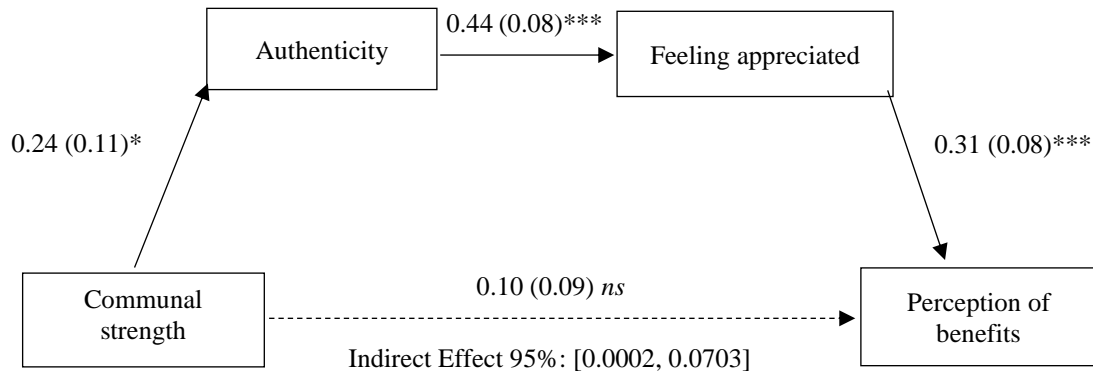
The results showed that communal strength predicted the perception of benefits, $b = 0.19$, $t = 2.08$, $p = .040$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.38]. Having children, IOS, and relationship satisfaction were not significant (all $ps > .05$). Communal strength did not predict the perception of costs, $b = -0.18$, $t = -1.89$, $p = .062$, 95% CI [-0.36, 0.01]. Having children and IOS were not significant, whereas relationship satisfaction predicted perception of costs, $b = -0.30$, $t = -2.79$, $p = .006$, 95% CI [-0.51, -0.09]. That is, women with higher relationship satisfaction perceived less costs of their work sacrifices than those with lower relationship satisfaction.

The Roles of Authenticity and Partner Appreciation

Perception of Benefits. The results showed that women with higher communal strength seemed to feel more authentic (i.e., true to themselves) when they make work sacrifices, which was associated with greater perceptions of their partners' appreciation, which in turn, was associated with a higher perception of benefits in work sacrifices, $b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI [0.0002, 0.0703]. The total effect of communal strength on benefits was significant, $b = 0.23$, $SE = 0.11$, 95% IC [0.011, 0.457]. The variables included in the model predicted 44% of the variance of the perception of the benefits of making work sacrifices. The indirect effect is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1

The Indirect Effect of Communal Strength on Perception of Benefits Mediated by Authenticity and Partner Appreciation in Study 1



Note. Standardized beta coefficients reported with standard errors within parentheses; ns = no significant.

* $p < 0.05$. *** $p < 0.001$.

Having children and IOS were not significant ($p > .05$), whereas relationship satisfaction was significant to feeling appreciated ($b = 0.27$, $SE = 0.09$, $t = 2.96$, $p = .004$, 95% CI [0.09, 0.45]). That is, women with higher relationship satisfaction felt more appreciated by their partners when they made work sacrifices than those with lower relationship satisfaction.

Perception of Costs. The indirect effect of communal strength on the perception of costs based on authenticity and feeling appreciated was not significant ($b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [−0.0054, 0.0463]).

Auxiliary Analyses

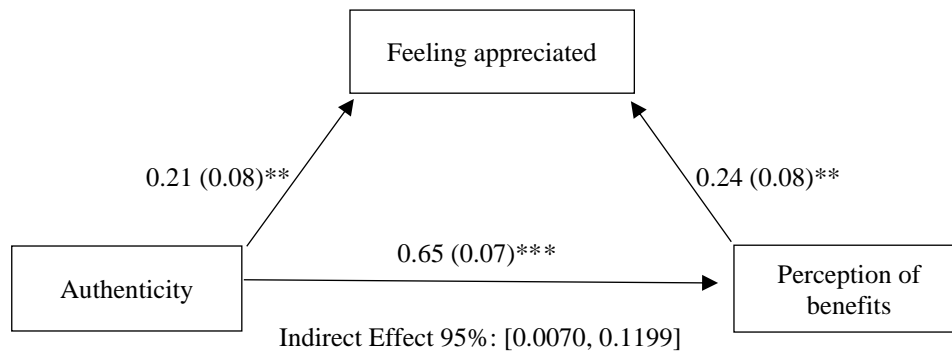
Considering that women seem to make more work sacrifices than men, according to gender roles, the focus of our study was not family sacrifices in women. However, as noted in the Measures section, we also assessed their perceptions (i.e., sense of authenticity, feeling appreciated, costs, and benefits) of their family sacrifices in an exploratory way. After we controlled for having children, IOS, and relationship satisfaction, the results showed that communal strength did not predict the perception of benefits ($b = 0.00$, $t = 0.02$, $p = .987$, 95% CI [−0.19, 0.19]), or the perception of costs of making a family sacrifice ($b = 0.03$, $t = 0.33$, $p = .745$, 95% CI [−0.16, 0.22]). In the same

vein, the indirect effects of communal strength on the perception of benefits and costs, individually, based on the sense of authenticity and feeling appreciated were not significant ($b_{benefits} = 0.00$, $SE = 0.00$, 95% CI $[-0.0075, 0.0171]$; $b_{costs} = 0.00$, $SE = 0.00$, 95% CI $[-0.0075, 0.0063]$).

It makes sense that communal strength would not predict that women would feel authentic in making family sacrifices, because these sacrifices would be more focused on fulfilling career goals rather than satisfying the needs of others. For this reason, we explored how women who felt more authentic in making these sacrifices perceived more benefits or costs because they felt more appreciated by their partners. As shown in Figure 2, when we controlled for having children, IOS, and relationship satisfaction, the results revealed that women who felt more authentic (i.e., true to themselves) when they made family sacrifices perceived more benefits in their sacrifices ($b = 0.65$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[0.51, 0.78]$). The reason women who felt more authentic perceived more benefits in their family sacrifices was that they feel more appreciated by their partners when they made these sacrifices ($b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI $[0.0070, 0.1199]$). The total effect of the sense of authenticity on the perception of benefits was significant, $b = 0.70$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[0.56, 0.83]$. These variables predicted 53.79% of the variance of the perception of the benefits of making family sacrifices. This model was not significant for the perception of costs, $b = 0.00$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI $[-0.0517, 0.0652]$.

Figure 2

Partner Appreciation as Mediator of the Relationship Between Authenticity and the Benefits of Family Sacrifice in Women in Study 1



Note. Standardized beta coefficients reported with standard errors within parentheses.

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

Brief Discussion

The results of Study 1 demonstrated that communally oriented women perceived more benefits (personal and relationship well-being) of making family sacrifices. As in previous research on decision-making behavior (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020), when the women in our study identified with their communal roles, they made decisions consistent with social expectations of them. Likewise, Kogan et al. (2010) found that communally motivated people tended to enjoy making sacrifices. Furthermore, based on this previous research, we identified two mechanisms between communal strength and the perceived benefits of making work sacrifices: the sense of authenticity and the partner appreciation. Our results allowed us to replicate these findings such that, when women high in communal strength felt more authentic, they experienced greater partner appreciation, which, in turn, predicted higher benefits of making work sacrifices. These findings suggest that in addition to a personal pathway (authenticity) between communal strength and perceived benefits, there is also a partner pathway in which perceiving their partners' appreciation of their sacrifices makes women perceive more benefits to making work sacrifices in their life.

Study 2

In Study 2, we sampled men to test whether feeling authentic before making family sacrifices would increase their perceptions of the benefits and costs because they would perceive their partners' appreciation after making the sacrifice. In this study, we took into account family sacrifices because they are the sacrifices that men tend to make to a greater extent (Dahm et al., 2019). In men, we did not predict communal strength to be a determinant variable of feeling authentic given that it is a variable traditionally associated with women; in fact, it is women who have higher scores (Le et al., 2018). Furthermore, family sacrifices, in which one must sacrifice some aspect of the family to attend to work needs, are more focused on achieving a career goal rather than attending to or satisfying the needs of others—communal strength.

Method

Participants

The initial sample was composed of 139 Spanish men ($M = 49.92$; $SD = 8.58$). We removed five participants because they had another sexual orientation, three because they were divorced, nine because they failed the attention check, and five because they had incoherent responses to an open-ended question about their sacrifices. Participants were 117 Spanish men ($M = 50.65$; $SD = 7.51$; range from 34 to 67). On average, the men reported being involved in their relationships for 23 years ($M_{months} = 271.78$; $SD = 126.97$; range from 18 to 504 months). Most participants were married (81.2%), 12% were currently living with their partners, and 6.8% were maintaining dating relationships. In addition, 86.3% had children, and 13.7% did not. A post hoc power analysis for mediation using Monte Carlo simulations (5,000 replications and 20,000 draws; Schoemann et al., 2017) showed that a sample size of 117 individuals would be enough to ensure a statistical power of 0.80.

Procedure

The procedure was the same as that followed in Study 1 except that, in this study, participants were asked to think of the most recent family sacrifices they had made to attend to work needs.

Measures

Communal Strength (Mills et al., 2004; Ramírez-Fernández et al., 2019).

Relationship Satisfaction (Rusbult et al., 1998; van der Drift et al., 2014).

IOS (Aron et al., 1992; Gómez et al., 2011).

Family Sacrifice

We used the same procedure as in Study 1, but in this study, participants recalled the most recent family sacrifices they had made following the instructions (see Supplemental Material). They then answered the same items used in Study 1 with the family sacrifice in mind. Even though it was not the aim of this research, in the same vein as Study 1, the men were also asked to describe a work sacrifice and to answer the items regarding this sacrifice. Both conditions were counterbalanced to avoid response bias.

Sociodemographic Variables

Data were collected regarding participants' ages, relationship statuses, relationship lengths, and whether they had children.

Results

Analysis Strategy

Descriptive statistics, reliabilities, and correlations for all variables are displayed in Table 2. Independent hierarchical regression analyses were performed to test the predictive contribution of communal strength to the perceptions of benefits and of costs, individually. Having children, IOS, and relationship satisfaction were entered in Step 1, and communal strength was included in Step 2 of the regression model. We then ran two simple mediation analyses using PROCESS (Version 3.4, Model 4; Hayes, 2018) to test the mediator role of feeling appreciated between authenticity and the perception of benefits and costs, individually. Authenticity was included as the predictor (X), feeling appreciated (M1) as the mediating variable, and perception of benefits and costs (Y) as criteria variables (see Figure 3). Having children, IOS, and relationship satisfaction were

introduced as covariates in all analyses. Variables were centered. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 21).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables in Study 2

Measures	<i>n</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1.Having children ^a	117	–	–.10	–.14	.05	.04	.19*	.02	.03
2. IOS	117		–	.55**	.24**	.23**	.17	.10	.00
3.Relationship satisfaction	117			–	.21**	.10	.12	–.05	.03
4.Communal strength	117				–	.06	.02	.08	.02
5. Authenticity	117					–	.61**	.52**	–.03
6. Partner appreciation	117						–	.59**	.08
7. Perception of benefits	117							–	.08
8. Perception of costs	117								–
Range									
Potential		0–1	1–7	1–7	1–10	1–7	1–7	1–7	1–7
Real		0–1	1–7	2.20–7	2.60–10	1–7	1–7	1–7	1–7
Mean (<i>SD</i>)		–	5.26 (1.42)	5.41 (0.84)	8.23 (1.17)	4.91 (1.73)	4.89 (1.77)	4.51 (1.63)	4.26 (1.86)
α Reliability		–	–	.70	.76	–	–	.80	.87

Note. ^a 0 = No, 1 = Yes; IOS = Inclusion of other in the self.

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

Does Communal Strength Predict Benefits and Costs of Family Sacrifices in Men?

As we predicted, communal strength did not predict the perception of benefits ($b = 0.07$, $t = 0.72$, $p = .474$, 95% CI [–0.12, 0.26]), or the perception of costs ($b = 0.02$, $t = 0.18$, $p = .856$, 95% CI [–0.18, 0.21]).

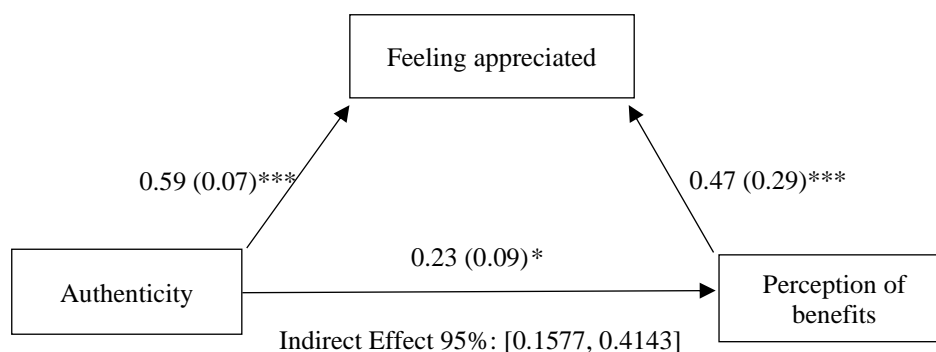
The Effect of Authenticity on Perception Based on Partner Appreciation

Perception of Benefits. The results showed that men who are felt more authentic (i.e., true to themselves) when they made family sacrifices perceived more benefits in their sacrifices ($b = 0.24$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .012$, 95% CI [0.05, 0.42]). The reason men who felt more authentic perceived more benefits in their family sacrifices was that they felt more appreciated by their partners ($b = 0.28$, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI [0.1577, 0.4143]). The

mediation is depicted in Figure 3. The total effect of authenticity on the perception of benefits was significant ($b = 0.52$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.35, 0.68]). The variables included in the model predicted 41.25% of the variance of the perception of the benefits of making family sacrifices.

Figure 3

Partner Appreciation as Mediator of the Relationship Between Authenticity and the Benefits of Family Sacrifice in Men in Study 2



Note. Standardized beta coefficients reported with standard errors within parentheses.

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

Perception of Costs. The simple mediation model was not significant for the perception of costs. Neither feeling authentic ($b = -0.11$, $SE = 0.12$, $p = .344$, 95% CI [-0.35, 0.12]), nor feeling appreciated ($b = 0.15$, $SE = 0.12$, $p = .231$, 95% CI [-0.09, 0.39]) predicted the perceived costs of making family sacrifices.

Auxiliary Analyses

As in Study 1, we aimed to test in an exploratory way the perceptions of counterstereotypical sacrifices (i.e., in the case of men, work sacrifices). Considering work sacrifices, communal strength did not predict the perception of benefits ($b = -0.06$, $t = -0.68$, $p = .499$, 95% CI [-0.25, 0.12]), or the perception of costs ($b = -0.08$, $t = -0.78$, $p = .435$, 95% CI [-0.27, 0.12]). Likewise, the indirect effects of the sense of authenticity on the perceptions of benefits and costs, individually, based on feeling appreciated were not significant ($b_{benefits} = 0.14$, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI [-0.0173, 0.3117]; $b_{costs} = 0.09$, $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI [-0.1070, 0.3079]).

Brief Discussion

In this study, we showed that men who felt more authentic after making family sacrifices perceived more benefits (for themselves and for their relationships). The association between a sense of authenticity and the perception of benefits was mediated by the perception of partner appreciation. As we predicted, communal strength did not predict any study variables in men who made family sacrifices. This study shows that men who felt more authentic when they made family sacrifices (according to social expectations, that is, “what any man would do for his family”) perceived that their partners appreciated them more; consequently, they perceived more benefits from these sacrifices.

General Discussion

These studies applied the social role theory (Eagly, 1987) to the study of sacrifice to understand the roles that work and family sacrifices (as a reflection of the internalization of gender roles), play in the perceptions of benefits and costs. Furthermore, we studied how both an individual variable (authenticity) and a relationship variable (perception of partner appreciation) could influence this perception process. In a study of women (Study 1), we found that being high in communal strength predicted a greater perception of the benefits (personal and relationship well-being) of making work sacrifices. Furthermore, we found that this process was mediated by the sense of authenticity and the perception of their partners’ appreciation such that, when women high in communal strength felt more authentic, they experienced greater partner appreciation, which, in turn, predicted a higher perception of the benefits of making work sacrifices. In a study of men (Study 2), our results showed that men who felt more authentic after making a family sacrifice experienced greater partner appreciation, which, in turn, predicted a higher perception of benefits.

According to gender roles, women are expected to make greater investments in their relationships than men; indeed, women make more larger or frequent sacrifices than men (Ahmed & Shaheen, 2013). A reflection of the internalization of gender roles may be the work sacrifices they make, which is one of the most important decisions of their lives (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2022). Admittedly, the fact that women score higher in communal motivation (Le et al., 2018) illustrates how they continue to direct their

preferences or goals toward satisfying the needs of others. In line with this, we found that women high in communal strength perceived higher benefits (personal and relationship well-being) in making work sacrifices. This finding is congruent with previous studies, where it was found that communally motivated people tended to enjoy making sacrifices (Kogan et al., 2010), and had relationships that functioned well (Stafford & Kuiper, 2021). These women may feel positive because by making these sacrifices, they are behaving in accordance with social expectations. Along these lines, Villanueva-Moya and Expósito (2020) demonstrated that women with communal traits limited their decisions because of the fear of being negatively evaluated. Likewise, these women could perceive more benefits for their partners, because these sacrifices could help them achieve their professional goals. Therefore, if women sacrifice work, both they and their partners will feel better; hence, they perceive more benefits for the relationship. In contrast, communal strength did not predict the perception of costs. This result is in line with previous studies, in which there were also no perceived costs of choosing between family and work (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2021), or the costs were underestimated (Visserman et al., 2020). Given that making sacrifices to satisfy the family's needs is inherent to women's role, the fact that they do not perceive costs is another reflection of their internalization, minimizing the situation (i.e., foregoing their immediate self-interests to promote the well-being of a partner or relationship).

Critically, we found that the sense of authenticity that women felt when sacrificing their professional development for family needs and the perceptions of their partners' appreciation function as mediators of communal strength and the perception of benefits (Kogan et al., 2010). Women who were high in communal strength perceived more benefits of making work sacrifices because such sacrifices authenticated their sense of self. They may feel more authentic when they make these sacrifices because it is something they have been doing all their lives and because it is what society expects of them. That is, women could affirm their traditional perceptions through their sacrifices. Likewise, feeling that they are behaving in accordance with themselves can bring them closer to their partners (Kogan et al., 2010). If we add to this the fact that partners seem to show caring and understanding behaviors toward the sacrifice (Visserman et al., 2021), and that this family support could be a resource gain for the partner's workplace (Stollberger et al., 2021), it is normal to find that women perceive that their partners appreciate them more. In some way, men could be reinforcing that their partners sacrifice

their professional development to attend to family needs, given that in most cases, it is not possible for both partners to develop professionally. Accordingly, these findings reflect that certain situations (e.g., high demands of work and family), individual factors (e.g., communal orientation and authenticity), and relationship factors (e.g., their partners' appreciation) can lead women to tend to invest in family over work. The second study allowed us to verify the other perspective of gender roles, that is, the family sacrifices that men make to attend to their work responsibilities. As with women, according to gender roles, men feel true to themselves (i.e., authentic) when they make family sacrifices, because it is socially preestablished that a man must sacrifice himself so that his family does not lack for anything. This feeling of authenticity brings them closer to their partners, perceiving greater appreciation from them (Kogan et al., 2010). Women may try to satisfy the men's needs and appreciate them, as the women perceive that the men are making a sacrifice (working overtime, spending less time at home, etc.). Furthermore, women experience guilt or shame if they prioritize work (Dahm et al., 2019), so it seems reasonable that they should appreciate their partners for doing so. All of this leads men to perceive more benefits for their partners and for their relationships.

Finally, through exploratory analyses, we observed how women also seemed to feel authentic when they made family sacrifices, which is not surprising given that the incorporation of women into the labor market has meant that they also identify with the work role, though they do not put aside the family role. Admittedly, women prioritize family when their decisions are between work and family (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2022). Our findings showed that women who felt more authentic in fulfilling their work needs perceived more benefits because they felt that their partners were supportive. As with men, it seems that in family sacrifices (i.e., where family is sacrificed to meet work needs), the partner has a significant role to play. Finally, in the sample of men, no statistically significant results were found for work sacrifices. This pattern seems to reflect that women are adopting a countertypical role (work) without forgetting their traditional one (family), whereas men seem to remain in their traditional role (work; Moya & Moya-Garofano, 2020).

This study has several implications for the study of gender roles and major sacrifices. The study extends the findings of Kogan et al. (2010) associating communal strength with the perception of benefits by providing evidence that women who are highly

motivated to respond to their partners' needs experience work sacrifice as intrinsically rewarding. Both women and men make sacrifices in accordance with their roles (work and family sacrifices, respectively) because such sacrifices authenticate their identities. In addition, this is reinforced by the couple, improving the self of both people and the couple's well-being. Work and family sacrifices are a double-edged sword because on one hand, men appreciate their partners when they make work sacrifices, and women appreciate their partners when they make family sacrifices, leading, in turn, to greater perceptions of benefits (personal and relationship well-being). Future research could further validate these findings in a larger sample or even replicate them across different cultures. It would also be interesting to carry out laboratory studies, where couples are invited to converse about these sacrifices, and perform dyad analysis (e.g., Visserman et al., 2020).

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Supplemental Material

Work and Family Sacrifices, a Double-Edged Sword: The Role of Authenticity and Partners Appreciation in the Perception of Benefits and Costs

This file includes:

1. Procedure and measures
2. Supplementary tables of main analyses

1. Procedure and Measures

Participants were recruited through the online platform LimeSurvey. Informed consent was obtained from participants prior to their completion of the measures. Participants were first asked to complete relationship measures (communal strength, relationship satisfaction, and inclusion of other in the self). Participants were next asked to think of the most recent work sacrifice they made to attend to family needs. They then completed a series of measures regarding the sacrifice they had recalled. Finally, they answered the sociodemographic variables (age, relationship status, length of relationship, whether they had children, and educational level).

[Communal Strength]. *First of all, please think about your romantic relationship and indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements.*

1. How far would you be willing to go to visit your partner?
2. How happy do you feel when doing something that helps your partner?
3. How large a benefit would you be likely to give your partner?
4. How large a cost would you incur to meet a need of your partner?
5. How readily can you put the needs of your partner out of your thoughts?*
6. How high a priority for you is meeting the needs of your partner?
7. How reluctant would you be to sacrifice for your partner?*
8. How much would you be willing to give up to benefit your partner?
9. How far would you go out of your way to do something for your partner?
10. How easily could you accept not helping your partner?*

*Reverse items

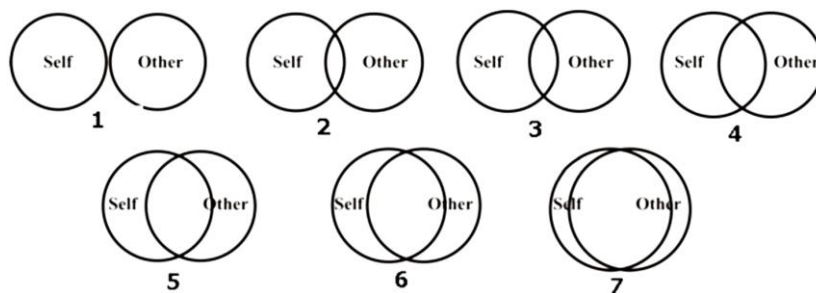
All items were assessed on a 10-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 10 = *extremely*).

Relationship Satisfaction]. Please indicate your extent of agreement regarding the following questions about your romantic relationship.

1. I feel satisfied with our relationship
2. My relationship is much better than others' relationships
3. My relationship is close to ideal
4. Our relationship makes me very happy
5. Our relationship does a good job of fulfilling my needs for intimacy, companionship, etc.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

[Inclusion of Other in the Self]. Below are seven pairs of circles. The left circle represents you, the right circle represents your romantic partner. Please indicate the number of the picture below that best describes how you view you and your romantic partner.



Item was assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *totally independent* to 7 = *almost completely overlapping*).

[Sacrifices] Research shows that in romantic relationships, there are often times when partners want different things. When situations like this arise, it is common for one romantic partner to sacrifice what they would like for the benefit of the other. For example, you have plans for this Sunday with your friends and your partner asks you to accompany him/her to a meal with his/her family, so you decide to postpone the get-together with your friends. We are interested in understanding how you make these decisions.

[Work sacrifice] *Now, please take a moment and think about the last time you sacrificed some aspect of your work life to attend to family needs. In as much detail as possible, please describe the situation.*

Now you will find some statements about the episode you have described. Please answer the following questions.

[Authenticity]

- I felt authentic (true to myself) while making this sacrifice” (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*)

[Partner appreciation]

- My partner really appreciated my making this sacrifice” (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*)

[Benefits]

- How beneficial would this sacrifice be for you?
- How positively would you feel about this sacrifice?
- How beneficial would you feel this sacrifice would be for your relationship?

[Costs]

- How costly would this sacrifice be for you?
- How big would this sacrifice be for you?
- How hard would you find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

[Family sacrifice] *Now, please take a moment and think about the last time you sacrificed some aspect of their family to attend to work life. In as much detail as possible, please describe the situation.*

Now you will find some statements about the episode you have described. Please answer the following questions.

[Authenticity]

- I felt authentic (true to myself) while making this sacrifice” (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*)

[Partner appreciation]

- My partner really appreciated my making this sacrifice” (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*)

[Benefits]

- How beneficial would this sacrifice be for you?
- How positively would you feel about this sacrifice?
- How beneficial would you feel this sacrifice would be for your relationship?

[Costs]

- How costly would this sacrifice be for you?
- How big would this sacrifice be for you?
- How hard would you find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

[Sociodemographic Variables]

What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- ☐ heterosexual
- ☐ Homosexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Asexual

What is your age? _____

What is your current relationship status?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Dating relationships
- ☐ Living with your partner
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

How long have you been in this relationship? (in years and months)

- ☐ Year(s):
- ☐ AND Month(s):

Do you have any children?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

What is your educational level?

- ☐ Primary education
- ☐ Secondary education
- ☐ High school
- ☐ Vocational training
- ☐ Degree

2. Supplementary Tables of Main Analyses

Table 1

Effect of Communal Strength on Benefits and Costs of Work Sacrifices (z Scores; Study 1)

Predictor	Perception of benefits			Perception of costs		
	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI
<i>Step 1</i>						
Having children ^a	0.01	0.06	[−0.52, 0.56]	−0.06	−0.64	[−0.71, 0.37]
IOS	0.10	0.92	[−0.11, 0.31]	0.07	0.69	[−0.14, 0.29]
Relationship satisfaction	0.19	1.74	[−0.03, 0.40]	−0.30**	−2.79	[−0.51, −0.09]
<i>Step 2</i>						
Having children ^a	0.02	0.22	[−0.48, 0.59]	−0.07	−0.78	[−0.75, 0.33]
IOS	0.04	0.40	[−0.17, 0.26]	0.12	1.14	[−0.09, 0.33]
Relationship satisfaction	0.17	1.58	[−0.04, 0.38]	−0.28**	−2.64	[−0.49, −0.07]
Communal strength	0.19*	2.08	[0.01, 0.38]	−0.18	−1.89	[−0.36, 0.01]
<i>R</i> ² (adj <i>R</i> ²)		.10 (.07)			.10 (.07)	

Note. ^a 0 = No, 1 = Yes; IOS = Inclusion of other in the self; *N* = 123; All VIFs ≤ 1.50.

* *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01.

Table 2

Multiple Mediation Analysis of the Communal Strength, Authenticity, Partner Appreciation on Perception of Benefits in Study 1 (z-scores)

Background	Authenticity		Partner appreciation		Perception of benefits	
	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI
Constant	−0.14	[−0.64, 0.36]	0.22	[−0.22, 0.65]	−0.04	[−0.44, 0.36]
Communal strength	0.20*	[0.01, 0.38]	−0.01	[−0.17, 0.16]	0.09	[−0.06, 0.23]
Authenticity			0.45***	[0.29, 0.61]	0.42***	[0.25, 0.58]
Partner appreciation					0.32***	[0.15, 0.48]
Having children	0.16	[−0.38, 0.69]	−0.25	[−0.71, 0.22]	0.05	[−0.38, 0.47]
IOS	0.17	[−0.04, 0.38]	−0.00	[−0.19, 0.18]	−0.05	[−0.22, 0.12]
Relationship satisfaction	0.02	[−0.19, 0.23]	0.27**	[0.09, 0.45]	0.07	[−0.10, 0.24]
	<i>R</i> ² = 0.10		<i>R</i> ² = 0.32		<i>R</i> ² = 0.44	
	<i>F</i> (4, 118) = 3.24, <i>p</i> = 0.0146		<i>F</i> (5, 117) = 11.11, <i>p</i> < 0.001		<i>F</i> (6, 116) = 15.44, <i>p</i> < 0.001	
Indirect Effects	Effects		95% CI			
Total	0.11		[−0.0141, 0.2513]			
I1	0.08		[0.0009, 0.1834]			
I2	−0.0016		[−0.0563, 0.0528]			
I3	0.028		[0.0002, 0.0721]			

Note. ^a 0 = No, 1 = Yes; IOS = Inclusion of other in the self. I1 = Communal strength → Authenticity → Perception of benefits; I2 = Communal strength → Feeling Appreciated → Perception of benefits; I3 = Communal strength → Authenticity → Feeling Appreciated → Perception of benefits. The indirect effects are significant where the Bootstrap Confidence Interval does not include the value 0. * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Multiple Mediation Analysis of the Communal Strength, Authenticity, Partner Appreciation on Perception of Cost in Study 1 (z-scores)

Background	Authenticity		Feeling Appreciated		Perception of costs	
	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI
Constant	−0.14	[−0.64, 0.36]	0.22	[−0.22, 0.65]	0.12	[−0.37, 0.62]
Communal strength	0.20*	[0.01, 0.38]	−0.01	[−0.17, 0.16]	−0.14	[−0.32, 0.05]
Authenticity			0.45***	[0.29, 0.61]	−0.26*	[−0.46, −0.05]
Partner appreciation					0.17	[−0.04, 0.37]
Children ^a	0.16	[−0.38, 0.69]	−0.25	[−0.71, 0.22]	−0.14	[−0.67, 0.39]
IOS	0.17	[−0.04, 0.38]	−0.00	[−0.19, 0.18]	0.15	[−0.06, 0.36]
Relationship satisfaction	0.02	[−0.19, 0.23]	0.27**	[0.09, 0.45]	−0.32	[−0.53, 0.11]
	<i>R</i> ² = 0.10		<i>R</i> ² = 0.32		<i>R</i> ² = 0.14	
	<i>F</i> (4, 118) = 3.24, <i>p</i> = 0.0146		<i>F</i> (5, 117) = 11.11, <i>p</i> < 0.001		<i>F</i> (6, 116) = 3.26, <i>p</i> = 0.01	
Indirect Effects	Effects		95% CI			
Total	−0.04		[−0.1090, 0.0159]			
I1	−0.05		[−0.1279, 0.0009]			
I2	−0.00		[−0.0363, 0.0302]			
I3	0.02		[−0.0054, 0.0463]			

Note. ^a 0 = No, 1 = Yes; IOS = Inclusion of other in the self. I1 = Communal strength → Authenticity → Costs; I2 = Communal strength → Partner appreciation → Costs; Communal strength → Authenticity → Partner appreciation → Costs. The indirect effects are significant where the Bootstrap Confidence Interval does not include the value 0.* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4*Effect of Communal Strength on Benefits and Costs of Family Sacrifices in Study 2 (z Scores)*

Predictor	Perception of benefits			Perception of costs		
	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI
<i>Step 1</i>						
Children ^a	0.02	0.23	[-0.48, 0.60]	0.04	0.40	[-0.44, 0.66]
IOS	0.18	1.60	[-0.04, 0.40]	-0.02	-0.14	[-0.24, 0.21]
Relationship satisfaction	-0.14	-1.27	[-0.36, 0.08]	0.04	0.35	[-0.19, 0.26]
<i>Step 2</i>						
Children ^a	0.02	0.16	[-0.50, 0.59]	0.04	0.38	[-0.45, 0.66]
IOS	0.17	1.47	[-0.06, 0.39]	-0.02	-0.17	[-0.25, 0.21]
Relationship satisfaction	-0.15	-1.34	[-0.37, 0.07]	0.04	0.32	[-0.19, 0.26]
Communal strength	0.07	0.72	[-0.12, 0.26]	0.02	0.18	[-0.18, 0.21]
<i>R</i> ² (adj <i>R</i> ²)		.03 (-.01)			.00 (-.03)	

Note. ^a 0 = No, 1 = Yes; IOS = Inclusion of other in the self; *N* = 117; All VIFs ≤ 1.47.

Table 5

Simple Mediation Analysis of the Authenticity, Partner Appreciation on Perception of Benefits in Study 2 (z-scores)

Background	Partner appreciation		Perception of benefits	
	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI
Constant	-0.44*	[-0.83, 0.05]	0.23	[-0.17, 0.63]
Authenticity	0.59***	[0.55, 0.74]	0.24*	[0.05, 0.42]
Partner appreciation			0.47***	[0.29, 0.66]
Having children	0.51*	[0.09, 0.94]	-0.27	[-0.70, 0.16]
IOS	0.00	[-0.17, 0.18]	0.04	[-0.13, 0.22]
Relationship satisfaction	0.09	[-0.09, 0.26]	-0.17	[-0.34, 0.01]
	<i>R</i> ² = 0.40		<i>R</i> ² = 0.41	
	<i>F</i> (4, 112) = 18.72, <i>p</i> < 0.001		<i>F</i> (5, 111) = 15.58, <i>p</i> < 0.001	

Note. ^a 0 = No, 1 = Yes; IOS = Inclusion of other in the self.

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

Table 6

Simple Mediation Analysis of the Authenticity, Partner Appreciation on Perception of Costs in Study 2 (z-scores)

Background	Partner appreciation		Perception of costs	
	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI
Constant	−0.44*	[−0.83, 0.05]	−0.03	[−0.55, 0.49]
Authenticity	0.59***	[0.55, 0.74]	−0.11	[−0.35, 0.12]
Partner appreciation			0.15	[−0.09, 0.39]
Children	0.51*	[0.09, 0.94]	0.04	[−0.52, 0.60]
IOS	0.00	[−0.17, 0.18]	−0.01	[−0.24, 0.22]
Relationship satisfaction	0.09	[−0.09, 0.26]	0.03	[−0.20, 0.25]
	$R^2 = 0.40$		$R^2 = 0.02$	
	$F(4, 112) = 18.72, p < 0.001$		$F(5, 111) = 0.36, p = .876$	

Note. ^a 0 = No, 1 = Yes; IOS = Inclusion of other in the self.

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

Chapter 6

*How do Women and Men Perceive the
Sacrifice of Leaving Work for Their
Families? A Cost–Benefit Analysis*

Los estudios del Capítulo 5 mostraron que la motivación comunal de las mujeres fue un predictor de la percepción de beneficios al sacrificar el trabajo por la familia. Las mujeres con una mayor motivación comunal percibían más beneficios de sacrificar el trabajo por la familia porque se sentían más fieles a sí mismas, y porque percibían un mayor aprecio por parte de su pareja por ello. Sin embargo, la motivación comunal no predijo la percepción de beneficios al sacrificar la familia por el trabajo, ni en mujeres ni en hombres, lo cual tiene sentido dado que cuando se realizan sacrificios familiares no se están satisfaciendo las necesidades de los y las demás, sino las propias. Tanto las mujeres como los hombres que indicaron sentirse fieles a sí mismos/as al realizar sacrificios familiares, percibieron más beneficios al realizarlo porque su pareja les apreciaba por la decisión tomada. Los resultados de este estudio corroboran los hallazgos de estudios previos en los que se encontró que tanto el trabajo como la familia eran dos aspectos importantes para las mujeres. Concretamente, las mujeres parecen sentirse fieles a sí mismas tanto cuando realizan sacrificios laborales, al dejarse guiar por los roles de género, como cuando realizan sacrificios familiares, al dejarse guiar por su deseo de sentirse realizadas. Por su parte, los hombres solo se sintieron fieles a sí mismos cuando realizaron sacrificios familiares, reflejando así su interiorización de los roles de género. Los resultados de estos estudios muestran la importancia del papel reforzador de la pareja en las decisiones que toman hombres y mujeres.

Partiendo de los resultados encontrados, en el Capítulo 6 se ha querido analizar de una manera más detallada las diferencias de género existentes en la percepción de costes y beneficios al realizar sacrificios laborales y familiares. Al igual que en los estudios previos, los roles de género se han evaluado a través de la variable autenticidad. También se evalúan cómo las variables interpersonales, compromiso y satisfacción con la relación, afectan a la percepción de costes y beneficios, y a su vez en el bienestar de las personas.

The studies in Chapter 5 showed that women's communal motivation predicted perceived benefits of sacrificing work for family. Women with higher communal motivation perceived more benefits from sacrificing work for family because they felt more loyal to themselves, and because they perceived greater appreciation from their partner for it. However, communal motivation did not predict the perceived benefits of sacrificing family for work for either women or men, which makes sense given that when family sacrifices are made, it is not others' needs that are being met, but one's own. Both women and men who indicated they felt true to themselves when making family sacrifices perceived more benefits from doing so because their partner appreciated them for the decision they made. This study's results corroborate the findings of previous studies in which both work and family were found to be two important aspects for women. Specifically, women seemed to feel true to themselves both when making work sacrifices, which gender roles guide, and when making family sacrifices, which their desire to feel fulfilled guides. In contrast, men, only felt true to themselves when making family sacrifices, reflecting their internalized gender roles. These studies' results showed the importance of the partner's reinforcing role in the decisions men and women make.

Based on the results found, in Chapter 6 we wanted to analyze in more detail the existing gender differences in the perception of costs and benefits of making work and family sacrifices. As in previous studies, gender roles have been evaluated through the authenticity variable. We also evaluated how the interpersonal variables commitment and relationship satisfaction affect the perception of costs and benefits, and in turn, the individuals' well-being.

How do Women and Men Perceive the Sacrifice of Leaving Work for Their Families? A Cost–Benefit Analysis

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Abstract

We aimed to analyze perceptions of the benefits and costs of family and work sacrifices through Spanish samples. In Study 1, participants ($N = 222$) rated the associated benefits/costs of a sacrifice (work vs. family). In Study 2, participants ($N = 213$) rated the associated benefits/costs of a work sacrifice, their willingness to sacrifice and sense of authenticity. In Study 3, participants ($N = 186$) reported on commitment and relationship satisfaction, rated the associated benefits/costs of a work sacrifice, and their life satisfaction. Participants perceived that work sacrifices are more costly for men and more beneficial for women; and that women felt more authentic for making them. For women, higher commitment or relationship satisfaction were associated with greater perception of benefits, which was associated with greater life satisfaction. These findings highlight the relevance of gender roles in sacrifices, and hence, in women's professional advancement.

Keywords: romantic relationships, work, family, sacrifice, gender roles

How do Women and Men Perceive the Sacrifice of Leaving Work for Their Families? A Cost–Benefit Analysis

Consider a heterosexual couple's relationship that includes children in which both partners work full-time. Both want to keep their jobs, but their schedules are incompatible with their family responsibilities. Faced with this situation, one of the two has to sacrifice his or her personal goals for the benefit of their partner and the relationship. Who is more likely to make the sacrifice?

In recent years, female labor force participation has increased; however, this increase has not automatically led to a balance in family responsibilities between women and men (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2020). In fact, traditional gender stereotypes have not changed along with this transition (e.g., Moya & Moya-Garófano, 2021). The fact that men have not increased their dedication to the private sphere (i.e., family responsibilities) means that many women have still had to leave or reduce their dedication to the public sphere (i.e., work), sacrificing their professional aspirations for the family's benefit. Compared to men, women are less likely to work full-time and to advance in their careers, and they are more likely to be employed in lower-paying jobs (OECD, 2020), being family responsibilities are one of the main causes of part-time work among women (Ministry of Labor and Social Economy, 2020). According to the above data and social role theory (Eagly, 1987), women make greater work sacrifices; that is, they are the ones who sacrifice their career aspirations to attend to family responsibilities to a greater extent. Men make greater family sacrifices; that is, they more often sacrifice family to attend to work responsibilities (Dahm et al., 2019). But how do men and women perceive these sacrifices? Previous studies have shown that individuals perceive more benefits and fewer costs in their daily sacrifices (e.g., visiting family or seeing friends) compared to those of their partner regardless of gender (Visserman et al., 2020). No study to date has been conducted to document findings on the perceived benefits and costs of major sacrifices, such as leaving a job to take care of one's family.

Sacrifices and Gender Roles

When situations such as the one described above arise in for couples, where one partner's goals and preferences conflict with the other's partner, people often make sacrifices (Righetti et al., 2022). Visserman et al. (2020) showed that people perceive fewer costs and greater benefits when they sacrifice their self-interest to benefit the relationship; that is, people feel better when giving up their own goals for the relationship than when their partner does so. Despite the nature of sacrifices, foregoing one's immediate self-interest to promote others' well-being (i.e., taking a caregiver role), studies on perceptions of sacrifice have shown no gender-based differences. But what happens if we account for social roles (work and family) in the sacrifices? The literature shows that men are expected to choose work as their priority and women are expected to choose the family (Ellemers, 2018). In general, men do not find themselves in the situation of choosing between work and family because they behave according to pre-established roles (i.e., family sacrifice). They do not have to battle the societal expectation that women do at home (Nsair & Piszczek, 2021). Women often face situations in which they have to choose between work (egalitarian role) and family (traditional role). Both domains are mutually incompatible in some respects (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), resulting in situations in which women must sacrifice in one domain to function effectively in the other.

Recently, Xue et al. (2020) showed that when family interferes with work, women usually become housewives (sacrifice work) and men are less likely to leave their work (sacrifice family). Likewise, in interviews, women have indicated that when they must decide to work full-time or care for their families, they often choose the second option (Hochschild & Machung, 2012) because they perceive that choosing a professional future would entail greater costs for their family (Nsair & Piszczek, 2021; Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2021). This may be because they feel guilt or because they feel they are not fulfilling their traditional role as caregivers. Indeed, women think more about reducing their working hours to reserve more energy and time for their families (Aarntsen et al., 2019). When women (but not men) make daily sacrifices to avoid negative outcomes (i.e., guilt or relationship damage), they perceive more gratitude from their partners (Visserman et al., 2018). Furthermore, when women perceive greater satisfaction from

their partners after making daily sacrifices, they increase their own well-being (Righetti et al., 2020), reinforcing the stereotypes about their behavior.

Research Overview

We analyzed the gender differences in how the benefits and costs of family- and work-related sacrifices are perceived in three studies. In Study 1, participants thought of the most recent family- versus work-related sacrifice they had made and rated the associated benefits and costs for themselves and for their partners (their partner's perspective). We expected that women and men would perceive (a) greater benefit and lesser cost for women who make work sacrifices, (b) lesser benefit and greater cost for men who make work sacrifices, (c) greater benefit and lesser cost for men who make family sacrifices, (d) and lesser benefit and greater cost for women who make family sacrifices. Considering the results of Study 1, in Study 2, we focused on work sacrifices. After reading a work sacrifice scenario, participants rated the associated benefits and costs for the main characters (female and male), themselves, and their partners. We expected that women and men would perceive greater benefits and lesser cost for women who make work sacrifices. In Study 2, we examined participants' willingness to sacrifice and sense of authenticity, which could reflect gender roles. Specifically, we expected that women and men perceived that women would be more willing to make a work sacrifice, and would feel more authentic if they made the work sacrifice rather than their partners. In Study 3, participants completed several relationship measures (relationship satisfaction and commitment) based on their most recent work sacrifices, rated the associated social benefits and costs to themselves, and evaluated their life satisfaction. We expected that relationship measures would be associated with perceived benefits and costs independently, which would increase life satisfaction. Codes and data are available at Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/mpc52/?view_only=cc12a2459988441780498cc368f120e0). We report all manipulations, measures, and exclusions in these studies (see online supplementary material [OSM] for more information).

Study 1

Method

Participants

Our initial sample included 297 Spanish participants. The inclusion criterion was being involved in a heterosexual romantic relationship for a minimum of 3 months. We removed seven participants from the analyses because they were not involved in a romantic relationship, ten participants because they did not have a heterosexual orientation, eight participants because they were not Spanish, two participants because they did not answer all measures, and fifty participants because they failed the attention check (i.e., “If you are reading this question, answer with ‘3’”). Regarding the main measure (sacrifices), we excluded twenty-eight participants because they provided incoherent responses to an open-ended question. We conducted the analyses with the remaining 222 participants ($M_{age} = 49.19$; $SD = 7.70$; $range = 31-67$; 54.1% women and 45.9% men). Couples’ romantic involvement ranged from 3 months to 47 years ($M_{months} = 264.70$; $SD = 132.63$). More than half of the participants were married (79.3%), 13.1% currently lived with their partners, and 7.7% were maintaining a dating relationship. Most participants (86.9%) had children. Last, more than half of the participants (64.9%) worked full-time, 13.5% worked part-time, 6.8% were unemployed, 8.1% were housewives, and 1.8% indicated another situation. Sensitivity power analysis (G*Power; Faul et al., 2007) revealed that the sample size was sufficiently large enough to detect effects of at least a small size of .08.

Procedure and Measures

We recruited participants online (linked to Qualtrics Software) via advertisements on internet forums and social networks (e.g., Facebook). After they signed an informed consent form, we asked participants to think of their most recent family- versus work-related sacrifice, and then they completed sacrifice measures in relation to the situation they had recalled. Participants first completed several relationship measures, including relationship satisfaction (Rusbult et al., 1998; van der Drift et al., 2014; five items; “I feel satisfied with our relationship”; $\alpha = .74$), on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), and the Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) scale (Aron et al., 1992; Gómez et al., 2011) on a 7-point scale (1 = *totally independent* to 7 = *almost completely*

overlapping). Next, we asked participants to describe vividly a recent family sacrifice they had made in writing. We defined *sacrifice* for the participants based on Day and Impett (2016). Then, they answered several questions about their decision on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*). Specifically, participants indicated the benefits (three items; e.g., “How beneficial would the sacrifice be for you?”; $\alpha = .80$) and costs (three items; e.g., “How costly would the sacrifice be for you?”; $\alpha = .87$) of their sacrifices (Visserman et al., 2020). We also asked the participants to imagine their partner having to make the sacrifice they had described and to rate the associated benefits (three items; e.g., “How beneficial would the sacrifice be for your partner?”; $\alpha = .86$) and costs (three items; e.g., “How costly would the sacrifice be for your partner?”; $\alpha = .88$). After they completed all measures, we asked participants to recall the most recent work sacrifice they had made. Then they rated the benefits and costs of the described sacrifice for themselves and their partners. We counterbalanced the work and family sacrificer conditions to avoid response bias. Participants completed the study by answering demographic questions. Participants did not receive monetary compensation. See the OSM for more information.

Analysis Strategy

We conducted several repeated-measures ANOVA mixed tests to quantify the effects of sacrificer condition (own vs. partner) and gender as well as the interaction between sacrificer condition and gender on the perception of benefits and costs, respectively, using SPSS (Version 24). When interactions emerged, we performed pairwise Bonferroni-corrected comparisons. We first conducted the analyses with the condition of family sacrifices and then with work sacrifices. We introduced IOS scores, relationship satisfaction, and having children as covariates.

Results

Family Sacrifices

Perception of benefits. Our results did not reveal significant main effects of sacrificer condition, gender, or the interaction of sacrificer condition and gender on perceived benefits. Having children and relationship satisfaction did not yield statistically significant results. However, IOS scores significantly affected the perception of benefits

(see Table 1). Parameter estimates showed that participants who scored higher on the IOS scale perceived greater benefit when their partners made the sacrifice than when they made it (see Table 1 in OSM).

Perception of costs. Similarly, neither sacrificer condition, gender, nor the interaction of the sacrificer condition and gender significantly influenced perceived costs. Covariates were not significant (see Table 1).

Table 1

Perception of Benefits and Costs as a Function of Gender, Sacrificer Condition, and the Interaction Between Them in Study 1

Variables	Sacrifice benefits			Sacrifice costs		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
<i>Family sacrifices</i>						
Gender ^a	0.10	.754	.00	1.08	.301	.01
Sacrificer (Own vs. Partner)	0.02	.888	.00	0.08	.782	.00
Gender \times Sacrificer	0.00	.948	.00	1.93	.166	.01
IOS ^b	6.37	.012	.03	0.21	.647	.00
Relationship satisfaction	1.24	.266	.01	0.90	.344	.00
Having children ^b	1.18	.279	.01	0.12	.733	.00
<i>Work sacrifices</i>						
Gender	4.90	.028	.02	0.07	.797	.00
Sacrificer (Own vs. Partner)	0.10	.748	.00	2.84	.094	.01
Gender \times Sacrificer	5.70	.018	.03	5.52	.020	.03
IOS ^c	6.19	.014	.03	0.04	.846	.00
Relationship satisfaction	0.19	.665	.00	9.08	.003	.04
Having children ^b	0.52	.473	.00	0.08	.777	.00

Note. ^a 1 = male, 2 = female; ^b IOS = Inclusion of other in the self; ^c 1 = No, 2 = Yes.

Work Sacrifices

Perception of benefits. Sacrificer condition had no statistically significant effect. In contrast, gender significantly influenced the perceived benefits of work sacrifices. Pairwise Bonferroni-corrected comparisons indicated that the perception of benefits differed significantly between men and women: men perceived work sacrifices as more beneficial than women did (see Tables 2 and 3). Likewise, the interaction of sacrificer condition and gender significantly affected perceptions. A post hoc test suggested significant differences in the perception of benefits based on sacrificer condition (Own vs. partner) between men and women. Men and women perceived greater benefit when they made the work sacrifice than when their partner made it, but the differences were lower among women (see Tables 2 and 3). Figure 1 depicts the interaction.

Relationship satisfaction and having children were not significant factors. In the same vein as family sacrifices, IOS scores significantly predicted the perceived benefits of sacrifice (see Table 1). In this case, parameter estimates showed that participants with higher IOS scores significantly perceived greater benefits when their partner made the sacrifice (see Table 1 in OSM).

Table 2*Post-hoc Comparisons of Costs and Benefits Ratings Between Conditions in Study 1*

Variables	Sacrifice benefits			Sacrifice costs		
	Difference (SE)	95% CI	<i>p</i>	Difference (SE)	95% CI	<i>p</i>
<i>Family sacrifices</i>						
Men vs. Women	0.07 (0.22)	[−0.36, 0.49]	.754	0.24 (0.24)	[−0.22, 0.71]	.301
Own vs. Partner	0.24 (0.08)	[0.08, 0.40]	.004	0.20 (0.11)	[−0.01, 0.41]	.057
Men: Own vs. Partner	0.25 (0.12)	[0.00, 0.49]	.047	0.05 (0.16)	[−0.26, 0.37]	.737
Women: Own vs. Partner	0.23 (0.11)	[0.01, 0.46]	.039	0.36 (0.15)	[0.07, 0.64]	.016
<i>Work sacrifices</i>						
Men vs. Women	0.38 (0.17)	[0.04, 0.71]	.028	−0.06 (0.22)	[−0.50, 0.38]	.797
Own vs. Partner	1.11 (0.13)	[0.85, 1.36]	<.001	−0.12 (0.12)	[−0.35, 0.11]	.297
Men: Own vs. Partner	1.42 (0.19)	[1.04, 1.80]	<.001	0.16 (0.17)	[−0.19, 0.50]	.366
Women: Own vs. Partner	0.79 (0.18)	[0.45, 1.14]	<.001	−0.40 (0.16)	[0.09, 0.72]	.013

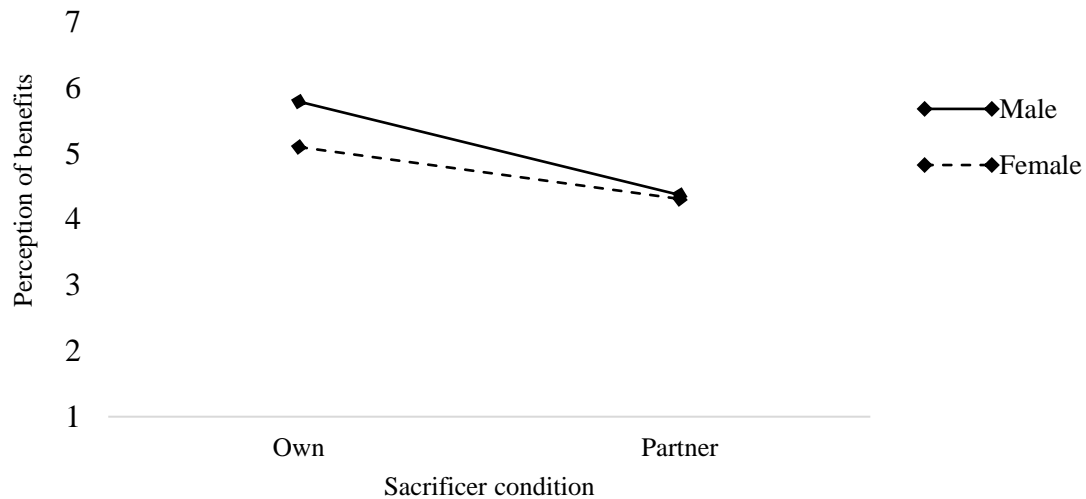
Table 3*Means and Standard Deviations for Sacrifice Benefits and Costs Among Conditions in Study 1*

Condition	Sacrifice benefits		Sacrifice costs	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
<i>Family sacrifice</i>				
Own	4.64 (1.71)	4.51 (1.65)	4.34 (1.81)	4.32 (1.95)
Partner	4.41(1.81)	4.28(1.64)	4.29 (1.84)	3.96 (1.92)
<i>Work sacrifice</i>				
Own	5.85 (1.15) ^a	5.04 (1.65) ^b	3.87 (1.79)	3.71 (1.84) ^c
Partner	4.41 (1.81) ^a	4.28 (1.64) ^b	3.66 (1.94)	4.16 (1.96) ^c

Note. The means with the same superscripts (a, b, and c) are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Figure 1

Interaction of the Sacrificer Condition and Gender on the Perception of Benefits of Work Sacrifices in Study 1



Perception of costs. We did not find significant main effects for sacrificer condition or gender. In contrast, the interaction of sacrificer condition and gender significantly influenced benefit perception (see Table 1). A post hoc test revealed significant differences in the perception of benefits based on sacrificer condition (own vs. partner) among women, but not among men (see Table 2). Women perceived greater cost when their partner made the work sacrifice than when they made it. Although the differences were not statistically significant, men's scores indicated a tendency to perceive their own work sacrifices as more costly than when their partners made them (see Table 3). Figure 2 depicts this interaction.

IOS scores and having children did not significantly affect the perceived cost of sacrifice. However, relationship satisfaction did (see Table 1). Parameter estimates revealed that participants with greater relationship satisfaction perceived lesser cost than participants with lower satisfaction. These differences were significantly larger when a participant's partner made the sacrifice than when they made it themselves (see Table 1 in OSM).

Figure 2

Interaction of the Sacrificer Condition and Gender on the Perception of Costs of Work Sacrifices in Study 1



Brief Discussion

We found no significant effects on family sacrifices. Men could not perceive that they had sacrificed some aspects of their family lives when attending to work life due to their traditional role as providers. Likewise, women could not perceive a family sacrifice as such, because they traditionally have not considered leaving their families behind, even if they work too. Indeed, most of the people we removed for the sacrifice response were women who answered “none,” “I could not see myself in this situation,” and so on.

Considering work sacrifices, contrary to what we expected, men and women perceived greater benefit when they made work sacrifices themselves than when their partners made them. This finding aligns with that of Visserman et al. (2020), who showed that people perceive greater benefits when they sacrifice their own self-interest to benefit a relationship. Additionally, as expected, women perceived greater cost when their partners made the work sacrifice than when they had to. Although the differences were not significant, men’s scores indicated a tendency to perceive their own work sacrifices as more costly than their partners’. In sum, our findings provide preliminary evidence that women perceived that for their partners, sacrificing some aspects of their family to attend to work life would be more costly, big, and hard than when they did it. This result did not emerge among men.

Study 2

With Study 2, we aimed to analyze work sacrifices more exhaustively. Participants read a scenario in which a female or male character made a work sacrifice. They then rated the associated benefits and costs for the characters. Likewise, they imagined themselves and their partners in the scenario and rated the associated benefits and costs for both. Moreover, in this study, we assessed the characters', participants', and participants' partners' willingness to make the work sacrifice. We expected that women and men would both perceive women as more willing to make work sacrifices. Last, we evaluated the participants' sense of authenticity (i.e., staying true to themselves). We believed women and men would believe that women would feel more authentic when they sacrificed work than when their partners did so because caring for others (i.e., work sacrifice) is a socially pre-established behavior for women. With this study, we built on Study 1 by adding the willingness to sacrifice and the sense of authenticity, which could reflect the effect of gender roles in the sacrifice.

Method

Participants

Our sample for Study 2 included 213 Spanish participants (53.1% women and 46.9% men). The participants' mean age was 47 years ($SD = 8.07$, $range = 35-69$). Originally, 232 participants involved in heterosexual romantic relationships for a minimum of 3 months participated in the study, but we excluded five participants from data analysis because they were not Spanish and twelve others because they failed the attention check. Participants reported being involved in their relationships for 20 years ($SD_{months} = 129.91$). Most participants were married (81.2%), 11.3% currently lived with their partners, and 7.5% were maintaining dating relationships. More than half of participants had children (77%). Over half of the participants (53.1%) worked full time, 16.9% worked part time, 8.9% were unemployed, 12.2% were housewives, and 10% indicated another situation. A sensitivity power analysis (G*Power; Faul et al., 2007) revealed that the sample size was sufficiently large enough to detect effects of at least a small size of .07.

Procedure and Measures

The procedure for Study 2 was similar to that of Study 1, but we asked participants to imagine a work sacrifice scenario instead of thinking of a recent sacrifice. First, individuals rated their relationship satisfaction (Rusbult et al., 1998; van der Drift et al., 2014; $\alpha = .78$) and completed the IOS scale (Aron et al., 1992; Gómez et al., 2011). They then imagined a scenario in which a couple (Juan and María) had decide whether to reduce their working hours or change jobs to take care of their children. This scenario was inspired by previous research on work and family decisions (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2022). To determine whether the scenario could happen in a romantic relationship, we asked the participants the extent to which they thought the situation described could happen in a romantic relationship ($M = 5.94$, $SD = 1.20$). Most situations experienced in romantic relationships involved mutual dependence, which led to more cooperative behaviors in interactions between couples (Columbus et al., 2021). Therefore, we evaluated the perception of mutual dependence in the scenario using the mutual dependence subscale of the short version of the Situational Interdependence Scale (SIS; Gerpott et al., 2018; two items; e.g., “What each of us does in this situation affects the other”; $r = .56$; $\rho = .59$) on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; $M = 5.28$, $SD = 1.69$). After they read the scenario, we asked participants to imagine that Juan (male) vs. María (female) was the one who had decided to sacrifice his or her job, and evaluated the extent to which the sacrifice would be beneficial ($\alpha_{\text{Juan}} = .84$, $\alpha_{\text{María}} = .78$) or costly ($\alpha_{\text{Juan}} = .88$, $\alpha_{\text{María}} = .87$) to both of them (Visserman et al., 2020). Participants also rated the benefits ($\alpha_{\text{own}} = .83$, $\alpha_{\text{partner}} = .83$) and costs ($\alpha_{\text{own}} = .93$, $\alpha_{\text{partner}} = .92$) of the scenario’s work sacrifice for themselves vs. their partners. Additionally, participants indicated the extent to which they thought that Juan (vs. María) would be willing to sacrifice work. They also indicated to what extent they thought that they (vs. partners) would be willing to do so (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *totally*; adapted from Day & Impett, 2018; van Lange et al., 1997). Last, individuals reported the extent to which they would feel authentic (true to themselves) after making this sacrifice (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*; based on Impett et al., 2013) and answered demographic questions. See OSM for more information.

Analysis Strategy

For Study 2, we conducted the same set of analyses as in Study 1. First, we analyzed the hypothetical sacrifice's (Juan vs. María) effect on perceived benefits and costs and willingness to sacrifice. We also analyzed the romantic relationship sacrifice's (own vs. partner's) effects on the same variables, adding authenticity in this case.

Results

Perception of Benefits

Hypothetical sacrifice (Juan vs. María). Neither the hypothetical sacrificer condition nor the interaction between hypothetical sacrificer condition and gender significantly influenced how benefits were perceived (see Table 4). Nonetheless, our results demonstrated a significant gender effect. Pairwise Bonferroni-corrected comparisons revealed that perceptions of benefits differed significantly between men and women (see Table 5). In general, men perceived work sacrifices as more beneficial than women did (see Table 6). Neither relationship satisfaction nor IOS scores were significant factors. However, having children significantly affected perceptions (see Table 4), indicating that participants with children perceived work sacrifices as more beneficial than those without them. Parameter estimates revealed that these differences were significant when María (female) made the sacrifice, but not when Juan (male) made the sacrifice (see Table 2 in OSM).

Table 4

Perception of Benefits/Costs, Willingness to Sacrifice, and Authenticity as a Function of Gender, Sacrificer Conditions, and Interactions in Study 2

Variables	Sacrifice benefits			Sacrifice costs			Willingness to sacrifice			Authenticity		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
<i>Hypothetic sacrifice</i>												
<i>(Juan vs. María)</i>												
Gender ^a	4.22	.041	.02	0.33	.567	.00	1.16	.283	.01	–	–	–
Sacrificer (Juan vs. María)	0.03	.861	.00	1.51	.221	.01	8.23	.005	.04	–	–	–
Gender × Sacrificer	0.29	.593	.00	2.35	.127	.01	19.55	<.001	.09	–	–	–
IOS ^b	0.08	.781	.00	0.33	.566	.00	0.72	.397	.00	–	–	–
Relationship satisfaction	3.18	.076	.02	5.63	.019	.03	3.30	.071	.02	–	–	–
Having children ^c	4.62	.033	.02	7.01	.009	.03	1.58	.210	.01	–	–	–
<i>Romantic relationship sacrifice (own vs. partners)</i>												
Gender	1.87	.173	.01	0.32	.574	.00	0.30	.584	.00	2.09	.150	.01
Sacrificer (Own vs. Partner)	0.33	.566	.00	1.14	.287	.01	2.26	.134	.01	1.26	.26	.01
Gender × Sacrificer	12.60	<.001	.06	42.52	<.001	.17	24.64	<.001	.11	25.26	<.001	.11
IOS ^a	0.82	.368	.00	0.41	.525	.00	0.12	.732	.00	0.26	.609	.00
Relationship satisfaction	9.74	.002	.05	11.58	.001	.05	15.98	<.001	.07	22.45	<.001	.10
Having children ^b	8.28	.004	.04	13.74	<.001	.06	18.44	<.001	.08	11.28	.001	.05

Note. ^a 1 = female, 2 = male; ^b IOS = Inclusion of other in the self; ^c 1 = No, 2 = Yes.

Romantic relationship sacrifice (own vs. partners). The results did not show significant effects caused by sacrificer condition or gender. In contrast, the interaction of the sacrificer condition and gender significantly affected perceived benefit (see Table 4). Post hoc testing suggested significant differences in perceived benefit based on sacrificer condition (own vs. partners) among women, but not men (see Table 5). Women perceived a greater benefit whether they would have made the work sacrifice than whether their partners would have made it. Although the differences were not statistically significant, men tended to perceive a greater benefit when their partners made the work sacrifice than whether they would have made it (see Table 6). The interaction is depicted in Figure 3. IOS scores did not significantly affect this outcome. In contrast, relationship satisfaction and having children significantly affected perceptions (see Table 4). That is, participants with greater relationship satisfaction perceived greater benefit whether their partner would have made the work sacrifice, than whether they would have made it. Similarly, participants with children perceived work sacrifice as more beneficial than participants without them. These differences were significantly higher whether they would have made sacrifice than whether their partners would have sacrificed (see Table 2 in OSM).

Figure 3

Interaction of the Romantic Relationship Sacrificer Condition and Gender on the Perception of Benefits of Work Sacrifices in Study 2

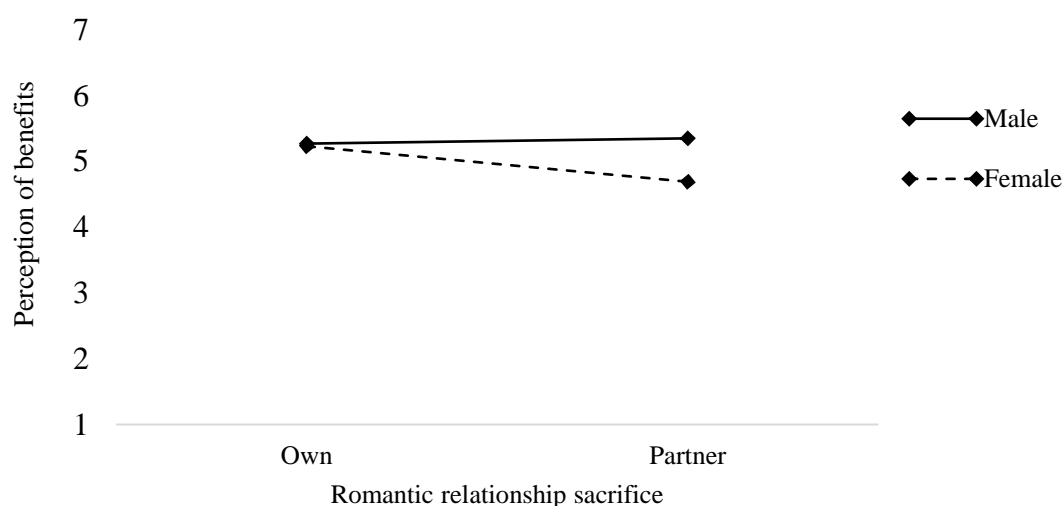


Table 5*Post-hoc Comparisons of Benefits/Costs, Willingness to Sacrifice, and Authenticity Ratings Among Conditions in Study 2*

Variables	Sacrifice benefits			Sacrifice costs			Willingness to sacrifice			Authenticity		
	Difference (SE)	95% CI	<i>p</i>	Difference (SE)	95% CI	<i>p</i>	Difference (SE)	95% CI	<i>p</i>	Difference (SE)	95% CI	<i>p</i>
<i>Hypothetic sacrifice</i>												
Women vs. Men	−0.36 (0.18)	[−0.71, −0.02]	.041	0.10 (0.17)	[−0.24, 0.44]	.567	−0.17 (0.16)	[−0.49, 0.14]	.283	–	–	–
María vs. Juan	0.40 (0.08)	[0.24, 0.55]	<.001	−0.52 (0.12)	[−0.76, −0.28]	<.001	1.19 (0.11)	[0.97, −1.41]	<.001	–	–	–
Women: María vs. Juan	0.44 (0.11)	[0.23, 0.65]	<.001	−0.71 (0.17)	[−1.04, −0.38]	<.001	1.69 (0.15)	[1.38, 1.99]	<.001	–	–	–
Men: María vs. Juan	0.35 (0.11)	[0.13, 0.58]	.002	−0.33 (0.18)	[−0.68, 0.03]	.068	0.69 (0.16)	[0.36, 1.01]	<.001	–	–	–
<i>Romantic relationship sacrifice</i>												
Women vs. Men	−0.24 (0.17)	[−0.58, 0.11]	.173	−0.11 (0.20)	[−0.50, 0.28]	.574	−0.08 (0.15)	[−0.39, 0.22]	.584	−0.27 (0.19)	[−0.64, 0.10]	.150
Own vs. Partner	0.23 (0.09)	[0.06, 0.40]	.009	−0.15 (0.12)	[−0.39, 0.09]	.224	0.32 (0.12)	[0.08, 0.56]	.010	0.11 (0.13)	[−0.15, 0.38]	.397
Women: Own vs. Partner	0.54 (0.12)	[0.30, 0.77]	<.001	−0.96 (0.17)	[−1.29, −0.62]	<.001	0.93 (0.17)	[0.60, 1.27]	<.001	0.79 (0.18)	[0.43, 1.16]	<.001
Men: Own vs. Partner	−0.08 (0.13)	[−0.17, 0.33]	.510	0.66 (0.18)	[−1.01, −0.30]	<.001	−0.29 (0.18)	[−0.65, 0.06]	.102	−0.57 (0.20)	[−0.95, −0.18]	.004

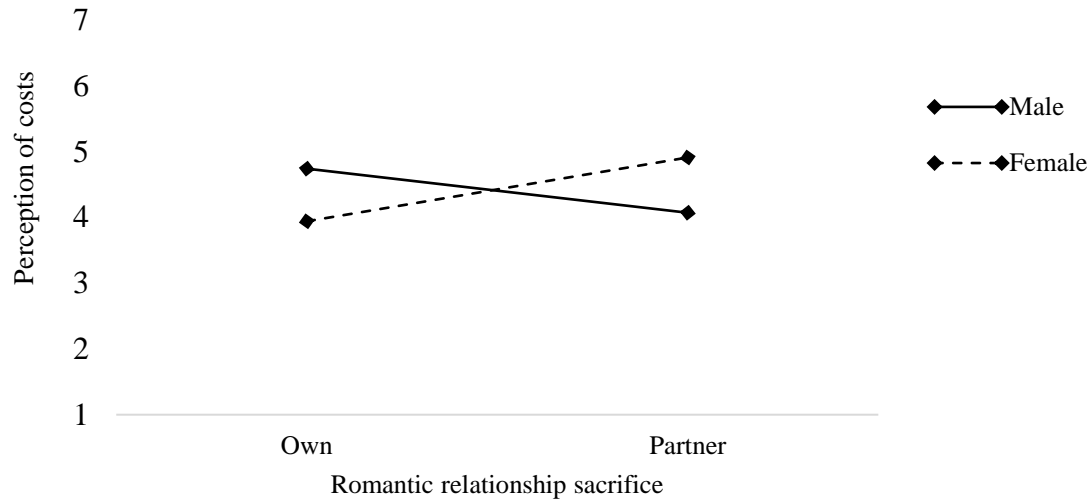
Perception of Costs

Hypothetical sacrifice (Juan vs. María). Neither the hypothetical sacrificer condition, gender, nor the interaction between hypothetical sacrificer condition and gender significantly affected perceived cost. As in our Study 1 analyses, IOS scores did not significantly influence perceptions, but relationship satisfaction and children did (see Table 4). Participants with greater relationship satisfaction perceived lesser cost than participants with lower satisfaction. Participants with children perceived work sacrifice as less costly than participants without them. However, these differences were significantly greater when Maria (female) made the sacrifice compared to when Juan (male) did (see Table 2 in OSM).

Romantic relationship sacrifice (Own vs. partners). The results revealed no significant effects of sacrificer condition or gender. However, the interaction of the sacrificer condition and gender was significant (see Table 4). Post hoc testing suggested that these differences were significantly higher among women than men (see Table 5). Women perceived greater cost whether their partners would have made the work sacrifice compared to themselves. In contrast, men perceived more costs whether they would have made the hypothetical work sacrifice than whether their partners did (see Table 6). This interaction is depicted in Figure 4. IOS scores did not have a significant effect, although relationship satisfaction and the presence of children were significant factors (see Table 5). Participants with greater relationship satisfaction perceived fewer costs than participants with lower satisfaction. These differences were significantly higher whether their partners would have made sacrifice than whether they would have made it. In the same vein, participants with children perceived work sacrifices as less costly than participants without them. Parameter estimates revealed that these differences were significantly higher whether they would have made the sacrifice, than whether their partners would have made it (see Table 2 in OSM).

Figure 4

Interaction of the Romantic Relationship Sacrificer Condition and Gender on the Perception of Costs of Work Sacrifices in Study 2

**Table 6**

Means and Standard Deviations for Sacrifice Benefits/Costs and Willingness to Sacrifice Among Conditions in Study 2

Condition	Sacrifice benefits		Sacrifice costs		Willingness to Sacrifice		Authenticity	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
	<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>Hypothetic sacrifice</i>								
María	5.22 (1.31)	4.81 (1.39)	4.80 (1.64)	4.76 (1.64)	5.64 (1.40) ^d	5.92 (1.10) ^e	—	—
Juan	4.84 (1.47)	4.39 (1.49)	5.12 (1.53)	5.47 (1.37)	4.97 (1.59) ^d	4.22 (1.57) ^e	—	—
<i>Romantic relationship sacrifice</i>								
Own	5.27 (1.40)	5.23 (1.43) ^a	4.74 (1.71) ^b	3.94 (1.89) ^c	5.49 (1.32)	5.92 (1.43) ^f	5.14 (1.87) ^g	5.40 (1.81) ^h
Partner	5.35 (1.36)	4.69 (1.58) ^a	4.07 (1.78) ^b	4.91 (1.57) ^c	5.82 (1.38)	4.97 (1.74) ^f	5.71 (1.45) ^g	4.60 (1.88) ^h

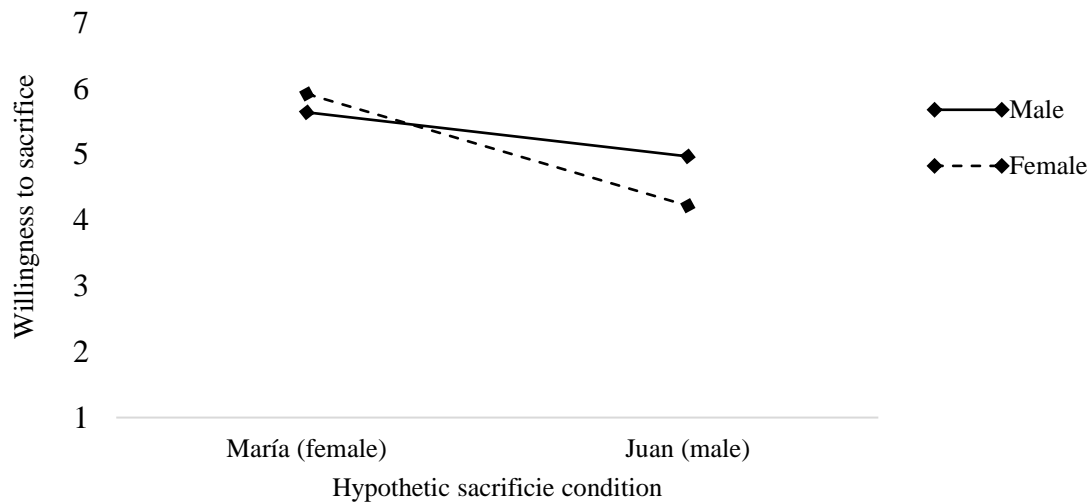
Note. The means with the same superscripts (a, b, c, d, e, f, g and h) are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Willingness to Sacrifice

Hypothetical sacrifice (Juan vs. María). The results revealed no significant effects of gender on willingness to sacrifice. However, the hypothetical sacrificer condition significantly affected willingness to make a work sacrifice (see Table 4). Post hoc tests suggested that participants perceived María as more willing to make a work sacrifice than Juan (see Tables 5 and 6). Likewise, the interaction of the hypothetical sacrificer condition and gender was significant. Willingness to sacrifice differed significantly between women and men (see Tables 4 and 5). As illustrated in Figure 5, women and men perceived that María was more willing to make a work sacrifice than Juan (see Table 6). Covariates were not significant (see Table 4).

Figure 5

Interaction of the Hypothetic Sacrificer Condition and Gender on the Willingness to Make Work Sacrifices in Study 2

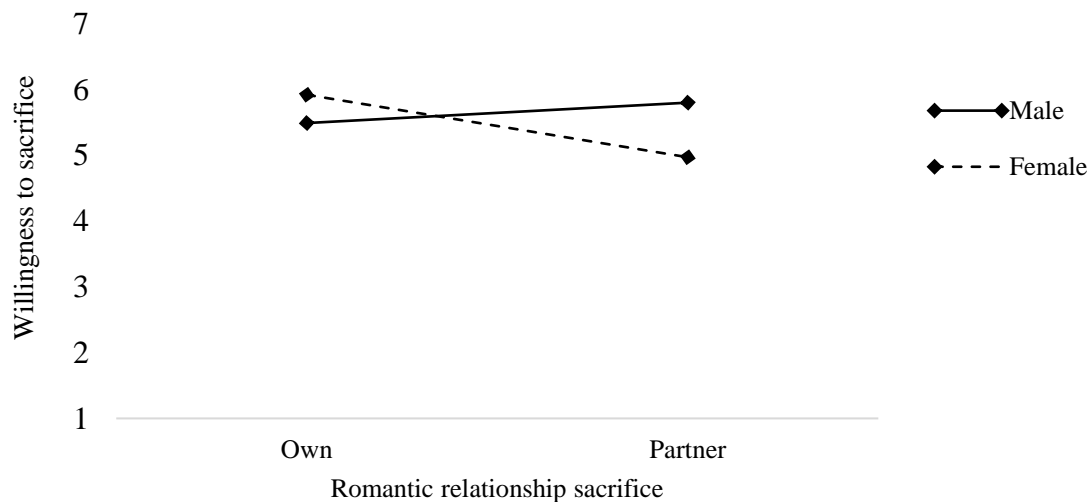


Romantic relationship sacrifice (Own vs. partners). Neither the effect of the sacrifice nor gender significantly affected willingness to sacrifice. In contrast, the interaction of the sacrificer condition and gender was significant (see Table 4). Post hoc tests suggested significant differences in the willingness to sacrifice among women, opposite to men (see Table 5). Women themselves as more willing to make a work sacrifice than their partners. Although the differences were not significant, men tended to perceive that their partners would be more willing to make a work sacrifice than themselves, as well (see Table 6). This interaction is depicted in Figure 6. IOS scores did

not significantly affect willingness to sacrifice. However, relationship satisfaction and children significantly influenced this (see Table 4). Participants with greater relationship satisfaction perceived themselves as more willing to make work sacrifices than participants with lower relationship satisfaction. These differences were significantly higher when participants thought their partners would be more willing to sacrifice than when they think that they would be more willing to make it. Likewise, participants with children perceived themselves as more willing to make a work sacrifice than participants without children. Parametric estimates revealed that these differences were significantly higher when they think that they would be more willing to make a work sacrifice than when they think that their partners would be more willing to make sacrifice (see Table 3 in OSM).

Figure 6

Interaction of the Sacrificer Condition and Gender on the Willingness to Make Work Sacrifices in Study 2.



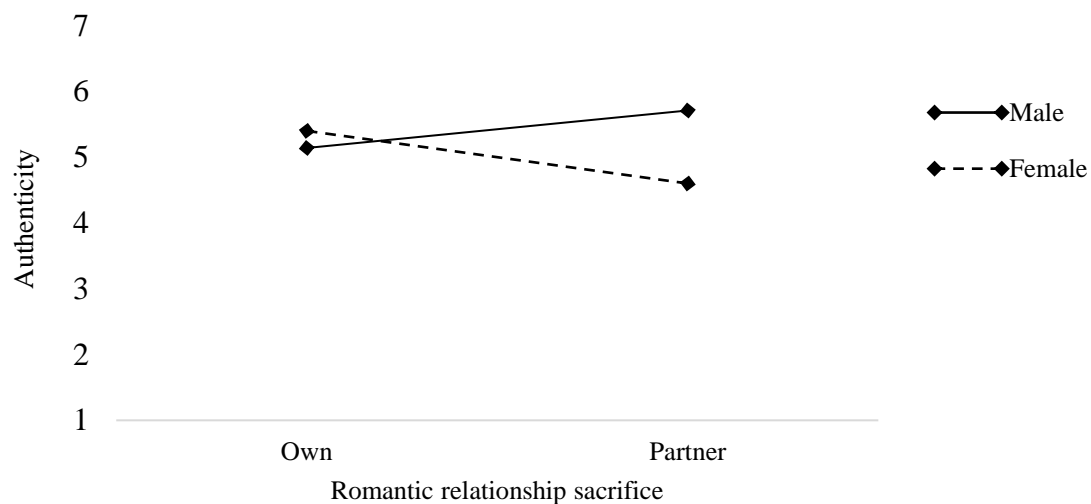
Authenticity

Neither the romantic relationship sacrificer condition nor gender affected participants' sense of authenticity, but the interaction of romantic relationship sacrifice and gender significantly did (see Table 4). As shown in Table 5, these differences were significantly greater among women than men. Women felt more authentic when they had to make a work sacrifice than when their partners did. In contrast, men perceived that their partners felt more authentic when they made the work sacrifice than when the men

had to (see Table 6). This interaction is shown in Figure 7. Concerning covariates, IOS scores once again did not have a significant effect, but relationship satisfaction and children affected perceived authenticity (see Table 4). Participants with greater relationship satisfaction perceived that their partners felt more authentic than themselves. In contrast, participants with children felt more authentic than their partners (see Table 4 in OSM).

Figure 7

Interaction of the Sacrificer Condition and Gender on Authenticity to Make Work Sacrifices in Study 2



Brief Discussion

The results of Study 2 showed that both women and men perceived work sacrifices as more costly for men. Supporting this result, women (but not men) perceived themselves making a work sacrifice as more beneficial than their partners doing so. Women also perceived themselves as willing to make work sacrifices to a greater extent than men. Consistently, both women and men perceived that woman would feel more authentic if they were to make a work sacrifice, positively reinforcing gender roles. These results support our Study 1 findings and demonstrate how gender roles are implicitly reflected in work sacrifices.

Study 3

Study 3 aimed to support and expand previous literature suggesting an association between commitment and sacrifice in romantic relationships (Powell & van Vugt, 2003; van Lange et al., 1997). Specifically, we expected that for women (but not men), higher levels of commitment would be associated with a greater perception of benefits (or lesser perceived cost, independently), which in turn would be associated with greater life satisfaction. Thus, we expected that perceptions of benefits and costs would independently mediate the relationship between commitment and well-being (Bucher et al., 2018). Our Study 2 findings also showed that relationship satisfaction predicted benefits and costs. This was in line with van Lange et al. (1997), who indicated that relationship satisfaction was associated with sacrifice. Thus, we expected that, as with commitment, higher levels of relationship satisfaction would associate with greater perceived benefit or lesser perceived costs, independently. This in turn would be associated with greater life satisfaction.

Method

Participants

We recruited 237 participants for Study 3, but we removed 8 who were not Spanish, three who did not have a heterosexual orientation, two who were not in romantic relationships, eight participants who failed the attention check, and twenty-nine participants who gave incoherent responses to an open-ended question about work sacrifice. The inclusion criteria were involvement in a heterosexual romantic relationship for a minimum of 3 months and having children. The final sample was comprised of 186 Spanish participants (53.2% women and 46.8% men). Participants' ages ranged from 33 to 74 years ($M = 48.53$, $SD = 6.70$). The length of couples' romantic involvement was 20 years on average ($SD_{\text{months}} = 104.60$). Almost all participants were married (95.2%), 3.2% were currently lived with their partners, and 1.6% were maintaining a dating relationship. Over half of participants (61.8%) worked full time, 16.1% worked part time, 5.9% were unemployed, 11.3% were housewives, and 4.8% indicated another situation. A sensitivity power analysis (G*Power; Faul et al., 2007) revealed that our sample size was sufficiently large enough to detect effects of at least a small size of .07.

Procedure and Measures

The procedure for Study 3 was the same as in Study 1. Participants first completed several relationship measures, including commitment (seven items: “I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner”; $\alpha = .85$; Rusbult et al., 1998; van der Drift et al., 2014), relationship satisfaction (five items; $\alpha = .87$; Rusbult et al., 1998; van der Drift et al., 2014), and the IOS scale (Aron et al., 1992; Gómez et al., 2011). We asked participants to think of their most recent work sacrifices, and then they completed sacrifice measures related to the situation they had recalled. As in Studies 1 and 2, participants rated the benefits ($\alpha = .80$) and costs ($\alpha = .88$) of their sacrifices (Visserman et al., 2020). Furthermore, participants gave global judgments made about life satisfaction (five items: “In most ways my life is close to my ideal”; $\alpha = .87$; Diener et al., 1985; Cabañero-Martínez et al., 2004) on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), and answered sociodemographic questions. See OSM for more information.

Analysis Strategy

We ran several moderated mediation models using PROCESS (Version 3.4.1, Model 59; Hayes, 2017) to explore the moderating effects of gender in the direct and indirect relationships between commitment (or relationship satisfaction, independently) and life satisfaction based on perceived benefits and costs (independently), and controlling for IOS scores. In addition, we conducted simple slopes analyses to indicate the relations between crucial variables for women and men separately.

Results

Effects of Commitment and Relationship Satisfaction on Life Satisfaction Based on Cost–Benefit Perceptions

Commitment. As shown in Table 7, commitment exerted a significant main effect on life satisfaction, and this effect was moderated by gender. The effect of commitment on benefit perception was significant, and this effect was moderated by gender. Simple slope tests (see Figure 8) indicated that for women, higher levels of commitment were associated with greater perception of benefits, $b = 0.77$, $SE = 0.16$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.46, 1.08]. However, for men, the relation between commitment and perception of benefits was non-significant, $b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.22$, $p = .755$, 95% CI [−0.36, 0.50]. Finally,

the effect of one's perception of benefits on life satisfaction was significant, and this effect was also moderated by gender. Simple slope tests (see Figure 9) revealed that for women, greater perceived benefit was associated with increased life satisfaction, $b = 0.33$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.18, 0.49]. In contrast, for men, this relation was not significant, $b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .703$, 95% CI [-0.14, 0.21]. Bias-corrected bootstrap analyses indicated that the indirect path was moderated by gender. For women, the indirect effect of commitment on life satisfaction via the perception of benefits was significant, $b = 0.26$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI [0.14, 0.43], but not for men, $b = 0.00$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.06, 0.15]. This model accounted for 29% of the variance in life satisfaction (see Figure 10). As expected, for women only, stronger commitment was associated with greater perceived benefits, which in turn were associated with greater life satisfaction.

Regarding perceived cost, our results (see Table 5 in OSM) showed that the moderated mediation model was not statistically significant.

Figure 8

Interaction of Commitment and Gender on the Perception of Benefits in Study 3

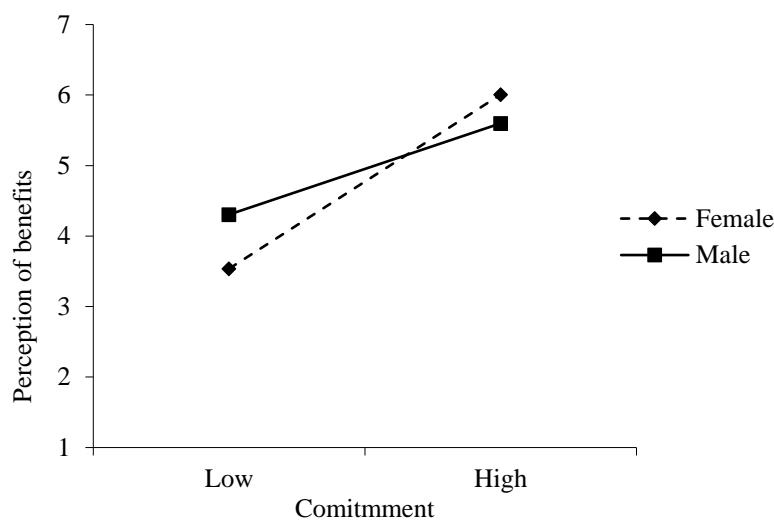


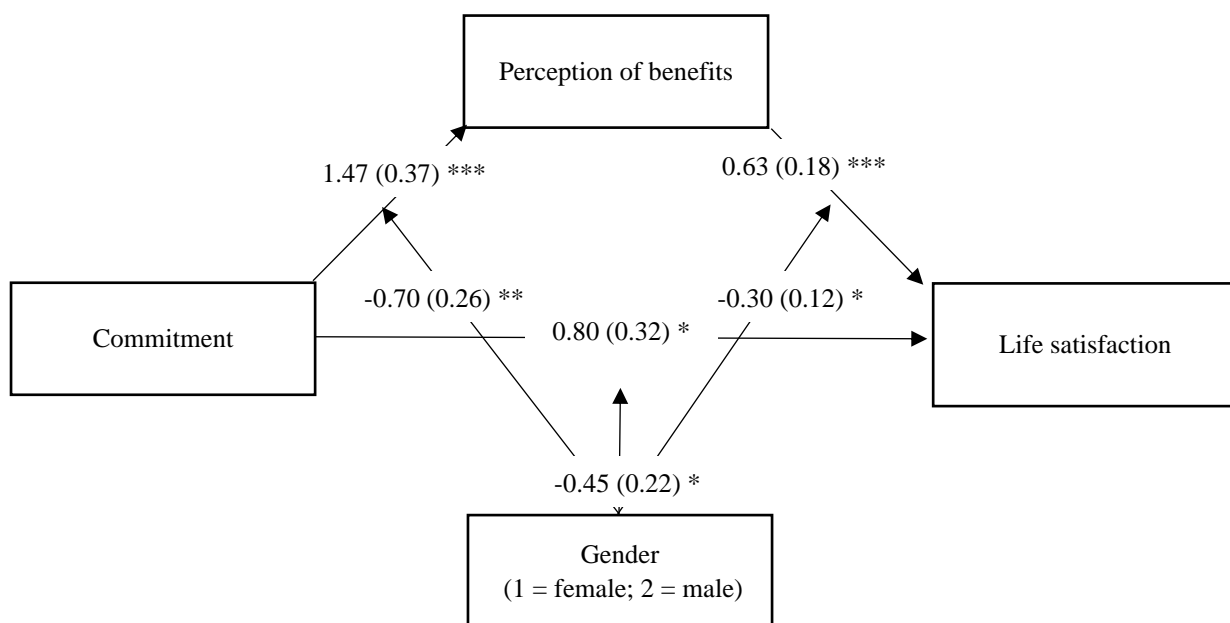
Figure 9

Interaction of Perception of Benefits and Gender on Life Satisfaction in Study 3.



Figure 10

Graphic Representation of the Moderated Mediation Model with Commitment as Predictor in Study 3



Note. All reported values are unstandardized estimates, with their SE reported between parentheses.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 7*Testing the Moderated Mediation Effect of Commitment on Life Satisfaction Based on Benefits in Study 3*

Antecedents	Benefits			Life satisfaction		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI
Constant	−4.93*	2.44	[−9.74, −0.13]	−4.78*	1.96	[−8.64, −0.92]
IOS	0.10	0.08	[−0.05, 0.25]	0.17**	0.06	[0.05, 0.29]
Commitment	1.47***	0.37	[0.73, 2.21]	0.80*	0.32	[0.17, 1.44]
Benefits				0.63***	0.18	[0.28, 0.98]
Gender ^a	4.80**	1.76	[1.32, 8.28]	4.87***	1.45	[2.01, 7.73]
Commitment × Gender	−0.70**	0.26	[−1.22, −0.18]	−0.45*	0.22	[−0.88, −0.02]
Benefits × Gender				−0.30*	0.12	[−0.53, −0.07]
	<i>R</i> ² = 0.17			<i>R</i> ² = 0.29		
	<i>F</i> (4, 181) = 8.95, <i>p</i> < .001			<i>F</i> (6, 179) = 12.35, <i>p</i> < .001		
	Indirect effect: <i>b</i> = −0.25, <i>SE</i> = 0.09, 95% CI [−0.44, −0.09]					

Note. ^a 1 = women, 2 = men.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Relationship Satisfaction. We found that relationship satisfaction's effect on life satisfaction was not significant. This effect was not moderated by gender, either (see Table 8). Relationship satisfaction had a significant main effect on the perception of benefits, an effect that was moderated by gender. Simple slope tests (see Figure 11) showed that for women, greater relationship satisfaction was associated with greater perception of benefits, $b = 0.61, SE = 0.11, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.38, 0.83]$. In contrast, for men, the relation between relationship satisfaction and perception of benefits was not significant, $b = 0.24, SE = 0.15, p = .122, 95\% CI [-0.06, 0.54]$. Last, the effect of perceived benefits on life satisfaction was significant, and this effect was also moderated by gender. Simple slope tests (see Figure 8) revealed that for women, greater perception of benefits was associated with greater life satisfaction, $b = 0.27, SE = 0.07, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.13, 0.42]$, but not for men, $b = -0.03, SE = 0.08, p = .679, 95\% CI [-0.20, 0.13]$. Bias-corrected bootstrap analyses indicated that the indirect path was moderated by gender. For women, the indirect effect of relationship satisfaction on life satisfaction via the perception of benefits was significant, $b = 0.17, SE = 0.05, 95\% CI [0.07, 0.08]$. This did not hold true for men, $b = -0.01, SE = 0.03, 95\% CI [-0.06, 0.06]$. This model

accounted for 40% of the variance in life satisfaction (see Figure 12). As expected, for women (but not men) higher levels of relationship satisfaction were associated with perceiving greater benefit, which in turn was associated with increased life satisfaction.

Our moderated mediation model did not significantly predict perceptions of cost (see Table 6 in OSM).

Figure 11

Interaction of Relationship Satisfaction and Gender on the Perception of Benefits in Study 3

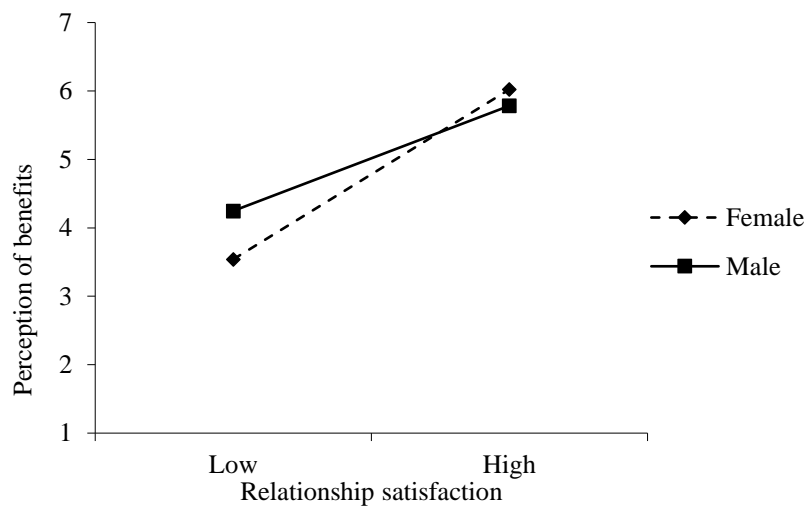
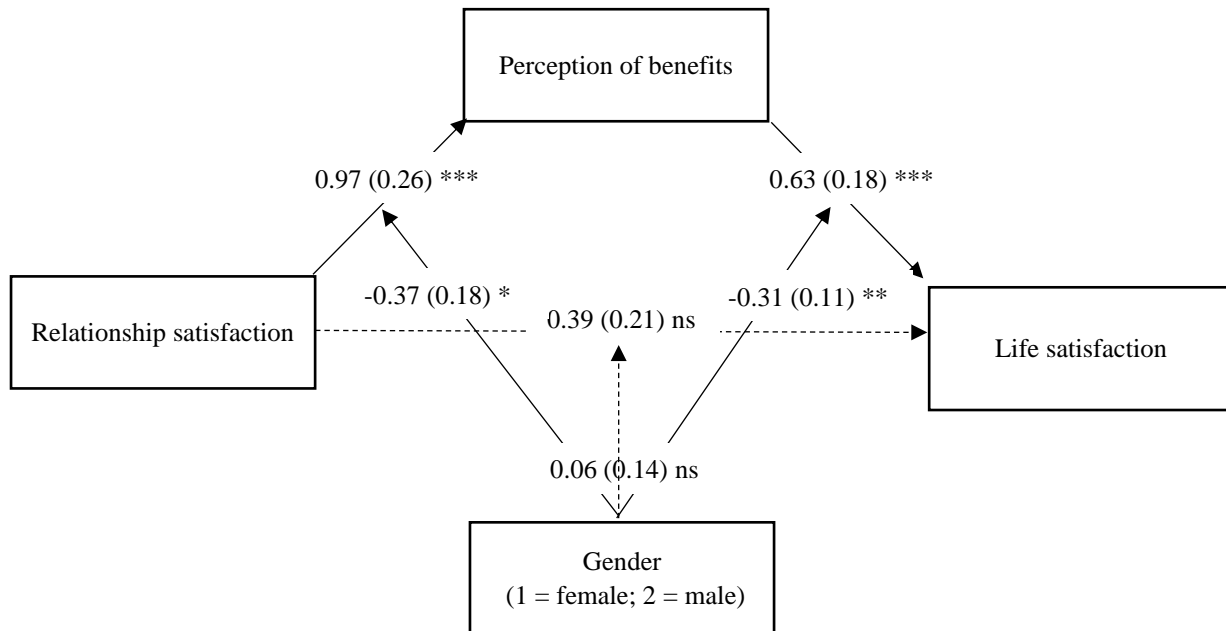


Figure 12

Graphic Representation of the Moderated Mediation Model with Relationship Satisfaction as Predictor in Study 3



Note. All reported values are unstandardized estimates, with their SE reported between parentheses. ns = no significant.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 8

Testing the Moderated Mediation Effect of Relationship Satisfaction on Life Satisfaction Based on Benefits in Study 3

Antecedents	Benefits			Life satisfaction		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI
Constant	−0.32	1.45	[−3.18, 2.54]	−0.76	1.15	[−3.03, 1.51]
IOS	0.06	0.08	[−0.09, 0.21]	0.07	0.06	[−0.04, 0.18]
Relationship satisfaction	0.97***	0.26	[0.46, 1.49]	0.39	0.21	[−0.03, 0.82]
Benefits				0.58***	0.17	[0.25, 0.91]
Gender ^a	2.18*	1.02	[0.17, 4.18]	1.58	0.83	[−0.06, 3.22]
Relationship satisfaction × Gender	−0.37*	0.18	[−0.73, −0.01]	0.06	0.14	[−0.22, 0.34]
Benefits × Gender				−0.31**	0.11	[−0.52, −0.09]
	<i>R</i> ² = 0.19			<i>R</i> ² = 0.40		
	<i>F</i> (4, 181) = 8.95, <i>p</i> < .001			<i>F</i> (6, 179) = 19.89, <i>p</i> < .001		
Indirect effect: <i>b</i> = −0.17, <i>SE</i> = 0.06, 95% CI [−0.30, −0.06]						

Note. ^a 1 = women, 2 = men.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Brief Discussion

Study 3 revealed that women intended to persist in their romantic relationships—that is, they perceived that making work sacrifices would be more beneficial and positive for themselves and their relationships when they were committed or had high relationship satisfaction. This in turn led them to be more satisfied with their lives because they felt that they were doing what they had to. In contrast, this did not occur in men. We noted no significant effects on perceived cost. This could be due to the fact that costs are often underestimated when people focus on what is gained rather than lost in relationship or family contexts (Visserman et al., 2020; Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2021).

General Discussion

The apparent equality in the public sphere of work has not led to progress in the private sphere, or family. In most cases, this means that women have sacrificed their professional progression to attend to family needs. We aimed to analyze how men and women perceive these sacrifices in terms of benefits and costs. Study 1 revealed that both men and women perceived a greater benefit when they themselves made a work sacrifice than when their partners did. Both Study 1 and 2's findings indicated consistently that sacrificing work was perceived as more costly for men. Study 2 also demonstrated that women perceived themselves as more willing to sacrifice work for the family, which did not occur in men. Additionally, women and men in Study 2 perceived that women would feel more authentic if they were to make the work sacrifice. Study 3 revealed that women (but not men) with higher levels of commitment (or relationship satisfaction, independently) perceived work sacrifice as beneficial, which seemed to increase their life satisfaction. Across these studies, we found that current gender roles were inherent to romantic relationships' sacrifices (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). The perceived sacrifice of leaving one's work life to attend to family responsibilities was more damaging for men than women. It could suggest that gender roles influence the decisions women make about how to lead their lives according to what is socially pre-established.

Broader Considerations

When we asked participants to evaluate a work-related sacrifice they had made, we found that both women and men perceived these sacrifices as more beneficial. This result may signal some progress in gender equality (e.g., co-responsibility), as men perceived that it was good for them to sacrifice their work for the family as well. But what happens when a person is faced with a specific work sacrifice that may be costly, such as having to leave a full-time position or reduce one's job position to attend to family responsibilities? Our participants perceived that women were more willing to sacrifice their professional careers to benefit their families, which is in line with social role theory (Eagly, 1987) and previous literature (e.g., Dahm et al., 2019). When the private sphere interferes with the public sphere, women are more likely to become housewives and leave work (i.e., return to their traditional roles) than men (Xue et al., 2020).

We add to the literature the fact that work sacrifice is perceived by both genders as costlier for men and more beneficial for women. These findings reflect the false illusion of gender equality: although society has accepted women's presence in the public sphere, it is not yet acceptable for them to leave the private sphere. Women sacrificing their professional careers to take care of their families is perceived as more beneficial. This invisible barrier is imposed not only by men, but also by women themselves due to the internalization of gender roles (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2021). As this research reveals, women feel more true to themselves if they make these types of sacrifices, behaving in accordance with society's expectations of them. Indeed, women's behaviors are often oriented around ideals compared to men's (Johnston & Dickman, 2015). Although women often must forego their professional self-interests to promote the well-being and care of others, they perceive great satisfaction with their lives, as reported by a woman in Aarntzen et al.'s (2019) qualitative study: *"Sometimes I think that if I quit work then I would have enough time for everybody."*

We also examined the role of romantic relationships in this perception. Specifically, women (but not men) with higher romantic relationship commitment or satisfaction perceived that their own work sacrifices would be more beneficial and positive for themselves and their relationships, which in turn led to greater life satisfaction. Van Lange et al. (1997) demonstrated that commitment and relationship satisfaction were associated with willingness for daily sacrifice, but did not investigate sacrifices related to gender socialization. Taking work sacrifices into account, we observed that only in women did stronger relationship commitment make them perceive work sacrifices as more beneficial, in turn perceiving greater well-being in their lives. Women might be making these sacrifices because of what is expected of them (Impett & Gordon, 2008), because women's behaviors are predetermined to a large extent by what others think (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020); if a work sacrifice also benefits others, they are likely to feel satisfied with their lives.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although we contributed to the literature on gender roles and sacrifices through the three replicable studies, our research has several limitations that are necessary to consider. Our findings are preliminary, so their generalizability to the general Spanish population must be tested in future research. Replicating these results across two other

Western cultures (e.g., the United States) would also increase confidence in the generalizability of our findings. Our studies involved cross-sectional data, which limit strong causal conclusions. Although experimental laboratory studies of sacrifice have rarely been conducted (Righetti et al., 2022), future research could reinforce our findings by using experimental procedures to examine causal effects. Additionally, on the basis of our studies, future studies could test the perceptions of both partners as a dyad (e.g., Visserman et al., 2020).

Conclusions

Although men do not have to battle against societal expectations in the same way women do at home, women face daily sacrifices related to work and family. Our research shows that although society has accepted women's presence in the public sphere, it is still not socially acceptable for women to leave the private sphere. Women perceive a greater benefit when they sacrifice their careers to take care of their families. Women even feel more true to themselves (more authentic) if they make these types of sacrifices, behaving in accordance with society's expectations of them. These findings highlight the relevance of gender roles in work sacrifices, and thus in women's professional progression. They reveal that gender inequality is still perpetuated in present-day society.

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Supplemental Material

How do Women and Men Perceive the Sacrifice of Leaving Their Work for Their Family? Benefit and Cost Analysis

This file includes:

Study 1

1. Procedure and measures
2. Tables of main analyses

Study 2

1. Procedure and measures
2. Tables of main analyses

Study 3

1. Procedure and measures
2. Tables of main analyses

Study 1

1. Procedure and Measures

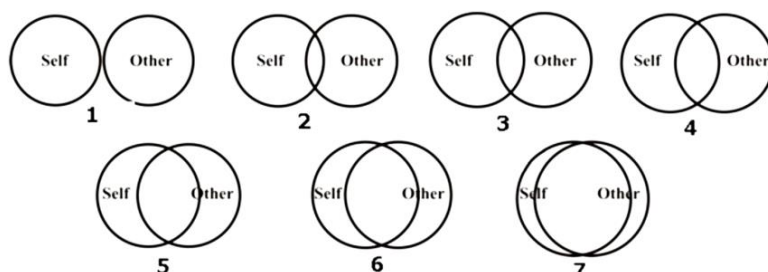
Participants were recruited through the online platform LimeSurvey. Informed consent was obtained from participants prior to their completion of the measures. Participants were first asked to complete relationship measures (relationship satisfaction, and inclusion of other in the self). Participants were asked to think of the most recent sacrifice (family vs. work), and then they completed sacrifice measures in relation to the situation they had recalled. Finally, they answered the sociodemographic variables (age, relationship status, length of relationship, whether they had children, and educational level).

[Relationship Satisfaction]. *Please indicate your extent of agreement regarding the following questions about your romantic relationship.*

1. I feel satisfied with our relationship
2. My relationship is much better than others' relationships
3. My relationship is close to ideal
4. Our relationship makes me very happy
5. Our relationship does a good job of fulfilling my needs for intimacy, companionship, etc.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

[Inclusion of Other in the Self]. Below are seven pairs of circles. The left circle represents you, and the right circle represents your romantic partner. Please indicate the number of the picture below that best describes how you view you and your romantic partner.



Item was assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *totally independent* to 7 = *almost completely overlapping*).

[Sacrifices] Research shows that in romantic relationships, there are often times when partners want different things. When situations like this arise, it is common for one romantic partner to sacrifice what they would like for the benefit of the other. For example, you have plans for this Sunday with your friends and your partner asks you to accompany him/her to a meal with his/her family, so you decide to postpone the get-together with your friends. We are interested in understanding how you make these decisions.

[Work sacrifice] Now, please take a moment and think about the last time you sacrificed some aspect of your work life to attend to family needs. In as much detail as possible, please describe the situation.

Now you will find some statements about the episode you have described. Please answer the following questions.

[Benefits]

- How beneficial would this sacrifice be for you?
- How positively would you feel about this sacrifice?
- How beneficial would you feel this sacrifice would be for your relationship?

[Costs]

- How costly would this sacrifice be for you?
- How big would this sacrifice be for you?
- How hard would you find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

Now we would like you to imagine your partner having to make the sacrifice you have described and answer the following questions.

[Benefits]

- How beneficial would this sacrifice be for your partner?
- How positively would your partner feel about this sacrifice?
- How beneficial would your partner feel this sacrifice would be for your relationship?

[Costs]

- How costly would this sacrifice be for your partner?
- How big would this sacrifice be for your partner?
- How hard would your partner find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

[Family sacrifice] *Now, please take a moment and think about the last time you sacrificed some aspect of their family to attend to work life. In as much detail as possible, please describe the situation.*

Now you will find some statements about the episode you have described. Please answer the following questions.

[Benefits]

- How beneficial would this sacrifice be for you?
- How positively would you feel about this sacrifice?
- How beneficial would you feel this sacrifice would be for your relationship?

[Costs]

- How costly would this sacrifice be for you?
- How big would this sacrifice be for you?
- How hard would you find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

Now we would like you to imagine your partner having to make the sacrifice you have described and answer the following questions.

[Benefits]

- How beneficial would this sacrifice be for your partner?
- How positively would your partner feel about this sacrifice?
- How beneficial would your partner feel this sacrifice would be for your relationship?

[Costs]

- How costly would this sacrifice be for your partner?
- How big would this sacrifice be for your partner?
- How hard would your partner find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

[Sociodemographic Variables]

What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Homosexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Other

What is your age? _____

What is your current relationship status?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Dating relationship
- ☐ Living with your partner
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

How long have you been in this relationship? (in years and months)

- ☐ Year(s):
- ☐ AND Month(s):

Do you have any children?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

What is your employment situation?

- ☐ Housewives
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Work part-time
- ☐ Work full-time
- ☐ Another situation

What is your nationality?

- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Other

2. Tables of Main Analyses

Table 1

Parameter Estimates for Between Subjects (Covariates) on Perception of Benefits/Costs as a Function of Conditions in Study 1

Variables	Sacrifice benefits								Sacrifice costs							
	Own				Partner				Own				Partner			
	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Family sacrifices</i>																
IOS ^a	0.19 (0.09)	[0.01, 0.37]	2.04	.043	0.25 (0.10)	[0.07, 0.44]	2.66	.009	−0.02 (0.11)	[−0.23, 0.19]	−0.22	.828	−0.07 (0.11)	[−0.27, 0.14]	−0.61	.540
Relationship satisfaction	−0.10 (0.13)	[−0.35, 0.15]	−0.76	.446	−0.17 (0.13)	[−0.43, 0.09]	−1.31	.192	−0.17 (0.14)	[−0.45, 0.11]	−1.19	.235	−0.08 (0.14)	[−0.36, 0.21]	−0.53	.595
Having children ^b	0.49 (0.34)	[−0.18, 1.15]	1.45	.150	0.20 (0.34)	[−0.48, 0.88]	0.59	.559	0.29 (0.38)	[−0.45, 1.04]	0.78	.439	−0.06 (0.38)	[−0.81, 0.69]	−0.15	.878
<i>Work sacrifices</i>																
IOS ^a	0.09 (0.08)	[−0.06, 0.25]	1.16	.249	0.25 (0.10)	[0.07, 0.44]	2.66	.009	0.09 (0.10)	[−0.11, 0.28]	0.85	.398	−0.05 (0.11)	[−0.26, 0.16]	−0.47	.642
Relationship satisfaction	0.25 (0.11)	[0.04, 0.46]	2.34	.020	−0.17 (0.13)	[−0.43, 0.09]	−1.31	.192	−0.35 (0.14)	[−0.62, −0.08]	−2.54	.012	−0.40 (0.15)	[−0.69, −0.18]	−2.78	.006
Having children ^b	0.16 (0.28)	[−.40, 0.72]	0.56	.580	0.20 (0.34)	[−0.48, 0.88]	0.59	.559	0.16 (0.36)	[−0.56, 0.87]	0.43	.670	0.03 (0.38)	[−0.72, 0.79]	0.08	.934

Note. ^a IOS = Inclusion of other in the self; ^b 1 = No, 2 = Yes.

Study 2

1. Procedure and measures

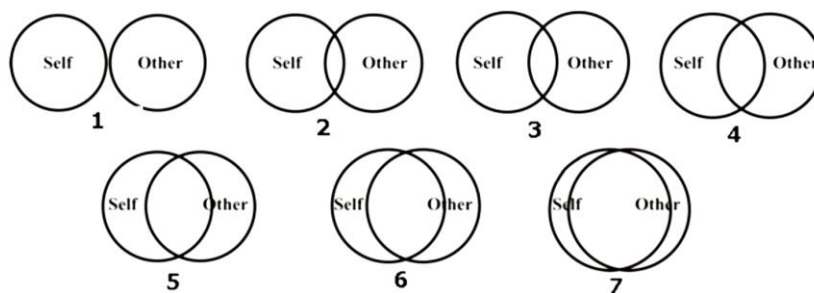
Procedure was similar to Study 1, except that participant were asked to imagine a scenario (work sacrifice) instead of thinking of a recent sacrifice and rated it.

[Relationship Satisfaction]. *Please indicate your extent of agreement regarding the following questions about your romantic relationship.*

1. I feel satisfied with our relationship
2. My relationship is much better than others' relationships
3. My relationship is close to ideal
4. Our relationship makes me very happy
5. Our relationship does a good job of fulfilling my needs for intimacy, companionship, etc.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

[Inclusion of Other in the Self]. *Below are seven pairs of circles. The left circle represents you, and the right circle represents your romantic partner. Please indicate the number of the picture below that best describes how you view you and your romantic partner.*



Item was assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *totally independent* to 7 = *almost completely overlapping*).

[Scenario sacrifice] *The following is a real situation of a couple, please read it carefully:*

"Mary and John have the job for which they have prepared and trained for years. They both enjoy good working conditions. A few years ago they decided to start a family, and now they have two young children: a boy and a girl. They both work full time, and have tried to maintain this work situation. However, they are aware that their children need more care and attention from them. Maria and Juan are trying to coordinate to take care of the children, but they cannot maintain this situation any longer without negative consequences for both work and family, and it is really impossible for them to reconcile work and family life as they have been doing so far.

This situation has led them to consider that one of them will have to reduce their working hours or change to a position with fewer responsibilities. In this way, their children would receive the attention they need, and only the work of one member of the couple would be affected, and not that of both".

Now you will find some statements about the described situation. Think about the situation you have just read and indicate how the statements describe this couple.

[Mutual dependence]

- What each of us does in this situation affects the other.
- Whatever each of us does in this situation, our actions will not affect the other's outcomes. *

*Reverse code item.

Items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

Imagine that it is María who decides to reduce her working hours or change jobs to care for and look after her children.

[Benefits]

- How beneficial would this sacrifice be for her?
- How positively would she feel about this sacrifice?
- How beneficial would she feel this sacrifice would be for your relationship?

[Costs]

- How costly would this sacrifice be for her?
- How big would this sacrifice be for her?
- How hard would she find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

Imagine that it is Juan who decides to reduce her working hours or change jobs to care for and look after her children.

[Benefits]

- How beneficial would this sacrifice be for him?
- How positively would he feel about this sacrifice?
- How beneficial would he feel this sacrifice would be for your relationship?

[Costs]

- How costly would this sacrifice be for him?
- How big would this sacrifice be for him?
- How hard would he find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

[Willingness to sacrifice]

Imagine that, as the situation indicates, Maria and Juan are NOT able to combine the two jobs:

- To what extent do you think Maria would be willing to reduce her work hours or change jobs to care for and look after her children?
- To what extent do you think John would be willing to reduce his work hours or change jobs to care for his children?

Items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *totally*).

Now, imagine that you are who decide to reduce your working hours or change jobs to care for and look after your children.

[Benefits]

- How beneficial would this sacrifice be for you?
- How positively would you feel about this sacrifice?
- How beneficial would you feel this sacrifice would be for your relationship?

[Costs]

- How costly would this sacrifice be for you?
- How big would this sacrifice be for you?
- How hard would you find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

[Authenticity]

- To what extent would you feel authentic (true to myself) after making this decision? (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*)

Imagine that it is your partner who decides to reduce her working hours or change jobs to care for and look after your children.

[Benefits]

- How beneficial would this sacrifice be for your partner?
- How positively would your partner feel about this sacrifice?
- How beneficial would your partner feel this sacrifice would be for your relationship?

[Costs]

- How costly would this sacrifice be for your partner?
- How big would this sacrifice be for your partner?
- How hard would your partner find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

[Authenticity]

- To what extent do you think your partner would feel authentic (true to himself/herself) after making this decision? (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*)

[Willingness to sacrifice]

Imagine that you had found yourself in a situation as described in the couple:

- To what extent would you be willing to reduce your working hours or change jobs to care for your children?
- To what extent do you think your partner would be willing to reduce his/her working hours or change jobs to care for his/her children?

Items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *totally*).

[Real scenario] To what extent do you think this situation could happen in a couple's relationship? (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*)

[Sociodemographic Variables]

What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Homosexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Other

What is your age? _____

What is your current relationship status?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Dating relationship
- ☐ Living with your partner
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

How long have you been in this relationship? (in years and months)

- ☐ Year(s):
- ☐ AND Month(s):

Do you have any children?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

What is your employment situation?

- ☐ Housewives
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Work part-time
- ☐ Work full-time
- ☐ Another situation

What is your nationality?

- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Other

2. Tables of Main Analyses

Table 2

Parameter Estimates for Between Subjects (Covariates) on Perception of Benefits/Costs as a Function of Conditions in Study 2.

Variables	Hypothetic sacrifice condition															
	Sacrifice benefits								Sacrifice costs							
	María				Juan				María				Juan			
	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
IOS ^a	0.12 (0.08)	[−0.09, 0.39]	1.51	.132	−0.07 (0.08)	[−0.24, 0.09]	−0.87	.384	0.00 (0.09)	[−0.18, 0.19]	0.00	.997	0.08 (0.08)	[−0.08, 0.24]	1.00	.318
Relationship satisfaction	0.15 (0.12)	[−0.09, 0.39]	1.26	.210	0.26 (0.13)	[0.00, 0.52]	1.97	.050	−0.17 (0.15)	[−0.46, 0.12]	−1.16	.250	−0.36 (0.13)	[−0.61, −0.11]	−2.82	.005
Having children ^b	0.54 (0.22)	[0.11, 0.97]	2.47	.014	0.37 (0.24)	[−0.11, 0.85]	1.51	.132	−0.59 (0.27)	[−1.12, −0.06]	−2.18	.031	−0.50 (0.23)	[−0.96, −0.38]	−2.13	.035
	Romantic relationship sacrifice condition															
	Sacrifice benefits								Sacrifice costs							
	Own				Partner				Own				Partner			
	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
IOS ^a	0.09 (0.08)	[−0.07, 0.24]	1.12	.265	0.04 (0.08)	[−0.12, 0.20]	0.51	.613	−0.07 (0.10)	[−0.27, .13]	−0.69	.492	−0.03 (0.09)	[−0.21, 0.15]	−0.38	.708
Relationship satisfaction	0.31 (0.12)	[0.07, 0.56]	2.54	.012	0.39 (0.13)	[0.14, 0.64]	3.02	.003	−0.33 (0.16)	[−0.65, −0.02]	−2.11	.036	−0.54 (0.14)	[−0.82, −0.25]	−3.72	<.001
Having children ^b	0.62 (0.23)	[0.18, 1.07]	2.77	.006	0.56 (0.24)	[0.10, 1.03]	2.38	.018	−0.97 (0.29)	[−1.53, −0.39]	−3.34	.001	−0.77 (0.36)	[−1.29, −0.25]	−2.92	.004

Note. ^a IOS = Inclusion of other in the self; ^b 0 = No, 1 = Yes.

Table 3

Parameter Estimates for Between Subjects (Covariates) on Willingness to Sacrifice as a Function of Conditions in Study 2

Variables	Willingness to sacrifice															
	Hypothetic sacrifice condition								Romantic relationship sacrifice condition							
	María				Juan				Own				Partner			
	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
IOS ^a	0.11 (0.07)	[-0.03, 0.25]	1.53	.127	0.00 (0.90)	[-0.17, 0.18]	0.04	.971	0.04 (0.08)	[-0.11, 0.19]	0.52	.604	0.00 (0.09)	[-0.17, 0.17]	0.05	.963
Relationship satisfaction	0.02 (0.11)	[-0.20, 0.24]	0.22	.828	0.35 (0.14)	[0.07, 0.63]	2.50	.013	0.28 (0.12)	[0.05, 0.51]	2.35	.020	0.52 (0.14)	[0.25, 0.78]	3.79	<.001
Having children ^b	0.32 (0.20)	[-0.08, 0.73]	1.59	.115	0.16 (0.26)	[-0.36, 0.66]	0.60	.550	0.86 (0.22)	[0.43, 1.29]	3.96	<.001	0.70 (0.25)	[0.21, 1.19]	2.81	.005

Note. ^a IOS = Inclusion of other in the self; ^b 0 = No, 1 = Yes.

Table 4

Parameter Estimates for Between Subjects (Covariates) on Authenticity as a Function of Condition in Study 2.

Variables	Romantic relationship sacrifice condition							
	Own				Partner			
	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
IOS ^a	0.14 (0.10)	[−0.06, 0.34]	1.40	.162	−0.06 (0.09)	[−0.24, 0.12]	−0.69	.491
Relationship satisfaction	0.38 (0.16)	[0.06, 0.69]	2.37	.019	0.78 (0.14)	[0.50, 1.06]	5.51	<.001
Having children ^b	0.90 (0.29)	[0.33, 1.48]	3.11	.002	0.60 (0.26)	[0.09, 1.11]	2.31	.022

Note. ^a IOS = Inclusion of other in the self; ^b 0 = No, 1 = Yes.

Study 3

1. Procedure and Measures

The procedure was as in Study 1, except that now participants were only asked to think of the most recent work sacrifice.

[Commitment]. *Please indicate your extent of agreement regarding the following questions about your romantic relationship.*

1. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner
2. I want our relationship to last for a very long time.
3. I feel very attached to our relationship-very strongly linked to my partner.
4. It is likely that I will date someone other than my partner within the next year.
5. I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future.
6. I want our relationship to last forever.
7. I am oriented toward the long-term future of my relationship.

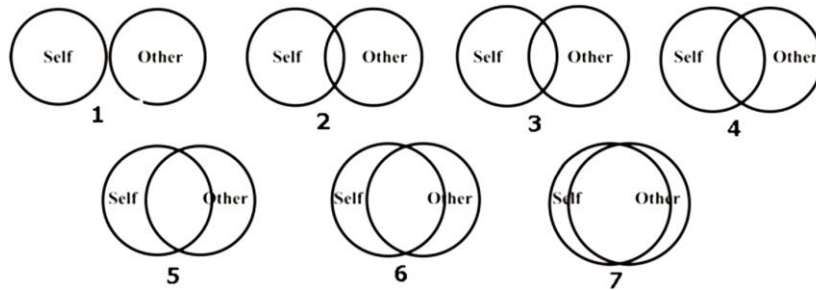
All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

[Relationship Satisfaction]. *Please indicate your extent of agreement regarding the following questions about your romantic relationship.*

1. I feel satisfied with our relationship
2. My relationship is much better than others' relationships
3. My relationship is close to ideal
4. Our relationship makes me very happy
5. Our relationship does a good job of fulfilling my needs for intimacy, companionship, etc.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

[Inclusion of Other in the Self]. Below are seven pairs of circles. The left circle represents you, and the right circle represents your romantic partner. Please indicate the number of the picture below that best describes how you view you and your romantic partner.



Item was assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *totally independent* to 7 = *almost completely overlapping*).

[Sacrifices] Research shows that in romantic relationships, there are often times when partners want different things. When situations like this arise, it is common for one romantic partner to sacrifice what they would like for the benefit of the other. For example, you have plans for this Sunday with your friends and your partner asks you to accompany him/her to a meal with his/her family, so you decide to postpone the get-together with your friends. We are interested in understanding how you make these decisions.

[Work sacrifice] Now, please take a moment and think about the last time you sacrificed some aspect of your work life to attend to family needs. In as much detail as possible, please describe the situation.

Now you will find some statements about the episode you have described. Please answer the following questions.

[Benefits]

- How beneficial would this sacrifice be for you?
- How positively would you feel about this sacrifice?
- How beneficial would you feel this sacrifice would be for your relationship?

[Costs]

- How costly would this sacrifice be for you?
- How big would this sacrifice be for you?
- How hard would you find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

[Life satisfaction] *Now, we would like you to reflect on your life and answer the following questions.*

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
3. I am satisfied with my life
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all to 7 = extremely)

[Sociodemographic Variables]

What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Homosexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Other

What is your age? _____

What is your current relationship status?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Dating relationship
- ☐ Living with your partner
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

How long have you been in this relationship? (in years and months)

- ☐ Year(s):
- ☐ AND Month(s):

Do you have any children?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

What is your employment situation?

- ☐ Housewives
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Work part-time
- ☐ Work full-time
- ☐ Another situation

What is your nationality?

- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Other

2. Tables of Main Analyses

Table 5

Testing the Moderated Mediation Effect of Commitment on Life Satisfaction Based on Costs in Study 3

Antecedents	Benefits			Life satisfaction		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI
Constant	5.99	3.38	[−0.67, 12.65]	−4.09	2.08	[−8.19, 0.00]
IOS	−0.06	0.11	[−0.27, 0.15]	0.19**	0.06	[0.06, 0.31]
Commitment	−0.29	0.52	[−1.32, 0.73]	1.31***	0.31	[0.70, 1.91]
Costs				−0.18	0.13	[−0.44, 0.09]
Gender ^a	−1.27	2.44	[−6.10, 3.55]	4.61**	1.49	[1.68, 7.54]
Commitment × Gender	0.20	0.37	[−0.52, 0.92]	−0.71**	0.22	[−1.13, −0.28]
Costs × Gender				0.08	0.09	[−0.10, 0.26]
	<i>R</i> ² = 0.00			<i>R</i> ² = 0.23		
	<i>F</i> (4, 181) = 0.21, <i>p</i> = .931			<i>F</i> (6, 179) = 9.09, <i>p</i> < .001		
	Indirect effect: <i>b</i> = −0.01, <i>SE</i> = 0.01, 95% CI [−0.11, 0.09]					

Note. ^a 1 = women, 2 = men.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 6*Testing the Moderated Mediation Effect of Relationship Satisfaction on Life Satisfaction Based on Costs in Study 3*

Antecedents	Benefits			Life satisfaction		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI
Constant	3.71	2.03	[−0.30, 7.73]	1.21	1.20	[−1.15, 3.57]
IOS	−0.06	0.11	[−0.27, 0.16]	0.08	0.06	[−0.03, 0.20]
Relationship satisfaction	0.05	0.37	[−0.67, 0.78]	0.74***	0.20	[0.35, 1.23]
Costs				−0.19	0.12	[−0.43, 0.05]
Gender ^a	0.47	1.43	[−0.58, 0.43]	0.53	0.84	[−1.13, 2.19]
Relationship satisfaction × Gender	−0.07	0.26	[−0.58, 0.43]	−0.12	0.14	[−0.39, 0.15]
Costs × Gender				0.09	0.06	[−0.03, 0.20]
	<i>R</i> ² = 0.00			<i>R</i> ² = 0.37		
	<i>F</i> (4, 181) = 18.31, <i>p</i> = .947			<i>F</i> (6, 179) = 17.15, <i>p</i> < .001		
	Indirect effect: <i>b</i> = −0.00, <i>SE</i> = 0.02, 95% CI [−0.05, 0.05]					

Note. ^a 1 = women, 2 = men.* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Chapter 7

*It Was Not the Best Option: Family-Role
Overload and Regret About Making
Work Sacrifices*

Los hallazgos de los estudios recogidos en el Capítulo 6 revelaron que, las diferencias de género aparecen principalmente ante los sacrificios laborales. En concreto, tanto mujeres como hombres percibían el sacrificio laboral como más costoso para los hombres y más beneficioso para las mujeres. Además, ambos géneros consideraron que las mujeres no solo se sentían más auténticas o fieles a sí mismas al realizar estos sacrificios, si no que, a su vez, ellas serían las que tendrían una mayor disposición a realizarlos en caso de que se diera la situación.

En cuanto a las variables interpersonales, se observó que, las mujeres (pero no los hombres) con un mayor compromiso y satisfacción con la relación percibían más beneficios al realizar los sacrificios laborales, desencadenando en un mayor bienestar para sí mismas. Es decir, la inversión en sus relaciones interpersonales parece incrementar su bienestar al realizar sacrificios en pro de éstas, pero ¿qué ocurre cuando dirige el foco de atención a ella misma independientemente de la pareja? Está claro que las mujeres perciben que sacrificar el trabajo fue beneficioso para los y las demás e incluso para sí mismas al reducir la doble presencia, sin embargo, también perciben que esta decisión supone altos costes para ellas mismas (Horne y Breitzkreuz, 2018). Por ejemplo, las mujeres podrían haber decidido sacrificar el trabajo para disminuir su sensación de sobrecarga familiar; sin embargo, este reajuste no parece disminuir su sobrecarga (Matthews et al., 2014), por lo que las mujeres se encontrarían en la misma situación que al principio en el ámbito privado. Partiendo de esta base, en el Capítulo 7 se analiza como el hecho de que las mujeres sigan experimentando sobrecarga tras sacrificar su trabajo influye en su percepción del sacrificio, y en consecuencia en su bienestar.

The findings of the studies in Chapter 6 revealed that gender differences appeared mainly in work sacrifices. Specifically, both women and men perceived work sacrifice as more costly for men and more beneficial for women. In addition, both genders considered that women not only felt more authentic or true to themselves when making these sacrifices but also that, in turn, they would be the ones who would be more willing to make them if the situation arose.

Regarding interpersonal variables, we observed that women (but not men) with greater commitment and satisfaction with the relationship perceived more benefits from making work sacrifices, resulting in greater well-being for themselves. That is, a woman investing in her interpersonal relationships seems to increase her well-being by making sacrifices for them. However, what happens when she directs the focus to herself independently of her partner? Clearly, women perceive that sacrificing work was beneficial for others and even for themselves by reducing dual presence; however, they also perceive that this decision entails high costs for themselves (Horne & Breitzkreuz, 2018). For example, women might have decided to sacrifice work to decrease their sense of family overload; however, this readjustment does not seem to decrease their overload (Matthews et al., 2014). Therefore, women would find themselves in the same situation as at the beginning in the private sphere. On this basis, Chapter 7 analyzes how women continuing to experience overload after sacrificing their work influences their perception of sacrifice and consequently their well-being.

**It Was Not the Best Option:
Family-Role Overload and Regret About Making Work Sacrifices**

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Abstract

Compared to men, women continue to shoulder family responsibilities and feel more family-role overload, leading them to make greater work sacrifices. This research aimed to examine whether women with a higher family-role overload regret their work sacrifices after analyzing the costs of them. Study 1 ($N = 218$) revealed that for women, a higher family-role overload is associated with greater regret about making work sacrifices after perceiving the costs of them. Study 2 ($N = 180$) showed that women with traditional partners had greater family-role overload, which led them to perceive their work sacrifices as more costly and consequently a greater regret for making them. Study 3 ($N = 285$) demonstrated that women with greater family-role overloads felt less satisfied with their lives due to the perception of greater costs of making work sacrifices and regret about them.

Keywords: work-family, sacrifices, overload, regret, gender roles

It Was Not the Best Option: Family-Role Overload and Regret About Making Work Sacrifices

In recent years, the number of women in the labor market has increased (46% female; National Statistical Institute, 2022), showing a possible advance in the view of gender roles. Even though the public sphere has advanced towards equality, the private sphere (i.e., family) has retained traditional gender roles (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2020) with significant gender differences. Women spend twice as much time on caregiving and household chores than men do (OECD, 2021), regardless of their work commitments. The family responsibilities are a trigger for family-role overload, in which women have been found to have significantly higher scores than men (Duxbury & Halinski, 2014, 2018; Korabik et al., 2017). This is one of the main reasons that many women choose part-time work (Ministry of Labor and Social Economy, 2021). In accordance with what is socially expected of them, women with a greater sense of family-role overload might decide to reduce their working hours or even leave their job to have enough time and energy for their family and reduce their family-role overload. Nevertheless, reallocating resources interdomain does not reduce family-role overload (Matthews et al., 2014), and these women are expected to regret their decision. On this basis, we decided to examine whether women (vs. men) with higher family-role overloads regret their work sacrifices more after analyzing the costs of their decision.

Family-Role Overload and Regret

Family-role overload occurs when an individual feels overwhelmed by duties and requirements that arise from the family domain (e.g., housework and caregiving; Coverman, 1989). This could be understood as another form of gender inequality because it affects women more due to their social role as caregivers, which decreases their well-being (Dean et al., 2022; Duxbury & Halinski, 2014, 2018; Korabik et al., 2017). More specifically, this overload predicts family-to-work conflict between women and men (Matthews et al., 2014). When this interference occurs, women are more likely to leave work than men, which reinforces gender inequality in career progression (Xue et al., 2020). Although women understand that this sacrifice will be costly for their career progression, they believe that it will be more beneficial for their family (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2021b). By prioritizing family over work, women (but not men) think that

their sacrifice will give them more energy and time for their families and assume they will not feel guilty for complying with gender roles (Aarntzen et al., 2019).

Through a longitudinal study, Matthews et al. (2014) showed that people who experienced overload reallocated resources between domains to cope with it. For example, individuals with work-role overload reallocate resources from the family domain to the work domain to decrease it. However, this process was not successful in family-role overload; scaling back or leaving work did not decrease the family-role overload, even in the short term. Therefore, women can choose to reduce work to decrease their sense of family-role overload; however, as Matthews demonstrated, this readjustment does not decrease their overload, so women would find themselves in the same situation as at the beginning in the private sphere but with less progression in the public sphere. They are expected to perceive costs from these sacrifices because, although it was a difficult decision for women (vs. men; Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2022), they expected to obtain benefits. However, despite sacrificing their own needs for the benefit of others, they find themselves in the same situation, with the additional cost of reduced professional opportunities (Horne & Breitreuz, 2018). Specifically, many women regret prioritizing family in the long term (Newton et al., 2012) because their work was their safe place, where they felt free (Horne & Breitreuz, 2018). On this basis, we expected that women (but not men) with high family-role overload would experience more regret related to making work sacrifices because they perceive a higher related cost. Even though they made this sacrifice to reduce their overload, after analyzing the associated costs, they would perceive that it was not the best option. Regret is considered a negative emotion of self-blame, which people experience when they realize that the outcome of the other choice would have been better (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2007). Gender differences have been found in regret, as women experience regret concerning their decision-making to a greater extent than men (van de Calseyde et al., 2018; Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2022). Analyzing regret in the domain of work sacrifices is fundamental, given that when people make these sacrifices, they have to decide between two options. This concept is particularly salient considering that women's decision-making process is guided by gender norms (i.e., but not men; e.g., Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2020, 2021a); in many circumstances, women make decisions according to what is expected of them rather than what they really want.

Research Overview

Through three studies, we examined whether women with a higher family-role overload regretted their work sacrifices to a greater extent after analyzing the costs of their decisions. In Study 1, women and men self-reported their family-role overload, recalled their most recent work sacrifice, rated the associated costs, and rated the extent to which they experienced regret about this sacrifice. We expected that women (but not men) with high family-role overload would experience more regret about making work sacrifices when they perceived the cost of the sacrifices to a greater extent. Considering the results of Study 1, we selected women as the participants of Studies 2 and 3. In Study 2, we also tested whether gender role ideology was one of the causes of family-role overload, taking it as a predictor of the mediation model of Study 1. Finally, in Study 3, women completed the same procedure as in Study 1, but we also investigated the consequences of the mediation model of Study 1 for well-being (i.e., life satisfaction). Codes and data are available at Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/mbfe2/?view_only=dc9d757530934408b396b0b8a07f4682). We have reported all manipulations, measures, and exclusions in these studies (see the online supplementary material [OSM] for more information).

Study 1

Method

Participants

Originally, participants were 235 but 17 were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria (i.e., being involved in a heterosexual romantic relationship, having children, and being Spanish) or because they did not follow the instructions properly (i.e., they failed the attention check or they provided incoherent responses to an open-ended question). The final sample was 218 Spanish individuals (51.8% identified as women and 48.2% as men) between 35 and 74 years of age ($M = 48.32$, $SD = 6.50$). A sensitivity power analysis (G*Power; Faul et al., 2009) for a linear multiple regression test ($1 - \beta = 80\%$; $\alpha = .05$; $N = 218$) revealed that the sample size was sufficiently large enough to detect effects of at least a small size of .06. All participants had been in a relationship for at least 3 months, with an average of 4 years ($SD = 8.78$); 93.1% were married, 4.1% currently lived with their partners, and 2.8% were maintaining a dating relationship. Most

of the participants worked full-time (64.7%), 14.7% worked part-time, 6% were unemployed, 10.1% were homemakers, and 4.6% indicated another situation.

Procedure and Measures

Participants were recruited online via advertisement on internet forums and social networks. We informed the participants about the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. If participants agreed, they could begin to answer the measures. Participants were asked to recall their most recent work sacrifice, and then answered the measures in relation to the situation they had recalled. First, they self-reported their family-role overload (Thiagarajan et al., 2006; six items; “I have to do things that I do not really have the time and energy for”; $\alpha = .85$) on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Participants were asked to consider their family life when answering the items (Lu et al., 2019; Matthews et al., 2014). A preliminary study enabled us to prove that asking participants to consider family/work when they answered overload items was effective, showing gender differences in family-role overload (see OSM). After this, participants vividly described a recent work sacrifice they had made in writing. To reduce perceptions that sacrifice might be inherently negative, we defined *sacrifice* beforehand for the participants based on Day and Impett’s (2016) work. They rated the extent to which this sacrifice was costly for them (Visserman et al., 2020; three items; “How hard did you find it to make this sacrifice?”; $\alpha = .90$) on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*). In addition, participants rated the extent to which they felt regret about the sacrifice described above (Brehaut et al., 2003; five items; “I would go for the same choice if I had to do it over again”; $\alpha = .81$) on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). They completed the study by answering demographic questions. Participants did not receive monetary compensation. See the OSM for more information.

Results

Analysis Strategy

Descriptive statistics and correlations among study variables may be found in Table 1. We ran a moderated mediation model using PROCESS (Version 3.4.1., Model 59; Hayes, 2017) with 10,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals to analyze the moderation effects of gender in the direct and indirect relationship

between family-role overload and experienced regret through the perception of costs (see Figure 1). When the expected interactions emerged, we performed simple slope analyses to interpret the interactions for high and low (+1SD; Figures 2 and 3).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables in Study 1

Measures	<i>n</i>	1.	2.	3.
1. Family-role overload	218	–		
2. Perception of costs	218	.18**	–	
3. Regret	218	.29**	.18**	–
Range				
Potential		(1–7)	(1–7)	(1–7)
Actual		(1–7)	(1–7)	(1–7)
Mean (<i>SD</i>)		4.32 (1.72)	3.54 (1.98)	2.34 (1.38)
Women (<i>SD</i>)		4.60 (1.76)	3.65 (2.04)	2.57 (1.50)
Men (<i>SD</i>)		4.01 (1.63)	3.42 (1.91)	2.09 (1.20)
Gender difference <i>t</i>		2.54*	0.84	2.61*
Cohen's <i>d</i>		0.35	0.12	0.35

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

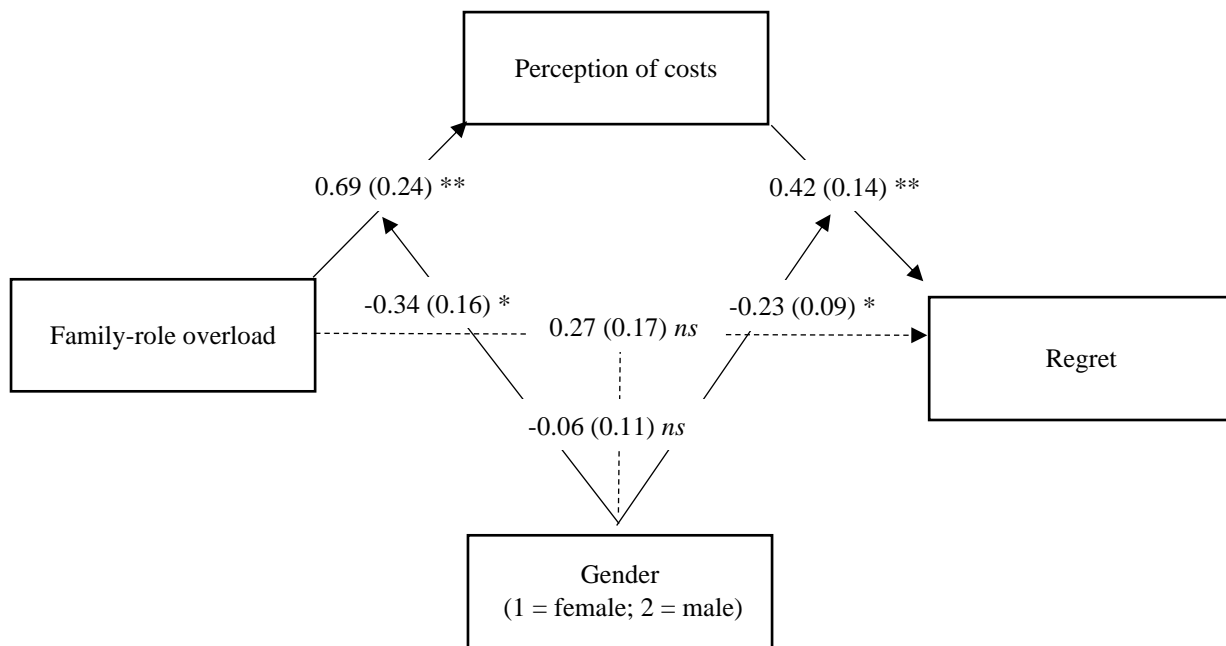
Effects of Family-Role Overload on Experienced Regret Based on the Perception of Costs

As shown in Figure 1, the overload did not exert a significant main effect on regret. The effect of overload on the perception of costs was significant, and this effect was moderated by gender. Simple slope tests (see Figure 2) indicated that, for women, higher levels of overload were associated with greater perception of costs, $b = 0.35$, $SE = 0.10$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [0.15, 0.56]. For men, this relationship was non-significant, $b = 0.01$, $SE = 0.12$, $p = .898$, 95% CI [–0.22, 0.24]. The effect of one's perception of costs on experienced regret was significant and was also moderated by gender. Simple slope tests (see Figure 3) revealed that, for women, greater perceived costs were associated with increased regret, $b = 0.19$, $SE = 0.06$, $p = .003$, 95% CI [0.07, 0.31]. In contrast, for men, this relation was not significant, $b = -0.04$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .584$, 95% CI [–0.17, 0.09]. Bias-corrected bootstrap analyses indicated that the indirect path was moderated by gender. For women, the indirect effect of overload on experienced regret via the

perception of costs was significant, $b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.14], but not for men, $b = -0.00$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [-0.02, 0.02]. This model accounted for 15% of the variance in experienced regret. As expected, for women (but not men), higher family-role overload was associated with greater perceived costs, which in turn were associated with experiencing greater regret.

Figure 1

Moderated Mediation Model with Perception of Costs as Mediator of the Effect of Family-Role Overload to Experienced Regret About Making a Work Sacrifice in Study 1



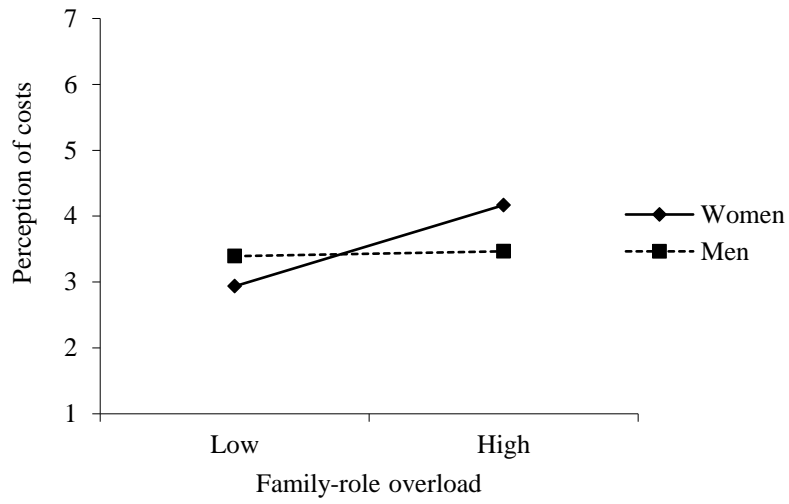
Index of moderated mediation: 95% CI [-0.14, -0.01]

Note. All reported values are unstandardized estimates, with their SE reported between parentheses. ns = no significant.

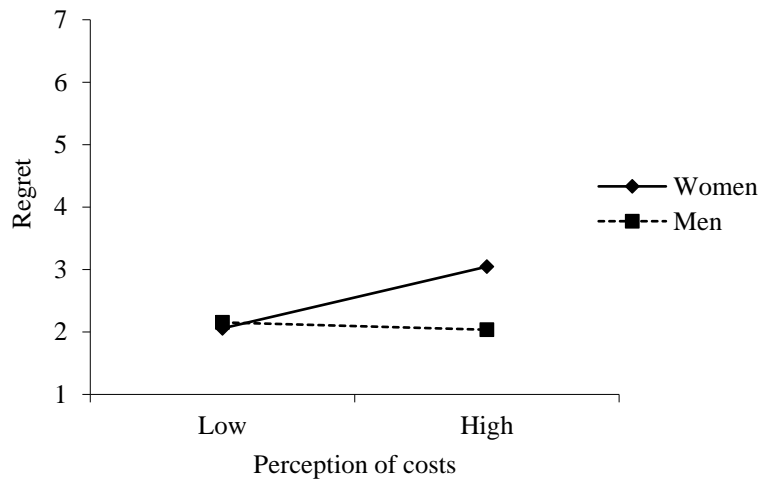
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Figure 2

Interaction of Family-Role Overload and Gender on the Perception of Costs in Study 1

**Figure 3**

Interaction of Perception of Costs and Gender on Regret in Study 1



Brief Discussion

When women feel overwhelmed by duties and role requirements arising from the family domain, they experience more regret about making work sacrifices because they perceive that their choice had greater costs for them. These results show that, although the women intended to ameliorate their feeling of overload, the decision they made were not the best ones, since it they entailed great costs. This result did not emerge among men, which is consistent with previous studies indicating that family domain responsibilities decrease time at work for women but not for men (Goñi-Legaz & Ollo-López, 2016). Therefore, although men may feel overloaded at home, they do not consider the option of sacrificing work according to their gender role, and they do not experience regret about it (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2022).

In Study 2, we sought to provide a predictor of women's family-role overload. In addition, in this study, work sacrifice was analyzed in a more specific way: The participants were asked to imagine that they were sacrificing a full-time job in order to attend to family responsibilities. Previous literature has shown that women and partners' ideology affect women's perception (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2021b) and are associated with women's overload and well-being (e.g., Hu et al., 2021; Kincaid, 2021; Steiner et al., 2019). We expected that women and partners' traditional ideology (respectively) would increase the women's sense of family-role overload, which would be associated with greater perception of costs, which in turn would be associated with greater regret about making work sacrifices.

Study 2

Method

Participants

The initial study sample included 223 participants, of whom 28 were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria (i.e., women, being involved in a heterosexual romantic relationship, having children, and being Spanish) and 15 because they failed the attention check. These exclusions resulted in a total sample size of 180 Spanish women ranging from 35 to 69 years of age ($M = 48.19$, $SD = 8.75$). Statistical power analysis (G*Power; Faul et al., 2009) confirmed that the current sample size was

sufficiently large enough to detect effects of at least a size of .04. Women reported having children and being involved in their relationship for an average of 22 years ($SD = 9.57$); 85% were married, 13.3% currently lived with their partners, and 1.7% were maintaining a dating relationship. Over half of the participants worked full-time (75%), and 25% worked part-time.

Procedure and Measures

In this study, participants were asked to imagine a specific work sacrifice scenario instead of thinking of a recent work sacrifice. They first reported their gender role ideology (Scholz et al., 2014; four items; “A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children”; $\alpha = .74$; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*, with a higher score indicating a traditional ideology). They were also asked to view the situation from their partner’s perspective and to answer the measure of gender role ideology so we could obtain the partner’s gender role ideology as perceived by the woman ($\alpha = .67$). In addition, they reported their family-role overload (Thiagarajan et al., 2006; $\alpha = .78$). Afterward, participants were shown a scenario in which one member of a couple had to decide to sacrifice their work for their family role (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2022; see OSM for more information). They then evaluated the extent to which the sacrifice would be costly for them (Visserman et al., 2020; $\alpha = .89$) and the extent to which they would experience regret about doing so (adapted from Righetti & Visserman, 2018; “To what extent do you think you would regret it if you decided to reduce your working hours or change your job to take care of your children?”; 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *totally*) and answered demographic questions. They did not receive monetary compensation.

Results

Analysis Strategy

Descriptive statistics and correlations among study variables may be found in Table 2. We ran a hierarchical regression analysis to test the prediction regarding the effect of gender role ideology on family-role overload (see Table). We included women’s gender role ideology in Step 1, partner’s gender role ideology in Step 2, and family-role overload as the dependent variable. Then, to analyze the indirect effect of gender role ideology on regret (see Figure 4) based on family-role overload and the perception of

costs, we carried out two serial mediation analyses using PROCESS (Version 3.4.1, Model 6; Hayes, 2018) with 10,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables in Study 2

Variables	<i>n</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Women's gender role ideology	180	–				
2. Partner's gender role ideology	180	.70**	–			
3. Family-role overload	180	.21**	.29**	–		
4. Perception of costs	180	–.07	–.08	.12	–	
5. Regret	180	–.12	–.09	.12	.57**	–
Range						
Potential		(1–7)	(1–7)	(1–7)	(1–7)	(1–7)
Actual		(1–7)	(1–7)	(1–7)	(1–7)	(1–7)
Mean (<i>SD</i>)		2.72 (1.49)	2.81 (1.40)	5.01 (1.45)	4.52 (1.76)	3.64 (1.93)

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Gender Role Ideology as Predictor of Family-Role Overload

The results showed that a woman's ideology predicts her own family-role overload. However, as can be seen in Table 3, this effect disappears when the partner's ideology, which significantly predicts the woman's family-role overload, is considered.

Table 3*Effect of Gender Role Ideology on Family-Role Overload in Study 2*

Predictors	Family-role overload			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI
<i>Step 1</i>				
Women's Gender Role Ideology	0.21**	0.07	2.87	[0.06, 0.35]
<i>Step 2</i>				
Women's Gender Role Ideology	0.02	0.02	0.20	[-0.18, 0.21]
Partner's Gender Role Ideology	0.28**	0.27	2.70	[0.08, 0.49]
$R^2 = .08$				

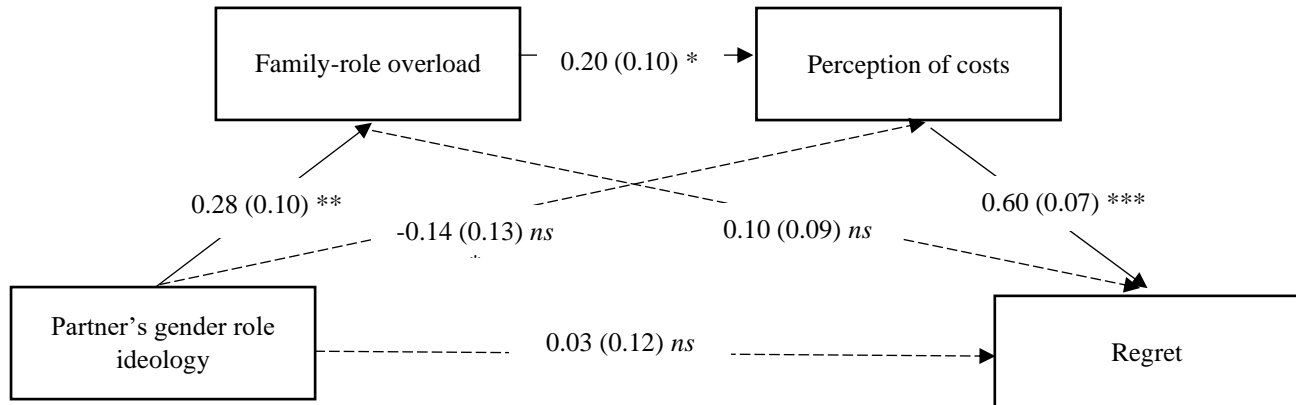
Note. ** $p < .01$.

Effect of the Partner's Gender Role Ideology on Experienced Regret Through Family-Role Overload and the Perception of Costs

We conducted the mediation analyses with the partners' ideology as a predictor, since this had more significance for overload than the women's own ideology. Women's own ideology was introduced as a covariate, and it was not significant (all $p > .05$). The results showed that the indirect effect was significant because of the 95% confidence interval around the indirect effect did not contain zero, $b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI [0.0005, 0.08]. Specifically, women with a traditional partner perceived more family-role overload, which was associated with greater costs, which in turn was related to higher experienced regret (see Figure 4). That is to say, women with a traditional partner perceived that they would experience more regret from feeling greater family-role overload and perceiving greater cost of making work sacrifices. The variables included in the model predicted 33% of the variance of the experienced regret.

Figure 4

Serial Mediation Model Depicting Indirect Effect of Partner's Gender Role Ideology on the Experienced Regret Through Family-Role Overload and the Perception of Costs in Study 2



Specific Indirect Effect ($X \rightarrow M1 \rightarrow Y$) 95% CI [-0.02, 0.09]

Specific Indirect Effect ($X \rightarrow M2 \rightarrow Y$) 95% CI [-0.24, 0.08]

Note. All reported values are unstandardized estimates, with their SE reported between parentheses. ns = no significant; * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Brief Discussion

The results of Study 2 showed that, when women with a traditional partner perceived greater family-role overload and, consequently, greater costs of making work sacrifices, they considered that they would regret making work sacrifices, regardless of their own ideology. In addition, the results showed that the effect of the partner's ideology on women was stronger than that of their own ideology (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2021b). This result is interesting because it suggests that it does not matter so much what a woman is like as what her partner is like or thinks. That is, it appears that others influence women's own perception and decisions, and they adjust their behavior to what their partners expect of them.

In Study 3, we sought to analyze the consequences of family-role overload and experienced regret about making work sacrifices for women's well-being. Family-role overload and regret could be one of the reasons why women (as compared to men) have a lower level of well-being (e.g., Batz & Tay, 2018). Korabik et al. (2017) indicated that

family-role overload is negatively associated with life satisfaction. Regret about decision-making is likewise negatively associated with life satisfaction (Newton et al., 2012; Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2022). In this sense, women's well-being is affected by their being overloaded, underrecognized, and isolated and by their no longer feeling accomplished after sacrificing their work, which perpetuates their desire to return to work (Horne & Breitzkreuz, 2018). We expected that women with higher family-role overload would experience lower life satisfaction through perceiving greater costs and regret about their work sacrifices, given that, even if they reallocate resources from work, their overload will remain the same, adding to it the costs of having sacrificed work.

Study 3

Method

Participants

We recruited 365 participants, but 37 were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria (i.e., women, being involved in a heterosexual romantic relationship, having children, and being Spanish) and 43 because they did not follow the instructions properly (i.e., they failed the attention check or they provided incoherent responses to an open-ended question). The participants were 285 Spanish women between 33 and 79 years of age ($M = 48.21$, $SD = 7.12$). A sensitivity power analysis (G*Power; Faul et al., 2009) showed that the sample size was sufficiently large enough to detect effects of at least a small size of .06. The participants reported being involved in a relationship for an average of 23 years ($SD = 10.56$); 86% were married, 8.1% currently lived with their partners, and 6% were maintaining a dating relationship. A majority of participants (40.4%) worked full-time, 19.6% were homemakers, 18.6% worked part-time, 13% were unemployed, and 8.4% indicated another situation.

Procedure and Measures

The procedure was the same as in Study 1. First, participants reported their family-role overload (Thiagarajan et al., 2006; $\alpha = .81$). They then were asked to recall their most recent work sacrifice and answered the measures in relation to the described sacrifice. They vividly described a recent work sacrifice they had made in writing, and they rated the associated costs (Visserman et al., 2020; $\alpha = .86$), the experienced regret in relation

to the described sacrifice (Brehaut et al., 2003; $\alpha = .88$), and their life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985; Cabañero-Martínez et al., 2004; five items: “In most ways my life is close to my ideal”; $\alpha = .86$; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) and answered demographic questions. Participants did not receive monetary compensation. See the OSM for more information.

Results

Analysis Strategy

Descriptive statistics and correlations among study variables may be found in Table 4. We performed a serial mediation model using PROCESS (Version 3.4.1., Model 6; Hayes, 2018) with 10,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals to analyze the indirect effect of family-role overload on life satisfaction (see Figure 5).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables in Study 3

Measures	<i>n</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Family-role overload	285	–			
2. Perception of costs	285	.18**	–		
3. Regret	285	.19**	.38**	–	
4. Life satisfaction	285	–.36**	–.18**	–.42**	–
Range					
Potential		(1–7)	(1–7)	(1–7)	
Actual		(1–7)	(1–7)	(1–7)	
Mean (<i>SD</i>)		4.27 (1.62)	4.07 (2.19)	2.42 (1.59)	4.92 (1.38)

Note. ** $p < .01$.

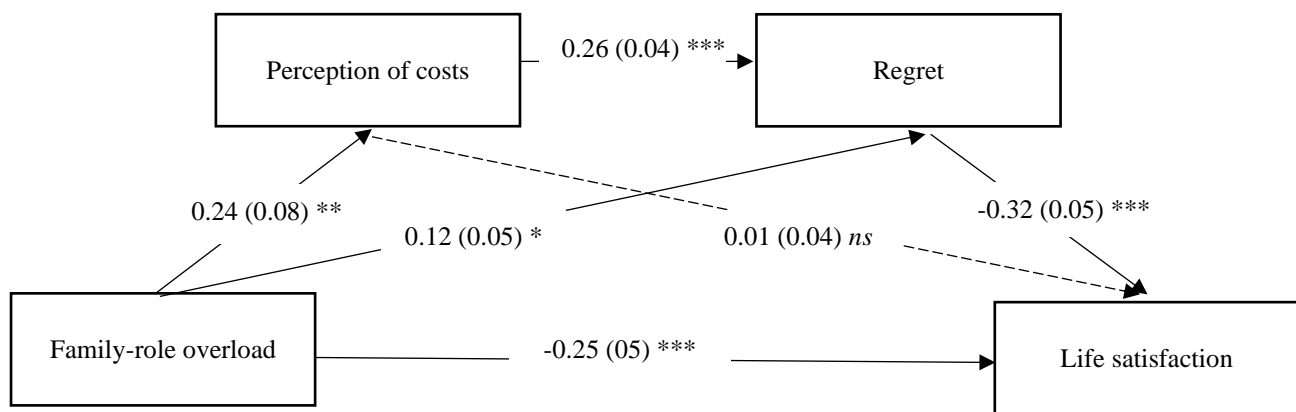
Effects of Family-Role Overload on Life Satisfaction Based on the Perception of Costs and Experienced Regret

The indirect effect of family-role overload on life satisfaction based on the perception of costs and experienced regret was significant, given that the 95% confidence interval around the indirect effect did not contain zero, $b = -0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI

$[-0.04, -0.01]$. That is to say, women with higher family-role overload had less life satisfaction due to the perception of greater costs of making work sacrifices and experiencing regret about them (see Figure 5). The variables included in the model predicted 25% of the variance of life satisfaction.

Figure 5

Serial Mediation Model Depicting Indirect Effect of Family-Role Overload on Life Satisfaction Through the Perception of Costs and the Experienced Regret in Study 3



Specific Indirect Effect ($X \rightarrow M1 \rightarrow Y$) 95% CI $[-0.02, 0.02]$

Specific Indirect Effect ($X \rightarrow M2 \rightarrow Y$) 95% CI $[-0.08, -0.01]$

Note. All reported values are unstandardized estimates, with their SE reported between parentheses. ns = no significant; * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Brief Discussion

Study 3 showed that women with a high sense of family-role overload not only regretted making work sacrifices more after analyzing the costs involved, but that this regret made them experience less satisfaction with their life. These results suggest that, after taking stock of their work sacrifices, they considered that they did not get what they expected, such as a reduction of their overload, and that these sacrifices were an additional barrier to their professional development (Horne & Breitkreuz, 2018), leading them to make an overall negative analysis of their life.

General Discussion

This work contributes to the previous literature on sacrifices showing that gender roles lead women and men to exhibit behaviors in line with what is expected of them (Eagly & Wood, 2016). The results of Study 1 revealed that, for women (but not men), a higher family-role overload is associated with greater regret about making work sacrifices due to the perception of their greater costs. These results led us to focus on women in the subsequent studies. In Study 2, we found that women who perceived that they had a traditional partner experienced greater family-role overload, which led them to perceive greater costs for their work sacrifices and, consequently, greater regret about making them. Furthermore, the results of Study 3 showed that women with a greater overload who perceived greater costs of their sacrifices and experienced more regret considered that they were less satisfied with their lives.

Several studies have shown that, when it comes to choosing between work and family, women are more likely to sacrifice work for family than men (Aarntzen et al., 2019; Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2022; Xue et al., 2020). Matthews et al. (2014) demonstrated that reallocating resources from one setting to another decreases overload; however, they pointed out that, in the case of family-role overload, this process does not work. This result is in line with gender roles, given that, even today, the family is still considered a woman's responsibility. Therefore, despite sacrificing their own needs or their place of safety and projection (work), women are in the same situation of sacrificing as before, with the additional cost of hindering their professional advancement (Horne & Breitzkreuz, 2018). Our findings contribute to this literature by showing that women (but not men) with greater overload perceive that they regret their work sacrifices more after an analysis of the costs they entailed. In fact, as the women themselves related, when they make work sacrifices, they feel unappreciated, isolated, and overwhelmed, which makes them question their own decisions (Horne & Breitzkreuz, 2018). In this sense, our results also provided evidence that regretting their sacrifices, after an analysis of the consequences, decreases women's well-being.

Furthermore, as indicated by previous studies, we found that the women's traditional ideology and their partners' ideology predicted women's overload (Hu et al., 2021; Kincaid, 2021). However, when both were taken into account, the results showed that a traditional partner's ideology had the greatest effect on women's overload. Men

with a traditional ideology would follow established gender roles, that is, men's behavior would be more oriented toward the achievement of professional goals rather than household chores, which implies that the woman must assume such family responsibilities with the overload that this entails. Consequently, women perceived that their decisions entailed great costs and they regretted them to a greater extent. The results of this study contribute to the existing literature that points out that the influence that a partner's ideology has on women is stronger than that of their own ideology (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2021b). These findings suggest that the partner has an important role in work sacrifices, especially in overload and regret. In sum, this research contributes to the literature on work sacrifices. These results indicate that although women make these sacrifices based on what they think is socially best (and how they are expected to behave), they do not achieve the results they expected and consequently regret risking their professional progress for the family. In addition, they suggest that women cannot overcome this situation alone—no matter what they do, their well-being will continue to be affected, and the involvement of the partner is also necessary to overcome this invisible gender inequality. For example, if there were a more even work-life balance between the two partners, women would not be overloaded and would not have to give up their jobs.

Although our work extends the sacrifice literature through a gender orientation, several limitations must be taken into account. All studies are cross-sectional, which limits causal conclusions. Based on our results, future studies could manipulate women's overload through an e-prime methodology and see how it affects other areas of their lives. Likewise, these studies have only considered the perspective of the woman while leaving aside that of the partner. It would be interesting to analyze how partners perceive a woman's overload and how they evaluate her degree of regret, which would expand the results of our work.

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Supplemental Material

It Was Not the Best Option: Family-Role Overload and Regret About Making Work Sacrifices

This file includes:

Preliminary Study

1. Method
2. Results

Study 1

1. Procedure and Measures

Study 2

1. Procedure and Measures

Study 3

1. Procedure and Measures

Preliminary Study

Method

Participants

An initial sample of 66 Spanish participants took part in the study voluntarily and without financial compensation. Being involved in a heterosexual romantic relationship, having children, and being Spanish were the inclusion criteria. Five participants were removed because they failed to pass an attention check, 14 because they did not answer all the items, five participants because they were single, one has other sexual orientation. Leaving a final sample of 40 Spanish participants (22 women and 18 men; ages 37–60, $M_{\text{age}} = 50.10$, $SD = 6.18$). Using G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2009), we conducted a sensitivity power analysis ($1 - \beta = 80\%$; $\alpha = .05$; $N = 40$). It revealed that the design could detect an effect size of $d = 0.80$ using a difference between two independent means test. Participants reported being involved in a relationship for an average of 25 years ($SD = 7.44$); 90% were married, and 10% currently lived with their partners. A majority of participants (55.5%) worked full-time, 15% were homemakers, 12.5% worked part-time, 10% were unemployed, and 7.5% indicated another situation.

Procedure and Measures

Participants were recruited online via advertisement on internet forums and social networks. We informed them about the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses, asking them to sign the informed consent form if they agreed after reading it (“After being informed of the above, I agree to participate in the study”). Once the participants had accepted the informed consent, they answered the overload and sociodemographic measures. They self-reported their family-role overload ($\alpha = .86$) and work-role overload ($\alpha = .85$; Thiagarajan et al., 2006; six items; “I have to do things that I do not really have the time and energy for”) on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Participants were asked to consider their family/work life when answering to the items respectively (Lu et al., 2019; Matthews et al., 2014). We counterbalanced the work and family sacrifier conditions to avoid response bias.

Results

We conducted an independent samples *t*-test analysis using gender as the independent variable (1 = female; 2 = male) and family-role overload and work-role overload as dependent variables. The results showed that, women (vs. men) self-reported greater family-role overload, $t(38) = 2.21, p = .033, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.09, 1.98], d = 0.70$ ($M_{\text{women}} = 5.06, SD = 1.49; M_{\text{men}} = 4.03, SD = 1.44$). However, the results did not show statistically significant differences in work-role overload, $t(38) = 1.55, p = .131, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.23, 1.70], d = 0.50$ ($M_{\text{women}} = 4.73, SD = 1.59; M_{\text{men}} = 3.99, SD = 1.38$).

Study 1

Procedure and Measures

Participants were recruited online via advertisement on internet forums and social networks. We informed the participants about the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. If participants agreed, they could begin to answer the measures. Participants were asked to recall their most recent work sacrifice, and they then answered the measures in relation to the situation they had recalled. Finally, they answered the sociodemographic variables (gender, sexual orientation, age, relationship status, length of relationship, whether they had children, employment situation, and nationality).

[Family-role Overload]. *Please consider your family life and indicate your extent of agreement regarding the following questions.*

1. I have to do things that I do not really have the time and energy for.
2. I need more hours in the day to do all the things that are expected of me.
3. I cannot ever seem to catch up.
4. I do not ever seem to have any time for myself.
5. There are times when I cannot meet everyone's expectations.
6. I seem to have more commitments to overcome than other parents I know.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

[Sacrifices] *Research shows that in romantic relationships, there are often times when partners want different things. When situations like this arise, it is common for one romantic partner to sacrifice what they would like for the benefit of the other. For example, you have plans for this Sunday with your friends and your partner asks you to accompany him/her to a meal with his/her family, so you decide to postpone the get-together with your friends. We are interested in understanding how you make these decisions.*

[Work sacrifice] *Now, please take a moment and think about the last time you sacrificed some aspect of your work life to attend to family needs. In as much detail as possible, please describe the situation.*

[Costs] *Now you will find some statements about the episode you have described. Please answer the following questions.*

- How costly did this sacrifice be for you?
- How big did this sacrifice be for you?
- How hard did you find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

[Regret] *Considering again the situation you have described, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.*

1. It was the right decision.
2. I regret the choice that was made.
3. I would go for the same choice if I had to do it over again.
4. The choice did me a lot of harm.
5. The decision was a wise one.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

[Sociodemographic Variables]

What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Homosexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Other

What is your age? _____

What is your current relationship status?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Dating relationship
- ☐ Living with your partner
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

How long have you been in this relationship? (in years and months)

- ☐ Year(s):
- ☐ AND Month(s):

Do you have any children?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

What is your employment situation?

- ☐ Homemakers
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Work part-time
- ☐ Work full-time
- ☐ Another situation

What is your nationality?

- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Other

Study 2

Procedure and Measures

Procedure was similar to Study 1, except that participant were asked to imagine a work sacrifice scenario instead of thinking of a recent work sacrifice.

[Gender Role Ideology] *Please indicate your extent of agreement regarding the following questions.*

1. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.
2. A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.
3. All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.
4. A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children.

Now, we would like you to put yourself in your partner's perspective and assess what you think his opinion is regarding the same questions.

1. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.
2. A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.
3. All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.
4. A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

[Family-role Overload]. *Please consider you family life and indicate your extent of agreement regarding the following questions.*

1. I have to do things that I do not really have the time and energy for.
2. I need more hours in the day to do all the things that are expected of me.
3. I cannot ever seem to catch up.
4. I do not ever seem to have any time for myself.
5. There are times when I cannot meet everyone's expectations.
6. I seem to have more commitments to overcome than other parents I know.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

[Scenario sacrifice] *The following is a real situation of a couple, please read it carefully:*

"María and Juan have the job for which they have prepared and trained for years. They both enjoy good working conditions. A few years ago they decided to start a family, and now they have two young children: a boy and a girl. They both work full time, and have tried to maintain this work situation. However, they are aware that their children need more care and attention from them. Maria and Juan are trying to coordinate to take care of the children, but they cannot maintain this situation any longer without negative consequences for both work and family, and it is really impossible for them to reconcile work and family life as they have been doing so far.

This situation has led them to consider that one of them will have to reduce their working hours or change to a position with fewer responsibilities. In this way, their children would receive the attention they need, and only the work of one member of the couple would be affected, and not that of both".

Imagine that you are who decide to reduce your working hours or change jobs to care for and look after your children.

[Costs]

- How costly would this sacrifice be for you?
- How big would this sacrifice be for you?
- How hard would you find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

[Regret]

- To what extent do you think you would regret it if you decided to reduce your working hours or change your job to take care of your children? (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

It was assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *totally*).

[Sociodemographic Variables]

What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Homosexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Other

What is your age? _____

What is your current relationship status?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Dating relationship
- ☐ Living with your partner
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

How long have you been in this relationship? (in years and months)

- ☐ Year(s):
- ☐ AND Month(s):

Do you have any children?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

What is your employment situation?

- ☐ Homemakers
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Work part-time
- ☐ Work full-time
- ☐ Another situation

What is your nationality?

- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Other

Study 3

Procedure and Measures

The procedure was the same as Study 1. Firstly, participants were asked to recall their most recent work sacrifice, and they then answered the measures in relation to described sacrifice.

[Family-role Overload]. *Please consider you family life and indicate your extent of agreement regarding the following questions.*

1. I have to do things that I do not really have the time and energy for.
2. I need more hours in the day to do all the things that are expected of me.
3. I cannot ever seem to catch up.
4. I do not ever seem to have any time for myself.
5. There are times when I cannot meet everyone's expectations.
6. I seem to have more commitments to overcome than other parents I know.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

[Sacrifices] *Research shows that in romantic relationships, there are often times when partners want different things. When situations like this arise, it is common for one romantic partner to sacrifice what they would like for the benefit of the other. For example, you have plans for this Sunday with your friends and your partner asks you to accompany him/her to a meal with his/her family, so you decide to postpone the get-together with your friends. We are interested in understanding how you make these decisions.*

[Work sacrifice] *Now, please take a moment and think about the last time you sacrificed some aspect of your work life to attend to family needs. In as much detail as possible, please describe the situation.*

Now you will find some statements about the episode you have described. Please answer the following questions.

[Costs]

- How costly did this sacrifice be for you?
- How big did this sacrifice be for you?
- How hard did you find it to make this sacrifice?

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*)

[Regret] *Considering again the situation you have described, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.*

1. It was the right decision.
2. I regret the choice that was made.
3. I would go for the same choice if I had to do it over again.
4. The choice did me a lot of harm.
5. The decision was a wise one.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

[Life satisfaction] *Now, we would like you to reflect on your life and answer the following questions.*

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
3. I am satisfied with my life
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree)

[Sociodemographic Variables]

What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Homosexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Other

What is your age? _____

What is your current relationship status?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Dating relationship
- ☐ Living with your partner
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

How long have you been in this relationship? (in years and months)

- ☐ Year(s):
- ☐ AND Month(s):

Do you have any children?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

What is your employment situation?

- ☐ Homemakers
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Work part-time
- ☐ Work full-time
- ☐ Another situation

What is your nationality?

- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Other

Chapter 8: General Discussion (In Spanish)

Discusión General

Las personas se enfrentan a lo largo de su vida con multitud de situaciones en las que han de tomar decisiones. Éstas pueden variar en función del grado de complejidad, desde las decisiones más sencillas, como decidir qué comer o qué ropa ponerse, hasta las más complejas, como decidir sobre reducir la jornada laboral, tomar una excedencia o incluso dejar el trabajo para tratar de satisfacer las necesidades de la familia. Cuando alguien toma una decisión, sus percepciones y comportamientos tienden a manifestar los sesgos desarrollados por los esquemas sociales imperantes (Augoustinos et al., 2014), como los roles de género. De acuerdo con la *teoría del rol social* (Eagly, 1987; Eagly y Wood, 2016) los roles de género constituyen una guía social prescriptiva que define lo que se espera socialmente del comportamiento de mujeres y hombres. El comportamiento de ellas debe estar dirigido hacia el cuidado de los y las demás, mientras que el de ellos debe estar orientado hacia el cumplimiento de sus objetivos personales. Si bien es cierto que la socialización de género dirige la toma de decisión de ambos géneros, las consecuencias para unos y otras no son las mismas. Dado que el proceso de toma de decisión determina la vida de las personas, analizar la manera en la que se toman las decisiones podría ayudar a visibilizar las situaciones de desigualdad que dirigen la vida de muchas mujeres. Por tal razón, el objetivo general de la presente tesis doctoral ha sido profundizar en los efectos de la socialización de género en el proceso de toma de decisión de las personas, y en concreto de las mujeres. Particularmente, se analizan dos cuestiones: (a) cómo determinadas variables (contextuales e interpersonales), derivadas de los roles de género, están asociadas con la toma de decisión; y (b) cómo las decisiones de las mujeres guiadas por la socialización de género influyen en su bienestar.

A continuación, se describirán los hallazgos y contribuciones más relevantes obtenidos en la parte empírica que compone la presente tesis. A pesar de que los resultados se han agrupado en artículos y objetivos independientes entre sí, con el fin de facilitar la información lo más clara y comprensible posible, se consideraran dos grandes bloques que abordan los objetivos principales de la tesis doctoral, el relativo a las variables contextuales e interpersonales, y el relativo al bienestar. Se discutirán las implicaciones derivadas de los resultados, y posteriormente se recogerán algunas de las limitaciones y posibles líneas futuras de investigación. Finalmente, se hará referencia a posibles implicaciones prácticas y conclusiones derivadas de la presente tesis.

Variables Asociadas al Proceso de Toma de Decisión

Variables Contextuales

En relación con las variables contextuales, primeramente, el Capítulo 2 manifestó cómo la discriminación de género afectaba a la capacidad de toma de decisión de las mujeres. Particularmente, el proceso de toma de decisión de éstas se vio afectado cuando se encontraban bajo condiciones de amenaza del estereotipo, llevándolas a asumir decisiones menos arriesgadas. Más aún, los pensamientos que experimentan las mujeres ante la sensación de ser evaluadas negativamente por los y las demás moderaron este efecto. En concreto, la toma de decisión de las mujeres que se encontraban bajo condiciones de amenaza del estereotipo se vio afectada en mayor medida cuando estas mujeres sentían un mayor miedo a la evaluación negativa. Hacer explícitas las diferencias de género en un determinado contexto parece desencadenar en las mujeres situaciones de amenaza, lo que afecta a su cognición, y como resultado, a su toma de decisión. Los hallazgos de este estudio permiten afianzar los resultados de von Hippel et al. (2011), quienes encontraron que las situaciones de discriminación merman la confianza de las mujeres para lograr sus metas profesionales. Las mujeres son conscientes de que tendrán menos éxito en su trabajo debido a estas situaciones de discriminación, lo que les lleva a invertir menos en su progresión profesional (Meeussen et al., 2021). Al igual que los hombres, las mujeres pueden esforzarse en conseguir una meta profesional, no obstante, es el esfuerzo de las mujeres el que se ve obstaculizado por las numerosas situaciones de discriminación de género que permean en todos los órdenes de la sociedad.

Por otro lado, el estudio del Capítulo 3 mostró que la internalización de los roles de género parece dirigir la toma de decisión de las mujeres. Concretamente la feminidad se erigió como un buen predictor del miedo a la evaluación negativa que sufren las mujeres, lo cual puede ser debido a la preocupación de éstas por no alcanzar los estándares sociales de feminidad impuestos (Leary, 1992). El hecho de que sean las mujeres más tradicionales las que informen sentir un mayor miedo a la evaluación negativa, es un buen indicativo de la existencia de sanciones sociales a las que las mujeres están expuestas si no se comportan de acuerdo con su rol tradicional (Moss-Racusin y Rudman, 2010). De acuerdo con los resultados, esta sensación de miedo parece limitar su toma de decisión hacia decisiones más seguras e intuitivas, es decir, aquellas decisiones congruentes con su rol de género, y por tanto no juzgadas socialmente (i.e., elegir quedarse con la familia

en lugar de trasladarse a otra ciudad por motivos laborales). Estas variables podrían ser una de las causas por las que las mujeres, cuando se enfrentan al dilema trabajo y familia, se decantan en mayor medida por la familia (e.g., Xue et al., 2020). Esto, entre otras consecuencias, supone una dificultad para el avance profesional de la mujer y la promoción hacia puestos de responsabilidad (i.e., estereotípicamente masculinos), legitimando y manteniendo las situaciones de desigualdad existentes y la brecha de género en el ámbito.

La cuestión es, ¿Qué pasaría si no existiesen contextos sociales discriminatorios? ¿La capacidad de toma de decisión de las mujeres sería la misma que la de los hombres? ¿Las mujeres tomarían decisiones orientadas a beneficiar a los y las demás o a ellas mismas? Los resultados del Capítulo 2 y 3 dan respuesta a las cuestiones planteadas. En condiciones donde no existía discriminación (i.e., condición en la que no se hacen referencia a las diferencias de género), los resultados mostraron que la capacidad de las mujeres para tomar decisiones fue mejor que la de los hombres (condición de no amenaza al estereotipo). Es decir, las mujeres mostraron poseer mejor capacidad para tomar decisiones cuando se eliminan las situaciones discriminatorias, permitiéndoles tomar decisiones más arriesgadas y beneficiosas. En esta línea, el estudio del Capítulo 3 reveló que, cuando no se tuvieron en consideración los roles de género y el miedo asociado a desviarse del rol tradicional, las mujeres tomaron decisiones más arriesgadas en el ámbito social (e.g., “Mudarte a una ciudad lejos de tu familia” o “Defender una opinión impopular en una reunión de trabajo”). Los resultados encontrados en ambos capítulos son congruentes con la evidencia empírica previa. La literatura indica que cuando se elimina información externa negativa, las mujeres toman mejores decisiones (Byrne y Worthy, 2015, 2016). Así mismo, cuando se apartan de su rol de género tradicional toman decisiones más deliberadas y egoístas, en lugar de decisiones intuitivas y sociales, congruentes con el rol de cuidadora que dictan los roles de género (Rand et al., 2016). Estos hallazgos reflejan que no solo es necesario animar a las mujeres a participar en mayor medida en puestos de responsabilidad y liderazgo, sino también crear contextos en los que se sientan seguras, o incluso tratar de erradicar los contextos discriminatorios a los que se ven expuestas diariamente, y las consecuencias asociadas a ello. Varias investigaciones han indicado que, proporcionar consecuencias positivas a las mujeres tras sus decisiones mejora su proceso de toma de decisión (Flores-Torres et al., 2022; Morgenroth et al. 2022). El hecho de reducir la socialización diferencial de género les

permitiría tomar decisiones de manera más racional y deliberada, considerando no solo en mayor medida los beneficios para los y las demás, si no, también los beneficios asociados para ellas mismas.

Variables Interpersonales

Con respecto a las *variables interpersonales*, en el Capítulo 4, el análisis de contenido de las “decisiones más importantes” de las personas participantes en nuestra investigación puso de manifiesto que, en el ámbito de las relaciones interpersonales, las decisiones que involucraban a la pareja fueron las más frecuentes. Estos resultados son congruentes con la literatura previa dado que, la pareja, constituye una de las fuentes más importantes que aportan bienestar a las personas (Robles et al., 2014), siendo este aspecto, parte esencial del autoconcepto de las mujeres (Gore y Cross, 2011). Los resultados del Capítulo 5 mostraron que las mujeres con una mayor motivación a satisfacer las necesidades de la pareja (e.g., “¿Cuánto estarías dispuesta a abandonar en beneficio de tu pareja?”) percibían mayores beneficios tras realizar sacrificios laborales (i.e., dejar el trabajo por la familia). Estos resultados son congruentes con la literatura relativa a roles de género, existiendo un acuerdo unánime de que el comportamiento de las mujeres ha estado y ésta dirigido principalmente hacia el cuidado de los y las demás, esto es, sostienen rasgos más comunales. Así mismo, los comportamientos sustentados por estas motivaciones comunales desencadenaron que las mujeres se sintieran más fieles a sí mismas (i.e., auténticas), dado que sus decisiones o sacrificios estaban dirigidos hacia el cuidado de una parte importante de sí mismas, su pareja o familia. A su vez, en la línea con los hallazgos de Kogan et al. (2010), los resultados arrojados por los estudios realizados ponen de manifiesto que el hecho de que las mujeres se sintieran más fieles a sí mismas tras realizar los sacrificios laborales hacía que sintiesen mayor cercanía por parte de su pareja, al percibir un mayor aprecio por el sacrificio realizado y, en consecuencia, percibían más beneficios derivados del sacrificio. En este caso se observa un doble reforzamiento, uno interno, la interiorización de los roles de género por parte de la mujer y otro externo, el aprecio que recibe de su pareja. El hecho de que la pareja aprecie su decisión podría mitigar los posibles costes derivados del sacrificio, percibiendo así esta decisión como más beneficiosa (Gordon et al., 2022). En los hombres, la motivación comunal no predijo la percepción de beneficios al realizar sacrificios laborales, ni la autenticidad o aprecio de la pareja, lo cual tiene sentido dado que sus

comportamientos no están socialmente dirigidos hacia el cuidado de los y las demás (i.e., sacrificio laboral) sino a la consecución de sus objetivos (i.e., sacrificio familia). A este respecto se encontró que los hombres se sentían más fieles a sí mismos cuando realizaban sacrificios familiares (i.e., dejar la familia por el trabajo), lo que a su vez corrobora los resultados del análisis del contenido del Capítulo 4, en el que se encontró que las decisiones más importantes de los hombres giraban principalmente en torno al trabajo, acorde a su rol de proveedor. No solo se sentían más fieles a sí mismos, sino que al igual que ocurría con las mujeres ante los sacrificios laborales, los hombres percibían una mayor cercanía por parte de su pareja tras realizar estos sacrificios y, por ende, también mayores beneficios al realizarlos. Estos resultados muestran las dos caras de la moneda, esto es, como los hombres refuerzan el comportamiento estereotípico de las mujeres como cuidadora, y como las mujeres refuerzan el comportamiento estereotípico de proveedor de sus parejas masculinas. Nótese que, de acuerdo con lo esperado, la motivación comunal de las mujeres no predijo la percepción de beneficios tras realizar sacrificios familiares. No obstante, resulta interesante señalar que, al igual que ocurría con los hombres, las mujeres también se sentían fieles a sí mismas tras hacer sacrificios familiares, percibiendo más aprecio de su pareja y en consecuencia más beneficios al realizar sacrificios familiares. Estos hallazgos reflejan, de acuerdo con el análisis de contenido del Capítulo 4 que, para las mujeres, tanto la familia como el trabajo son dos aspectos importantes en sus vidas. Las mujeres se sienten fieles a sí mismas al decidir sacrificar aspectos de su vida laboral porque es lo que *deben hacer* (interiorización de la norma social), pero también deciden sacrificar aspectos de su vida familiar para poder alcanzar sus metas, situándolas en la necesidad de conciliar entre ambos roles (i.e., doble presencia), con las consecuencias que ello acarrea para su desarrollo personal, laboral y su bienestar. Las mujeres perciben el apoyo de su pareja en ambos sacrificios, no obstante, los hombres siguen manteniéndose al margen a la hora de realizar sacrificios laborales, lo que da lugar a que sea la mujer la que, en mayor medida, tenga que sacrificar algún ámbito para lograr la conciliación.

Los estudios del Capítulo 6 permitieron reforzar esta realidad, es decir, que es menos probable que los hombres decidan sacrificar su trabajo (e.g., Hochschild y Machung, 2012; Xue et al., 2020). Los resultados mostraron que, tanto las mujeres como los hombres percibían que el sacrificio laboral sería más beneficioso para las mujeres y más costoso para los hombres. A pesar de los costes que supondría para el progreso

profesional de la mujer, ambos géneros consideran que este sacrificio sería más beneficioso para ellas. Más aún, tanto mujeres como hombres percibían que en caso de enfrentarse a una situación en la que un miembro de la pareja tuviera que decidir sacrificar su trabajo, esta persona sería siempre la mujer. No solo percibían que las mujeres estarían más dispuestas a sacrificar el trabajo, sino también que ellas se sentirían más auténticas o fieles a sí mismas al realizarlo. Estos resultados son congruentes con investigaciones previas (Horne y Breitzkreuz, 2018; Nsair y Piszczek, 2021; Villanueva-Moya y Expósito, 2021), las cuales demostraron que las mujeres perciben más beneficios para los y las demás al sacrificar el trabajo, congruente con su rol social. Además, el hecho de que tanto ellas mismas como los hombres perciban que las mujeres se sentirían más auténticas al realizar sacrificios laborales hace explícito el arraigo de la socialización de género en la sociedad actual, y en concreto en la dinámica de las relaciones de pareja, donde las mujeres se encuentran obstáculos para avanzar.

Consecuencias para el Bienestar

Uno de los principales objetivos de esta tesis doctoral estaba orientado a analizar el impacto que las decisiones de las mujeres podrían tener para su bienestar general. En este apartado se hará un breve recorrido por los estudios relacionados con esta variable. Concretamente, el último estudio del Capítulo 6 reflejó que, una mayor implicación de la mujer en la relación de pareja parece mitigar los costes derivados de realizar sacrificios laborales. De hecho, los resultados mostraron que, las mujeres con un mayor compromiso y satisfacción con la relación percibían más beneficios tras realizar sacrificios laborales, acarreando un mayor bienestar para sí mismas. Estos resultados irían en línea con algunas de las investigaciones previas sobre sacrificios (Righetti y Impett, 2017; van Lange et al., 1997), las cuales han demostrado que tanto el compromiso como la satisfacción con la relación incrementan la disposición a sacrificar de las personas. Más aún, si tenemos en cuenta que cuidar y satisfacer las necesidades de los y las demás es una parte importante del autoconcepto de las mujeres (Gore y Cross, 2011), es previsible que sean las mujeres las que se sientan mejor tras realizar tales sacrificios. Por tanto, la inversión de las mujeres en sus relaciones interpersonales parece incrementar su bienestar al realizar sacrificios en pro de éstas.

Los resultados de nuestras investigaciones muestran que las mujeres perciben que realizar sacrificios laborales es beneficioso para los y las demás e incluso para sí mismas

al reducir la doble presencia (familia-trabajo). Sin embargo, también perciben que estas decisiones son costosas para ellas mismas (Horne y Breitkreuz, 2018; Villanueva-Moya y Expósito, 2021), con el consecuente dilema o conflicto que supone esta situación para las mujeres, y que sin duda tendrá un impacto en sus vidas y en su bienestar. Por esta razón, se consideró necesario redirigir la mirada hacia el bienestar de la mujer más allá de sus relaciones. El análisis del contenido del Capítulo 4 reveló que, a diferencia los hombres, las mujeres se enfrentan a una situación de ambivalencia en torno al trabajo y la familia. La ambivalencia surge cuando las mujeres tienen que decidir entre comportarse de acuerdo con lo que *deben hacer* (i.e., familia) o con lo que *quieren hacer* (i.e., progresar profesionalmente). En los capítulos previos se ha podido comprobar como la interiorización de los roles de género y el miedo que tienen las mujeres a las presiones sociales (i.e., evaluaciones negativas) dirigen su decisión hacia lo que es socialmente correcto (i.e., familia). Los resultados del Capítulo 4 mostraron como las mujeres que toman decisiones guiadas por la interiorización de los roles de género se arrepienten más de sus decisiones, sintiéndose menos satisfechas con sus vidas. Parece ser que tras evaluar las decisiones que tomaron, las mujeres no obtuvieron los resultados que esperaban, considerando que la otra opción habría sido quizás una mejor opción, lo que sin duda causa mella en su bienestar. Por tanto, la interiorización de los roles de género parece ser una de las posibles causas por las que las mujeres informan tener menores niveles de bienestar que los hombres. Estos resultados subrayan la importancia de incluir los roles de género en las investigaciones sobre el estudio del arrepentimiento y el bienestar (Newton et al., 2012).

Por otra parte, los resultados del Capítulo 7 mostraron que, no solo los roles de género per se pueden dirigir a un mayor arrepentimiento en las mujeres, sino también las consecuencias derivadas de estos roles. Una de las consecuencias de que los roles de género tradicionales sigan persistiendo en la sociedad actual, a pesar del avance de las mujeres en el ámbito público, es la sobrecarga que éstas experimentan al tratar de conciliar sus roles tradicionales con los que prescriben las normas sociales actuales (igualdad de oportunidades). Dado que los hombres no han incrementado su presencia y actividad en el ámbito privado de manera igualitaria (Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económicos, 2022), las mujeres se ven sobrecargadas al tener que conciliar las tareas y responsabilidades de ambos ámbitos, y en mayor medida por las responsabilidades derivadas del ámbito familiar, donde son las principales responsables

(Neujoks y Hamjediers, 2022). Ante esta situación, las mujeres pueden considerar que sacrificar el trabajo aliviaría sus responsabilidades, y por tanto percibirían mayores beneficios al tomar esta decisión, sin embargo, el hecho de reasignar el tiempo y energía del trabajo a la familia parece no disminuir esta sobrecarga (Matthews et al., 2014). En efecto, los resultados del Capítulo 7 revelaron que, tras realizar sacrificios laborales, las mujeres con una mayor sobrecarga familiar perciben más costes de su sacrificio y se arrepienten más de su decisión. Por tanto, cuando las mujeres evalúan las decisiones que han tomado parecen ser conscientes de que se encuentran en la misma situación que al principio con respecto al ámbito privado, pero con el consecuente retroceso de su avance en el ámbito público (laboral). Todo ello parece llevar a las mujeres a percibir que hubiera sido mejor la otra opción, lo que disminuye su satisfacción con la vida y su bienestar. La sobrecarga es una desigualdad invisible adjudicada a las mujeres sin posibilidad de negociación, afectando a su trabajo y tiempo libre. Decidan lo que decidan, para las mujeres la sobrecarga es algo “perdurable en cuanto que no tiene principio ni fin porque está ligado al cuidado de las personas” (Dean et al., 2022). En consecuencia, esta desigualdad invisible, derivada de la socialización de género, influye en la toma de decisión de las mujeres, determinando y condicionando sus vidas.

Limitaciones

Aunque los capítulos empíricos extienden la escasa literatura sobre la influencia de los roles de género en el proceso de toma de decisión, lo cierto es que estos capítulos no están exentos de algunas limitaciones. A continuación, se señalarán las limitaciones generales con el objetivo de que puedan ser consideradas en el planteamiento de futuras investigaciones.

En primer lugar, tal y como se hizo explícito al comienzo de la tesis, no fue posible encontrar una medida de toma de decisión adecuada que se adaptase a cada uno de los objetivos presentados en los capítulos empíricos. Si bien es cierto que se utilizó la medida más empleada en el dominio de la toma de decisión como punto de partida de los capítulos empíricos (i.e., Iowa Gambling Task; Bechara et al., 1994), esta medida se alejaba del objeto de interés, esto es las decisiones relativas al conflicto trabajo- familia. No obstante, el uso de esta medida fue relevante para mostrar implícitamente cómo las situaciones desigualitarias afectan al proceso de toma de decisión de las mujeres. Así mismo, la naturaleza de esta medida, esto es, la evaluación de toma de decisiones arriesgadas

permitió el avance de los siguientes estudios. Estos estudios se focalizaron en las decisiones arriesgadas de índole social, lo que fue abriendo paso hacia los sacrificios laborales y familiares. Por supuesto, el estudio de los sacrificios supuso un gran avance con respecto al objeto de interés de la tesis (i.e., decisiones familiares y laborales), aunque su uso no estuvo exento de algunas limitaciones. A pesar de existir una medida de autoinforme sobre sacrificios laborales y familiares (Dahm et al., 2019), ésta no solo carece de propiedades psicométricas adecuadas o contrastadas, sino que también recoge decisiones a las que no todo el mundo se podría haber enfrentado a lo largo de su vida (e.g., rechazar una promoción, viajar por trabajo, teletrabajar...). Esto dio lugar a la evaluación de los sacrificios a través de la metodología del incidente crítico, la cual ha sido ampliamente usada por investigadoras expertas en la temática (e.g., Day y Impett, 2018) y en Psicología Social en general (Flanagan, 1954). No obstante, tal y como señalaban las investigadoras Impett y Gordon (2008), las mujeres podrían no categorizar sus sacrificios laborales como tal. Es probable que no definan estas decisiones como sacrificios dado que cuidar de los y las demás es parte del papel de la mujer en la sociedad. En este mismo sentido, puede existir una menor probabilidad de que los hombres categoricen sus sacrificios familiares como tal, dado que es un comportamiento adherente a su rol, y por ende normalizado.

En segundo lugar, dada la dificultad de desarrollar una manipulación adecuada y debido a las dificultades de diseñar un sacrificio con validez ecológica en laboratorio, los sacrificios en las relaciones de pareja apenas han sido estudiados en entornos experimentales (Righetti et al., 2022). Por dicha razón, los estudios presentados implican datos transversales, lo cual limita obtener conclusiones causales sólidas.

En tercer lugar, en lo que respecta a las características de la muestra empleada a lo largo de los diferentes capítulos empíricos, se puede observar que, los primeros estudios se llevaron a cabo con población estudiante dada la dificultad de acceso a muestra de población general de edad media. Esto dificulta la generalización de las conclusiones de los primeros estudios al conjunto de la población general, dado que no han vivido las mismas experiencias laborales y familiares. No obstante, las medidas de toma de decisión empleadas en los primeros estudios concernían a decisiones más generales, y no tan relacionadas con la familia y el trabajo, por lo que la experiencia laboral y familiar no era una variable fundamental que considerar. Los consecuentes

estudios centrados en las decisiones laborales y familiares fueron realizados con una muestra que había experimentado a lo largo de su vida alguna decisión relacionada con este dominio, de hecho, la muestra estuvo compuesta por población general de una edad media aproximada de 47 años.

Futuras Líneas de Investigación

Aunque los capítulos empíricos han supuesto un avance de la literatura en el campo de la toma de decisión, y en concreto de los sacrificios laborales y familiares, futuras líneas de investigación podrían tomar los trabajos recogidos en esta tesis doctoral como un nuevo punto de partida, teniendo en consideración las limitaciones señaladas previamente.

Una de las variables a tener en cuenta en futuras investigaciones podría ser el poder, dado que se ha demostrado que este constructo juega un papel importante en la manera en la que operan y funcionan las relaciones de pareja (Alonso-Ferres, 2021). Tanto es así que, las dinámicas de poder parecen influir en la disposición a realizar sacrificios (Righetti y Impett, 2017). La jerarquización de género o patriarcado proporciona socialmente mayor poder o estatus a los hombres (e.g., Eagly, 1987), por lo que tradicionalmente se ha considerado que los hombres tienen más poder que las mujeres (e.g., Felmlee, 1994). Esta (a)simetría de poder puede ser reflejado dentro de las relaciones de pareja. Las personas con un alto poder se ven menos afectadas por las acciones de otras personas, y aumenta la distancia emocional y psicológica con los y las demás (Lammers et al., 2012; Righetti y Impett, 2017). En este sentido sería esperable encontrar que los hombres, quienes suelen tener más poder perciban más beneficios de realizar sacrificios familiares, dado que serían más capaces de priorizar sus propios intereses sobre los y las demás.

Respecto al arrepentimiento que sienten las mujeres tras realizar el sacrificio, futuras líneas de investigación podrían explorar de manera más exhaustiva los resultados encontrados a través de diseños longitudinales. Las mujeres parecen tener una mayor disposición a sacrificar por los y las demás, pero luego parecen arrepentirse. ¿Se arrepienten a corto o a largo plazo? Puede ser que las mujeres no se arrepientan en el momento de realizar el sacrificio, pero que cuando se enfrenten a los costes que les está suponiendo la decisión tomada se arrepientan más a largo plazo.

Por último, en los trabajos de la tesis doctoral en los que se ha tenido en cuenta el papel de la pareja, esta variable ha sido evaluada de manera indirecta. Es decir, ha sido la pareja la que ha evaluado en términos de percepción cómo considera que su pareja se comporta o piensa. Futuras líneas de investigación podrían explorar las relaciones encontradas en los trabajos actuales teniendo en cuenta la respuesta real de la pareja a través de análisis diádicos (e.g., Visserman et al., 2020).

Conclusiones e Implicaciones Prácticas

El marco conceptual de esta tesis puso de manifiesto la relevancia de analizar la influencia de la socialización de género en el proceso de toma de decisión de las personas, y en mayor medida en las mujeres. Dado que las decisiones que toman las personas determinan su vida, podría decirse que el arraigo de los roles de género ha determinado la vida de muchas mujeres. Esta tesis proporciona evidencia empírica que permite visibilizar las situaciones de desigualdad sutilmente invisibilizadas en el proceso de toma de decisión de las mujeres. La utilidad práctica de esta tesis doctoral deriva de la comprensión de ciertas variables, derivadas de los roles de género, que guían las decisiones de las mujeres, obstaculizando su avance. Se ha demostrado que cuando las mujeres se sienten seguras y sin prescripciones, sociales toman mejores decisiones, es decir, son capaces de pensar de forma más racional y deliberada. Por esta razón, no basta con dar a las mujeres la oportunidad de elegir lo que ellas quieran, sino también trabajar con la desigualdad existente en el contexto social que las rodea y condicionan.

Es cierto que ha habido un avance en materia de igualdad y que existen relaciones de pareja que concilian de manera igualitaria, pero aún persisten patrones de relación de pareja más anclada en lo tradicional. Algunos hombres parecen apoyar que las mujeres realicen sacrificios familiares y laborales, sin embargo, estos no se llegan a plantear el hecho de realizar sacrificios laborales. Por tanto, es importante fomentar el aumento de la participación masculina en el ámbito privado, lo que aumentaría la conciencia social y reduciría las presiones sociales sobre la mujer, contribuyendo a relaciones familiares más equitativas e igualitarias. De esta forma, todas las responsabilidades del ámbito privado no recaerían en la mujer fundamentalmente, reduciendo la imagen de que deben ser las mujeres quienes realizan más sacrificios para gestionar este ámbito. Así mismo, una mayor implicación masculina reduciría las situaciones de ambivalencia a las que se enfrentan las mujeres, entre lo que deben y quieren hacer, y en consecuencia se reduciría

su arrepentimiento. No obstante, el aumento de la presencia masculina por sí misma no reduciría el problema, dado que los hombres pueden hacerse responsables del ámbito privado, pero esto sería en vano si no se cambia la conciencia social acerca de la distribución de tareas en función del género. Cuando las mujeres no se encuentran los resultados esperados tras evaluar sus decisiones puede deberse a una incorrecta definición o evaluación del problema (Lunenberg, 2010). Es importante hacer conscientes a las mujeres de que ellas no son las culpables de sus decisiones, sino que se han visto sometidas implícitamente a la norma social. Las mujeres podrían decidir sacrificar el trabajo porque considerarían que así reducirían la ambivalencia a la que se enfrentan, tendrían más tiempo y energía y por ello reducirían su sensación de sobrecarga. No obstante, el problema persiste tras sus sacrificios con los consecuentes costes para su bienestar. En definitiva, con esta tesis se ha pretendido proporcionar una mayor comprensión de cómo la socialización de género sigue determinando la vida las mujeres en nuestra sociedad, afectando no solo a sus decisiones sino también a su bienestar. Aunque los estudios recogidos sirvan de punto de anclaje para el campo de la investigación en materia de género, dada la continuidad de la desigualdad de género en nuestra sociedad, aún quedan muchos obstáculos que analizar y a los que dar visibilidad en la vida de las mujeres.

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