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Development and validation of the Granada Burnout Questionnaire in Spanish police

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Abstract The goal of the present study is to develop a questionnaire, with proper psychometric properties and current norms, to evaluate the burnout syndrome in Spain. The operative definition of burnout proposed by Maslach and Jackson is used to define three dimensions (*Emotional exhaustion*, *Depersonalization* and *Personal accomplishment*). A total of 2,403 national Spanish police participated. Evidence of construct validity was checked through cross validation (showing a good fit of the three factors model to the data). Using the MBI, NEO-FII and CECAD evidence of convergent validity and criteria validity were developed (showing that the relations are similar to the ones that appear in other research). The discrimination, mean, standard deviation, and typical error of the average of the items composing the various dimensions were analyzed. Both the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the conditional standard error of measurement (CSEM) were calculated for each of the dimensions. The results showed good internal consistency (all α values $> .85$). Finally, the questionnaire was scaled using *T* scores. The psychometrical properties reported here support the use of this new questionnaire for the burnout evaluation in Spanish police.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Evaluación del
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Cuestionario de
Burnout Granada;

Resumen El objetivo del presente estudio es desarrollar un cuestionario, con propiedades psicométricas adecuadas y baremos actuales, para evaluar el síndrome de burnout en España. Se utiliza la definición de burnout propuesta por Maslach y Jackson para definir las tres dimensiones (*Cansancio emocional*, *Despersonalización* y *Realización personal*). Participan un total de 2.403 policías nacionales españoles. Se estudian evidencias de validez de constructo mediante validación cruzada (encontrándose un buen ajuste del modelo de tres factores a los datos). Se

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Estudio Instrumental

utilizan MBI, NEO-FII y CECAD para obtener evidencias de validez convergente y validez de criterio (se encuentran relaciones similares a las que se informan en otras investigaciones). Se analizan la discriminación, media, desviación típica y error típico de la media de los ítems que forman parte de las citadas dimensiones. Se calcula tanto el coeficiente alfa de Cronbach como el error estándar de medida condicional (CSEM) para cada una de las dimensiones del cuestionario. Los resultados muestran una buena consistencia interna (todos los valores $\alpha > .85$). Finalmente, el cuestionario fue baremado utilizando puntuaciones *T*. Sus propiedades psicométricas, apoyan el uso de este nuevo cuestionario para la evaluación del burnout en policías españoles.

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Police work is one of the most stressful professions in modern society due to exposure to violent situations, antisocial and aggressive behavior, and situations that put one's own safety at risk (Vuorensyrjä & Mälkiä, 2011). These professionals may undergo conflict as a function of the role that they perform. On the one hand, they are carrying out the laws in force and should not be moved by emotions or personal opinions. On the other hand, they should serve citizens and are expected to be friendly, understanding, and have a "friendly" relationship with the public. The difficulty of combining both roles can generate high levels of stress, which, if continuous, may lead to burnout syndrome (Shirom, 2009). In fact, in the United States, studies relate this problem to the number of suicides among these professionals, which is greater than the number of police agents who die in the course of duty (Seay, 2009).

Burnout is traditionally defined as a syndrome that is characterized by "Emotional Exhaustion" which refers to the sensations of physical overexertion and emotional weariness that occur as a consequence of the continual interactions that workers must maintain between themselves and clients, "Depersonalization" which involves the development of cynical attitudes and responses toward the persons for whom the workers provide services, and low "Personal Accomplishment" which implies the presence of a negative self-concept as the result of unpleasant situations (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

According to Wheeler, Vassar, Worley, and Barnes (2011), the most commonly used questionnaire for the evaluation of burnout syndrome is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The MBI has been translated and adapted for multiple cultures and has been used to establish the convergent validity of other instruments that evaluate the syndrome (Isoard-Gautheur, Oger, Guillet, & Martin-Krumm, 2010). There are three versions: the MBI-GS [General Survey], which is used to evaluate the general population; the MBI-ES [Educators Survey], which is intended for educators; and the MBI-HSS [Human Services Survey], which is used to evaluate professionals who provide human services (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). The Spanish version of the MBI was adapted in 1997 (Seisdedos, 1997). This survey is presently unavailable; thus, it cannot be used legally. Furthermore, there are no current scales; that is, the Spanish population is evaluated with criteria that were prepared in 1997, which does not seem advisable (American Educational Research Association [AERA], American Psychological Association [APA], & National Council on Measurement in Education [NCME], 1999).

The development of burnout syndrome has negative consequences on the individual. For example, high levels of burnout are related to a greater propensity for violent conduct, greater negativity toward performing tasks that extend beyond the limits of those that must be performed due to obligation, and deterioration in the performance of work (Manzoni & Eisner, 2006; Van Emmerick, Jawahar, & Stone, 2005). Relationships have also been established between various dimensions of burnout and several emotional disorders and personality factors (Tourigny, Baba, & Wang, 2010; Wu, 2009).

The organizations for which these professionals work can also be affected by the problem. For example, there is a connection between high levels of worker burnout and a decrease in work effectiveness and an increase in absenteeism (Petita & Vecchione, 2011).

Finally, it should be emphasized that this problem affects the users of the services that these professionals provide and, thus, society as a whole due to the lower service quality (Storm & Rothmann, 2003). Research in this area shows that when professionals suffer burnout, their relations with citizens become more frustrating and hostile. This effect is especially important for police activity because respectful conduct is considered to be key to resolving a conflict in a satisfactory fashion (Euwema, Kop, & Bakker, 2004).

The goal of the present instrumental study is to prepare a questionnaire, with proper psychometric properties and current norms, that reliably and validly evaluates burnout syndrome in Spain. This tool uses the same theoretical framework as the MBI, is included as an annex to this paper, and is available to psychologists who wish to use it. The wording of the items allows the questionnaire to be used with the general population and various professional groups. The psychometric analysis of the Spanish national police is presented in the current study.

Method

Participants

A total of 2,403 national Spanish police participated. The average age of the participants was 35.41 years ($SD = 8.75$). Of the participants, 84.2% were male and 14.1% were female; 47.2% were single, 49% married, and 3.8% separated, divorced, or widowed. Of the sample, 88.9% belonged to the Basic Scale, 7.2% were sub-inspectors, and 3.9%

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