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REPORT



Xenophobia: scale development and validation

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ABSTRACT

This study reports the development and validation of a scale to measure xenophobia. The authors were particularly interested in the characterisation of this phenomenon in African nations. Two studies were conducted to explore and confirm the factor structure of the xenophobia scale and ascertain its validity and reliability. In study I, exploratory factor analysis produced a two-factor structure for the xenophobia scale labelled ingroup centredness and ingroup exclusivity. Study II confirmed the two-factor structure that emerged in study I and also established the convergent validity and internal consistency of the scale. Findings in this study suggest xenophobia captures two aspects that border on attitude towards ingroup and attitude towards outgroups. In addition, findings revealed that positive ingroup attitude may not necessarily translate into negative outgroup attitude.

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Xenophobia; ingroup identification; outgroup attitude; social categorisation; Africa; ethnicity

Introduction

The term xenophobia has been said to be a porous one (Yakushko 2009) given the myriad events it has been used to describe. The anti-Semitism of the Nazi period, the negative attitude towards foreigners in the United States (Yakushko 2009), the Ku Klux Klan anti-black movement in the United States (Chaleila 2016), attacks and/or negative treatment against foreigners of African descent in South Africa (Buthelez 2009; Misago, 2009; Moyo 2009) and even South Africans who were for some reasons considered to be inferior (Misago, 2009; Moyo 2009). All these events have been given the label of xenophobia. In addition, definitions of this concept have equally been diverse, perhaps reflecting different scholars' notions of it. Olowu (2008) defined xenophobia as fear or dislike of individuals or groups thought of as foreign. The group may constitute people of another continent, a neighbouring family or even miscreants from other parts of a country regarded as intrusive. It is an attitude or behaviour that discards, excludes and denigrate people based on the perception that they are outsiders to the community or of a different national identity ("Declaration on Racism" 2001). Also, Ullah and Huque (2014) conceive of xenophobia as a malicious discrimination based on identified differences in ethnic, religious and sexual orientations. Similarly, the United Nations [UN 2013] characterises xenophobia as manifestations of hostility, dislike or hatred towards outgroups based on their assumed origin, gender, religion or sexual preferences. Lastly, the Psychology Dictionary

(2015) defines xenophobia as a pathological fear of strangers expressed in hostile relations with people of a different nation, ethnic group, or even separate areas or neighbourhoods.

The diverse definitions and applications of xenophobia are however not captured by the existing scales that measure this concept. Most scales that measure xenophobia or related concepts to the knowledge of the authors have a predominant focus on attitude towards foreign nationals and immigrants. These include, for example, van der Veer et al.'s (2011) Fear-based xenophobia scale; Symeonaki and Kazani's (2011) Xenophobia scale; Ommundsen and Larsen's (1999) 'Illegal immigrant scale' and van der Veer et al.'s (2008) Attitude towards unauthorised immigration scale.

Given the nature of these scales, it makes them inadequate to capture the peculiar ways in which xenophobia may be expressed in some societies, particularly in the way such attitudes may cut across different discriminatory bases such as religion, ethnic grouping and other cultural elements. Most African nations are comprised of different ethnic groups who vie for supremacy over one another due to historical feuds and prevailing societal conditions. Despite national identity, the different ethnic identities held by the citizens of these nations are a potent factor in social interaction. The ethnic identities have often engendered conflicts that have led to devastating consequences for the nation. These conflicts have equally been sustained over the years due to politics of ethnicity, sectorial claims to resources, uneven regional distribution of resources and a constant clamour for supremacy (Etefa 2019; Irobi 2005). Examples of these conflicts include the Rwanda Genocide (Batware 2012; Isabirye and Mahmoudi 2001; Rwanda 2018), South Africa's ethnic clashes (Kraft 1990; Misago, 2009; Moyo 2009; SAHO 2015), Nigeria's ethnic clashes (Adebayo and Olonisakin 2018; Dlakwa 1997; Irobi 2005) and Liberia's civil war (Rincon 2010; Young 2008).

Of these African nations, Nigeria is of special interest. Nigeria is a multi-group nation with many divisive social categories that strongly contend for citizens' identification with and loyalty to their national identity. Most prominent of these categories are ethnic, religious and political groupings. Nigerians are socially categorised primarily along ethnic, religious and political affiliations and people of different categories fear domination by the other (Bello 2012; Jacob 2012). Conflict involving any of these categories usually has elements of the others. The nation is spatially distributed in such a way that people of a particular ethnic group are predominantly located in a particular region and each ethnic group also has a religion with which it is predominantly associated. Politics of ethnicity dominate the political front in the nation as campaigns hinge on ethnic and religious sentiments to garner people's votes. The media is rich with tirades of religious, political and ethnic denigration utterances by people of one group towards those of other groups. While there are various reasons for xenophobic attitudes expressed by Nigerians, the majority seem to be about competition for economic or political gain. The history of inter-ethnic strife in Nigeria has been about competition for resources of different forms such as power, dominance, autonomy and territory (Albert 1999; John 2013; Okoli 2012) and discriminatory support from the government (Ekeh 1975; John 2013). This has led to what Whaley (2001) labelled as cultural mistrust, a form of adaptive coping technique characterised by lack of trust of outgroups or people who have discriminated against or marginalised one's own group. Given the peculiarities of the cultural make-up of African nations such as Nigeria, it is important and necessary to have a measure of xenophobia, a phenomenon that characterises

social relations among groups in these nations. The aim of this study is therefore to develop and validate a xenophobia scale that reflects the peculiar nature of the phenomenon in an African nation like Nigeria.

From the definitions and measures of xenophobia aforementioned, and the different events that have been labelled as xenophobia in world history, what can be surmised is that the phenomenon embodies fear of outgroups (Chaleila 2016; Olowu 2008; van der Veer et al. 2011), feelings of superiority towards outgroups (Chaleila 2016; Symeonaki and Kazani 2011), dislike of outgroups ("Declaration on Racism" 2001; Olowu 2008; Ullah and Huque 2014), fear of cultural erosion by outgroups (Chaleila 2016; van der Veer et al. 2011), malicious discrimination against outgroups ("Declaration on Racism" 2001; Ullah and Huque 2014) and avoiding social relations with outgroups ("Declaration on Racism" 2001; Symeonaki and Kazani 2011).

Furthermore, xenophobic expressions in Nigeria are largely characterised by feeling of superiority of one group over the other which further influences the perception that one's group has more right to certain resources than the other groups (Mohammed 2016; Our Reporter 2014). Equally, this feeling of superiority of the ingroup over outgroups is a major feature and root of xenophobic expressions that have been recorded in world history. For example, the Ku Klux Klan recreated in 1915 symbolised white supremacy over Jews and Catholics (McVeigh 2009) while the Rwanda genocide involved a supremacy battle between the Hutu and the Tutsi groups (Batware 2012). Also, in a study by Vandeyar and Vandeyar (2017), findings revealed that both the source and recipient of xenophobic attitudes usually believe themselves to be superior in certain characteristics deemed important by them, which is a source of stereotypical, prejudicial and discriminatory practices for both parties. These events and empirical findings evidence that perceived superiority is a major feature of xenophobic attitudes.

Given the above, the xenophobia scale in this study captures fear of ethnic, religious, economic and political domination. It also captures perceived superiority among groups and the fear of erosion of cherished cultural norms, which may be expressed in a desire for ethnic purity or a distaste for inter-ethnic contact and a dislike of outgroup members. In drawing items for the xenophobia scale, the aforementioned scales on xenophobia and related concepts were consulted. Items were generated in line with the characterisation proposed for the scale.

Method (Study I)

Participants, materials and procedure

Participants were pooled from among university undergraduates and civil servants. Males 205 (60.8%) and females 132 (39.2%) with ages ranging between 20–65 years made up the sample. Participants were of different ethnic groups in the nation and an attempt was made to draw the sample from both minority and majority ethnic groups and from different religions. Thirty-six items were generated based on the a priori stated characterisation of xenophobia with 25 pro-traits and 11 con-traits. A 5-point scaling format of 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree) was adopted for this study. Items were given to a conference of experts for assessment and there was substantial agreement on the suitability of scale items.

Analysis and result

The data were screened to ensure normality of data and that there were no univariate or multivariate outliers. Finney and DiStefano (2006) recommend that skewness should not exceed a value of three and kurtosis should not exceed eight. For univariate outlier a z-test was conducted and the recommendation is that z-score ≥ 3.29 should be considered a univariate outlier (Tabachnick and Fidell 1996). For multivariate outlier, the Mahalanobis D^2 statistics was used. Any case with P -value less than 0.001 are considered a multivariate outlier (Werner 2003). The data set satisfied the criteria for normality and univariate and multivariate outlier identification. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the scale. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity (BTS) confirmed that an EFA could be performed on the data. A Maximum Likelihood Method (MLM) was used to determine the structure of the item pool. Although the authors expected that xenophobia would be a unidimensional construct, the scale was still examined for possible underlying factors. The Oblimin rotation type was selected for analysis given that if the scale yielded more than one factor, they would still be expected to correlate. Also, analysis was set to suppress factor loadings less than .35 based on the recommendation by Hair et al. (1995); this led to the loss of 12 items with poor factor loading. The MLM with Oblimin rotation, greater than one eigenvalue criterion and scree plot produced the following results:

- The first factor comprised 17 items and accounted for 14.13% of the total variance of the scale. The underlying theme for items in this category was 'ingroup centredness' and was labelled as such ($\alpha = .82$).
- The second factor comprised 7 items and explained 9.75% of the total variance of the scale. The factor was labelled 'ingroup exclusivity' ($\alpha = .67$).

The two subscales together explained 23.88% of the variance of the scale and had a correlation of .19 and an alpha of .81 for the entire scale. The 17 items that made up the ingroup centredness subscale contained items that border on egocentric concern for the welfare of one's ingroup, the belief in the superiority of the ingroup over the outgroup, belief in the superiority of ingroup claims to resources and a perception of threat from the outgroup. All items in this subscale were positively worded. Ingroup exclusivity was descriptive of aversion to social relations between ingroups and outgroups and all items were negatively worded. The tendency for negatively-worded items to form a different subscale is not new (Merritt 2012; Neuliep and McCroskey 1997; Suárez-Alvarez et al. 2018; Wong, Rindfleisch, and Burroghs 2003) since item wording tends to influence a participant's response (Bishop, Tuchfarber, and Oldendick 1978; Salazar 2015; Sauro 2011; Sauro and Lewis 2011) which may in turn influence the factor structure, moreso in cross-cultural settings (Sauro 2011). See Table 1 for scale items.

Method (Study II)

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

Participants, materials and procedure

In order to confirm the structure of the xenophobia scale, a second study was conducted. The 24 items were administered to a sample of 1050 undergraduate students; M age

Table 1. Scale items, factor loadings and descriptive statistics for the xenophobia scale.

N = 337.

S/N	Items	Factor Loading	Item Means	Items SD	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Ingroup centredness							
1	Other religions are a threat to my religion.	.56	2.69	1.32	.49	.35	.81
2	I believe in the idea of having schools where only people of the same religion are enrolled.	.55	2.25	1.22	.51	.32	.81
3	I don't care if protecting the interests of my ethnic group results in violence and discomfort of other ethnic groups.	.54	2.17	1.22	.45	.25	.81
4	The way politics is practised in this country, there is need for each ethnic group to try and acquire political power of its own.	.53	3.02	1.27	.45	.34	.81
5	Other ethnic groups are a threat to my ethnic group.	.51	2.48	1.24	.49	.31	.81
6	I do not believe I have to like people of other ethnic groups, religion or political parties.	.50	2.49	1.26	.44	.29	.81
7	Having inter-ethnic relationship of an intimate nature will lead to the erosion of the cherished values of my ethnic group.	.48	2.70	1.16	.42	.22	.81
8	All is fair and just in ethnic wars.	.48	2.29	1.21	.48	.29	.81
9	For security reasons, when occupying a public office, one should surround the self with people of one's ethnic group.	.46	2.34	1.24	.43	.25	.81
10	One of the reasons for ethnic clashes in this country is that people of different ethnic groups have refused to remain in their region.	.45	2.60	1.24	.38	.25	.82
11	Interacting with people of other ethnic groups can sometimes be unpleasant.	.44	2.62	1.22	.41	.19	.81
12	The religion of my ethnic group is superior to those of other ethnic groups.	.44	2.48	1.27	.38	.22	.82
13	In this country, it should be every ethnic group for itself.	.42	2.73	1.32	.43	.26	.81
14	Some ethnic groups and their religion(s) and traditions should be abolished in this country.	.39	2.60	1.38	.38	.22	.82
15	I would consider it a betrayal if my child marries from another ethnic group.	.39	2.15	1.22	.33	.27	.82
16	For ethnic survival in this country, some people must be willing to become martyrs.	.39	2.87	1.26	.35	.22	.82

(Continued)

Table 1. Continued.

N = 337.							
S/N	Items	Factor Loading	Item Means	Items SD	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
17	The idea of unity in diversity cannot work in Nigeria. <i>M</i> = 42.99, <i>SD</i> = 10.89 Mean inter-item correlation = .22	.36	2.50	1.28	.29	.16	.82
Ingroup exclusivity							
18.	Coexisting/living with people of other ethnic group(s) can be an interesting experience.	.59	2.35	1.27	.48	.38	.62
19.	It is always nice to interact with people of other ethnic group(s).	.53	2.13	1.23	.46	.23	.62
20.	I believe in inter-ethnic marriage.	.52	2.14	1.16	.40	.25	.63
21.	Nigeria can be peaceful; we only need to be tolerant of each other.	.46	2.35	1.26	.40	.17	.63
22.	It is possible to genuinely like people of other ethnic group.	.45	2.02	.95	.33	.29	.65
23.	It is okay for political leadership of the country to rotate between the different ethnic groups.	.40	1.86	.87	.31	.15	.66
24.	There are always ways for ethnic groups to live in peace with one another. <i>M</i> = 14.76, <i>SD</i> = 4.59, Mean inter-item correlation = .23 Note: items 18–24 are reversed-scored	.39	1.90	1.10	.33	.13	.65

23.33 (*SD* 4.22), 576 (54.9%) males and 473 (45%) females while one participant (0.1%) did not indicate gender. In terms of religion, 184 (17.5%) practised Islam, Christianity 856 (81.5%), traditional religion, two (0.2%), one participant indicated other religions without specifying which while seven participants (0.7%) did not report their religions. For ethnic grouping, there were 15 ethnic groups while four participants (0.4%) did not report their ethnic groups. Half of the participants belonged to majority ethnic groups while the other half belonged to minority ethnic groups. For the purpose of establishing the validity of the xenophobia scale, the following measures with similar underlying themes as the xenophobia scale were also included:

- Ingroup attachment: this variable reflects the extent to which an individual identifies or is attached to the ingroup. This was measured with the Multi-group ethnic identity measure (MEIM) scale by Roberts et al. (1999). This variable was expected to correlate positively with the xenophobia scale.
- Need for closure (NFC): this is a variable that captures the need for quick answers or solutions to a problem or situation. It is also characterised by rigidity in information

processing and a need for stability, consistency and predictability (Kruglanski 1990; Kruglanski 2004; Roets and Van Hiel 2011). This variable was measured with the revised NFC scale by Roets and Van Hiel (2011). This variable was expected to correlate positively with the xenophobia scale.

- Social dominance orientation (SDO): this reflects an orientation towards social inequality in terms of group dominance and anti-egalitarian attitude. This variable was measured with the SDO scale developed by Ho et al. (2015) which has two dimensions: dominance and egalitarianism. A positive relationship with the xenophobia scale was also expected.
- Cultural intelligence (CI): this measures an individual's ability to adapt and be sensitive to cultural differences in a multicultural situation (Earley and Ang 2003; Earley and Mosakowski 2004). It was measured with a cultural intelligence scale developed by Earley and Mosakowski (2004). A negative relationship with the xenophobia scale was expected.
- Intergroup contact (IC): this refers to the extent of interaction among people from different groups. It was measured with questions about existence, duration and frequency of contact with people from different groups.

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), validity and reliability

A CFA using the Maximum Likelihood Method was conducted. Analysis supported the two dimensional structure for the xenophobia scale that emerged in study I. Fit indices were satisfactory: $\chi^2/df = 3.15$, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .05. The factor structure was further investigated to test the unidimensionality of the xenophobia scale. Fit indices were poor relative to the two dimensional model: $\chi^2/df = 5.49$, CFI = .84, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .11. An invariance test was also conducted to determine whether the model fit was different for people from majority and minority groups. Analysis revealed no significant difference. Internal consistency as measured by Cronbach Alpha confirmed the reliability of the scale .85 and .83 for ingroup centredness and ingroup exclusivity, respectively. The correlation between the two subscales was .25.

Convergent validity

Ingroup attachment; $\chi^2/df = 3.15$, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .03 and $\alpha = .88$ correlated positively with the ingroup centredness subscale ($r = .14$, $P < .01$) and negatively with the ingroup exclusivity subscale ($r = -.17$, $P < .01$).

NFC; $\chi^2/df = 4.09$, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .04 and $\alpha = .76$ correlated positively with the ingroup centredness subscale ($r = .12$, $P < .01$) and negatively with the ingroup exclusivity subscale ($r = -.19$, $P < .01$).

SDO; $\chi^2/df = 3.37$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .05 and (SDO-D, $\alpha = .76$) and (SDO-E, $\alpha = .84$). The dominance dimension correlated positively with both subscales; ingroup centredness subscale ($r = .39$, $P < .01$) and ingroup exclusivity subscale ($r = .09$, $P < .01$). Also, the egalitarianism dimension correlated positively with both subscales; ingroup centredness subscale ($r = .14$, $P < .01$) and ingroup exclusivity subscale ($r = .37$, $P < .01$).

CI; $\chi^2/df=3.41$, CFI=.96, RMSEA=.05, SRMR=.04 and $\alpha=.78$ showed a positive relationship with the ingroup centredness subscale ($r=.14$, $P<.01$) and a negative relationship with the ingroup exclusivity subscale ($r=-.27$, $P<.01$).

Ingroup contact correlated negatively with both the ingroup centredness subscale ($r=-.14$, $P<.01$) and the ingroup exclusivity subscale ($r=-.14$, $P<.01$).

Discussion

This study set out to develop and validate a scale to measure xenophobia in the form in which this phenomenon plays out in a typical African society like Nigeria. It was hypothesised that a measure of xenophobia would embody perceived superiority of the ingroup, fear of ethnic, religious, economic and political domination and erosion of the ingroup's norms and a desire to avoid social contact with outgroups. These elements were embodied in the two dimensions of the xenophobia scale that emerged in this study. EFA and CFA established a two-factor structure for the xenophobia scale comprising aspects of ingroup centredness and ingroup exclusivity. Ingroup centredness is an egocentric concern for the welfare of the ingroup, perceived superiority of the ingroup over outgroups and a perceived threat from outgroups, while ingroup exclusivity captures an aversion to social relations with outgroups.

Variables of ingroup attachment, need for closure, social dominance orientation, cultural intelligence and intergroup contact were also included to establish the validity of the xenophobia scale. While the pattern of correlation that emerged between these variables and each of the dimensions of the xenophobia scale is largely as expected for the confirmation of the convergent validity of the xenophobia scale, it also keenly speaks to how the phenomenon of xenophobia may be experienced by citizens of a nation such as Nigeria. Ingroup attachment which captures identification and attachment to the ingroup had a positive correlation with the ingroup centredness dimension and a negative correlation with the ingroup exclusivity dimension. These findings suggest that while an attachment to the ingroup may encourage feelings or beliefs of superiority of the ingroup over outgroups as an expression of xenophobic attitude, such might not extend to avoiding social relations with outgroups. That attachment to the ingroup leads to less discrimination against outgroups may be understood within the context of structural mechanisms that necessitate interdependence with members of outgroups and the perceived unrealistic possibility of excluding outgroups. This line of reasoning is supported by studies that have shown that interdependence for survival among groups helps to mitigate negative attitudes among them (Alavi and McCormick 2008; Duckitt, Callaghan, and Wagner 2005; Ramamoorthy and Flood 2004; Tanaka, Tago and Gleditsch, 2017). Equally, as theoretical and empirical positions have revealed, a secured sense of ethnic identity cannot be achieved without accommodation of outgroup members in a multi-group nation (Federico, Hunt, and Fisher 2013; Jost et al. 2003; Jost, Ledgerwood, and Hardin 2007; Phinney 1989; Van Hiel, Pandelaere, and Duriez 2004).

Furthermore, a need for closure also correlated positively with ingroup centredness and negatively with ingroup exclusivity. These directions of relationship also tow the line of the previous submission. A need for closure may motivate identifying with and espousing the ideals of the ingroup. On the other hand, a desire to avoid social relations with outgroups might not augur well in a clime where groups by design and necessity

have to rely on each other. Indeed, such discrimination may create instability and conflict that threaten closure (Federico, Hunt, and Fisher 2013; Jost et al. 2003; Jost, Ledgerwood, and Hardin 2007; Van Hiel, Pandelaere, and Duriez 2004). Cultural intelligence also had a direct relationship with ingroup centredness and an inverse relationship with ingroup exclusivity. This suggests that cultural intelligence would function in a multi-group and interdependent society by helping individuals to adapt to different cultural situations and maintain peaceful relations with both ingroups and outgroups. Finally, intergroup contact had a negative relationship with both dimensions of xenophobia. This suggests that increased contact with outgroups could lead to less discrimination and prejudice towards outgroups. This has been supported by studies on the effect of intergroup contact on outgroup attitudes (Harrison 2012; Ramalu et al. 2010; Scacco and Warren 2016).

Conclusion

The xenophobia scale that emerged in this study captures the nature of this phenomenon in Nigeria as an African nation whose multiple ethnic, religious and political groups are still labouring under the politics of ethnicity bestowed on them by their colonisers and by the constant struggle against and fear of supremacy from each other. This relational context is equally descriptive of what is obtainable in other African nations which therefore positions this scale as a veritable tool for examining xenophobia in other African countries. Lastly, the direction of the relationships among the variables included as a measure of convergent validity for the xenophobia scale suggests that the structural

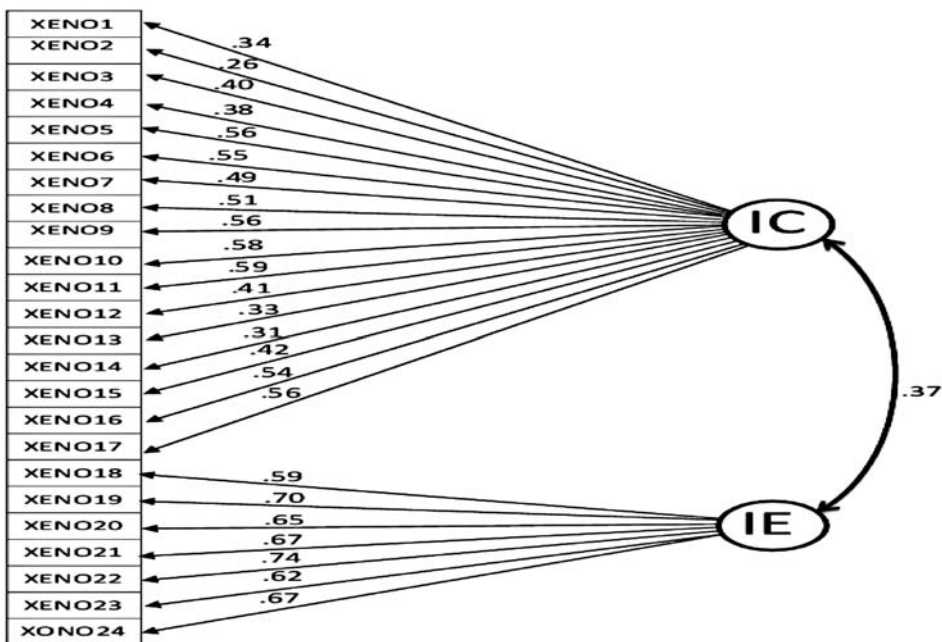


Figure 1. Confirmatory factor analysis for xenophobia scale. The model shows that xenophobia has two dimensions: ingroup centredness (IC) and ingroup exclusivity (IE).

design of a society/group in terms of how interdependent groups or individuals are positioned in terms of their survival could be a promising tool for exploring a mechanism for peaceful relations within such a society/group. The authors implore other researchers, particularly African researchers, to explore the usability and validity of this scale in their nations [Figure 1](#).

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