



Article Gender-Based Violence and Sexism among Young Couples

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Abstract: This study aims to characterise the prevalence of violence in intimate relationships among young university students and the internalisation of ambivalent sexism. The method used was a quantitative, descriptive study of Primary Education and Early Childhood Education groups in Andalusia, Spain. The final sample consisted of 848 participants. As a data collection tool, we used the VIREPA questionnaire and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. The results show that the most frequent forms of violence in young couples' relationships are emotional, followed by physical and sexual violence, and emotional violence, followed by physical and psychological violence, with sexual aggression being slightly lower. Concerning the variable sex, although the averages are very close, women have higher averages in terms of emotional, physical, and psychological abuse; personal devaluation; and sexual abuse, while men have higher averages in terms of social and economic control. In addition, low levels of sexism were found to be ambivalent in the sample, with the results being highly differentiated by gender, with men having higher arithmetic means than women. This led us to design educational strategies that avoid inequalities between men and women and that contribute to the eradication of sexism and, consequently, the perpetration of violence.

Keywords: violence among couples; ambivalent sexism; young people; university

1. Introduction

Violence, in general, is a social scourge present in all societies, regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, or educational level (Gallardo López and Gallardo Vázquez 2019; Madrona-Bonastre et al. 2023). During the last few decades, there has been a worrying increase in cases of violence among couples as a means of resolving conflicts (Díaz-Aguado et al. 2013; Pazos et al. 2014; Rubio-Garay et al. 2019), referring to the methods of psychological, physical, or sexual abuse inflicted by one party to induce a state of compliance in and attain dominance over the other person. Partner violence can manifest and be exercised in different typologies, situations, or contexts (González-Gijón and Soriano-Díaz 2021; Soriano 2011).

The most recent research focuses on the violence exercised among younger couples, as it increases in adolescence, with a high rate occurring between 20 and 25 years of age (Garrido Antón et al. 2020; O'Leary and Slep 2011; Rubio-Garay et al. 2017). Furthermore, at this stage, evolutionary behaviours are acquired in terms of the ways of interacting in romantic relationships that will most likely continue into adulthood (González-Ortega et al. 2008; Paíno-Quesada et al. 2020; Van de Bongardt et al. 2015; Wekerle and Wolfe 1999).

Some studies point out the importance of considering some risk factors that are involved in the perpetuation of violent behaviour in relationships, including the acceptance of violence, sexism, and jealousy (Muñoz-Ponce et al. 2020; Muñoz-Rivas et al. 2015). Sexism is understood as an attitude through which both behaviours are prescribed, behaviours such as the way people relate based on biological sex (Bonilla-Algovia 2021; Carretero and Nolasco 2019; Lameiras 2002). These behaviours are considered to lead to an attitude of prejudice towards the female sex and, as a consequence, constitute a causal factor of



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Copyright: © 2024 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https:// creativecommons.org/licenses/by/ 4.0/). violence against women and one of the main manifestations of inequality between the sexes (López-Sáez et al. 2019). Also, ambivalent sexism, according to Glick and Fiske (1996) and Martín-Fernández et al. (2018), is a multidimensional construction that includes hostile and benevolent attitudes that promote the preservation of traditional gender roles to ensure the maintenance of a patriarchal social structure, with hostile sexism being the most prevalent explicit prejudice against women exhibited by men (Formiga et al. 2002; López-Sáez et al. 2019; Rodríguez del Pino and Jabbaz 2022). Benevolent sexism consists of the idealisation of women as figures associated with motherhood, protection, respect, etc., assigning them the position of romantic objects. This manifests as a positive-negative attitude with the objective of having control over women and considering them inferior to men (Janos and Espinosa 2018; Rodríguez et al. 2009).

This is how the affective elements that represent ambivalent sexism can be considered tools for silencing and normalising violence and making it invisible, making it difficult to understand the magnitude of its impact on the lives of the victims and the possibility of criminalising violence (Velázquez 2003).

Research on sexism shows that, although progress has been made in recent decades regarding equality between men and women, sexist attitudes still persist in society (Herrero et al. 2017) and among young Spaniards (Aguaded 2017; Alonso-Martínez et al. 2022; Azorín Abellán 2017; Esteban and Fernández 2017; García-Díaz et al. 2020; León and Aizpurúa 2020; Rodríguez del Pino and Jabbaz 2022), and they are linked to violence among young couples, so they require interventions for prevention.

In this sense, educational institutions can and should play a key role in prevention to overcome sexism and violence between couples, especially the youngest ones (Agüero et al. 2017; Gila-Ordóñez and Callejón-Chinchilla 2018; Gallardo López and Gallardo Vázquez 2019; Gauna et al. 2022). Furthermore, as Álvarez del Cuvillo (2020b) points out, universities are distinct from other educational institutions due to their size and relative independence, characterising them to a greater extent as a "miniature society" since social relationships on university campuses transcend those purely work-related or academic; they become a conducive space for raising awareness and prevention (p. 45). In fact, all Andalusian Universities are committed to the eradication of sexism and building more egalitarian relationships between men and women, thus fulfilling their ultimate purpose: the comprehensive development of the students and their social functions (Álvarez del Cuvillo 2020a; Tomé 2017).

From this perspective, it is advisable to consider the university environment a space in which to develop violence prevention programmes that take into account the different types of violence, from the most subtle to the serious, and the factors associated with each of them, i.e., how to resolve conflicts that arise, and different ways to regulate emotions to prevent more serious types of violence (Castro 2017; Ferreiro 2017; Huerta Mata 2021; Morlana 2017; Pérez-Dueñas et al. 2023).

Considering the above, this study focuses on identifying the violence suffered and ambivalent sexism exhibited in relationships between young university students based on gender in order to analyse perceptions and attitudes towards intimate partner violence. The results of this research will allow for predicting violent behaviour, designing strategies and educational measures that avoid inequalities between men and women, and promote social and psychological mechanisms that overcome the obstacles hindering the eradication of sexism and consequently violence.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Design

A descriptive, quantitative study was conducted. This study was undertaken through a single group measurement taken with respect to the groups and courses selected from a probabilistic sampling of the Degree of Primary Education and Early Childhood Education at the University of Córdoba and the University of Jaén in Andalusia, Spain.

2.2. Participants

The participating sample was selected through random sampling between all courses and groups relating to the Primary Education degree and Early Childhood Education program taught at the University of Córdoba and Jaén University. The sample consisted of 848 participants, of which 215 were men and 630 women, and the majority of participants were less than 21 years old (N = 454; 53.5%), followed by participants who were between 21 and 24 years old (N = 337; 39.7%) and, finally, the group over 24 years old (N = 54; 6.4%). Likewise, 352 (41.5%) were seeking an Early Childhood Education degree (41.5%), and 493 (58.1%) were seeking a Primary Education degree. In Table 1, we can see the distribution of the participants by course.

| urse | Frequency | Percentage | Percentage Valid | Percentage Accumulated |
|--------|---|--|--|---|
| First | 198 | 23.3 | 23.4 | 23.4 |
| Second | 300 | 35.4 | 35.5 | 58.9 |
| Third | 309 | 36.4 | 36.6 | 95.5 |
| Fourth | 38 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 845 | 99.6 | 100.0 | |
| System | 3 | 0.4 | | |
| otal | 848 | 100.0 | | |
| | First Second Third Fourth Total System | First198Second300Third309Fourth38Total845System3 | First 198 23.3 Second 300 35.4 Third 309 36.4 Fourth 38 4.5 Total 845 99.6 System 3 0.4 | Birse Frequency Percentage Valid First 198 23.3 23.4 Second 300 35.4 35.5 Third 309 36.4 36.6 Fourth 38 4.5 4.5 Total 845 99.6 100.0 System 3 0.4 30.4 |

Table 1. Participant distribution according to course.

2.3. Measuring Instruments

The instruments used for this study were the questionnaire developed by González-Gijón and Soriano-Díaz (2021) and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory created by Glick and Fiske (1996) and adapted to Spanish by Expósito et al. (1998).

The Violence in Young Couple Relationships Questionnaire (VIREPA), created by González-Gijón and Soriano-Díaz (2021), comprises two parts: firstly, an analysis of sociodemographic variables divided into demographic factor information about the couples and their self-perceptions of abuse (victimisation) and the rest of the variables, 20 in total, that measure the types of abuse that can occur in relationships and are grouped into 5 dimensions, namely, Emotional Abuse, Physical and Psychological Abuse, Personal Devaluation, Social and Economic Control, and sexual abuse (González-Gijón et al. 2023; Montero-Fernández et al. 2022). The dimensions according to González-Gijón and Soriano-Díaz (2021) are defined as follows:

1. Emotional Mistreatment (EM): This dimension allows us to evaluate the form of psychological abandonment that involves the absence of attention to the affective needs and moods of a person as well as the form of mistreatment that is exercised through forms of contempt intended to convince another of their low value as an individual and of the social value of the other member of the relationship. 2. Physical and Psychological Mistreatment (PPM): This dimension allows us to detect physical mistreatment defined as any action or omission, which is not accidental, that causes physical harm to a person or places them at risk of suffering it; psychological mistreatment is defined as any behaviour that induces devaluation, suffering, or psychological harm and Münchhaussen Syndrome, which occurs in situations in which fictitious symptoms and/or pathologies are fabricated or induced, which are actively generated by the corresponding partner. 3. Personal devaluation (PD): This form of abuse consists of an attempt to devalue a person's religious beliefs and ideological values while emphasising gender roles and stereotypes. 4. Social and Economic Control (SEC): This dimension refers to social control consisting of surveillance and obstacles and prohibitions that are put in place in order to hinder or prevent the interpersonal relationships of a partner, as well as economic control or abuse, understood as the use, without consent and in an abusive manner, of the objects of one's partner. 5. Sexual abuse (SA): This dimension refers to the existence of abusive behaviours of a

sexual nature, carried out from a position of power, without consent and against the will of the other partner, as well as the implementation of sexual behaviours that the other person feels to be degrading and humiliating (pp. 7–8).

The evaluation of the questionnaire is carried out through a Likert-type scale of five response options (1, Never; 2, Sometimes (1 to 2); 3, Many times (3 to 5); 4, Almost always (6 or more); and 5, Always). Regarding the reliability of the instrument, it has an Alpha coefficient, both in general form ($\alpha = 0.937$), as in the five dimensions, with values greater than 0.700.

The Omega coefficient also provides high reliability for the total value ($\omega = 0.908$) and each of the factors, exceeding 0.826. Both indices give the instrument high internal consistency (González-Gijón and Soriano-Díaz 2021).

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, developed by Glick and Fiske (1996) and translated into Spanish by Expósito et al. (1998), assesses ambivalent attitudes (both hostile and benevolent) towards women and whether they are at risk of victimisation. It consists of 22 items with a Likert-type response scale with five alternatives ranging from completely false (1) to completely true (5). It consists of the following dimensions: Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism; and these dimensions consist of three sub-dimensions. The first is Protective Paternalism, which reinforces the belief that women are weaker than and inferior to men and validates male dominance. The second sub-dimension is Gender Differentiation, which describes men's desire to differentiate themselves positively from women by keeping them in different spheres. Less emphasis is placed on the significance of heterosexual intimacy, which prioritises relationships with the opposite sex as a means of attaining happiness (Zubieta et al. 2011). Through the Cronbach's alpha test, it was determined that the scale score is indicative of an increased degree of prejudice against women, with a reliability coefficient of 0.91.

2.4. Procedure

For the gathering of information, ethical considerations in line with the Declaration of Helsinki were ensured. The confidentiality of data was also guaranteed in accordance with Organic Law 7/2021, passed on May 26th, which pertains to the protection of personal data processed to detect, prevent, investigate, and prosecute. This study investigates criminal offences and the administration of criminal sanctions while ensuring participant anonymity. To conduct this research, we prepared instruments to be administered in person to each group, selected via a sampling process, throughout the 2021–2022 academic year.

2.5. Data Analysis

The data analysis was performed using descriptive statistical techniques and nonparametric inferential tests due to the absence of normal data. The data were previously checked for normality using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, and the result was p < 0.05. Consequently, the Mann–Whitney U test was applied, with sex as the grouping variable. To conduct these analyses, we utilised the SPSS v.26 statistical package.

3. Results

We begin this section by describing, based on a general analysis, the data on violence in the participants' relationships. The results (Figure 1) offer us information on the arithmetic means obtained in the dimensions related to the different types of violence analysed regarding victimisation and show us that the highest means correspond to emotional abuse (M = 1.33), followed by physical and psychological abuse (M = 1.19) and social and economic control (M = 1.18). The type of violence least suffered by our participants was sexual abuse (M = 1.09), closely followed by personal devaluation (M = 1.14).

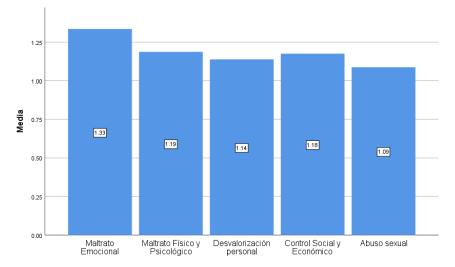


Figure 1. Types of violence suffered.

Regarding the mean values obtained for each type of violence concerning the sex variable, as displayed in Table 2, women have higher arithmetic means than men in terms of emotional, physical, and psychological abuse; personal devaluation; and sexual abuse. The means are very close between genders, with men scoring higher than women in social and economic control.

| Table 2. Types of maltreatment suffered by gender | r. |
|---|----|
|---|----|

| Types of Maltreatment Suffered | Males (N = 215) | | | Female (N = 630) | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------|------|------------------|-----------|-------|
| | Μ | DT | Μ | DT | U | p |
| Emotional Abuse | 1.29 | 0.63 | 1.35 | 0.73 | 65407.000 | 0.680 |
| Physical and Psychological Abuse | 1.17 | 0.40 | 1.19 | 0.52 | 64034.000 | 0.313 |
| Personal devaluation | 1.13 | 0.36 | 1.14 | 0.38 | 66154.500 | 0.885 |
| Social and Economic Control | 1.23 | 0.57 | 1.16 | 0.45 | 58824.000 | 0.001 |
| Sexual abuse | 1.05 | 0.38 | 1.10 | 0.41 | 62776.500 | 0.010 |

On the other hand, regarding the analysis of the differences in the types of violence regarding the function of sex, carried out using the Mann–Whitney U test for two independent samples when the *p*-value is significant (p < 0.05), we can accept, with 95% confidence, that there are statistically significant differences between men and women in the average value of the social and economic control variable (p = 0.001), wherein men have a higher value (M = 1.23) than women (M = 1.16) (Table 2), and in sexual abuse (p = 0.010), where women present a higher value (M = 1.10) than men (M = 1.05).

Concerning the internalisation of sexism among the participants, it can be affirmed that the sample had low levels of ambivalent sexism. However, highest results were observed in the gender differentiation subdimension (M = 1.04), followed by protective paternalism (M = 0.69) (Figure 2).

However, the analysis of the data provided by the study participants has revealed that the male and female university students in this study exhibited varying degrees of ambivalent sexism based on their gender. There are statistically significant disparities between male and female individuals in the average values of all the variables related to sexism, as revealed by this analysis regarding ambivalence towards women (Table 3). Specifically, in all the dimensions analysed (hostile sexism and benevolent sexism (and, within the latter, protective paternalism, gender differentiation, and heterosexual intimacy)), men demonstrate higher average arithmetic means than women.

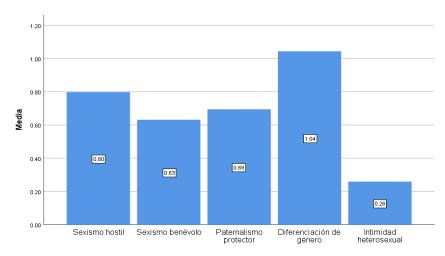


Figure 2. The internalisation of sexism.

| Table 3. | Types of | abuse | suffered | according | to | gender. |
|----------|----------|-------|----------|-----------|----|---------|
| | | | | | | |

| Ambivalent Sexism | Male (1 | N = 215) | | Fema | | |
|--------------------------|---------|----------|------|------|-----------|-------|
| | Μ | DT | Μ | DT | U | р |
| Hostile sexism | 1.16 | 0.97 | 0.68 | 0.79 | 46260.000 | 0.000 |
| Benevolent sexism | 0.90 | 0.80 | 0.54 | 0.53 | 49671.000 | 0.000 |
| Protective paternalism | 1.01 | 1.00 | 0.58 | 0.74 | 49723.500 | 0.000 |
| Gender Differentiation | 1.16 | 0.99 | 1.00 | 0.97 | 61287.000 | 0.038 |
| Heterosexual intimacy | 0.58 | 0.93 | 0.15 | 0.39 | 49546.000 | 0.000 |

Despite the previously observed low levels of sexism overall, significant differences in means based on gender remain apparent. Hostile sexism directed at women, with a *p*-value of 0.010, averaged 1.16 in men compared to 0.68 in women from the sample group (refer to Table 3). In the realm of benevolent sexism, men exhibit a higher mean value in comparison to women, specifically concerning protective paternalism (men: 1.01; women: 0.58) and overall (men: 0.90; women: 0.54), with a *p*-value of 0.000. These results allow us to identify certain behaviours that can cause women to become victims of crime more frequently than men.

4. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the experiences of intimate partner violence among young university student couples, as well as any examples of ambivalent sexism that may be related to gender. The findings reveal that, although with a low or very low tendency, emotional maltreatment has the highest mean scores, followed by physical maltreatment and physical abuse. In addition, emotional abuse ranks highest in terms of average scores, followed by physical and psychological abuse, social and economic control, and psychological abuse. Sexual abuse is the least prevalent type of violence among our participants. Thus, it is clear that emotional violence, together with physical and psychological violence, are the most constant, effective, and widespread forms of the exercise of power. Lack of affection, contempt, lack of recognition of a person, and intimidation and humiliation in private or in public, with the aim of undermining a person's self-esteem, are the most frequent forms of violence among couples (Lapierre et al. 2019; Renner et al. 2020; Winstok and Sowan-Basheer 2015).

In this respect, several studies show that, among psychological and emotional violence, the risk behaviours most frequently exercised by young people are insults, humiliation, marginalisation, jealousy, control, threats, infidelity, and blackmail, and, although these aggressions may seem obvious to many adolescents, they go unnoticed and are not usually perceived as violent, and therefore importance is not attached to the consequences that arise (Smith et al. 2022; Muñoz-Ponce et al. 2020; Cava and Buelga 2018; Kidman and Kohler 2020). This type of violence against women has physical, social, and thus emotional consequences. It can even lead to the development of Stockholm syndrome (Obeid and Hallit 2018).

Studies have consistently found emotional violence to be the most common form of abuse amongst young couples, followed by physical and psychological violence (Alarcón-Vásquez et al. 2022; Hilario Ramos et al. 2020; Paíno-Quesada et al. 2020). Sexual abuse is slightly less frequent (Garrido Antón et al. 2020).

However, when comparing the results obtained from men and women in terms of victimisation, it is evident that women experienced various forms of violence. This study identifies emotional, physical, and psychological abuse; personal devaluation; and sexual abuse as the prevalent types of violence suffered by women. Only men reported experiencing violence of the social-and-economic-control type. Previous studies indicate that aggression is higher in females (Arbach-Lucioni et al. 2015; Elmquist et al. 2016; Guillén Verdesoto et al. 2021), which corresponds with our research findings. However, in relation to the influence of gender on the results, it cannot be forgotten that this study focuses on seekers of Infant Education and Primary Education degrees, which are feminised degrees in Spain (Luzón-Trujillo and Montes-Moreno 2018). In this sense, the results characterise the situation of intimate partner violence corresponding to people striving to achieve these degrees. The slight discrepancy in the findings concerning the incidence of sexual violence among young couples confirms that among young couples, men and women are equally likely to perpetrate violence (Alegría del Ángel and Rodríguez 2017; Guillén Verdesoto et al. 2021). Furthermore, recent research demonstrates that intimate partner violence among young couples is typically bidirectional (Bringas Molleda et al. 2023; Herrero et al. 2020; Lozano-Martínez et al. 2022; Paíno-Quesada et al. 2020). However, statistically significant differences exist only for the type of abuse related to social and economic control, where men show a higher value, and for types of abuse for which women show a higher value. These findings align with earlier research, for instance, the study by Garrido Antón et al. (2020).

Concerning the internalisation of sexism, the sample exhibited low levels of ambivalent sexism, with the most significant outcomes linked to benevolent sexism regarding gender differentiation. This refers to the inclination for men to favourably distinguish themselves from women by keeping them in spheres perceived as different and of lower importance (Zubieta et al. 2011). Furthermore, paternalistic protector attitudes legitimising the dominant male figure were observed. From this approach, it is confirmed that beliefs regarding the difference in status between men and women play a significant role in the victimisation of women (Agadullina et al. 2022). In this sense, sexism, an ideology that supports unequal statuses, becomes a crucial factor. This issue becomes relevant for consideration in the examination of domestic violence among couples.

This analysis demonstrates statistically significant disparities between the genders concerning ambivalent sexism directed towards women. Therefore, studies have shown a higher incidence of hostile sexism and benevolent sexism among men (Antonio and Laca-Arocena 2017; Arnoso et al. 2017; Muñoz-Ponce et al. 2020). Within the context of benevolent sexism, we observed a greater disparity between genders in terms of the role of the paternal protector. Numerous studies identify hostile sexism as a predictor of the attitudes that justify psychological violence ain relationships (Agadullina et al. 2022; Herrero et al. 2020; Martín-Fernández et al. 2018; Ponce-Díaz et al. 2019; Soto 2020). The idea that women's progress poses a threat to the hierarchical position held by men, as they aim to control and dominate women in personal, work, and public relationships, is often cited as a justification for psychological violence against women in relationships (Connor et al. 2016; Glick et al. 2015). In this sense, the purpose of hostile attitudes is to harm an individual's self-esteem and limit their liberty to maintain authority. Rollero et al. (2019) substantiate that the extent of one's hostile and benevolent sexism is inversely related to their perceived credibility. Limiting women's rights and even subjecting them to humiliation are examples of psychological violence.

Based on the above, this study demonstrates that gender discrimination is linked to the victimisation and perpetuation of violence among young couples, with variations observed according to sex. The identified differences confirm a higher incidence of violence towards women. Consequently, our results reinforce the significance of addressing sexism as a strategy for preventing violence in relationships between young people (Carrascosa et al. 2019; Madrona-Bonastre et al. 2023).

The relevance of this study lies in its identification of emotional violence as the most frequent form of violence among young couples, as well as the association between sexism and the maintenance of violence among young couples, and it also indicates the importance of paying attention to emotions, especially in the educational sphere. Ramírez Hernández (2020) points out that emotions are culturally and socially shaped, specifically through their relationship with the intersubjectivity produced through interactions between human beings in close coexistence. In this sense, emotions are shaped by personal and social perceptions of the body, whose acceptance or rejection is determined according to certain established cultural schemes, so if this perception does not conform to these schemes, stereotypes are generated, which can victimize partners in a relationship and produce violent attitudes. This idea can justify sexism and its link to intimate partner violence, which raises the need for a long-term process of cultural transformation to eradicate it (Kaplan and Szapu 2020).

Studies have found that violence is not a spontaneous or natural phenomenon. Instead, men and women deliberately learn to use violent behaviours to harm their partners (Echeburúa 2019; Ibabe et al. 2020; Salguero-Alcañiz et al. 2023; Zamora-Damián et al. 2018). Violence in couple relationships tends to begin progressively, with a higher frequency at early ages (Borrás et al. 2017; Rubio-Garay et al. 2017). In this sense, it is considered necessary to continue advancing the associated study and analyse how the gender roles observed in one's family and peer group influence their perceptions and attitudes towards intimate partner violence, and it would be interesting to know its relationship with the socioeconomic and educational levels of one's family.

Therefore, the study of sexism and violence in relationships between young people is of great importance due to their prevalence (Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) 2022) and consequences (Rodríguez et al. 2018) and the stages in which they occur (Kidman and Kohler 2020). In addition, identifying their prevalence based on gender allows us to identify a key factor in their incidence and consequently to focus prevention programs.

The findings allow us to draw objective conclusions that aid in creating effective educational strategies for combating sexism, thus reducing violence and positively impacting society. It is imperative to overcome the hindrances that obstruct sexism's eradication.

5. Conclusions

The study allows identifying the violence suffered and ambivalent sexism in relationships between young university students based on gender in order to analyse perceptions and attitudes towards intimate partner violence. The most frequent form of violence in young couples' relationships is emotional, followed by physical and sexual violence, and emotional violence, followed by physical and psychological violence, with sexual aggression being slightly lower. Concerning the variable sex, although the averages are very close, women have higher averages in terms of emotional, physical, and psychological abuse; personal devaluation; and sexual abuse, and men have higher averages in terms of social and economic control. In addition, low levels of sexism were found to be ambivalent in the sample, the results being highly differentiated by gender, with men having higher arithmetic means than women.

Faced with all this, from the educational perspective, we consider it appropriate to design new proposals and strategies that can prevent inequalities between men and women. It is not a question of denying the existing differences between men and women but of preventing them from being an excuse for the domination of one over the other, hence the advisability of introducing these issues in a transversal manner in studies, teaching about

the identification of violence (physical, sexual, or psychological), increasing knowledge about this type of mistreatment among young people, and developing emotional education programmes. It is also important to provide young people with tools and competences that aid in the use of social networks in their relationships, whether for dating, sexual partnerships, or other types of relationships (Pérez-Dueñas et al. 2023). The creation of gender equality bodies, the implementation of specific protocols for dealing with harassment issues, and the implementation of actions that seek to generate knowledge on the subject and raise awareness among students are some preventive measures that prevent victimisation and the perpetration of violent behaviour. In this sense, some examples include programmes and resources that have had a positive impact in the educational sphere by reducing violent behaviour, raising awareness of gender-based violence, or reducing emotional aggression (Peskin et al. 2014; Taylor et al. 2010).

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

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