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Sociodemographic characteristics of violence in university students from Huánuco, Peru

Características sociodemográficas de la violencia en estudiantes universitarios de Huánuco, Perú

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ABSTRACT:

The objective was to determine the acceptance of violence related to sociodemographic characteristics. It was a descriptive and cross-sectional study with 1756 students from the Hermilio Valdizán National University, Huánuco, 2019. A sociodemographic file and attitudes scales on violence against women and in the university environment were applied, with prior consent. The Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis U test was used for $p \leq 0.05$. Acceptance of violence was very low (1.6 [from 1 to 5]). In addition, there were significant differences according to age, sex and other sociodemographic characteristics ($p \leq 0.05$). In conclusion, the acceptance of violence differs according to sociodemographic characteristics in university students.

KEYWORDS: Violence, university students, sociodemographic characteristics..

RESUMEN:

El objetivo fue determinar la aceptación de la violencia relacionada a características sociodemográficas. Fue un estudio descriptivo y transversal, con 1756 estudiantes de la Universidad Nacional Hermilio Valdizán, Huánuco, 2019. Se aplicó, previo consentimiento, una ficha sociodemográfica y escalas de actitudes sobre violencia contra la mujer y en el ámbito universitario. Se utilizó la prueba U de Mann-Whitney y Kruskal-Wallis para $p \leq 0,05$. La aceptación de la violencia fue muy baja (1,6 [de 1 a 5]). Además, hubo diferencias significativas según edad, sexo y otras características sociodemográficas ($p \leq 0,05$). Conclusión, la aceptación de la violencia difiere según características sociodemográficas en estudiantes universitarios.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Violencia, estudiantes universitarios, características sociodemográficas..

INTRODUCTION

Violence corresponds to one of the immense public health threats in the world (Zamudio, Andrade, Arana & Alvarado, 2017). Violence is one of the most gigantic inconveniences that it exists worldwide, this is shown in different ways in the relational dynamics of the individual, it can be: physical, psychological, sexual, verbal, cultural and structural, among others (García & Fuentes, 2019). However, today, violence corresponds to a phenomenon that seems to have become part of daily life and for which we have learned to live, or rather, to survive. Only when the damage is evident, this is usually recognized as a problem (Jackman, 2002; Hajar, López & Blanco, 1997).

The fact that a climate of acceptance in the face of violence has been established in societies, seems to be strongly linked to cultural values that value violence as a valid and even “natural” way to resolve conflicts. It is interesting to note that there is a conviction that conservatism, authoritarianism, and acceptance of violence are associated with negative attitudes towards the female sex and minorities of all kinds (Jackman, 2002; Walter, 1989). Likewise, Pinzón, Armas, Aponte and Useche (2019) report that the inconvenience of violence, in any of its forms; it is not pathological, it is learned. This shows that it is society that teaches it and culture that legitimizes violence.

Actually, in different parts of the world, men and women accept violence against women. From various social, political and economic sources; violence against women is invisible and tolerated. Its true impact on the lives of women and on society in general is underestimated, and that has been the trend for several centuries (Vara, 2014). Definitely, attitudes of acceptance of violence against women are evident throughout the world (Vargas, Lila & Catalá, 2015), with figures ranging between 4 and 90% according to the country (De Miguel, 2015; Meil, 2013; Yount, et al., 2014; Gracia, 2014). In the case of women in Latin America, acceptance of violence against women also tends to vary significantly between countries, being around 4.3% in the Dominican Republic, 16.5% in Bolivia, 22.9% in Paraguay and 38.2% in Ecuador (Pan American Health Organization, 2014). In Peru, the social acceptance index towards violence against women is 54.8% (National Institute of Statistics and Informatics, 2016), a value that differs with 70.8% of experienced violence against women (National Institute of Statistics and Informatics, 2015). Then, in light of these findings, it is assumed that the percentages of tolerance towards violence against women are underestimated.

Safranoff (2017), refers that various sociodemographic factors are emphasized as relevant in the formation of acceptance attitudes towards violence: age and gender, education, economic resources, marital status, religion, place of residence and personal satisfaction. Regarding the consequences of these types of violence, Velzeboer, et al., (2003), point out that they are frequently devastating and they are very widespread; which have implications for physical health and psychological well-being, mainly for women and girls. At the same time, they endanger the social development of the different members of the family as a unit of the communities where the affected people are found and of society in general.

Indeed, in the face of this problem, prevention must be aimed at reducing or eliminating them, through media campaigns, education and legal persuasion. That for the Peruvian case, there are violence prevention policies that are aimed at all strata and territories of the country. According to Law 30364, the National Observatory of violence against women and members of the family group designed the National Plan against Gender Violence for the period 2016 to 2021, with the aim of reducing violence against women through the organization and implementation of actions with the participation of all State entities. Based on the monitoring of the achievement of proposed objectives, the results are not as expected, since in 2016, the incidence of violence against women and members of the family group was 10.8%; In 2017 it decreased to 10.6% and in 2018 it increased again to 10.9%, these percentages show the existing gap to reach the expectation of proportions lower than 7.7% by 2021 (Peru: Ministry of the Women and Vulnerable Populations, 2019).

From the analysis of Oviedo (2017), there is evidence of the existence of gender violence (understood as man and woman) in the couple relationships of the students of a university in Bolivia and they live with it in a naturalized way. Faced with such a situation, research for many decades has prioritized addressing issues of sexual violence with cross-sectional quantitative methodologies, primarily in countries such as Spain, Mexico and Colombia; although there are also studies of epidemiological approaches and public health (Pinzón, Armas, Aponte & Useche, 2019; Villalobos and Ramírez, 2018). The study carried out by De La Cruz, Olarte and Rodríguez (2019), characterize the affective communication of the students of a university in Mexico with aggressive expressions through blows, shoves and obscenities, being associated with the heteronormative system of patriarchal society; the emotions that they least manifest in a public space are sadness and affection because it means a sign of inferiority to them.

The analysis of the complexity of violence in the vulnerable group of university students is little addressed, this is highlighted by Moreno, Sanabria and González (2015) when pointing out this subtle violence, it can be confused simply with teaching-learning processes or with characteristics of the personality that apparently has nothing to do with violent behavior according to gender, such as jokes. Consequently, the study of violence in students is relevant, especially in higher-level institutions, which play a primary role in the formation and diffusion of ideologies (Castells, 2001; Ramírez, Avendaño, Aleman, Lizarazo, Ramírez and Cardona, 2018). Among these ideologies are the rules that subordinate the feminine to the masculine; it means, a type of structural violence where men are located in a superior position, thereby maintaining power asymmetries and gender violence (Confortini, 2006). Against this background, the present research aims to determine the acceptance of violence in relation to sociodemographic characteristics in students of the National University Hermilio Valdizán, Huánuco - Peru 2019.

DEVELOPMENT

Acceptance of violence: conceptual delimitation

The World Health Organization (1996) (Cited in World Health Organization, 2002, p. 5) defines violence as:

The deliberate use of physical force or power, whether threatening or effective, against oneself, another person, or a group or community, that causes or is highly likely to cause injury, death, psychological harm, developmental disorders or deprivation.

Regarding the acceptance of violence for the purposes of this study, it is understood as the set of attitudes, perceptions, habits and cultural practices that legitimize, help, support and perpetuate the aggressions, damages and suffering that are carried out by symbolic attributions founded on the construction of the male and female gender (Comprehensive Program against gender violence and the United Nations Fund and Spain for the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals, 2010).

Below are some definitions of the forms of violence addressed in the university context: Domestic violence. Some definitions of family violence are considered, which try to explain it in a generic way:

- "It is any act or omission occurring in the family framework by works of one of its components that threatens the life, physical or mental integrity, or the freedom of another component of the same family" (Council of Europe, 1987; cited in Wiborg, et al., 2000, p. 28).
- "It is a form of structural violence, because for it to occur a certain level of acceptance and social tolerance (supported by culture, law, ideology ...) towards this violence is necessary" (Ramos, 2007, p. 189).
- "It refers to physical, mental, sexual or other aggressions, carried out repeatedly by a family member, and that cause physical and / or psychological damage and violate the freedom of another person" (Echeburúa, 2003, p 112).

Gender violence

According to the World Health Organization (2018, p. 6) defines it as:

Any act of gender violence that results, or may result in physical, sexual or psychological harm to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether they occur in public life or in private.

Violence in the university environment

It is conceptualized as the threat or use of physical force or power against other individuals, against oneself, against objects or against a group or community within the university environment (Pan American Health Organization, 1990).

METHODOLOGY

Design and participants

Cross-sectional descriptive quantitative approach with correlational design. All the students from the Huánuco Headquarters participated in the study, enrolled in the 2019 academic year of the 27 Professional Schools of the Hermilio Valdizán National University, which in total was made up of 7,836 students. From this population, it was extracted, through the simple random probability sampling design, a sample made up of 1756 students of the 3rd year of studies from the 27 Professional Schools of the Huánuco Headquarters.

Instrument A sociodemographic record and the following forms previously validated by seven judges were used as data collection instruments: an attitudes scale about family violence adapted from Rigg and O'Leary (1996), with reliability $\alpha = 0.847$; another scale of attitudes towards gender violence by Chacón (2015), which reached a reliability of $\alpha = 0.937$; the scale of attitudes towards violence against women in the relationship of Chuquimajo (2000) obtaining a reliability of $\alpha = 0.975$; and a scale of attitudes about forms of violent expression in the university field of Amórtegui-Osorio (2005), where it obtained a reliability of $\alpha = 0.925$.

Procedures

Initially, the coordination for field work was carried out: data collection. Subsequently, data collection was carried out through the application of the following instruments: sociodemographic record, scale of attitudes about family violence, scale of attitudes towards gender violence, scale of attitudes towards violence against women in the relationship of couple and scale of attitudes on forms of violent expression in the university field. All participants, prior to the application, signed an informed consent. And, the instruments answered it in their classrooms.

Data analysis

In the descriptive analysis, the qualitative measures of frequency and percentage were used, and in the quantitative measures of central tendency and dispersion. In the bivariate inferential analysis, the Mann-Whitney test was used, and the Kruskal-Wallis test was used in the multivariate analysis. A significance of 0.05 was taken into account. In data processing, the statistical package IBM SPSS Statistics 20.0 was used.

RESULTS

Sample general characteristic

Regarding the sociodemographic characteristics of the university students, the following prevailed: ages between 18 to 29 years, the female sex, the origin of the Pillcomarca district, their nucleus of family coexistence, the civil situation was that of single, sufficient economic situation, their employment situation student, Catholic religion, study time of three years and the predominant professional career was economics (see Table I).

Table I.

Sociodemographic characteristics	Frequency (n=1756)	%
Age in years		
Under 18	15	0,9
18 to 29	1694	96,5
30 or more	47	2,7
Gender		
Male	758	43,2
Female	998	56,8
Origin		
Huanuco	541	30,8
Amaryllis	475	27,1
Pillcomarca	690	39,3
Other	50	2,8
Nucleus of coexistence		
Single	674	38,4
Family of origin	864	49,2
Couple	21	1,2
Couple and children	68	3,9
Sons	15	0,9
Other family	101	5,8
Others	13	0,7
Civil situation		
Single	1670	95,1
Married	28	1,6
Coexistence	47	2,7
Separated	7	0,4
Abandonment	4	0,2
Economic situation		

High	11	0,6
Enough	907	51,7
Neither insufficient nor sufficient	512	29,2
Insufficient	307	17,5
Assistance assistance	19	1,1
Employment situation		
Just study	1270	72,3
Study and work	486	27,7
Religion		
None	379	21,6
Catholic	978	55,7
Evangelical	343	19,5
Mormon	17	1,0
Other	39	2,2
Study time at university		
3 years	1017	57,9
More than 3 years	739	42,1
Career		
Health	369	21,0
Economic Sciences	493	28,1
Engineering	412	23,5
Social and humanities	482	27,4

Source: Own elaboration.

Source: Own elaboration.

Acceptance of violence from a global analysis reached an average of 1.6 (from 1 to 5). In addition, in the different modalities the acceptance of violence against women in the relationship was higher (2.7), followed by the acceptance of gender violence (1.3) and last place the acceptance of family violence (1.2) and the acceptance of violence in the university environment (1,2) (see Table II).

Table II. Averages of the acceptance of violence and their different modalities in university students

Statistical measures	Average values				
	Acceptance of violence	Acceptance of family violence	Acceptance of gender violence	Acceptance of violence against women in the relationship	Acceptance of violence in the university environment
Half	1,6	1,2	1,3	2,7	1,2
Median	1,6	1,0	1,1	2,7	1,1
25th percentile	1,3	1	1	2	1
75th percentile	1,7	1,3	1,4	3,6	1,3
Rank	1 a 3,1	1 a 4,4	1 a 3,4	1 a 3,9	1 a 4,2

Source: Own elaboration.

Inferential analysis

Concerning the inferential analysis, the acceptance of violence against women in the intimate relationship was significantly different according to age (30 years and over); The male sex predominated in the acceptance of general violence and its forms: gender violence, violence against women in the relationship and violence in the university environment; and according to origin, there were significant differences in the acceptance of general violence (other origin), family violence (other origin) and violence against women in the relationship

(Pillcomarca), all with $p \leq 0.05$ (see Table III). Likewise, there were significant differences according to family nucleus (children and other people), employment status and religion (evangelical and Mormon), all with $p \leq 0.05$ (see Table IV). And significant differences were also found according to study time at the university (more than three years) and professional career (economics, engineering and social sciences and humanities), all with $p \leq 0.05$ (see Table V).

Table III. Acceptance of violence and its different modalities according to age, gender and origin in university students.

Demographic characteristics	Acceptance of violence		Acceptance of family violence		Acceptance of gender violence		Acceptance of violence against women in the relationship		Acceptance of violence in the university environment	
	$\pm S$	p-value	$\pm S$	p-value	$\pm S$	p-value	$\pm S$	p-value	$\pm S$	p-value
Age in years										
Under 18	1,5±0,2		1,2±0,3		1,1±0,1		3,0±0,9		1,1±0,3	
18 to 29	1,6±0,3	0,129	1,2±0,4	0,596	1,3±0,4	0,289	2,7±0,9	0,051	1,2±0,4	0,434
30 or more	1,6±0,3		1,2±0,3		1,3±0,4		3,0±0,8		1,3±0,5	
Gender										
Male	1,6±0,3	0,000	1,2±0,4	0,646	1,3±0,4	0,000	2,8±0,8	0,006	1,3±0,5	0,000
Female	1,5±0,3		1,2±0,4		1,2±0,4		2,6±0,9		1,2±0,3	
Origin										
Huánuco	1,6±0,3	0,008	1,2±0,4	0,033	1,2±0,4	0,293	2,7±0,9	0,001	1,2±0,4	0,617
Amarilis	1,5±0,3		1,3±0,4		1,3±0,4		2,6±0,9		1,2±0,4	
Pillcomarca	1,6±0,3		1,2±0,4		1,3±0,4		2,8±0,9		1,3±0,5	
Other	1,7±0,3		1,3±0,4		1,3±0,4		2,9±0,7		1,3±0,5	

Source: Own elaboration

Source: Own elaboration

Table IV. Acceptance of violence and its different modalities according to nucleus of coexistence, civil situation, economic situation, employment situation and religion in university students.

Social characteristics	Acceptance of violence		Acceptance of family violence		Acceptance of gender violence		Acceptance of violence against women in the relationship		Acceptance of violence in the university Environment	
	LS	P-value	LS	P-value	LS	P-value	LS	P-value	LS	P-value
Nucleus of coexistence										
Alone	1,6±0,3		1,2±0,4		1,3±0,4		2,9±0,8		1,2±0,4	
Family of origin	1,5±0,3	0,000	1,2±0,4	0,986	1,2±0,4	0,109	2,6±0,9	0,000	1,2±0,4	0,298
Couple	1,7±0,3		1,2±0,4		1,4±0,5		2,7±0,8		1,5±0,7	
Couple and children	1,6±0,4		1,2±0,3		1,4±0,5		2,8±0,9		1,2±0,3	
Sons	1,7±0,2		1,2±0,3		1,2±0,3		3,1±0,6		1,5±0,7	
Other family	1,6±0,3		1,2±0,4		1,3±0,4		2,6±0,9		1,3±0,5	
Others	1,7±0,2		1,2±0,3		1,3±0,3		3,2±0,6		1,2±0,3	
Civil situation										
Single	1,6±0,3		1,2±0,4		1,3±0,4		2,7±0,9		1,2±0,4	
Married	1,6±0,4		1,2±0,4		1,3±0,5		2,6±0,9		1,4±0,7	
Coexistence	1,6±0,4	0,775	1,3±0,5	0,944	1,4±0,5	0,474	2,9±0,8	0,448	1,2±0,3	0,550
Separated	1,6±0,3		1,1±0,1		1,3±0,4		3,0±0,8		1,2±0,4	
Abandonment	2,4±0,9		1,8±0,9		2,0±1,2		3,4±0,4		2,4±1,6	
Economic situation										
High	1,7±0,4		1,1±0,1		1,3±0,4		2,9±0,8		1,6±0,8	
Enough	1,5±0,3		1,2±0,4		1,2±0,4		2,6±0,9		1,2±0,4	
Neither insufficient, nor sufficient	1,6±0,3	0,000	1,2±0,3	0,005	1,3±0,4	0,000	2,8±0,9	0,000	1,2±0,4	0,002
Insufficient	1,7±0,3		1,3±0,4		1,3±0,4		2,9±0,8		1,3±0,5	
Assistance	1,9±0,3		1,6±0,8		1,5±0,4		3,3±0,5		1,3±0,5	
Employment situation										
Just study	1,6±0,3	0,012	1,2±0,4	0,031	1,3±0,4	0,099	2,7±0,9	0,184	1,2±0,4	0,174
Study and work	1,6±0,3		1,2±0,3		1,3±0,4		2,7±0,9		1,3±0,5	
Religion										
None	1,5±0,3		1,2±0,3		1,3±0,4		2,6±0,9		1,2±0,5	
Catholic	1,6±0,3		1,2±0,4		1,3±0,4		2,7±0,8		1,2±0,4	
Evangelical	1,6±0,3	0,111	1,2±0,4	0,043	1,2±0,4	0,155	2,8±0,9	0,004	1,2±0,4	0,122
Mormon	1,6±0,3		1,3±0,5		1,2±0,3		2,7±1,0		1,3±0,6	
Other	1,5±0,5		1,2±0,4		1,4±0,6		2,2±0,8		1,4±0,7	

Source: Own elaboration.

Table V. Acceptance of violence and its different modalities according to study time at the university and career in university students.

Social characteristics	Acceptance of violence		Acceptance of family violence		Acceptance of gender violence		Acceptance of violence against women in the relationship		Acceptance of violence in the university environment	
	±		±		±		±		±	
	S	p-value	S	p-value	S	p-value	S	p-value	S	p-value
Study time at university										
3 years	1,6±0,3	0,028	1,2±0,4	0,083	1,2±0,4	0,000	2,7±0,9	0,374	1,2±0,4	0,011
More than 3 years	1,6±0,3		1,2±0,4		1,3±0,4		2,7±0,8		1,3±0,5	
Career										
Health	1,5±0,3		1,2±0,4		1,2±0,3		2,5±1,0		1,2±0,3	
Economic Sciences	1,6±0,3	0,000	1,3±0,4	0,000	1,4±0,4	0,000	2,8±0,7	0,000	1,2±0,4	0,000
Engineering	1,6±0,3		1,2±0,3		1,3±0,4		2,6±0,9		1,3±0,5	
Social and humanities	1,6±0,3		1,2±0,4		1,3±0,4		2,8±0,9		1,3±0,5	

Source: Own elaboration.

CONCLUSIONS

In general, the acceptance of violence was very low (1.6 on average [from 1 to 5]), and this differs according to age, sex, origin, nucleus of coexistence, economic situation, work situation, religion, time of study in college and career. Finally, it should be noted that the sample studied (university students) has high normative demands, so it is not uncommon to assume more moderate levels of acceptance and strong pressure to deliver socially desirable responses. In other words, if this study were carried out in other population groups, with lower levels of education and social pressure, the findings would undoubtedly be more worrying.

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