
Educate for Love or Violence

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ABSTRACT

The current study shows the physical, psychological and conflict-related sexual violence expressions among the couples of the UAA. The main goal was to know and show the conditions that the university has in relation to violence with these couples. As an educator, I recognize that the phenomenon of violence tends to be more serious than what we normally think it is because we are educating or spoiling people that become repeaters of a chain of violence. Therefore, violence is considered in this research as an intentional act that is directed to dominate, control, attack or hurt someone else. The act of violence, whether it can be given only once or repeatedly, can cause irreversible damage. It involves the abuse of power by using force and it can be physical, psychological, economical or political. This research found that more frequent expressions of psychological violence, followed by physical and finally the expressions of sexual violence.

Keywords: women, students, high school, violence, couples

INTRODUCTION

The methodological approach for doing this research was the critical communicative. The critical communicative methodology responds to the challenges of society and modern science through the postulates, the principles, the techniques used to collect and analyze information and the communicative organization itself by developing the construction of knowledge using the reflection. It has special emphasis on the interactions and social dimensions that cause the exclusion and/or social transformation. The main objective of this research is: to identify what the most frequent kind of violence among the students of Autonomous University of Aguascalientes (physical, psychological and sexual violence).

Composition and sample design. In the 70 undergraduate majors that are offered by the Autonomous University of Aguascalientes, there are enrolled 6,645 women. The sample of 700 university women was integrated by attending room by room throughout the University and both shifts, the morning and the afternoon, were taken into consideration.

BODY OF THE PAPER

Equality between men and women is directed to a fair treatment of both sexes, according to their respective needs, and may include equal treatment or different treatment but equal in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. The concepts that are involved in studies on this topic are: gender, gender perspective and gender violence. Thus, the term gender refers to the social differences and relations between men and women, which are learned and can evolve over time and vary among societies and cultures. This term does not replace sex, which refers exclusively to biological differences.

In addition, roles or gender roles are learned in a society, community or social group, that makes its members perceive as masculine or feminine certain activities, tasks and responsibilities; value and hierarchize them differently and to nest and recovered differentially, the constant allocation behavior social roles and activities of women and men naturalizes their roles. This naturalization of gender attributes implies a critical relation between a person's sex and his/her ability to perform a task, and considering these roles and abilities as "natural" means they are immutable. Recognizing and

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admitting that these features supposedly fixed and immovable are cultural assignments is what allows us to transform them, subvert the perception people have of being male or female and recognize that their roles and abilities have been socially assigned and; therefore, other roles might be conceived.

Consequently, gender as part of every culture, is also present in the life of institutions and is expressed at all levels of its operation so it can be said that gender is an inherent part of the culture of institutions with clear and specific effects linked to the nature of these. However, at Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes (Autonomous University of Aguascalientes), as stated by Rubio, “we have not developed a consistent line of research to state with certainty how gender impacts the set of knowledge, moods, actions and level of development that an educational community achieves and that also reports on the degree of visibility of gender projected routines, customs, standards, educational style, beliefs, attitudes, values, symbols, relationships, discourse and goals of that community” (Rubio 25). This culture, like any cultural phenomenon is closely linked to the general ideological processes of a company, including the effect of naturalization and universalization.

To work on the problem of gender violence it is required to quantify the phenomenon, make it visible in figures as well as structure and define its manifestations, its typology to be able to interpret and classify violence which is also differentiated in males, females, children, youngsters, adults or elders. Violence is also subject to gender spaces and to culture. Male violence tends to occur in public areas while female in private ones.

However, the problem of partner violence has a beginning: dating. Violence and inequity are assimilated into learning stages of relationships, negotiating with the other. It is believed that education is the best way to prevent violence. Violence and rules to relate a couple are practiced while dating, so it is possible to apply other new forms of coexistence between couples. This study relies on the idea that violence has its origins at the beginning of relationships, for this reason couples from Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes are the subjects of research.

Violence studies are recent in Mexico but “according to National Survey on Household Relationship Dynamics (ENDIREH 2006), more than 78 thousand women who represent 13.3% of young people between 15 and 19 years and are living with a partner experienced physical violence” (ENDIREH 25). When speaking of violence it is generally understood as a tangible manifestation of beating. The same happens when a person tries to determine whether he or she is experiencing a state of violence, and believes he or she is only when beating occurs. Any other manifestation of conflicts is understood as part of a daily relationship. At the state level different studies and research on dating violence focused on the dynamics of relationships while others focused specifically on the issue of violence.

The Government of Mexico City created a team joining The Institute for Women, the Institute of Youth and The Directorate-General for Equity and Social Development to investigate the courtship stage beginning in 2002 with the Campaign to Identify and Prevent Violence in Dating Relationships.

In the First National Survey on Exclusion, Intolerance and Violence in Public Schools and Higher Education, designed by the Secretariat of Public Education, SEP, in 2007, the overall results state that young people aged 15 to 19 do not they agree with the use of violence; however, “when they answered the specific question: Do you agree with violence? 16% agreed and considered violence part of human nature, that is to say that violence is accepted as a way to solve conflict” (ENEIVEMS 23), it is also assimilated as natural and defined and perceived according the socio-historical and cultural specific structures. The first experiences of dating during adolescence occur in a context in which young people develop in an environment of daily violence and sadness. Suffering seems to be a mood of youth and exclusion and the survey provides an overview of the state of mind of youngsters. The survey shows a marked depressive state of Mexican young men, identified a marked distance from women, which is ultimately another characteristic of the experience of dating.

It is in 2007 when the National Institute of Statistics together with various Government agencies of the State of Aguascalientes conducted the first national survey of dating violence ENVIN 2007 and its results were published in 2008 which are included in the following section. When talking about courtship an ideal is set in the minds of youth, recognizing dating as a learning stage of the best way to relate to the other in a romantic, personal and intimate way. Dating meets the social and cultural purpose of preparing young people for the establishment of formal relationships with the aim of

integrating a marriage and a family and; therefore, implement those stereotypes, roles and practices learned in the family of origin.

In a dating relationship an additional element involved is sexuality. Once started, sexuality and dating involve practices and habits which in turn involve culture, discourse and morality. These social practices, culturally constructed, cannot be ignored by youngsters; on the contrary, they make up their identity. ENVIN indicates that dating violence is inadvertent, and although three types of violence were identified, physical, psychological and sexual, it is still essential to know what the situation or the family environment is like to know how dating relationships of young men and women will be like. “Results include relevant aspects such as the ratio children have experienced verbal or physical violence. It is estimated that 8 out of 10 children have been insulted at home and the ratio evidently increases in urban areas which may be a result of violence socialization” (ENVIN 19) , that is, in more traditional rural communities violence is accepted as a correction mechanism of minors while in urban areas there is clearer knowledge of what violence is. Nevertheless, violence is still in use as a traditional method of education.

In June 2010 the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) launched a campaign to prevent dating violence under the slogan I love without violence, aimed at high school students. This campaign was supported by various institutions such as Mexican Institute of Youth, the Ministry of Health and supported by the United Nations Population Fund in Mexico and the National Women's Institute.

Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes (Autonomous University of Aguascalientes) is currently doing a research project titled Pilot Implementation of Prevention, Care, Sanctions and Eradication Models in the state of Aguascalientes, which aims to empower major public institutions in the implementation of protocols for the eradication of gender-based violence against women. Academic institutions will have a vital role to play in prevention by studying this phenomenon and training instances in charge of prevention, care, and eradication of such phenomenon.

From the different types of violence found in the literature, it was decided to explore the physical, psychological and sexual violence. The results are the following:

Physical Violence: the first type of violence that is going to be discussed is the physical violence. The questionnaire that was applied told the female students that such violence was characterized by “acts of intentional aggression used in any of the parts of the body. It included using an object, a weapon or any substance with the purpose of holding, immobilizing and damaging the physical integrity of a person” (Álvarez y Pérez 12). Thus, in the questionnaire that was used to collect information, questions related to having received shoving, scratching, pulling, bites, slapping, punching, kicking, aggression with heavy objects, burns, attempts of strangulation, threats with sharp objects or weapons by their classmates, teachers or their couples were made. In this research, biting 14.1%, pushing 9.7% and pulling 8.6% are the most frequent behaviors related to physical violence among the female students of the Autonomous University of Aguascalientes.

All of the other forms of physical violence, even though they appeared in very small percentages, indeed exist and this is worrying. With these results, it is convenient to carry out actions in order to prevent the physical violence and of course it is important that it can be detected immediately so that the couple can be aware that the previous behaviors are inappropriate between two people who love each other. These behaviors are evidence of an escalation of violence that can lead to situations of extreme violence in the future.

Psychological violence : in the questionnaire that was applied, it was specified that it was meant by “psychological violence that form of abusing that was manifested through harsh words, insults, humiliation, shouting and swearing and/or verbal abuse such as denigrating, ridiculing and making up ironies to create insecurity and to humiliate” (Rodriguez 166). In addition, there are some cases of psychological intimidation in which a person is frightened with gestures, shouting and a simple gaze or even objects are thrown at them or a particular property is destroyed. It consists of verbal abuse, harassment, imprisonment and deprivation of physical, financial and personal resources. The previous ideas are carried out repeatedly.

In the questionnaire that was used to gather information, it was enquired whether the women had experienced rejection by their couples, if she had been interrupted or asked to remain silent when she

wanted to make a comment, if she had been insulted by her boyfriend making her feel bad, if she had been given a nickname which she disliked, if her couple had told her that she did not have any talents, if she had been threatened by her boyfriend with gestures, bad words, shouting and gazes, if she had been depressed easily because her couple made her feel bad, if her couple had broken intentionally something of her property, if her couple had ridiculed her in front of her friends. In this research the most frequent behaviors related to psychological violence among the female students of the Autonomous University of Aguascalientes are: Being insulted by her boyfriend 24.9%, to experience rejection by their couples 19.4 %, she had been given a nickname which she disliked, if her couple had told her that she did not have any talents 16.0%, had been depressed easily because her couple made her feel bad 14.4% and had been threatened by her boyfriend with gestures, bad words, shouting and gazes 12.0%.

Sexual violence: in the questionnaire that was used to collect information, sexual violence was understood “by any sexual act or any attempt to obtain it by making comments or unwanted sexual insinuations or actions to trade or to use in any other form the sexuality of a person in any area against her will” (Caballero y Ramos 25). The questions asked were:

Have you ever felt verbally seduced by your couple?

Has your couple ever made any obscene gestures?

Has your couple ever touched his sexual organ?

Has your couple ever forced you to listen to talks about sex?

Has your couple ever forced you to watch pornography?

Has your couple ever touched your erogenous zones intentionally?

Has your couple ever gotten you drunk with the purpose of having sex with you?

Have you ever heard of a teacher who has requested sex to give a grade?

Have you ever heard of a female student who has offered she to have sex to get a grade?

Have you ever heard of someone who has been a victim of sexual violence at the UAA?

Have you ever felt harassed by any of your classmates?

Have you ever felt harassed by any of your teachers?

Have you ever been sexually violated by any of your classmates?.

The responses with the percentages are: Verbally seduced 35.5%, her couple has shown her his sexual organ 22.4%, she has been touched intentionally by her couple in her erogenous zones 19.1% and have you ever heard of a student who offered sex to get a grade? 12.5% are the most frequent behaviors related to sexual violence among the female students of the Autonomous University of Aguascalientes.

CONCLUSION

The goals set at the beginning of this research were the following: 1) To know the manifestations of violent behaviors experienced by students from the Autonomous University of Aguascalientes. 2) To identify the most frequent kinds of violence among the female students of the Autonomous University of Aguascalientes. 3) To know the types of violence that UAA female students (physical, psychological and sexual violence) tend to face. 4) To identify the set of expressions of violent behavior. 5) To suggest specific actions based on the most frequent expressions of violence against university female students. 6) To provide a protocol aimed to eradicate gender-based violence against students of the Autonomous University of Aguascalientes. When it was complete, it can be shown that each of the objectives was achieved properly and on time.

In the next part, there will be shown the various expressions of physical violence, the ones that were experienced the most by the female students from the Autonomous University of Aguascalientes with their couples: some of them are related to bites, pulling, scratching, slapping, punching and kicking. Firstly, this study gave evidence that there is existence of physical violence and that it is enough to

start looking for solutions to eradicate them. Students must recognize these behaviors on time because these conducts are inappropriate between two people who love each other and they are a sign of escalating violence that can lead to extreme situations of violence in the future.

The expressions of psychological violence that were most often experienced by UAA students were insults by their boyfriends and they made them feel bad, rejection by their couples, interruption or remaining silent when they wanted to express some ideas. They also become easily depressed because their boyfriends told them that they had done something wrong. They felt threatened by their boyfriends with gestures, words, shouting and/or gazes, they felt they had been psychologically violated by their classmates, they did not like the idea of having given a nickname or having been ridiculed their couples in front of their friends and finally they felt psychologically violated by their teachers.

The expressions of sexual violence that the UAA female students experienced the most were: verbal seduction, their couple touched his sexual organ, their couple intentionally touched their erogenous zones, they knew students who offered sex to get a grade, they knew students who have been victims of sexual violence at the UAA and they knew teachers who requested sex in order to give a grade. The topic of sexual violence could be included in events that are organized by the Department of Psychology and lectures on this topic should be given. Conferences can be organized with the purpose of talking about this topic and it would be good to give students a leaflet when they go to take a required medical examination and it could be presented when students attend the talks related to having a healthy university.

It is also recommendable that at the time of registration, all students can be given a document that explains that the university has a policy of "zero tolerance" towards any type of gender-based violence and sexual harassment. In addition, it is suggested that the same document provides information about the services that are offered if you are a victim of any of the previous situations. It is also proposed that the service that is available to students who have been victims of violence can be headed by women because students say they feel more confident when making their complaint.

It is proposed to design a website where students can find the authorities of the university and phone numbers that can help them if they have a problem and in this way everybody can have a quick access to people in charge of these situations at the university. We can start thinking, with the help of teachers, to introduce this topic in all educational programs to allow students to read and discuss about it in class. Simultaneously, it can be suggested the creation of a team with volunteers to convince students to ask for help. There can also be designed manuals, brochures, pamphlets, posters and websites. The information can be distributed by sending emails, by publishing journal articles, by putting an advertisement in the newspaper, by having newsletters and having conferences in which students can participate.

This research opens new lines of investigation for future projects. Future research should be aimed at assessing the measures that are currently being implemented and the measures that could develop as the project progresses.

Some guidelines to anticipate and prevent the generation of violence among university students are:

- a) The university should strengthen the programs of the Ombudsman, the University Rights at the UAA and the Institutional Committee for Gender Equity so that experts in this field can develop effective policies and actions to prevent rather than to punish violent acts among the university community.
- b) That the previous instances, along with researchers in the field, could work together on the Regulatory Framework to have legal instruments that contemplate the responsibility that the UAA has to implement the necessary measures to prevent conducts and omissions that could cause acts of violence against women in the UAA.
- c) The UAA is encouraged to implement strategies to develop policies and spread information to promote the safety of women not only in the university, but also in society in general.
- d) The UAA is invited to carry out actions of primary prevention against violence; this is, to implement outreach programs focused on preventing violence before it occurs.

- e) Taking into consideration the classification of the levels and strategies to prevent violence according to the OMS (World Health Organization), it is suggested to attend violence against university students in an individual way or through the use of tutorial and therapeutic programs or home visit programs when students agree with this idea.
- f) To ensure that any actions that are taken can be closely related to the results of research about this subject.
- g) It is recommended to use the media and all the information technology available at the UAA to raise awareness on this issue.
- h) Because of the multifactorial nature of violence, it is suggested that this topic could be implemented to all students so that they can do projects and propose actions related to legal nature, criminal law, criminology nature, and health, psychological and sociocultural aspects.
- i) To design, to plan, to develop, to monitor and to evaluate actions based on gender and human rights of women.
- j) To contemplate that the actions, programs and strategies that are implemented have to be progressive.

Finally, trying to answer the title of this article, considering the evidence found, there is insufficient evidence to state that students exhibit violent behaviors that were not learned in any school program and should therefore continue to study the influence of family of origin and the social environment in which students develop a multifactorial manner to consider the set of influences that involved violence between dating couples in college.

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