

Cross-Cultural Analysis of Teen Dating Victimization: Typologies, Correlates, and Implications for Intervention

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Abstract

Background: Dating violence (DV) is still a global problem of enormous proportions. Scientific and social consensus highlights the necessity of performing typological analyses in order to better understand the diverse violent experiences and intervention needs of the victims. **Method:** The sample comprised 1,308 Mexican and Spanish adolescents aged between 12 and 18, who had been victims of DV. Two-step cluster analyses were performed for each country using the frequency and severity of the victimization as grouping variables, which was followed by an analysis of the differences between clusters in personal and relationship characteristics. **Results:** The analyses suggested three clusters in both countries: Victims of psychological aggression, Victims of psychological and physical aggression, and Victims of psychological, physical, and sexual aggression. The early start of the first dating relationship and the prolonged exposure to aggression throughout different relationships were associated with the most victimized groups. **Conclusions:** The findings highlight the need to start intervention strategies at a young age targeting the promotion of skills to recognize and confront violence before it is established as a pattern of coexistence with the significant other.

Keywords: Dating violence, victimization, typology, cross-cultural, cluster analysis.

Resumen

Estudio Transcultural de Víctimas de Violencia en el Noviazgo: Tipología, Caracterización e Implicaciones de Intervención. Antecedentes: la violencia en el noviazgo (VN) es un hecho constatado a nivel internacional, resulta necesario profundizar en el conocimiento de la diversidad de las experiencias de las víctimas a través de análisis tipológicos que permitan mejorar las estrategias de intervención existentes. **Método:** el objetivo del estudio fue identificar los perfiles de las víctimas de VN en dos países latinos usando como variables de agrupación los tipos de agresión. Participaron 1.308 adolescentes mexicanos y españoles víctimas de VN. Se llevaron a cabo two-step cluster analysis en ambos países en función de la tipos y frecuencia de las agresiones; seguidos de comparaciones entre grupos en las características personales y de la relación. **Resultados:** los análisis sugieren la formación de tres agrupaciones cluster en ambos países. Los grupos más victimizados se caracterizaron por el inicio temprano de las relaciones y la exposición prolongada a las agresiones en diferentes relaciones. **Conclusiones:** los hallazgos apuntan a la necesidad de adaptar las intervenciones a edades más tempranas, con el objetivo de promover el desarrollo de habilidades para reconocer y enfrentar la violencia antes de que se normalice, aumente o establezca como un patrón de convivencia estable.

Palabras clave: violencia en el noviazgo, victimización, tipologías, transcultural, análisis clúster.

During the last two decades, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) has been recognized by scientific and social consensus as a priority area of intervention. Throughout this time, the understanding of the phenomenon has widened, turning it into an increasingly solid basis for the development of preventive, legal, and treatment intervention policies for abusers and victims (Hossain, et al., 2020; Tarzia et al., 2020; World Health Organization, 2013).

The diverse studies carried out around the world over the last 5 years, however, warn that the problem is far from being diminished as an expected result of the aforementioned interventions; rather, IPV continues to be an important and increasing problem. Empirical

data indicates that in adolescent populations, psychological-verbal aggression is still especially frequent (reported by 5.8% - 92% of the samples studied) as is physical (1% - 57.5 %) and sexual abuse (10% - 64.6%; Hossain, et al., 2020). The results regarding the effects of the intervention programs implemented are also not very encouraging. Even though the programs seem to have a significant impact on the adolescent's general knowledge and attitudes about DV, the prevalence of violent behavior in young couples does not appear to decrease after participating in the intervention sessions (De la Rue et al., 2017).

Similar conclusions have been reached in adult populations. It is estimated that 1 in every 3 women over the age of 18 suffers some kind of physical or sexual violence from their partner. Although data on the victimization of men is scarce, considerable prevalence of victimization, psychological, physical, or sexual, is also estimated to occur between 2% and 28% in nonclinical samples (Tarzia et al., 2020).

The undeniable extent of the problem coupled with the limited results obtained so far in the clinical field is proof of the need for

further research. However, based on the partial efficacy of the previous research, a different scientific analysis is required. This perspective, added to the various empirical studies regarding the important intra-couple differences in the direction and overlap of the types of violence, e.g. couples with psychological violence exclusively, or psychologically and physically violent couples, highlights the need to go one step further, and to stop considering the experience of abuse or victimization as a global, undifferentiated phenomenon. An in depth analysis is needed based on an empirical, multidimensional, and simultaneous characterization of the different types of aggression in both the abusers and the victims to reflect a more realistic view and understanding of the problem (Cascardi et al., 2017; Siria et al., 2020; Weiss et al., 2017; Ybarra, et al., 2016).

The first step in achieving a specific understanding of the victimization and abuse patterns is to change the mere descriptive analysis of the prevalence of aggressive behavior. Research needs to emphasize the frequent overlap of the different types of aggression and the complex interrelationships between the frequency, severity, risk factors, and consequences associated with the different patterns and typologies of abuse found in the empirical reality of couples (Garthe et al., 2018; Haynie et al., 2013; Reidy et al., 2016).

From this perspective, Haynie et al. (2013) analyzed the frequencies and simultaneity of different forms of DV in American adolescents founding the empirical existence of three differentiated profiles: (a) Nonviolent (65%), (b) Victims and perpetrators of verbal aggressions (29.8%), and (c) Victims and perpetrators of verbal and physical aggressions (5.25%). A few years later, Choi et al. (2017) found a very similar typology in another American sample: (a) Nonviolence (40.7%), (b) Victims and perpetrators of emotional violence (30.6%), and (c) Victims and perpetrators of psychological and physical violence (8.7%). Based on the results of the analysis of the victimization experience in their study sample, Choi et al. (2017) suggested modifying the typology initially proposed by Haynie et al. (2013), adding two more profiles: a group characterized exclusively by sexual abuse (11.7%) and another characterized exclusively by physical attacks (8.3%).

Although these studies have served as a reference to describe DV more comprehensively, recent research has indicated the need to make a typological differentiation between the aggressors' and victims' profiles to facilitate the understanding of the psychological, social, and familial characteristics of those who maintain hostile and aggressive behaviour towards their partners (aggressors) and those who are recipients of the violence (victims).

The study of empirically validated typologies of abusers is providing interesting data for the adaptation and improvement of interventions, demonstrating the clinical utility of intervention (Cantos et al., 2019; Redondo et al., 2019). However, in the case of victims, this new study approach remains scarce. Thus, when studies have exclusively focused on victims, three differentiated profiles have been found: (a) Victims with a low frequency of low severity aggressions (60%); (b) Victims frequently abused but with low levels of severity (between 30% and 36% of the studied samples), and (c) Victims of different types of violence and a high frequency of assaults (11% - 19%) (Herbert et al., 2018; Reidy et al., 2016).

Undoubtedly, more research is needed to analyze the empirical validity of the different victims' typologies and characterizations across samples. Only through this analysis will we be able to adopt

better preventive and intervention measures, thus providing each type of victim with the specific resources to cope with their situation of abuse. Furthermore, to give more validity to the typologies, it is necessary to include in the current multidimensional analysis of the victims the individual and psychosocial variables associated with a higher risk of victimization cited in previous literature (Bonache et al., 2017; Herbert et al., 2018), which will allow a more detailed, specific, and differentiating description of each typology and profile.

It should also be considered that the analysis of typologies in DV relationships has mainly been limited to the Anglo-Saxon context, leaving a theoretical gap regarding the ability to generalize the stated typologies in other cultures (Choi et al., 2017; Garthe et al., 2018; Goncy et al., 2017). Only by comparing the results obtained from studies into different cultures will a deeper understanding of typologies, risk factors, and health consequences be possible. Cross-cultural research is the key to analyzing the stability of the conclusions in order to understand the reality of the victims and determine which factors are fundamental when addressing preventive or intervention strategies across different samples.

Limited research has focused on the DV profiles from Latinx populations, in which although they share the Spanish language, there are also important differences between these countries that could influence the victim's experiences and their responses to the aggression. For instance, Mexico and Spain, are located in the different geographical contexts: America and Europe, each continent characterized by a different historical and economic development, which may also imply significant differences when it comes to the availability of familial, social and institutional resources to recognize and face the violence (Estevez et al., 2016). Moreover, Mexicans are taught to have more traditional attitudes about women and their commitment in relationships as well as more rigid expectations about gender roles (Shaffer et al., 2018), which could also affect the victim's experiences.

Hence, knowing more about the characteristics that define and differentiate each group across cultures can be decisive in guiding future preventive and intervention strategies. Furthermore, systematic reviews seem to indicate that the behavioral change of the victims after participating in an intervention program is directly related to the profile and type of their victimization. Research suggests that intervention programs tend to be more effective for those victims involved in relationships characterized by high frequency and visibility of aggression; it seems that those involved in more violent relationships have a greater possibility of reporting and leaving the violent relationship when compared to those victims involved in situations where the violence is more subtle and could to be interpreted as less important or even normal (Arroyo et al., 2016; Eckhardt et al., 2013).

Therefore, the current study has three objectives to address important gaps in the existing literature. Firstly, we aimed to identify the typology of the victims of DV in an adolescent Mexican sample. By doing so, we expected to find differentiated profiles of victims distinguished by the frequency and severity of the aggression. Secondly, we analyzed the stability of the typology found in the Mexican sample by replicating the analysis in a Spanish sample with similar characteristics, but different social and cultural influences. We sought to give greater strength to the conclusions and to enable the possibility of generalizing the knowledge. Finally, we characterized the Mexican and Spanish victims according to the typology described recognizing the socio-

demographic variables and characteristics of the relationships. We expected to describe the specific profiles, needs, and resources of each group and to identify the potential treatment implications for each type of victim.

Method

Participants

The original sample consisted of 1359 adolescents, 89.1% were victims of verbal aggressions i.e., insults or threats, 82.6% victims of jealous tactics, 46.0% victims of coercive behavior, 35.4% victims of low severity physical aggressions, i.e. slapping, punching or kicking; 1.4% victims of high severity physical aggressions, i.e. being strangled, beaten or harmed with a weapon, and 5.9% were victims of sexual aggression. Only 4.1% of the total sample did not suffer any kind of aggression and were excluded from the analyses because the objective of the study was to identify the typology of the victims of DV.

The final sample consisted of 1,308 adolescents: 681 Mexicans and 627 Spaniards; 59.3% girls and 40.7% boys aged between 12 and 18 years old ($M = 15.72$, $SD = 1.31$). The average duration of the relationships was 12.91 months ($SD = 10.55$) in Mexico, and 10.39 months ($SD = 10.55$) in Spain. More than half of the participants claimed to “hang out” with their partners at least three times a week (70.4% in Mexico and 81.2% in Spain), and, despite recognizing themselves as victims of some type of violence, 80% stated their intention to remain in the relationship (79.4% in Mexico and 80.3% in Spain). The majority of the participants rated their relationship as highly satisfactory on a subjective scale of 1 to 10 (from 0 = very unsatisfactory to 10 = very satisfactory), reaching high scores of 8.89 ($SD = 1.39$) in Mexico and 8.44 ($SD = 1.59$) in Spain.

Instruments

Sociodemographic Questionnaire. A sociodemographic questionnaire was designed *ad-hoc* for the study. This questionnaire included information regarding sociodemographic data and information about the dating relationship, e.g. duration, satisfaction, and commitment.

Modified Conflict Tactics Scale (M-CTS; Cascardi et al., 1999). Mexican Cultural Adaptation (Ronzón-Tirado et al., 2019) and Spanish Validation (Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2007). This Likert-type scale with five response options, i.e. 0 ‘never’ to 4 ‘very often’, was used to measure the frequency of verbal (5 items; range 0-20) and physical (10 items; range 0-40) victimization. In the Mexican sample, the reliability was measured by Cronbach’s alpha coefficient; $\alpha = 0.62$, 95% CI [0.56 - 0.65] for verbal victimization and $\alpha = 0.76$, 95% CI [0.73 - 0.79] for physical victimization. In the Spanish sample, $\alpha = 0.63$, 95% CI [0.58 - 0.67] for verbal victimization and $\alpha = 0.71$, 95% CI [0.67 - 0.74] for physical victimization.

Dominant and Jealous Tactics Scale (DJTS; Kasian & Painter, 1992). Spanish Validation of Muñoz-Rivas et al. (2019) This Likert-type scale with 5 options: 0 ‘never’ to 4 ‘very often’, was used to measure the frequency of victimization by dominant (7 items; range 0-28) and jealous tactics (4 items; 0-16). The reliability of the scale for the Mexican sample was $\alpha = 0.77$, 95% CI [0.75 - 0.79] and $\alpha = 0.77$, 95% CI [0.74 - 0.79] for the Spanish sample.

Sexual Coercion Scale (ECS; Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2017) This Likert-type scale (5 items, range 0-20) was used to measure the frequency of sexual victimization through different types of coercive behavior. The five options: 0 ‘never’ to 4 ‘very often’, included items such as use of threats of verbalizations and facilitators, i.e. alcohol and drugs, to facilitate unwanted sexual intercourse. The reliability of the scale for the Mexican sample was $\alpha = 0.71$, 95% CI [0.89 - 0.84], and $\alpha = 0.69$, 95% CI [0.65 - 0.72] in Spain.

Procedure

The evaluations took place in the classrooms of 20 educational centers in Mexico and Spain during the academic year 2017-2018. Seven public institutions, i.e. three secondary centers and four high schools, were from Xalapa (Veracruz, México), and 13 were public education centers from Madrid (Madrid, Spain). The participation of the students was voluntary and anonymous, and their participation required the informed consent and agreement of the students, parents, school orientation department, and the Association of Mothers and Parents of Students of each school. The evaluation sessions lasted an average of 60 minutes. Ethical approval for all the procedures and analyses conducted during the current study was provided by the Research Ethics Committee of the Autonomous University of Madrid (CEI-85-1576).

Data Analysis

Firstly, the reliability of each questionnaire was analyzed using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (α). Next the descriptive statistics of the sociodemographic, characteristics of the relationship, and victimization variables were calculated to describe each country’s sample. Then, a cluster tendency was analyzed and a first two-step cluster analysis was performed with the Mexican sample using the direct scores obtained by each participant for each type of victimization. The number of clusters was determined automatically using Log-likelihood as a measure of the distance between individuals and the Bayesian of Schwartz (BIC) as a clustering criterion.

In order to verify the stability of the clustering solution obtained in the Mexican sample, another Two-step cluster analysis was performed using, as a grouping variables, the direct scores of the victimization measurements from a Spanish sample of 629 adolescent victims of DV. The sample had similar characteristics, but different cultural and social influences.

A two-step cluster analysis procedure was selected as being a robust procedure even when analyzing data such as violent behavior, where normality and independence is not fully met (Bacher et al., 2004). As a way to minimize the possible effect of ordering the cases on both the resulting clustering models, the analyses were performed three times on each sample; the cases were randomly ordered for each analysis. The same results were obtained each time.

Finally, in order to characterize each cluster group ANOVAS with Post Hoc comparisons were performed by selecting the type of victim as the comparison factor for the personal and relationship characteristics. All analyses were performed using the SPSS Statistics V21.0, the Silhouette values were analyzed using the STATS CLUS SIL extension command.

Results

Typology of Adolescent Victims of Dating Violence: Mexican Sample

The majority of the Mexican adolescents reported being victims of psychological violence through verbal aggression (31.8%), jealous tactics (87.8%), or dominant tactics (44.9%). More than a third of the sample (33.9%) reported being victimized through physical aggression, and 5.7% reported having suffered some type of sexual coercion in their current relationship.

When analyzing the cluster tendency of the sample based on the severity, frequency and overlapping of the assaults, three inconsistent increases in the dissimilarity measure were observed at the agglomeration schedule, suggesting the formation of three or four groupings. However, after analyzing the dendrogram distribution, a three-cluster solution turned out to be the one that best reflected the underlying structure of the data, since three groups with relatively homogeneous data were observed. Next, a two-step cluster analysis was performed and confirmed the formation of three differentiated groups of victims. This solution was the most appropriate for the model as it turned out to be the closest typology to the actual experience of the adolescents and the one with best statistical adjustment index. The clustering model obtained a BIC score equivalent to 1398.56 (lower than the two-classes solution, BIC = 1706.07), it had the highest value for the Average Distance Ratio (3.21) in relation to the rest of the possible groupings, and a total Silhouette mean dissimilarity value of 0.39.

Each of the three types of victims was characterized by clear differences in the frequency, severity, and overlap of the incidents

of aggression. The three types were named according to the victims' response to the characteristics of the victimization profile (see Table 1). Group 1, the Victims of Psychological Aggressions (VPA), comprised 65.6% of the sample. This type of victim was characterized by infrequent victimization, mainly through verbal aggression and jealous behavior. Group 2, the Victims of Psychological and Physical Aggressions (VPPA) comprised 32.2% of the adolescents. This group was characterized by a medium frequency of victimization compared with the other two groups and by victimization through verbal, jealous, dominant, and physical aggression. Finally, Group 3, the Victims of Psychological, Physical and Sexual Aggression (VPPSA), consisted of 2.2% of the cases. This last group of victims was characterized by being constantly abused through more severe attacks, e.g. physical and sexual aggression.

Typology of Adolescent Victims of Dating Violence: Spanish Sample

The frequency, severity, and overlapping pattern of the victimization reported by the Spanish sample was very similar to that found in the Mexican sample. Most of the Spaniards identified as victims of psychological violence (93.6% through verbal aggression, 85.1% through jealous tactics, and 50.1% through dominant tactics). More than a third of the sample (33.9%) reported being victims of physical aggression, and 5.7% reported being victims of some type of sexual coercion.

After replicating the two-step cluster analysis in the Spanish sample, the results suggested, as in the Mexican sample, the formation of three clearly differentiated groups (see Table 2). Once

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations and ANOVAS Statistics Across Clusters on the Different Types of Victimization: Mexican Typology

Victimization	VPA		VPPA		VPPSA		F(680)	η^2	Bonferroni
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Verbal	2.76	2.02	6.81	2.5	10.8	4.71	298.75***	.47	1>2*** 1>3***2>3***
Dominance	0.43	0.81	2.26	2.02	8.13	5.78	253.12***	.43	1>2*** 1>3***2>3***
Jealousy	2.17	1.62	6.39	3.04	9.53	5.48	294.71***	.47	1>2*** 1>3***2>3***
Physical	0.48	1.02	1.77	2.29	12.47	6.37	342.68***	.50	1>2*** 1>3***2>3***
Sexual	0.03	0.19	0.16	0.50	3.2	5.40	102.69***	.23	1>2*** 1>3***

Note: N = 681. VPA= Victims of psychological aggressions (N=447); VPPA= Victims of psychological and physical aggressions (N=219); VPPSA= Victims of psychological, physical and sexual aggressions (N=15)
*** p < .001

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations and ANOVAS Statistics Across Clusters on the Different Types of Victimization: Spanish Typology

Victimization	VPA		VPPA		VPPSA		F(628)	η^2	Bonferroni
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Verbal	2.69	1.74	6.67	2.56	9.81	4.13	318.18***	.50	1>2*** 1>3***2>3***
Dominance	0.42	0.70	2.19	1.79	5.45	4.40	208.28***	.40	1>2*** 1>3***2>3***
Jealousy	1.87	1.55	5.40	3.02	6.79	4.45	183.85***	.37	1>2*** 1>3***2>3***
Physical	0.25	0.60	1.13	1.48	6.43	5.00	258.34***	.45	1>2*** 1>3***2>3***
Sexual	0.02	0.13	0.05	0.21	1.39	2.05	119.35***	.28	1>2*** 1>3***

Note: N = 629. VPA= Victims of psychological aggressions (N=356); VPPA= Victims of psychological and physical aggressions (N=240); VPPSA= Victims of psychological, physical and sexual aggressions (N=36)
*** p < .001

again, the first type was VPA (56.1% of the sample), characterized by infrequent victimization, mainly through verbal aggression and jealous behaviour. Group 2, VPPA (38.2 % of the sample), was characterized by a medium frequency of victimization when compared to the other two groups. Finally, Group 3, VPPSA (5.7% of the sample), was characterized by high frequencies of victimization through all five types of aggression. The BIC value for the three-class clustering model was 1354.29, showing a better fit than the two-class model (BIC = 1676.81), it also had the highest value in the Average Distance Ratio (2.68) when compared to the other possible solutions, and a total Silhouette mean dissimilarity value of 0.35.

Validation of the Model: Relationship Between the Typology Personal and Relationship Characteristics

Once the similarity of the typology was corroborated in both samples, each type of victim was characterized based on sociodemographic variables and characteristics of the relationships that have been related to an increased risk of DV. According to the expectations, the ANOVA tests revealed a clearly differentiated profile for each group of victims in both countries. The most victimized groups were characteristically associated with greater number of risk factors for victimization, e.g. both members were older and had been in long-term relationships (See Table 3).

The VPPSA group from both samples were characterized as being older youth (Mexico: $F(680) = 5.41, p < 0.01, \eta^2 = 0.02$; Spain: $F(628) = 6.16, p < 0.01, \eta^2 = 0.02$), having a greater number of previous dating experiences (Mexico: $F(680) = 6.11, p < 0.01,$

$\eta^2 = 0.02$; Spain: $F(628) = 16.34, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.02$), maintaining long-term relationships (Mexico: $F(680) = 8.13, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.05$; Spain: $F(628) = 16.34, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.05$), and feeling less satisfied in their current relationship (Mexico: $F(680) = 12.57, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.04$; Spain: $F(628) = 8.27, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.03$).

Regarding the particularities in the characterization of the victims from both countries, the Mexican victims from the most victimized group, the VPPSA, tended to establish courtship relationships with boys and girls who were older than the victims ($F[680] = 4.88, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.01$). Unlike the Mexican sample, the later start of the first dating relationship in Spain was associated with a lower frequency and severity of aggression ($F[628] = 3.67, p < 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.03$).

Discussion

Cluster analyses were performed and included not only the most common aggressive behavior studied in the IPV investigations, e.g. verbal and physical aggression, but also, as suggested by previous studies (Choi et al., 2017; Garthe et al., 2018) other characteristically displayed behavior in younger couples that could better enable the understanding of the actual victimization experience of this particular age group, e.g. jealousy, dominant tactics, and sexual coercion.

In general, the diversity in the experiences of victimization described by the participants corroborates the need to overcome the univariate approach of the problem and the need to carry out more detailed and typological analyses of victimization beyond the mere verification of the presence or absence of the aggression in

Table 3
Typology Validation Based on the Sociodemographic and Characteristics of the Relationship

Mexican sample	VPA		VPPA		VPPSA		F(680)	η^2	Bonferroni
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Sex	0.38	0.48	0.41	0.94	0.53	0.51	0.958	.00	
Victim's age	15.61	1.33	15.92	1.23	16.20	1.14	5.41**	.02	2>3**
Abuser's age	16.32	2.21	16.65	2.34	18.47	4.06	7.21***	.01	1>2* 1>3***
Couple's age difference	0.71	1.78	0.72	1.94	2.27	3.59	4.88**	.01	1>2** 1>3**
Relationship length	11.78	9.84	14.85	11.16	17.93	15.90	8.13***	.05	2>3***
Satisfaction	9.05	1.28	8.64	1.50	7.67	1.95	12.57***	.04	1<2* 1<3*** 2<3**
Age at first dating experience	12.61	1.79	12.68	1.76	12.67	1.45	0.122	.02	
Number of previous dating experiences	3.91	3.01	4.71	3.56	4.80	2.83	6.11**	.02	2>3**
Spanish sample	VPA		VPPA		VPPSA		F(628)	η^2	Bonferroni
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Sex	0.39	0.49	0.43	0.49	0.56	0.50	1.88	.01	
Victims' age	15.47	1.08	15.69	1.11	16.02	0.84	6.16**	.02	1>3* 2>3*
Abuser's age	16.45	2.25	16.84	2.26	16.96	1.57	2.719	.01	
Couple's age difference	0.97	2.02	1.14	1.99	0.97	1.50	0.476	.00	
Relationship length	8.59	8.10	12.55	9.81	13.28	9.41	16.34***	.05	1>3** 2>3***
Satisfaction	8.60	1.47	8.34	1.54	7.55	2.20	8.27***	.03	1<2* 1<3***
Age at first dating experience	12.91	1.64	12.58	1.61	12.44	1.82	3.67*	.03	2<3*
Number of previous dating experiences	2.93	1.53	3.33	1.75	3.67	2.01	6.31**	.02	1>3* 2>3*

Note: VPA= Victims of psychological aggressions; VPPSA= Victims of psychological and physical aggressions; VPPSA= Victims of psychological, physical and sexual aggressions. Score ranges: Victims age (12-18); Abusers age (12-23); Couples age difference (years; 0-6); Relationship length (months; 0-24); Satisfaction (0-10); Victim's age at first dating experience (8-17); Number of previous dating experiences (1-12)
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

order to effectively target interventions according to the different types of victims (Carrascosa et al., 2019; Haynie et al., 2013; Herbert et al., 2018; Reidy et al., 2016).

The analyses revealed that despite the evident diversity of the experiences, the victims of both countries could be grouped into three categories which were clearly differentiated by the severity, frequency, and overlap of the victims' experiences: (a) Victims of psychological aggression, (b) Victims of psychological and physical aggression, and (c) Victims of psychological, physical, and sexual aggression.

The most representative group in both samples was Group 1: the victims of psychological aggressions and low frequency of assaults (victimized by verbal and jealous tactics), in contrast with the other two groups, in which physical aggression (32.2% and 38.2% of the samples) and sexual aggression (2.2% and 5.7% of the samples) were more evident. Severe aggression does not seem to be characteristic of the adolescent victims from Mexico or Spain, indicating that younger adolescents are victimized fundamentally through more subtle aggression that can be easily normalized during the adolescent stage. Further intervention strategies must target the development of skills related to the recognition of psychological aggression and an objective evaluation of the relationship interactions before the aggressive behaviour is normalized, increased in severity and frequency, or become established as a stable pattern of coexistence with the significant other. Professionals must pay attention to the fact that young people may consider that psychological and mild physical aggression is normal, or expected in dating relationships (Hossain et al., 2020), which represents an important risk factor for the gradual evolution into more severe patterns of victimization during adult life, where more serious aggression tends to be displayed, including severe physical assaults and violent behaviour of a sexual nature (Weiss et al., 2017).

In addition, by incorporating into a subsequent study of the risk factors associated with the typological analysis of each type of victim, we were able to outline a more detailed characterization of the victims. We identified that early adolescents were those exposed to a lower frequency and severity of aggression. But when the adolescents characterized by an early start of their first dating relationship, i.e. 12 years old on average, grew older they became the ones at greater risk of being the victims of more frequent and severe assaults (VPPA and VPPSA). This trend corroborates the need to start to address the problem through intervention strategies adapted to young people of between 11 and 12 years old, rather than addressing the problem when they are 14 years or older, as is the case in previous interventions (De La Rue et al., 2017). Undoubtedly, the information that young people have when starting their first dating experience could play an especially relevant role in the formation of healthy interaction patterns rather than those of an aggressive nature.

The results also indicate that adolescents with a lower risk of severe victimization (VPA) were characterized by a lower number of previous relationships, and relationships of a shorter duration

when compared to those in the VPPA and VPPSA groups. These data coincide with the proven effect of the prolonged exposure to aggression throughout different relationships over the acceptance of the aggression as a proper way of solving disagreements, and the subsequent increase in the severity and frequency of the victimization in young and adult victims (Kennedy et al., 2018; Ybarra et al., 2016). Therefore, health professionals are encouraged to strengthen the interventions strategies for the modification of the attitudes towards aggressive behaviour in dating situations, placing special emphasis on the cognitive evaluations of those that have already been involved in previous violent relationships.

One of the main differences between the Mexican and Spanish samples was the tendency of the Mexican victims to establish intimate relationships with people significantly older than themselves; this age difference was especially relevant in the VPPSA groups. This result highlights the importance of the inequalities of experience and power over the perpetration of aggressive behaviour within the relationship (Johnson et al., 2015; Shorey et al., 2017), but could also imply the effect of cultural values and appraisals related to the establishment, commitment and traditional behaviour expected from the Mexican couples. This highlights the need for further research into the effect of cultural values on dating victimization in Mexican populations.

Finally, it should be noted that both the Mexican and Spanish victims reported that they were very satisfied with their relationships. Although the level of perceived satisfaction decreased in the groups with a higher frequency and severity of the abuse (VPPA and VPPSA), the perceived satisfaction, even in the group with the highest risk (VPPSA) remained higher than 7 (on a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 was equivalent to very satisfied). This is a very significant fact because it undoubtedly suggests the need for a crucial element to make any preventive intervention effective. To get young victims of DV to end or modify their relationships, a change at the cognitive level is also necessary, and this is where the appropriate subjective evaluation of the relationship could be especially important. Thus, it seems necessary to include strategies that enable adolescents to differentiate between satisfaction and involvement in the relationships, and to analyze relational patterns, especially with those adolescents who have suffered other types of victimization, especially during their childhood (Edwards et al., 2012).

This study is not without some limitations: the sampling from single regions in both countries could restrict the representativeness of the findings, further studies regarding victimization profiles in Latinx cultures must include probability sampling methods in order to strengthen the findings and generalizability of the profiles. Additionally, not all the scales used in this research were culturally adapted to each country, and although they were able to score acceptable reliability values, they could potentially constrain the results due to the DV cultural traits. We encourage the development of systematic and methodical adaptations of DV measurements in Latinx populations in order to improve the accuracy of the existing instruments and the cross-cultural research findings (Ronzón-Tirado et al., 2019).

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