

Self-esteem and couple relationships in young women from the state of Hidalgo, Mexico

Autoestima y relaciones de pareja en mujeres jóvenes del Estado de Hidalgo, México

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Abstract:

Self-esteem is related to the individual's attitudes towards himself. These are cognitive, affective, emotional, and behavioral factors. The World Health Organization mentions that one of three women suffers or has suffered abuse by their partner or ex-partner, which is 35% of all women worldwide. Nowadays, violence against women is a public health problem with serious consequences for mental health, and it affects women of all cultures, socioeconomic and educational levels; a violent woman who has low self-esteem is considered vulnerable, and it affects her development. The main objective was to identify and understand the relationship between self-esteem and the possible existence of violence in couple relationships in young women between 18 and 24 years of age in Hidalgo. A mixed approach was used with a sequential transformative design. In the quantitative results, a considerable percentage of young women with low self-esteem (58%) was found. In the qualitative results, it was found that self-esteem is related to life experiences in the family and couple, and stereotyped gender roles were identified that denigrate women, allowing vulnerability in their relationships. It is concluded that low self-esteem is a factor that is built at an early age, and it derives significant experiences, which may be involved in the development of intra-family and couple relationships with violent dynamics.

Keywords:

Self-esteem, violence, couple relationships, gender roles

Resumen:

La autoestima se relaciona con las actitudes del individuo hacia sí mismo, integradas por factores cognoscitivos, afectivos, emotivos y conductuales. La Organización Mundial de la Salud menciona que una de cada tres mujeres en el mundo sufre o ha sufrido maltrato por parte de su pareja o expareja, lo que corresponde al 35% del total de mujeres en el mundo. Actualmente la violencia contra la mujer es un problema de salud pública con graves consecuencias para la salud mental, afecta a mujeres de todas las culturas, niveles socioeconómicos y educativos; una mujer violentada que posee autoestima baja se considera vulnerable, viéndose afectada en el desarrollo integral de su vida. El objetivo general de la investigación fue identificar y comprender la relación entre autoestima y posible existencia de violencia en las relaciones de pareja, en mujeres jóvenes de 18 y 24 años del estado de Hidalgo. Se utilizó un enfoque mixto, con *diseño transformativo secuencial* (DITRAS). En los resultados cuantitativos se encontró un porcentaje considerable de mujeres jóvenes con baja autoestima (58%). En los resultados cualitativos se encontró que la autoestima se relaciona con las experiencias de vida en el ámbito familiar y de pareja, se identificaron roles de género estereotipados que denigran a las mujeres, posibilitando pautas de vulnerabilidad en sus relaciones de pareja. Se concluye que la baja autoestima es un factor que se construye a temprana edad derivado de experiencias significativas, las cuales pueden estar involucradas en el desarrollo de relaciones intrafamiliares y de pareja con dinámicas violentas.

Palabras Clave:

Autoestima, violencia, relaciones de pareja, roles de género

INTRODUCCIÓN

From childhood, self-esteem should be an important factor for the development of people because success in different areas in

which they operate will depend on this. Self-esteem implies the way in which we value ourselves, as well as the moral values, defects, abilities, virtues and even the way in which we act, which in turn comes from the experiences lived and the

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environments in which we live, which They develop from birth based on love, security and feeling valued.

Orosco (2015) argues that self-esteem has to do with the individual's attitudes toward himself. Attitudes include affects and feelings and are composed of cognitive, affective, emotional, and behavioral factors.

On the other hand, Zenteno (2017) affirms that self-esteem is a set of feelings and sensations concerning oneself, the result of the experiences that one is having, and that can be positive or negative; He adds that individuals interpret their experiences based on these feelings and sensations, which are influenced by areas such as personal, work, professional and social.

Espínola, Cambranis, Salazar, Moreno, and Esteves (2017) refer that the couple relationship is a bond that is established between two people and they feel attracted to each other, which is seen as a complex and constantly changing system, opening up different types of relationship such as marriage, free union or courtship. Courtship represents an opportunity to get to know each other, a stage of experimentation and search, with activities, tastes, and thoughts in common. It is a prelude to a lasting relationship.

The Mexican Youth Institute (2017) mentions that violence in a relationship is understood as any physical, psychological, mental, and sexual aggression to dominate and maintain control over the other person. Start with any uncomfortable comment, then with a jerk that at first may seem like a game between the two, but as time goes on, the situation can become more serious. Anacona and Armando (2013) explain that dating violence tends to be characterized by less serious acts of abuse compared to those that occur in marital violence, characterized by physical and psychological abuse. Nava, Onofre, and Báez (2017) report that women with low self-esteem face intimate partner violence (including sexual violence); In addition to being more exposed to risk factors and, therefore, they suffer a high level of vulnerability, a situation that is linked to economic, social and cultural subordination, according to which the man considers that his partner belongs to him and that therefore, he has the right and control over his body, as well as deciding when and how of sexual encounters. In their study *Dating Violence, Emotional Dependence and Self-esteem in adolescents and young adults*, Villa, García, Cuetos, and Sirvent (2017) found that depending on gender, adolescent female victims of violence had lower self-esteem compared to males, those who more frequently exercised accommodation and manipulation processes.

The World Health Organization (WHO) (2021) mentions that one in 3 women in the world suffers or has suffered abuse by their partner or ex-partner; this corresponds to 35% of all women in the world; at the same time, it points out that violence can negatively affect the physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health of women. Following the above, it is important to highlight that violence is accompanied by psychological damage even when only physical, economic, or other damage is evident.

Currently, violence against women is a public health problem with serious consequences that affect women of all races, cultures, socioeconomic or educational levels and cause countless sufferings. According to the National Survey on the Dynamics of Relationships in Households (ENDIREH, 2016), the violence perpetrated by partners, husbands, ex-boyfriends, or ex-husbands against women in Mexico is "severe and very severe" in 64.0% of cases.

According to the UN (2016, cited by Rueda, 2018), it refers that gender violence in an affective relationship is the behavior of the partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual, or psychological damage, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and control behaviors.

Violence is something that is transmitted from generation to generation; as Pelliza and Poroli (2018) refer, the behaviors, beliefs, or thoughts learned in the face of this type of violence are so structured that they are difficult to modify, turning them into norms of coexistence and into gender roles, where we settle, that is, how to be masculine or feminine, influencing the ideology, emotions, and behavior of each family member. Pérez, Arenas, Forgiony, and Rivera (2019) reaffirm that beliefs are diffused in the environment since these are components acquired through interaction with the environment and with other subjects. According to the above, these beliefs allow violence to be maintained or increased, in this case, gender violence, which ends up being a social problem that continues to affect today.

Patsi (2020) mentions that being a victim of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse in the family during the first years of life is a predisposing factor for the type of relationship that will be consolidated in adulthood; therefore, the maladaptive schemes and the emotional dependence reflected in the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of the family nucleus, are related and last in adult life, which are characterized by subordination, submission, sacrifice, putting the partner's needs before their own, which would lead to maintaining the relationship as a couple despite their toxicity and repeat the cycle of violence over and over again.

Rodríguez, Riosvelasco, and Nemesio (2018), in their study carried out with third-grade high school adolescents, found that adolescents manage to identify violence in their dating relationships; however, it is considered a normal process of the relationship, in the same way, found that violence occurs in both men and women; however, the violence suffered by women continues to be greater.

It is possible that a violented woman has low or decreased self-esteem because, before society, she would be considered a vulnerable woman without the necessary tools to cope with the situation in which she lives, increasing the risk of mental problems, leading her to an inefficient development in the different areas of your life. That is why the present work aims to identify and understand the relationship between self-esteem and the possible existence of violence in the relationships of

young women between 18 and 24 years of age in the state of Hidalgo.

METHOD

For the purposes of this research, a mixed approach (quantitative-qualitative) was used; it is a Sequential Transformative Design (DITRAS). According to Hernández, Fernández, and Baptista (2014), the priority and initial phase of this design can be quantitative or qualitative or give both the same importance in the same way, its central purpose is to serve the theoretical perspective of the researcher. In both phases, it must take into account the opinions and voices of all the participants and the groups they represent. This is how this study was developed in two phases: the first phase was quantitative to identify the degree of self-esteem and the presence of violence and the second phase was qualitative to deepen the dynamics in the couple relationships of the women participants.

The data collection was carried out online with young women who live in the state of Hidalgo due to the Covid-19 pandemic during the year 2020. Below we develop each of the phases.

Phase 1. Quantitative

The following objectives were set for this first phase:

1. To identify the levels of self-esteem of young women between 18 and 24 years old who live in the state of Hidalgo through a self-esteem scale.
2. To identify the levels of violence in the relationships of young women between 18 and 24 years old who live in the state of Hidalgo through a dating abuse questionnaire.
3. To discover if there is a correlation between the variables of self-esteem and violence in the relationships of young women between 18 and 24 years of age in the state of Hidalgo.

Sample

The sample was non-probabilistic for convenience, where 60 women participated, selected according to the following inclusion criteria: Young women between 18 and 24 years old, who wished to participate voluntarily, who had a relationship of 6 months or more, who are heterosexual, and who resided in the state of Hidalgo.

Instruments

For this stage, the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale was used, validated in Mexico by Jurado, López, and Querevalú in 2015, designed to evaluate the abstraction that the individual makes of himself in relation to his attributes, his abilities, his activities, and your objects. The scale consists of 10 items, has an internal consistency of 0.76 and 0.87, and reliability is 0.80, focused on adolescents, adults, and the elderly.

Similarly, the Dating Abuse Questionnaire (CMN) was used and validated in Mexico by Osorio in 2012. The Mexican

version of the CMN has five scales called: E1 - Psychological abuse, with 27 items ($\alpha=0.93$); E2 - Physical abuse, with a total of 8 items ($\alpha=0.82$); E3 - Economic abuse, with a total of 7 items ($\alpha=0.82$); E4 - Sexual abuse with a total of 9 items ($\alpha=0.85$); and E5 - Sociocultural influence with a total of 6 items ($\alpha=0.78$). The scale obtained a reliability of 0.95, measured by Cronbach's Alpha.

Procedure

The process began with the publication of a flyer on different social networks, inviting young women to participate in the study (see figure 1). The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale and the Dating Abuse Questionnaire were adapted to Google Forms, where the participants responded online in approximately 20 minutes. It is worth mentioning that the Google form gave a presentation of the person who directed the study and its objective. The importance of protecting the identification data of each participant during the application was highlighted, for which informed consent was sent to them, stating that their answers would be totally confidential and for academic purposes.

Figure 1.

Invitation to participate in the study is shown through a Flyer with contact information.



Source: Own elaboration

Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed with the SPSS software version 21. In the first instance, a matrix was made with the socioeconomic data and the results of the quantitative instruments of each of the participants, giving them a value from 0 to 4. Subsequently, the qualification was carried out of these instruments, and the means, medians, and modes of the variables self-esteem and violence were calculated. Finally, the correlation between these variables was obtained.

Phase 2. Qualitative

The following objectives were set for the second phase:

1. Describe the couple relationships of young women between 18 and 24 years of age in Hidalgo.
2. Identify how the gender construction of young women between 18 and 24 years old in Hidalgo has been.
3. Identify the self-esteem processes of young women between 18 and 24 years old in Hidalgo.
4. Identify the relationship between self-esteem and the existence of violence in young women between 18 and 24 years old in Hidalgo.

Participants

For the development of the qualitative phase, it was decided to select four participants who previously answered the scales in Google Forms to deepen their experience around violence and self-esteem; the selection criteria are shown in the following table:

Table 1.

The score obtained by participants in the evaluation of self-esteem and violence.

Subject	Self-esteem score	Violence score
1	32 - very high	65 - low
2	31 - high	58 - low
3	26 - mild	65 - low
4	21 - low	96 - low

Participant one scored very high on self-esteem and low violence, participant two scored high on self-esteem and low violence, participant three scored low on self-esteem and low violence, and participant four scored low on self-esteem and in violence, which allowed to know the affinities and the divergences that appear in each situation.

Techniques, instruments, and registration form

The depth interview technique was used since it is suitable for addressing factors such as intimacy and complicity. It also allows discovering in detail and greater depth aspects that the participants considered relevant and transcendent within their own experience, for which it was essential to carry it out not only individually but also in a space where the interviewee feels comfortable and safe.

An interview guide was used as an instrument, represented by a table of axes and categories, the first of which was called self-esteem: where self-concept, self-knowledge, gender constructions, and stereotypes of the participants found since childhood were highlighted, in addition to how it influences the relationships between parents and children.

The second axis refers to couple relationships: where previous courtship experiences were rescued, the differences between these relationships and the current relationship, and inquiring

about the degree of satisfaction, life project, and the social influence rescued in their couple ties.

In turn, as registration forms, the sessions were audio-recorded, in addition to field notes.

Table 2.

Table of axes and categories

Analysis axes	Analysis Categories
Axis 1 Self-esteem	Self Concept
	Self-knowledge
	Gender constructions
	Stereotypes
Axis 2 Dating relationships	Childhood-Adolescence
	Previous experiences
	Couple: Bond- Satisfaction
	Life Project
	Violence
	Social influence

Data collection

In the first place, the participants with relevant results from the Google forms were selected, later they were contacted, inviting them to be part of the second phase of the study, once the invitation was accepted, a date and time were agreed to carry out the depth interview, which was carried out through the Meet and Zoom platforms.

The selected participants were contacted virtually, it was of the utmost importance to mention the protection that would be given to the identification data of each of the participants, for which informed consent was sent to them, also prepared in Google Forms, where they signed providing their authorization to cite data or information obtained, mentioning that their answers would be totally confidential, for academic purposes and under anonymity, so pseudonyms were used for each of the participants and thus protect their identity. During the framing, authorization to audio-record and screenshots were requested to evidence the investigation and better work with the data obtained; at the same time, they were informed that the audio recordings would be eliminated once the investigation was completed.

Systematization and data analysis

Once the depth interviews were carried out, the digital transcription began, which allowed the elaboration of an Excel matrix to categorize and analyze the information obtained. During this process, axes and emerging categories that resulted from these interviews were added. In the first axis, self-esteem, the relationship category with the mother was added, while for the second emerging axis, it was called self-esteem and gender constructions, leaving dating relationships as the third axis.

RESULTS

Phase 1. Quantitative

Sociodemographic data

Next, the result of the descriptive analysis is described. According to the sample of 60 young women, it was observed that 39% of the participants are 23 years old, 13% are 22 years

old, and another 13% with 19 years. Regarding the marital status of the participants, it was observed that 62% of them are single and in a dating relationship, and 25% of them are in a free union. Regarding occupation, 50% study and another 20% study and work. Similarly, it was observed that 62% of the participants have been in a relationship for more than 2 years. Regarding the ages of their partners, 47% correspond to the range of 23 to 26 years of age.

Descriptive results

The results show a higher rate of women with a low level of self-esteem (58%) and a mild level (20%). Regarding the rates of violence, a higher rate of women without partner abuse was identified (8%) and a low level of 91% (See Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3.
Levels of self-esteem presented in the sample

		Self-esteem level			
		F	%	Valid %	Accumulated %
Valid	Low (1-25)	35	58.3	58.3	58.3
	Mild (26-28)	12	20.0	20.0	78.3
	High (29-30)	9	15.0	15.0	93.3
	Very High (31-32)	4	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total		60	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.
Levels of violence presented in the sample.

		Violence Level			
		F	%	Valid %	Accumulated %
Valid	No violence (57)	5	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Low violence (58-133)	55	91.7	91.7	100.0
Total		60	100.0	100.0	

A correlation ($r = -.333$) was found between the variables of self-esteem and violence in the couple relationship, in addition to a bilateral significance of .009. In other words, there is an inversely proportional linear association between the levels of self-esteem and violence. It is thought that the self-esteem of the young women surveyed is not influenced by the violence exercised within their relationship since aspects such as the age of majority, the level of studies, and the relationship time (more than 2 years) influence the level of violence to be low, it is important to investigate variables that allow discovering the reason for low self-esteem.

Phase 2. Qualitative

During the second phase, qualitative, four women participated, whose general characteristics are summarized in tables 5, 6, 7, and 8. These data were rescued from the in-depth interviews carried out.

Table 5.
General characteristics of the participant Catalina.

Pseudonym: Catalina Age: 19 years old	
Marital status	Single, in a dating relationship
Dedication	Undergraduate student and working
Place where you live	Pachuca, Hidalgo
Number of children	0
Family nucleus	Mother, father, brother
Beginning of sexual life	12 years old
Sexually active	Yes
Relationship time	1 year 3 months
Couple's data	
Age	56 years old
Educational level	Ph.D.
Dedication	Work as a Lawyer and Teacher

Table 6.
General characteristics of the participant Yan.

Pseudonym: Yan Age: 18 years old	
Marital status	Single, in a dating relationship
Dedication	Undergraduate student
Place where you live	Zacualtipán, Hidalgo
Number of children	0
Family nucleus	Madre, Padre, Hermana
Beginning of sexual life	18 años
Sexually active	Si
Relationship time	6 months
Couple's data	
Age	19 years old
Educational level	High School
Dedication	Study the bachelor's degree

Table 7.
General characteristics of the participant Annette.

Pseudonym: Annette Age: 21 years old	
Marital status	Single, in a dating relationship
Dedication	Undergraduate student
Place where you live	Pachuca, Hidalgo.
Number of children	0
Family nucleus	Sisters
Beginning of sexual life	15 years old
Sexually active	Yes
Relationship time	1-year
Couple's data	
Age	21 years old
Educational level	High School
Dedication	Study the bachelor's degree

Table 8.
General characteristics of the participant Valery.

Pseudonym: Valery Age: 23 años	
Marital status	Free union
Dedication	Not currently working, graduated with Bachelor's degree
Place where you live	Pachuca, Hidalgo.
Number of children	0
Family nucleus	Couple
Beginning of sexual life	17 years
Sexually active	Yes
Relationship time	5 years
Couple's data	
Age	25 years old
Educational level	High School
Dedication	Bachelor's degree and working

As can be seen in the table of general characteristics, there were four interviewed participants: Catalina, Yan, Annette, and Valery. They are between 18 and 23 years old, single in a dating relationship, except for Valery, who is in a free union. Likewise, 3 of the participants are studying for a degree (Catalina, Yan, Annette), and another participant is a recent graduate (Valery), so they have the same degree of study. Three of them live in Pachuca Hidalgo (Catalina, Annette, and Valery), and another one in Zacualtipán Hidalgo (Yan). Catalina and Yan live with their nuclear family, made up of a mother, father, and siblings, while Anette lives with her older sister, and Valery lives with her partner. None of them have children, they are sexually active, and the beginning of their sexual life is between the ages of 12 and 18. Relationships between couples ranging from 6 months to 6 years are observed. Within the characteristics of the couple, it can be seen that they are men of legal age ranging from 19 years to 56 years. It is highlighted that the partners of two of the participants are students (Yan and Annette), another works as a lawyer and teacher (Catalina), and another works in a pizza stall and is studying for a degree (Valery). The data analysis is presented below, resulting from the identification of axes and categories in the discourse of the four participants.

Axis: Self-esteem

What defines me?

According to Minichiello et al. (2010), from birth, people develop within the family. They grow, constitute their identity, acquire responsibilities and commitments, and develop resources that allow them to enter and develop in the adult world. One of these resources is self-esteem, a component that is based on the self-perception of each person. It allows one to self-assess the qualities and defects, in

addition to perceiving the impact of achievements and goals that are obtained through daily experiences that have significance for each of the individuals.

Self-esteem is generated and evolves from childhood, where pleasurable and pleasant experiences that are significant bring, as a consequence, a transcendental value for the development of high self-esteem. Otherwise, significant unpleasant experiences have an important impact on the development of low self-esteem. This is how Annette describes it, who has received comments since childhood about her body within her family environment, mainly due to aspects such as her height and weight, which she describes as a significant unfavorable experience.

"I never felt thin, I mean, my mom always told me: 'you have a belly', 'you're fat, 'you have to lose weight,' and at that time, I weighed 68. I mean, for my height, it was something perfect, I was super thin, and now that I gained a lot of weight, I didn't realize it because I never really felt thin enough to take that moment of 'I feel thin,' and I'm already gaining weight, so it's something that has affected me and has It took more work to accept my height; obviously my body is much larger in all dimensions" (Annette in an interview, 2021).

In the same way, Yan, from her childhood, was creating insecurities within her family, since she was a child, she was required to do well in school.

"I remember I was in third grade; the teacher waited a few minutes to let us out; that is, it had taken about 10 minutes, and my mom was supposed to be waiting for me, but she wasn't, so I'm going walking to my house, I arrived, and he slapped me, he said 'I told you to hurry up, and you didn't, so that's why I came.' So I remember that, and it makes me ugly, it made me sad because my mom was always impatient [...] I'm nervous when they ask me things, that is, even if they're simple and I know, I start to think, 'oh no, and if I answer wrong or if they tell me something and yell at me... Well, yes, it still scares me" (Yan in an interview, 2021).

It is possible that as a result of the unfavorable experiences that Annette and Yan lived in their childhoods, derived from the formation of self-concepts of distrust and doubt towards their person, creating low self-esteem, which had repercussions on their childhood-adolescence development, not only on their self-perception but also in how they developed in the different school and family settings. Contrary to when a significant pleasant experience is present, as Catalina comments, her mother was in charge of giving her words of encouragement and showing her the positive aspects that Catalina has had since her childhood.

"When I was little, my mom always tried to comb my hair, and I was like, 'I don't like you to comb my hair' but my mom was always very insistent, 'you look very

pretty', 'you are very beautiful', 'if you comb your hair you're pretty', 'if you dress up you're much more beautiful' [...] when I grew up it was always like, 'hello my princess', 'you woke up very pretty today', 'get excited', 'you're too smart', 'you deserve more than what you now have and you can get what you want if you want it' (Catalina in interview, 2021).

Harter and Bukowski (2012) mention that self-perceptions are constituted by the interaction of multiple factors. Among them, early interactions in the family environment and with parents, in particular, have a fundamental weight. Likewise, interactions in childhood influence the development of the relationship between mothers and daughters, a fundamental aspect that our participants rescue.

Yan mentions that since his childhood, he has experienced unfavorable experiences with his mother, resulting in a relationship of mistrust and insecurity.

"I know that it is good, I know that it gave me many things, that it greatly influenced my ideas and my current value system, so I am very grateful for all that, but yes, I have respect for it; I do not trust it, I couldn't tell him that I have a problem or tell him that I have a problem" (Yan in an interview, 2021).

In the same way, Annette identifies that the unfavorable experiences lived with her mother have made their relationship not be attached, deriving mistrust towards her and the emotional problems present in her daily life.

"It hurts me like my mom makes those decisions, that she tells me that kind of thing, and on the other hand, I feel between a rock and a hard place; it's my emotional stability, my security, because not even in my house, in my Fourth, I felt free or safe or comfortable" (Annette in an interview, 2021).

On the other hand, when a significant experience where affection, patience, and tolerance are shown on the part of the mother, it strengthens aspects such as trust and communication, as reported by Catalina.

"Con mi mamá somos demasiado cercanas siempre lo hemos sido, hay muchísima comunicación, mi mamá me cuenta todo y yo le cuento todo creo que aparte de ser mi mamá es mi mejor amiga" (Catalina en entrevista, 2021)

Now, it was identified that childhood experiences influence the development of people's self-esteem, however another characteristic found in the participants' discourse is self-concept. Self-concept is an important psychosocial factor in the construction of personality, it is conditioned by perception and social and physical experiences (Espejo et al., 2018). What is reflected in the lives of the participants since by growing and living their own experiences, they learn about themselves; as Catalina tells us, she had to go through unpleasant experiences in different areas of her life, such as minimizing her feelings, criticism of her physical and

intellectual appearance, which led her to recognize flattering aspects in her and restructure her own self-perception.

"Now I know that I am very pretty, that I can achieve everything that I set out to do, excel in any area, that I am no longer, I no longer feel insufficient for people, that if people do not want me by their side It's not because of me, it's not me, so these are thoughts that helped me overcome that" (Catalina in interview, 2021).

Axis: Self-esteem and gender constructions

How to be a woman?

As described in the previous section, significant experiences with pleasant and pleasant emotions, and significant experiences with unpleasant emotions that occurred during childhood, lead to the development of self-esteem, self-concept, and the formation of healthy bonds with the nuclear family; however, it is considered that as a result of these significant experiences, behaviors of how to act within the family nucleus, known as gender roles, are developed and imitated.

Cortes (2014) mentions that gender roles are the norms, prescriptions, and expectations of the behavior of the feminine and masculine, they are the way we relate to the world and identify us, so it is strongly linked to the concept of identity. Similarly, Cortes (2014) mentions that gender stereotypes are generalizations and beliefs about how men and women should be and behave.

The influence of beliefs has a great impact on the construction of how a woman should be and how she should behave, in addition to influencing the way of operating among the members of the family, since men and women are determined by how to act, such and as Catalina comments, who observed in much of her life, the authoritarian relationship that her father exercised over her mother, since within the family environment what the father commanded was respected and obeyed, in addition to the expression of comments minimizing the woman in terms of feelings and aptitudes.

"I think that at the beginning, I kept it in my head that women don't have to give their opinion, that their opinion is worth nothing, that women can't work, that women only have to be at home attending to men, and it was something that led me to have several relationships like this, and that they made me understand that my opinion was worthless, was something that developed a lot in me [...] When we were very young [Catalina and her brother], we always played, but it started to grow; he started to push me aside, he started to yell at me, and the same thing my dad did whenever I did something wrong, he yelled at me or told my mom to scold me" (Catalina in interview, 2021).

Gender stereotypes influence beliefs about how women should act and behave; however, there are variants according

to culture, social class, ethnic group, and even the generation or age range of people. These variants also exist within the family, so it is in the family where the central dimensions of social relations are reproduced and transformed, where the first manifestations of roles multiply, so there will be differences in each family (Ospina and Montoya, 2015) for example the impact within the family of Catalina who grew up in an environment dominated by patriarchy and Annette, on the contrary, mentions that within her family environment, made up mostly of women, there was a great influence both of his father, his mother and his older sisters to value themselves as a person and to work on their own needs, this without the approval or accompaniment of men at their side, thus demonstrating that men and women have the same skills to achieve their goals and objectives.

"[...] they always told me that as women we shouldn't leave a man on both sides [neither men nor women], and my dad also stressed a lot that not because of the economic or physical part or anything we had to be there or to be with a man to support us or to give us anything if he treated us badly, that is, if he treated us badly we had to get out of there at that moment, and my mother was perhaps in the same situation of not depending of no one, but not so focused on a man, not simply because we are a woman, to work to earn what we can, rather to work to earn something (Annette in an interview, 2021).

Within the family environment, gender stereotypes are produced and transformed; however, it is not the only area that is influenced; it is important to highlight that the constructions of how to be a woman not only come from the family environment, it also influences the social and cultural, which has repercussions on questioning and reestablishing the beliefs that are maintained in the family nucleus, as mentioned by Yan

"I have different ideas than my parents have, but despite that, I know. I am a group of different things, and I know that my ideas, even though they are different, are fine because they are mine, and well, no, I think that because of that, I do not let them put certain ideas or stereotypes on me" (Yan an interview, 2021).

Within the social and cultural spheres, different stereotypes and gender roles are rescued, which have an influence on women; Villa, García, and Cuentos (2017) rescue that many women assume beliefs of *romantic love* that are associated with maladaptive relational patterns, which is linked to the couple's identification with the romantic ideal, intrusive thoughts, the disabling process of idealizing the other and the relationship, and the belief in something "magical" in the relationship.

The romantic ideal is influenced by the social constructs learned generation after generation through stories, legends, songs, and currently by movies, movies, and soap operas, thus

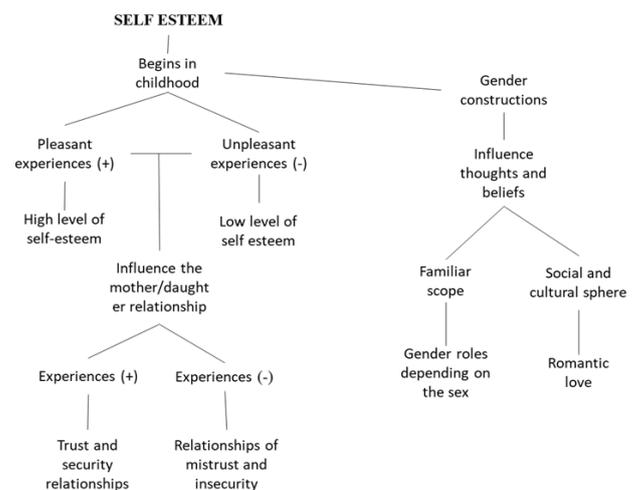
giving social representations to imitate, as highlighted by Catalina.

I think that if I had those ideas of princess stories, I would have always liked Cinderella very much. So I think that these aspects of the film have pleased me to carry them out with the person I am now, yes I would like to make that relationship a beautiful story, a story that neither of us can forget and that we have a good taste of that (Catalina in an interview, 2021).

Below is a diagram that summarizes what was read during this section; in it it is observed that self-esteem originates in childhood, in the family nucleus, through experiences that contain significance for the individual, can be pleasant, called positive, that derive high self-esteem and unpleasant experiences called negative that lead to developing low self-esteem. The experiences influence the parent-child relationship, where pleasant experiences develop relationships of trust and security, while unpleasant relationships develop relationships of mistrust and insecurity. Gender constructions emerge with childhood, they are influenced by the thoughts and beliefs held by the family and in the social and cultural sphere, where gender roles and beliefs of romantic love are formed.

Figure 2.

Diagram of the self-esteem category.



Source: Own elaboration

The lived experiences are very important for the construction of self-esteem and self-concept of people since different aspects of the environment and the areas where they develop are rescued to form their personality and to value themselves as people and women. It is the basis that supports how to relate to the outside world, which is why the next chapter will explain how aspects such as self-concept intervene in relationships.

Axis:

Dating relationships, experiences, and learning.

As described in the previous chapter, self-esteem is very important to identify how a person defines himself and how it affects personal growth, as well as the experiences that occur throughout life influence how to behave and should be each individual, referring to gender roles and stereotypes.

Reyes, Foshee, Niolon, Reidy, and Hall (2016) mention that social stereotypes could influence adolescents to perceive the existence of behaviors mediated by gender roles in couple relationships; therefore, it could be thought that there are behaviors that are reinforced or punished depending on whether they are male or female. In the case of our participants, growing up in families with different ideas and beliefs about how to be a woman, they take reference to repeat patterns, for example, Catalina, who grew up in an environment dominated by her father, transfers part of these beliefs to her relationships, since it was common for psychological violence to be exercised within her family, it was common for her to receive the same treatment from her ex-partner

"I had a relationship a year and a half ago, in which I suffered a little violence, I lasted six years with this person [ex-partner], and during these 6 years it was, well, that he didn't take me into account at all, he told me that I wasn't in his plans, that... he didn't really want anything with me, so I started to get ideas, that everything he did was wrong, that I wasn't enough for him, that I wasn't like that stereotype of girl that he had in mind, thin, pretty [...] he hit me playfully or pinched me, it hurt but I didn't say anything, I entered a process of suffering from severe anxiety and depression, then I reached the point of having three suicide attempts" (Catalina in interview, 2021).

Recalling Rueda (2018), he mentions that violence is a behavior of the partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological damage, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and control behaviors. Catalina refers to the type of psychological and physical violence she suffered and the consequences that affected her quality of life; among these consequences are the high rates of anxiety and depression, which led to three suicide attempts.

Mendoza et al. (2019) identifies that the consequences of violence in dating relationships are: the affectation of self-esteem, depression, unwanted pregnancies, fear/isolation, and change or abandonment of life plans. These consequences are related to the loss of trust that affects future relationships, as Annette tells us.

"I was in a relationship where they cheated on me, and that created a block for me, insecurity, where I can no longer trust people 100% and the truth is something complex, [...] I was very sure of myself I trusted people a lot" (Annette in interview, 2021).

Rodríguez et al. (2011) observe that most adolescents identify a certain degree of violence in their dating relationships and consider it a normal process. Catalina, Yan, Annette, and Valery agree that at the beginning of their relationships with ex-partners, there were no violent behaviors; however, over time, they discovered traits in the other that seem undesirable, and situations arise that are misunderstood, such as remembering past relationships, mentioning people of the opposite sex, the way they dress, their own personality, etc. Likewise, behaviors are initiated that bring insecurity and jealousy to the couple as a consequence, giving rise to progressively showing signs of violence, ranging from disqualifying comments, ignoring, hurtful jokes, pinching and hitting, struggles, and threats with objects or weapons, among others.

Many of these behaviors are overlooked by the women to whom they are exercised; therefore violence resembles a snowball; it grows as the relationship progresses and these behaviors are allowed, just as Valery refers:

"I had a partner in high school who was very romantic at first, however, he had violent actions like hitting him on the walls, we went to school together, he was a year older than me, so when he left, I stayed in the school and he began to be jealous of me all the time, to such an extent that he called me at all hours and went to school for me every day" (Varely in an interview, 2021).

Rivas, et al., (2018) mention that many women manage to face and end the relationship when they have social support and professionals who listen and guide them. Catalina refers that facing and ending a relationship is a long process in which they go through several painful situations, where the support of their social networks is not enough because their only support network (her mother) was immersed in a situation of similar violence, it was until she resorted to professional help, where she was able to identify tools that allowed her to face the violence and the consequences of the relationship with her ex-partner.

"It was hard for me to realize that a relationship is not like that, that being with a person does not mean that they have to verbally and physically attack you, that they do not have to put you down, so I entered a therapy process for 2 years [...] Fortunately I made good progress, I was able to get ahead, my anxiety levels dropped considerably, my self-esteem rose too much" (Catalina in interview, 2021)

Slatcher and Selcuk (2017) mention that establishing and maintaining couple relationships supposes, even from adolescence and youth, a component of psychosocial development with implications for well-being and psychological adjustment. Even though couple relationships can sometimes involve some risk, when they work satisfactorily, they are a source of emotional and social support; they contribute to the elaboration and construction of

identity, to the improvement of social competence, and even to Physical Health. As a result of the experiences that the participants share about their relationships with previous partners, they manage to rescue aspects of learning where the experiences of violence they went through served as a reflection on what was actually sought in a couple, achieving a balanced relationship between feelings and respect, in addition to her own physical and psychological well-being, as reported by Catalina, who after suffering physical and psychological violence for six years from her ex-partner, has managed to establish a relationship that is satisfactory to her.

'I feel too happy, I think we have a lot of things in common, I think the biggest thing is that every day is better than the day before, I think that's what unites us the most, we always have to get ahead, we always have to be' (Catalina in an interview, 2021).

Catalina, Annette, Yan, and Valery rescue essential elements that strengthen their current relationships; among them is communication. Starting from the fact that couple relationships constitute a fundamental aspect of life, communication and understanding in a couple are essential aspects for personal and social development; Thus, the proper functioning of a relationship provides emotional and social support, and it is undeniable that a person has traditionally been associated with a good relationship (Ruíz Becerril, 2001).

We always try as if there is a problem, some friction between him and me, we always talk about it, eh... we never try to assume, it is always to have those clear ideas, talk about it and then handle it in the best way, if there is something that bothered him about me because he has all the freedom to say it, and so do I (Catalina in interview, 2021).

Therefore, it is highlighted that during relationships where violence is experienced, multiple psychological consequences are unleashed, such as depression, anxiety, insecurities, and even suicide attempts; however, when realizing the effects generated by relationships of violence, it is transcendental for act and reach changes, as it happened to the participants of this study. It is worth emphasizing the importance of the support networks that are available since they serve as support to be able to get out of the situation of violence in which one lives; such situations of violence open a gap of possibilities since, according to For the participants, these situations serve as learning for future couple relationships that are established, since upon realizing it, it is unlikely that the women who were subjected to violence will repeat these events that they have previously experienced.

Below is a diagram that summarizes what was read during this chapter, in which it is observed that gender constructions influence relationships, where there are normalized and repetitive behaviors derived from the family environment, which give way to the existence of possible violence within couple relationships, resulting in depressive symptoms,

anxiety and suicide attempts. However, when realizing it, the situation is faced, ending the violent relationship; from this moment on, learning for future relationships predominates, implementing communication, and implementing limits.

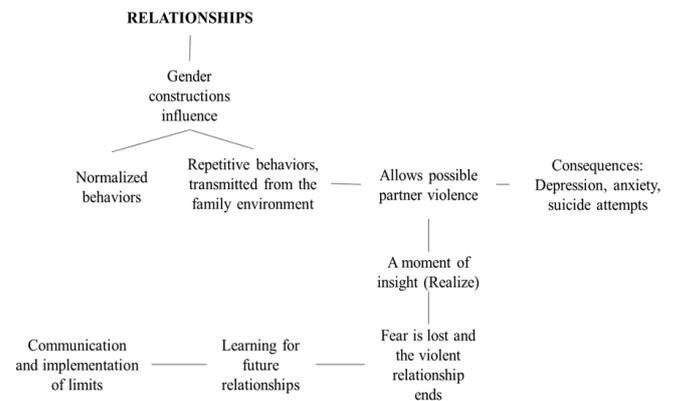
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Self-esteem is a set of feelings and sensations regarding oneself, the result of significant experiences throughout life, pleasant and pleasant experiences, or unpleasant experiences, which are interpreted based on feelings and sensations and influence the development of each woman.

Ocampo (2015) mentions that people who are victims of abuse by their partners tend to show lower levels of self-esteem. For this reason, women with low self-esteem have greater exposure to risk factors and, therefore, suffer a high level of vulnerability.

Figure 3.

Diagram of the category of relationships.



Source: Own elaboration

The data found in this study indicate that there is a considerable percentage of young women with low self-esteem (58%) and women with a low level of self-esteem (20%), on the other hand, a higher rate of women with low violence (91%). A correlation ($r = -.333$) was found between the variables of self-esteem and violence, in addition to a bilateral significance of .009, which shows an inversely proportional linear association; however, there is no statistically significant difference.

Possibly these results are derived from the population in which the study was carried out since the young women surveyed in the quantitative stage are female high school and university students; therefore, there is greater access to information on violence against women and more tools to identify it.

Similarly, Gallegos et al. (2019), within their research on Self-esteem and psychological violence against university women in their relationships, from a sample of the state of Morelos, identified that violence with self-esteem does not represent a focus of alert that serves to relate these variables, because, although a positive correlation was found between these two factors, it was not significant, although more than a third of the

women showed low self-esteem, and more than half said they had suffered some type of violence.

So other factors related to low self-esteem are rescued, such as insecurities and irrational ideas of themselves, regarding their body and personality.

On the other hand, during the second qualitative phase, it was found that the current partner relationships of the participants, regardless of the relationship time, are characterized by different factors that make it healthy, one of them is the communication that exists within them, which leads to express feelings, thoughts, and disagreements; in a way that determines an environment of trust and security. It is important to mention that this communication is a factor learned and rescued from previous relationships since the participants of this study mention that in their previous relationships, there was psychological and physical violence, and as a result, an insight is reached, referring to the way in which they are living, which is transcendental to act and reach mainly personal changes, such as respecting themselves, positioning themselves as their main priority, doing what they like and what benefits them, in addition to setting limits to people who do not benefit their mental health, in this case, relatives or close people with sexist ideologies and aggressors, which affects the relationships that are established in the future.

The development of the gender constructions of the participants was rescued; the first contact is within the family environment since it is here where the main models to follow are discovered, in addition to the existence of beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors of how to be a woman, marking stereotypes and gender roles, referring that women are related to family care functions, adjusting their lifestyles to these activities. However, it is emphasized that these beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors have been modified over the years since currently, both sexes (women and men) share different activities and mark new models to follow, where women show individual growth and economic dependence.

These results agree with Pérez, et. al, (2019) who mention that beliefs are diffused in the environment since these are components acquired through interaction with the environment and with other subjects. According to the above, these beliefs allow violence to be maintained or increased, in this case, gender violence, which ends up being a social problem.

Lived experiences are of great importance for the construction of self-esteem and self-concept of people since different aspects are collected to form their personality and self-evaluate. These experiences arise from childhood, pleasant and pleasurable experiences mark a transcendental value to develop high self-esteem, strengthening aspects of confidence and security when developing in different areas (school, work, friendship, couple) and unpleasant experiences mark a value to develop low self-esteem. These experiences have to do with the relationship between mothers and daughters, in such a way that as long as there are pleasant experiences, there will be a relationship of trust and assertive communication, on the contrary, if

unfavorable experiences persist, there will be relationships with mistrust and insecurity.

It is important to mention that low self-esteem can be a factor that develops at an early age, depending on the experiences lived, which go hand in hand with family environments where marked gender roles, behaviors, thoughts, and beliefs are observed denigrating the women. women; It is likely that women normalize them, thus giving patterns of vulnerability in their relationships so that by following these models of behavior, they fail to realize the violence experienced within their relationships, opening up multiple psychological consequences, such as depression, anxiety, insecurities, and even suicide attempts.

During this study some limitations were found since adjusting the research online, it prevented the invitation to participate to those women who do not usually develop in the online environment; In the same way, it is thought that there could be intimidation when being in a relationship where violence is experienced, in addition to the fact that these vulnerable women could not have access to the social networks where the flyer was posted, however, the participating women were able to express themselves in the interviews in depth that in past relationships they were victims of violence, therefore it was possible to rescue important aspects about their self-esteem and their gender constructions, which possibly open guidelines to place them in vulnerable places in the face of violence within their relationships.

This study is an initial contribution to the analysis of violence in couple relationships, it opens paths for the understanding of new factors related to low self-esteem in current relationships, their links, and the affections that are built in them; It will allow the development of psychosocial intervention proposals for the prevention and care of violence against women.

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