THE MYTHS OF ROMANTIC LOVE AND VIOLENCE IN COURTSHIP

Vanessa Vallejo Lozano¹
Gabriela Isabel Pérez Aranda²
Sinuhé Estrada Carmona ³
Liliana García Reyes⁴
Miguel Àngel Tus Sierra⁵

ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective is to analyze the relationship between the myths of romantic love and intimate partner violence, to identify the predictive factors.

Theoretical Framework: Partner violence has its beginnings in dating; through obvious or invisible behaviors due to their normalization. In Mexico, 70.1% of women aged 15 years and older have experienced at least one situation of violence throughout their lives (INEGI, 2022). On the other hand, the myths of romantic love are a set of socially supported beliefs with sexist ideals that can be a direct source of information to know if it is related to violence in the couple.

Method: The proposed research is quantitative, non-experimental and correlational. The instruments used were: Boyfriend Violence Questionnaire by Rodríguez-Franco et al., (2010) and the Romantic Love Myths Scale by Bonilla and Rivas (2020). 200 people (65 men and 135 women) adolescents in the age range of 16 to 23 years participated.

Results and Discussion: Significant relationships (p<.05) were found between the myths of distorted love and dating violence, since actions that cause harm to the subject are minimized. Distorted myths are related to humiliation, sexual violence, physical coercion, gender violence, emotional and instrumental punishment in the relationship.

Implications of the research: The findings contribute to the understanding of emotional health in couple relationships, as well as the psychosocial dynamics between beliefs and practices of violence in relationships.

Originality/Value: This study contributes to the understanding of violence and the role of myths of romantic love in couple relationships in the context of southeastern Mexico.

Keywords: Couples, Violence, Myth of Romantic Love, Distorted Love.

OS MITOS DO AMOR ROMÂNTICO E DA VIOLÊNCIA NA NOIVADO

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo é analisar a relação entre os mitos do amor romântico e da violência entre parceiros íntimos, para identificar os fatores preditores.

¹ Universidad Autónoma de Campeche, Campeche, México. E-mail: al057582@uacam.mx
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0006-7151-4844

² Universidad Autónoma de Campeche, Campeche, México. E-mail: gaiperez@uacam.mx
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9918-3921

³ Universidad Autónoma de Campeche, Campeche, México. E-mail: sestrada@uacam.mx
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9605-8148

⁴ Universidad Autónoma de Campeche, Campeche, México. E-mail: ligarcia@uacam.mx
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5404-3100

⁵ Universidad Autónoma de Campeche, Campeche, México. E-mail: miguatu@uacam.mx
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1584-7725
Referencial Teórico: A violência entre parceiros tem início no namoro; através de comportamentos óbvios ou invisíveis devido à sua normalização. No México, 70,1% das mulheres com 15 anos ou mais viveram pelo menos uma situação de violência ao longo da vida (INEGI, 2022). Por outro lado, os mitos do amor romântico são um conjunto de crenças socialmente apoiadas com ideais sexistas que podem ser uma fonte direta de informação para saber se está relacionado com a violência no casal.

Método: A pesquisa proposta é quantitativa, não experimental e correlacional. Os instrumentos utilizados foram: Boyfriend Violence Questionnaire de Rodríguez-Franco et al., (2010) e a Escala de Mitos de Amor Romântico de Bonilla e Rivas (2020). Participaram 200 pessoas (65 homens e 135 mulheres) adolescentes na faixa etária de 16 a 23 anos.

Resultados e Discussão: Foram encontradas relações significativas (p<0,05) entre os mitos do amor distorcido e da violência no namoro, uma vez que são minimizadas ações que causam danos ao sujeito. Os mitos distorcidos estão relacionados à humilhação, à violência sexual, à coerção física, à violência de gênero, ao castigo emocional e instrumental no relacionamento.

Implicações da pesquisa: Os achados contribuem para a compreensão da saúde emocional nas relações de casal, bem como da dinâmica psicossocial entre crenças e práticas de violência nos relacionamentos.

Originalidade/Valor: Este estudo contribui para a compreensão da violência e do papel dos mitos do amor romântico nas relações de casal no contexto do sudeste do México.

1 INTRODUCTION

For generations, physical and psychological violence have been present in dating relationships through behaviors perceived by society as normal, which become invisible by the young people and adolescents themselves, since the recognition of these behaviors become difficult to identify in themselves and in others. It is worth mentioning some such as threats to end the relationship, excessive jealousy that in turn triggers other more serious ones that include physical violence such as pulling, pushing, slapping, etc.

In this way, violence has been identified as one of the problems that has not yet been eradicated, according to INEGI (2022) has identified that 70.1% of women aged 15 and over have experienced at least one situation of violence throughout their lives, 51.6% have suffered sexual violence, 45.6% community violence, followed by intimate partner violence (39.9%).

Therefore, Casique & Castro (cited in INEGI 2021) point out that women may be at greater risk of suffering violence in a marital relationship, in addition, the nature of the emotional bond deepens its effects. It has been highlighted that psychological abuse uses the myth of romantic love as a cultural tool. Therefore, the aim is to analyze the relationship between the myths of romantic love and intimate partner violence.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The various forms of violence in the intimate partner relationship is a problem that has not been eradicated for a long time, leaving consequences on the personal development, independence and, most importantly, on the affective relationships of women based on the concept of gender.

Abuse in relationships usually begins with psychological abusive behaviors, which are difficult to identify since they are masked in the appearance of affection and affection even though they are restrictive and controlling behaviors (Yugueros, 2014). Rubio et al., (2015), on the other hand, state that violence in dating relationships is characterized by the appearance of attitudes such as: threats, control, coercion and subordination, with the intention of causing physical, psychological and/or sexual harm.

However, violence extends beyond physical means, violence through social networks in recent years has attracted quite a bit of attention. We are currently living in a virtual world in which violence has managed to transcend and occupy a significant space, becoming a new means to exercise and receive violence, managing to transfer the vulnerability of the virtual
world to people's daily lives. On the other hand, Pérez-Pimienta et al., (2022) mentions that virtual violence is a phenomenon that is just beginning and that it seems to be getting bigger.

On many occasions, violence in the relationship is usually justified in terms of love. In this way, Oliveros (2019) identified romantic love as a precursor of violence in couple relationships since it has patriarchal connotations based on power differences, feelings of inadequacy when not with one's partner, acceptance of toxic attitudes, romantic love has been influenced by current culture. In this way, the socialization process, children, adolescents, young people and adults receive many messages about the roles they should adopt and practice according to their gender and learn to act, that is, what is the "right" and what is the right thing. These beliefs about male and female roles are passed on to young people from birth.

As explained, young people from adolescence are the ones who are most likely to be influenced by these myths, which are reinforced, for the most part, by the content they consume daily, such as movies, series, music, advertising, music videos, etc. since they treat love in an aspirational way and determine romantic expectations, resulting in complications at this stage of human development, becoming unable to identify the violence that is exercised or received from the partner.

In this way, the myths of romantic love turn out to be a direct source of information on how to carry out dating relationships by referring to behaviors related to "ideal love". As a result, young people grow up internalizing this idea and behavior, just as society labels them according to their gender. This fact may contribute to the presence of violence in relationships between younger couples (Donoso et al., 2018). In this way, the myths of romantic love continue to be based on sexist arguments that, as we have seen over the years, do not bring positive consequences in the daily or everyday social coexistence that exists between people, much less in those whose ages and developmental capacities do not allow them to fully generate their own judgment towards these gestures and attitudes considered "true love".

Recent research on the myths of romantic love shows that, even in the 21st century, they continue to affect current generations by leading to dating violence. However, it is necessary to know that the problem of violence is a structural problem, which not only harms couples in general, but also harms the population in various social and relationship areas, so we cannot attribute the full responsibility for such violence to adolescent couples.
3 METHODOLOGY

Based on the non-experimental quantitative cross-sectional methodology, since the data collected took place at a certain time in the same place, this research is correlational as there are two variables within the same context.

Sample: 200 people (65 males and 135 females) adolescents aged 16 to 23 years participated.

Inclusion criteria: Men and women who are currently in a dating relationship regardless of how long they have been in the relationship and are in an age range between 16 and 23 years old.

Exclusion criteria: they are not in a dating relationship and they are over 23 years old.

Type of sample: This sample is non-probabilistic for convenience since the selection of subjects depends on the characteristics taken into account by the inclusion criteria proposed by the study and intentional due to the need to have subjects who better represent the case proposed.

Ethical criteria of the study: people participated voluntarily. Therefore, an informed consent was added at the beginning of the questionnaire, to safeguard the information on the participation of adolescents, preferably minors, where the objective and purpose of this research were informed.

3.1 INSTRUMENTS

a). Questionnaire on Violence between Boyfriends (CUVINO) prepared by Rodríguez-Franco et al., (2010) validated by the Yearbook of Clinical and Health Psychology, of the Department of Personality, Evaluation and Psychological Treatments of Seville, Spain in 2010. This assessment tool includes violent behaviors in the romantic relationships of adolescent couples. It is composed of 42 behavioral indicators (questions), which must be answered in a format of five options, from 0 to 4; in Likert format. A cronbach's alpha of .971 was obtained in the application;

b). Romantic Love Myths Scale developed by Bonilla & Rivas (2020), designed and validated in 2020. The scale is composed of 11 items that measure the acceptance of romantic myths, in a Likert format, with alternatives from 1 to 5. These, in turn, are divided into two factors; Factor 1 called "Myths of Idealized Love", which is composed
of items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, while Factor 2 called "Myths of Distorted Love", is composed of items 8, 9, 10 and 11. Getting a cronbach's alpha of .763;

c). Questionnaire on Violence in Networks, is a questionnaire that consists of 6 items, which are answered on a Likert scale (5 Always in the year, 4 Frequently in the year, 3 Sometimes in the year, 2 Once in the year, 1 Not in the year). It was validated in the article "Correlational study of sexual consent and violence in a sample of young couples from Campeche, Mexico"; where they obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .933, while in the current application they obtained a .769 Cronbach's alpha.

Data analysis: through the SPSS program with its most recent version 29.0, which is a software that allows the analysis of statistical data on the correlation of romantic love myths with violent relationships in adolescent couples.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the data presented in this research, the sample was made up of 32.5% men and 67.5% women, between the ages of 16 and 23 years at the time of the application of the questionnaires. The sexual orientation of the respondents was divided into: 73.5% heterosexual people and 18% bisexual people, both being the highest percentages; On the other hand, the lowest percentages correspond to 3% homosexual people and 5.5% identified with another sexual orientation.

A little more than half of the sample, 58%, are in high school, while 41.5% are pursuing a bachelor's degree. Regarding the duration of the current relationship of the respondents, it was very varied, 39% of the participants have had a duration of more than one year, while 27% have lasted less than a month with their current partner, 12% have approximately one to three months, 8.5% from 3 to 6 months duration and 13.5% from 6 months to a year.

In relation to the religion they profess, 41.7% of the participants belong to the Catholic religion, that is, almost half of the population that was surveyed, while 20.6% belong to the Christian religion and 8% belong to "other" religion; On the other hand, the remaining 29.6% mention that they do not profess any religion at present.

Below are the main results obtained in the study.
Table 1

Correlations between the myths of romantic love and dating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>D</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>CE</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>VRS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>-.112</td>
<td>-.068</td>
<td>-.121</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>-.049</td>
<td>-.094</td>
<td>-.047</td>
<td>-.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.346</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>.495</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>.516</td>
<td>.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>.176</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>.238</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.238</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>.272</td>
<td>.906</td>
<td>.241</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>.374</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>.704</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-sided).
*. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-sided).


According to the table above, it was found that the greater the myths of distorted love, the greater the violence in courtship; In this way, the myths of distorted love are conceptualizations of love where the words, actions and facts that occur within a relationship are wrongly interpreted, favoring negative behaviors. In this sense, since many of these distorted ideas are present, violent acts in these relationships will be greater since they are justified by the distorted belief of what love is.

Among the violent acts with the highest correlation with distorted myths are coercion, understood as moral and/or physical repression, physical violence, gender-based violence and emotional punishment, as well as violence on social networks by the partner. On the other hand, the violent acts with the lowest incidence, but also with a statistically significant correlation, are humiliation, detachment, sexual and instrumental violence.

It is worth mentioning that only distorted myths have been correlated with various dating violence and social media violence.

In general, the following table is presented.
Table 2

Total score correlations MIT, VN, and VRS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MIT</th>
<th>DV</th>
<th>RSV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>.110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>.614**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.614**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-sided).
*The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-sided).

MIT: Myths of Romantic Love
DV: Dating Violence
RSV: Social Media Violence

As can be seen in Table 2, dating violence has a significant correlation with violence through social networks, that is, the greater the dating violence (such as emotional punishment, detachment, humiliation, sexual violence, coercion, physical, instrumental and gender violence by the partner) the greater the violence through social networks, within which there are behaviors in which the couple seeks a way to obtain your passwords, monitor your profiles and read your messages or threaten to post photos or intimate information on social media for the purpose of blackmailing you.

It can also be observed that romantic love myths in general are not directly related to social media violence and dating violence. In a similar study conducted by Suárez (2022), he found evidence showing that romantic love beliefs are not related to violent attitudes in relationships. In the same way, Aguirre and Caisataoa (2022) agree with the above found in a sample of adult couples from Lima, Peru. However, as can be seen more specifically in Table 1, distorted myths of romantic love are positively related to social media violence and dating violence.

These results allow us to affirm that the ideas that are internalized about romantic love have violent consequences since it is the only factor that is strongly related to behaviors of detachment, humiliation, sexual violence, physical violence, gender, emotional and instrumental punishment and violence in social networks by the partner.

Bonilla et al., (2017) in a study carried out with 362 students, it was identified that the internalization of the myths of romantic love participates as a probable risk factor for the appearance of gender-based violence within affective relationships.
The myths of distorted love allow us to generate a distorted vision of the ideals of love, where love is the most important thing and requires total surrender in this world. The idealization of myths precisely allows the increase in rates of gender-based violence, promoting feelings of ownership and depersonalization in a large part of a sample of high school students (Marqués & Mestre, 2018).

Table 3

Correlations with Sociodemographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>E</th>
<th>ES</th>
<th>TR</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MIT</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>-.207**</td>
<td>-.220**</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.003*</td>
<td>.002*</td>
<td>.450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>.180*</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.011*</td>
<td>.760</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSV</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>.225**</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>.143*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.002*</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>.047*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-sided).
*The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-sided).

MIT: Myths of Romantic Love
DV: Dating Violence
RSV: Social Media Violence
E: Age
ES: schooling
TR: Relationship Time
R: Religion

According to Table 3, in relation to sociodemographic data, it was identified that: the younger the age, the greater the myths of romantic love exist in the relationship.

Similarly, Muñiz et al., (cited in Cerro & Vives, 2019) express that most young people do not know how to distinguish the difference between a test of love and a form of control resulting from the internalization of the myths of romantic love. For his part, Romero (2021) identified that young people "reflect high levels of internalization of myths of omnipotence, the better half, jealousy and mating." Romantic myths are adopted by adolescents based on social inheritances ranging from family beliefs to content that is consumed in the media and is usually distorted and/or detached from reality.

In this research it was also possible to identify that schooling has a statistically significant relationship with the myths of romantic love, so that having more schooling is less the romantic myths in which we believe, opening the possibility that the fact of having an education makes it difficult for us to fall into distortions and idealizations of romantic love.
Education allows for a questioning of the ideas learned from childhood where each person can decide whether to continue with them or not.

Dating violence was correlated with the age at which the older the age, the greater the violence received and in the same way the greater the violence through social networks, this corroborates the findings of Pérez & Estrada (2024) who identified that the older the age, the greater the violence received and the violence exercised.

On the other hand, intimate partner violence through social networks occurs the older you are and have been in the relationship for longer.

Although it has been found that behaviors of control or surveillance of the partner or ex-partner through social networks and electronic media have been the behaviors that have had the highest prevalence, since at least 75% of a sample with young people has been part of this violence as a perpetrator, while on the other hand it has been reported that 82% have suffered this type of violence (Borrajo et al., cited in Gámez-Guadix, 2018).

Thanks to the above, we can define that, the greater the myths of distortion of romantic love, the greater the violence in relationships, including violence in social networks.

Table 4
Linear regression analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>gl1</th>
<th>gl2</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.333</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>&lt;.001*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5
Model Coefficients – Dating Violence Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Estimador</th>
<th>EE</th>
<th>Inferior</th>
<th>Superior</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constante</td>
<td>50.43</td>
<td>5.396</td>
<td>39.79</td>
<td>61.075</td>
<td>9.35</td>
<td>&lt;.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAI</td>
<td>-1.08</td>
<td>0.329</td>
<td>-1.73</td>
<td>-0.433</td>
<td>-3.29</td>
<td>&lt;.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAD</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.407</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>2.733</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>&lt;.001*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-sided)

According to tables 4 and 5, a significant predictive coefficient of the dating violence variable can be observed. The factor of the myths of distorted love predict violence by up to 40% and the factor of the myths of idealized love by up to 32%.
5 CONCLUSION

According to the results applied to the adolescent population in relation to the myths of romantic love, the general result is not related to violence, however, the only factor that showed that, if there is a significant relationship between romantic love and violence is the factor "myths of distorted love" which in the vast majority has violent consequences during the dating relationship since due to its distorting nature it allows violent behavior.

Although the intensity of the consequences changes or varies according to the age and education of the participants, the results showed that almost the entire population of this research has internalized different myths of romantic love, distorted love and idealized love. In the same way, it was found that in addition to the violence that can occur within the face-to-face environment of the couple, it is also manifested by social networks as a new form of violence in courtship, so it is considered important to work on healthier relationships through re-education with the aim of having a greater critical awareness about what love is. what we have been taught and how we can put into practice behaviors that lead us to have healthier, non-violent relationships with our partners.

Regarding the distorted myths and the idolized myths of love, a moderate predictability is described, which suggests further analysis of these factors and their relationship with other variables.

REFERENCES


