

## **Inmate Partner Violence Through Social Networks**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to analyze the relationship between dating violence and the social media. A sample of 400 university students from both private and public institutions of Mexico City was selected. From these sample, 46.6% were men and 52.4% women, with an age range of 16-29. Two scales were used to evaluate, the first one corresponds to violence in dating and the second scale to violence in dating through social media. Both instruments are Likert scale with response options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A pilot test was used to evaluate the usefulness of the instrument and its validness and reliability. Statistical analysis of Chronback alpha and factor analysis of the scales were used. In the reliability analysis appropriate values for both scales were obtained, which means that there was an appropriate relationship between the reagents with the scales proposed in general. To analyze the relationship between intimate partner violence and intimate partner violence on social media crosstabs were performed with analysis chi square, the results showed significant differences between dating violence and intimate partner violence on social media on significance levels. Thus, the relationship between intimate partner violence and intimate partner violence on social media showed that in a low (high) level of violence there is also a low (high) level of violence in social media likewise in a severe level of

intimate partner violence the level of violence involving social media is also severe.

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**Keywords:** Couple, dating violence, social media, dating violence in social media

## **Introduction**

A couple is conformed by two people either a man and a woman or people form the same gender which are united by a sentimental bond. A couple can be identified as one since courtship to marriage. The concept of couple changes depending on the age, time of the relationship, maturity, and life experiences of the people that conform it (Mercy & Teten, 2015).

Adolescence is a transition period that ranges between 12 or 13 years to 18 or 20; it is the step between childhood to a mature age, it is also where the physical changes of puberty occur. Additionally during this stage of life changes in the social development occur, this changes are associated to the feeling of belonging to groups with whom she/he identifies with, this is why they are so important to them. The constant search for an identity as well as the achievement of a physical appearance consistent with the criteria and fashion stereotypes are two of the factors that receive the most attention from teenagers. In the affective aspect the corresponding interest in sexuality is particularly incident so it is at this time when individuals probably have their first sexual encounters.

Couple relationships can be strongly influenced by the physical attraction as well as by principle of similarity or affinity. The interpersonal factors that have influence in the couple are: emotional maturity; self-esteem; respect for others; adaptability; ability to express and receive affection; communication level; and satisfaction in sexual intercourse (Muñoz Corvalan, J., 2012).

According to the General Secretary of the National Population Council (CONAPO), in Mexico, between 40 and 45 percent of single women in the country, between the age of 25 and 29 years old report having an affair. According to the National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships (ENDIREH 2011), at 15 years 52% of single women have or have had a relationship; this percentage increases to 74.5% when they reach 18; while less than 12% of women remain single until adulthood. According to the National Survey on Dating Violence (ENVIN 2007) educational institutions and social spaces are the main places of encounter with the couple: 36 % at school, 18% on the street and 14 % at parties.

The quality of our relationships is based on our health and wellbeing. The relationships we have with our romantic partners, children and other family members or friends and coworkers shape our lives in deep ways. Love relationships are the most focused on shaping the contours of our lives.

Violence weakens and often can destroy these relationships that are so important to our health and well-being (Mercy & Teten, 2015).

WHO defines violence as the use of physical force or power, either as a threat, against oneself, another person, a group or a community, causing or likely to cause injury, death, psychological harm or a developmental disorder (World Health Organization, 2002). Violence is a social health problem and a major psychosocial risk. Because of the extent of the damage and deaths it causes, it is classified as a social, biological and psychological problem (Espin, Valladares, 2008).

Violence can manifest itself in different ways, it is important to learn how to identify it, to distinguish the different violent behaviors (CONAPO). Violence is categorized as: emotional or psychological violence; physical violence; sexual violence; and economic or patrimonial violence (CONAPO, 2012).

On the other hand, as a specific type of violence, intimate partner violence also known as dating violence, has also been in the past three decades a significant worldwide social problem due to its magnitude and consequences (Medina & Barberet, 2003; Vives Alvarez - Dardet & Caballero, 2003). Some manifestations of intimate violence on the emotional level are: insults, humiliation, denial of the relationship and control of the partner's family and social bonds. Physically, this same type of violence is manifested as: hitting, pushing, violent strokes, among other things; in the sexual level, sexual contacts against the will, impairment of the use of contraception or forcing the person to engage in unwanted sexual practices (Bookwala, Frieze, Smith & Ryan, 1992; Canada Minister of Health, 1996).

According to the Survey on Dating Violence (ENVIN 2007), 76% of young Mexicans between the age of 15 and 24 years have suffered episodes of violence at least once in dating. As for the reasons that give rise to violence, 41% of men said they got upset because of jealousy; 25.7% because their partner has a lot of friends; and 23.1% say that their partner is angry for everything for no apparent reason. In regard to women, 46% said get upset because they feel jealous; 42.5% because their partner commit to something and fail in doing it; and 35% because they believe they are being deceived (Secretaria de Gobernación, 2007).

Dating violence is usually an experience that is characterized by feelings of shame. The fear that they may lay the blame and that the secret is not kept, that adults will push them to end the relationship or fear of being harmed, avoid revealing the situation they are going through. Their biggest confidants are friends; and for this and other reasons, violence in intimate relationships is a phenomenon that is surrounded by silence and pain, which

underestimates the real extent of the problem (Aparicio, Lopes Ferreira Duarte, 2014).

Media is a tool used in contemporary society to inform and communicate messages in textual, sound, visual or audiovisual version (Subgerencia Cultural del Banco de la República, 2015). Every day, individuals and communities have access to information that describes, explains and analyzes data and political, social, economic and cultural events, both locally and in the global context (Subgerencia Cultural del Banco de la República, 2015).

The short text messages that are sent from the server to the recipient have become the most used form of communication from a wide range of forms of communication, which include Twitter and Facebook (Moore et al. BMC Public Health, 2013).

Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social media as an internet based service that allows individuals to build a public profile or semipublic within a bounded system, to articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and to see and explore their list of connections and those made by other users within the system.

About two years ago, the total internet users in Mexico was estimated at 51.2 million, the daily internet time was set at 5 hours 36 minutes. The main devices to establish internet access were personal computers or laptops (59%), desktop computers (57%), smartphones (49%), mobile phones (27%) and tablets (20%) (AMIPCI, 2014). For example, The World Bank estimates that the number of cell phones per 100 people in 2010 was 90.15 in the United States, 130.34 in the UK and globally 78.16 (Moore et al. BMC Public Health, 2013).

The social media called Facebook, enjoys worldwide popularity in a complex system that integrates services that are offered by the network itself, such as messaging and the ability to publish and share photos, video, links, etc. (Ciuffoli, C. and Lopez, G. 2010, p. 124), which is why it has millions of users around the world, there are a few students who do not have a profile on this social media. In Mexico there are 49 million internet users who have a profile on the social media Facebook.

One in four teenagers who have a sentimental relationship, is harassed by their partner online with texts intended to control, degrade and terrify (Zweig and Dank, 2013).

Victims of digital abuse are twice as likely to be physically assaulted in the face reality (Lucio –Lopez, L., & Prieto - Quezada, M. 2011).

It is identified as electronic violence the abuse occurring in cyber interactions between teenagers who have a relationship. According to Hinduja and Patchin (2011), possessive jealousy takes on a new face in cyberspace, because those who play the role of aggressors stalk their partners

to monitor their activity both on their computers and on their mobile phones, violating their privacy.

## Method

### Participants

400 surveys were conducted in which 47.8% of the participants were men and 52.2% women (Table 1). The age range was from 19 to 25 years, where most of the participating group was 22 years old. It was found that 34.8% of participants had a partner, while 54.3 % did not.

Table 1. Population characteristics

GENDER	Masculine	46.6%
	Feminine	53.4%
AGE	16 a 20 years	40.5%
	21 a 29 years	59.5%

### Instrument

The measuring instrument used consists of 41 questions divided into 3 sections. The first part consists of questions regarding the sociodemographic area, the second part by the scale measuring partner violence and the third, to the scale measuring partner violence on social media.

The instrument uses Likert type scales, where the answers to each item range from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

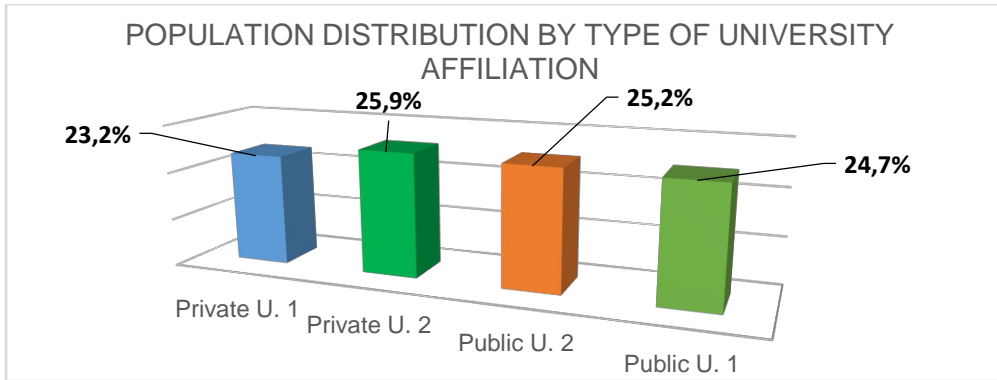
### Process

The instrument was applied individually and in an autoaplicable form; each participant was asked for its voluntary participation and it was emphasized that the data was going to be uses for research purposes, confidentiality was assured.

### Results

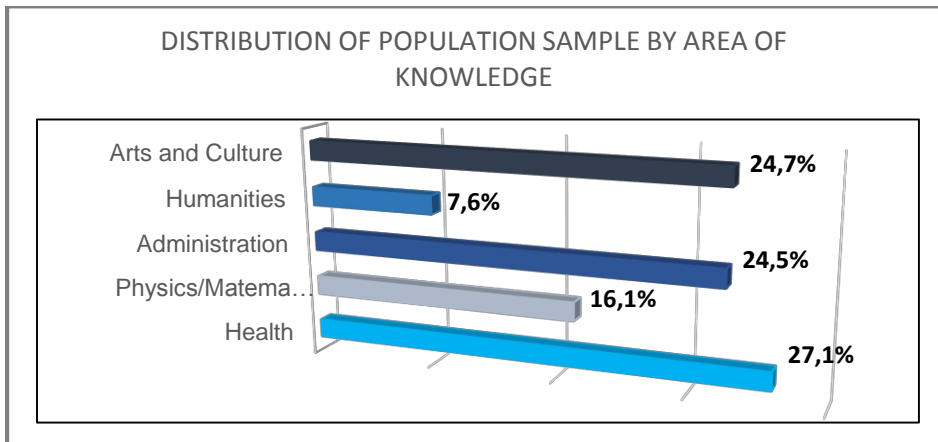
The analysis of the results was carried out considering the following variables: gender, age, college, career, reason and frequency of use of social media and the technology used.

In Figure 1, the concentration of participants is observed in terms of the type of university affiliation, which include both the public (49.9%) and private sector (49.1%).



**Figure 1.** Population distribution by type of university affiliation.

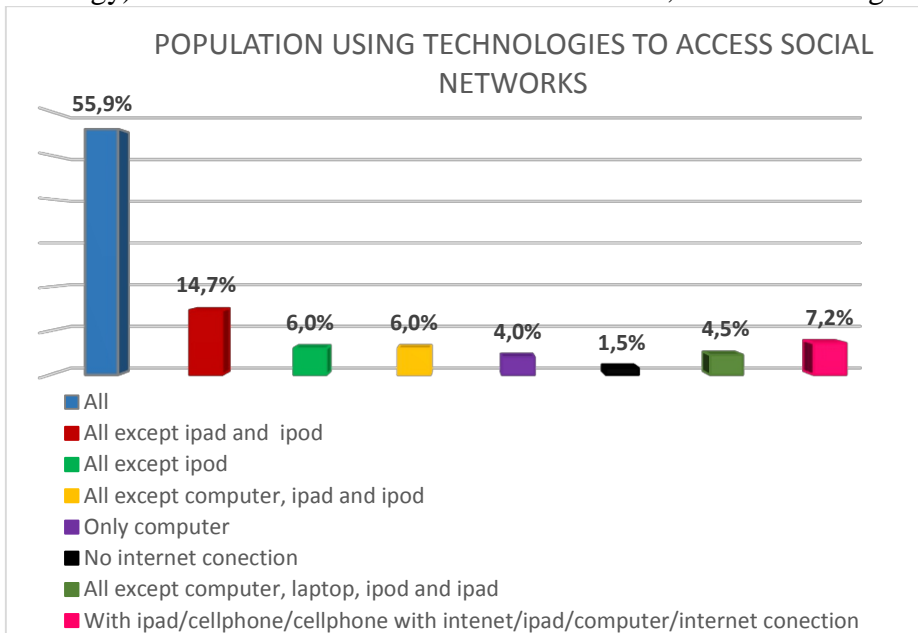
Respondents study different careers, these were grouped into 5 different areas of knowledge: Arts and Culture, Humanities, Administration, Physics/Mathematics and Health (Figure 2). 27% of respondents study a career in the department of Health. 25% in Administration, 25% in Art and Culture, 16% in Physics/Mathematics and 8% in the department of Humanities.



**Figure 2.** Areas of knowledge corresponding to the careers studied by the respondents.

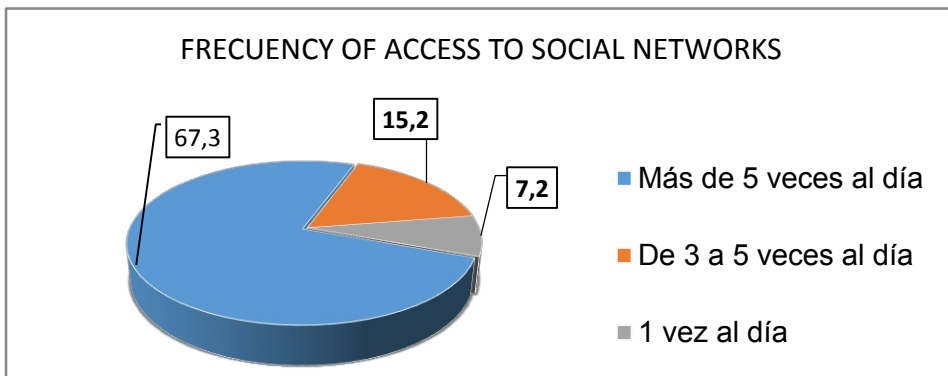
Regarding the technologies used by the subjects to who the survey was applied, 56% have all of the technologies (ipad, phone, phone with internet, computer, internet, laptop), 15 % of the respondents have all of the technologies except for ipad and ipod; 7% have at least one of the technologies; 6% of the respondents have all of the technologies except for ipod; 6% of the respondents have all of the technologies except for computer, ipad and ipod; 5% have all of the technologies except for computer, laptop , ipad, and ipod; 4% only have a computer; and 1% does not have internet connection. Based on these results, we can infer that almost

all of the subjects (99%) surveyed have a mean of communication (technology) that allows them to access a social media, as shown in Figure 3.



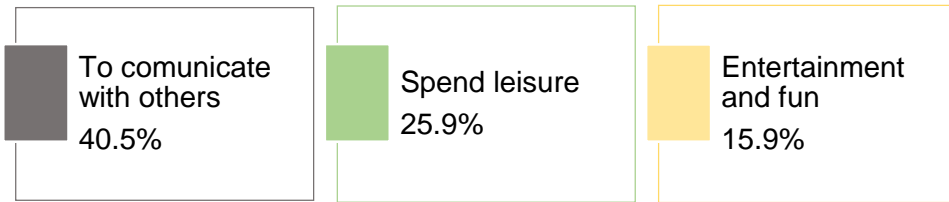
**Figure 3.** Technologies used by university students to access social media.

From the results found in the descriptive analysis of the frequency of use (How often do you use Facebook, whatsapp or some other social media?) and why young university students access social media (What is the main reason why you use Facebook, whatsapp, instagram, Snapchat) 67.3% of the population uses social media more than 5 times a day, 15.2% use social media three to five times a day, while only 7.2% of the population uses social media 1 time per day (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Frequency of access to social media, regardless of the technology used for it.

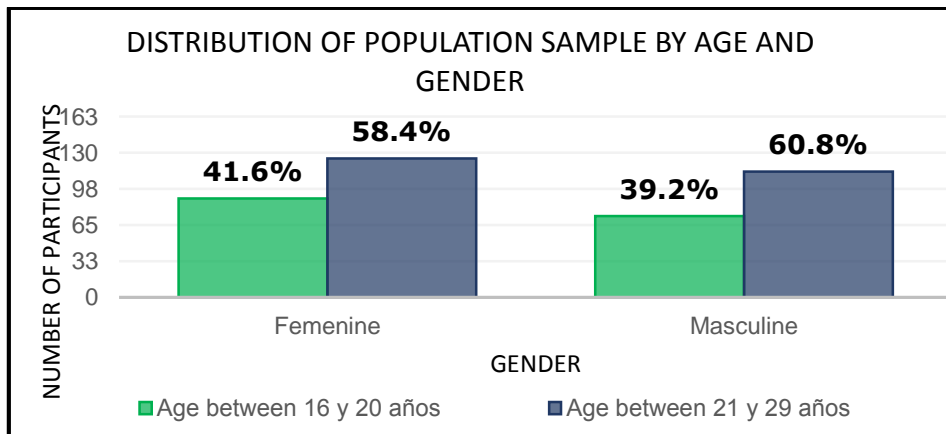
In the results obtained on the main reason for the use of social media; 40.5% of the population uses them to communicate with others, 25.9% use them to spend leisure time, while for a 15.9% they are means of entertainment and fun (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Uses and customs for the use of social media among young university students.

### Analysis of Results

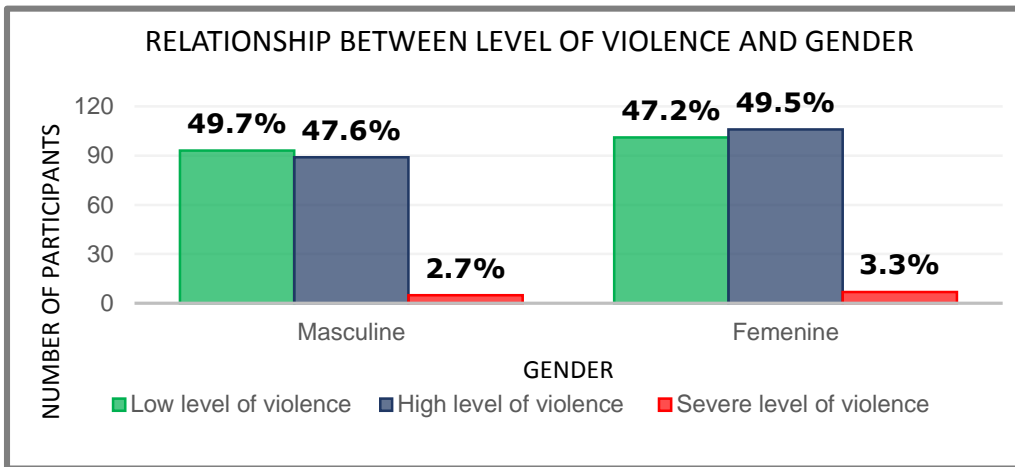
According to the results obtained in the analysis of the information that was collected, it can be seen that within the age group between 16 and 20 years, 39.2% of the members are men, while 41.6% are women; whereas, in the second age group comprising 21 to 29 years, 60.8% are men and 58.4% are women (Figure 6).



**Figure. 6** Distribution by gender and age range

Regarding the male population, 49.7% have a low level of intimate partner violence, 47.6% have a high level and 2.7% have a severe level of partner violence. On the other hand, in the female population, 47.2% have a low level of violence, 49.5% have a high level and 3.3% had severe level of intimate partner violence (Figure 7). There is no significant difference in the level of partner violence reporting participants by gender (Chi-square test with de.329a value and significance of .848).



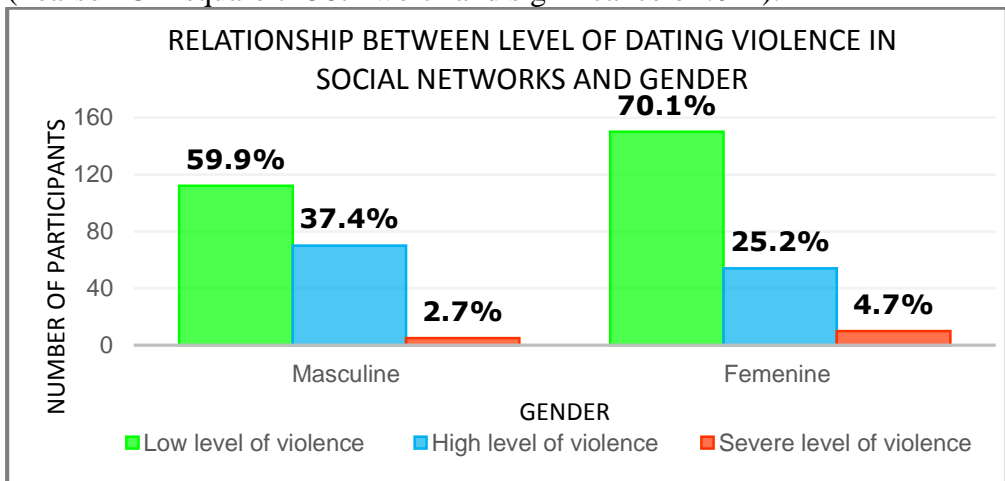


**Figure 7.** Comparative levels of intimate partner violence based on the gender.

In particular, in contrast to the phenomenon referred to in the preceding paragraph, when it comes to intimate partner violence in social media, the characteristics change significantly. Of all male participants, 59.9% have a low level of partner violence on social media, 37.4% have a high level and 2.7% have a severe level.

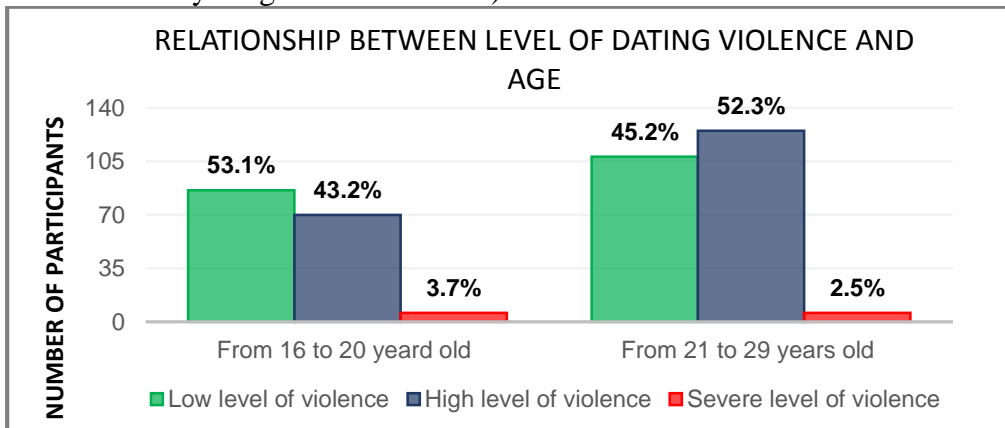
As for all female participants, 70.1% have a low levels of partner violence on social media, 25.2% a high level and 4.7% a severe level (Figure 8).

Therefore, in this case there is a significant difference between the gender of participants and levels of partner violence on social media (Pearson Chi-square 7458th worth and significance of .024).

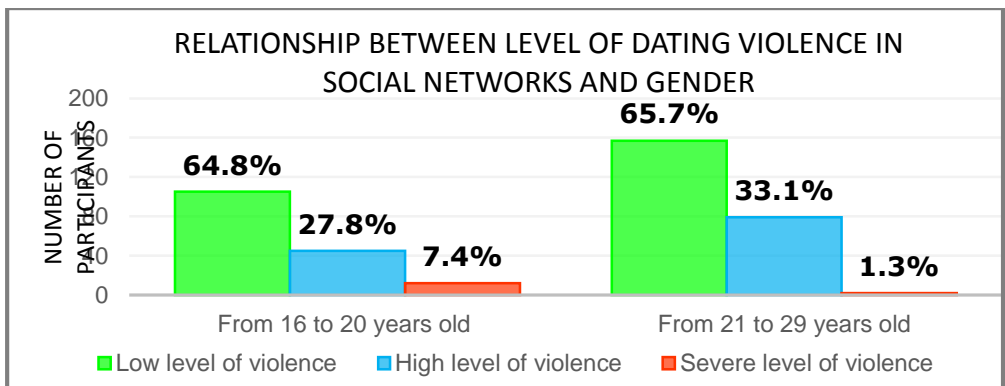


**Figure 8.** Comparative levels of partner violence on social media, based on gender.

When considering the two age ranges that have been defined for the purpose of this work, the results show that (Figure 9), 53.1% of subjects between 16 and 20 years old have a low level of intimate partner violence, 43.2% have high levels of partner violence and 3.7% have severe levels; but referring back to the context of social media, 64.8% of subjects show low levels of partner violence in social media, 27.8% show high levels and 7.4% severe levels of partner violence on social media (Figure 10). Within the second age group, this is 21 to 29 years, 45.2% have low levels of partner violence while 52.3% of patients show high levels of 2.5% and severe levels (Figure 9); while 65.7% of the subjects in this group indicate low levels of partner violence on social media, 33.1% indicate high levels and 1.3% severe levels (Figure 10). There is no statistically significant difference between the levels of intimate partner violence with age (Pearson Chi-Square with a value of 3.345ay significance .188), but there is a statistically significant difference when it comes to its manifestation in social media (Chi-square worth 10.650ay a significance of .005).

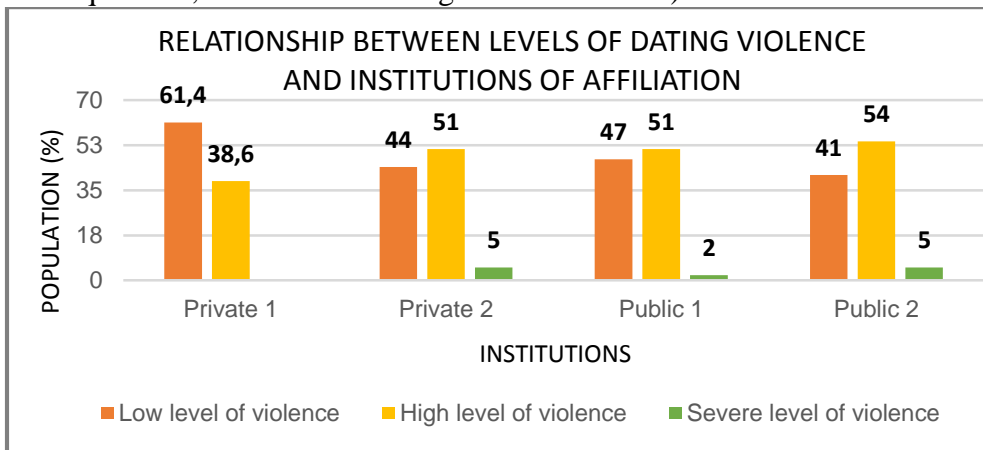


**Figure 9:** Comparative levels of partner violence, depending on the age group.



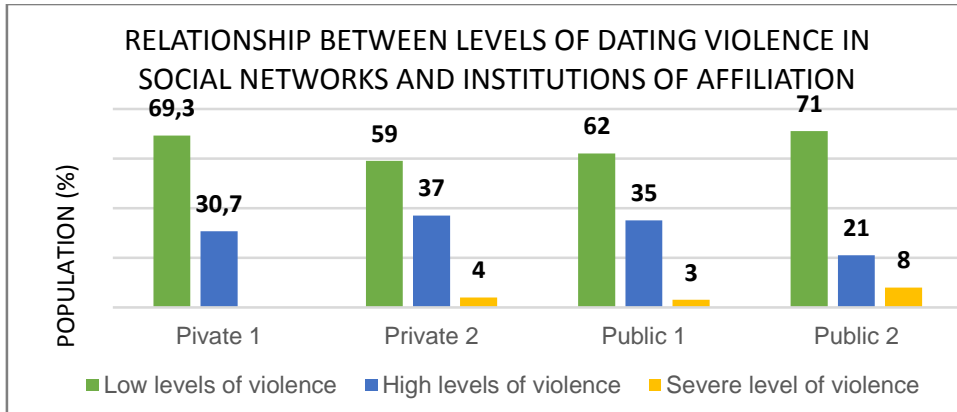
**Figure 10.** Comparative levels of partner violence on social media, depending on the age group.

In Figure 11 the characteristics of the relationship between levels of partner violence and the institution of affiliation can be observed. In the Private University 1, 61.4% have a low level of violence, 38.6% a high level and there is no level of severe violence. In the Private University 2, 44% have a low level of violence, 51% a high level, and 5% a severe level. At the Public University 1, 47% have a low level of violence, 51% have a high level, and 2% a severe level. Finally at the Public University 2, 41% have a low level, 54% a higher and 5% a severe level of intimate partner violence. According to the analysis, there is a significant difference between the level of partner violence and the institutions in which respondents study (Pearson Chi -square 14,046th worth and significance of .029).



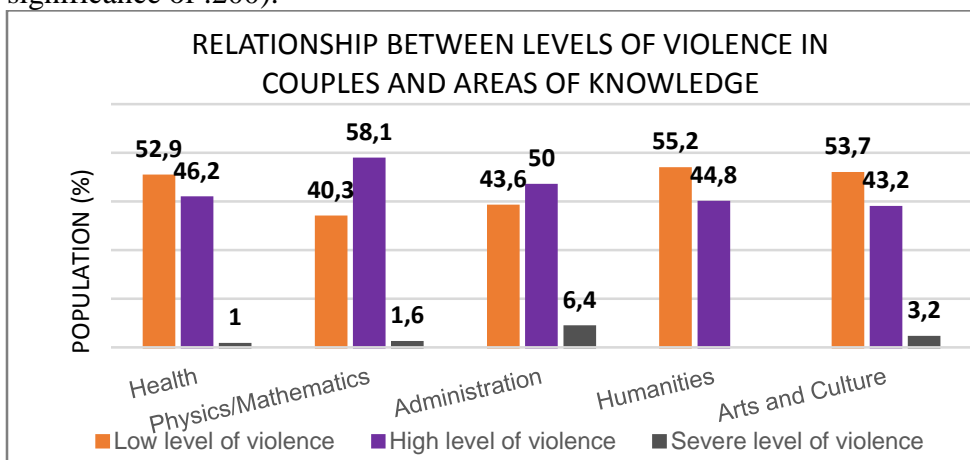
**Figure 11.** Comparative Levels of Dating Violence depending on the type of University in which the subjects surveyed study.

By crossing the corresponding information of dating violence on social media with the data about the educational institutions of origin of the participants in the survey (Figure 12) it shows that: At the Private University 1, 69.3% has a low level of partner violence on social media, 30.7% a high level and there is no severe level; at the Private University 2, 59% have a low level, 37% a high level and 4% a severe level; at the Public University 1, 62% have a low level, 35% a high level and 3% have severe level of intimate partner violence in social media; finally, at Public University 2, 71% have a low level of partner violence on social media, 21% a high level and 8% have a severe level. In terms of the results of the analysis carried out, there is a significant difference between intimate partner violence on social media and the Universities of origin (Pearson Chi-square 15,230th worth and significance of .019).



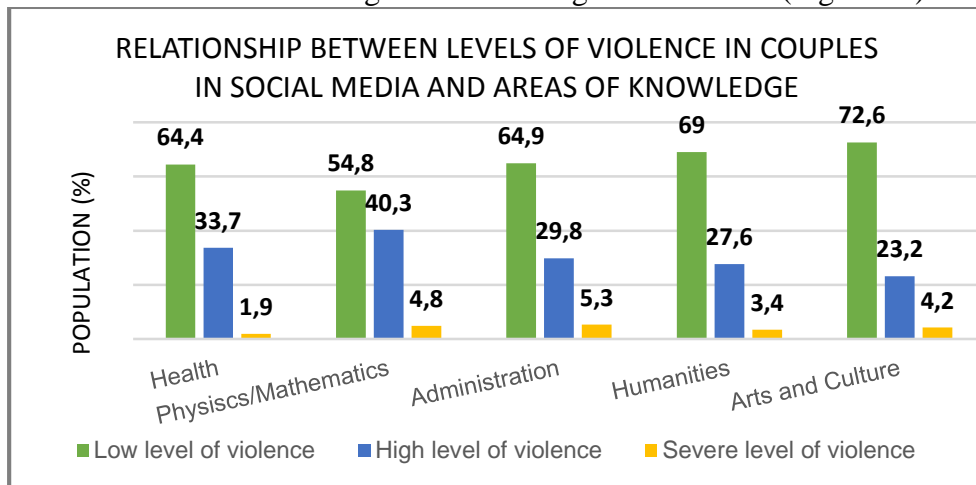
**Figure 12.** Comparative Levels of Dating Violence in Social Networks, depending on the type of University in which the subjects surveyed study.

In Figure 13 its shown how the carrier influences the level of partner violence. In the area of Health it was found that more than 50% have a low level of violence, 46% have a high level of violence and 1% have a severe level of dating violence. In the area of Physics/ Mathematics it was observed that 40% have a low level of violence, 58% have a high level, and in 1.6% the level of violence is severe. In the Administrative area, 43.6% have a low level of violence, 50% have a high level and 6.4% a severe level of partner violence. In the area of Humanities 55.2% have a low level of violence, 44.8% a high level, and none have a severe level of dating violence. In the area of Arts and Culture, 53.7% have a low level of violence, 43.2% have a high level and 3.2% have a severe level. There is no significant difference between the levels of dating violence associated with different areas of knowledge that were considered (Pearson Chi-square 11,033th worth and significance of .200).



**Figure 13.** Comparative of the relationship between intimate partner violence levels and the areas of knowledge according to the careers studied by the respondents.

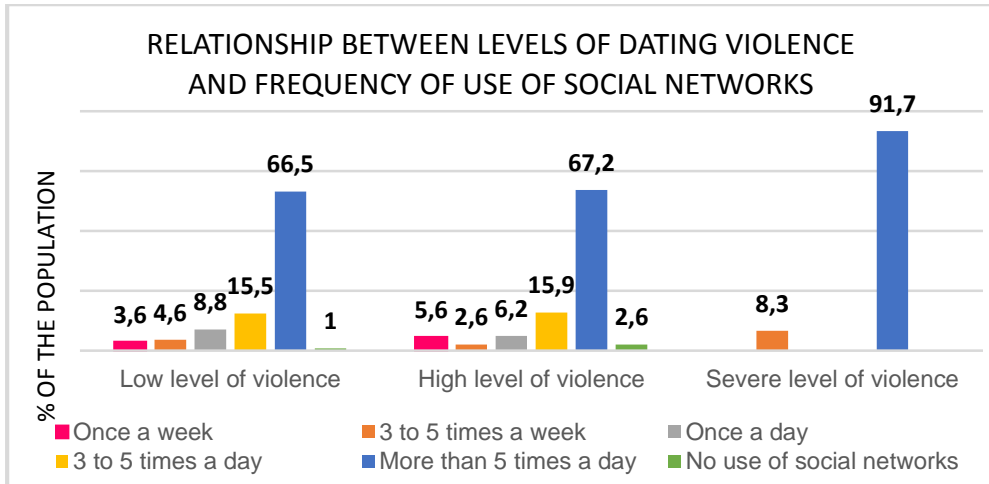
As in the previous case, there is no significant difference between the levels of dating violence on social media, in terms of the areas of knowledge from the career studied by the participants (Pearson Chi -square with a value of 7.6366ay a significance of .470). This stems from the fact that: in the area of Health, 64.4 % of the respondents have a low level of violence, 33.7% have a high level and 1.9% have a severe level; in the Physics/ Mathematics area, 54.8% have low level, 40.3% have a high level and 4.8% a severe level of dating violence through social media; In the administrative area, 64.9% have a low level of couple violence, 29.8% a high level and 5.3% a severe one; in the humanities area, 69% have a low level of violence in couple through social media, 27.6% a high level and 3.4% a severe level; finally in the area of Arts and Culture, 72.6% have a low level, 23.2% a high level and 4.2% a severe level of dating violence through social media (Figure 14).



**Figure 14:** Comparative levels of partner violence on social media, based on the areas of knowledge from the careers studied by the respondents.

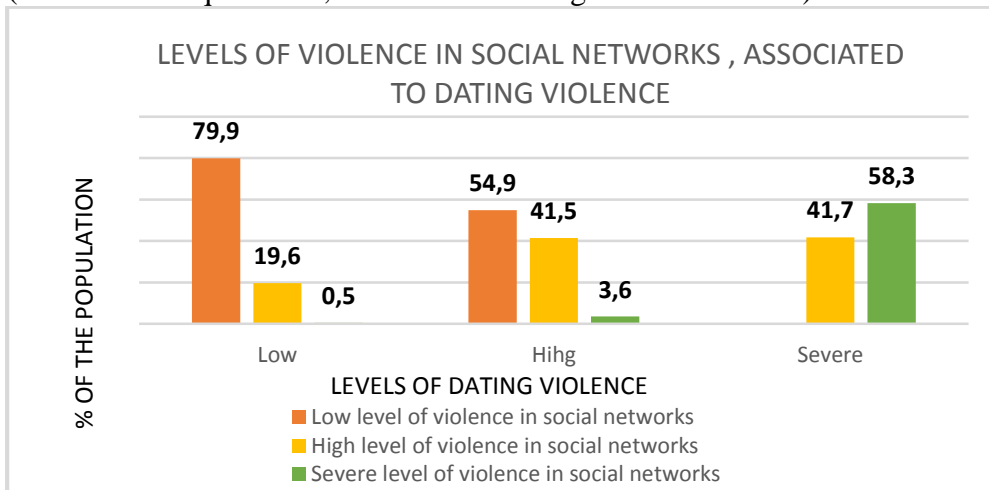
The levels of violence in couples were compared, depending on the frequency with which people use social media; it was found that:

- In the low level of violence, 3.6% use social media once a week; 4.6% 3 to 5 times per week; 8.8% once daily; 15.5% 3 to 5 times a day; 66.5% more than five times a day; and 1% do not use social media.
- In the high level of violence, 5.6% use social media 1 time per week; 2.6%, 3 to 5 times per week; 6.2%, once a day; 15.9%, 3 to 5 times a day; 67.2% , more than five times a day; and 2.6 % do not use social media.
- In the severe level of violence, it was found that 8.3% use social media 3 to 5 times a week; and 91.7 % , more than five times a day (Figure 15). The analysis reveals that there is a difference between the levels of dating violence according to the frequency of use of social media (Pearson Chi-square 41,391th worth and significance of .000).



**Figure 15.** Levels of dating violence depending on the frequency of use of social media.

In dating violence of a LOW level, 79.9% also have a low level of violence through social media, 19.6% have a high level and 0.5% a severe level. In dating violence of a HIGH level, 54.9% have a low level of violence through social media, 41.5% a high level and 3.6% a severe level. In intimate partner violence of a SEVERE level, 0% of couples have a low level of violence, 41.7% have a high level and 58.3% have a severe level (Figure 16). There is a significant difference between the levels of violence as a couple, compared to the levels of violence as a couple through social media. (Pearson Chi-square 134,035th worth and significance of .000).



**Figure 16:** Levels of dating violence, compared to levels of dating violence through social media.

## Conclusion

Over the past three decades, intimate violence, also known as dating violence has been established as a relevant social problem worldwide due to

its magnitude and consequences (Medina & Barberet, 2003; Vives, Álvarez-Dardet & Caballero, 2003). This type of violence has been defined by several authors such as the exercise or threat of violence by at least one member of the couple.

In the research significant differences in the presence of dating violence and dating violence in social media were found; the results show that of all the male participants have a higher level of high and low violence, while female have a higher level of severe violence. As for the age groups (16 to 20 years and 21 to 29 years), people in the older age group experience more violence of low and high levels, while the younger age group has a higher level of severe violence. Referring to the institutions where the participants study it is observed that the type of relationship with the level of partner violence is observed with and without the participation of social media.

The proposed hypothesis was tested; the higher the level of partner violence in the subjects, there is an increased risk of using the mass media as a tool for intimate partner violence. In the increased use of social media (more than five times a day) 66.5% of participants have a low level of violence; 67.2% of the sample has a high level of violence; and 91.7% a level of severe violence.

For a low level of intimate partner violence there is also a low level of violence in social media; in a high level of partner violence there is a higher incidence of partner violence on social media both in a high and low level (54.9% and 41.5% respectively), and in a severe level of partner violence, there are also observed severe levels of violence through social media.

The main objective of this research was to manifest this social problem and to show relevant statistics that make clear the important need of finding mechanisms that help to reduce it.

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