

Emotional Dependence, Satisfaction with Life and Partner Violence in University Students

Dependencia emocional, satisfacción con la vida y violencia de pareja en estudiantes universitarias

Carlos Ramón Ponce-Díaz* 

Universidad Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Lima, Perú
Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola, Lima, Perú
ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0101-2244>

Jesús Joel Aiquipa Tello 

Universidad Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Lima, Perú
ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1982-6908>

Manuel Arboccó de los Heros 

Universidad Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Lima, Perú
ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8481-310X>

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*Correspondence

Email: cponediaz@hotmail.com

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Summary

The objective of the study was to analyze the relationship between emotional dependence and satisfaction with life in a group of Psychology students from public and private universities in Metropolitan Lima, victims and non-victims of partner violence. The research involved 1211 university students with an average age of 21.7 years ($SD = 4.7$), 54% not subjected to any partner violence and 46% who had experienced violence. The instruments used were the Questionnaire on Violence between partners (CUVINO, Rodríguez-Franco et al., 2010), the Inventory of Emotional Dependence (IDE, Aiquipa, 2015) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS, Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). The results indicate that in the group of women experiencing partner violence there is a statistically significant relationship and an inverse relationship between emotional dependence and life satisfaction, both for the total scale (-0.24 , $p < .005$) and for all dimensions (values between -0.128 to -0.26 , $p < .001$). However, in the group of women not subjected to partner violence, the relationship between the study variables was lower (-0.11 , $p < .005$) and some relationship was only found between satisfaction with life and three of the seven dimensions (values between -0.11 to -0.16 , $p < .005$).

Keywords: Partner Violence; Emotional Dependence; Satisfaction with Life; University Students.

Resumen

El objetivo del estudio fue analizar la relación entre la dependencia emocional y la satisfacción con la vida en un grupo de estudiantes de Psicología de universidades públicas y privadas de Lima Metropolitana, víctimas y no-víctimas de violencia de pareja. Participaron 1211 estudiantes universitarias con edad promedio de 21.7 años ($DE=4,7$), 54% sin violencia de pareja y 46% con violencia. Los instrumentos empleados fueron el Cuestionario de Violencia entre Novios (CUVINO, Rodríguez-Franco et al., 2010), el Inventario de Dependencia Emocional (IDE, Aiquipa, 2015) y la Escala de Satisfacción con la Vida (SWLS, Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). Los resultados indican que en el grupo de mujeres con violencia de pareja existe relación estadísticamente significativa y de tipo inversa entre dependencia emocional y satisfacción con la vida, tanto para la escala total ($-0,24$; $p < .005$) como para todas las dimensiones (valores entre $-0,128$ hasta $-0,26$; $p < .001$). Sin embargo, en el grupo de mujeres sin violencia de pareja, la relación entre las variables de estudio fue menor ($-0,11$; $p < .005$) y solo se halló relación entre satisfacción con la vida y tres de las siete dimensiones (valores entre $-0,11$ hasta $-0,16$; $p < .005$).

Palabras clave: Violencia de pareja; Dependencia emocional; Satisfacción con la vida; Estudiantes universitarias.

Introduction

Partner violence is defined as any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological, or sexual harm to the members of this relationship. Such behavior may include physical aggression, psychological abuse, sexual coercion, and control behaviors (Heise & García-Moreno, 2003). Likewise, most of the victims of this type of violence in heterosexual relationships are women, while men are the perpetrators. (United Nations, 2015).

In recent years, interest in studying violence against young and adolescent women has increased (Cortés-Ayala et al., 2015; Rodríguez-Franco et al., 2016; Stöckl, March, Pallitto, & García-Moreno, 2014; Viejo, 2014). It is not that the investigation of this problem was not concerned about adult women who already cohabit with their partners, but rather that, apparently, this tendency tries to investigate in a timely manner the characteristics of this type of violence and the associated variables that could explain it, in such a way that the interventions are

optimized and the harmful effects on women are reduced. It is also important to note that most studies on partner violence were conducted with university students (Aizpurua, Caravaca-Sánchez & Stephenson, 2018; García et al., 2013; López-Cepero, Lana, Rodríguez-Franco, Paíno & Rodríguez-Díaz, 2015).

In the Peruvian context, the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI), through the Demographic and Family Health Survey (ENDES), reports that at the national level 65.4% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 at least once suffered some type of violence from their husbands or partners (INEI, 2017). More precisely, Vara-Horna et al. (2016) found that 65% of female university students who had a partner were once in their lives attacked by their partners or ex-partners; while in the last year preceding the study, 47.8% of women were attacked by their partners, with an average of 20 attacks per year.

The harmful consequences reported in university students who are victims of partner violence imply, among others, mental health problems such as stress, anxiety disorders, depression and suicidal ideas (Aizpuru et al., 2018; Eshelman & Levendosky, 2012; Martín-Baena, Talavera, & Montero-Piñar, 2016), as well as difficulties in academic performance (Banyard et al., 2017). With respect to the variables associated with the initiation and maintenance of intimate partner violence in young people, it is important to mention that most studies co-indicate grouping them into demographic, contextual, family, relational and psychological risk factors (Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt, & Kim, 2012). Thus, there are reports, among other variables, of previous experiences of family violence (Stöckl et al., 2014); difficulties in emotional regulation (Momeñe, Jáuregui, & Estévez, 2017); diminished self-esteem (Moral, García, Cuetos, & Sirvent, 2017) and self-efficacy in the relationship (Baker, Cobb, McNulty, Lambert, & Fincham, 2016).

The studies reviewed in relation to both adult and youth populations report a relationship between emotional dependence and violence during dating (Del Castillo, Hernández, Romero, & Iglesias, 2015, Momeñe et al., 2017; Moral et al., 2017). Other studies find high levels of emotional dependence in those women who reported mistreatment by their couples with respect to their peers who did not experience such violence, highlighting that characteristics such as partner prioritization, submission and subordination, and fear of rupture, seem to be main attributes of emotional dependence for women who are ill-treated (Aiquipa, 2015; Huerta et al., 2016).

In this context, one of the variables associated with partner violence is emotional dependence. In recent years, this construct has been the object of interest and research in the field of couple relationships (Avci Çayir & Kalkan, 2018; Estévez et al., 2018; Gonzalez-Bueso et al., 2018; Niño & Abaunza, 2015; Urbiola & Estévez, 2015; Urbiola, Estévez, Iruarizaga, & Jauregui, 2017). Although the literature presents various theories that deal with emotional dependence, the proposal offered by Castelló (2005) is used for the purposes of this study. The author proposes the affective bonding model to explain the nature of emotional dependence. Thus, he refers that human beings have the need to bond with others in order to obtain security and affection, which generates permanent bonds with them. This affective bonding with others can occur to varying degrees. This affective bonding with others can occur to varying degrees. For the author, the difference between the relationships of normal couples and their emotional dependent peers are continuous, and they can be placed in a hypothetical continuous in degrees or levels of affective bonding. Emotional dependence constitutes the extreme dimension of the need for affective bonding, generating a pattern of thinking, feeling and acting more or less stable in the person while in the interaction with their couples.

On the other hand, although there are studies that investigated the relationship between psychological well-being and partner violence (Bernardo & Estrellado, 2017; Mohamed & Herrera, 2014; Montero et al, 2011; Poutiainen & Holma, 2013), only some studies specifically address satisfaction with life in women who suffer partner violence, and those that propose that

one of the consequences of this type of violence is precisely the decrease in the level of satisfaction with life (Callahan, Tolman, & Saunders, 2003; García, Włodarczyk, Reyes, San Cristóbal, & Solar, 2014).

In this context, satisfaction with life constitutes one of the components of subjective well-being, and it is defined as the cognitive and global evaluation of the quality of life in general (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Thus, satisfaction with life represents an evaluative judgment (Pavot & Diener, 2008). According to Schimmack, Diener and Oishi (2002), changes in life satisfaction are often systematically linked to changes in specific and accessible domains, rather than being the product of random contextual factors. Consequently, life satisfaction judgments appear to be sensitive to changes in the important domains of a person's life. Thus, some studies identify important domains that can influence life satisfaction judgments, such as social support (Diener & Diener McGavran, 2008; Turner & Brown, 2010; Novoa & Barra, 2015; Ruvalcaba-Romero, Fernández-Berrocal, Salazar-Estrada, & Gallegos-Guajardo, 2017; Trepte, Dienlin, & Reinecke, 2015), academic performance (Pavot & Diener, 2008; Schimmack et al., 2002), personal goals or objectives (Heckhausen & Kay, 2018; Klug & Maier, 2015) and entertainment and leisure activities (Liu & Yu, 2015; Pascucci, 2015).

No research has been found that reports the possible relationship between emotional dependence and life satisfaction in the context of partner violence. In this sense, the authors consider that the subject matter raised is current and of national interest, and that the study is also amply justified by the numerous cases of partner violence and female homicide that have occurred in recent years in Peru, where university students were particularly involved in a group of those cases.

The educational role of universities is of paramount importance for the professional development of students. This is why many higher education institutions develop tutorial plans aimed at the development of personal aspects (self-esteem, social skills, regulation of emotions, among others), with the aim of encouraging better adaptation of students. In this sense, this study is framed in the field of study of non-cognitive variables associated with academic performance since their presence can influence in an unfavorable or negative way in the personal and professional consolidation of the student.

Therefore, the main objective of the study is to analyze the relationship between emotional dependence and satisfaction of university students of psychology in Metropolitan Lima, victims and non-victims of intimate partner violence. To achieve this, in the first place, the percentage of women who reported being victims of intimate partner violence is identified; then, the scores of emotional dependence and life satisfaction in the two groups (suffering and not suffering violence) are compared; and finally, the type and intensity of relationship between the variables studied is analyzed.

Method

The study is an empirical research with quantitative methodology. Following Ato, López and Benavente (2013), this study corresponds to the associative strategy, insofar as the relationship between the variables satisfaction with life and emotional dependence in groups with and without partner violence was explored; and it is transversal, since the study was defined at a specific time.

Participants

There were involved 1211 women over 18 years of age, university students of the Psychology Career, residents of Lima, who had at least one heterosexual relationship. 43% of the participants come from public universities, while 67% come from private universities. The average age of the group is 21.7 years ($SD = 4.7$) and their predominant marital status is single (95%). 74% do not work while 26% share their studies with work activity. Most of them cohabit with their parents

(78%), 8.7% live with other relatives, while 9.2% live alone and only 3.8% cohabit with their partners. 94% do not have children and 46% currently have a couple while 54% do not.

Instruments

Sociodemographic data sheet. An ad hoc questionnaire was prepared containing questions to collect data such as age, place of residence, type of university, marital status, cohabitation, employment situation and current heterosexual relationship.

Violence questionnaire between boyfriend and girlfriend- CUVINO (Rodríguez-Franco et al., 2010) The test consists of 42 reagents in Likert format of five options (between 0 and 4) that evaluate behaviours indicating violence in the romantic relationships of couples in adolescent and young age. Each of the reagents investigates the presence of these indicators and the degree of discomfort these behaviors caused in the person. According to the purpose of the study, only the presence of the indicators was considered in order to identify those female students who reported partner violence and those who did not. The psychometric properties reported indicate a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient equal to 0.93 for the total scale and values between 0.58 and 0.81 for its eight dimensions; items with factorial loads between 0.36 and 0.76, composed of 8 factors that explain 51.3% of the total variance and statistically significant correlations between all factors, with relationship intensity of 0.30 to 0.65. For the present research, a pilot study was conducted with 300 female university students (characteristics similar to the final sample), in order to corroborate the relevance and thoroughness of the psychological tests. Thus, the CUVINO obtained a reliability coefficient $\alpha = 0.96$ for the total scale and values between 0.52 and 0.92 for its factors; item-test correlation between 0.33 and 0.79 and variance explained by the eight factors of 69.7%.

Emotional Dependency Inventory-IDE (Aiquipa, 2012, 2015). This instrument is made up of 49 items on a Likert scale of five alternatives (between 1 and 5) and evaluates behaviours of affective dependence towards the couple). The instrument obtained satisfactory reliability indicators such as ($\alpha = 0.96$; $r_c = 0.91$). Likewise, adequate evidence of construct validity was found, such as indexes according to values of .80 and 1.00 for more than 95% of the reagents, reproduction of 7 factors that explained 58.3% of the total variance, containing items with factorial loads between 0.40 and 0.70 and mean differences between clinical and non-clinical groups significant at 95% confidence level. In the pilot study ($n = 300$), the IDE obtained a reliability coefficient $\alpha = 0.97$ for the total scale and values between 0.79 and 0.90 for its factors; item-test correlation between 0.32 and 0.74 and variance explained by the seven factors of 61.5%.

Satisfaction with Life Scale-SWLB (Diener et al., 1985). Composed of five items written in positive direction by means of a Likert response scale of 7 points (from 1 = "very much in disagreement" to 7 = "totally agree"). The initial psychometric properties of the SWLB reported a test-retest correlation coefficient (two months) of 0.82 and alpha coefficient 0.87; reproduction of a single factor representing 66% of the variance, with items with factor loads between 0.61 and 0.84. Several studies have confirmed the satisfactory psychometric properties of SWLB, in different study samples, both international (Atienza, Pons, Balaguer, & García-Merita, 2000; Cecilia, Martínez, & Pilar, 2013; Celis-Atenas, & Silva, 2012; López-Ortega, Torres-Castro, & Rosas-Carrasco, 2016; Padrós, Gutiérrez, & Medina, 2015; Pavot & Diener, 2008; Vera-Villarroel, Urzúa, Pavez), and national (Alarcón, 2000; Arias-Gallegos, Huamani-Cahua, & Caycho-Rodríguez, 2018; Caycho-Rodríguez et al., The results of the pilot study ($n=300$) indicate that the SWLB obtained a reliability coefficient $\alpha = 0.81$; item-test correlation between 0.58 and 0.72 and a one-dimensional model that explained 58.7% of the variance of the scores.

Procedure

Once the measuring instruments were selected, authorization to use them was virtually requested from the respective authors, who responded favorably. The informed consent was

elaborated and the instruments were edited in such a way that they formed a single booklet. At the same time, team members contacted key collaborators for the application of the instruments. These collaborators were psychologists and professors from public and private universities, who were in charge of several groups of students. In this sense, the data collection was done face to face in the classrooms of the participants from the different universities, between May and July 2018, following the standardized instructions of the tests and confirming the voluntary participation of the students through signed informed consent. After an exhaustive review of the applied formats, 75 of them were eliminated as they were incomplete. Then, the database was elaborated with Microsoft Excel for a later statistical analysis.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics, such as measures of dispersion (standard deviation), central tendency (mean and median) and distribution (indices of asymmetry and kurtosis) were used to characterize the study variables. In order to examine the group difference, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U statistic and the *probability of superiority or PS* were used as an indicator of effect size (Grissom, 1994; Grissom & Kim, 2012; Newcombe, 2006), being these values small ($PS \geq 0.56$), medium ($PS \geq 0.64$) and large ($PS \geq 0.71$) (Grissom, 1994). Bivariate analysis was also performed using Spearman's rho coefficient (ρ), taking the value of the intensity of the coefficient as an indicator of the size of the effect of that relationship (Cohen, 1988; Ferguson, 2009). Thus, values $\rho \geq 0.10$ were considered small, $\rho \geq 0.30$ medium and $\rho \geq 0.50$ large (Cohen, 1988; Grissom, 1994). A significance level of 0.05 was used for all analyses. Data processing was supported by IBM SPSS Statistics 24.0.

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the study variables. It is observed that the average sample satisfaction with life was 25.5 ($SD = 5$), while the total group of students obtained an average of 82 points on the total scale of emotional dependence ($SD = 28.7$).

The average score in the partner violence variable was 10.8 ($SD = 17.3$). In order to determine the groups of women showing and not showing indicators of partner violence, the cut-off point established was the score corresponding to the 55th percentile (6 points), since the ad hoc analysis of the difference in the ranges of scores carried out in the study indicated that the groups thus formed presented statistically significant differences in the total score of partner violence ($U = 364650$, $p < 0.01$). Likewise it is important to consider the CUVINO authors' recommendation that any of the behaviors contemplated in the CUVINO, even only one, may be indicators of violence (Rodríguez-Franco et al., 2010). Thus, the group experiencing no violence was made up of women with 0 to 5 points, making a total of 650 cases (54%), while the group suffering violence had 6 to more points, counting 561 cases (46%).

On the other hand, it was found that the scores of the variables emotional dependence and partner violence presented asymmetry and kurtosis indices outside the range ± 1 (George & Mallery, 2016), concluding then that these scores do not approximate a normal distribution, so it is appropriate to use non-parametric tests for the following analysis.

Table 1.*Descriptive statistics on partner violence, satisfaction with life and emotional dependence*

Variables	Descriptive			Normality	
	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>DE</i>	g1	g2
Partner violence	10.8	5	17.3	3.1	11.9
Satisfaction with life	25.5	26	5.0	-0.9	1.0
Emotional dependence	82.0	75	28.7	1.7	3.6
Fear of breaking up	12.5	10	5.3	2.5	7.7
Fear and intolerance to loneliness	18.3	16	7.1	1.5	2.7
Couple priority	12.3	10	5.4	2.0	4.4
Need to access the partner	12.8	12	4.6	0.7	0.4
Exclusivity wishes	7.8	7	3.3	1.8	4.1
Subordination and submission	9.9	9	3.9	0.9	0.6
Control and domain desires	8.3	7	3.6	1.6	3.0

Note: N = 1211. M: Mean; Mdn: Median; DE: Standard deviation; g1: Asymetry; g2: Kurtosis

Table 2 shows the average range of scores, Mann-Whitney statistic U and the Probability of Superiority (PS), for emotional dependence (full scale and dimensions) and life satisfaction in groups with and without partner violence. It is observed that, in the group of women with intimate partner violence, the average range of scores in satisfaction with life is lower than in the group without violence. With respect to the emotional dependence variable (total score and dimensions), the group of women with partner violence presents higher average ranges than the group of women without partner violence. Likewise, judging by the value of Mann-White's nonparametric U test and the corresponding levels of significance, there are statistically significant differences between the group with violence and without violence in the scores of satisfaction with life ($U = 138509.5$, $p < 0.01$) and emotional dependence, both on the total scale ($U = 93023.5$, $p < 0.01$) and in the seven dimensions ($U = 233321-277781.5$, $p < 0.01$). The magnitude of this difference is small for life satisfaction ($PS = 0.38$) and large for the full scale of emotional dependence ($PS = 0.74$) and medium to large for its dimensions ($PS = 0.63-0.76$).

Table 2.

Differences on satisfaction with life and emotional dependence between women experiencing or not couple violence

Study variables	With violence (n = 561)	Without violence (n = 650)	U	PS
	Range average	Range average		
Satisfaction with Life	527.90	673.41	138509.5*	0.38
Emotional dependence (total)	765.18	468.61	271626.5*	0.74
Fear of breaking up	771.71	462.98	275286.5*	0.75
Fear and intolerance to loneliness	743.20	487.58	259297*	0.71
Couple priority	776.15	459.14	277781.5*	0.76
Need to access the partner	696.90	527.54	233321*	0.63
Exclusivity wishes	712.73	513.89	242198*	0.66
Subordination and submission	739.06	491.16	256972.5*	0.70
Control and domain desires	759.43	473.58	268396.5*	0.74

Note: * $p < 0.01$. U: Mann-Whitney's U test, PS: Probability of Superiority

Table 3 shows that, in the group of women with intimate partner violence, the relationship between emotional dependence and satisfaction with life is statistically significant and inverse, both for the total score and for each of the dimensions of the emotional dependence variable, with a small relationship intensity for the total scale ($\rho = -0.24$) and its dimensions (ρ between -0.146 and -0.256). On the other hand, in the group of women without violence, the variable satisfaction with life was inversely and statistically significantly associated with only five of the seven components of emotional dependence, the intensity of these relationships being weak or small for the total scale of emotional dependence ($\rho = -0.10$) and its dimensions (values ρ between -0.087 and -0.159).

Table 3.

Spearman rho correlation coefficient between life satisfaction and emotional dependence in women suffering and not suffering partner violence.

Emotional dependence	Satisfaction with life	
	With violence (n = 561)	Without violence (n = 650)
Total score	-.241**	-.106**
Fear of breaking up	-.252**	-.159**
Fear and intolerance to loneliness	-.256**	-.161**
Couple priority	-.229**	-.111**
Need to access the partner	-.128**	-.033
Exclusivity wishes	-.146**	-.046
Subordination and submission	-.157**	-.054
Control and Domain desires	-.229**	-.087*

Note: ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Discussion

The results show that 46% of the female participants report indicators of intimate partner violence. These indicators include, for example, indifference to the participants' feelings, personal criticism, mocking behaviors for being a woman, manipulative behaviors, blaming the partner for the state of the relationship, behaviors to generate suffering on the partner such as complaints or displays of anger, threats to end the relationship, physical aggression such as pushing or slapping, and even unwanted sexual acts and touching. Similar studies report prevalence of intimate partner violence ranging from 20% to 85% in young women and adolescents (Eshelman & Levendosky, 2012; García, 2013; López-Cepero et al., 2015; Martín-Baena et al., 2016; Stöckl et al., 2014; Rodríguez-Franco et al. 2016; Vara-Horna et al., 2016; Viejo, 2014). This suggests that violence to women by their male partners is occurring at an early age and that cohabitation is not necessary for this type of abuse to occur, which is worrisome given the consequences of this public health problem.

One of the variables related to partner violence is emotional dependence (Aiquipa, 2015; Castelló, 2005; 2012; Huerta et al, 2016; Momeñe, Jáuregui, & Estévez, 2017; Moral et al., 2017; Zalapa et al 2012). Although emotional dependence is conceived as the dysfunctional dimension of personality trait with the need for affective bonding, and as such can be characteristic of both men and women, some studies report that women tend to report higher levels of emotional dependence than men in the couple relationship (Alonso-Arbiol, Shaver, & Yárnoz, 2002; Avci Çayir & Kalkan, 2018; Del Castillo et al, 2015; Rusby, Harris, & Tasker, 2013; Sanathara, Gardner, Prescott, & Kendler, 2003). The study found that the group of women with intimate partner violence had higher emotional dependence scores than the comparison group. Thus, the participants with emotional dependence experience the need to access the couple; they feel anguish when not being close to the couple and before an eventual separation; they prioritize the couple, above all, assuming submissive and subordinate behaviors (Santamaría et al., 2015); such characteristics could explain the tolerance of mistreatment in the relationship.

On the other hand, it was found that the group of women with partner violence felt less satisfied with life than the comparison group. Given that the partner relationship represents an important area in people's lives, as it constitutes a source of well-being for its members (Schimmack et al., 2002), as long as this relationship is functional, it is possible that satisfaction in this area is transferred to others, being perceived as a general satisfaction. On the contrary, the perception of satisfaction with life decreases when the relationship is conflictive and harmful, as it occurs in the partner violence relationship. In this regard, García et al. (2014) found that forms of abuse such as humiliation and gender violence have a negative effect on psychological well-being.

Likewise, an inverse relationship was found between emotional dependence and satisfaction with life in both groups, although in the group that is not subjected to violence it was less intense with respect to the group with partner violence. This suggests that dysfunctional patterns of affective bonding, such as desires for control and dominance, fear and intolerance of loneliness, and need for affection, are associated with low satisfaction with life. Thus, an emotionally dependent person who suffers partner violence will live his or her relationship with high levels of displeasing emotions, such as anguish, sadness, fear, guilt, frustration, and uncertainty. This situation generates depressive and anxious symptoms in the person (Rusby et al., 2013; Sanathara et al., 2003; Santamaría et al. 2015; Urbiola et al., 2017), which can influence their perception of happiness and satisfaction with life.

In this context, it should be noted that one of the most important influences on satisfaction with life of people in general, and university students in particular, is social support (Diener & Diener McGavran, 2008; Turner & Brown, 2010) Some studies found that university students who score high in satisfaction with life have greater social support received and/or perceived (Novoa & Barra, 2015; Ruvalcaba-Romero et al., 2017; Trepte et al. which implies that they

perceive that they have supportive close friends and family; whereas those who do not have close friends and family or perceive less social support are more likely to feel dissatisfied (Diener & Diener McGavran, 2008). Thus, a person who is emotionally dependent and in a violent relationship will be more likely to feel dissatisfied because he or she tends to isolate himself or herself from the supportive social group, i.e., relatives and friends, as the couple is prioritized over anything else. In addition, when violence is installed in a relationship, little by little the aggressor member exercises a coercive control that limits the social contacts of the victim (Stark, 2007), even if they do not cohabit. Thus, the aggressor usually tests the love that the couple has for him by making her choose between him or the victim's relatives and friends, and given the characteristics of emotional dependence that the woman has, she will choose to distance herself from her social group (Zalapa et al., 2012).

In addition to interpersonal relationships, another factor influencing life satisfaction judgments in university students is the performance they may have in their academic activities (Pavot & Diener, 2008; Samaha & Hawi, 2016; Schimmack et al., 2002). When a person is immersed in a violent couple relationship and tends to be dependent on the couple, it is possible that he or she neglects this type of activity precisely because he or she prioritizes the couple and will do whatever it takes to maintain the relationship for fear that the relationship will end. Under these conditions, the female participants experience constant worry, high levels of anguish, stress, discomfort with themselves and other unpleasant emotions that could negatively influence their academic performance and consequently in their satisfaction with life.

Having personal objectives or goals and moving towards them, as well as having entertainment and leisure activities, contribute to a person feeling satisfied with his or her life (Heckhausen & Kay, 2018; Klug & Maier, 2015; Liu & Yu, 2015; Pascucci, 2015). However, in the case of the group participants who suffered partner violence, unlike the non-violence group, the high need for partner access, desires for exclusivity, and subordinate and submissive behaviors generate postponement of personal goals and displacement of recreational activities, leading to personal dissatisfaction.

The results obtained may be useful for national and private universities located in Metropolitan Lima, which have a large number of female students studying Psychology and who may be immersed in a situation of partner violence. Given the findings, and within the framework of the intersectorial national policy for the prevention of violence against women, universities can implement, in their university welfare programmes, preventive sessions to foster balanced, functional and healthy relationships for their members, as well as interpersonal and coping skills that foster greater satisfaction with life, thus promoting protective factors that reduce the likelihood that their female student population will initiate or maintain violent relationships.

Finally, it is important to note that the study was limited to investigating the relationship between emotional dependence and life satisfaction in the two study samples, with and without violence. Therefore, the combined effect of the variables mentioned on the variance of partner violence in the participants was not analyzed. Likewise, the differences in the study variables according to the type of violence (e.g., physical, psychological and sexual) were not compared. On the basis of the contributions resulting from the study, further research may investigate the aspects so far referred to.

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