



## Research Article

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# Intimate Partner Violence and Academic Emotional Exhaustion among University Students: A Public Health Perspective

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Intimate partner violence is a public health problem that affects the mental health of people, with a tendency to experience negative emotions and also related to the university environment that, together with other factors such as emotional exhaustion, are a limitation for the personal and professional development of individuals. The objective of this study was to determine the relationship between violence in relationships and academic emotional exhaustion in students of a private university in Metropolitan Lima. **Methodology:** it was quantitative, correlational, cross-sectional and non-experimental design. The sample consisted of 203 students from a private university in Lima - Peru, where a simple random probability sample was used. 2 instruments were used: DVQ-R (5 dimensions, 20 items) and ECE (1 dimension, 10 items), both instruments were validated and reached their respective reliability. **Results:** they show that there is a positive and moderate correlation (0.462) between both variables. Regarding the dimensions, a low positive correlation was obtained in the first three dimensions (physical, sexual, humiliation) and a moderate positive correlation in the previous two (detachment, coercion). **Discussion:** violence and academic emotional exhaustion are phenomena that need to be prevented responsibly by the sum of factors that trigger and the potential risk of affecting the dimensions of physical, psychological and emotional character. Therefore, timely psychological interventions in university students are transcendent for the quality of life and their mental health.

**Keywords:** Intimate Partner, Violence, academic emotional exhaustion, public health, university students

## 1. Introduction

Intimate partner violence is a social phenomenon that affects the public health of individuals, because it brings with it various health problems for victims who have suffered some type of abuse (Cherrez-Santos et al., 2022); situation that has a negative impact, since according to statistics it is estimated that one in three women have suffered some kind of mistreatment by their partner. In this sense, the repercussions of violence affect the various human dimensions, bringing limitations and experiencing feelings of failure in personal development, being a cause for concern throughout the world (Vargas, 2017; Velzeboer et al., 2021).

Intimate partner violence and academic emotional exhaustion represent critical public health concerns with far-reaching implications for individuals' physical, mental, and social well-being (Reyes et al., 2023; Schokkenbroek et al., 2024; White et al., 2024). Intimate partner violence, characterized by behaviors such as physical violence, emotional abuse, and sexual coercion within intimate relationships, affects millions of individuals worldwide, with university students being particularly vulnerable (An et al., 2024). Similarly, academic emotional exhaustion, marked by feelings of burnout, fatigue, and disengagement from academic pursuits, is prevalent among students and can have detrimental effects on their academic performance and overall well-being (Kelmendi & Baumgartner, 2020). Studies have shown a bidirectional relationship between intimate partner violence and emotional exhaustion, with experiences of violence contributing to increased stress and decreased academic functioning, and academic stressors exacerbating the risk of intimate partner violence victimization or perpetration (Llano-Suárez et al., 2021).

The situation of intimate partner violence, according to García-Díaz et al. (2020) it is a prevailing event in daily life because it affects the physical, psychological and sexual level of most women, whose apogee arises in youth or adolescence, and during the university stage. For Ponce-Díaz et al. (2019) to suffer some type of violence by the couple, it is not necessary to maintain a state of coexistence. In addition, Bolívar-Suárez et al. (2022) stated that levels of low self-esteem, physical damage and violence against the partner, are factors that raise levels of abuse. Likewise, in Spain, Paíno-Quesada et al. (2020) showed that the mistreatment exercised by students was bidirectional, and to a lesser extent unidirectional, being the first more generalized and with features of psychological violence, however, it was minimal when exacerbated with physical violence.

This problem in the university stage, affects the academic performance of students, who showed concentration problems, exhaustion exhibited performance below their abilities and also expressed desires to abandon their studies (Chafloque-Céspedes et al., 2020). Also, several studies reported that students perceived feelings of anguish-distress and constant tiredness, associated with the fulfillment of academic duties (Jacobo-Galicia et al., 2021; Suyo-Vega et al., 2022).

It should be noted that the established violence indicator is the result of pathologies and academic emotional exhaustion, because it has harmful effects on the psychology of the subject, due to its prevalence of depressive disorders or anxiety in populations of young university students, which are framed as a risk group (Seperak-Viera et al., 2021). These statements coincide with (Estrada Araoz et al., 2021) who pointed out that high levels of emotional exhaustion prevail mostly in women aged 16-20 years, who work and with scarce resources (González Velázquez, 2020)

Therefore, academic emotional exhaustion is the reduction of the energy and emotions of the individual with physical deterioration and associated with the perception of discouragement or defeat (Alfonso Águila et al., 2015; Barraza, 2018; Barreto Osama & Salazar Blanco, 2020). Estrada Araoz et al., 2021). Subsequently, Cooper et al. (2017) expressed that academic burnout is linked to emotional dysregulation, regardless of mental pathologies, which are restricted by intimate partner violence and self-control. In addition, Araujo & Pinguz (2017) identified that this social problem is relevant as a research phenomenon, due to the psychosocial results found in the study.

Given the above, the general objective is proposed: to determine the relationship between violence in relationships and academic emotional exhaustion in students of a private university in Metropolitan Lima from the results found, prevention strategies and improvement plans for couples

in the university field can be developed.

## 2. Methodology

The research was of non-experimental design, as stated (Sánchez et al., 2018), who point out that all research work is carried out naturally, without interfering, or creating alteration between the variables.

### 2.1 Participants

The statistical sample amounted to 203 university students from Metropolitan Lima, between 18 and 60 years old; being (32.1%) men and (67.9%) women, who belonged to various faculties and different degrees of instruction (undergraduate or graduate) and participated voluntarily. Simple random probability sampling was used in the research, the lists of enrolled students were obtained, and the study participants were selected through a lottery where everyone had the same opportunities to be included (Hernández et al., 2019).

### 2.2 Instruments

#### 2.2.1 Dating Violence Questionnaire - Revised (DVQ-R)

This instrument used, whose author is Rodríguez-Díaz et al. (2017) is an abbreviated variant of CUVINO questionnaire. It consists of 5 dimensions, totaling 20 items rated on a Likert scale. It was initially elaborated in Spain and adapted in Peru by Torres Malca (2021), obtaining an AFC of (0.63 - 0.75; 0.87 - 0.89), demonstrating factorial loadings and a positive distribution of items, with satisfactory values (CFI = 0.84, TLI = 0.81, RMSEA = 0.028, CHISQ = 551.60), establishing the instrument's validity. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was (0.93; 0.89), affirming its reliability (Torres Malca, 2021)

#### 2.2.2 Emotional Fatigue Scale (ECE)

Whose author is Ramos Campos et al. (2005), its original version consists of 1 dimension, 10 items and a Likert scale. It was created in Spain and has been adapted in Peru by Guzmán-Yacaman & Reyes-Bossio (2018) and Dominguez Lara (2014), obtaining an AFC of (.83; .49 - .94), evidencing factorial loads and an adequate homogeneity of the items of (.33), with adequate values (GFI = 0.911, RMR = 0.056, RMSEA = 0.104, CFI = 0.895, AGFI = 0.860 and CHISQ = 205.69), specifying that the instrument has validity and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of (0.83; 0.87), corroborating an excellent reliability.

#### 2.2.3 Procedures

After requesting permits from the authorities of the institution, he coordinated with the teachers of the undergraduate and graduate classrooms of the private university of Lima for the delivery of the lists and emails, as well as informed and invited the students to participate in the study which was shared the Google Forms. with prior informed consent to collect information through Gmail and / or WhatsApp. The data obtained was transferred to a matrix for review and respective processing. Once the data collection was completed, the filtering of the surveys that did not follow the protocols continued, and on this principle the final database was forged. In reference to ethical aspects, authorship rights and scientific or professional ability were respected, in order to safeguard academic rigor during the study process.

## 2.3 Data analysis

SPSS v. 26 was used for data analysis. It began with the descriptive analysis of the variables and their dimensions, according to the stipulated levels and establishing differences in the sample. For inferential evaluation, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was developed, where an abnormal distribution was obtained. Consequently, the Rho Spearman correlation coefficient was executed to investigate the link between the variables and their dimensions; Finally, the results were plotted in figures and tables.

## 3. Results

**Table 1:** Levels of variables and dimensions

Variable /Dimensions	Low level		Intermediate level		High level	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Intimate partner violence	179	88.18	22	10.83	2	0.99
Physical violence	177	87.19	21	10.35	5	2.46
Sexual violence	170	83.74	27	13.30	6	2.96
Humiliation	152	74.88	43	21.18	8	3.94
Detachment	99	48.77	84	41.38	20	9.85
Coercion	124	61.08	69	33.99	10	4.93

It is evident that the variable intimate partner violence in the absolute sample showed a low level of 88.18%, a medium level with 10.83%, and a high level 0.99%. As for the dimensions: physical violence, with a low level of 87.19%, a medium level with 10.35% and a high level 2.46%. Sexual violence, a low level of 83.74% was found, a medium level with 13.30% and a high level 2.96%. Humiliation, a low level was found with 74.88%, a medium level 21.18% and a high level with 3.94%. Detachment, a low level was found with 48.77%, a medium level with 41.38% and a high level with 9.85%. Coercion, a low level was established 61.08%, a medium level 33.99% and a high level with 4.93%.

**Table 2:** Variable levels

Variables	Low level		Intermediate level		High level	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Academic emotional exhaustion	64	31.53	111	54.68	28	13.79

It was found that the academic emotional exhaustion, in the total sample reached a medium level of 54.68%, a low level 31.53% and a high level with 13.79%.

**Table 3:** Correlation between variables and dimensions

Correlation	Variable	Dimensions					
		Violence in relationships	Physics*	Sexual*	Humiliation*	Detachment*	Coercion*
Rho Spearman							
Academic emotional exhaustion*	,462**	,282**	,255**	,377**	,444**	,415**	0,000

Notes. \*\*: The correlation is significant at the level 0.01 (bilateral).

It was found that there is a moderate positive correlation between the variable intimate partner violence and academic emotional exhaustion. Specifying that, as there are high levels of intimate

partner violence, there will be high levels of academic emotional exhaustion. As for the positive relationship, low in the first three dimensions (physical, sexual, humiliation) and a moderate positive correlation in the previous two (detachment, coercion). In addition, a calculated value  $p = 0.000$ , and a significance level 0.01 (bilateral); revealing that high levels of abuse (detachment, coercion), leads to high factors of academic emotional exhaustion. However, having serious levels of abuse (physical, sexual, humiliation) does not necessarily, there will be high levels of academic emotional exhaustion.

#### 4. Discussion

The findings found from the sample of 203 university students and identified a global index of partner violence, with predominance of the low level with 88.18%, results that reiterate that partner violence remains a delicate social problem, in which the subjects expand their experiences of aggression, normalizing these attitudes by reiterating harmful patterns in their relationship. These results agree with what was recorded by (Llano-Suárez et al., 2021) who explained that only 10% of participants said they felt mistreated. Likewise, according to the criteria of zero tolerance, they revealed that 57.0% exhibited submission, 52.0% blind attitude and 75.7% were passive individuals.

In the university environment this phenomenon is present, since they show repercussions such as academic dropout and poor performance in professional development, which harms the personal development of the student (Cooper et al., 2017).

In reference to the dimensions of intimate partner violence, in the study sample there was a primacy of the low level of physical violence with 87.19%, in sexual violence 83.74%, in humiliation 74.88%, in detachment 48.77% and in coercion 61.08%. These results disagree with what was found by Llano-Suárez et al. (2021), who argued that 39.5% of university students experienced coercion, 56.0% expressed detachment, 25.5% tolerated humiliation, 21.3% suffered sexual abuse and 8.2% suffered physical abuse in their relationship.

It should be noted that adverse experiences branch into various forms such as, physical and sexual abuse (observer or victim), detachment (abandonment, indifference, abuse and breakup of parents), coercion (confinement), humiliation (psychological or sentimental damage, discrimination). These reactions to stressors generate a decline in work, brain structures and notable biological modifications or dysfunction in the allostatic systems (Sereno Torres & Camelo Roa, 2020).

In relation to the overall index of academic emotional exhaustion in the student sample, an average level of 54.68% was evidenced, where the tests validated that university students faced frantic changes, the result of academic demands, economic pressure, submission to violent actions of the couple, the demanding working conditions, among other factors with which they interact, induce a relevant dysfunction of emotional well-being. The results are compared with the study of Estrada Araoz et al. (2021), who stated that students showed an average level of academic emotional exhaustion with 66.3%. Likewise, (Seperak-Viera et al., 2021), they highlighted a manifest incidence of emotional exhaustion with 44.3% of average level in university students.

Likewise, the theory that, the greater the number of adverse experiences suffered by the individual, there is a high possibility of perceiving having insufficient individual skills and abilities, which will cause damage at the physiological level or evolution of mental pathologies (Barreto Osama & Salazar Blanco, 2020; Zhu et al., 2023)

With regard to significant differences, there was no evidence of inequalities between the level of education in the variable partner violence, coexisting with a predominance of the low level in undergraduate with 87.92%, and in postgraduate 88.99%; However, the lapse in both stages of formation was 1.07%. Additionally, both populations differed in the number of study subjects, yet they revealed similar trends. These results cannot be contrasted by the existence of knowledge gaps, however, Hernández de la Cruz & Bautista (2019) mentioned that the university population that is subjected to partner abuse, is qualified with individual and private problems; covering up scenarios and behaviors of violence in relationships, which makes them habitual or routine acts.

Adverse experiences disturb adequate emotional development and are associated with

maladaptive coping behaviors such as poor dialogue with friends and family, which restrict support networks, abusive consumption of psychoactive substances or promiscuous sexual behaviors, which worsen the effects of partner abuse and cause emotional exhaustion, as they do not have feasible alternative solutions.

In reference to the significant difference according to degree of education on the dimensions of intimate partner violence, a low level of physical violence prevails in undergraduate with 85.23%, sexual violence with 83.89%, humiliation with 73.15%, detachment with 48.32% and coercion with 59.73%. Compared to graduate, it exhibited a low level of physical violence with 92.59%, sexual violence with 83.33%, humiliation with 79.63%, detachment with 50.00% and coercion with 64.81%. These results can be differentiated with the equivalent low-level outcomes for both settings, identifying minor discrepancies with 7.36% in physical abuse, 0.56% in sexual abuse, 6.48% in humiliation, 1.68% in detachment, and 5.08% in coercion. These findings confirm that the dimensions of partner abuse are not notified and reported by university students, because they express dread, subjugation and social confinement, which standardizes supremacy and abuse.

Similarly, Páino-Quesada et al. (2020), postulated that the levels of physical violence in students was 46.1 - 53.9%, sexual violence 39.4 - 60.6%, coercion 44.1 - 55.9%, humiliation 44.2 - 55.8%, detachment 41.9 - 58.1%. Globally, 41.9 - 58.1% were found to have suffered from partner abuse in their relationship. In addition, based on the theory of adverse experiences, it is contemplated that abuse presents a tendency of recidivist patterns that cause submission and low self-esteem. Subjects who have experienced abuse or disputes in the family environment are likely to endure similar scenarios in future relationships, as well as raise the scope of the problem to deadly levels.

Regarding the significant difference according to the degree of instruction on academic emotional exhaustion, in undergraduate it was 58.39% (medium level) and postgraduate 44.41% (low level). These percentages highlight a disparity of 13.98%, in the emotional fatigue perceived by students. The results found disagree with what was stated by Martínez-Libano et al. (2021), who found a high level (65.7%) of emotional exhaustion in university students, which I raise as a warning to state and higher education institutions, who must assume responsibility for reducing these harmful effects on students.

According to Terezinha Bobato et al. (2021), they stated that adverse experiences usually occur in the family sphere, to later significantly influence the development of the person in the future, especially in individual self-concept or control of harmful feelings. These characteristics are connected with the tendency to discourage individuals, in order to deal with difficulties such as academic burnout, because it causes sequelae in emotional and physical health (Barreto Osama & Salazar Blanco, 2020).

Likewise, in the correlation between the study variables, finding a moderate positive correlation (0.462), which determines that between the variables intimate partner violence and academic emotional exhaustion there is a similar trend. These results agree with Cooper et al. (2017), who found a direct correlation between academic emotional exhaustion and intimate partner violence, indicating that university campuses are fickle and unstable due to the expansion of information coverage through multimedia channels, since they generate stress or anxiety that students face, and the incidence of different forms of abuse within institutions. It is inferred that these problems are situations that hinder the development of personal and professional skills in students and affect the control of emotions.

As for the theory of adverse experiences, which argues that there are events that are related to each other, given the low capacity of victims to confront situations and seek support, and are transformed into traumas with accumulated repercussions. For this reason, university students who have experienced negative situations such as partner abuse or academic burnout, are vulnerable to suffering from early physical and mental risks (Barreto Osama & Salazar Blanco, 2020).

Regarding the correlation between the dimensions of intimate partner violence and academic emotional exhaustion, a correlation of Rho Spearman (0.282, 0.255, 0.377, 0.444, 0.415 was found, expressing a low positive correlation in the dimension (physical, sexual, humiliation), which shows

that in the dimensions and the variable there is some dependence; and a positive and moderate correlation (detachment, coercion), interpreting that they have the same tendency. In addition, it is necessary to mention that there are no investigations of correlation between the variables and dimensions, however, the studies reviewed agree on the need to explore the behavior of the variables from different approaches, to understand the phenomenon in the university environment, which is a situation tolerated by students, who face difficult scenarios, limitations or implications during the development of their professional skills. that produce a negative impact in the psychological area (Cooper et al., 2017; Ocupa-Cabrera et al., 2023).

Regarding the theoretical assumptions, abuse increases the levels of victimization and development of maltreatment, with a tendency to health-related problems. This scenario differs from other research that shows that students do not exhibit negative experiences of violence (Barreto Osama & Salazar Blanco, 2020; Suyo-Vega et al., 2022). It was concluded that the incidences caused by any type of abuse have unfavorable effects on social or personal development, which are sustainable over time and have an evident effect on emerging stressors, being a trigger to encourage the consumption of psychoactive substances or behaviors that undermine the quality of life.

Some recommendations for policymakers include:

- a. Universities should develop and implement comprehensive prevention programs aimed at raising awareness about intimate partner violence and providing students with the skills to recognize and address abusive behaviors. These programs could include workshops, training sessions, and educational campaigns focused on healthy relationships, consent, conflict resolution, and bystander intervention.
- b. Universities should also ensure that adequate support services are available for students who may be experiencing intimate partner violence or academic emotional exhaustion. This could include counseling services, support groups, hotlines, and peer support networks. Additionally, universities should train faculty and staff to recognize the signs of intimate partner violence and provide appropriate support and referrals.
- c. Universities should review and strengthen campus policies related to intimate partner violence and academic stress. This could involve updating codes of conduct, implementing zero-tolerance policies for violence, and providing clear procedures for reporting incidents and seeking support. Additionally, universities should consider implementing flexible academic accommodations for students experiencing emotional distress due to intimate partner violence.
- d. Universities should actively promote healthy relationships and positive communication skills among students. This could involve integrating relationship education into orientation programs, curriculum, and extracurricular activities. Universities could also collaborate with community organizations and local agencies to offer workshops and resources focused on healthy relationships and conflict resolution.

The limitations of the study were that it is necessary to apply the instrument in person to determine other trends of responses for a comprehensive psychological evaluation. Conduct a qualitative study to recognize the phenomenon in this population.

## 5. Conclusions

Violence in relationships and academic emotional exhaustion are phenomena that need to be adequately prevented by the sum of factors it triggers and the potential risk of affecting the physical, psychological and emotional dimensions. Issues that can have a negative impact on mental health, academic performance, and overall quality of life. High rates of stress, newly acquired independence, and academic pressure can all contribute to situations of conflict and abuse. It is important for educational institutions to provide resources and support to students who may be experiencing dating violence. This may include counseling services, support groups, and healthy relationship education.

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