Myths of romantic love and emotional dependency as predictors of gender violence in young couples
Mitos del amor romántico y dependencia emocional como predictores de violencia de género en parejas jóvenes

Authors:
Esperanza Rojas Quispe[1] - https://orcid.org/0009-0001-2377-4207
Marilia Chuquicallata Huayta[1] - https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0823-328X
Rita Córdova Soncco[1] - https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1880-4560

Affiliation:

[1]Peruvian Union University Juliaca - Peru

Corresponding author: Esperanza Rojas Quispe. Peruvian Union University. Mailing address: Exit to Arequipa, Km. 6 Chullunquiani, Héroes de la Guerra del Pacífico Highway, Juliaca, Puno, Peru. Email: esperanza.rojas@upeu.edu.pe Telephone: 947749799

ABSTRACT

Gender-based violence in young couples is a global social problem, and it has been suggested that beliefs such as the myths of romantic love and emotional dependency can influence abusive behaviors. Therefore, this research aimed to determine whether these variables are predictors of gender-based violence among young people in the city of Juliaca. A quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional, predictive study was conducted with a sample of 1,226 individuals aged 18 to 30. The results showed that both emotional dependency ($p = 0.001$; $B = 0.492$) and the myths of romantic love ($p = 0.001$; $B = 0.118$) predict gender-based violence, and that the myths of romantic love also predict emotional dependency ($B = 0.496$). Likewise, significant correlations were found between the variables: myths of romantic love with emotional dependence (Rho = 0.466) and with gender violence (Rho = 0.312), and between emotional dependence and gender violence (Rho = 0.558), all with $p < 0.05$. These findings indicate that these beliefs contribute to normalizing abusive behaviors and justifying violence in relationships.

Keywords: gender violence, myths, love.

RESUMEN

La violencia de género en parejas jóvenes es un problema social que preocupa a nivel mundial, y se ha sugerido que creencias como los mitos del amor romántico y la dependencia emocional pueden influir en conductas abusivas. Por ello, esta investigación tuvo como objetivo determinar si estas variables son predictores de la violencia de género en jóvenes de la ciudad de Juliaca. Se realizó un estudio de enfoque cuantitativo, de diseño no experimental, corte transversal y tipo predictivo, con una muestra de 1,226 personas de entre 18 y 30 años. Los resultados mostraron que tanto la dependencia emocional (p = 0.001; B = 0.492) como los mitos del amor romántico (p = 0.001; B = 0.118) predicen la violencia de género, y que los mitos del amor romántico también predicen la dependencia emocional (B = 0.496). Asimismo, se encontraron correlaciones significativas entre las variables: mitos del amor romántico con dependencia emocional (Rho = 0.466) y con violencia de género (Rho = 0.312), y entre dependencia emocional y violencia de género (Rho = 0.558), todas con p < 0.05. Estos hallazgos indican que estas creencias contribuyen a normalizar comportamientos abusivos y justificar la violencia en las relaciones.

Palabras clave: violencia de género, mitos, amor.

INTRODUCTION

The surveillance report of the Ministry of Health indicates that, between 2016 and 2021, 71.5 % of people aged 15 to 34 attempted to end their lives,[1] and some of these cases are related to experiences of heartbreak,[2] which is related to the Femicide Records of the Public Ministry of Peru, during the period between January 2009 and October 2023, that 74 % of the victims (7 out of 10 women) were between 18 and 44 years old. In 89.7 % of the cases, the femicide was perpetrated by the partner, ex-partner, or family member.[3]

On the other hand, during 2024, statistics from the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations in Peru reported a total of 168,492 cases of victims of violence nationwide, of which 5,180 correspond to the Puno region, representing a significant increase compared to previous years: 4,511 cases in 2023 and 3,888 in 2020. These data demonstrate an increase in violence in the Puno region.[4] These statistics are related to the Demographic and Family Health Survey, which found that 53 % of women between 15 and 49 years of age reported having suffered some physical, psychological, or sexual aggression from their partner (boyfriend, spouse, or cohabitant). The most common type of violence was psychological violence at 49.3 %, followed by physical aggression at 27.2 %, and finally sexual violence at 6.5%.[5] Additionally, specialists from the Gestalt Institute of Lima (IGL, 2024) warn that women with low self-esteem are more prone to developing emotional dependency, which makes them more vulnerable to suffering different types of violence.[6] Furthermore, it is relevant to highlight that, before 2020, a prevalence of 35 % of dysfunctional families was reported, the main causes being parental separation, divorce, or living in an environment of physical and psychological abuse.[7]

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Regarding the myths of romantic love, according to the Western model, this originated in a context of gender inequality, where women lacked autonomy and were subordinate to their partners. Although the struggle for equality has driven changes in traditional roles, the media continues to disseminate stereotypes that affect the identity of children, adolescents, and young adults, promoting female emotional dependence. These patterns persist and manifest in new generations.[8] In this sense, they are defined as a multidisciplinary phenomenon because they involve society, cultural norms, emotional aspects, and ideological and sociocultural aspects, making them a cultural construct[9] of expressions presented as truth yet false, with a strong emotional charge.[10] This emphasizes the importance of true love, partner selection, and the expectations of a long-term relationship.[11] Likewise, Bonilla-Algovia and Rivas-Rivero[12] define them as a group of irrational beliefs about love. From this perspective, the myths of romantic love can be explained by Albert Bandura's social learning theory.[13]

Consequently, Ariza et al. [14] conducted research in Colombia on the myths of romantic love, revealing that these myths are deeply ingrained in people and are linked to violence, suffering, and gender roles. This aligns with the study carried out by Cerro and Vives [15] on Spanish subjects aged 16 to 25, which highlights the prevalence of love myths such as the soulmate ("predestined partner"), eternal passion ("must last for years"), and omnipotence ("love conquers all").

Emotional dependency is defined as maladaptive behavior in which individuals attempt to fill emotional voids, generally with a partner whom they idealize as indispensable to their lives.[16] It is distinguished by a set of psychological traits characterized by fear of not being loved, excessive efforts to maintain the relationship,[17] an exaggerated need for attention and affection, a constant need for approval from the other person, and fear of being alone.[18] and the giving of unconditional affection, which can generate conflicts and a dysfunctional bond.[19] Beraún and Poma[20] mention that people with emotional dependency suffer psychological or other types of violence, which contributes to violent behaviors within a romantic relationship and is a variable causing family violence.[21] This problem can be understood through Aaron Beck's Cognitive Behavioral Theory of dysfunctional cognitive schemas.[22]

In Mexico, Pérez-Aranda and Estrada-Carmona[23] conducted a study of university students aged 18 to 38. They determined that individuals with emotional dependency are more likely to experience violence, finding a significant relationship. These results are consistent with the study conducted by Alcalá et al.[24] in pre-university students in the same country in 2021, among young people aged 14 to 20. The survey carried out by Pérez et al.[25] in Peru in 2022 among male individuals aged 18-30 years. In these studies, the findings show that the greater the demonstration of emotional dependence, the greater the risk of being a victim of some violence.

Regarding gender-based violence, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) describes it as a pattern of mistreatment and control based on gender, manifesting as men exerting power over women and vice versa.[26] Intimate partner violence, on the other hand, emphasizes intentional physical, psychological, and sexual

harm inflicted on a partner to exert power within the relationship.[27] Many young people have an exaggerated and excessive view of dating, using romantic feelings as justification for controlling their partner in a suffocating and desperate manner. These behaviors can evolve into violent behaviors, which are interpreted as demonstrations of affection towards the partner.[24] This problem can be explained by the sociocultural theory of Lev Vygotsky, which explains the factors that influence violent behavior.[28]

In Chile, Valdivia-Rojas et al.[29] conducted a 2023 study with nursing students on types of violence and myths about romantic love. Analyzing data from 163 participants, they determined that 26.7 % of the subjects experienced violence from their partner (boyfriend, cohabitant, or spouse). In contrast, a 2020 study by Palacios and Valverde[30] in Ecuador involving university students aged 18 to 37 found no correlation between these variables. However, the study found that the incorporation and assimilation of romantic love myths were present in most subjects.

It is worth noting that within traditional love and sentimental expression, educational background plays a role,[31] as do flawed information processing, the perception that the other person is better despite observing violent behavior, and the idea that they might change at some point, even leading us to feel compassion for the violent individual. These factors are related to people who exhibit emotional dependency. It is pertinent to highlight the need to implement robust strategies to avoid long-term consequences, especially to prevent physical and psychological violence.[32]

Similarly, Valdivia-Rojas et al.[29] in their 2023 research concluded that intervention is needed to eradicate the myths of romantic love; this conclusion aligns with the perspective of Palacios and Valverde,[30] who state that human beings have unconsciously carried erroneous myths about love for a long time, which causes suffering, violence, and fatal consequences. Therefore, it is suggested that investment in prevention measures, interventions, empowerment, greater awareness, and mobilization be made to combat this psychosocial problem.

This study aims to determine whether myths about romantic love and emotional dependency are predictors of gender-based violence in young couples in the city of Juliaca. Specifically, it seeks to determine the interaction between myths about romantic love and emotional dependency, the association between myths about romantic love and gender-based violence, and the connection between emotional dependency and gender-based violence in young couples in the city of Juliaca.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is analytical in approach, predictive in type, non-experimental in nature, and cross-sectional.[33]

According to the most recent data from the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics, the population selected for this research is finite. It is composed of 54,871 young people residing in

the province of San Román, in the district of Juliaca, aged 18 to 30, with a history of sentimental relationships.[34]

The sampling method is non-probabilistic convenience sampling. According to Otzen and Manterola, this method allows the selection of cases representative of the population or that fit the purpose of the study.[35] The sample consists of 1,226 young people, both male and female, aged 18 to 30 years, who were in a romantic relationship at the time of the study and who also signed the informed consent form.

The following instruments will be used in the data collection process:

Scale of myths of romantic love: Developed in 2020 by Bonilla-Algovia and Rivas-Rivero[12] in Spain, with an age range of 17 to 39 years, used a questionnaire to assess the acceptance of beliefs associated with romantic love, based on the theoretical foundations of ideal love (Barrón et al., 1999; Bosch et al., 2008; Ferrer et al., 2010; Yela, 2000, 2003). Furthermore, the reduced scale is valid in its construct with appropriate indices (GFI = 0.98; AGFI = 0.98; CFI = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.065; RMSR = 0.052). The results of these indices show that the model is appropriate and fits the data well. Furthermore, the content validity was reviewed by four expert judges, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was determined to be $\alpha = 0.80$, with a 95 % confidence interval ranging from 0.78 to 0.82. It consists of 11 items with a 5-point Likert-type response structure: 1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, neither agree nor disagree; 4, agree; and 5, strongly agree. All items are directly oriented, so higher scores reflect a greater level of agreement among participants.

Content validity was verified using Aiken's V formula with respective 95 % confidence intervals ($z = 1.96$; $n = 6$),[36] through a review by a group of six expert judges, with the sole purpose of using it in the Peruvian context. An Aiken's V coefficient of 0.95 was reported (95 % = 0.76; 95 % = 0.99); likewise, item 5 showed significant indices, while the other items showed highly significant indices under a conservative criterion.

The Intimate Partner Violence Questionnaire was developed in 2020 by Arroyo et al.[27] in Peru to assess violence in two main areas: physical and psychological violence within intimate relationships. It is based on the theory of violence in romantic relationships among young people.[37] The instrument is designed for individuals aged 18 to 30. A KMO value of 0.937 was found, with a significance level of 0.001. Additionally, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.943, and the McDonald's omega was 0.947 for the entire scale. Similarly, the individual items showed Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.940 to 0.942, and McDonald's omega coefficients ranged from 0.944 to 0.946. These results indicate high reliability for the instrument. It consists of 29 items, and is grouped into five facets, which are: Physical Violence consists of 10 items, Manipulation includes 5 items, Verbal Violence is composed of 6 items, Coercion has 3 items; finally, Prohibitions covers 5 items; all of them, employ a binary response design and a 5 point Likert scale.

Content validity was examined using Aiken's V formula with respective 95 % confidence intervals ($z = 1.96$; $n = 6$),[36] through a review by a group of six expert judges. It was concluded that the instrument shows an

Aiken's V coefficient of 0.99 (95 % = 0.82; 95 % = 1). Similarly, item 9 showed significant indices, while the other items showed highly significant indices under a conservative criterion. Regarding the dimensions, the following Aiken's V coefficients were presented: Physical Violence (V = 0.99), Manipulation (V = 0.99), Verbal Violence (V = 0.99), Coercion (V = 1.00), and Prohibitions (V = 0.97).

The Emotional Dependency Scale (EDS), developed by Lemos Hoyos and Londoño Arredondo in 2006 and adapted to the Peruvian context in 2016 by 38), applies to individuals aged 16 to 47 and aims to measure self-descriptions related to romantic relationships. It is based on Beck's Cognitive Therapy model (Beck, Freeman et al., 1995) and demonstrates construct validity; the CFI (0.99), NNFI (0.98), SRMR (0.06), and RMSEA (0.02) indicate exceptional values. Its omega reliability ranges from 0.85 to 0.93. The scale consists of 23 items, offers six response options on a Likert scale from 1 to 6, and covers a total of six dimensions: 1) Separation anxiety, 2) Affective expression of the partner, 3) Modification of plans, 4) Fear of loneliness, 5) Borderline expression, and 6) Seeking attention.

Content validity was verified using Aiken's V formula with respective 95% confidence intervals ($z = 1.96$; $n = 6$),[36] and through review by a group of six expert judges. The findings show an Aiken's V coefficient of 0.95 (95 % = 0.77; 95 % = 0.99). Similarly, items 9, 10, 13, and 20 showed significant indices, while the other items showed highly significant indices under a conservative criterion. Regarding the dimensions, they presented the following Aiken's V coefficients: Separation Anxiety (V = 0.97), Affective Expression of the Partner (V = 0.93), Modification of Plans (V = 0.77), Fear of Loneliness (V = 0.99), Borderline Expression (V = 0.83), and Attention Seeking (V = 1).

The process began with in-person data collection using three instruments designed to assess myths about romantic love, emotional dependency, and gender-based violence in young couples in the city of Juliaca. The administration took approximately 15 minutes. The tests were then scored according to their specific guidelines, and the responses were recorded in Microsoft Excel. Subsequently, the data were transferred to Jamovi software (version 2.3.17) and JASP software (version 0.17.2.1) for analysis. Frequency tables were used for descriptive analysis, and predictive statistics, such as linear regression and Spearman's rho coefficient, were used for inferential analysis.

Before data collection began, approval was obtained from the ethics committee of the Peruvian Union University (approval number 2025-CEB-FCA-UPeU-006). First, detailed information about informed consent was provided to ensure participants' voluntary participation and to respect their autonomy and dignity. Subsequently, the study objectives, methods, and potential benefits were clearly explained.[39] Finally, once consent was obtained, the instruments were administered.

It is also relevant to mention that, according to the Singapore Declaration, regarding research, the ethical principles of honesty in all aspects, responsibility in research, professionalism when working with others, and good research management are considered.[40]

RESULTS

Table 1. Sociodemographic data of the study population.

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Female	768	62.6
	Male	458	37.4
	Total	1126	100
Age	18 to 20	432	35.2
	21 to 23	378	30.8
	24 to 27	226	18.4
	28 to 30	190	15.5
	Total	1126	100
Marital status	Single	787	64.2
	Married	31	2.5
	Boyfriend/Girlfriend	258	21.0
	Cohabitant	150	12.2
	Total	1126	100
Level of education	Primary	23	1.9
	Secondary	128	10.4
	Higher university	402	32.7
	Senior technician	185	15.1
	Incomplete higher education	488	39.9
	Total	1126	100
Are you currently in a relationship?	Yeah	601	49.0
	No	625	51.0
	Total	1126	100
If your answer was no to the previous question, "How long ago were you in a relationship?"	Less than 6 months	213	17.4
	Between 6 months and 1 year	147	12.0
	Between 1 and 2 years	90	7.3
	More than two years	175	14.3
	If I'm in a relationship	601	49.0
	Total	1126	100

Table 2. Descriptive analysis.

	Average	Standard deviation	Asymmetry	Typical asymmetry error	Kurtosis	Typical kurtosis error
Myths of romantic love	32.98	7.18	0.04	0.07	0.21	0.14
Emotional Dependence	55.79	24.26	0.58	0.07	- 0.42	0.14
Separation anxiety	17.05	8.18	0.59	0.07	- 0.45	0.14
Affective expression	11.09	5.17	0.31	0.07	- 0.74	0.14
Plan modification	9.72	4.75	0.68	0.07	- 0.23	0.14
Fear of loneliness	6.93	3.50	0.67	0.07	- 0.34	0.14
Limit expression	5.70	3.21	1.25	0.07	0.87	0.14
Attention seeking	5.27	2.58	0.41	0.07	- 0.57	0.14
Gender violence	43.72	20.06	1.80	0.07	2.82	0.14
Physical violence	14.10	7.14	2.10	0.07	3.95	0.14
Handling	6.86	3.56	2.30	0.07	4.87	0.14
Verbal violence	9.73	4.67	1.33	0.07	1.07	0.14
Coercion	4.68	2.51	1.63	0.07	2.13	0.14
Prohibitions	8.34	4.09	1.37	0.07	1.43	0.14

The descriptive results corresponding to the variables and their dimensions. According to the skewness values, the indicators myths of romantic love (0.04), emotional dependence (0.58), separation anxiety (0.59), affective expression (0.31), modification of plans (0.68), fear of loneliness (0.67), and attention-seeking (0.41) show a normal distribution, as they fall within the acceptable range for this type of analysis. On the other hand, the values corresponding to borderline expression (1.25), gender violence (1.80), physical violence (2.10), Manipulation (2.30), verbal violence (1.33), coercion (1.63), and prohibitions (1.37) present a non-normal distribution.

Regarding kurtosis measures, the variable "myths of romantic love" has a value of 0.21, suggesting a normal distribution. Similarly, the variables "emotional dependence" (-0.42), "separation anxiety" (-0.45), "affective expression" (-0.74), "modification of plans" (-0.23), "fear of loneliness" (-0.34), "attention-seeking" (-0.57), and "borderline expression" (0.87) also show normal distributions, falling within the acceptable range for this measure. Conversely, the variables related to gender violence have high kurtosis values, indicating a non-normal distribution of the data: gender violence (2.82), physical violence (3.95), Manipulation (4.87), verbal violence (1.07), coercion (2.13), and prohibitions (1.43) (Table 2).

Table 3. Variable correlations.

Variable		Myths of romantic love	Emotional dependency
Emotional dependency	Spearman's rho	0.466	—
	p-value	< .001	—
Gender violence	Spearman's rho	0.312	0.558
	p-value	< .001	< .001

Correlation indices were calculated using Spearman's Rho. A moderate, positive, direct correlation was observed between myths of romantic love and emotional dependency, which was statistically significant (Rho = 0.46; p < 0.05), with respect to gender violence, with a weak magnitude (Rho = 0.31; p < 0.05). Likewise, a moderate, positive, direct correlation was found between emotional dependency and gender violence (Rho = 0.55; p < 0.05) (Table 3).

Table 4. Correlation of dimensions.

Variable	Separation anxiety	Expression of affection between partners	Plan modification	Fear of loneliness	Limit expression	Attention seeking
Physical violence	0.464	0.385	0.455	0.435	0.437	0.401
	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Handling	0.434	0.364	0.435	0.394	0.448	0.400
	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Verbal violence	0.501	0.445	0.512	0.476	0.441	0.446
	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Coercion	0.501	0.421	0.461	0.466	0.450	0.418
	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Prohibitions	0.406	0.369	0.420	0.393	0.362	0.359
	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001

The following are the correlation coefficients calculated using Spearman's Rho, which assesses the relationships between the dimensions of emotional dependency and gender violence.

In the separation anxiety dimension, a direct and moderate correlation, statistically significant, is observed with the following dimensions: physical violence (Rho = 0.46, p = 0.01), Manipulation (Rho = 0.43, p = 0.01),

prohibitions (Rho = 0.40, p = 0.01), verbal violence (Rho = 0.50, p = 0.05) and coercion (Rho = 0.50, p = 0.01).

Regarding the affective expression dimension of the couple, direct and weak associations, statistically significant, are evident with the following dimensions: physical violence (Rho = 0.38, $p < 0.05$), Manipulation (Rho = 0.36, p = 0.01), prohibitions (Rho = 0.36, p = 0.01) and with moderate magnitude: verbal violence (Rho = 0.44, p = 0.01) and coercion (Rho = 0.42, p = 0.01).

Likewise, the modification of plans dimension shows direct, moderate and statistically significant correlations in all the evaluated dimensions of gender violence: physical violence (Rho = 0.44, p = 0.01), manipulation (Rho = 0.43, p = 0.01), medium verbal violence (Rho = 0.51, p = 0.01), coercion (Rho = 0.46, p = 0.01) and prohibitions (Rho = 0.42, p = 0.01).

Regarding the dimension of fear of loneliness, a direct, positive and moderate relationship is evident in the following dimensions: physical violence (Rho = 0.43, p = 0.01), verbal violence (Rho = 0.47, p = 0.01) coercion (Rho = 0.46, p = 0.01) and with weak magnitude: Manipulation (Rho = 0.39, p = 0.01) and prohibitions (Rho = 0.39, p = 0.01).

Direct and moderate correlations, with statistical significance, were also identified between the borderline expression dimension of emotional dependence and the following dimensions: physical violence (Rho = 0.43, p = 0.01), manipulation (Rho = 0.44, p = 0.01), verbal violence (Rho = 0.44, p = 0.01), coercion (Rho = 0.45, p = 0.01); however, with weak magnitude in prohibitions (Rho = 0.36, p = 0.01).

Finally, the attention-seeking dimension shows direct, positive and moderate correlations, statistically significant with: physical violence (Rho = 0.40, p = 0.01), manipulation (Rho = 0.40, p = 0.01), verbal violence (Rho = 0.44, p = 0.01), coercion (Rho = 0.41, p = 0.01) and with weak magnitude in prohibitions (Rho = 0.35, p = 0.01) (Table 4).

Baños et al.[41] state that five regression assumptions must be verified before interpreting the predictive model. The first assumption, linearity, indicates that the variables are related; therefore, it is met. The normality assumption requires that the residuals follow a normal distribution, and the QQ plot shows a linear pattern; therefore, this second assumption is fully met. The third assumption, independence of errors, requires that the model errors are not related. The Durbin-Watson statistic is DW = 1.63; therefore, this assumption is also met. The fourth assumption, homoscedasticity, indicates that the errors do not affect the predictions, and the scatter plot shows uniform dispersion. Finally, the multicollinearity assumption requires that the variables be distinct from each other, so VIF and tolerance are within the acceptable range (see Appendix 2).

A model was tested in which myths of romantic love and emotional dependency are significant predictors of gender-based violence. The findings indicate that both variables—emotional dependency (p = 0.001; B = 0.492) and myths of romantic love (p = 0.001; B = 0.118)—predict gender-based violence (Table 4)

Table 5. Model coefficients - Gender violence

Preacher	Estimator	Standard Error	t	p	Standard estimator
Constant	10.122	2.2341	4.53	< .001	
Myths of romantic love	0.331	0.0762	4.34	< .001	0.118
Emotional dependency	0.407	0.0226	18.04	< 0.001	0.492

A model was verified in which the myths of romantic love and emotional dependence are significant factors that predict gender violence. The findings indicate that both variables: emotional dependence (p = 0.001; B = 0.492) and myths of romantic love (p = 0.001; B = 0.118) predict gender violence (Table 5).

Table 6. Model coefficients - Emotional dependence.

Preacher	Estimator	Standard Error	t	p	Standard estimator
Constant	0.552	2.8314	0.195	0.846	
Myths of romantic love	1,675	0.0839	19,967	< 0.001	0.496

Likewise, the model in which myths of romantic love predict emotional dependence was tested, in which the findings indicate that myths of romantic love (p = 0.001) significantly predict emotional dependence (B = 0.496) (Table 6).

DISCUSSION

One of the essential aims of this research is to determine whether the myths of romantic love and emotional dependency are predictors of gender-based violence in young couples in the city of Juliaca. After statistical

processing, it was determined that both variables, emotional dependency (p = 0.001; B = 0.492) and myths of romantic love (p = 0.001; B = 0.118), are factors that influence gender-based violence. In short, as long as high levels of emotional dependency and myths of romantic love are present, there is also a risk of increased gender-based violence in relationships. These results can be compared with those of Pérez-Aranda and Estrada-Carmona,[23] who conducted a 2024 study to determine the relationships among violence, relationship maintenance, and dependency among university students. Their findings demonstrated a positive and substantial association between emotional dependency and violence. Furthermore, Valdivia et al.[29] in 2023 conducted a study on nursing students in Chile about types of violence and the myths of romantic love, where a statistically significant and positive relationship was found between three types of myths of romantic love (jealousy, pairing, and free will) with some kinds of violence.

The above can be supported by Pérez et al.[42] who refer to the concepts of the stages and cycles of violence related to dependency. In this context, individuals experiencing dependency tend to minimize the impact of violence, hindering their ability to leave the relationship. Similarly, they cling to their partners, increasing the risk of being trapped in a recurring cycle of abuse. From Adolph's perspective,[43] it is emphasized that thoughts and beliefs influence behavior. Consequently, erroneous thought patterns contribute to emotional dependency and the perpetuation of violence in relationships. These beliefs generate excessive attachment and tolerance of violence.

On the other hand, Urie Bronfenbrenner proposes the ecological model, which explains violent behavior as the interaction among various environmental systems. These include: (1) the immediate environment, such as family and friends;(2) external interactions, such as school, teachers, and the neighborhood; (3) the indirect environment, which encompasses social norms and judicial systems; (4) cultural factors, such as values and religion; and (5) temporal changes in the different environments over time. This model posits that each of these factors influences the others, and that integrating all of them increases the likelihood of acts of violence.[44] Complementarily, Aaron Beck's cognitive-behavioral theory[22] argues that violence can originate from dysfunctional mental schemas and distorted beliefs, which affect the interpretation of reality and the regulation of behavior.

Specifically, one objective was to determine the relationship between myths of romantic love and emotional dependency among young couples in Juliaca. After processing the statistical data, a direct, moderately positive, and statistically significant association was found between myths of romantic love and emotional dependency (Rho = 0.466; p < 0.01). Furthermore, the model in which myths of romantic love predict emotional dependency was confirmed, with the findings indicating that these myths significantly predict emotional dependency. In summary, it suggests that as beliefs about romantic love myths are adopted, they contribute to higher levels of emotional dependency in romantic relationships. These results can be compared with those of Galicia et al.,[45] who conducted a study with high school and undergraduate students, and found a significant correlation between myths of romantic love and emotional dependency.

Similarly, in the study carried out by Marcatona Naranjo[46] concludes that the myths of romantic love have a direct impact on emotional dependency, since a person with emotional dependency has the idea that the partner is predestined for one, which is classified as a myth of romantic love, likewise, cognitions about exclusivity, the belief in the existence of a soulmate, together forever and love can do anything.

The above is supported by Beattie,[47] who notes that the myths of romantic love intensify dependency. He adds that a lack of experience and autonomy is a factor that increases the vulnerability to developing dependency in early adulthood. Yela García[48] notes that when expectations are not met in a relationship, people focus on myths that promote unconditional, eternal, and perfect love to idealize their romantic relationship. This makes them more prone to cling to their partners and to seek perfection in their love life.

Similarly, Pinto Bismarck[49] mentions that myths about love generate unrealistic expectations, projecting the search for a perfect relationship. After the disappointment of not meeting these expectations, frustration and a need to constantly provide well-being and happiness to one's partner arise, expecting this to be reciprocated. Furthermore, if these expectations are not met, it generates a cycle of dissatisfaction that fuels dependency. This can be explained by Albert Bandura's social learning theory,[13] which maintains that people learn behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes by observing others, such as family members, social figures, and the media. In this sense, the myths of romantic love are internalized from childhood through culture, the media, and stereotypes, leading to dysfunctional patterns that promote the idea that love implies sacrifice or suffering.

Another objective of this study is to determine the relationship between myths of romantic love and gender-based violence in young couples in the city of Juliaca. The findings indicate a direct, weak, and statistically significant positive correlation (Rho = 0.312; $p < 0.01$), suggesting that a greater prevalence of myths about romantic love is associated with a higher likelihood of experiencing gender-based violence. In this regard, similar studies were found, such as those by Palacios and Valverde,[30] whose results indicate an internalization of myths about romantic love, followed by violence in intimate relationships. This aligns with the research by Lozano et al.,[50] who found a significant relationship between the two variables.

The findings stem from the perception of romantic love as the only way to achieve a happy and fulfilling life, leading to the necessity of searching for a partner and maintaining a relationship despite potential consequences.[31] According to Esteban et al.,[51] two aspects of love are considered: the first is the individual, and the second is generational and gender inequalities. Information processing, our way of thinking, principles, and behavior of love lead to an individual constructing their identity and their way of seeing or idealizing their gender. On the other hand, studies such as Ferre and Bosch,[52] Cubells and Calsamiglia,[53] and Resurrección-Rodríguez and Córdova-Iñesta[54] state that the myths of romantic love can increase the likelihood of suffering or committing different types of violence.

According to Vygotsky,[28] this can be explained by sociocultural theory, which states that a psychological process unfolds through two stages: the first is a collaborative activity, and the second is a personal process

chosen by the individual. This means that society and a person's formative experiences can significantly influence the internalization of ideas, both positive and negative. From this perspective, society, the family environment, affective bonds, and educational experiences play a fundamental role in the formation of psychological structures. The repetition of specific messages or norms can facilitate the adoption of mental schemas that promote adaptive behaviors or, conversely, dysfunctional ones, as is the case with emotional dependency in romantic relationships.

The final objective was to determine the relationship between emotional dependency and gender-based violence in young couples in the city of Juliaca. Statistical analysis revealed a direct, moderately positive, and statistically significant relationship (Rho = 0.558; p < 0.01), meaning that a correlation exists, and greater emotional dependency is associated with a higher likelihood of experiencing gender-based violence. These results can be compared with the study by Pérez et al.,[25] which aimed to identify whether emotional dependency significantly predicts intimate partner violence. This study found a direct and statistically significant correlation with violence in intimate relationships (Rho = 0.500; p <0 .05). Similarly, the survey by Alcalá et al.[24] focused on analyzing emotional dependency as a predictor of violence, finding a relatively low incidence, meaning that dependency makes experiencing violent acts more probable. Likewise, the study conducted by Aiquipa Tello[21] found that emotional dependence and violence show a statistically significant relationship.

These results are consistent with previous research suggesting that individuals with emotional dependence on their partner resort to various strategies to maintain the relationship. They perceive loneliness with panic and fear of abandonment, which can lead them to submit to their partner. They also become victims of patriarchal emotions, jealousy, and insecurity.[24] Individuals exhibiting emotional dependence are conditioned with negative thoughts that they will eventually be abandoned, emotionally neglected, and that they are not good enough. This progressively leads to experiencing different types of violence,[55] as well as a high risk of suffering domestic violence.[20]

According to Castello,[56] this can be explained by his theory that human beings always have a desire to be accompanied and establish healthy interpersonal relationships, but that this can reach the extreme of being detrimental to a person, becoming an excessive need. Likewise, John Bowlby's attachment theory[57] mentions that early affective experiences shape an attachment style (secure, anxious, avoidant), among which anxious and insecure attachment make individuals more vulnerable to enduring violence due to fear of being alone or due to idealizing their partner.

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that myths of romantic love and emotional dependence are statistically significant predictors of gender violence in young couples in the City of Juliaca; that is, high levels of emotional dependence and greater internalization of the myths of romantic love increase the risk of gender violence.

Furthermore, it was concluded that a statistically significant relationship exists between romantic love myths and emotional dependency among young couples in Juliaca. Similarly, a statistically significant relationship was found between myths of romantic love and gender-based violence. Finally, a statistically significant relationship was also identified between emotional dependency and violence.

These results underscore the urgent need to establish evidence-based programs to promote healthy relationships to reduce gender-based violence in couples, as well as to raise awareness and provide guidance on the psychological and physical implications of violence.

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