

Attachment And Its Link to Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review

By

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Abstract

Due to the frequency and severity of domestic violence against women, there has been growing concern about it. Numerous women's lives have been lost due to this type of violence, which is a serious problem that is expected to continue in the future. A limited amount of research only takes into account variables that are connected to attachment. Most focus on the deaths of both men and women who were in relationships and do not provide accurate information about the phenomenon under study. To fully understand this case, a real analysis of the elements only related to attachment and its link to intimate partner violence is essential. The objective of the study is to systematically review the elements associated with attachment and its link with intimate partner violence. We systematically searched databases of peer-reviewed research, published between 2018 and 2022, which provided data on attachment using a measure of association (quantitative) or pathway (qualitative), between attachment and its linkage in intimate partner violence. Twenty studies found inclusion criteria extracted from databases (Scopus). The review was conducted under the standards of the PRISMA guidelines. The findings revealed that there are specific elements where the behavior of individuals who act with violence against women in the couple, intervenes elements such as hostility attitudes, anger, personality disorders, the perception of fragility of the victim and the reinforcement of previous violent behaviors. The results have implications for predicting and preventing women's deaths, providing applied scientific knowledge to develop public action programs, guidelines and reforms.

Key words: Attachment, intimate partner violence, gender violence, intimate partner violence.

1. Introduction

Intimate partner violence is a problem of public health, which is why there has recently been an awareness of its causes and consequences (Vellotti et al., 2021). According to WHO, traumatic events are actions that contain physical and emotional abuse, sexual harassment, neglect and exploitation, which result in actual or potential harm to the health and progress of the child. When this event occurs outside the family environment, strong family support and parental help can appease the progress of post-traumatic pathology (Yilmaz et al., 2022). Individuals build and maintain emotional relationships in their lives, the way of relating, the mode of attachment is the result of the mental models of bonding erected in affective practices. Insecure attachment is defined by great anxiety and ignoring the establishment of interpersonal relationships. These individuals could specifically benefit from learning appropriate strategies to control their emotions in youth and maximize their level of well-being (Monaco et al., 2021). Several researchers have focused their attention on the seriousness of the violence. Much Researchers have studied the factors related to these deaths to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon in order to predict and prevent it (Abrunhosa et al.,

2021). However, female partner-related deaths continue to occur and cannot be prevented. (Elisha et al., 2010). In this article, we define violence couple such as physical violence, sexual assault, physical abuse, and psychological aggression (included coercive tactics) by a current or former partner (Emerson and Dobash, 2011). Studies on factors linked to violence couple are not enoughs (López et al., 2018). Many times cases of intimate partner violence have no correlation with specific factors related to attachment and intimate partner violence in the literature Scientific. Many of the cases in landmark studies were evaluated and identified as low-risk violence. (Beautiful and Alvarez, 2017; Dobash and Cavanagh, 2009). In this regard, several cases of violence couple have factors that differ from those already known, therefore, from those included in the risk assessment instruments (López et al., 2018). An accurate identification of this violence allows a face De effective (Roller and De Piccolo, 2020). Research evidence has confirmed the continued need to investigate risk factors for domestic violence (Spencer and Stith, 2020).

To explain intimate partner violence and attachment theory, different theories of violence have been used. (Hazan and Shaer, 1987) is one of them. Attachment Issues Are Consistent Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Violence (Kuijpers, Van Der and Winkel, 2012). According to Bowlby (1988), Attachment is a behavioral system that organizes human behavior to improve survival and adaptability. When a person encounters a circussubstance that compromises their survivability and adaptability Your apprehension system is activated. Once activated, their initial response is to look for a nearby enemy figure (it is say couple and parents) (Bowlby, 1973). Yes The figures of Attachments consistently respond to needs of attachment of the individual, a secure attachment, as well as the sense of being worthy of the love of others (i.e., one's own functional models) and the assurance that others will provide support in times of need (i.e., functional models of others) What are developed (Bartholomew, 1997). These mental representations of oneself and others can be classified into two categories: attachment anxious (fear of abandonment) and attachment avoidant (fear of being bullied) (Brennan et al., 1998).

Relationship Experts See Violence couple as a futile attempt to keep a couple together when there are threats to attachment needs (Simpson and Rholes, 1994). Threats perceived as apprehension of attachment by insecure partners can generate differences in perspective, which can result in the continuation or victimization of violence o a combination of both. For example the attachment is a consistent predictor of both perpetration and victimization of violence couple in both men and women (Henderson et al., 1998). Generally, the anxiety associated with attachment is associated with aggression between married couples and married couples. (Babcock et al., 2000). Finding that there is a particular relationship that can allow to avoid attachment. Cummings-Robeau et al. (2009) Discovered Link Between Attachment Avoidance and Domestic Violence. In contrast, Miga et al. (2010) did not find that the Attachment style was not associated with such violence. However, other factors, such as the interactions of different types of attachment, may be at play, as evidenced by a study that found that anxiety of attachment, impulsivity and an interaction effect between avoidance of Attachment and anxiety of attachment in the couple were associated with self-report But male perpetration were not reported (Pollard and Songs, 2021).

Also Scientific literature Evidence suggesting that emotional instability is a predictor of ongoing intimate partner violence. According to one theory, difficulties in controlling emotions are caused by a biological predisposition to react emotionally and by havingIt is developed in an invalidating environment (Linehan, 2018). With the time Difficulties with controlling emotions can manifest as problems of behaviour and disorders related to the persistence of violence couple, such as antisocial personality disorder (Donahue, McClure & *Res Militaris*, vol.13, n°2, January Issue 2023

Moon, 2014), borderline personality disorder (Herr et al., 2013) and depression (Berking et al., 2014). Some studies have found that difficulties with emotional regulation are positively associated with the persistence of domestic violence. (McNulty and Hellmuth, 2008), including studies on young adults in romantic relationships (Pollard and Cantos, 2021; Shorey et al., 2011). It is vital to investigate how gender can affect perpetrators of violence couple Because there is strong evidence showing the importance of emotional regulation in this area. The development One or adverse childhood experiences can also have an impact on the likelihood that they will commit an act of aggression. As a continuous precursor to the perpetuation and victimization of violence couple, traumatic people and childhood experiences have been identified, specifically witnessing violence between parents and experiencing physical abuse as a child (Eriksson and Mazerolle, 2015; Gerwartz and Edleson, 2007) and recidivism (Gewirtz and Edleson , 2007). Some evidence suggests an increased risk of retaliation for those who report child abuse or who witness violence between parents. (Linder and Collins, 2005). However, being exposed to violence couple and experiencing it yourself can increase your risk of being a victim of violence. couple (Iverson et al., 2014). However, more thorough research needs to be done on the mechanisms behind this relationship..

Responding to the needs of the current context, a gap in knowledge is visualized and we pose the following question: How does attachment style influence intimate partner violence? For this reason, this systematic review of articles from 2018 to 2022 is justified, as it seeks to meet the objective of collecting updated empirical evidence that allows us to draw consensus conclusions about the role of attachment styles in the generation of situations of violence in couple conflicts, as well as to investigate recent innovative proposals for intervention in conflictive couples.

2. Methods

This is an exploratory systematic review for this, it was based on the PRISMA model (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyzes), the PRISMA flowchart was used to synthesize the search procedure (Sierra and Kintz, 2015). PRISMA is an improved version of the QUAROM guide, which includes a checklist and flowchart with 27 components. According to Sierra-Correa and Cantera Kintz (2015), PRISMA has three distinct advantages: it allows you to define specific research questions to carry out systematized aspects, it allows you to select inclusive and exclusive criteria, and it allows you to review a large dataset efficiently. PRISMA was used to uncover previous studies on family elements close to attachment and intimate partner violence, through a systematic review. The databases used in our search were *Scopus*, *Google Scholar*, *MEDLINE* and *Scielo*, of which threesteps are involved in the process of systematic review of the objective of the study. The fase 1, included all the results that the databases yielded. Phase 2, selection and phase 3 developed the inclusion process (Figure 1).

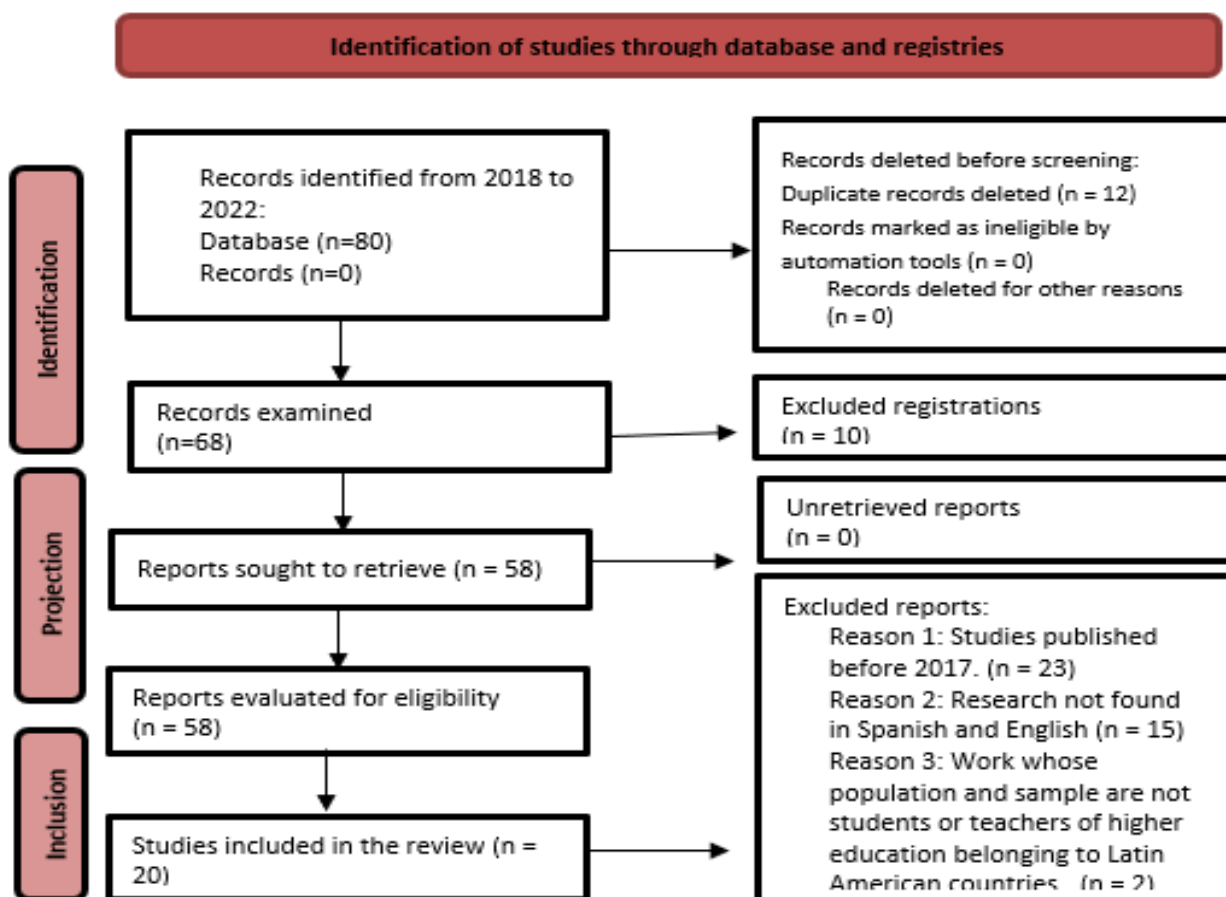


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 identification flowchart.
Source: Adapted by researchers.

The first stage was to identify the keywords that would be used in the search strategy process. According to previous studies, similar keywords and keywords associated with factors related to attachment and intimate partner violence were used. The relationship of keywords were revised and updated, for example, added or different spelling variations. The keywords used in your final search version are shown in Table 1. The aim of this systematic review is to analyse research on intimate partner violence and attachment in studies that explored the relationship between attachment and the relationship between intimate partner violence. Many criteria were considered as a means of locating the criteria, and these criteria are presented in Table 2. In this study, we looked for articles that were published between 2018 and 2022 (i.e. within the last five years) so that our review could build on the latest research on information retrieval and analysis in the digital age.

Table 1. Article Search Terms

"attachment" AND "violence" AND "intimate partner violence" OR "gender violence" OR "attachment and violence" OR "intimate partner violence" OR "emotional attachment" OR "attachment"

Source: O'Reilly et al., (2022)
Note: Own elaboration

After applying the filters, N = 80 were considered, from which N = 60 were excluded, and finally N = 20 was selected. Below is a flowchart belonging to Prima 2020 for the new systematic reviews that include databases. (Table 3).

Table 2. *Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

| Type of criterion | Inclusion | Exclusion |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Publication | 2017 to 2022 | Before 2017 |
| Quality assurance | Studies published in Scopus | Unpublished studies in Scopus |
| Access | Open Access Studies | Paid or subscription magazines |
| Language | English, Spanish and Portuguese. | Studies in languages other than English, Spanish or Portuguese. |
| Academic discipline | Journals of Social and multidisciplinary Sciences. | Journals that are not specialized in social sciences or multidisciplinary. |

Source: O'Reilly et al., (2022)

Note: Own elaboration

The process was addressed by identifying scientific articles published between 2017 and 2022, disclosed in Scopus databases. In the search, the terms "attachment and violence" were used as descriptors in Spanish, in the Scopus database; and in English the words "attachment and violence" were used.

2.1. Selected fonts

Below are the 20 articles selected for the present research:

Table 4. *List of articles selected for the study*

| Nº | Reference | Title | Magazine |
|----|--|---|---|
| 1 | Akl et al., 2022 | Exposure to intimate partner violence: understandings from naturalization in Colombian men and women | Journal of Public Health |
| 2 | Alemann et al., 2022 | Intimate Partner Violence and Early Child Development | Pan American Journal of Public Health |
| 3 | Cadavid-Marín and Marínez-Garcés, 2022 | Symbolic violence in relationships from the marginality in young women | Latin American Journal of Social Sciences, Children and Youth |
| 4 | Contreras et al., 2022 | Economic impact of intimate partner violence: The case of two Colombian firms | Management Studies |
| 5 | Estévez et al., 2022 | Hopelessness in Gaming Disorder: Relationship to Attachment and Difficulties in Emotional Regulation in Young Adults | Spanish Journal of Drug Addiction |
| 6 | Fernández-Álvarez et al., 2022 | Resilience and associated factors in women survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: a systematic review | Annals of Psychology |
| 7 | Juarros-Basterretxea et al., 2022 | Dyadic Analysis of Emotional Intimate Partner Violence: An Estimation of Dyadic Patterns and Influencing Individual, Family, and Couple Factors | European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context |
| 8 | Muñoz et al., 2022 | Types and circumstances of marital union in the occurrence of physical intimate partner violence in Chiapas, Mexico, 2016 | Population and Health in Mesoamerica |

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| 9 | Rivas-Rivero and Bonilla-Algovia, 2022 | Sexist beliefs in men in a situation of suspension of sentence who have exercised violence against women in the couple | Colombian Act of Psychology |
| 10 | Villagrán et al., 2022 | Validation of the Scale of Acceptability of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women (A-IPVAW) in the Ecuadorian Population | Ibero-American Journal of Diagnosis and Psychological Evaluation |
| 11 | Villa-Rueda et al., 2022 | Interventions to prevent intimate partner violence in Latino and young Hispanic American populations: A systematic review. | Alternatives. Social Work Notebooks |
| 12 | Yilmaz et al., 2022 | The effect of traumatic experiences on attachment styles | Annals of Psychology |
| 13 | Bonilla-Algovia and Rivas-Rivero, 2021 | Intimate partner violence against women: A study on the beliefs of trainee teachers in Spain and Latin America | International Journal of Psychological Research |
| 14 | Estévez et al., 2021 | Role of attachment and early maladaptive schemas in | Latin American Journal of Psychology |
| 15 | Monaco et al., 2021 | The influence of attachment on well-being: The mediating role of emotion regulation in Spanish youth | Annals of Psychology |
| 16 | Pérez et al., 2021 | Perception of violence during relationships in adolescents | Nursing Goals |
| 17 | González-Ortega et al., 2021 | Combination of adult attachment styles, conflict resolution and relationship quality between young-adult couples | Psychotherapy |
| 18 | Guérin-Marion et al., 2020 | Developmental and attachment-based perspectives on dissociation: beyond the effects of maltreatment | European Journal of Psychotraumatology |
| 19 | Velotti et al., 2018 | Exploring relationships: a systematic review on intimate partner violence and attachment | Frontiers in Psychology |
| 20 | Pollard and Cantos, 2021 | Attachment, emotional dysregulation, and physical IPV in predominantly Hispanic young adult couples | International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health |

Table 4 shows that, of the 20 items included, according to their countries of origin are Spain 45%, Colombia 20%, Mexico 15% and Turkey, Chile, Canada and Nicaragua 5% each. Which have the type of study: Quantitative 50%, Qualitative 30% and Systematic Review 20%.

According to the titles of the studies included, 60% correspond to the theme of Intimate partner violence, followed by 40% correspond to the theme of attachment.

3. Results

From the chosen articles, each of them was analyzed, and the most important results were rescued.

Synthesized results

A total of twenty studies were preferably chosen for review. All reviewed articles investigated different relationships on attachment and intimate partner violence. We found five studies related to attachment and its relationship between young-adult couples; five of twenty manuscripts studied attachment style with parents, representing 20% of the total manuscripts (3,4,5,6). seven out of twenty (35.00%) explored the relationship between intimate partner violence. Three studies (15.00%) of the manuscripts found reviewed the association between attachment elements and couple behaviors (17, 18, 20). One study defined the correlation between impulsivity, attachment styles, and early maladaptive schemes (Estévez et al., 2021)

Attachment styles as a couple

Early attachment arises on the basis of self-esteem and relationships that have a significant impact on adolescents' relationships with friends, teachers, and partners later in life Bowlby (1969). According to Cadavid-Marín and Marínez-Garcés, 2022 provides relevant elements for young women to institute relationships free of possession, dependence and domination; a relationship where correspondence is the essential condition for committing to each other, separated from coercion and restrictions. Likewise, Estévez et al., 2022 indicate that impulsive behavior is generated by the following factors: security, value to parental authority, parental permissiveness, self-sufficiency and resentment to parents, childhood trauma and the negativity / pessimism scheme. According to Yılmaz et al., 2022, indicates that traumatic events have a significant effect on fearful and worried attachment; and a significant negative effect on secure attachment. According to González-Ortega et al., 2021, a distribution of adult attachment combinations (13% secure, 57% insecure, 30% mixed) shows some consistencies – the similar portion of mixed couples – and inconsistencies – the significantly larger portion of insecure, especially fearful couples – with data obtained from other samples. However, this appears to be in line with cross-cultural analyses of attachment styles in adults reporting higher average levels of fearful romantic attachment in Spain than in Chile, as well as a weaker significant negative correlation between secure attachment and fearful attachment among Spaniards compared to Spaniards. suggesting that in the first country, the three forms of insecure attachment could merge slightly and form a cluster that contrasts with secure scale. According to Pimentel and Santelices, 2017 highlights that attachment anxiety and avoidance are determinants in affective relationships, it is concluded that, the low indicators of avoidance in relationships, men convicted of intimate partner violence, mild type manages to form close relationships with another and are able to be receptive and get involved intimately, however, in situations of high interdependence in their relationships would experience a high level of anxiety regarding the possibility of being rejected or abandoned by having a negative view of themselves and their own valuation. On the other hand, the attachment pattern of mother-child insecurity appears to be associated with higher levels of aggression in women.

Intimate partner violence

Social learning theory states that exposure to violence in the family of origin or witnessing parental violence as a child is a widely studied risk factor for aggressive behavior in relationships. It takes a significantly long research time to carry out such a method, which fortunately is also true for other related family risk factors. Unfortunately, this problem is rarely solved using a fully prospective design. Pérez et al., 2021, found that there is more tolerance towards physical, psychological and sexual violence in men. There were no significant differences in the perception of partner aggressions, in terms of age, sexual orientation and having maintained or not a romantic relationship. Similarly Guérin-Marion et al., 2020 demonstrate the lasting impact of stressors related to early attachment on the development of dissociative outcomes, which often occur alongside maltreatment but may be independent of it. Juarros-Basterretxea et al., 2022, indicates that the increase in time shared between the

couple could increase possible conflict situations and generate episodes of intimate partner violence. Muñoz et al., 2022 mentions that it is a public health problem finding findings that ensured that the greatest occurrences of intimate partner violence in indigenous people have been widely documented, in which factors such as the type of union, the circumstance of union, social disadvantage and the age of union influence. Fernández-Álvarez et al., 2022, found that individual, relational and contextual factors are central to women's resilience and must be considered to be oriented to the generation of public policies. Akl et al., 2022, mentions that Several researchers mention the naturalization of VP is rooted in society linked to manhood, dominance, protective role; Contrary to femininity, linked to subtlety, obedience, weakness, empathy and being loyal. According to Bonilla-Algovia and Rivas-Rivero, 2021, it found findings showing that men, unlike women, tend to show more cognitive distortions about gender roles and VP versus women. In conclusion, the education system is one of the main socializing agents, which is why the instruction of educators on equality issues is proposed in order to eliminate gender biases and contribute to the development of a society free of VP.

Table 4. *General description of the study*

| Nº | Authors and year | Country | Design | Sample size | Magazine |
|----|--|-----------|-----------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Akl et al., 2022 | Colombia | Cross-sectional study | Participants (304 males, 427 females), Aged 20-65 | Journal of Public Health |
| 2 | Alemann et al., 2022 | Nicaragua | Cross-sectional study | 8 921 children between 0 and 5 years old and 7 436 mothers or caregivers from 7 133 households participated | Pan American Journal of Public Health |
| 3 | Cadavid-Marín and Marínez-Garcés, 2022 | Colombia | Qualitative study | Review study | Latin American Journal of Social Sciences, Children and Youth |
| 4 | Contreras et al., 2022 | Colombia | Cross-sectional study | 172 participated (111 men, 61 women) | Management Studies |
| 5 | Estévez et al., 2022 | Ecuador | Cross-sectional study | Participants were 1533 adolescents (826 men, 707 women) between 14 and 18 years of age ($M = 15.76$, $SD = 1.25$). | Spanish Journal of Drug Addiction |
| 6 | Fernández-Álvarez et al., 2022 | Spain | Qualitative study | Systematic review study | Annals of Psychology |
| 7 | Juarros-Basterretxea et al., 2022 | Spain | Cross-sectional study | 242 heterosexual couples participated | European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context |
| 8 | Muñoz et al., 2022 | Mexico | Cross-sectional study | 111,256 women aged 15 and over participated | Population and Health in Mesoamerica |
| 9 | Rivas-Rivero and Bonilla-Algovia, 2022 | Spain | Cross-sectional study | 121 men participated | Colombian Act of Psychology |
| 10 | Villagrán et al., 2022 | Ecuador | Cross-sectional study | Participants were 992 (53.9% female) aged between 18 and 72 years ($Medad = 26.57$, $SD = 9.68$) | Ibero-American Journal of Diagnosis and Psychological Evaluation |
| 11 | Villa-Rueda et al., 2022 | Mexico | Qualitative study | Systemative review | Alternatives. Social Work Notebooks |
| 12 | Yilmaz et al., 2022 | Turkey | Cross-sectional study | 804 students between 17 and 24 years old participated. | Annals of Psychology |

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|----|--|---------|-----------------------|---|---|
| 13 | Bonilla-Algovia and Rivas-Rivero, 2021 | Spain | Cross-sectional study | The sample was composed of 2395 teachers in training from these six Spanish-speaking countries, with an average age of 22.44 years ($SD = 6.13$) | International Journal of Psychological Research |
| 14 | Estévez et al., 2021 | Ecuador | Cross-sectional study | The sample is 1533 adolescents from Ecuador (826 men and 707 women), between 14 and 18 years of age ($M = 15.76$, $SD = 1.25$). | Latin American Journal of Psychology |
| 15 | Monaco et al., 2021 | Spain | Cross-sectional study | Participants were 126 young people (61.9% women) between 19 and 26 years old ($M_{age} = 24.16$; $SD_{age} = 3.54$). | Annals of Psychology |
| 16 | Pérez et al., 2021 | Spain | Cross-sectional study | 286 study subjects participated. 58.4% ($n = 167$) were female. Students aged 12-15 years prevailed ($n = 245$; 85.7%). 46.2% ($n = 132$) of students said they had or had a relationship | Nursing Goals |
| 17 | González-Ortega et al., 2021 | Spain | Cross-sectional study | A sample of 405 Spanish heterosexual couples of young adults, The mean age of women and men was 21 years ($SD = 2.11$) and 22 years ($SD = 2.28$) | Psychotherapy |
| 18 | Guérin-Marion et al., 2020 | Spain | Qualitative study | Systematic review | European Journal of Psychotraumatology |
| 19 | Velotti et al., 2018 | Italy | Qualitative study | Systematic review | Frontiers in Psychology |
| 20 | Pimentel and Santelices, 2017 | Chile | Cross-sectional study | 20 men between 30 and 50 years old each. The mean age was 39 years ($SD = 7.7$) | Psykhē |

4. Discussion and Conclusions

Based on the articles consulted, it can be concluded that the behavior of individuals who act with violence against women in the couple (VAWP), intervenes elements such as attitudes of hostility, anger, personality disorders, the perception of fragility of the victim and the reinforcement of previous violent behaviors. For this reason, risk detection protocols have been proposed in cases of VAWP, and in studies with aggressors elements have been identified such as the presence of learning and behavioral problems in childhood 23.5%, anger and emotional imbalance 79.4%, history of aggression or criminal history 44.1%, and minimize the perception of violence, even if it occurs frequently and is serious, 78.4% (Andrés-Pueyo et al. in Rivas-Rivero and Bonilla-Algovia, 2022).

On the other hand, Pimentel and Santelices (2017) found that men who perform the act of violence expose an insecure attachment and a lot of anxiety in their relationships, expressing fear and insecurity in the face of abandonment; on the other hand, in non-violent men, less anxiety and a more secure attachment are visualized in their relationships, expressing greater closeness and intimacy, so it infers that both the mode of attachment and the dimensions correlate with violent behavior in individuals; higher degrees of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance are associated with greater victimization of intimate partner violence, both physical and psychological through perceived partner conflict and higher levels of

romantic perfectionism (Lafontaine et al., 2021).

VP does not occur only in adulthood, but now its onset is increasingly anticipated and habitual, with adolescence being a key time where new ways of relationship are generated, including relationships. Therefore, the first sentimental relationships should be considered as a risk phase for the development of abusive and control behaviors (Pérez et al., 2021).

Globally, while men are more likely to suffer violence in armed conflict and criminal activities, women are at greater risk of being victims of violence by individuals close to their environment, such as their partners (Guedes et al. in Villagrán et al., 2022). The highest levels of intimate partner violence (PM) occur in women between adolescence and young adulthood, in Hispanic and Latin American populations. Therefore, it is important to identify interventions to prevent PV where this age range and race is connected are urgent and necessary (Villa-Rueda et al., 2022).

The capacity for emotional regulation is highly interconnected with attachment styles obtained in childhood through experiences with parents. It has been shown that negative interactions at an early age with attachment figures, such as emotional abuse, would produce an insecure attachment style that would remain constant until adulthood and lead to the development of hopelessness (Estévez et al., 2022).

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