



Psychosocial Factors Affecting the Recognition of Gender-Based Violence: A Study with Adolescents

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Abstract

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a public health issue and a serious violation of human rights worldwide. It can manifest in various forms, including physical and sexual violence, economic deprivation, threats and intimidation, harassment, and emotional abuse. GBV affects not only the victim and the perpetrator but also society as a whole. Societal perceptions and representations of GBV can lead to several harmful effects, such as the isolation of victims, the inaction of authorities and professionals, and the perpetuation of detrimental norms among peers. While physical violence and rape are generally recognized as forms of GBV, other types of violence are less likely to be properly identified and addressed. This study aimed to investigate the psychosocial variables that may influence the recognition of abusive and controlling behaviors in intimate relationships. The participants were 368 adolescents (61.3% male, aged 15-19). The results indicated that the endorsement of sexist attitudes, rape myths, romantic love myths play a significant role in the recognition of psychological violence in intimate relationships, as well as in the perception of severity versus victim blaming in cases of controlling behaviors. The implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: adolescence; gender; intimate relationships; love; violence.