

RESEARCH ARTICLE

CARACTERIZACION Y ACTITUDES SOBRE VIOLENCIA DE GÉNERO EN ESTUDIANTES DE ENFERMERÍA EN COLOMBIA 2024

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES AMONG COLOMBIAN NURSING STUDENTS IN 2024

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Recibido: 15 de enero de 2025.

Aprobado: 15 de Marzo de 2025

RESUMEN

Introducción: La violencia de género es una problemática social que afecta a mujeres de todas las culturas, en Colombia las cifras de violencia contra la mujer aumentaron en los últimos años; la suspensión del confinamiento facilitó que las mujeres denunciaran registrándose más casos, quienes son principalmente víctimas de violencia por la pareja y la expareja. **Objetivo:** Describir la asociación de las actitudes sobre violencia de género con la edad sexo y grado académico en estudiantes de pregrado en enfermería en Colombia. **Metodología:** Investigación cuantitativa, descriptiva y transversal, participaron 120 estudiantes de enfermería del primer al octavo periodo de una universidad en Colombia, se midieron las actitudes hacia la violencia de género a través de tres componentes: cognitivo, afectivo y conductual, se utilizó la Escala de Actitudes hacia la Violencia de Género. **Resultados:** 84.2% fueron mujeres, 15.8% hombres, el porcentaje predominante (40%) tuvo actitud negativa lo que indica una actitud mayormente de rechazo hacia la violencia de género, a pesar de esto, más de la mitad tienen una posición neutral o de aceptación hacia la violencia de género en su conjunto. **Conclusiones:** Las

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How to cite this article: Cano-Barrios Allison, Huerta-González Sara, De La Hoz-Quintero Cristian, Montes-Mosquera Claudeth, De Arco-Castrillón Ángela, Characterization and Attitudes Towards Gender-Based Violence in Nursing Students in Colombia 2024. Revista Ciencias Básicas En Salud, 3(1):1-17. April 2025, ISSN 2981-5800.



actitudes hacia la violencia de género entre los estudiantes muestran una tendencia mayoritaria hacia lo negativo. En el componente cognitivo, predomina la actitud negativa; en el conductual, la actitud positiva es predominante; y en el afectivo, prevalece la indiferencia.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Violencia, violencia contra la mujer, salud mental, exposición a la violencia, salud pública.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Gender-based violence is a social issue affecting women of all cultures from a young age. In Colombia, the number of cases of violence against women has increased in recent years. The lifting of lockdown measures facilitated women reporting these cases, with most women being victims of domestic violence, primarily at the hands of current or former partners. **Objective:** To describe the association between attitudes towards gender-based violence and age, sex, and academic year among undergraduate nursing students in Colombia. **Methodology:** A quantitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional study was conducted involving 120 nursing students from the first to eighth semesters at a Colombian university. Attitudes towards gender-based violence were measured through three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral, using the Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence Scale. **Results:** 84.2% were women, 15.8% were men, and 55% were Catholic. The predominant percentage (40%) had a negative attitude, indicating a mostly rejecting attitude towards gender-based violence. Despite this, more than half have a neutral or accepting position towards gender-based violence as a whole. **Conclusions:** Attitudes towards gender-based violence among students show a majority trend towards the negative, with notable differences in the cognitive, behavioral, and affective components. In the cognitive component, a negative attitude predominates; in the behavioral component, a positive attitude is predominant; and in the affective component, indifference prevails.

KEYWORDS: Violence, violence against woman, mental health, exposure to violence, public health.

INTRODUCCIÓN

The Pan-American Health Organization (PHO) defines gender-based violence as any act of gender-based aggression that results in, or is likely to result in, physical,

sexual, or psychological harm to the victim, including threats, coercion, or deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

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Gender-based violence is a social issue; data from the World Health Organization (WHO) suggest that one in three women experiences physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner, or sexual violence perpetrated by non-partners.

The National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences (INML-CF) reported an increase in cases of violence against women in 2021 (Márquez, 2022). In the case of Colombia, during the first half of 2023, 133 cases were recorded, indicating an average of 40 cases per month, according to the Colombian Observatory of Femicides (Idrobo, 2023).

In Colombia, it is believed that there is underreporting of cases of violence against women within universities, as gender-based violence response protocols were only made mandatory starting in 2022. Therefore, it is essential to understand the underlying attitudes that may contribute to this type of violence, in order to generate greater knowledge about the phenomenon and support its prevention and eradication within university settings (Idrobo, 2023).

Accordingly, this study aimed to analyze the association between attitudes toward gender-based violence and variables such as age, sex, and academic level among undergraduate nursing students in Colombia.

METHOD AND MATERIAL

Quantitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional study. The research characterized the attitudes of nursing students toward gender-based violence. A total of 120 students enrolled from the first to the eighth academic period at a university in Colombia participated, during the period from January to June 2024. A non-probabilistic convenience sampling method was used. Inclusion criteria included being male or female students of legal age, enrolled in the nursing program, and without verbal communication impairments. The variables examined included sociodemographic data and students' perceived attitudes toward gender-based violence, based on three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. To



measure these attitudes, the Gender-Based Violence Attitudes Scale (EAVG) was employed, which has a reported Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.944 (Chacón, 2025). This self-administered scale consists of 38 items with a 5-point Likert response format ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The three dimensions are distributed as follows: cognitive (13 items), affective (10 items), and behavioral (15 items). Descriptive statistics based on frequencies and percentages were applied to analyze sociodemographic variables, while inferential statistics using the chi-square (χ^2) test were used to estimate possible associations between the three attitudinal components and the variables of sex, age, and academic level. Data were organized and analyzed using Microsoft Excel for Microsoft 365.

Ethical considerations were addressed through adherence to the ethical principles of confidentiality and truthfulness by the researcher in relation to both the institution and the study participants. This was carried out in

accordance with Resolution No. 008430 of October 4, 1993, which establishes the scientific, technical, and administrative standards for health research in Colombia (Ministry of Health, 1993). Informed consent was obtained from all participants, explaining the objective of the study and emphasizing the confidentiality, voluntary nature, and anonymity of their participation.

RESULTS

Forty-five percent of the participants were between 18 and 19 years old, 52.5% were between 20 and 29 years old, and only 2.5% were between 40 and 49 years old. Among the respondents, 84.2% were women and 15.8% were men. Catholicism was the predominant religion, reported by 55% of participants, followed by Christianity at 32.5%, while 12.5% indicated that they did not practice any religion.

Regarding socioeconomic status, 60.8% (73 participants) reported living in households classified within strata 1 to 2, 34.2% in strata 3 to 4, and 5% in

strata 5 to 6. In terms of place of residence, 55.8% of the study population resided in Barranquilla, followed by 33.3% in Soledad, 3.3% in Puerto Colombia, and 7.5% in other areas. With respect to academic level, the majority of respondents were enrolled in the third

and fifth academic periods (16.7%), followed by the fourth period (15%), sixth (14.2%), first (11.7%), seventh (10.8%), and finally, the second and eighth periods with 8.3% and 6.7%, respectively.

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Nursing Students at a University in Colombia.

Sociodemographic Variables	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18 to 19	54	45%
	20 to 29	63	52,5%
	40 to 49	3	2,5%
Gender	Feminine	101	84,2%
	Masculine	19	15,8%
Religion	Catholic	66	55%
	Cristian	39	32,5%
	Jehovah's Witnesses	0	0
	Other	2	1,7%
	No religion	13	10,8%
Stratum	1 and 2	73	60,8%
	3 and 4	41	34,2%
	5 and 6	6	5%
Residence	Barranquilla	67	55,8%

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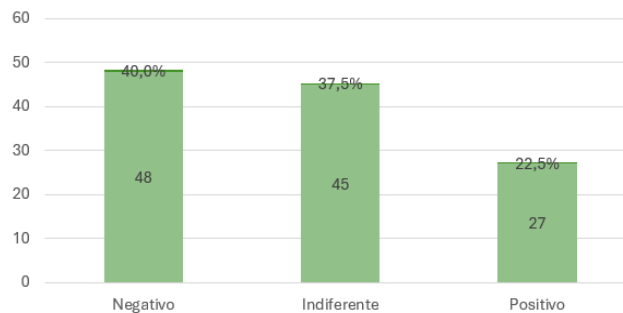
	Soledad	40	33,3%
	Puerto Colombia	4	3,3%
	Other	9	7,5%
Semester	1	14	11,7%
	2	10	8,3%
	3	20	16,7%
	4	18	15%
	5	20	16,7%
	6	17	14,2%
	7	13	10,8%
	8	8	6,7%

Source: Own elaboration. Sociodemographic variables characterization form.

In relation to attitudes toward gender-based violence, the data showed that, overall, the majority (40%) displayed a negative attitude, 37.5% exhibited an indifferent attitude, and 22.5%

demonstrated a positive attitude. It can be observed that the predominant negative percentage reflects a largely rejecting stance toward gender-based violence (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Attitude Level toward Gender-Based Violence among Nursing Students at a University in Colombia.



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Source: Own elaboration. Gender-Based Violence Attitudes Scale.

Regarding the level of attitude toward gender-based violence, analyzed by components, in the cognitive component, 79.16% exhibited a negative attitude, 10.8% an indifferent attitude, and 10% showed a positive attitude. This suggests that a significant majority of students hold beliefs that disapprove of gender-based violence. In the behavioral component, 95% reported a positive attitude, 5% exhibited an indifferent attitude, and there

were no negative attitudes in this component.

In the affective component, 72.5% exhibited an indifferent attitude, 23.3% showed a positive attitude, and 4.2% demonstrated a negative attitude. This may suggest that the majority of students do not have a strong emotional reaction or awareness regarding gender-based violence, as they neither reject nor accept it (Table 2).

Table 2. Level of Attitude toward Gender-Based Violence among Nursing Students at a University in Colombia, Categorized by Components.

Dimension	Niveles					
	Negative	%	Indifferent	%	Positive	%
Cognitive	95	79,2%	13	10,8%	12	10%
Conductorly	0	0	6	5%	114	95%
Affective	5	4,2%	87	72,5%	28	23,3%

Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding attitude levels based on gender, 40.6% of women exhibited a negative attitude, followed by 37.6% showing an indifferent attitude and 21.8% demonstrating a positive attitude. Among

men, 36.8% had a negative attitude, 36.8% exhibited an indifferent attitude, and 26.3% showed a positive attitude. Although both women and men exhibit a significant proportion of attitudes

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rejecting gender-based violence, a slight tendency toward rejection is observed among women, while men show a more equitable distribution across the attitude levels. When analyzing the association

statistic, no significant association was found ($\chi^2 = 0.2049$, $p = 0.9$) between attitudes toward gender-based violence and sex among participants (Table 3).

Table 3. Level of Attitude toward Gender-Based Violence among Nursing Students at a University in Colombia by Gender.

Gender	Level						Total
	Negative	%	Indifferent	%	Positive	%	
Feminine	41	40,6%	38	37,6%	22	21,8%	101
Masculine	7	36,8%	7	36,8%	5	26,3%	19
Total	48	40%	45	37,5%	27	22,5%	120

$\chi^2=0,2049$, $p= 0,9$

Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding the level of attitude in relation to age, it was observed that among students aged 18 to 19 years, 44.4% exhibited a negative attitude, 29.6% showed an indifferent attitude, and 2.9% demonstrated a positive attitude. Among students aged 20 to 29 years, 44.4% had an indifferent attitude, 34.9% exhibited a negative attitude, and 20.6% displayed a positive attitude. In the group of students

aged 40 to 49 years, 66.7% presented a negative attitude, and 33.3% showed an indifferent attitude. Younger students showed a greater tendency to reject gender-based violence, while the 20 to 29 age group predominantly exhibited a neutral attitude. Older students reported a marked non-acceptance attitude. Similarly, when examining the association, no significant correlation

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was found between these variables ($\chi^2 = 3.9764$, $p = 0.6798$).

Table 4. Level of Attitude toward Gender-Based Violence among Nursing Students at a University in Colombia by Age.

Age	Level						Total
	Negative	%	Indifferent	%	Positive	%	
18 to 19	24	44,4%	16	29,6%	14	25,9%	54
20 to 29	22	34,9%	28	44,4%	13	20,6%	63
30 to 39	0		0		0		0
40 to 49	2	66,7%	1	33,3%	0	0	3
Total	48	40%	45	37,5%	27	22,5%	120

$\chi^2 = 3.9764$, $p = 0.6798$.

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 5 presents the values of attitudes toward violence in relation to religion. Among students who profess the Catholic faith, 39.4% exhibited an indifferent attitude, 34.8% showed a negative attitude, and 25.8% demonstrated a positive attitude.

Regarding students who identified as Christian, 41% reported a negative attitude, 38.5% an indifferent attitude, and 20.5% a positive attitude. All students who practiced another religion showed a negative attitude toward gender-based violence. Among those

who reported not professing any religion, 53.8% had a negative attitude, followed by 30.8% with an indifferent attitude, and 15.4% with a positive attitude. No

statistically significant association was observed between these variables ($p = 0.7604$).

Table 5. Level of Attitude toward Gender-Based Violence among Nursing Students at a University in Colombia by Religion.

Religion	Level						Total
	Negative	%	Indifferent	%	Positive	%	
Catholic	23	34,8%	26	39,4%	17	25,8%	66
Cristian	16	41%	15	38,5%	8	20,5%	39
Jehovah's Witnesses	0		0		0		0
Other	2	100%	0		0		2
No Religion	7	53,8%	4	30,8%	2	15,4%	13

$\chi^2=4.9732$, $p=0.7604$

Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding place of residence, among the surveyed students residing in Barranquilla, 40.3% exhibited a negative

attitude, 38.8% showed an indifferent attitude, and 20.9% displayed a positive attitude. Among students from Soledad,

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40% had a negative attitude, 32.5% exhibited an indifferent attitude, and 27.5% demonstrated a positive attitude. In the group of students residing in Puerto Colombia, 50% showed a negative attitude, while the other 50% had a positive attitude. Among those who reported living in other areas, 66.7% exhibited an indifferent attitude, and

33.3% showed a negative attitude (Table 6).

Statistical tests did not reveal a significant association between these variables, regardless of students' place of origin or residence. Furthermore, the results showed equitable scores with no marked differences in attitudes toward gender-based violence (Table 6).

Table 6. Level of Attitude toward Gender-Based Violence by Place of Residence among Nursing Students at a University in Colombia.

Residence	Level						Total
	Negative	%	Indifferent	%	Positive	%	
Barranquilla	27	40,3%	26	38,8%	14	20,9%	67
Soledad	16	40%	13	32,5%	11	27,5%	40
Puerto Colombia	2	50%	0		2	50%	4
Other	3	33,3%	6	66,7%	0		9

$\chi^2=7.9308$, $p=0.2432$

Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding the academic period, it was observed that students in the first period predominantly exhibited a positive attitude (42.9%), followed by 35.7% with a negative attitude and 21.4% with an indifferent attitude. Among second-period students, 50% showed a negative

attitude, followed by 30% with an indifferent attitude and 20% with a positive attitude. For third-period students, 40% presented a negative attitude, while 60% showed a combination of positive and indifferent attitudes, at 30% and 30%, respectively.

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Regarding fourth-period students, 55.6% reported a negative attitude, 33.3% an indifferent attitude, and 11.1% a positive attitude.

Among fifth-period students, 40% reported a negative attitude, followed by 35% with an indifferent attitude and 20% with a positive attitude. In sixth-period students, 58.8% exhibited an indifferent attitude, 29.4% a negative attitude, and 11.8% a positive attitude. In the more advanced periods, data showed that seventh-period students mostly (46.2%) had an indifferent attitude, 38.5% a negative attitude, and 15.4% a positive

attitude. For eighth-period students, 50% showed an indifferent attitude, 25% had a negative attitude, and the remaining 25% displayed a positive attitude.

The chi-square test did not show a significant association between attitude level and academic period ($\chi^2 = 11.9075$, $p = 0.6137$). These results indicate that there is no significant change across academic periods, meaning that there is no suggestion that attitudes toward gender-based violence either increase or decrease as students' progress in their studies (Table 7).

Table 7. Level of Attitude toward Gender-Based Violence by Semester among Nursing Students at a University in Colombia.

Semester	Level						Total
	Negative	%	Indifferent	%	Positive	%	
1	5	35,7%	3	21,4%	6	42,9%	14
2	5	50%	3	30%	2	20%	10
3	8	40%	6	30%	6	30%	20
4	10	55,6%	6	33,3%	2	11,1%	18
5	8	40%	7	35%	5	20%	20
6	5	29,4%	10	58,8%	2	11,8%	17
7	5	38,5%	6	46,2%	2	15,4%	13

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8	2	25%	4	50%	2	25%	8
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 $\chi^2=11.9075, p=0.6137$

Source: Own elaboration.

DISCUSSION

According to the data analysis, the majority of the nursing student population in this study exhibits a negative attitude, suggesting that they reject gender-based violence. These results align with those obtained in the study conducted by Noriega (2022) on attitudes toward violence against women among female students at a higher education institution in Peru. In her study, it was highlighted that the largest percentage of the studied population (96%) displayed a negative attitude, indicating that the students maintained a firmer and more unanimous stance against gender-based violence.

In relation to gender, in the behavioral dimension, 95% of the students in Noriega's (2022) study exhibited a negative attitude, which contrasts with the results presented in this research. This difference highlights the variability in responses and concrete actions toward

gender-based violence among the university population studied.

In León's (2020) study, the results showed that male students scored higher than female students in sexist attitudes that could induce violence, finding a significant difference. This suggests that sexism influences gender-based violence by perpetuating traditional gender roles that subordinate women, creating power inequalities that can trigger abuse, normalizing violence through ambivalent attitudes that justify or mask aggression, and blaming victims for their situation, thus exonerating perpetrators of responsibility. Regarding the affective dimension, 88% of the female participants exhibited a negative attitude, in contrast to the results of the present study, where the majority showed an indifferent attitude. These discrepancies in emotional responses to gender-based violence suggest the influence of contextual and cultural factors on the

perception and rejection of this issue (Noriega, 2022).

Although both studies reflect a negative trend toward violence against women in the cognitive dimension, the differences in the behavioral and affective dimensions between participants in both contexts highlight the complexity and diversity of attitudes toward this issue in different educational environments. In another study by Genes et al. (2021), the results showed that 79% of participants expressed disagreement or rejection toward the sexist statements evaluated, with only 1.18% agreeing and 19.06% remaining indifferent.

The comparison between the results of these studies highlights the importance of considering diverse perspectives and contexts in understanding attitudes toward violence against women. The disparities in the behavioral and affective dimensions emphasize the complexity and the influence of contextual factors on participants' responses.

In other studies, on the topic, such as the one conducted by Melgarejo (2020) on

students at a private university in Peru, where the Gender-Based Violence Attitudes Scale (EAVG) was used as an instrument, the results showed a predominance of indifferent attitudes toward gender-based violence at 48.3%, followed by a positive or accepting attitude toward gender-based violence at 41.4%, and finally, 10.3% of university students rejected gender-based violence. These findings contrast with the results of the present study.

A study conducted in Murcia, Spain, investigated attitudes toward gender-based violence in a sample of 316 students aged 10 to 12 years. The results of that study showed that 82.9% of the participants exhibited a sexist attitude. On the other hand, 16.1% of the students expressed a rejection of gender-based violence and support for gender equality, while 1% of the respondents remained neutral on the issue. Although this study was conducted with a secondary education population, the authors consider it important to highlight the similarity of its results with those of the present study (Azorin, 2017).

Loli (2020) found a significant relationship between ambivalent sexism and attitudes toward gender-based violence and observed that hostile sexism was present at a moderate level in 65% of the sample, similar to what was reported by Garcés et al. (2022), who reported a significant relationship between the justification of violence and sexism, with men showing a greater tendency to justify violence compared to women. Additionally, specific reasons related to gender-based violence were identified. For instance, 5.3% of the respondents justified violence based on homosexual orientation, 4.3% mentioned belonging to religious communities such as Jehovah's

CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals a diversity in terms of age, gender, religion, and place of residence. The majority of participants are young women, primarily Catholic, with most residing in Barranquilla, followed by Soledad.

The attitudes towards gender-based violence among the students who

Witnesses, and 4.2% belonged to Protestant religious communities. The results suggest that sexism and gender discrimination may influence students' attitudes toward violence, especially in the context of gender-based violence in university settings. These findings indicate that, although there is a general tendency to reject gender-based violence in the cognitive dimension, behavioral and affective responses vary considerably across different groups studied. This diversity underscores the importance of addressing gender-based violence from multidimensional and contextualized approaches.

participated in the study showed a predominant negative tendency. In the cognitive component, a negative attitude prevailed; in the behavioral component, a positive attitude was dominant; and in the affective component, indifference prevailed.

In general, students from different religious backgrounds exhibited a balanced distribution of attitude levels, except for those who identified with other

religions, who showed unanimous rejection. Meanwhile, those who did not adhere to any religion predominantly tended to not accept gender-based violence, although with a significant proportion of indifference.

When analyzing these attitudes according to demographic variables such as gender, age, religion, socioeconomic status, and place of residence, no significant associations were found. The results suggest that attitudes toward gender-based violence do not vary significantly across the different groups studied.

The data indicate that there is no statistically significant association between attitudes toward gender-based violence and the level of progress in the nursing program. Negative, indifferent, and positive attitudes are similarly distributed across all academic periods, showing no significant change as students advance in their academic training.

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