



International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology

www.elsevier.es/ijchp



Peer sexual harassment in adolescence: Dimensions of the sexual harassment survey in boys and girls



Esther Vega-Gea^{a,b,*}, Rosario Ortega-Ruiz^{a,c}, Virginia Sánchez^b

^a Universidad de Córdoba, Spain

^b Universidad de Sevilla, Spain

^c University of Greenwich, United Kingdom

Received 13 May 2015; accepted 10 August 2015

Available online 8 September 2015

KEYWORDS

Adolescence;
Sexual harassment;
Confirmatory factor
analysis CFA;
Ex post facto study

Abstract The phenomenon of adolescent sexual harassment is a topic that has taken on special relevance in recent decades. However, general consensus regarding its nature, prevalence and dimensions has yet to emerge. This study used a representative sample of 3,489 Andalusian adolescents from the second stage of Compulsory Secondary Education (E.S.O.) and the Spanish Baccalaureate (*Bachillerato*), and it is primarily focused on two main objectives: to test the factor structure of the “sexual harassment” scale in boys and girls, and to analyze the prevalence of the sexual harassment among adolescent students. Descriptive analyses and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were performed, allowing us to explore the nature of the phenomenon and to describe its prevalence. The results obtained revealed a two-dimensional structure of this scale in both boys and girls: one dimension reflecting visual-verbal forms of sexual harassment and the second dimension including physical forms. Regarding to prevalence, the outcomes shown a high prevalence of sexual harassment involvement across both sexes during adolescence. However, boys were more involved in victimization and aggression than girls. The importance of analyzing the phenomenon in greater depth is also highlighted.

© 2015 Asociación Española de Psicología Conductual. Published by Elsevier España, S.L.U. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

PALABRAS CLAVE

adolescencia;
acoso sexual;
análisis factorial
confirmatorio AFC;
estudio ex post facto

Acoso sexual en adolescentes: dimensiones de la Escala de acoso sexual en chicos y chicas

Resumen El fenómeno del acoso sexual entre adolescentes es un tópico que está tomando especial relevancia en las últimas décadas, si bien, no existe aún un consenso general sobre su naturaleza, prevalencia y dimensiones. El presente trabajo ha contado con una muestra

* Corresponding author: Avda. San Alberto Magno, s/n, 14004, Córdoba, Spain.
E-mail address: esther.vega@uco.es (E. Vega-Gea).

representativa de 3.489 adolescentes andaluces del segundo ciclo de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y Bachillerato, y se ha centrado principalmente en dos objetivos fundamentales: testar la estructura factorial de la escala de violencia sexual en chicas y chicos; analizar su prevalencia entre los adolescentes. Para ello se han realizado análisis descriptivos y análisis factoriales confirmatorios (AFC), que nos han permitido explorar la naturaleza del fenómeno y describir su prevalencia. Los resultados obtenidos en esta investigación han puesto de manifiesto la existencia de una estructura bidimensional del fenómeno, en la que se distingue un factor visual-verbal y un factor físico de acoso sexual, en chicos y chicas. Respecto a la prevalencia, los resultados han señalado una alta prevalencia de implicación en acoso sexual durante la adolescencia, en chicos y en chicas, aunque con diferencias, siendo que los chicos afirmaron estar más implicados en victimización y agresión. También se destaca la importancia que tiene analizar el fenómeno en mayor profundidad.

© 2015 Asociación Española de Psicología Conductual. Publicado por Elsevier España, S.L.U. Este es un artículo Open Access bajo la licencia CC BY-NC-ND (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

The phenomenon of sexual harassment in adolescence is a research topic that has taken on particular importance in recent decades, most notably since the publication of the study by the American Association of University Women ([American Association of University Women, AAUW, 1993](#)). This report painted a picture of high prevalence of sexual harassment among high school students ([Hill & Kearl, 2011](#); [Leaper, Brown, & Ayres, 2013](#); [Lichy & Campbell, 2012](#)), attracting the interest of researchers and educators the world over, and has succeeded in having them recognize adolescent peer sexual harassment as an issue that constitutes a public health concern ([Bucchianeri, Eisenberg, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2013](#); [Mumford, Okamoto, Taylor, & Stein, 2013](#)) and which interferes in the educational pursuits of both schools and students ([Vicario-Molina, Fuertes, & Orgaz, 2010](#)). The available literature on this phenomenon reveals an ever-increasing amount of research ([Cortés et al., 2014](#); [Mumford et al., 2013](#); [Ortega & Sánchez, 2011](#); [Ortega, Sánchez, Ortega-Rivera, Nocentini, & Menesini, 2010](#); [Wei & Chen, 2012](#); [Zych & Quevedo-Blasco, 2011](#)) suggesting that a considerable percentage of secondary students have, at some point, been at the receiving end of unwelcome behaviour that could be viewed as peer sexual harassment.

Despite this growing interest in the study of peer sexual harassment, a single definition for this phenomenon has yet to be formally adopted, encompassing gender-related, psychological, legal, sociological, psychoeducational and developmental approaches ([Bucchianeri et al., 2013](#); [Conroy, 2013](#); [Espelage, Basile, & Hamburger, 2012](#); [Petersen & Hyde, 2013](#); [Tillyer, Wilcox, & Gialopsos, 2010](#)).

We define peer sexual harassment in adolescence as "an unwanted and unwelcome sexual behaviour because sexual harassment cause distress and discomfort to the victims, which can interfere with the normal life of students in schools. Sexual harassment includes different behaviours, such as name-calling, rumours, sexual comments, looks, gestures, attempts at personal contacts, and physical attacks" ([Ortega et al., 2010](#), p. 248). Starting from a developmental perspective, sexual harassment in adolescence should be understood in terms of factors related to pubertal development, which trigger an awakening of others' sexual interest and desire ([Ortega et al., 2010](#); [Shute, Owens,](#)

[& Slee, 2008](#)). Thus, the increasing interest shown by peers, together with adolescents' lack of skills when it comes to expressing sexual interest, could in itself constitute a risk factor for episodes of sexual harassment among young people ([McMaster, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2002](#); [Petersen & Hyde, 2013](#)). Several studies support this view, with pubertal status leading to an increase in both sexual harassment victimization and aggression ([Pepler, Craig, Connolly, Yulie, & McMaster, 2006](#)), and the start of dating relationships increasing the risk of sexual harassment from opposite-sex peers ([Schnoll, Connolly, Josephson, Pepler, & Simkins-Strong, 2015](#)).

There is an alarming prevalence of this phenomenon among the adolescent population, where prevalence rates range from 20% to 84% ([American Association of University Women, AAUW, 2011](#); [Bucchianeri et al., 2013](#); [Charmaraman, Jones, Stein, & Espelage, 2013](#)), with boys showing more involvement than girls in aggression ([AAUW, 2011](#); [Attar-Schwartz, 2013](#)) and similar rates in victimization ([McMaster et al., 2002](#); [Mumford et al., 2013](#)). However, the disparity in the data lends itself to controversy and highlights the gap in the research regarding the means of measuring this phenomenon, it is that some studies use a single item to measure peer sexual harassment and others use large scales. Theoretical models have been quite influential insofar as considering the phenomenon a one-dimensional ([Menesini & Nocentini, 2008](#); [Schnoll et al., 2015](#)), two-dimensional ([Ortega et al., 2010](#); [Witkowska & Kjellberg, 2005](#)), or three-dimensional construct ([Ormerod, Collinsworth, & Perry, 2008](#)). It is important to take account of this consideration given that one-dimensional measures tend to considerably increase prevalence rates. On the other hand, two-dimensional models, although with significant nuances, usually differentiate between physical and other forms of harassment ([Ortega et al., 2010](#)). Those models stemming from the perspective of gender also include a third dimension, namely gender-based harassment. Therefore differentiating between these forms of harassment, unwelcome sexual attention and sexual coercion ([Ormerod et al., 2008](#)). However, the variability in these dimensions has not been accompanied by conclusive studies that have explored the factorial structure

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/879953>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/879953>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)