

Sexual Coercion Perpetration and Victimization: Gender Similarities and Differences in Adolescence

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Andrés A. Fernández-Fuertes, PhD,¹ 
Rodrigo J. Carcedo, PhD,² Begoña Orgaz, PhD,²
and Antonio Fuertes, PhD²

Abstract

Sexual coercion is a worldwide health problem that endangers the well-being of those involved. In the same line of the most recent and comprehensive studies, this study sought to investigate the extent of sexual coercion, both perpetration and victimization, among male and female adolescents. Moreover, it jointly analyzed the predictive power of different variables that have been considered as useful to design preventive programs. For this purpose, a cross-sectional study, using proportional stratified cluster sampling, was performed and 1,242 Spanish adolescents (15–19 years old) were surveyed. Results show that both genders had reported committing and suffering sexual coercion. However, perpetration was reported more often by males: no significant gender difference was found in victimization. It was also concluded that need for control and power, normative beliefs about sexual coercion, hostile sexism, negative alcohol expectancies, and sociosexual orientation were significant predictors of perpetration for

¹University of Cantabria, Santander, Spain

²University of Salamanca, Salamanca, Spain

Corresponding Author:

Andrés A. Fernández-Fuertes, Department of Education, University of Cantabria. Avda. de Los Castros, s/n, 39005 Santander, Cantabria, Spain.

Email: fernandezaa@unican.es

both genders. Concerning victimization, need for control and power and normative beliefs were found to be significant predictors for males and females, as were negative alcohol expectancies and sexual esteem, though only for males. According to these results, both genders can be both perpetrators and victims of sexual coercion in adolescence, but not to the same extent. Moreover, preventive programs should include activities related to perpetration and victimization, taking into account the effectiveness of their components to intervene with male and female adolescents.

Keywords

sexual assault, prevention, adolescent victims, offenders

There is considerable evidence of the benefits of romantic relationships for personal and social well-being (Viejo, Ortega-Ruiz, & Sánchez, 2015). However, some romantic experiences can be negative and endanger health, for example, when, through coercive tactics, sexual contact has been maintained without voluntary consent (Collibee & Furman, 2014; Ilabaca, Fuertes, & Orgaz, 2015; B. J. Young, Furman, & Jones, 2012). Sexual coercion is defined as

any behavior carried out to force the sexual will of another person, regardless of what coercive strategy has been used, whether or not the sexual contact has taken place, and the characteristics of the attempted sexual behavior, if it did occur. (Fuertes, Ramos, & Fernández-Fuertes, 2007, p. 342)

Therefore, it is important to understand sexual coercion in a broad sense: from attempted coercion to completed rape (Fuertes et al., 2013; Russell, Doan, & King, 2017). With regard to young people, the prevalence of sexual coercion and its consequences clearly show the importance of tackling the root causes of this problem (Hernández & González, 2009; A. M. Young, Gray, & Boyd, 2009).

Prevalence of Sexual Coercion

Most knowledge about sexual coercion comes from studies conducted with college students in the United States (Krahé, Tomaszewska, Kuyper, & Vanwesenbeeck, 2014). Mostly, men's perpetration and women's victimization have been studied (Russell et al., 2017; Schatzel-Murphy, Harris, Knight, & Milburn, 2009; Tharp et al., 2013) because males commit more sexual coercion and women suffer more sexual coercion (Brousseau, Hébert, & Bergeron, 2012; Krahé & Berger, 2013). For instance, a recent study with

European youths showed an overall rate of 16.3% of men versus 5.0% of women reporting sexual aggression perpetration; however, gender difference in victimization was smaller than for perpetration: 27.1% for men and 32.2% for women (Krahé et al., 2015).

Some studies also point out women's use of coercive strategies and the existence of sexual victimization in men (e.g., Bouffard, Bouffard, & Miller, 2016; Eaton & Matamala, 2014; Palmer, McMahon, Rounsaville, & Ball, 2010; Turchick, 2012). However, few studies have analyzed the prevalence of this problem jointly considering men and women as possible perpetrators and victims (Fernández-Fuertes, Orgaz, & Fuertes, 2011; Krahé et al., 2014), a lack especially outgoing in adolescence.

Predictors of Sexual Coercion Perpetration and Victimization

There is also a need to improve our knowledge about predictors of sexual coercion, both perpetration and victimization, in adolescence. Having a good understanding of protective and risk factors as well as analyzing gender similarities and differences is crucial to an effective intervention (Bouffard et al., 2016; Krahé et al., 2015; Russell et al., 2017). In addition, given that there is no unique factor that causes sexual coercion, different modifiable protective and risk factors must be taken into account in research and intervention (Tharp et al., 2013).

Some studies also highlighted the importance of studying not only individual variables but also interpersonal and cultural ones such as sexual scripts, gender roles, extent of sex education, drinking culture, and so on (Fuertes et al., 2013; Krahé et al., 2014; Murnen, 2015). In this regard, Tharp et al. (2013) stated that it is possible to group all the variables associated with sexual coercion into two constellations (i.e., presence and acceptance of violence and unhealthy sexual behaviors, experiences, or attitudes), understood as key targets for developing prevention programs. This approach extends the confluence model (Malamuth, Linz, Heavey, Barnes, & Acker, 1995; Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991) by including community and societal variables of the social ecology, as well as protective factors.

The presence and acceptance of violence are variables that have been found not only to be associated with sexual coercion perpetration but also with victimization. For example, normative beliefs (i.e., subjective norms) and myths about sexual coercion and rape (Bouffard et al., 2016; Eaton & Matamala, 2014; Fuertes et al., 2013; Tharp et al., 2013; Yost & Zurbriggen, 2006; Zinzow & Thompson, 2015), attitudes toward interpersonal violence (Johnson & Johnson, 2017; Krahé et al., 2015), as well as past violence in

different contexts (e.g., family, peers, romantic relationship, etc.) (Fuertes, Ramos, De la Orden, Del Campo, & Lázaro, 2005; Tharp et al., 2013) were identified as correlates of perpetration. Alternatively, variables such as past violence (Bouffard et al., 2016; Fuertes, Ramos, Martínez-Álvarez, Palenzuela, & Taberero, 2006) have been associated with victimization.

Unhealthy sexual behaviors, experiences, or attitudes were also associated with sexual coercion. For example, risky alcohol and drug use (Zinzow & Thompson, 2015), hostile sexism (Dutton-Greene & Straus, 2005; Eaton & Matamala, 2014; Parrott et al., 2012), sexual preoccupation, sexual esteem, and empathy (Fuertes et al., 2005; Krahe et al., 2015) were linked to perpetration. Moreover, consumption of alcohol and other drugs before sexual interactions and expectancies about the effects of alcohol (Fuertes et al., 2006; Krahe et al., 2015; Palmer et al., 2010; Santos-Iglesias & Sierra, 2012), sexual assertiveness (Krahe et al., 2015), traditional and stereotypical sex role beliefs and attitudes (Fuertes et al., 2006), sociosexual orientation, age of sexual debut, frequency of sexual experiences before 13 years of age, and number of sexual partners (Bouffard et al., 2016; Franklin, 2010; French, Bi, Latimore, Klemp, & Butler, 2014; Santos-Iglesias & Sierra, 2012) were associated with victimization.

The Moderating Effect of Gender

Sociocultural and feminist explanations attribute men's sexual coercion toward women to patriarchal power and dominance. In this sense, in European countries with more gender equality, men's perpetration tends to be lower whereas women's perpetration tends to be higher; in any case, men perpetrate more sexual coercion than women (Krahe et al., 2015).

Some authors have claimed that predictors that explain men and women's perpetration may not be the same (Schatzel-Murphy et al., 2009), but others assert that there are many similarities between genders (Bouffard et al., 2016; Catalozzi, Simon, Davidson, Breitbart, & Rickert, 2011; Fuertes et al., 2006; Yost & Zurbriggen, 2006). The same enigma exists regarding sexual coercion victimization.

There are few studies examining predictors both of sexual coercion perpetration and victimization for men and women (Russell et al., 2017). Krahe et al.'s (2015) work is an exception: in this research with young people (18-27 years old), some predictors of sexual coercion (perpetration and victimization) were found only for men or women. Consequently, gender seemed to play a moderating role in the relationship between predictors and sexual coercion, but a moderation test of gender was not performed. This would be interesting to analyze, especially with adolescents, given the lack of studies with this population.

Based on the above review, three conclusions can be drawn: first, most research has been focused on men's perpetration and women's victimization, mostly among American college students; second, it necessary to focus on the factors—both protective and risk factors—that are more consistently associated with this problem and that can be used in preventive programs; and finally, to date, it is unknown whether there are common predictors, for men and women, that explain perpetration and victimization. Therefore, this study aims to determine the prevalence of sexual coercion perpetration and victimization by male and female adolescents in Spain, a country where gender inequality and sexism are still importantly present (De Lemus, Montañés, Megías, & Moya, 2015; Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2013), sexual education has little space in school curriculums, and this topic is still taboo in most families (Martínez-Álvarez et al., 2012). Moreover, it examines jointly some of the most significant predictors for sexual coercion prevention (see Tharp et al., 2013) to determine their relative importance for explaining perpetration and victimization in adolescence. Based on the existing literature, we hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 1: In Spain, the proportion of perpetration will be greater among males, while victimization will be greater among females.

Hypothesis 2: Predictors will be associated with sexual coercion, both perpetration and victimization.

Hypothesis 3: Gender will play a moderating role between predictors and sexual coercion (perpetration and victimization).

Method

Participants

This cross-sectional research was carried out on a sample selected using the proportional stratified cluster sampling method with a 3% margin of error and a 95% confidence level: participants' age and gender, as well as type of high school and area of residence were the factors. All participants were students from public, charter, or private secondary schools from Burgos, Zamora, and Salamanca (Castile and Leon, Spain), 73.1% were high school students and 26.9% were vocational training students.

The sample comprises 1,242 adolescents from Castile and Leon (Spain), 42.8% males and 57.2% females, whose ages ranged from 15 to 19 years ($M = 17.03$, $SD = 0.96$). Participants voluntarily completed an anonymous questionnaire, after having obtained informed consent.

Instruments

Predictor variables

Normative beliefs about sexual coercion. Base on Abbey and McAuslan's (2004) study, an 18-item scale was developed ad hoc to analyze participants' beliefs about how their peers would behave in situations of sexual negotiation (e.g., "Imagine that one of your male best friends is alone in a room with someone he is sexually attracted to, but your friend knows that the other person does not feel like having sex. To what extent would your friend try to pressure the other person?"; 12 items, six items were about a male best friend in different situations and six items were about a female best friend in the same situations), as well as their beliefs about what participants' close friends would expect of them in such situations (e.g., "Imagine that you are alone in a room..."; six items). Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*he or she or I would not do that*) to 5 (*he or she or I would surely do that*). In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .76.

Need for control and power. An adaptation of the instrument elaborated by Lisak and Roth (1988) was used. The original instrument analyzes the degree to which men feel inadequate, inferior, or despised in relation to women and their reactions to these feelings. Items were modified to assess the need for control and power in both genders. Participants rated each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*often*). The observed Cronbach's alpha was .66 (six items).

Sexism. The Spanish version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Expósito, Moya, & Glick, 1998) was used for males and the Ambivalent Attitudes toward Men Inventory (Lameiras, Rodríguez, & Sotelo, 2001) was used for females. Both instruments have two subscales: Hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. The scale of measurement for both questionnaires was a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). In this study, Cronbach's alphas were .86 for males' hostile sexism (11 items), .84 for females' hostile sexism (10 items), .75 for males' benevolent sexism (11 items), and .76 for females' benevolent sexism (10 items).

Expectancies about the effects of alcohol. This assessed the anticipated consequences of alcohol on cognitive function and relationships (both social and sexual). The items were assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all likely*) to 5 (*totally likely*). This scale was designed by Fuertes et al. (2005) based on the measure of alcohol expectancies developed by Abbey, McAuslan, Ross, and Zawacki (1999). In this study, good reliability

was found for its two subscales: Positive expectancies (10 items; $\alpha = .89$) and negative expectancies (5 items; $\alpha = .78$).

Empathic concern and perspective taking. The two subscales from the Spanish version of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Pérez-Albéniz, de Paúl, Etxeberría, Montes, & Torres, 2003) that evaluate these constructs were used. Each subscale has seven items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*does not describe me well*) to 5 (*describes me well*). The observed Cronbach's alphas were .68 for empathic concern and .64 for perspective taking.

Sexual esteem and Sexual preoccupation. The Sexuality Scale (Snell & Papini, 1989) measures sexual esteem, sexual preoccupation, and sexual depression, although sexual depression was not assessed in this study. Each subscale has 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*it does not describe me at all*) to 5 (*it totally describes me*). The obtained Cronbach's alphas were .79 for sexual esteem and .83 for sexual preoccupation.

Sociosexual orientation. The Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991) is a 7-item self-report questionnaire about past sexual behaviors, expected number of future sexual partners, frequency of sexual fantasies, and attitudes toward casual sex. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .63.

Criterion variables

Sexual coercion perpetration. The Post-Refusal Sexual Persistence Scale (PSP, Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, & Anderson, 2003) is an instrument that covers 19 sexual coercion tactics, grouped into four independent subscales: Sexual arousal (three items, $\alpha = .81$), emotional manipulation and deception (six items used; two items of the PSP were not included because their content is about the use of authority to coerce, and this study is focused on sexual coercion among peers; $\alpha = .75$), exploitation of the intoxicated (two items, $\alpha = .61$), and use of physical force or threats (six items, $\alpha = .72$). Before responding to these items, participants were asked "Have you ever been in a situation where you wanted some kind of sexual contact (e.g., kissing, hugging, touching, intercourse, etc.), but the boy or girl you were with clearly stated that s/he did not want to?" Only if the answer was "Yes" were participants asked to answer the PSP scale. Participants who utilized any tactic of sexual coercion were coded as "1" (presence of sexual coercion perpetration) and those who did not were coded as "0" (absence of sexual coercion perpetration).

Sexual coercion victimization. This variable was measured via the PSP scale (Struckman-Johnson et al., 2003), following the same strategy used for perpetration. Internal reliabilities were also acceptable in this study: Sexual arousal (three items, $\alpha = .84$), emotional manipulation and deception (six items used, $\alpha = .66$), exploitation of the intoxicated (two items, $\alpha = .80$), and the use of physical force or threats (six items, $\alpha = .76$). Participants who were victims of any tactic of sexual coercion were coded as “1” (presence of sexual coercion victimization) and those who were not were coded as “0” (absence of sexual coercion victimization).

Procedure

The questionnaire was applied by at least one member of the research group during school hours in a single session with prior informed consent of participants, their families, and the school’s supervisors and principals. Before application, information about the aims of the research, the expected duration of the subject’s participation, and procedures was given again. In addition, the subjects were reminded of their right to decline to take part in the study, as well as their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Finally, they were informed that all data collected would be confidential.

After the participants had completed the questionnaires, they were debriefed about the study. In addition, instructions about whom to contact for more information about sexual coercion and participants’ rights were provided. The procedures were approved by the Bioethics Committee of the University of Salamanca (Salamanca, Spain).

Data Analysis

First, independent samples *t* test and chi-square test were used to assess the statistical significance of gender differences. Second, hierarchical logistic regression analysis was used to study the moderating effect of gender on the criterion variables (presence vs. absence of perpetration and presence vs. absence of victimization): predictors were entered into the first block (main effects), and interactions between gender and predictors were entered in the second block (interactions). The SPSS 24 was used to perform all analyses at an alpha level of .05.

Results

Regarding the prevalence of sexual coercion, a significantly higher proportion of males was found who admitted having perpetrated sexual coercion at

Table 1. Prevalence of Sexual Perpetration and Victimization for Men and Women.

		Total	Men	Women	$\chi^2_{(1)}$	Cramér's V
		n (%)	n (%)	n (%)		
Perpetration	Yes	352 (42.8)	215 (48.1)	137 (27.6)	42.43***	.212
	No	592 (57.2)	232 (51.9)	360 (72.4)		
Victimization	Yes	520 (37.3)	210 (48.7)	312 (46.6)	0.489	.021
	No	592 (62.7)	221 (51.3)	358 (50.4)		

*** $p < .001$.

Table 2. Descriptives and Sex Differences in Predictors and Outcomes.

	Total	Men	Women	t	df	η^2
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)			
Normative beliefs	31.43 (10.06)	35.67 (10.64)	28.25 (8.29)	-13.23***	958.07	.13
Need for control and power	12.53 (3.42)	12.63 (3.61)	12.46 (3.27)	-0.85	1,215	—
Positive alcohol expectancies	25.90 (8.76)	26.35 (8.61)	25.56 (8.87)	-1.55	1,196	—
Negative alcohol expectancies	15.75 (4.69)	15.53 (4.72)	15.91 (4.67)	-1.42	1,210	—
Benevolent sexism	25.46 (10.15)	34.38 (7.38)	18.84 (6.01)	-38.94***	962.25	.57
Hostile sexism	32.22 (8.74)	36.09 (8.28)	29.37 (7.94)	-14.24***	1,200	.15
Empathic concern	26.43 (3.55)	25.31 (3.43)	27.26 (3.40)	-9.65***	1,173	.07
Perspective taking	23.90 (3.74)	23.21 (3.77)	24.41 (3.63)	-5.55***	1,190	.03
Sexual esteem	35.01 (5.57)	35.65 (5.18)	34.53 (5.80)	-3.43***	1,107.77	.01
Sexual preoccupation	27.81 (6.94)	31.51 (6.07)	24.99 (6.20)	-17.91***	1,160	.22
Sociosexual orientation	12.03 (6.17)	15.35 (5.78)	9.50 (5.19)	-18.39***	1,196	.22

*** $p < .001$.

least once. Also, no significant differences were observed between males and females who had suffered sexual coercion at least once (Table 1).

Before analyzing the association of the different predictors and sexual coercion perpetration and victimization, descriptive information of the predictors was obtained (Table 2). Significant gender differences were found: whereas males showed higher levels of normative beliefs, benevolent and hostile sexism, sexual esteem, sexual preoccupation, and sociosexual orientation, females did so in empathic concern and perspective taking.

Regarding the regression analysis conducted to explain sexual coercion perpetration, the main effects model (i.e., first block of predictors) was significant, $\chi^2(12, N = 1242) = 96.104, p < .001$. This model accounted for 19%

Table 3. Logistic Regressions for Sexual Coercion Perpetration and Victimization.

	Perpetration (0 = No, 1 = Yes)			Victimization (0 = No, 1 = Yes)		
	B	SE	Exp(B)	B	SE	Exp(B)
Need for control and power	.090	.028	1.094***	.142	.035	1.153***
Normative beliefs	.028	.010	1.028**	.032	.014	1.032*
Benevolent sexism	-.005	.015	0.995	.022	.020	1.023
Hostile sexism	.027	.013	1.028*	.017	.015	1.017
Positive alcohol expectancies	-.007	.012	0.993	-.009	.013	0.991
Negative alcohol expectancies	-.044	.019	0.957*	.020	.023	1.020**
Empathic concern	.015	.029	1.015	.050	.032	1.051
Perspective taking	.009	.026	1.009	.020	.031	1.020
Sexual esteem	.021	.017	1.021	-.015	.018	0.985*
Sexual preoccupation	.024	.017	1.025	.030	.017	1.031
Sociosexual orientation	.052	.017	1.053**	.028	.022	1.029
Sex (0 = Men, 1 = Women)	.199	.298	0.820	.785	2.455	2.192
Need control-power × gender				-.002	.056	0.998
Normative beliefs × gender				-.007	.020	0.993
Benevolent sexism × gender				-.051	.034	0.951
Hostile sexism × gender				-.027	.038	0.973
Positive alcohol expectancies × gender				-.005	.022	0.995
Negative alcohol expectancies × gender				-.114	.037	0.893**
Empathy × gender				-.041	.055	0.960
Perspective taking × gender				.012	.048	1.012
Sexual esteem × gender				.086	.034	1.090**
Sexual preoccupation × gender				.036	.057	1.037
Sociosexual orientation × gender				-.003	.033	0.997

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

of the variance of sexual coercion perpetration. To the study the moderating effect of gender, the interaction of each predictor with gender was also included in a second block. The interactions model produced an increment of 2% variance, but none of the interactions was found to be significant. Hence, the main effects model was selected to explain sexual perpetration. In this sense, the predictors found to be significant for both genders were need for control and power, normative beliefs, hostile sexism, negative alcohol expectancies, and sociosexual orientation. Therefore, higher scores in need for control and power, normative beliefs, hostile sexism, and sociosexual orientation, as well as lower scores in negative alcohol expectancies predict sexual coercion perpetration for male and female adolescents (Table 3).

Finally, predictors of sexual coercion victimization were studied (Table 3). In this case, the contribution of the interactions model to the explained variance was significant, $\chi^2(23, N = 1242) = 104.102, p < .001$, adding 4% more variance: Negative alcohol expectancies × gender, and sexual esteem × gender

interactions were found to be significant. The final model, including main effects and interactions, accounted for 18% of the variance of sexual coercion victimization. Need for control and power and normative beliefs were again found to be significant predictors: Adolescents of both genders who presented higher scores in these predictors showed a higher probability of having suffered sexually coercive behaviors. In addition, lower scores in negative alcohol expectancies and higher scores in sexual esteem were also associated with a higher probability of having been victims of sexually coercive behavior, but only for males.

Discussion

This study was aimed to examine gender similarities and differences in the prevalence of sexual coercion, as well as in the factors associated with it among adolescents. Important findings emerged from this study. First, both perpetration and victimization were reported by males and females in adolescence but perpetration was reported more often by males, and no significant gender difference was found in victimization. Second, need for control and power, normative beliefs, hostile sexism, negative alcohol expectancies, and sociosexual orientation proved to be significant predictors of sexual coercion perpetration for both genders. Finally, significant predictors of sexual coercion victimization were also identified: need for control and power and normative beliefs for both genders; and (lower) negative alcohol expectancies and sexual esteem, although only among males.

Regarding the prevalence of sexual coercion, different definitions, instruments (e.g., Conflict Tactics Scale [CTS], socioeconomic status [SES], CADRI, etc.), participants' age, and evaluation criteria (e.g., last year, since age of consent, etc.) have been used in this field of research, which makes it difficult to compare the results obtained in Spain with those of other countries. In any case, the existence of a higher incidence of perpetration among males than females has been consistently observed in previous studies (Fernández-Fuertes et al., 2011; Krahé & Berger, 2013; Krahé et al., 2015; Palmer et al., 2010). However, contrary to our expectations, no significant gender difference was found in victimization. This result is consistent with some previous research (e.g., Fernández-Fuertes et al., 2011; Palmer et al., 2010) but it contradicts the conclusions of most studies in this field (Brousseau et al., 2012; Krahé et al., 2015).

Some cultural traits could explain these results. Regarding the association between gender equality and sexual coercion, Krahé et al. (2015) speculated that the more powerful females' position is in society, the more perpetration they would show toward males. Spain ($M = 66.2$) is slightly above the mean

percentage of the European Index of Gender Equality ($M = 68.3$) but a high presence of gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes has been reported among adolescents and youths (Díaz-Aguado, 2016; Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2013), a fact that could influence the results obtained.

We highlight that our results indicate the existence of sexual coercion among adolescents, both males and females. In addition, a significant percentage of females reported perpetration, and a significant percentage of males reported victimization, as different authors have also stated (Bouffard et al., 2016; Fernández-Fuertes et al., 2011; Krahe et al., 2015; Krahe et al., 2014). Studies indicate that women tend to experience more negative consequences than men in situations of sexual coercion (Ilabaca et al., 2015); however, this should not lead to ignoring that both genders can be perpetrators and victims, a conclusion that should be taken into account when tackling this problem in Spain (Fuertes et al., 2013).

Concerning the factors involved in sexual coercion, all predictors analyzed have been studied previously, but only with regard to perpetration or victimization, or else they were used to explain sexual coercion only for males or females. We shall first address sexual coercion perpetration as a criterion variable: our results lend, on one hand, support to the confluence model (Malamuth et al., 1995; Malamuth et al., 1991) and, on the other hand, the need to extend it, as proposed by Tharp et al. (2013), at least when predicting both genders' perpetration. It is known that men's sexual coercion perpetration can be explained by hostile sexism (Dutton-Greene & Straus, 2005; Johnson & Johnson, 2017; Parrott et al., 2012) and (unrestricted) sociosexual orientation (Kennair & Bendixen, 2012; Yost & Zurbriggen, 2006), but also by normative beliefs about sexual coercion (Eaton & Matamala, 2014; Fuertes et al., 2013; Johnson & Johnson, 2017; Yost & Zurbriggen, 2006), need for control and power (Brousseau et al., 2012; Schatzel-Murphy et al., 2009), and (low) negative expectancies about the effects of alcohol (Fuertes et al., 2006). The fact that gender did not play a moderating role in this study means that these variables are significant predictors for both genders.

In this research, sexual coercion victimization has been found to be associated with need for control and power and normative beliefs, as other studies have pointed out (e.g., Eaton & Matamala, 2014). Moreover, in this study, a higher degree of sexual esteem also predicted victimization but only for males. Therefore, men who feel more confident about their sexual skills may be at higher risk of becoming victims of sexual coercion, perhaps because some men could interpret these situations as a form of women's interest, as feeling desired, and reinforcing their personal worth, as suggested in previous studies (Ilabaca et al., 2015). Similarly, another risk factor only for men is a lower level of negative expectancies about the effects of alcohol: Men seem to underestimate the real risks of alcohol consumption more than women do.

However, contrary to previous research, in this study, empathy (empathic concern and perspective taking), benevolent sexism, positive expectancies about the effects of alcohol, and sexual preoccupation were not found to be significant predictors of sexual coercion perpetration (e.g., Fuertes et al., 2005; Fuertes et al., 2006; Johnson & Johnson, 2017) or victimization (e.g., Gidycz, McNamara, & Edwards, 2006; Messman-Moore, Ward, & DeNardi, 2013; Yamawaki, Ostenson, & Brown, 2009). According to our results, the predictive power of these variables has been overshadowed by the other variables, which seem to be more important, at least in Spain. This result is especially interesting, because it can help to prioritize certain objectives of the interventions to the detriment of others.

Drawing on our results, we can state that normative beliefs about sexual coercion and need for control and power are shared predictors of sexual coercion perpetration and victimization in male and female adolescents. Regarding normative beliefs, what is thought to be acceptable in sexual interactions may not only affect participants' behavior but also their degree of acceptance of others' behavior (Johnson & Johnson, 2017; Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015). Therefore, in Spain, it is especially important to refute certain values, beliefs, and expectations, both the individual's and the peers,' as they are part of the beginning and maintenance of sexual coercion. Likewise, need for control and power is a human need linked to individuals' insecurities; in Spain, a great amount of youths experience intimacy as a dynamic of domination and submission (Díaz-Aguado, 2016). According to our study, they are at greater risk of sexual coercion but it would be essential to analyze the importance this predictor has in more equalitarian and less sexist cultural contexts. Finally, (lower) negative expectancies about the effects of alcohol also predict sexual coercion perpetration in males and females. In our opinion, this result is related to a prevalence of binge drinking in adolescence, which is similar for both genders in Spain (Teixidó-Compañó et al., 2017), possibly due to high alcohol accessibility and availability; thus, the importance of this predictor should be studied in countries having with a different drinking culture, other than Spain. As will be explained in the next section, these three variables should be taken into account in prevention programs, which should focus not only possible on perpetrators, but also on possible victims and bystanders.

Practical Implications

The results of this study show at least two main relevant aspects for intervention in sexual coercion. In Spain, there is a significant percentage of male victims and of female perpetrators. Therefore, educational programs should consider that male and female adolescents could act both as aggressors and as victims (Fernández-Fuertes et al., 2011; Fuertes et al., 2013; Schatzel-Murphy

et al., 2009). In addition, three main predictors of sexual coercion perpetration and victimization have been found: normative beliefs, need for control and power, and (lower) negative expectancies about the effects of alcohol. Consequently, these would be focal points in prevention programs for sexual coercion. Moreover, the inclusion of both sociosexual orientation and hostile sexism for preventing perpetration, as well as of sexual esteem for preventing victimization, would be useful in these programs. Finally, the existence of shared predictors of sexual coercion, committed and suffered by both genders, endorses the implementation of preventive programs with mixed groups during school hours. This also helps decision-making process when designing interventions based on the objectives sought, the number of possible sessions, and so on.

Limitations

Like all research, this study has some limitations. Perhaps the main limitation is the cross-sectional design of this study. Bidirectionality of variables may be an issue because predictors and experiences of sexual coercion may have a reciprocal relationship. However, we have tried to solve this limitation by taking into account previous research and theoretical frameworks, which point in the same direction regarding the relationship between the predictors and the criterion variables. In addition, the existing literature shows the relevance of the selected predictors. In any case, future longitudinal research is recommended to deal with these limitations.

The characteristics of the study sample constitute another limitation, as they are all Spanish high school-aged adolescents. In future studies, it is recommended to have a more diverse sample of adolescents, paying special attention to certain less studied groups (e.g., adolescents in a situation of vulnerability, immigrants, etc.). Therefore, further international research is necessary to replicate the results that we have obtained in other cultural contexts, in addition to the inclusion of qualitative techniques, which would enrich the data interpretation.

In summary, the results of this work carried out with Spanish adolescents allow us to confirm the existence of sexual coercion perpetration and victimization in both genders, although not with the same magnitude. This shows the importance of early prevention of this problem through programs aimed at males and females. In the same way, in this work, different predictors of sexual coercion were jointly analyzed, examining their relative importance in our cultural context. Thus, certain similarities were observed in the explanation of the perpetration and victimization of both male and female adolescents, valuable information for the design and implementation of evidence-based prevention programs.

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ORCID iD

Andrés. A. Fernández-Fuertes  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1015-4332>

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Author Biographies

Andrés A. Fernández-Fuertes, PhD, is a bachelor in psychology and PhD in sexuality and interpersonal relationships. He is currently an associate professor of learning and developmental psychology (Department of Education, University of Cantabria, Spain). His main research topics are teen dating violence, peer sexual coercion, sexual education, and bullying and school well-being.

Rodrigo J. Carcedo, PhD, is a bachelor in psychology and PhD in sexuality and interpersonal relationships. He is currently an associate professor at the Department of Developmental and Educational Psychology (University of Salamanca, Spain). His teaching is focused on sexual, emotional, and social development. His research work has addressed the study of social, emotional, and sexual needs in socially excluded populations, especially prison inmates and their families.

Begoña Orgaz, PhD, is an associate professor in the Department of Basic Psychology, Psychobiology and Methodology of Behavioral Science (University of Salamanca, Spain). She is a member of two research groups focused on the study of disabilities, and sexuality and interpersonal relationships. She is in charge of the development of statistical design and analyses in both research groups.

Antonio Fuertes, PhD, is a professor at the University of Salamanca who teaches sexual psychology and sexual, emotional, and social development at the Faculty of Psychology. Currently, he is the team leader of a research group called Sexuality and Interpersonal Relationships (University of Salamanca, Spain). His research interests include adolescent and youth sexuality, emotional and social development, and violence in intimate relationships.