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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Prevalence of Bidirectional Intimate Partner Violence in a Sample of College Students in Portugal

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Abstract

Purpose This study aimed to (a) characterize the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) victimization and perpetration; (b) delineate the prevalence and frequency of various types of violence suffered and perpetrated; (c) explore potential gender and sexual orientation differences in the prevalence and frequency of IPV perpetration and victimization; (d) analyze the most common pattern of IPV; and (e) investigate potential gender and sexual orientation differences in the different IPV patterns.

Methods The study sample comprised 262 participants. The study was conducted online, and participants completed a sociodemographic questionnaire and the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale.

Results Bidirectional violence (BV) was the most common pattern of violence in the past year among college students. Psychological violence was the most prevalent type of violence experienced and perpetrated in the past year and across the lifetime in all subsamples analyzed. No gender or sexual orientation differences were found in overall IPV victimization and perpetration prevalence and frequency in the past year and across lifetime. However, men reported a higher prevalence of past year and lifetime sexual coercion perpetration than women, and heterosexual individuals exhibited higher prevalence rates of lifetime physical assaults.

Conclusions The study's findings further reinforce that BV is prevalent in intimate relationships, particularly among college students. Consequently, there is a need to create effective prevention and intervention programs to help diminish the high prevalence of this phenomenon.

Keywords Bidirectional violence, intimate partner violence · College student · Prevalence

Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is defined as the use of violent behaviors against a current or former partner, encompassing physical (e.g., slapping, kicking), psychological (e.g., intimidation, humiliation), and/or sexual acts (e.g., forced sexual intercourse) that may cause harm (e.g., Smith et al., 2018; World Health Organization [WHO], 2024). Recognized as a global public health issue (Laskey et al., 2019), IPV affects people across diverse demographics irrespective of age, gender, sexual orientation, culture, or socioeconomic status (Hattery & Smith, 2019; Ridings et al., 2021).

Among the various intimate contexts where IPV may occur, dating in early adulthood has emerged as a notable concern (Portugal et al., 2023). IPV peaks during early adulthood, often coinciding with college experiences (Rodriguez et al., 2022). While prevalence rates vary based on measurement criteria, demographics, or analyzed types

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of violence, multiple studies suggest that IPV is prevalent among college students, with estimates ranging from 20 to 50% (Amar & Gennaro, 2005; Gover et al., 2008; Kaukinen, 2014; Straus & Ramirez, 2007). In the United States of America, the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) revealed that a significant proportion of men and women experience physical or sexual violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner before the age of 25 (55.8% and 71.1%, respectively), with a notable percentage occurring between 18 and 24 years of age (Smith et al., 2018), an age group that often represents college students (Direção-Geral do Ensino Superior [DGES; General Directorate of Higher Education], 2024; Rodriguez et al., 2022). In Portugal, a recent study on dating violence in higher education found that 53.8% (n=2342) of participants, with a mean age of 22.42 years (SD=5.06), experienced at least one violent behavior, and 34.4% (n=1496) perpetrated at least one violent behavior in their intimate relationships (Neves et al., 2021). Violent behaviors in young adults tend to escalate and may serve as a precursor to conjugal violence (Machado et al., 2014).

Moreover, IPV victimization can result in various negative outcomes. Among college students, IPV has detrimental effects on both physical and mental health, as well as negative implications for their educational experiences (Daigle et al., 2016). Specifically, college students who have experienced IPV commonly report physical injuries (e.g., scratches, bruises, and broken bones) (Amar & Gennaro, 2005; Daigle et al., 2016; Straight et al., 2003), depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and substance abuse (Harned, 2001; Øverup et al., 2015; Sabina & Straus, 2008; Zinzow et al., 2010). Such experiences are also associated with decreased relationship satisfaction and negative perceptions of intimate partners (Kaura & Lohman, 2007; Próspero & Vohra-Gupta, 2007; Shorey et al., 2012). Academically, IPV victimization is linked to adverse outcomes, including academic withdrawal (Brewer et al., 2018; Mengo & Black, 2016), lower grade point average (GPA) scores (Brewer et al., 2018), and an increased likelihood of dropping classes (Mengo & Black, 2016).

Given the high prevalence and severe consequences of IPV, college students are considered a high-risk population (Umana et al., 2014). Young individuals may resort to inappropriate strategies to solve tense situations with their intimate partners, making them vulnerable to a plethora of risk factors (e.g., substance abuse, intergenerational transmission of violence) (e.g., Duval et al., 2020; Palmetto et al., 2013).

Gender Symmetry in IPV

IPV has been a subject of research since the 1970s, and numerous studies have sought to address the various questions arising from this phenomenon. One question that has received considerable attention is gender symmetry, specifically examining the notion that men and women suffer and perpetrate violence against their intimate partners at approximately equal rates (e.g., Straus & Scott, 2009). This has been a contentious topic for many years, prompting researchers to offer different perspectives, notably the feminist and family researchers' perspectives. The feminist perspective sees IPV as a gender-based issue and a by-product of the patriarchal model, where men employ abusive behaviors to exert dominance over their wives (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Johnson, 1995; Laskey et al., 2019; Lewis et al., 2015; Mennicke & Wilke, 2015). In contrast, family researchers recognize various IPV patterns beyond unidirectional ones (e.g., Bates, 2016; Hines & Douglas, 2019). Johnson's typology outlines four types of violence within intimate relationships: (1) intimate terrorism, (2) violent resistance, (3) situational couple violence, and (4) mutual control (Johnson, 1995, 2005, 2006). Notably, only intimate terrorism is rooted in a unidirectional perspective, while the other typologies adopt a bidirectional perspective (Bates, 2016; Hines & Douglas, 2019). Despite initial perceptions that intimate terrorism is predominantly perpetrated by men, recent studies have challenged this assumption, revealing that men can also be victims of intimate terrorism, further reinforcing the gender symmetry discussion (Hines & Douglas, 2010, 2019).

Hence, it is crucial to acknowledge that diverse manifestations of violence may occur, and individuals of both genders can be victims and perpetrators of IPV, irrespective of their engagement in either heterosexual or homosexual relationships (Laskey et al., 2019; Machado et al., 2016a, 2019).

Bidirectional IPV Among College Students

Despite the ongoing debate surrounding the existence of gender symmetry in IPV, scientific evidence suggests that men and women engage in IPV at comparable rates (e.g., Machado et al., 2024). Moreover, IPV may also manifest in different types of relationships, as research shows similar rates between heterosexual and LGBTQ+couples (e.g., Capinha et al., 2022; Stults et al., 2022).

A substantial body of research has demonstrated that bidirectional violence (BV) is the most common pattern in intimate relationships, in which both partners engage as victims, perpetrators, or both (Costa et al., 2015; Johnson,

2006; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2012; Machado et al., 2024; Palmetto et al., 2013; Ridings et al., 2021).

Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al.'s (2012) systematic review examined rates of bidirectional versus unidirectional violence across various sample types, including large population studies, community, clinical and forensic samples. They found that the BV prevalence ranged from 39 to 72% (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2012). A recent systematic review further supported these findings, indicating that BV is the most commonly reported pattern in intimate relationships across various countries and sample types (e.g., community, clinical, forensic) (Machado et al., 2024).

Regarding BV among college students, the literature, although sparse and somewhat outdated, reveals consistent findings (e.g., Melander et al., 2010; Straus, 2008). Multiple studies have reported high prevalence rates of BV ranging from 54.3 to 71.2%, revealing that BV is the most prevalent pattern of violence among this group (Hines & Saudino, 2003; Orcutt et al., 2005; Straus & Ramirez, 2007). Furthermore, college students involved in BV often experience and perpetrate higher rates of physical assault, sexual coercion, and psychological aggression than those in unidirectional IPV relationships (Orcutt et al., 2005; Próspero, 2008). Additionally, college students involved in BV tend to engage in more frequent and severe violent acts, consequently resulting in greater physical injuries and mental health issues (Próspero, 2008; Testa et al., 2011).

Although studies on BV among Portuguese college students remain limited, the available research offers valuable insights into this phenomenon. Existing Portuguese studies support international findings, showing that both male and female college students report experiencing and perpetrating IPV, with psychological violence being the most commonly reported type of violence (Machado et al., 2010). More recent research further support these findings, highlighting that BV remains the most commonly reported pattern of violence among college students (Neves et al., 2021; Portugal et al., 2023). Despite the relatively small number of studies, the available Portuguese studies emphasize the need for prevention and intervention programs that not only acknowledge but also intentionally address the dynamics of IPV and promote healthy relationship practices and conflict-resolution skills among younger individuals (e.g., Machado et al., 2010; Neves et al., 2021; Portugal et al., 2023).

The Present Study

While BV has been recognized in scientific discourse, existing statistical and empirical evidence underscores its notable prevalence (Machado et al., 2024). However, research emphasis remains predominantly on unidirectional violence (McGarry & Hinsliff-Smith, 2023), which significantly impacts and shapes social and policy practices, and responses to IPV. Consequently, it is imperative to thoroughly investigate and elevate the visibility of BV in the scientific community, particularly within the Portuguese context, as the study of this phenomenon has been neglected. Recognizing this pattern is crucial given that prevailing policies and intervention programs predominantly adopt a gendered approach: victim support initiatives are primarily tailored to heterosexual women (Machado et al., 2016b), and perpetrator intervention programs are geared towards heterosexual men (Cunha et al., 2022). As a result, individuals outside this paradigm (e.g., men, LGBTQ + individuals) and those involved in distinct intimate violence patterns (i.e., situational violence, BV) are less likely to seek help, as their needs are often not met and they experience discrimination from such services (Laskey et al., 2019; Machado & Matos, 2016b). A comprehensive understanding of this violence pattern is indispensable for the development of effective prevention and intervention programs.

Moreover, college students are identified as a high-risk population due to the elevated prevalence of IPV among them and its detrimental impact on those affected (Umana et al., 2014). Despite this, there is a paucity of recent studies on BV that focus on this specific sample. Accordingly, our research aimed to (a) characterize the prevalence of IPV victimization and perpetration; (b) delineate the prevalence and frequency of various types of IPV victimization and perpetration; (c) explore potential gender and sexual orientation differences in the prevalence and frequency of IPV victimization and perpetration; (d) analyze the most common pattern of IPV; and (e) investigate potential gender and sexual orientation differences in different IPV patterns.

Methods

Sample

This study employed a cross-sectional quantitative design conducted online utilizing a convenience sample of college students in Portugal. To be eligible to participate, individuals had to be students at a university in Portugal, and were currently or previously involved in an intimate relationship for at least one month. Additionally, only participants aged between 18 and 24 years were considered for the study, as Portuguese official reports demonstrate that this specific age range seems to represent the vast majority of university students (DGES, 2024).

Initially, 1437 individuals accessed the link containing the study. However, 1175 responses were excluded because they either did not meet the inclusion criteria or did not complete all instruments. The final sample comprised 262

college students with a mean age of 21.27 (SD = 1.78). Most participants were women (92%), heterosexual (89.6%), and Portuguese (94.7%), and had completed the first cycle of higher education or obtained an undergraduate degree (59.9%). Furthermore, a significant proportion of the sample was single at the time of survey completion (97.3%). A more detailed description of the sociodemographic characteristics of the total sample and subsamples (i.e., gender and sexual orientation) is presented in Table 1.

Instruments

A sociodemographic questionnaire was created to collect data regarding age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, academic qualifications, professional situation, socioeconomic status, and the region where participants lived.

The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus et al., 1996, adapted by Paiva & Figueiredo, 2006) is a 78-item self-report instrument that assesses how couples solve conflicts. It contains five subscales (negotiation, psychological aggression, sexual coercion, physical assault, and injury) assessing victimization and perpetration, which can be further divided into minor and severe violence (except negotiation). Responses were provided on an eight-point scale (1 - Once in the past year; 2 - Twice in the past year; 3 - three to five times in the past year; 4 - six to 10 times in the past year; 5–11 to 20 times in the past year; 6 - more than 20 times in the past year; 7 - not in the past year, but it did happen before; 8 - this has never happened). Prevalence rates were converted into dichotomous variables according to Paiva and Figueiredo's guidelines. For annual prevalence, responses 1 to 6 were given a value of 100 (i.e., it occurred in the previous year), while responses 7 and 8 were given a value of 0 (i.e., it did not occur in the previous year). For overall prevalence, a value of 1 was assigned to responses from 1 to 7 (i.e., it occurred sometime) and a value of 0 to response 8 (i.e., it never occurred). In this study, all subscales were calculated, with the exception of negotiation. Both the original (Straus et al., 1996) and the Portuguese version (Paiva & Figueiredo, 2006) of the CTS2 demonstrated good reliability. As for internal consistency for the current sample, the following values were obtained: past year psychological aggression victimization, α = 0.74, and perpetration, α = 0.75; past year physical assault victimization, α = 0.92,

Table 1 Sample's sociodemographic characterization, and gender and sexual orientation differences in sociodemographic variables

Sociodemographic Variables	Total	Gender differences in sociodemographic variables					Sexual orientation differences in sociodemographic variables				
	n (%)	Male (*n* = 21)	Female (*n* = 240)	χ^2	*p*	V	Heterosexual (*n* = 232)	LGBTQ+ (*n* = 27)	χ^2	*p*	V
Nationality				-*	< 0.01	0.18			-*	0.17	0.09
Portuguese	248 (94.7)	17 (81.0)	230 (95.8)				221 (95.3)	24 (88.9)			
Other	14 (5.3)	4 (19.0)	10 (4.2)				11 (4.7)	3 (11.1)			
Marital status				-*	0.44	0.04			-*	0.64	0.05
Single	250 (97.3)	19 (95.0)	230 (97.5)				223 (97.4)	25 (100.0)			
Married/Cohabitation	7 (2.7)	1 (5.0)	6 (2.5)				6 (2.6)	0 (0.0)			
Current intimate relationship				-*	0.09	0.12			0.34	0.64	0.04
Yes	196 (76.0)	11 (57.9)	184 (77.3)				174 (75.7)	21 (80.8)			
No	62 (24.0)	8 (42.1)	54 (22.7)				56 (24.3)	5 (19.2)			
Education level				-*	0.12	0.22			5.04	0.07	0.14
6th grade	1 (0.4)	1 (4.8)	0 (0.0)				0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)			
12th grade	82 (31.3)	5 (23.8)	77 (32.1)				68 (29.3)	13 (48.1)			
Bachelor's degree	157 (59.9)	14 (66.7)	143 (59.6)				146 (62.9)	11 (40.7)			
Master's degree	22 (8.4)	1 (4.8)	20 (8.3)				18 (7.8)	3 (11.1)			
Socioeconomic status				-*	0.03	0.21			-*	0.18	0.17
Low	17 (8.0)	3 (18.8)	13 (6.7)				16 (8.3)	0 (0.0)			
Medium-low	61 (28.8)	5 (31.3)	56 (28.7)				55 (28.5)	6 (33.3)			
Medium	110 (51.9)	4 (25.0)	106 (54.4)				99 (51.3)	11 (61.1)			
Medium-high	21 (9.9)	3 (18.8)	18 (9.2)				21 (10.9)	0 (0.0)			
High	3 (1.4)	1 (6.3)	2 (1.0)				2 (1.0)	1 (5.6)			
Professional status				-*	0.14	0.11			-*	0.59	0.05
Student	217 (82.8)	1 (4.8)	44 (18.3)				41 (17.7)	3 (11.1)			
Working student	45 (17.2)	20 (95.2)	196 (81.7)				191 (82.3)	24 (88.9)			
Residence area				1.46	0.29	0.08			1.61	0.24	0.08
Urban	189 (73.3)	17 (85.0)	172 (72.6)				166 (72.2)	21 (84.0)			
Rural	69 (26.7)	3 (15.0)	65 (27.4)				64 (27.8)	4 (16.0)			

Note: *Some variables do not have a Chi-Square value, as more than 20% of cells counted less than 5. Therefore, Fisher's Exact Test was used

and perpetration, $\alpha = 0.91$; past year sexual coercion victimization, $\alpha = 0.72$, and perpetration, $\alpha = 0.77$; past year injury victimization, $\alpha = 0.96$, and perpetration, $\alpha = 0.94$; lifetime psychological aggression victimization, $\alpha = 0.72$, and perpetration, $\alpha = 0.73$; lifetime physical assault victimization, $\alpha = 0.86$, and perpetration, $\alpha = 0.86$; lifetime sexual coercion victimization, $\alpha = 0.71$, and perpetration, $\alpha = 0.74$; lifetime injury victimization, $\alpha = 0.90$, and perpetration, $\alpha = 0.88$. Finally, for overall victimization, in the past year, $\alpha = 0.92$, and lifetime, $\alpha = 0.90$; for overall perpetration, in the past year, $\alpha = 0.92$, and lifetime, $\alpha = 0.91$.

Procedures

This study received prior approval from the Ethics and Deontology of Scientific Research Committee of Lusófona University. Data was collected online using the "Qualtrics Survey" platform. The link to the study titled "Intimate relationships in Portugal: Characteristics and Dynamic" was disseminated through posts on various social networking websites (e.g., Facebook and Reddit), in addition to university forums and newsletters. Upon entering the study page, the participants were presented with an informed consent form outlining the study's objectives, assurances regarding the confidentiality and anonymity of their data, and the voluntary nature of their participation. The collected data were used exclusively for statistical analysis and were accessible only to team members. The participants received no financial support, compensation, or other incentives for their involvement in the study. The study was conducted between November and December 2021.

Data Analysis

IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29.0 was used to process and analyze the data. Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted for sample characterization and description of the main variables. Subsequently, an exploratory analysis was performed to assess whether the assumptions underlying the use of the parametric tests were fulfilled. Parametric and equivalent nonparametric tests were performed after verifying that the assumptions were not met. As advocated by Fife-Schaw (2000), when both procedures produce similar conclusions, results from the parametric tests should be presented, whereas when distinct conclusions are found, non-parametric results should be reported to ensure statistical accuracy.

The prevalence rates of victimization, perpetration, and type of violence were calculated for the past year and across the lifetime. Moreover, to analyze the prevalence of BV, participants were categorized into four categories: (1) victim (i.e., individuals who only reported victimization), (2) perpetrators (i.e., individuals who only reported perpetration), (3) bidirectional violence (i.e., individuals who reported being victims and perpetrators of violence), and (4) no violence (i.e., individuals who did not report any victimization or perpetration). Differences between gender, sexual orientation, and categories regarding the prevalence of IPV victimization and perpetration, as well as the types of violence, were analyzed using chi-square tests. Alternatively, Fisher's Exact Tests were used whenever more than 20% of cells counted less than 5. Likewise, gender and sexual orientation differences in the different IPV categories were tested using chi-square tests or Fisher's Exact Tests, when necessary. The frequency of participants' responses was also analyzed considering the aforementioned subscales (excluding negotiation), and only a subsample of participants that reported BV was considered. Lastly, differences between gender, sexual orientation, and categories regarding the frequency of violence were examined using Mann-Whitney tests.

To control for the increased risk of Type I error due to multiple comparisons, Bonferroni corrections were applied (Field, 2024). Specifically, analyzes of total IPV victimization and perpetration required four tests, thus yielding an adjusted significance level of 0.0125. In contrast, analyzes of differences in the prevalence or frequency of the types of IPV suffered or perpetrated required 16 tests, resulting in an adjusted significance level of 0.003125.

Table 2 Past year and lifetime prevalence rates of intimate partner violence victimization and perpetration in the total sample

		Total sample ($n = 262$)	
		Victimization *n* (%)	Perpetration *n* (%)
Past year	Total	153 (58.4)	160 (61.1)
	Psychological aggression	128 (48.9)	173 (66.0)
	Physical assault	40 (15.3)	43 (16.4)
	Sexual coercion	67 (25.6)	43 (16.4)
	Injury	11 (4.2)	7 (2.7)
Lifetime	Total	174 (66.4)	172 (65.6)
	Psychological aggression	160 (61.1)	173 (66.0)
	Physical assault	69 (26.3)	69 (26.3)
	Sexual coercion	85 (32.4)	54 (20.6)
	Injury	18 (6.9)	14 (5.3)

Results

Prevalence Rates of IPV

The prevalence rate of IPV victimization in the past year was 58.4% and the perpetration rate was 61.1%. The lifetime prevalence of IPV victimization and perpetration was 66.4% and 65.6%, respectively. Table 2 presents the results.

Prevalence Rates of the Types of IPV

Specifically, for each type of IPV (cf., Table 2), in the past year, 48.9% of participants reported having been victims of psychological aggression and 66% were perpetrators. Regarding sexual coercion, 25.6% were victims and 16.4% were perpetrators. Regarding physical assault, 15.3% reported having been physically assaulted, whereas 16.4% reported physically assaulting a partner. Regarding injury, 4.2% reported suffering an injury from a partner and 2.7% reported injuring their partner.

Regarding lifetime prevalence rates, 61.1% of the participants were victims of psychological aggression, whereas 66% were perpetrators. Regarding sexual coercion, 32.4% reported having been victims and 20.6% were perpetrators. Regarding physical assault, 26.3% were victims, and 26.3% were perpetrators. Finally, 6.9% were injured and 5.3% reported injuring their partner. Table 2 provides further details regarding the prevalence rates for each type of IPV suffered and perpetrated based on the total sample.

Gender and Sexual Orientation Differences in Total IPV Victimization and Perpetration

Chi-square tests found no statistically significant differences between male and female college students regarding past year IPV victimization, χ^2 (1) = 0.67, p = 0.41, V = 0.05, and past year IPV perpetration, χ^2 (1) = 0.01, p = 0.92, V = 0.01. Similarly, no differences were found in lifetime IPV victimization, χ^2 (1) = 0.20, p = 0.66, V = 0.03, or lifetime IPV perpetration, χ^2 (1) = 0.71, p = 0.40, V = 0.05.

Similarly, no statistically significant differences were found between heterosexual and LGBTQ + college students regarding past-year IPV victimization, χ^2 (1) = 0.87, p = 0.35, V = 0.06, or past-year IPV perpetration, χ^2 (1) = 0.38, p = 0.54, V = 0.04. Additionally, no differences were found in lifetime IPV victimization, χ^2 (1) = 0.79, p = 0.37, V = 0.06, or lifetime IPV perpetration, χ^2 (1) = 0.01, p = 0.94, V = 0.01. Table 3 provides a detailed description of these results.

Gender and Sexual Orientation Differences in the Prevalence of the Types of IPV Suffered and Perpetrated

When considering the adjusted alpha level of 0.003, no statistically significant differences between male and female participants were found regarding the types of IPV suffered and perpetrated in the past year (cf. Table 3). Likewise, no gender differences were found in any type of IPV suffered and perpetrated across participants' lifetime (cf. Table 3).

Regarding sexual orientation, no statistically significant differences were found in the types of IPV suffered and

Table 3 Past year and lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence victimization and perpetration based on participant's gender and sexual orientation

		Male (n = 21)		Female (n = 240)		Gender differences in Vic.			Gender differences in Perp.			Heterosexual (n = 232)		LGBTQ+ (n = 27)		Sexual orientation differences in Vic.			Sexual orientation differences in Perp.		
		Vic. n (%)	Perp. n (%)	Vic. n (%)	Perp. n (%)	χ^2	p	V	χ^2	p	V	Vic. n (%)	Perp. n (%)	Vic. n (%)	Perp. n (%)	χ^2	p	V	χ^2	p	V
Past year	Total	14 (66.7)	13 (61.9)	138 (57.5)	146 (60.8)	0.67	0.41	0.05	0.01	0.92	0.01	133 (57.3)	143 (61.6)	18 (66.7)	15 (55.6)	0.87	0.35	0.06	0.38	0.54	0.04
	Psych A.	10 (47.6)	14 (66.7)	117 (48.8)	158 (65.8)	0.01	0.92	0.01	0.01	0.94	0.01	116 (50.0)	157 (67.7)	11 (40.7)	15 (55.6)	0.83	0.36	0.06	1.59	0.21	0.08
	Phys A.	4 (19.0)	4 (19.0)	36 (15.0)	39 (16.3)	-*	0.54	0.03	-*	0.74	0.02	35 (15.1)	40 (17.2)	5 (18.5)	3 (11.1)	-*	0.58	0.03	-*	0.59	0.05
	Sex C.	8 (38.1)	8 (38.1)	59 (24.6)	35 (14.6)	1.85	0.17	0.08	-*	< 0.01	0.17	55 (23.7)	34 (14.7)	11 (40.7)	8 (29.6)	3.70	0.06	0.12	-*	0.06	0.12
	Inj.	2 (9.5)	2 (9.5)	9 (3.8)	5 (2.1)	-*	0.21	0.08	-*	0.04	0.13	9 (3.9)	7 (3.0)	2 (7.4)	0 (0.0)	-*	0.32	0.05	-*	1.00	0.06
Lifetime	Total	13 (61.9)	12 (57.1)	160 (66.7)	159 (66.3)	0.20	0.66	0.03	0.71	0.40	0.05	152 (65.5)	153 (65.9)	20 (74.1)	18 (66.7)	0.79	0.37	0.06	0.01	0.94	0.01
	Psych A.	12 (57.1)	14 (66.7)	147 (61.3)	158 (65.8)	0.14	0.71	0.02	0.01	0.94	0.01	143 (61.6)	157 (67.7)	16 (59.3)	15 (55.6)	0.06	0.81	0.02	1.59	0.21	0.08
	Phys A.	7 (33.3)	7 (33.3)	62 (25.8)	62 (25.8)	0.56	0.46	0.05	0.56	0.46	0.05	62 (26.7)	65 (28.0)	6 (22.2)	3 (11.1)	0.25	0.62	0.03	3.57	0.06	0.12
	Sex C.	9 (42.9)	10 (47.6)	76 (31.7)	44 (18.3)	1.10	0.29	0.07	-*	< 0.01	0.20	70 (30.2)	43 (18.5)	14 (51.9)	10 (37.0)	5.19	0.02	0.14	5.09	0.02	0.14
	Inj.	3 (14.3)	2 (9.5)	15 (6.3)	12 (5.0)	-*	0.16	0.09	-*	0.39	0.06	15 (6.5)	13 (5.6)	3 (11.1)	1 (3.7)	-*	0.41	0.06	-*	1.00	0.03

Note: Vic. = Victimization; Perp. = Perpetration; Psych. A. = psychological aggression; Phys. A. = Physical assault; Sex. C. = Sexual coercion; Inj. = Injury; *Some subscales do not have a chi-square value, as more than 20% of cells counted less than 5. Therefore, Fisher's Exact Test was used

perpetrated, in the past year or across participants' lifetime (cf. Table 3).

Gender and Sexual Orientation Differences in the Frequency of the Types of IPV Suffered and Perpetrated

As for the frequency of the types of violence suffered and perpetrated in the past year, Table 4 shows that no statistically significant differences were found in the participants' gender regarding the types of violence suffered or perpetrated.

Likewise, regarding sexual orientation, no differences were found in the past year frequency of any type of violence suffered and perpetrated (cf. Table 4).

Prevalence Rates of the Victim, Perpetrator, Bidirectional Violence, and No-Violence Categories

Results revealed that The BV category was the most common pattern of violence among college students (66%), followed by the no-violence category (19.8%). Furthermore, perpetrator and victim categories revealed the least common patterns (8% and 6.1%, respectively).

Gender and Sexual Orientation Differences in the Categories

Fisher's Exact Test found no statistically significant differences between gender ($p=0.79$, $V=0.09$) and sexual orientation ($p=0.63$, $V=0.09$). Table 5 provides further details regarding the gender and sexual orientation differences in the prevalence rates of all four categories.

Differences Between Categories in IPV Victimization and Perpetration

Statistically significant differences were found between categories in the past year in IPV victimization, χ^2 (3)=155.63, $p<0.001$, $V=0.77$, and IPV perpetration, χ^2 (3)=144.08, $p<0.001$, $V=0.74$. Specifically, the BV category had the highest prevalence rates in comparison to the other categories (85% for victimization and 82.7% for perpetration).

Moreover, statistically significant differences were found between the categories in lifetime IPV victimization, χ^2 (3)=200.11, $p<0.001$, $V=0.87$, and lifetime IPV perpetration, χ^2 (3)=177.13, $p<0.001$, $V=0.82$. The victim category had the highest prevalence of lifetime IPV victimization (93.8%), while the BV category had the highest prevalence of lifetime IPV perpetration (90.2%). The results are presented in Table 6.

Differences Between Categories in the Types of IPV Suffered and Perpetrated

Results (cf. Table 6) revealed that the BV category reported higher past year prevalence rates in most types of violence suffered and perpetrated compared to the remaining categories. Specifically, Chi-Square tests found statistically significant differences in past year psychological aggression victimization, χ^2 (3)=113.44, $p<0.001$, $V=0.66$, perpetration, χ^2 (3)=178.64, $p<0.001$, $V=0.83$, and past year sexual coercion victimization, χ^2 (3)=35.77, $p<0.001$, $V=0.37$. Moreover, Fisher's Exact Tests found statistically significant differences in past year sexual coercion perpetration, $p<0.001$, $V=0.32$, and in past year physical assault victimization, $p<0.001$, $V=0.30$, and perpetration, $p<0.001$, $V=0.28$. No differences were found regarding past year injury victimization, $p=0.25$, $V=0.13$, and perpetration, $p=0.57$, $V=0.12$.

Regarding lifetime prevalence rates, the BV category had the highest prevalence rates of psychological aggression victimization, χ^2 (3)=157.55, $p<0.001$, $V=0.78$; perpetration, χ^2 (3)=178.64, $p<0.001$, $V=0.83$; physical assault victimization, χ^2 (3)=39.02, $p<0.001$, $V=0.39$; and perpetration, χ^2 (3)=38.33, $p<0.001$, $V=0.38$. Furthermore, Fisher's Exact Tests revealed that the BV category presented the highest rates in sexual coercion perpetration, $p<0.001$, $V=0.35$. No differences were found in lifetime injury victimization, $p=0.05$, V=0.17, and perpetration, $p=0.10$, $V=0.14$. The only exception to this trend was sexual coercion victimization, χ^2 (3)=44.98, $p<0.001$, $V=0.41$, where the victim category presented the highest rates.

Differences Between Categories in Past Year Frequency in IPV Victimization and Perpetration

Statistically significant differences were found between categories regarding past year IPV victimization, $U=435.00$, $p<0.001$, r = -0.38, and IPV perpetration, $U=953.50$, $p<0.001$, r = -0.36. The BV category reported higher rates of IPV victimization ($M=15.71$; $SD=25.62$) than the victim category ($M=0.88$; $SD=1.41$) and higher rates of IPV perpetration ($M=14.55$; $SD=23.21$) than the perpetrator category ($M=1.86$, $SD=2.03$).

Differences Between Categories in Past Year Frequency of the Types of IPV Suffered and Perpetrated

Statistically significant differences were found between categories regarding the past year frequency of psychological aggression victimization ($U=516.00$, $p<0.001$, r = -0.37). Specifically, the BV category revealed higher

Table 4 Gender and sexual orientation differences in past year frequency of intimate partner violence victimization and perpetration, and in the types of violence suffered and perpetrated

		Gender differences						Sexual orientation differences					
		Male (n=21)		Female (n=240)				Heterosexual (n=232)		LGBTQ+ (n=27)			
		M	SD	M	SD	U	p	r	M	SD	M	SD	U	p	r
Vic.	Total	14.33	17.70	10.00	22.41	2002.00	0.11	0.11	10.42	22.27	10.19	21.49	3007.50	0.73	0.01
	Psych. A.	5.95	9.34	5.61	12.89	2408.50	0.72	0.02	5.74	12.75	5.19	12.17	2795.00	0.33	0.02
	Phys. A.	0.86	2.39	1.26	5.25	2428.50	0.66	-0.05	1.20	4.99	1.56	6.01	3035.00	0.68	-0.03
	Sex. C.	6.57	10.49	2.88	7.91	2090.00	0.09	0.20	3.13	8.35	3.44	6.99	2651.00	0.27	-0.02
	Inj.	0.81	3.49	0.48	3.09	2377.00	0.22	0.05	0.44	2.86	1.19	4.95	3019.00	0.38	-0.09
Perp.	Total	11.95	16.48	9.28	19.88	2235.50	0.38	0.07	9.80	20.22	7.48	14.22	2913.00	0.54	0.07
	Psych. A.	4.67	9.09	5.45	10.90	2299.50	0.49	-0.09	5.67	11.17	3.33	6.39	2749.00	0.28	0.13
	Phys. A.	1.71	5.51	1.19	5.03	2425.50	0.66	0.05	1.33	5.34	0.44	1.53	2937.50	0.42	0.11
	Sex. C.	4.76	8.81	2.16	7.88	1930.00	<0.01	0.15	2.36	8.15	2.52	6.70	2705.00	0.39	-0.01
	Inj.	0.95	4.14	0.25	2.19	2333.00	0.04	0.10	0.35	2.55	0.00	0.00	3037.50	0.36	0.10

Note: Vic. = Victimization; Perp. = Perpetration; Psych. A. = Psychological aggression; Phys. A. = Physical assault; Sex. C. = Sexual coercion; Inj. = Injury

frequency rates of psychological aggression victimization (M=8.65; SD=14.82) than did the victim category (M=0.31; SD=0.70). Table 7 provides details regarding the differences in past year frequency in IPV victimization and perpetration, as well as in the types of violence suffered and perpetrated.

Discussion

The results indicated a high prevalence of IPV victimization and perpetration among college students, corroborating previous research that highlights IPV as a significant issue within this population (e.g., Daigle et al., 2016; Neves et al., 2021; Portugal et al., 2023). The higher lifetime prevalence rates compared to the past year rates suggest that IPV might have occurred over a person's lifetime and may persist over long periods (Gomez-Casillas et al., 2021). Additionally, similar rates of victimization and perpetration could indicate that most participants were both victims and perpetrators, thus experiencing BV in their relationships. This was supported by subsequent analysis, which revealed that BV was the most prevalent pattern of violence among college students, mirroring patterns observed in previous studies (e.g., Faias et al., 2017; Portugal et al., 2023; Santos et al., 2019). The high prevalence of BV could be attributed to college students resorting to violence as a solution in situations of heightened conflict and tension (Palmetto et al., 2013). Moreover, these results may also reflect Johnson's typology of situational couple violence, in which less severe types of violence manifest during disputes and quarrels in a relationship (Johnson, 1995, 2006). However, because our study did not assess the severity of violence or the underlying motives for perpetration, we cannot conclusively rule out the possibility that some cases may reflect mutual violent control, in which both partners engage in coercive behaviors in an attempt to control the other (Johnson, 1995, 2006). Future research should include these dimensions to better differentiate between Johnson's typologies.

Psychological aggression emerged as the most prevalent type of violence suffered and perpetrated, consistent with existing literature (e.g., Costa et al., 2015; De Juan & Madan, 2018; Machado et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2018). The high prevalence rates may partly result from the subtle nature of psychologically violent behaviors, which often leads individuals to minimize, or overlook such behaviors. Indeed, research has found that younger individuals are more likely to downplay the severity of psychological aggressions and may even perceive psychologically abusive behaviors as justifiable acts of love (Caridade et al., 2020; Magalhães et al., 2019). Consequently, this minimization

Table 5 Victim, perpetrator, bidirectional violence, and no-violence categories prevalence and differences, based on participant's gender and sexual orientation

Categories	Gender		Gender differences in prevalence rates			Sexual orientation		Sexual orientation differences in prevalence rates		
	Male ($n=21$)	Female ($n=240$)				Heterosexual ($n=232$)	LGBTQ+ ($n=27$)			
	n (%)	*n* (%)	χ^2	*p*	*V*	*n* (%)	*n* (%)	χ^2	*p*	*V*
Victim ($n=16$)	0 (0.0)	16 (6.7)	-*	0.79	0.09	13 (5.6)	3 (11.1)	-*	0.63	0.09
Perpetrator ($n=21$)	1 (4.8)	20 (8.3)				20 (8.6)	1 (3.7)			
Bidirectional violence ($n=173$)	16 (76.2)	156 (65.0)				153 (65.9)	18 (66.7)			
No-violence ($n=52$)	4 (19.0)	48 (20.0)				46 (19.8)	5 (18.5)			

Note: *A chi-square value was not provided, as more than 20% of cells counted less than 5. Therefore, Fisher's Exact Test was used

Table 6 Differences between victim, perpetrator, and bidirectional violence categories in past year and lifetime victimization, perpetration, and types of violence prevalence rates

		Differences between victim and bidirectional violence (BV) in victimization					Differences between perpetrator and bidirectional violence (BV) in perpetration				
		Victim ($n=16$) *n* (%)	BV ($n=173$) *n* (%)	χ^2	*p*	V	Perpetrator ($n=21$) *n* (%)	BV ($n=173$) *n* (%)	χ^2	*p*	V
Past year	Total	6 (37.5)	147 (85.0)	155.63	<0.001	0.77	17 (81.0)	143 (82.7)	144.08	<0.001	0.74
	Psych. A.	3 (18.8)	125 (72.3)	113.44	<0.001	0.66	18 (85.7)	155 (89.6)	178.64	<0.001	0.83
	Phys. A.	0 (0.0)	40 (23.1)	-*	<0.001	0.30	2 (9.5)	41 (23.7)	-*	<0.001	0.28
	Sex. C.	4 (25.0)	63 (36.4)	35.77	<0.001	0.37	0 (0.0)	43 (24.9)	-*	<0.001	0.32
	Inj.	0 (0.0)	10 (5.8)	-*	0.25	0.13	0 (0.0)	7 (4.0)	-*	0.57	0.12
Lifetime	Total	15 (93.8)	159 (91.9)	200.11	<0.001	0.87	16 (76.2)	156 (90.2)	177.13	<0.001	0.82
	Psych. A.	9 (56.3)	150 (86.7)	157.55	<0.001	0.78	18 (85.7)	155 (89.6)	178.64	<0.001	0.83
	Phys. A.	3 (18.8)	66 (38.2)	39.02	<0.001	0.39	3 (14.3)	66 (38.2)	38.33	<0.001	0.38
	Sex. C.	8 (50.0)	76 (43.9)	44.98	<0.001	0.41	1 (4.8)	53 (30.6)	-*	<0.001	0.35
	Inj.	0 (0.0)	17 (9.8)	-*	0.05	0.17	0 (0.0)	13 (7.5)	-*	0.10	0.15

Note: Psych. A. = Psychological aggression; Phys. A. = Physical assault; Sex. C. = Sexual coercion; Inj. = Injury; *Some subscales do not have a chi-square value, as more than 20% of cells counted less than 5. Therefore, Fisher's Exact Test was used

likely contributes to greater tolerance of violence, allowing these behaviors to persist within relationships.

The results indicated no significant gender differences in IPV victimization or perpetration. This suggests that both male and female college students exhibit a similar potential to be victims and perpetrators of IPV, consistent with prior research (e.g., Costa et al., 2015; De Juan & Madan, 2018; Smith et al., 2018). Concurrently, the absence of significant differences regarding participants' sexual orientation reinforces the idea that this pervasive issue may be present in different types of relationships, and the individual's sexual orientation, much like gender, does not seem to influence the likelihood of being a victim and/or perpetrator of IPV (e.g., Capinha et al., 2022; Stults et al., 2022). Nonetheless, it is important to note that other factors consistently correlated with victimization and perpetration, such as socioeconomic status and relationship status (e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024; Reyal et al., 2024), may moderate this relationship. In our study, we found statistically significant differences in these factors across gender and sexual orientation. Therefore, future research should incorporate additional variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of IPV perpetration and victimization.

Although overall victimization and perpetration rates showed no gender or sexual orientation differences, distinctions emerged for specific types of violence. Men reported higher rates of sexual coercion and injury perpetration than did women. These results support previous studies that argue that certain types of violence seem to be preferred by certain genders (e.g., Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2012; Mennicke & Wilke, 2015), with men being responsible for more severe violence (i.e., sexual violence and physical violence that leads to injury) (Chen & Chan, 2021; Costa et al., 2015; Lövestad & Krantz, 2012). Previous literature indicates that factors such as the causes of violence, type of violence, and consequences may explain why there is gender asymmetry (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2012; Mennicke & Wilke, 2015). Furthermore, no significant differences in physical violence were found between genders. While some studies have reported higher male perpetration of physical IPV (Costa et al., 2015; Lövestad & Krantz, 2012), others have found no significant differences or higher female perpetration (Archer, 2002). This absence of differences in physical violence perpetration aligns with prior research that showed that IPV perpetration may not always follow a traditional gendered pattern (Archer, 2002). On the other

Table 7 Differences between victim, perpetrator, and bidirectional violence categories in past year frequency of intimate partner violence victimization and perpetration, and in the types of violence suffered and perpetrated

		Differences between victim and bidirectional violence (BV) in victimization							Differences between perpetrator and bidirectional violence (BV) in perpetration						
		Victim ($n=16$)		BV ($n=173$)					Perpetrator ($n=21$)		BV ($n=173$)				
		M	SD	M	SD	U	p	r	M	SD	M	SD	U	p	r
Past year	Total	0.88	1.41	15.71	25.62	435.00	<0.001	-0.38	1.86	2.03	14.55	23.21	953.50	<0.001	-0.36
	Psychological aggression	0.31	0.70	8.65	14.82	516.00	<0.001	-0.37	1.33	1.53	8.41	13.48	1128.00	<0.01	-0.35
	Physical assault	0.00	0.00	1.86	6.15	1064.00	0.03	-0.21	0.14	0.48	1.84	6.14	1532.50	0.11	-0.04
	Sexual coercion	0.56	1.15	4.73	9.69	1144.50	0.18	-0.29	0.00	0.00	3.58	9.57	1365.00	0.01	-0.26
	Injury	0.00	0.00	0.72	3.77	1304.00	0.33	-0.13	0.00	0.00	0.47	2.94	1743.00	0.35	-0.11

hand, it is also possible that the aforementioned result could be explained by the online nature of this study, as scientific research has shown that online studies tend to identify less severe types of violence, while more serious situations tend to escape online questionnaires (Cunha et al., 2023).

Exploring potential differences in the types of violence based on sexual orientation, the data revealed that LGBTQ+individuals suffered and perpetrated more sexual coercion in their lifetime than their heterosexual counterparts. Some studies have highlighted factors that may contribute to LGBTQ+individuals' vulnerability to violence, such as minority stress and increased substance use (Laskey et al., 2019). These factors increase the risk of IPV victimization and perpetration, including sexual violence (De Schrijver et al., 2022; Shorey et al., 2019). However, caution is advised when analyzing this finding, considering that there is a discrepancy in the number of heterosexual and LGBTQ+participants. If the number of LGBTQ+participants were higher, additional differences might have been observed or, conversely, the existing differences could have disappeared. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies include a more balanced number of participants to provide a more comprehensive understanding of BV dynamics. The absence of significant differences in the remaining types of violence suggests that BV may occur across various relationships (Capinha et al., 2022; Lewis et al., 2015; Stults et al., 2022; Wei et al., 2020). Further research with larger and more diverse samples is required to fully understand these dynamics.

The results revealed only gender and sexual orientation differences in the types of violence in perpetration rates. A possible explanation may lie in self-reporting biases that are influenced by societal norms. Prior research suggests that men may underreport victimization due to the stigma, which could obscure differences in victimization rates (Bates et al., 2022).

Regarding gender and sexual orientation differences among the categories, no statistically significant differences were found. Based on the prevalence rates of the various categories, it can be concluded that while BV was the most prevalent pattern of intimate violence, some participants assumed a unique role as either victims or perpetrators of IPV. Furthermore, more female college students were assumed to be the sole perpetrators in their relationships than were male college students. Taken together, these findings challenge the patriarchal perspective that designates women solely as victims and men solely as perpetrators, showing that violence can occur in intimate relationships regardless of gender or sexual orientation (Machado et al., 2024).

While we consider the key insights from our present study valuable, it is important to recognize certain

limitations that may impact the interpretation of our results. Primarily, data collection occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring the use of online methods to prioritize participants' safety. However, conducting an online study presents unique challenges, including difficulties in ensuring respondent identities (and preventing fraudulent access) as well as addressing the circumstances and potential for multiple responses from the same individual (Vasconcelos et al., 2023). Additionally, online studies face challenges in reaching demographics with limited Internet access and lack of direct contact with participants, making it impossible to promptly clarify any arising doubts (Andrade, 2020). Moreover, a substantial number of individuals who completed the study did not complete the questionnaire. This dropout phenomenon may be attributed to the proliferation of online studies during the pandemic, leading to questionnaire fatigue and decreased interest (Andrade, 2020; De Man et al., 2021).

Another limitation concerns the noteworthy gender and sexual orientation disproportions, which warrants caution when interpreting our findings. Specifically, the number of male and LGBTQ+participants was considerably lower than that of female and heterosexual participants, which may have influenced our results. Thus, we recommend that future research endeavors should include a more balanced sample to enhance the reliability of participant response comparisons. Similarly, the instrument used to gather data on IPV prevalence and frequency has its own constraints. While the CTS2 is a highly respected and useful instrument, it does not consider the broader context in which violence occurs (Ahmadabadi et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2017). Furthermore, the CTS2 does not account for potential motivations, and does not distinguish between violence used in self-defense or retaliation and unprovoked violence, potentially leading to cases being categorized as BV even when one partner acts solely in self-defense (Babcock et al., 2019). As a result, this approach may constrain interpretations regarding the dynamics of IPV, its direction and consequences (Ahmadabadi et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2017). Additionally, in this study, IPV was assessed from the perspective of one partner only. Relying on one viewpoint can lead to social desirability bias and may not capture accurately the complexity of IPV (Machado et al., 2024). Studies that include both partners offer a more detailed analysis by highlighting similarities and differences in their accounts of victimization and perpetration and provide valuable information regarding the broader context of violent interactions (Crane et al., 2014; Hu et al., 2021). To improve the quality and depth of IPV research, future studies should incorporate reports from both partners whenever possible. Furthermore, some of the subscales revealed internal consistency values very close to 0.70 (e.g., past year sexual coercion victimization, lifetime psychological aggression victimization, and perpetration) which, although acceptable, may raise concerns about their reliability. Thus, although our results challenge the gender-biased perspective of IPV, caution is advised when interpreting our findings. In addition, future studies should expand the understanding of individuals' motivations and interpretations of violent behaviors in intimate relationships, especially BV, as well as individuals' cultural contexts and backgrounds. The motivations underlying IPV perpetration are complex and shaped by multiple factors. For instance, while self-defense has been identified as one possible reason for female-perpetrated violence, research suggests that it is not necessarily the predominant motivation (Cascardi & Vivian, 1995; Hamberger & Guse, 2002, 2005). Moreover, studies indicate that men and women often report similar motives, including retaliation, control, and emotional responses such as anger or frustration (Elmquist et al., 2014). Additionally, literature indicates that ethnicity and culture can impact both IPV perpetration and victimization (Yoshioka & Choi, 2005). Therefore, future research should adopt qualitative or mixed-method approaches to enhance the depth of the current understanding of IPV dynamics.

Conclusion and Practical Implications

Much of the existing research on IPV tends to focus on unidirectional patterns, which are often influenced by a gendered perspective that disproportionately emphasizes female victimization. This narrow focus overlooks other IPV patterns, particularly BV, and fails to fully capture the complexity of IPV dynamics (Machado et al., 2019; Vasconcelos et al., 2023). This unidirectional bias has significant implications for public policies and for the design of prevention and intervention programs, which are often based on an oversimplified and gendered understanding of IPV (e.g., Cunha et al., 2022; Laskey et al., 2019; Machado et al., 2016b).

Given the prevalence of bidirectional IPV among college students, this study highlights the urgent need to incorporate this into prevention and intervention initiatives. Prevention strategies, including national campaigns, seminars, and conferences, must raise awareness of BV and challenge the assumption that IPV is always dichotomous or exclusively explained from a patriarchal perspective. By focusing specifically on college student - an at-risk population for both victimization and perpetration - this study underscores the critical role of educational institutions in promoting gender-inclusive information about IPV and challenging social stereotypes surrounding both victims and perpetrators (Jankowitz, 2018; Neves et al., 2021). Recognizing the fundamental role of prevention in this population, efforts

should be directed towards educating young people about cultivating healthy relationships without resorting to any type of violence (e.g., Neves et al., 2021; Straus, 2008).

Beyond prevention, it is vital to raise awareness about the available support services for those in violent relationships. Training victim support institutions and service providers is essential for adopting a comprehensive, gender-inclusive approach to addressing cases of BV, particularly among college students and young adults. This approach should take into account both the relational dynamics and the needs related to skills, intimacy, and developmental stage. By equipping practitioners with the necessary skills to intervene effectively, we can foster an environment in which individuals feel empowered to seek help and pursue healthy, nonviolent relationships. Considering the absence of gender and sexual orientation differences found in this study, a multifaceted and gendered-inclusive approach is key for dismantling harmful stereotypes and creating an IPV support system that recognizes the complexities of both victim and perpetrator roles in society.

This study contributes to the ongoing exploration of BV among college students, an area that remains underresearched despite growing recognition of its prevalence. The findings of this study underscore the significance of BV in intimate relationships within this population and highlight the need for effective prevention and intervention programs. Such programs should focus on reducing the occurrence of such violent acts in these relationships and equipping victims with the necessary tools to overcome the potential consequences of violence they may have experienced.

In summary, this study offers valuable contributions to the understanding of BV in the college student population. First, it supports the emerging body of literature that challenges the traditional view of IPV as unidirectional, thus validating the argument that IPV often assumes a bidirectional pattern. Second, it demonstrated that both male and female college students can perpetrate violence in intimate relationships, although the types of violence they experience and perpetrate may differ. While the findings align with the concept of gender symmetry in terms of overall IPV victimization and perpetration, they reveal asymmetry when considering the specific types of violence involved. These findings suggest that future research and interventions should consider the diverse and complex nature of IPV, taking into account the bidirectional nature of violence as well as its gendered and context-specific manifestations.

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Data Availability Non available.

Declarations

Ethical Approval The study was approved by the Ethic Comission of Lusófona University.

Competing Interests None.

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