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Chapter

Resilience in Mexican Women Who Have Experienced a Situation of Sexual Harassment

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Abstract

Introduction: Resilience provides victims of violence with the necessary strength to get out of difficult situations, increases self-esteem, and provides tools for women concerning the environment that surrounds them to act on it and create protective barriers. In Mexico, a high number of victims of sexual violence is established, however, no mechanisms or interventions are observed to increase resilience skills in people who have suffered some type of sexual harassment. **Objective:** to describe the resilience factors in a group of young people who have suffered sexual harassment. **Methodology:** Quantitative, observational, cross-sectional study with a descriptive scope, applied through a virtual survey using the Google Forms tool. **Results:** with 88 participants of which 80.7% were female, it is established that most of the subjects were at a high level of 90.9% (80), followed by a medium level of 9.1% (8); with an average of 5.79 (0.59 SD) of identification in the questions (I identify myself easily), while in the total score of 652, with a minimum of 451 and a maximum of 752. For men, the average resilience was 5.72 and for women 5.81, slightly higher. **Conclusion:** Resilience skills are essential to achieve a better adaptation to bullying situations, and not aggravate the consequences generated by people who exercise this type of violence.

Keywords: resilience, Mexican, women, sexual harassment, vulnerability groups

1. Introduction

For Fergus and Zimmerman cited above, resilience is referred to as that process linked to overcoming the negative effects after having been exposed to risk and successfully coping with the traumatic experience. They also raise risk and protective factors. Some definitions of resilience can be found in **Table 1**. Resilience in women who have experienced sexual harassment is the process by which they adapt with some degree of well-being to the adversities of the traumatic situation [3].

Group	Definition
They relate the phenomenon to the adaptability component.	He expresses that resilience is considered as the successful adaptation of an individual, being exposed to risk factors, mainly of biological order; but it also implies a low susceptibility of the subject to future stressors.
They include the concept of capacity or ability.	It takes as an example the definition of Grotberg [1], which proposes resilience as a universal human capacity, mainly of a biological nature. resilience as a universal human capacity, which allows facing life's adversities, overcoming them and transforming oneself as a result. He also refers to it as part of the evolutionary process and that it can be learned and developed from childhood.
Emphasize the conjunction of	According to Vanistendael [2], resilience has two components: likewise resistance to destruction, and on the other, the capacity to build positive behaviors in spite of difficult experiences.

Taken from: [3].

Table 1.
Definitions of resilience according to their applicability.

These resilience processes such as the interaction of social support factors, i.e. I have, skills and personal strengths, have characteristics such as the individual's confidence in himself and in others, which is the basis of other pillars and is the key to facilitate the process of resilience, constant self-confidence. Dignity and identity, recognition of one's own achievements and self-acceptance, introspection, reflection and critical awareness is asking questions, talking to oneself and giving honest answers, being autonomous and independent, knowing how to set boundaries between oneself and others with problematic conditions or capabilities. Keeping emotional and physical distance [4].

The relevant subcategories for this study are support networks, institutions, family, friends, women's groups (that's me), and for resilience to be important, in addition to personal factors, dynamic processes related to the environment and support networks are required, place or from the strengths that each individual has to respond to the traumatic situation caused by sexual violence and develop successfully to achieve personal, psychological, social, family growth (what can I do) and promote the resilience of victims of sexual violence as a dynamic process which allows them to work here and strengthen the process.

Likewise, harassment can be delimited as any practice of implicit or explicit sexual connotation coming from a person (known or unknown) and with a unidirectional character, that is, without the consent of the person to whom it is directed, occurring in public or private spaces with the potential to produce discomfort in the person harassed [5].

In Mexico, 19.2 million women have suffered some form of intimidation, harassment, bullying or sexual abuse at some point in their lives (Encuesta Nacional sobre Dinámica en las Relaciones Familiares [6]). 1 in 9 sexual crimes against women Sexual crimes against men (Encuesta Nacional de Victimización y Percepciones de Seguridad Ciudadana [7]). 40,303 women were raped in Mexico in the National Survey of Perceptions of Victimization and Public Safety 2018 [7].

32.8% of 15–17 year olds have experienced some form of sexual violence in the community (Statistical Review of Violence Against Children and UNICEF [8]). In 2021 you will see more and more dark images of sexual violence. 99.7% of cases go unreported. In the second half of 2021, almost 5 million women were victims of sexual crimes, 0.8 percentage points more than the previous year. Between July 2021 and December 2021, 99.7% of sexual assault cases against women over the age of 18 were reported. In 2020, the black figure is 98.6%. The cities with the highest cases of sexual crimes are Tlaxcala, Merida and Tampico (National Urban Public Safety Survey [9]).

For victims, this type of behavior has serious consequences on their physical and mental health, such as loss of self-confidence and self-esteem, increased nervous tension and irritability, and even anxiety, fear, depression and sleep disorders. Likewise, the increase in the level of stress can cause eating problems, difficulty concentrating at school or work, stigmatization and lead to the abandonment of daily life activities [10].

These two phenomena are related in the degree of affectation for these consequences, since resilience as a personal factor can provide mechanisms of adaptability and response to this type of violence, in addition to enhancing the victims' ability to cope with, assimilate and respond to these events [11].

Health interventions can provide basic results to increase their resilience, and it is important to highlight that, according to Humphrey's description of the impact of protective factors, public health is the basis for comprehensive treatment of women victims of sexual violence. The physical and mental health of women and research on the resilience of victimized women provide elements to understand the effective adaptation of these women and show how they can recover from trauma and achieve personal and successful lives and relationships [12–14].

Derived from this, it is established that non-violence prevention campaigns in public spaces and workspaces should be based on methodologies that are broader than a risk perspective, but should instead focus on disseminating messages related to the empowerment of women, the active participation of men, and the promotion of health [15].

For all of the above, the objective of this study is to describe the resilience factors in a group of young people who have suffered sexual harassment through the application of an instrument.

2. Materials and method

This is an observational study, descriptive in scope and cross-sectional, which worked with 88 participants, through a virtual survey on the Google Forms platform, using a non-probabilistic sampling by convenience, as inclusion criteria were established as young people who wished to respond to the survey and the most important elimination criterion was that they had not suffered a bullying event.

The questionnaire (Edith Henderson Grotberg Resilience Test) consists of 107 statements with which individuals could identify themselves from: 7. I identify myself totally (100–95%), with some rare exceptions, 6. I identify myself very easily and as a general rule, 5. I identify myself easily, 4.

The responses were grouped into 4 components:

- The “I am” and “I am”: indicates the degree of resilience or inner strength.

- The “I can” indicates the degree of social, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills.
- The “I have” refers to external resilience factors, support networks or social support (family, friends, social).
- The “I believe” refers to the convictions we have.

It is important to establish that during this process the Regulations of the General Law of Research in Health Research were considered, through a welcome screen the informed consent was collected and the objectives were shared, as well as the perceived benefits and risks.

3. Results

A total of 88 surveys were applied through the Google Forms tool. When measuring the reliability of the instrument, through Cronbach’s Alpha, a total of .974 was obtained, which indicates a high reliability at the time of application. In the sociodemographic data, 19.3% (17) were male and 80.7% (71) were female; the average age was 22 years (1.16 SD), of this group, 59.1% (52) were without a partner at the time of the survey, followed by 35.2% (31) who were in a relationship, and finally, with 5.7% (5), who were in a free union. Chi-square tests of independence established that the variables were not dependent on sex ($p = .608$) or marital status ($p = .856$) (**Table 2**).

In the first component, which establishes the “I am” and “I am” to describe the degree of internal resistance, high degrees of identification are described, especially for the items I am someone who likes to help and serve others, with 52.3% (I identify myself totally), for the statement I am compassionate (a) to the suffering of others with 45.5% (40) and for the sentence I am aware that I am a unique and unrepeatable person a total of 51.1% (45) of this same response. In this section, an average of 5.77 pts. (0.581 SD) is obtained, which indicates that on average people identify easily with the statements made, and when categorized, most of the subjects were found at a high level 88.6% (77).

For the next component that evaluates the degree of social, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills, it is obtained that on average people identify easily with the statements made with 5.72 pts. (0.572 SD), in which the following items stand out whose distribution was grouped in the response I identify myself totally: I can make decisions by myself with 50% (44), I can face problems and learn from them 42% (37) and I can face and work through adverse situations for as long as necessary 44.3% (39). Likewise, a phrase with which they identified very little was I can experience the desire to continue struggling with sometimes I can identify myself and sometimes not with 27.3% (24).

Gender	Civil status		
	Single	With a partner	In free union
Male	8 (10%)	8 (6%)	1 (1%)
Female	44 (42%)	23 (25%)	4 (4%)

Table 2.
Cross-tabulation of marital status and sex in the participating subjects.

Subsequently, to delimit the external factors of resilience, the support or social support networks such as family, friends, social networks is determined by establishing the average at 5.91 with a standard deviation of 0.688. In the analysis by items it is observed that the sentences in which most of the subjects identify themselves totally were: I am willing to recognize my mistakes and my responsibilities 67% (59), also the sentence I am willing to face adverse situations knowing that the solution depends on my own abilities and strength 65.9% (58) and finally I am willing to continue with courage and to the end the tasks or projects in which I have committed myself 55.7% (44).

Finally, in the component corresponding to the convictions that influence resilience, the statements with which the majority of the participants identified themselves as a whole were I have a structured home with rules 56.8% (50) and I have parents who encourage self-esteem 50% (44). The average identifying responses centered on 6.01 with a standard deviation of 0.70, placing them at the level of I identify very easily and as a rule. The percentages according to level can be seen in **Table 3**.

Regarding the general level of resilience evaluated, it is established that most of the subjects were at a high level 90.9% (80), followed by a medium level 9.1% (8); with an average of 5.79 (0.59 SD) of identification in the questions (I identify myself

Level	Resilience component			
	Internal strength	Social abilities	Support networks	Conviction
Low	0	0	0	0
Medium	10 (11.4%)	17 (19.3%)	11 (12.5%)	2 (2.3%)
High	78 (88.6%)	71 (80.7%)	77 (87.5%)	86 (97.7%)

Table 3.
 Classification according to the level of the components of the resilience instrument.

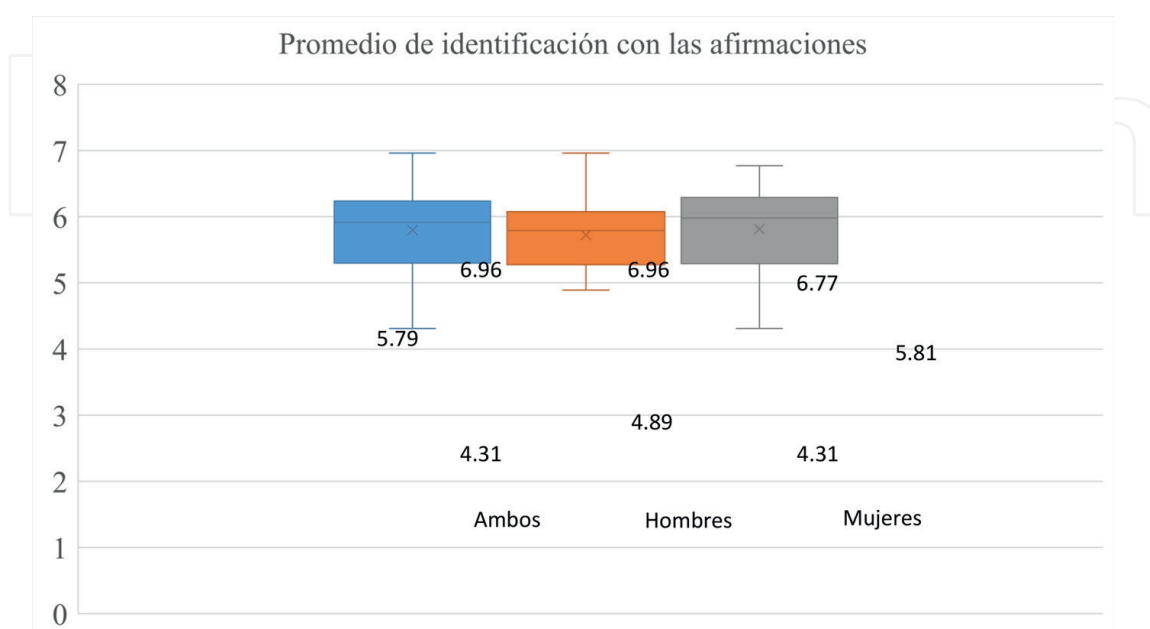


Figure 1.
 Distribution of self-identification affirmation averages by gender and overall.

easily), while in the total score of 652, with a minimum of 451 and a maximum of 752. For men, the average resilience was 5.72 and for women 5.81, slightly higher. The distribution between sexes and in general can be found in **Figure 1**.

4. Discussion

Resilience can be understood as the capacity or characteristic that people must have in order to come out on top when touched by violence is resilience and currently, there is little research that addresses this problem from a quantitative perspective.

In this research, most of the participants identify themselves at a high level in all components. Regarding inner strength, a high level is noted with 88.6% of identification at this level, which coincides with that reported by Moreano in 2018, who establishes through in-depth interviews that most participants state that inner strength is a decisive factor in facing this type of problem, because it allows rethinking questions about power and how public institutions can facilitate the empowerment of women in today's society [16].

Secondly, for social skills, in this research a high level was obtained in 80.7% of the participants, which differs with what was found by Cordero and Teyes in 2016, who evaluate the level of resilience of women in a situation of domestic violence in a community in Venezuela, by establishing that family or social factors influence this capacity at a high level with only 46.1%, which establishes an important difference in the public sphere since most of these women establish a loss of confidence in the close family and social nucleus due to the situation of harassment [17].

Subsequently for the support networks, the participants of this research indicate to be at a high level up to 87.5%, according to the identification of the phrases. This coincides with what was reported by Ramírez and Trujillo in 2019, who through their work groups report that support networks are the fundamental pillar on which the process of overcoming this violence is structured, since it contributes to generate the conditions for the identification of aggression. On many occasions, this is the factor that motivates the victims to take legal action and to break all types of relationship with the aggressor, in case they are in their social circle [18].

Then, in the last component, conviction, that is, what people believe can help them in situations of violence in this research a high level is obtained with 96.7%, which coincides with that reported by Ortíz in 2020, who states that among the most important factors of overcoming for women victims of sexual violence is the belief that the situation will improve, together with social and family support [19].

In general, the persons evaluated established a high identification with the statements contained in the instrument, as well as in each of the components, this is important, since as established by Lazo in 2021, resilience provides women victims of violence with the necessary strength to get out of difficult situations, increases self-esteem, and provides tools so that the woman in relation to the environment that surrounds her can act on it and create protective barriers [3].

5. Conclusions

During the development of the study, it became evident that those who generated the process of resistance had protective and risk factors that favored or limited such recovery, and in this case, it was clear how these factors play the role of women. Matter of victims of sexual harassment.

The emphasis on lack of support networks, negative emotions, lack of independence and autonomy, all common, become accepted traits from their life experiences and background.

The experience of sexual harassment affects the whole person, endangering their physical, mental and general health, and after sexual abuse it can be seen that to acquire the qualities of resilience, the person needs to have a rich and useful psychosocial support network. Visualize the positive in all bad events. These support networks reduce risk factors.

In this case, we see when confronted with these situations that he faced, he was somehow able to face the events from a different angle in life and change his mind about his purpose in life. Single parent), work, social, personal.

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