



The relationship between dating violence and help-seeking behavior among adolescents aged 12-14

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received : June 04, 2024

Revised : July 26, 2024

Accepted : August 5, 2024

Keywords:

Dating violence;
Impact of Violence;
Seeking help

ABSTRACT

Dating violence is a manifestation of inequality in any given relationship. It involves abuse within a romantic relationship that inflicts both physical and psychological harm on the victim. The psychological impacts include heartbreak, loss of self-confidence, and anxiety. This issue is particularly concerning among adolescents and warrants attention from various stakeholders. Consequently, seeking help is crucial for individuals who experience dating violence. This paper aims to assess the relationship between incidents of dating violence and the help-seeking efforts of victims. This study was a cross-sectional survey that was conducted at Junior High School. 82 respondents were recruited by utilizing the relationship between dating violence and help-seeking behavior with a proportional stratified random sampling technique, which also was analyzed using Chi-Square. The majority of respondents who experienced dating violence reported emotional violence (25.6%) and 48.8% of these individuals did not seek help. The results indicate no significant relationship between incidents of dating violence and help-seeking behavior among Adolescents aged 12-14 years old in at Junior High School in Yogyakarta $X^2(1, N = 104) = 1.7, p > .05$. This suggested that, within this study, there is no significant correlation between the occurrence of dating violence and efforts made by adolescents to seek help. Despite experiencing violence, these adolescents may not be inclined to reach out for assistance, suggesting a potential disconnect between experiencing violence and responding to it.

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1. Introduction

Dating Violence (DV) is a prevalent social phenomenon that often goes unrecognized, particularly prior to marriage. While dating is typically seen as a romantic and mutually affectionate experience, it can also pose significant risks, especially for women [1]. Some view dating violence as a normal consequence of relationship, which can lead individuals to maintain unhealthy relationships despite the abuse. Even though both men and women can be the perpetrators of dating violence, in several studies men were still held responsible for most intimate violence including DV. DV cannot be solely attributed physical strength or body size. The prevailing patriarchal culture was partly contributed to this circumstance, which positions men as more powerful and dominant. Societal norms often portray women as weak, submissive, and passive, reinforcing the mistreatment and abuse they may face [2].



DV is a recognized form of violence against women under Indonesian law. Perpetrators of DV can be charged under Articles 351-358 of the Criminal Code if the victim is under 18 years old. Additionally, they may be prosecuted under Law No. 35 of 2014, which amends Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection. Domestic violence is addressed by Law No. 23 of 2004. Despite these legal provisions, incidents of DV continue to occur. According to Komnas Perempuan's 2023 annual report, of the total complaints received, 339,782 were related to gender-based violence (GBV), with 3,442 cases reported directly to Komnas Perempuan. Violence in Personal Relationships (PR) remains predominant, accounting for 99% of GBV cases, or 336,804 incidents. Among these, violence by ex-partners was noted in 713 cases, with psychological violence being the most frequently reported form of abuse [3]. The most prominent forms of violence reported are physical violence (31%), sexual violence (30%), psychological violence (28%), and economic violence (10%).

Experiencing DV can have long lasting effects, including health problems and prolonged trauma. Trauma from sexual violence can lead to a loss of trust, feelings of worthlessness, and a sense of helplessness regarding one's own body. The physical consequences may include unwanted pregnancy, self-harm, or even tragic outcomes such as suicide. Therefore, seeking help is crucial for victims to receive the protection and support they need. Addressing and healing from the psychological trauma of sexual violence requires attentive support from close family and friends, who play a vital role in the recovery process [4].

Help-seeking behavior refers to seeking support during difficulties, which can be from formal sources like clinics, counselors, psychologists, and medical staff, or informal sources such as peers, friends, family, and community adults [5]. The phenomenon described highlights that many adolescents experience intense attractions, often referred to as 'Monkey Love,' leading to a desire to fulfill their every wish. When these desires are unmet, it can result in aggressive behavior and dating violence against their partners. This research was conducted due to the concern that many women are unaware of the violent behaviors they experience, which have significant psychological effects. Psychological violence, a challenging yet impactful consequence of DV, often goes unrecognized but profoundly affects women.

2. Method

This study was a cross-sectional survey conducted at a junior high school in Yogyakarta. The total study population comprised 459 students, with 237 students from class 7 and 222 students from class 8. The sampling method was probability sampling with a proportional stratified random sampling technique. Representatives were selected from each class, resulting in 17.8% of the total population (82 respondents) being recruited in this study.

The inclusion criteria for the sample were adolescents at junior high school in Yogyakarta who were willing to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria included adolescents aged younger than 12 years and those who were not present at the research site. The research instrument used a questionnaire, with the DV questionnaire adopted from previous research and the help-seeking questionnaire adapted from prior studies. Both instruments were modified and then tested for validity and reliability.

The validity and reliability tests were conducted with class IX students at a junior high school in Yogyakarta, using a significance level of 0.05 and an r-table value of 0.316 with 30 respondents. The association between DV and help-seeking behavior was analyzed utilizing Chi-Square. A significant association was observed if the p-value was <0.05. This research has received Ethical Clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Jenderal Achmad Yani SKep/536/KEP/XI/2023, issued on November 29, 2023.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

Respondent characteristics are summarized in Table 1. The majority of adolescents were 12 years old (46%), female (75%), and lived with their parents (67%) in a relationship (79%) that was shorter than <1 year (67%). The daily pocket money of the respondents mainly was \geq Rp—15,000 (51%).

Table 1. Distribution of respondent characteristics among adolescents

	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	12 years old	38	46
	13 years old	34	41
	14 years old	10	12
Gender	Man	20	24
	Woman	62	75
Residence	With parents	55	67
	Boarding house	27	32
Status	Have/are currently dating	65	79
	Never been in a relationship	17	20
Long Dating	< 1 year	55	67
	\geq 1 year	27	32
Pocket money (Daily)	< Rp. 15,000	40	49
	\geq Rp. 15,000	42	51
Total		82	100

Based on Table 2, most respondents who experienced DV reported emotional violence (25.6%). Regarding help-seeking behavior, 40 respondents (48.8%) did not seek help.

Table 2. Types of violence experienced by the respondents

	Variables	n	%
DV	Physical violence	6	7.3
	Emotional violence	21	25.6
	Sexual Violence	2	2.4
	Economic Violence	14	17.1
Help-seeking	No	40	48.8
	Yes	42	51.2

Based on Table 3, 17 out of 82 respondents (20.7%) experienced DV but did not seek help. The proportion of subjects who reported experiencing DV did not differ by help-seeking behavior, $X^2(1, N = 82) = 1.8, p > .05$.

Table 3. The relationship between dating violence with help search among adolescents

Dating Violence	Help Search				Total	p-value	X ₂ (95% CI)
	No		Yes				
	n	%	n	%			
Experience	17	20.7	24	29.2	41	50	0.27 (0.75–4.33)
Not experienced	23	28	18	22	41	50	
Total	40	48.7	42	51.2	82	100	

3.2. Discussion

The findings from this study reveal important insights into the prevalence of different forms of DV and help-seeking behaviors among adolescents at a junior high school in Yogyakarta. The lack of a significant relationship found in this study underscored the complexity of help-seeking behavior and suggests that factors other than the incidence of DV may influence whether individuals seek assistance.

The reluctance to seek help among adolescents, despite experiencing DV, may be influenced by various factors, including a lack of awareness, social stigma, or personal barriers. The PIK-R program, aimed at providing reproductive health information and counseling, only engages students when problems are identified, which may not address the proactive needs of those struggling with communication issues. Consequently, there is a pressing need for more accessible and preventative support mechanisms to encourage open communication and timely help-seeking among adolescents.

These findings align with previous research indicating that many DV victims either do not recognize their situation or perceive it as a personal issue, leading to underreporting and minimal help-seeking. Addressing these barriers through targeted educational programs and support services is crucial for improving the well-being and safety of adolescents facing DV.

Adolescents are divided into three stages: early adolescence (12-15 years), mid-adolescence (15-18 years), and late adolescence (19-22 years) [6]. During these years, romantic feelings and dating have become prominent. Adolescents facing relationship issues may experience significant emotional distress and, in severe cases, even suicidal thoughts if they feel unable to confide in their parents. This highlights the need for accessible emotional support and open communication [7].

DV is a significant concern for adolescents due to its severe health impacts. Physically, it can cause bruises, injuries, or even death. Psychologically, it leads to heartache, loss of self-confidence, and anxiety. Sexual violence can result in unwanted pregnancies, abortions, and sexually transmitted diseases [8]. DV involves coercion, pressure, and both physical and psychological abuse within a dating relationship. It can manifest as physical, emotional, or verbal abuse by one partner against the other [9].

One among other factors that cause violence against women is socio-cultural factors, power imbalance among individuals [10]. However, it highlights those unequal relationships, influenced by unequal power between two people in a relationship. When it happened among girls, in Indonesian society, this entrenched cultural norm weakens the status of women and reinforces the status of men [11]. Many women fail to recognize that restrictive behaviors from their partner, often seen as a regular part of care and affection, are forms of violence [12]. However, men also have different level of power and social gradients which make some of them more powerful compared to others. Thus, some men, for example, boys with certain characteristics, might have the possibility to get some violence from others too. Unfortunately, this study did not clarify whether girls or boys experienced more DV.

Gender oppression manifests as men controlling and suppressing women, often through violence that undermines women's independence. Contributing factors include mental illness, jealousy, and a lack of social control [13]. DV characterized by coercion to gain control, often leaves women with limited bargaining power, leading them to accept abusive behavior [14]. Women experiencing DV often stay silent due to shame and fear of ending the relationship. They may worry about social stigma and the perceived failure of a long-term relationship [15]. Fear of escalating violence also prevents them from resisting [16]. Research shows that patriarchal beliefs and traditional gender norms justify and perpetuate such violence [17][18][19]. Men with strong patriarchal views are more likely to commit violence against their partners [20]. Thus, patriarchal ideologies significantly contribute to the vulnerability of women in abusive relationships.

In cases of DV, victims often feel weak and lack self-confidence, while deeply loving their partners. Perpetrators frequently apologize and promise to change after an incident, showing regret and affection. Despite experiencing violence and having their rights compromised, women often forgive and give their partners another chance [15]. Individuals who are inclined to be abusive often repeat this behavior, as it reflects their personality and approach to conflict. Victims may not realize

that this violence can become a continuous cycle, causing long-term harm and impacting their future. If such behavior persists into marriage, it can lead to ongoing domestic violence and lasting trauma [21].

The severe psychological impact of DV includes high stress and the risk of depression, significantly affecting mental health and well-being [22]. Seeking help is crucial for those unable to resolve issues on their own, as it positively impacts mental health. However, not everyone in need of assistance actively seeks help [23]. Support can come from various external sources, including individuals with different roles and relationships.

4. Conclusion

The findings indicate no significant relationship between DV and help-seeking among adolescents aged 12-14 years old. Emotional, economic, psychological, physical, and sexual violence are prevalent among these adolescents. Further research should focus on improving students' behavior towards themselves (self-care) and others, improving their skills of requesting help to other people, managing emotions through emotional control training or counseling, being more independent and self-reliance to preventing future violence. This study also suggests enhancing PIK-R/Youth Information and Counseling Center activities and exploring these issues further using qualitative methods for deeper insights.

Acknowledgment

All contributors thanked all respondent

Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflicts of interest.

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