

## Age, gender and duration of dating with the involvement in dating violence

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### ABSTRACT

Dating violence (DV) is a public health issue with severe implications for victims and perpetrators both. Adolescents, both male and female, exhibit a tendency for involvement in this. This cross-sectional research aimed to analyze the relationship between age, gender, and dating duration with the involvement of perpetrators of violence in dating. The sample size for this study consisted of 351 adolescents who were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The sample inclusion criteria are active students, have a partner, and are willing to be respondents. Data were analyzed using Chi-square test with 95% confidence interval. The results showed that younger adolescents are more likely to be involved in DV. Almost all females have acted as perpetrators of physical and psychological violence in dating. Females and males have equal opportunities to engage in DV. The dating duration is also predicted as one of the causes of adolescent involvement in violence during courtship. The dating duration is predicted to be more prone to being involved—being the perpetrator—in DV. Victims must have the courage to take a stand and stop the relationship if they experience violence, and they must be wise and selective in help-seeking.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The world health organization (WHO) defines violence as an act of using physical force to intentionally and threaten or against someone in a group or community, which results in injury, death, psychological disorders, and developmental disorders [1]. In Indonesia, at least one among 10 adolescents reported that they had experienced physical violence such as being beaten, punched, kicked, or slapped by the partner. Some other adolescents were victims of sexual violence from their partner and this could be shared by both females and males [2].

The national commission (*Komnas*) found that 71% of cases of violence occurred in the private sphere, such as domestic violence (5,167 cases) and dating violence (DV) (1,873 cases) [3]. The women's national commission (*Komnas Perempuan*) informed that the picture is concerning regarding DV. The number of DV in 2015 increased by two times compared to the one in 2012 (1,085 cases). In 2015 DV cases accounted for 25% of the total violence against women in the private sector. Women and the young adult population aged 19-23 years are at high risk of becoming victims [4]. The ministry of women empowerment and children protection stated that 42.7% of unmarried women had experienced violence, and of 10,847 perpetrators of violence, 2,090 perpetrators were partners/friends [5], [6].

According to the annual records (CATAHU), there was an increase in violence cases from 2017 to 1,873 cases and 2018 to 2,073 cases. According to data from the office of women's empowerment, child protection and family planning (DP3AKB), the DV number reached 703 cases, while in district courts, there were 216 cases of DV. According to CATAHU, when viewed from the age characteristics, the victims of DV are 13-18 years old, and the perpetrators are 19-24 years old [7]. Psychological violence is most common among adolescents aged 14 to 20 years, with 94% for females and 93% for males. Meanwhile, physical violence in dating reaches 42% in females and 39% in males [8]. The high rate of violence in dating has become a concern in various studies because it can negatively impact both physically and psychologically [9].

The most reported form of violence was physical violence (41%), for instance push or pull, forcing off the vehicle, hand twist and body slam, which impacted mild to severe, such as suicide. Apart from physical violence, reported violence was sexual violence (31%) for example forcing to have sex for intercourse and petting, psychological violence (15%) for example bring up the past, and limiting association, and economic violence (13%) for example frequently purchase data packages, pay for meals, and meet the demands of different individuals [3], [6]. Verbal violence is part of the form of violence that is also often experienced by females. The verbal abuse can take in the form of threats, insults, watching a partner, sending excessive text messages, insults, to intimidation. This does not only happen to females.

DV is caused by multiple factors, such as individual, community, and environmental levels. Gender, age, low education level, lack of understanding, alcohol use and/or drug addiction, deviant sexual orientation, information support, family history of violence, and attitudes toward DV are all risk factors for violence at the individual level [10]–[12] and length of courtship, where exposure to violence increased with relationship length [13]. Research states that past experiences of violence and exposure to violent content on social media are predicted as causes of DV [14]. Poverty, easy access to alcohol and drugs are predicted as risk factors for violence at the community level. In the environment, violence can occur due to social norms that apply to the society where violence is considered normal, economic status, lack of social protection [10].

In general, males have a more supportive attitude towards violence than females. Males tend to justify violence more than females [15]. However, females are also potential perpetrators of violence. One study found that males were more likely to be victims and females were more likely to be perpetrators of DV. Adolescent females were found to have more aggressive attitudes than males towards dating conflicts [16]. A study found that violent behavior among males living in low-income urban environments is motivated primarily by money and drugs. In contrast, violent behavior among females is mainly motivated by gossip [17]. The study also found that adolescents who witnessed acts of DV tended to be involved [18].

Exposure to violence by parents was identified as the cause of adolescents between both gender committing violence during dating, especially physical violence [19]. Adolescents of both gender (male and female) who oppress others also tend to commit physical, verbal, and sexual violence in dating [20]. Research reports an increased risk of emotional violence against males. This increase happened due to changes in gender roles, where the role of females became stronger, resulting in a negotiation of roles in the relationship. However, females use this condition to fully control a relationship, not fight for gender equality [21]. Females who have an attitude that supports violence have the opportunity to become perpetrators of DV, especially physical violence [22].

DV is a public health problem that has negative consequences for both victims and perpetrators. DV is correlated with depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, alcohol and drug abuse, and unprotected sex [23]. DV also has long-term health and social impacts for its victims, even death. In the United States in 2003-2016, 2,188 children aged 11-18 years died, 7% of whom were victims of DV. Research on DV has been widely reported, both risk factors and consequences of violence experienced by victims or perpetrators. However, studies linking perpetrators of violence in dating to gender and length of courtship have not been widely reported. Therefore, this study reports the relationship between perpetrators of DV with gender and dating duration.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was an observational analytic using a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design [24]. The research population was Universitas Ahmad Dahlan students who are active in the 2020/2021 academic year. We get the sample by purposive sampling. The sample inclusion criteria were active students in the 2020/2021 academic year, had a partner, and were willing to be respondents. The exclusion criteria were students who drop out in the current academic year and students who do not complete the questionnaire. The sample taken consisted 404 students. 87% (351 people) met the inclusion and exclusion criteria from the number of samples used. The indicator in determining the categorization of the questionnaire is carried out using the receiver operating characteristic (ROC) technique by determining the

cut-off point used to express positive and negative test results. This questionnaire has been adapted [25] from intimate partner violence (IPV) and tested the validity of experts in previous studies with Aiken's V value of 0.8. Categorization in this study 0 (never), 1-3 times (sometimes), 4-9 times (often), and 10 to infinity (always). This questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms. This research was assisted by a team that previously had briefings related to the content in the questionnaire. This research has obtained ethical approval from the research ethics committee universitas Ahmad Dahlan with No. 012008030.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Results

Table 1 describes the frequency distribution of the characteristics of Universitas Ahmad Dahlan students based on the age of the respondents. The age of adolescents in this study varied. In this study, the 18 and 19 years old had a higher percentage than the other ages.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents by age

| Characteristics age of respondents (years old) | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| 17   | 14            | 4.0            |
| 18   | 85            | 24.2           |
| 19   | 85            | 24.2           |
| 20   | 71            | 20.2           |
| 21   | 63            | 17.9           |
| 22   | 23            | 6.6            |
| 23   | 6             | 1.7            |
| 24   | 4             | 1.1            |
| Total  | 351           | 100            |

Table 2 shows that almost all adolescents have been involved in DV. Most of the 351 adolescents were female, and more than half experienced a long courting (>12 months). The involvement of adolescents in violence (physical and psychological) during dating is no different. This means that adolescents commit violence, mild or severe, as long as they are involved in a courtship relationship.

Table 2. Univariate analysis of the involvement of violence in dating, gender, and dating duration

| Variables                             | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Physical violence involvement (n=168) |               |                |
| Severe                                | 85            | 50.6           |
| Mild                                  | 83            | 49.4           |
| Psychological violence involvement    |               |                |
| Severe                                | 178           | 50.7           |
| Mild                                  | 178           | 49.3           |
| Gender                                |               |                |
| Female                                | 318           | 90.6           |
| Male                                  | 33            | 9.4            |
| Dating duration                       |               |                |
| >12 month                             | 207           | 59.0           |
| ≤12 month                             | 144           | 41.0           |

Table 3 shows that from 168 adolescents dating, most adolescents aged less than 19 years have committed acts of physical violence in dating 0.65 times to commit physical violence to their partners but not statistically significant. Females have committed sexual violence against their partners. Females are 1.15 times more likely to commit violence during dating than males, which is not statistically significant. Meanwhile, more than half of adolescents' experience DV as long as they are dating. Adolescents briefly involved in romantic relationships (dating) had a 0.79 times probability of being involved in violence in a courtship relationship, which was mild but not statistically significant.

Table 4 explains that young adolescents or less than 19 years of age are 1.29 times more likely to commit acts of psychological violence in dating than older adolescents and are statistically significant. The majority of females have higher involvement in psychological violence in both severe and mild categories. Females are 1.02 times more likely to be involved in DV than males. Meanwhile, adolescents who dated for more than 12 months found more than half involved in severe and mild DV. Adolescents with a short dating duration have a 0.61 chance of being involved in DV in the mild category and are statistically significant.

Tabel 3. Chi-square test analysis between the involvement of physical violence, age, gender, and dating duration

| Variables       | Physical violence involvement (n=168) |      |      |      | p-value | OR CI95%         |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|---------|------------------|
|                 | Severe                                |      | Mild |      |         |                  |
|                 | n                                     | %    | n    | %    |         |                  |
| Age             |                                       |      |      |      |         |                  |
| ≤19 years old   | 42                                    | 49.4 | 44   | 53   | 0.65    | 1.02 (0.78-1.48) |
| >19 years old   | 43                                    | 53.9 | 39   | 47   |         |                  |
| Gender          |                                       |      |      |      |         |                  |
| Female          | 68                                    | 80.0 | 70   | 84.3 | 0.55    | 1.15 (0.81-1.64) |
| Male            | 17                                    | 20.0 | 13   | 15.7 |         |                  |
| Dating duration |                                       |      |      |      |         |                  |
| >12 month       | 60                                    | 70.6 | 50   | 60.2 | 0.12    | 0.79 (0.56-1.11) |
| ≤12 month       | 25                                    | 29.4 | 33   | 39.8 |         |                  |
| Total           | 85                                    | 100  | 83   | 100  |         |                  |

Table 4. Chi-square test analysis between the involvement of psychological violence, age, gender, and dating duration

| Variables       | duration                           |      |     |      | p-value | OR CI95%         |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|------|-----|------|---------|------------------|
|                 | Psychological violence involvement |      |     |      |         |                  |
|                 | Severe                             | Mild |     |      |         |                  |
|                 | n                                  | %    | n   | %    |         |                  |
| Age             |                                    |      |     |      |         |                  |
| ≤19 years old   | 82                                 | 46.1 | 102 | 59.0 | 0.02    | 1.29 (1.05-1.59) |
| >19 years old   | 96                                 | 53.9 | 71  | 41.0 |         |                  |
| Gender          |                                    |      |     |      |         |                  |
| Female          | 161                                | 90.6 | 157 | 90.8 | 1.000   | 1.02 (0.71-1.44) |
| Male            | 17                                 | 9.4  | 16  | 9.2  |         |                  |
| Dating duration |                                    |      |     |      |         |                  |
| >12 month       | 125                                | 70.2 | 82  | 47.4 | <0.001  | 0.61 (0.48-0.78) |
| ≤12 month       | 53                                 | 29.8 | 91  | 52.6 |         |                  |
| Total           | 178                                | 100  | 173 | 100  |         |                  |

### 3.2. Discussion

This research is related to the behavior of adolescent violence in the Yogyakarta area. Younger adolescents have a 0.65 times chance as perpetrators of physical violence to their partners but not statistically significant. Adolescents aged 19 years (young adolescents) are 1.29 times more likely to be perpetrators of psychological violence in dating than older adolescents (>19 years), and this is statistically significant. The age of maturity in adolescence or early adulthood ranges from 20 to 30 years [26]. Instability in early adulthood is the peak of a person's change of residence and is a time of instability in love, work, and education. Age is an indicator of a person with all the possibilities for him to have the opportunity to change their respective lives [27]. In the field, adolescents tend to behave unstably and often use coercion to show their existence. Adolescents tend to act as they wish because they have a romantic bond (dating). Based on their unwitting behavior, they become perpetrators or are involved with violence in dating/partners. This is in line with reports from Chen and Raine. They show that early adult girls are at increased risk of physical and verbal abuse in dating [28]. Dating and romantic relationships at an early age can be very problematic [29].

Based on gender, both males and females have the potential to become perpetrators of violence. Examples of behaviors that males and females often carry out are checking cellphones, yelling, hitting, and even limiting the association of their partners. Even though social distancing is enforced during the pandemic, they still restrict and monitor their partners via WhatsApp. The findings of this study suggest that females have a greater probability of being involved in DV than males. The previous report has shown that females are more likely to be perpetrators of DV [30], [31]. Another study states that in general violence, men have a tendency to commit violence compared to women [15] but it is possible, women also become perpetrators of violence with different motivations such as gossip being one of the motivations for women to commit violence [17]. It states that women respond more aggressively in conflict than males, implying that men are more likely to be victims of DV [16]. When viewed from the gender aspect of aggression, it is emphasized that the differences in the tendency of violent behavior by males and females depend on the situation. Males are more likely to act aggressively on others even when no one is provoking them, whereas females are just as aggressive as male-only when provoked. Dubu *et al.* [32] reported that males were more likely to engage in physical, sexual, and emotional violence. In contrast, females were more likely to engage in forms of verbal and emotional aggression. The literature review conducted by Dardis *et al.* [33] showed that physical violence in courtship is perpetrated by 17% to 48% of females and 10% to 39% of males. On the other hand, female students in China and America use physical violence as a way out or resistance

from other violence perpetrated by a male [34]. Likewise, with the findings reported by Taylor and Xia [35], one in four males have experienced physical violence in a relationship.

Various reports indicate a trend of a male experiencing violence in dating relationships compared to females. This happens because the portion of the female who commits violence based on an expression of anger tends to retaliate against violence and give punishment for unpleasant treatment. Most females who commit violence are influenced by feelings of frustration, jealousy, and intense anger [36]. Francos *et al.* [37] revealed that 47% of Spanish females perceive jealousy as a sign of love. Cascardi and Avery-Leaf [38] also reported that males are more prone to be victims of psychological violence in dating than females. The underlying motivation for males and females to commit violence in relationships is to regain a sense of power and satisfaction with their partners [39].

The duration of courtship or the length of a relationship will raise females' expectations for their partners. Females will obey their partner's wishes, forming a pattern of power and dependence relations directly proportional to violence. The greater the dependence, the greater the opportunity to be controlled, thus potentially experiencing violence. The length of courtship, female expectations, and reluctance to follow their partner will form a power relation and dependence [40]. According to the study results reported by Creamer *et al.* [41] of respondents who had dated for the twelve months before the survey, 8.2% of them experienced physical violence in their relationship. This is because the duration of courtship is positively correlated with the probability of violence in dating [42].

One of the factors that can affect violence in a dating relationship is a factor in the relationship, namely the length of time dating. This study is in line with the results reported by previous studies. Another study explains that the longer the courtship, the higher the likelihood of violence in the relationship [43]. The long duration of a dating relationship is usually characterized by increased levels of trust, intimacy, and commitment [44]. This provides an opportunity for violence to occur. Females committed to a relationship often tolerate their partner's attitudes that lead to violence, abuse, and rationalize behavior to maintain the relationship [45].

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that younger adolescents are more likely to be involved in violent dating activities. This study also shows that almost all females have experienced violence, physically or psychologically, from their partners during dating. Females and males have the same opportunity to be involved as perpetrators of DV. The duration of courtship is also predicted as one of the causes of adolescent involvement in violence during courtship. Long duration of courtship is predicted to be more vulnerable to being involved as perpetrators of violence in dating.

DV, physical or psychological violence, cannot be justified. Therefore, researchers suggest that adolescents be more selective and very careful in choosing friends to hang out with because friends can affect the lives of adolescents in the future. Teens should get to know their partners thoroughly before starting a deeper relationship. They need to explore his family background because knowing his family background will make it easier to understand the nature of the couple. In addition, the victim must have the courage to take a stand, must have the courage to say "No" and immediately stop the relationship when receiving violence. Adolescents are also asked to be more thoughtful and selective in help-seeking (HS) when experiencing violence. With this research, it is hoped that it can provide solutions to the problems experienced by adolescents and involve parents, teachers, and peers.

This study has several limitations. First, we have not included the broader demographic characteristics of the respondents. Second, this study also reviews adolescents in terms of their role as perpetrators of violence. Therefore, future research needs to consider aspects of family economic status, parenting patterns, cultural factors, and history of violence experienced by respondents in the family. Other researchers also need to elaborate on the role of adolescents as perpetrators and victims simultaneously. This becomes important as a basis for consideration in designing appropriate intervention patterns.

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