

The Current Situation of Dating Violence among College Students

Xiangna Kong^{1,2}, Jiale Long³, Eva Pacayra²

¹ College of Education, Hubei University of Science and Technology/Rural Education and Cultural Development Research Center, Xianning 437100, China

² Department of Psychology, Centro Escolar University, Manila/Makati, 1005/1229, Philippines

³ BDB Experimental School, Xianning, 432000, China

Abstract. 193 college students with dating experience were surveyed with the Chinese modified version of the Contingency Strategy Scale Short (CTS2S). Statistics of the survey results revealed that the incidence of cold violence among college students is very high when they are in love, and other forms of violence also exist. There are significant differences in dating violence among college students of different genders and different times of being in a relationship. Based on the results, researchers offer some suggestions for preventing dating violence.

Keywords: Dating Violence; Silent Violence; Mental Violence; Physical Violence; Sexual Violence.

1. Background

Love refers to a strong and stable intimacy that two people form in their hearts, and they have the willingness to desire each other to be their lifelong partners. Usually we think of falling in love as a developmental problem that people generally face when they develop into adolescence. At present, in China, the behavior of college love is becoming more and more common. In a survey conducted by Zhang Lijun (2017) and others in Guangzhou, more than 50% of college students have experienced love or are in love. In the process of being in love, both parties in love can bring good emotional experience to each other, so as to overcome loneliness. However, college students are in a critical period when their psychological level is from immature to mature, and their mental health is in an unbalanced state. Therefore, the psychological problems of college students caused by love have become one of the main aspects of college students' psychological crisis. The immature love of college students is often accompanied by a series of problems that endanger mental and physical health, such as depression, dating violence, and self-mutilation.

Dating violence refers to verbal, behavioral or physical threats, intimidation, harm or control of the other party in a romantic relationship (Wang Xiangxian, 2007), including these behaviors of current or former boyfriends/girlfriends. Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) found in the survey that 30%-50% of college students believed that they had suffered dating violence. But the above research only stays on physical violence, so in the early research, dating violence was defined as physical violence. Through the continuous research of scholars, it is found that mental violence is actually more common in the process of love (Neufeld, 1999), and more than 75% of girls have suffered mental violence. With the deepening of research, Anderson (2007) and others put forward a more detailed definition of dating violence: behaviors in which one party in love uses physical, sexual, and verbal abuse against the other party. Today, we generally divide dating violence into physical violence, sexual violence and mental violence. Dating violence can be more harmful than normal violence because it comes from someone close and it can have a huge emotional impact. In the United States (Chan KL, 2008), more than 1,200 people die each year due to partner violence, and 2 million girls and 600,000 boys are injured. Among college students, the incidence of violent behaviors that cause injury ranges from 1.0% to 16.4%.

To sum up, dating violence is a kind of violence that cannot be ignored among college students, and it will seriously endanger the physical and mental health of college students. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to violence in love.



The measurement tool for dating violence is currently widely used in the world. It is the CTS2S simplified by Murray Straus on the Conflict Strategy Scale, which is suitable for detecting the frequency of violent behavior and victimization between romantic partners. The items of the scale are easy to understand, have good reliability and validity, and include three dimensions: mental violence, physical violence, and sexual violence. In Qiu Zhaolong's (2021) study, the common silent violence model in China was added to the original scale as a part of mental violence. The new scale has passed the test of reliability and validity, and the number of items is moderate. Therefore, this study draws on Qiu Zhaolong's approach.

2. Statements of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate the current situation of dating violence among college students, including the following questions:

What is the incidence rate of dating violence among college students?

What is the degree of mental violence, physical violence and sexual violence among college students?

Differences in dating violence among college students in variables such as gender, family location, major, only child or not, number of times in love, and current love status.

3. Methods

3.1. Respondents

326 questionnaires were distributed to college students, and 300 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective rate of 92.02%. A total of 193 college students had love experiences. The details of the 193 college students are shown in the following table:

Table 1. Statistical Table of Demographic Variables of 193 College Students with Love Experience

variable	category	number	percentage
gender	male	62	32.1%
	female	131	67.9%
family location	countryside	130	67.4%
	city	63	32.6%
major	science & engineering & medicine	92	47.7%
	humanities & social sciences & music& sports& art	101	52.3%
only child or not	yes	51	26.4%
	no	142	73.6%
How many times have you been in love?	1	77	39.6%
	2	52	26.9%
	3 times and above	64	33.2%
current relationship status	single	94	48.7%
	in love	99	51.3%

3.2. Measuring Tool

This study uses the Chinese modified version of the Conflict Strategy Scale Short (CTS2S), which includes three dimensions: mental violence, physical violence, and sexual violence. Referring to Qiu

Zhaolong's (2021) research, a common violence pattern in China--Silen violence is added to the mental violence. The scale has a total of 14 items, and each item is scored on a 7-point scale: 0 time(never) = 1, 1times = 2, 2 times= 3, 3-5times = 4, 6-10times = 5, 11-20 times=6, >20 times=7. According to the scores of the respondents, the frequency of encountering dating violence in the relationship is judged. The higher the score, the higher the frequency of encountering love violence.

3.3. Data Processing

Statistical analysis of the survey results was carried out through spss26.0. After deleting invalid data and retaining valid data, descriptive statistics were used to present the current situation of dating violence among college students. Independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to test demographic variables.

3.4. Results

Table 2. The Frequency of Conflict Behaviors in the Last Three Months in the Latest Relationship of 193 Respondents

items	0 time N/P	1time N/P	2tinmes N/P	3-5times N/P	6-10times N/P	11-20times N/P	>20times N/P
1.I ignored my partner and didn't talk to him/her for a period of time.	44 22.8%	25 13.0%	39 20.2%	52 26.9%	21 10.9%	8 4.1%	4 2.1%
2 .My partner ignored me and didn't talk to me for a period of time.	66 34.2%	26 13.5%	28 14.5%	46 23.8%	13 6.7%	9 4.7%	5 2.6%
3.I yelled or verbally insulted my partner	146 75.6%	15 7.8%	13 6.7%	10 5.2%	6 3.1%	2 1.0%	1 0.5%
4.My partner yelled at me or verbally insulted me	147 76.2%	15 7.8%	14 7.3%	11 5.7%	2 2.6%	5 2.6%	1 0.5%
5.I threw things or threatened to hit my partner	169 87.6%	5 2.6%	10 5.2%	5 2.6%	1 0.5%	2 1.0%	1 0.5%
6.My partner threw things or threatened to hit me	171 88.6%	6 3.1%	9 4.7%	6 3.1%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%	0 0.0%
7.I push and hit my partner	167 86.5%	7 3.6%	9 4.7%	7 3.6%	1 0.5%	2 1.0%	0 0.0%
8.My partner pushes and hits me	173 89.6%	7 3.6%	6 3.1%	5 2.6%	1 0.5%	1 0.5%	0 0.0%
9.I punched and kicked my partner	178 92.2%	4 2.1%	4 2.1%	2 1.0%	3 1.6%	2 1.0%	0 0.0%
10.My partner punched and kicked me	181 93.8%	2 1.0%	3 1.6%	5 2.6%	0 0.0%	2 1.0%	0 0.0%
11.I forced my partner to have sex	186 96.4%	2 1.0%	2 1.0%	1 0.5%	1 0.5%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%
12 .My partner forced me to have sex	186 96.4%	4 2.1%	0 0.0%	2 1.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%	0 0.0%
13.I forced my partner not to use a condom	189 97.9%	1 0.5%	3 1.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
14.My partner forced me not to use a condom	189 97.9%	2 1.0%	1 0.5%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

	n	minimum	maximum	mean	std. deviation
active dating violence	193	1.00	5.43	1.5211	.62679
passive dating violence	193	1.00	5.14	1.4441	.56438
active mental violence	193	1.00	6.67	1.9983	.97687
passive mental violence	193	1.00	6.00	1.8653	.95394
active physical violence	193	1.00	6.00	1.2591	.77911
passive physical violence	193	1.00	6.00	1.1969	.66934
active sex violence	193	1.00	4.00	1.0674	.38612
passive sex violence	193	1.00	3.50	1.0596	.32327
valid n (listwise)	193				

Table 4. Gender Differences in Dating Violence

	nender	n	mean	std. deviation	t	sig
active dating violence	male	62	1.4770	.49887	-0.672	0.502
	female	131	1.5420	.67976		
passive dating violence	male	62	1.5530	.53545	1.855	0.065
	female	131	1.3926	.57235		
active mental violence	male	62	1.9570	.86098	-0.403	0.687
	female	131	2.0178	1.02974		
passive mental violence	male	62	2.0914	1.00304	2.290	0.023
	female	131	1.7583	.91432		
active physical violence	male	62	1.1210	.38074	-1.702	0.090
	female	131	1.3244	.90282		
passive physical violence	male	62	1.2419	.63853	0.642	0.522
	female	131	1.1756	.68479		
active sex violence	male	62	1.1129	.51549	1.128	0.261
	female	131	1.0458	.30666		
passive sex violence	male	62	1.0565	.32774	-0.092	0.926
	female	131	1.0611	.32239		

It can be seen from Table 2 that college students generally have "silent violence" in love, that is, "I ignored my partner and didn't talk to him/her for a period of time", "My partner ignored me and didn't

talk to me for a period of time". The probabilities of once or more were 77.2% and 65.8%, respectively, much higher than the incidence of other violent acts.

It can be seen from the description in Table 3 that overall, the average score of college students' dating violence, whether it is active dating violence or passive dating violence, exceeds 1 point (0 times, never), especially mental violence.

It can be seen from Table 4 that boys suffered more passive mental violence than girls ($p>0.05$), and there was no gender difference in other types of dating violence.

Table 5. Analysis of Variance on Dating Violence of College Students with Different Times of Being in a Relationship

		sum of squares	df	mean square	f	sig.
active dating violence	between groups	1.092	2	.546	1.396	.250
	within groups	74.337	190	.391		
	total	75.429	192			
passive dating violence	between groups	2.396	2	1.198	3.874	.022
	within groups	58.761	190	.309		
	total	61.157	192			
active mental violence	between groups	2.201	2	1.100	1.155	.317
	within groups	181.021	190	.953		
	total	183.222	192			
passive mental violence	between groups	5.695	2	2.848	3.201	.043
	within groups	169.024	190	.890		
	total	174.720	192			
active physical violence	between groups	.435	2	.218	.356	.701
	within groups	116.112	190	.611		
	total	116.547	192			
passive physical violence	between groups	1.775	2	.887	2.001	.138
	within groups	84.243	190	.443		
	total	86.018	192			
active sex violence	between groups	.679	2	.339	2.307	.102
	within groups	27.946	190	.147		
	total	28.624	192			
passive sex violence	between groups	.281	2	.141	1.350	.262
	within groups	19.784	190	.104		
	total	20.065	192			

The variables such as family location, major, only child or not, and current relationship status were tested, and it was found that there was no significant difference in these variables in dating violence.

With times of being in a relationship as the independent variable and dating violence as the dependent variable, the results of variance analysis were shown in Table 5.

It can be seen from Table 5 that there are differences in passive dating violence and passive mental violence among college students with different times of being in a relationship ($P < 0.05$). The results of multiple comparisons found that the overall passive dating violence of college students who fell in love twice was significantly more than that of college students who fell in love once ($P < 0.05$), but the passive dating violence of these two groups of college students was not significantly different from that of college students who fell in love three times or more. sexual difference. College students with 2 love experiences had more passive mental violence than those with only 1 love experience ($P < 0.05$). However, there is no significant difference between the passive mental violence of these two groups of college students and those college students who have been in love for 3 or more times.

4. Summary and Suggestions

According to the survey on the frequency of dating violence, we found that among the college students we surveyed, compared with obvious violent behaviors such as beating and insulting, "Silent violence" is more common, that is, ignoring each other and keeping not talk to each other. "Silent violence" is a type of mental violence. Compared with obvious mental violence such as insulting and yelling, people think that cold violence such as ignoring each other and not communicating is less harmful. However, if the time of cold violence is longer, it will also have a destructive impact on the relationship, which is not conducive to the solution of the problem. This behavior requires intervention.

According to the average item score of each type of dating violence, we can see that the average item score of each type of violence exceeds 1, which suggests that in the surveyed college students, each type of violence in love exists more or less. In particular, active mental violence and passive mental violence scored the highest, indicating that they occurred most frequently.

Variables such as family location, profession, only child or not, and current relationship status have no significant impact on dating violence, with the exception of gender. Boys suffer more passive mental violence than girls, that is to say, boys are more often ignored, insulted or threatened by their lovers. But girls did not report more active mental violence than boys. This may imply to us that girls are used to mental violence against their lovers, and they don't care about these behaviors they do, but boys feel hurt.

The college students with 2 love experiences reported more passive dating violence, especially passive mental violence, than those with only 1 love experience. But there is no significant difference between college students with 3 or more love experiences and those with only 1 and 2 love experiences. Having more romantic relationships did not increase the risk of violence in a romantic relationship among college students. But college students who have been in love twice seem to be suffering from more passive dating violence. The reason for this is difficult to explore. Perhaps, college students who have been in love more often are more experienced and know how to protect themselves. College students who have only been in love once have no more opportunities to feel the violence in love. Did college students who had already been in 2 relationships stop dating more after trauma? These require further research.

In view of the very high rate of silent violence, researchers suggest that school psychologists should actively provide some group counseling and lectures to students to make them realize the importance of positive communication in dating and love and to coach students' communication skills. Good communication habits and skills can avoid the occurrence of mental violence, especially silent violence. Counseling for girls should help them understand the disadvantages of mental violence and

what kind of behavior constitutes mental violence. Some girls do not think that insulting or neglecting each other are violent behaviors in love, but these behaviors cause great harm to boys.

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