Running Head: DEMOGRAPHIC EFFECTS ON ATTITUDES

Demographic Effects on Attitudes toward Dating Violence among College Students and the Need for Legal Protection

By:

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Abstract

Dating violence among college students, whether physical, sexual, or psychological is a serious problem with limited legal resources available for victims. Studies have shown that one in four undergraduate students are in an abusive dating relationship (Miller, 2011). In Kentucky, individuals in a dating relationship are not eligible to receive civil protective orders, leaving them without legal protection from abusive partners (Break the Cycle, 2010). A fifty-question survey was administered to 200 students enrolled in Justice Administration courses at the University of Louisville to determine what demographic factors might be related to attitudes toward abuse in dating relationships and whether or not dating partners should have legal protection from such abuse. The findings suggested that the gender of the perpetrator as well as gender of the respondent were related to perceptions of reported attitudes toward dating abuse but none of the demographic factors measured predicted attitudes toward legal protections defined as the use of Emergency Protective Orders (EPO's) in cases of abuse..

Table of Contents

Introduction

Dating violence can be physical, sexual, or psychological and is an especially serious problem among college students, with one in four undergraduate students in an abusive dating relationship (Miller, 2011). There are limited resources available to victims, and specifically in Kentucky, individuals in a dating relationship are not eligible to receive civil protective orders. This leaves these victims without legal protection from their abusive partners (Break the Cycle, 2010). In order for these protections to be afforded, legislation needs to be introduced; yet despite years of lobbying efforts for such legal protections, there remains a disparity in the rights of individuals in dating relationships and married couples or cohabitants. One reason for this inconsistency may be that the general public's attitude toward dating violence is incredulous**;** which could be influenced by certain demographic factors.

This study seeks to assess respondents' attitudes toward dating violence and the need for legal protections for dating violence victims. Additionally, the relationship toward these attitudes and respondents' demographic characteristics and their attitudes toward dating violence will be explored.

Review of Current Research, Literature, and Observations

Dating violence or Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as a distinct research topic is a relatively new field; previously it had only been looked at as "a precursor to marital violence" (Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd & Sebastian, 1991). Much of IPV research has come as the result of James Makepeace's 1981 article, *Courtship Violence among College Students*; in which he posits that IPV in dating relationships is as prevalent as marital violence (Makepeace, 1981). IPV can be comprised of four types of behavior:

physical violence, sexual violence, making threats, and psychological abuse (CDC, 2012). In IPV, psychological abuse is the most common form, but multiple forms of abuse within the same relationship are common (Sorenson & Thomas, 2009). Many victims of IPV sustain physical injuries; some of these injuries include minor cuts, scratches, or bruises, but others are more severe and can include broken bones, internal bleeding, and head trauma. IPV can also be fatal and was responsible for 14% of homicides in the U.S. in 2007. IPV is a very serious problem; each year 1.5 million women[1] and 834, 732 men are the victims of rape and/or physical assault perpetrated by an intimate partner (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Victims of IPV can suffer emotional injuries and have symptoms of trauma such as anxiety, difficulty sleeping, and Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. It is common for IPV victims to have low levels of self-esteem, and to engage in harmful health behaviors substance use and risky sexual behavior (CDC, 2012).

Most incidents of IVP are among heterosexual couples; with members same-sex couples accounting for less than one percent of the total victims (Sorenson & Thomas, 2009). Research has shown that IPV is incredibly prevalent, and occurs within approximately 30% of all dating relationships (Gray & Foshee, 1997). African American and Hispanic women are more likely to experience violent partnerships as are American Indian, and Alaska Native men and women, while Asian and Pacific Islander men and women report less IPV (Browning, 2002, Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Possible explanations for the higher rates of reported IPV are socioeconomic constraints, immigration status, cultural values, and institutional discrimination or lack of resources in

[1] Unless otherwise noted as pertaining only to college students, all statistics reference the general population.

ethnic communities (Few & Rosen, 2005).The financial impact of dating violence is astronomical; the cost to women alone exceeds $8.3 billion annually (CDC, 2012). There are a number of factors that put one at risk for IPV, including: being a woman, being a member of a minority group, being a younger individual, having less education, and living in poverty or having a low income (Michalski, 2005).

Research on IPV among college students is especially important because those most at risk for IPV are 16-24 year olds; women who are in their late teens and young adulthood are most likely to be exposed to intimate partners who pose the greatest risk of violent behavior (Blackford & Spears, 2012, Browning, 2002). Research has shown that alcohol is a common factor for IPV, and alcohol consumption and violence are highest during young adulthood, with violence peaking between 21 and 29 years of age. This further puts college students at risk for experiencing IPV (Wiersma, Cleveland, Herrera & Fischer, 2010). When males are drinking heavily they may behave aggressively or perpetrate nonphysical forms of abuse: verbal and psychological. In these situations a woman's use of IPV can be viewed as a defensive response in reaction to their partner's behavior (Wiersma, Cleveland, Herrera & Fischer, 2010). In a 2007 study done by Carol Jordan at the University of Kentucky's Center for Research on Violence against Women, 36% of female students were victims of rape, assault, or stalking during their time as students at the University of Kentucky (Blackford & Spears, 2012).

In today's society, individuals are delaying marriage and dating more individuals for longer periods of time (Carlson, 1999). As such, the risk of dating violence as the time prior to marriage and number of pre-marital partners increases. Research among college students has shown that the more serious the relationship, the greater likelihood

that aggression will occur, and that IPV becomes more frequent and severe over time (Stets, 1992, Sorenson & Thomas, 2009). While most research indicates that IPV is more common in committed than casual relationships, other research suggests that there is a curvilinear relationship between the seriousness of the relationship and the existence of IPV, with the lowest levels of violence existing in the least and most committed relationships (Carlson, 1999, Stets, 1992). Once a relationship has progressed to being committed, it is less likely to end suddenly with violence (Wiersma, Cleveland, Herrera & Fischer, 2010, Ronfeldt, Kimerling & Arias, 1998). Among IPV victims, women average 6.9 physical assaults by the same partner, and men 4.4 assaults, yet despite the high prevalence of IPV, most abuse goes unreported to police. It is estimated that only one-fifth of rapes and one-fourth of physical assaults are reported to authorities (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

Most research has found that there is a "sexual symmetry" in that men and women are equally likely to both perpetrate and receive IPV; but some complain that the research finding this symmetry fails to account for physical strength and size differences associated with gender (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). While men and women are shown to have the same likelihood of experiencing IPV, women are more likely to be injured as the result of IPV because of the greater average size and strength of men (Stets, 1992). Women who seek medical care for injuries sustained as the result of IPV tended to be under 35 years of age, single, separated or divorced, have low income, abuse drugs or alcohol, and have partners that abuse substances (Michalski, 2005). Women also reported experiencing more frequent and longer periods of violence, more threats, more fear of bodily harm, and more negative consequences (Michalski, 2005). When looking at the

prevalence and gender symmetry of IPV studies that include reports by both partners are better able to distinguish aspects of violence that are present because without a corroborating report, an individual may exaggerate their partner's perpetration of IPV and underreport their own (Wiersma, Cleveland, Herrera & Fischer, 2010).

Motives for the use of IPV vary based on gender. Men are more likely to perpetrate IPV based on the seriousness of the relationship, with serious relationships more likely than non-serious ones to have the conditions for violence. For women, the main motivator for the perpetration of IPV is situations of jealousy where in a serious relationship one partner is still dating other people. Conflict is defined as being "an interpersonal process that occurs whenever the actions of one person interfere with the actions of another" (Peterson, 1983). Interaction is essential to the formation and maintenance of relationships and is made up of many different processes including: consensus, expressive, and cognitive processes. Consensus refers to individuals agreeing on the goals of the interaction, while expressive processes involve attempts by one individual to bring another's behavior in line with their own, and cognitive processes are comprised of perceptual inferences about one's own and other's behavior (Stets, 1992). Disputes over control in relationships often result in the use of violence. Lack of consensus in dating relationships influences the occurrence of one-time minor aggression, but appears to have no influence on frequent patterns. Alternatively, cognitive and expressive processes of interaction influence frequent patterns of minor and severe aggression, but tend not to influence the one-time occurrences of aggression (Stets, 1992). Common control disputes are over "whether the relationship is monogamous, or whether each partner can date other people, the form and frequency of sexual behavior,

and who pays for entertainment" (Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987). All individuals have a threshold value of control; those with high thresholds have a low chance of using violence, while those with low thresholds have a high chance of using violence. Individuals may strike their partner in an attempt to control, modify, or change their behavior. In these situations, the victim may respond to their partner's violence by submitting to their control; this submission reinforces the perpetration of violence because the partner has been rewarded for behaving violently through their partner's compliance.

When a woman hits her partner it is more likely to be out of retaliation or self defense against IPV perpetrated against her (Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987). Female victims were more likely than male victims to perceive their aggressor's motivations for using physical force as the partner trying to gain control over them and as retaliation because the woman hit him first. Males, on the other hand, thought their female aggressors used physical force for different reason, specifically, the women expressing anger and as retaliation for feeling emotionally hurt or mistreated. Males also admitted to feeling jealous, which led to physical force more often than females who used force. Corroborating what male victims perceived, female perpetrators reported more frequently that they did use force in retaliation for feeling emotionally hurt and were more likely to report they used physical aggression to show anger than male perpetrators. Male perpetrators were more likely to state they used force in retaliation to being hit first, similar to what female victims perceived as a motive (Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd & Sebastian, 1991). While female victims felt male perpetrators used force to get control, female perpetrators were more likely than male perpetrators to state that getting control

was a reason they used physical means. Among perpetrators, the most frequently endorsed motivations were: not knowing how to express themselves verbally, self defense, expressing jealousy, wanting to gain control, to show anger, and retaliation for either physical or emotional abuse. Among victims, they felt the strongest motives for their perpetrators were: to gain control, retaliation for emotional hurt, jealousy, or to express their anger (Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd & Sebastian, 1991). Thus, there exists a consistency in the motives perceived by the victims for their partner's use of IPV and the actual motives of perpetrators.

Michael Johnson has argued that there are four distinct types of individual violence:

1. Situational couple violence—violence by one or both partners who are otherwise non-controlling
2. Violent resistance—violence vomited by a non-controlling partner against a partner who exhibits a pattern of coercive control and violence
3. Intimate terrorism—violence accompanied by a pattern of coercive control exercised in a relationship with a nonviolent or violent but controlling partner
4. Mutual violent control—violent and controlling behavior characteristic of both partners in a relationship (Johnson, 2005)

Much IPV can be described as situational couple violence, involving a relatively symmetrical pattern of partners lashing out as the end product of an argument. Situational couple violence is characterized by its occasional occurrence, relatively low level of injury, and gender symmetry. This type of violence tends to exist in a relationship where the couple has "a high degree of intimacy, relational involvement, and a shared proximity, a relative absence of mobility opportunities, a high level of functional interdependence, a relatively high degree of equality or access to similar resources,

greater social isolation, or the relative absence of partisans to intervene, weak external, independent networks with few cross-cutting ties, greater cultural distance from alternative dispute settlement agents" (Michalski, 2004). As relationships become more serious and more interdependent over time, the probability of conflict arising increases because there is an increasing interest in what the other partner does, and because the actions of one person have more implications for the other. Conflict leads to aggression either because the conflict has escalated to high levels of intensity or because there is a poor conflict management strategy (Stets, 1992). Perpetrators in dating relationships may hit the other with the belief that, ultimately, the relationship will not falter because of the act of aggression—so long as the aggression is not a "persistent pattern that takes a severe form" (Stets, 1992). Conflict at a low or even intermediate level may have a positive result for relationships because it may eliminate built up hostility by permitting the hostility to be aired and thus serve to *maintain* rather than *destroy* a relationship. Minor conflict may also be a means of reaching a better understanding about oneself and/or one's partner, or it could act as a catalyst for relationship growth and perhaps move the relationship to a deeper, more meaningful level (Stets, 1992). In contrast, when investment in the relationship is low, violence or other distressing events in the relationship are more likely to lead to its demise (DeMaris, 2000).

Psychological aggression is reported by a majority of individuals in intimate relationships. Higher levels of psychological aggression have been correlated with over all levels of physical assault (Hamby & Sugarman, 1999). 65% of White men and 56% of African American men were verbally or psychologically aggressive but not physically aggressive toward their partners. Conversely, only 0.2% of White men and none of the

African American men were physically aggressive but not psychologically aggressive (Ronfeldt, Kimerling & Arias, 1998). The Feminist theory of IPV emphasizes how batterers use techniques both physical and nonphysical to establish control over, generate fear in, or intimidate their partners (Hamby & Sugarman, 1999). Males are more likely to engage in multiple forms of aggression (e.g., verbal, psychological, physical), while women are highly vulnerable to attacks on their body image given the emphasis on women's attractiveness as a sign of worth in western society (Hamby & Sugarman, 1999). Instrumental, malicious, and explicit acts of psychological aggression are more severe than passive or expressive forms of psychological aggression and include: destroying the property of a partner, malicious name-calling, and threatening actual physical violence. These acts occurred more often with severe physical assault than other forms of psychological aggression and are more commonly perpetrated by men (Hamby & Sugarman, 1999). Low levels of satisfaction with relationship power increased the likelihood of psychological and ultimately physical abuse of a dating partner, and psychological abuse is a significant precursor to physical abuse (Ronfeldt, Kimerling & Arias, 1998).

The concept of entrapment suggests that an abused woman is somehow "stuck" in her relationship, and is defined typically as "a decision process whereby individuals escalate their commitment to a previously chose, though failing, course of action in order to justify or 'make good' on prior investments" (Brockner & Rubin 1985). Investments can be time spent in the relationship, self-disclosure, or the development of outside friendships that become interconnected to the relationship (Rusbult, 1991). To become entrapped, a woman must first display investment toward the goal of a committed and

safe relationship. When she experiences abuse, she begins to doubt the feasibility of her goal, and her decision-making process may produce conflict within herself and the relationship. If she perceives that she has no control in the relationship then a learned helplessness could prevent her from leaving (Few & Rosen, 2005). Researchers have identified a number of risk factors associated with women's victimization that likely have bearing on the possibility of entrapment. These risks are generally classified into three categories: individual/intrapersonal, relational, and social/situational (Lloyd & Emery, 2000). There are common protective factors that may provide a buffer against IPV and entrapment in abusive relationships. These factors include physical and psychological health, coping skills to manage stress, no substance dependencies, no past history of violence in one's family, high family cohesion and adaptability, strong community support and social networks, and cultural nuances (Carlson, McNutt, Choi & Rose, 2002). While in an abusive relationship, both black and white women reported feeling a temporary inability, or helplessness to either to control the direction of the relationship or to immediately leave their abusive partners.

Vulnerable women tend to form a type of addiction to their partners as an attempt to gain control over some aspect of their lives. When a woman becomes "addicted" in this sense, instead of gaining a sense of control as she intended, she ends up being heavily dependent on the person and paradoxically loses control and becomes psychologically entrapped in the relationship. Without perceived control, an abused woman's ability to evaluate the relationship becomes impeded and she begins to engage in split-processing where she sees only the good times in the relationship and minimizes the chronic IPV she suffers (Few & Rosen, 2005).

When evaluating attitudes toward IPV, three characteristics of the respondents have been identified as significant predictors of abuse judgments: gender, year in school, and current relationship status. Males are less likely than females to label incidents of IPV as abusive, and as students progress through their education they are more likely to evaluate acts of physical aggression as abusive and therefore to be less tolerant of this type of behavior. More advanced students and female students tended to define actions as abusive at a more frequent rate with individuals who are in a relationship appear to be more tolerant in that they less often define actions as abusive. The increased number and type of romantic relationships among older students could account for the correlation between age and abuse ratings. Respondents in an intimate relationship may identify acts as abusive less frequently in that they are using their personal relationship as a referent and projecting greater tolerance for the acts that could constitute IVP. They can see them as more "justified or acceptable because of the . inevitable tension and conflict that are part of an intimate relationship. Those not in a relationship may be more naïve and idealistic about romantic relationships and therefore less tolerant (Carlson, 1999).

Both contextual and student demographic characteristics were also found to influence perceptions of abusiveness and tolerance for abusive behaviors. Contextual factors such as the nature of the aggressive behavior, the consequences of the behavior, and the gender of the individual who initiates as well as sustains the aggression, the nature of the relationship between the partners, and the presence or absence of extenuating circumstances have all been identified as related to perceptions of abusiveness. Significant predictors of abuse judgments also included the nature of the aggressive act and victim's gender and sexual orientation. More severe acts of

aggression, female victims, gay and lesbian victims, a history of violence in the relationship, injurious outcome, male perpetrator, and alcohol consumption were contextual factors that significantly increased the probability that acts would be rated as "abusive" (Carlson, 1999). Two aspects of the aggressive behavior itself may also influence judgments of violence and abuse these are : the seriousness or severit of the behavior and whether it is a one-time versus repeated occurrence. Injurious outcomes, even those not requiring medical attention, and any history of violence in the relationship, including just one prior incident, significantly increased perceived abusiveness (Carlson, 1999). The frequency of the incident was also a significant predictor of whether police should be called and whether a restraining order should be issued in male-on-female IPV. Respondents were more likely to think police should be called if the incident was "the fifth time, one of many times, and when frequency was not mentioned, compared to if the incident was described as the only time" (Sorenson & Thomas, 2009).

In studies of perceptions of physical aggression, students (especially males) rated female violence less negatively than male violence. This situation may reflect the lower likelihood that women's violence will be injurious, particularly within the student population where the most common acts are at the less severe end of the violence continuum or may simply reflect cultural factors that may lead men to take women less seriously. Females reported sustaining much more injury than males, both emotionally and physically, while males appeared to underestimate the effects of physical force on women (Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd & Sebastian, 1991). Arias and Johnson (1989) found that one-third of their sample thought slapping was justifiable in response to sexual infidelity, to defend oneself, or in response to violence initiated by one's partner. Roscoe

(1985) found that substantial numbers of female college students thought violence was acceptable in self-defense or to prevent sexual abuse, and females were less likely to think force could be justifiable. Females were more likely to feel they were acting in self-defense or intended to hurt their partner, while males were more likely to use IPV to try to intimidate their partner (Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd & Sebastian, 1991). An important aspect of attitudes regarding dating violence is the issue of subjective perceptions of what actually constitutes violence or abuse. There are large discrepancies between the reported rates of physical violence in dating relationships as defined by researchers and the willingness on the part of those involved to label such behavior as violent or abusive or problematic; male recipients of physical violence are especially unlikely to label their experience as abuse (Carlson, 1999).

There are a variety of resources available to victims, many coming in response to the 1994 Violence against Women Act (VAWA) created under the leadership of then-Senator Joe Biden. VAWA has made outstanding improvements in the rights of women, such as: creating the “rape shield law” which prevents offenders from using victims’ past sexual conduct against them during a rape trial, placing the financial burden of rape examinations on the state rather than the victim, and requiring that a victim’s protection order be “recognized and enforced in all state, tribal, and territorial jurisdictions within the United States”. VAWA has also ensured that police respond to crisis calls and that judges understand the realities of domestic and sexual violence and that law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim advocates, and judges receive training annually. This act also created the National Domestic Violence Hotline that has answered over 3 million calls, 22,000 per month on average, and 92% of these callers report that it is their first call for

help. There has been a noticeable positive difference since the passing of VAWA. Specifically, from 1993-2010 the rate of IPV declined 67% and from 1993-2007 the rate of intimate partner homicides of females declined by 35% and that of males declined by 46%. Simultaneously, more individuals are also reporting their victimization to police and these reports are resulting in more arrests. VAWA has also motivated states to reform their laws to take violence against women more seriously. Today, laws have been reformed to no longer treat date/spousal rape as a less serious crime than stranger rape, all 50 states have passed laws criminalizing stalking, and all states have authorized warrantless arrests in misdemeanor domestic violence cases where the on scene officer determines that probable cause exists ("VAWA Fact Sheet,").

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Another nationally available resource is the Victim Information and Notification Everyday System (VINE) that came in reaction to the death of Mary Byron. Mary Byron was a resident of Louisville, Kentucky and had been raped, assaulted, and stalked by a former boyfriend in late 1993. He was arrested and jailed for these crimes but was released on bail; there was no resource or protocol in place to notify Mary of his release. On her 21st birthday, while sitting in her car after leaving her job at JC Penny, her former boyfriend fired seven shots at point blank range into Mary's head and chest through her driver's side window ("Mary's story,"). The Louisville community was shocked, and Mary's parents advocated for the system that could have saved their daughter's life. As the result, VINE was created and "allows crime victims to obtain timely and reliable information about criminal cases and the custody status of offenders 24 hours a day". This service provides victims with information about where the offender is being held, any transfers of the inmate, and of their release. VINE is available in all states except

South Dakota, Kansas, and Maine ("Vine link version 2.0," 2013). Mary's parents also established the Mary Byron project in 2000 to "attack the root causes of IPV and to help build safer, healthier communities" ("About the mary,").

In Kentucky the average number of women who will be a victim of IPV in their lifetime is 38%, notably higher than the national average of 25%. Kentucky is not only one of the states with the highest reported incidence of IPV, but one of only two states, South Carolina being the other, that does not allow protective orders to people in dating relationships (Halladay,2013). In Kentucky Domestic Violence Orders (DVO) are available only to married couples, couples who currently live (or have lived) together, or who have a child together (Blackford & Spears, 2012). This leaves a huge gap in the availability of resources to victims of IPV who are in a non-cohabitating, dating relationship. Many states are passing laws that extend the protections of a DVO to victims of IPV and are naming them after victims in notable IPV cases, like Ashlee's Law that was passed just this year in Utah (Lowry, 2013). In Kentucky, an IPV protection law has cleared the State House of Representatives every session for the last five years, but has never proceeded to a vote in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The Committee Chairman, Tom Jensen, a Republican from London, Kentucky said that he will not move the bill to the floor because he feels that extending these protections to people in dating relationships would "bog down the system" and that crimes like stalking or assault can be handled through existing laws (Blackford & Spears, 2012). However, proponents of these laws say that protective orders reduce violence over time, and in 2007, the University of Kentucky's Department of Behavioral Science said protective orders saved the state approximately $85 million (Blackford & Spears, 2012). This legislative session, the IPV

protection law, House Bill 9, passed 92-5 in the House and is currently moving to the State Senate for consideration. House Bill 9 would broaden the law relating to emergency protective orders to include those people in a dating relationship (Halladay, 2013).

While there are not many legal protections available to IPV victims there are a number of community-based resources available nationwide. Specifically in Louisville, there is: the Center for Women and Families, the Mary Byron Project, and the Louisville Metro Coalition to Prevent Teen Dating Violence. The Center for Women and Families was founded in 1912, and in 1977 opened the first domestic violence shelter in Kentucky. While the Center is named “for Women and Families” their clients include men, homosexual males and females, bisexual and transgendered people in addition to women and dependent children. The Center for Women and Families provides both residential and nonresidential services including: emergency shelter, transitional housing, as well as counseling and advocacy (“More than a,”). The Louisville Metro Coalition to prevent Teen Dating Violence works to research the prevalence of dating violence in the Louisville Metro area, and to increase resources available to victims. The Coalition also strives to spread awareness in the community of the severity of IPV ("Community education and,").

In addition to these resources available to victims of IPV in the Louisville Community, the University of Louisville is able to provide resources specifically to its students. The University Police can issue a No Contact Order if the perpetrator is another student at the University of Louisville, or if the perpetrator is a non-student University Police can have the perpetrator classified as a Persona Non Grata and they will not be allowed on campus. The University of Louisville also has PEACC (Prevention, Education, and Advocacy on

Campus and in the Community) as an available resource to students. PEACC started in October 1999 when the University of Louisville was awarded a grant from the Department of Justice's Violence against Women on Campus Program. PEACC is able to provide changes in on campus living arrangements, go to court or the Domestic Violence Intake Center with victims, provide free counseling, and offer academic assistance to help keep victims enrolled in school so that they both continue to have access to resources, and are able to not give up their goals for higher education (Larue, 2013). Academic assistance to victims is a much needed resource because often victims of IPV end up dropping out of college, while their perpetrators face little or no punishment and go on to graduate (Bolger, 2012). PEACC is also able to assist victims with creating a safety plan; a typical safety plan addresses the following areas of safety: emotional, within the home, in response to memories of the assault, if there is still contact with the offender, and legal actions (Larue, 2013). Despite the availability of these resources, many abused African American women in dating relationships turn to family or other personal support networks rather than "law enforcement, mental health facilities, or shelters" (Few & Bell-Scott, 2002).

This study seeks to further the knowledge on attitudes toward IPV specifically among college students and whether they feel civil protective orders should be available to victims of IPV. The research hypothesizes that demographic characteristics of individuals such as: gender, race, academic rank, etc. will influence not only attitudes toward the provision of legal protections to the victims of IPV but also individual attitudes toward IVP.

Method

To gather information on students' attitudes toward IPV and the need for legal remedies for victims of IPV, a fifty-question, anonymous, and voluntary survey was administered to students enrolled in courses within the Department of Justice Administration at the University of Louisville's Belknap campus. The survey contained items concerning attitudes toward IPV and the need for legal protections as well as items to gather demographic information about the respondents. The attitudinal items were taken in part from the 2007 Study of Unwanted Sexual Experiences Survey conducted at the University of New Hampshire ("University of new," 2007), the BBC domestic violence survey (citation) and the Attitudes toward Dating Violence Scales (citation)(Price, Byers & the Dating Violence Research Team, 1999, "Hitting home: Domestic," 2003). Demographic information included:

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Statements of attitudes toward dating violence from these surveys addressed three categories of violence: physical, psychological, and sexual with two different combinations of the gender of the victim and gender of the offender. Respondents are asked to indicate their responses to the attitudinal statements on a scale ranging from 1-5: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. Below are examples of items from each of the six categories:

1. Male perpetrated physical violence:
    a. Girls who cheat on their boyfriends should be slapped.
2. Female perpetrated physical violence:
    a. A girl usually does not slap her boyfriend unless he deserves it.
3. Male perpetrated psychological violence:
    a. A girl should ask her boyfriend first before going out with her friends.
4. Female perpetrated psychological violence:
    a. Girls have a right to tell their boyfriends how to dress.
5. Male perpetrated sexual violence:

   a. A girl who goes into a guy's bedroom is agreeing to sex.
6. Female perpetrated sexual violence:
   a. A girl should only touch her boyfriend where he wants to be touched.

Original items developed by the researcher were used to examine students' opinions on the need for the availability of civil protective orders for individuals in dating relationships.

Course instructors were asked to provide the researcher with time during a class session to the survey. The researcher went to the classroom, explained the purpose and nature of the survey, and provided potential subjects with a copy of the survey containing a consent document cover sheet. The subjects were then again informed of the purpose of the research and read the consent document. They were instructed to pull off and keep the consent document. Their consent to participate was established via the return of a completed survey. If they chose not to participate, they simply left the survey blank and turned it in when all individuals in the classroom were asked to return their surveys.

The sample size was 200 students. Data were entered into a statistical analysis program, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) directly from the surveys. The analysis consisted of bivariate analyses using Analysis of Variance to assess whether or not statistically significant differences in attitudes exist between individuals in differing demographic categories such as age, sex, race and political affiliation).

Results

The sample consisted of 200 students enrolled in Justice Administration courses at the University of Louisville. Of these 200 students, 96 were male and 104 were female, with ages ranging from 18-48. The average age of the sample was 21.6, and the sample was relatively evenly distributed throughout freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior

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students. The sample was largely conservative (42.5%), and White (78.5%) with an average GPA of 3.11 on a 4.0 scale. The current committed relationship status was split evenly, with 50% of students in a committed relationship at the time of the survey. The respondents were from 87 different cities of origin, 43 from within Kentucky, 40 from other cities within the U.S., and 4 from outside the U.S.; 45% of all participants reported Louisville, Kentucky as their city of origin.

As mentioned previously, the attitudinal items were taken from Price and Byer's 1999 Attitudes toward Dating Violence Scale. To convert the responses to the Attitudes toward Dating Violence Scale for analysis the scores for negatively worded items were reversed so that the items were consistent in the numeric values associated with "tolerance" and "non-tolerance" for abusive actions and could then be combined into an additive aggregate score for degree of tolerance of abusive behaviors. Respondents' responses to 43 attitudinal items on the survey were totaled to get create an overall attitude toward IPV score. Additionally, all items with a male perpetrator were separately, added together for an "attitudes toward male perpetrated IVP score" and all items with a female perpetrator were added together for an "attitudes toward female perpetrated IVP score" and the relationship between the demographic factors and these scores analyzed. The possible range of scores for overall attitude range from 32-160 and that for both male and female IPV scores ranged from 16-80. There were 32 total items which comprised the overall score and 16 items comprising each male and female perpetrated IPV. On all three scales, the higher the score the more tolerant the attitudes toward IPV (160 being the most tolerant for overall attitude and a score of 80 representing the most tolerant attitude for gender specific IPV). Question #24 of the

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survey was discarded to make the number of items equivalent for the male and female perpetrated IPV scales.

While previous research found associations between year in school, gender, race, relationship status, and attitudes toward IPV, the current study only found a significant relationship between gender of the perpetrator, gender of the respondent, and being a member of a university athletic team and attitudes toward IPV. That is, when Analysis of Variance with a significance standard of < .05 was used to assess the relationship between demographic factors and attitudes toward IPV, the only significant values found were those between respondent gender and being a member of an athletic team and IVP and attitudes toward IPV and respondent attitudes and gender of the perpetrator in IPV behaviors.

Respondents as a whole had low tolerance scores. The overall mean tolerance score for the total sample was XXX. Overall, male respondents were more tolerant than female respondents in all three categories of attitudes toward IPV – total, male perpetrator and female perpetrator, and 196 of 200 students felt that civil protective orders should be available to persons in dating relationship. When considering the gender of all respondents, Table 1 contains the data for the total sample and the attitudes toward IVP scale. Specifically, using the scale which had a potential range of 32 to 160 with 32 being no tolerance for any abusiveness and 160 being tolerance for all types of abusiveness, the mean score for men was 64.7 and the mean score for women was 51.3. Additionally, also shown in Table 1 is that the gender of the perpetrator was related to the degree of tolerance for IPV as meansured by the separate scales for male and female perpetrated IPV. The overall higher level of tolerance for both forms of IPV (male and

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female perpetrated) was evident though with both men and women more tolerant of female perpetrated rather than male perpetrated IPV.

Table 1: Attitudes Toward Dating Violence

Scores Based on Respondents' Gender		F	Sig.	Dating Violence Score for Males	Dating Violence Score for Females
Overall Attitude toward IPV	Between Groups (Combined)	42.839	.000	64.6526	51.3725
Attitude toward Female Perpetrated IPV	Between Groups (Combined)	45.009	.000	36.6563	28.7087
Attitude toward Male Perpetrated IPV	Between Groups (Combined)	25.927	.000	26.2136	21.2136

In a cross sectional analysis of respondents based on year in school, average attitude scores were found to be relatively stable across the four levels of students: freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Minority students comprised 21.5% of the sample, and had mean tolerance of IPV scores that were comparable with the mean score for white respondents of 61.9 and the mean score for non-white respondents of 63.9. Similarly, differences between respondents' tolerance for IPV based on the nature of respondent relationships (dating, married, etc.) were not found. The mean score for those students reporting involvement in a relationship was 58.18 versus a mean score of 57.36 for individuals not involved in a relationship. No differences were found based on any of the other demographic characteristics for scores on the male and female perpetrator scales.

Interestingly, though based on a small number of respondents who reported being a member of a university athletic team, those who reported themselves as athletes had higher mean scores for tolerance of IPV overall as well as for both male and female perpetrated IPV scales. These findings are shown below are the values for members of a university athletic team (only 10.5% of students: 11 male, 10 female) and gender of the

Deleted: s as a whole held more tolerant attitudes of IPV when a female was the perpetrator rather than a male.

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respondent and while significant, it must be noted, again, that the number of athletes is very small and the "split" on this variable is significantly skewed toward non-athletes which will influence the statistical analysis.

Table 2: Attitudes Toward Dating Violence

Member of a University Athletic Team		F	Sig.	Dating Violence Score	Dating Violence Score for Non-Athletes
Overall Attitude toward IPV	Between Groups (Combined)	7.380	.007	66.3810	56.6939
Attitude toward Female Perpetrated IPV	Between Groups (Combined)	5.450	.021	36.9048	31.9886
Attitude toward Male Perpetrated IPV	Between Groups (Combined)	5.446	.021	27.1429	23.1954

Conclusions

The sample did not have strongly tolerant attitudes for IPV, and was even less tolerant when a male was the perpetrator of the abuse. As previous research has speculated, this could be due to the overall larger size and physical strength of males in comparison to females or related to attitudes which generally hold that women are generally not inclined toward violence and so when they are the perpetrator of violence it is somehow more reasonable, more justified than when committed by men. The strength of tolerance for abusive behaviors as well as the strength of the tolerance for abusive acts based on the gender of the perpetrator was related to gender of the respondents. While both men and women reported low levels of tolerance for abusive behaviors, men were more tolerant than women. Similarly, while both men and women were more tolerant of male perpetrated than female perpetrated acts of abuse, women were less tolerant, overall, of abuse by both types of perpetrators.

Past these differential results based on gender, what is most interesting about the findings of this research is the lack of consistency with other findings as reported in the literature. Specifically, no differences were found between other demographic variables such as race, whether or not the respondent was in a relationship and educational ranking (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior). This was the case for both the overall tolerance scores and the scores for the male and female perpetrated IPV scores. The only demographic factor that predicted overall tolerance scores for IVP was whether or not the respondent was a student athlete. Those who were student athletes were found to be more tolerant of IPV, generally, than respondents who were not student athletes. And this finding, while statistically significant was based on the responses of students who were 95% non-athletes and 5% athletes or a total of 11 student athlete respondents.[2]

The lack of variation in tolerance toward IPV may be a function of several factors. 1) The "convenience sample" of students enrolled in Justice Administration courses may not be representative of the general college student population. 2) The lack of differences, specifically, in attitudes between white and non-white as well as the differences based on the type of relationship the student was involved in may reflect differences between the college student sample and the general population. 3) It may be that due to more widespread public education and notification that students, whether they hold the beliefs themselves or not, know what are the socially acceptable attitudes toward IPV and therefore articulate the "acceptable" rather than their "personal beliefs". This may also be heightened by the fact that a significant number of students enrolled in Justice Administration are also majors in this discipline. As such, they seek positions in

Deleted: While there was not a difference found with regards to year in school, this could be attributed to the cross-sectional design of the study, but it could also be that the sample was not representative of

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[2] The gender of the student athletes was evenly distributed with 5 being female and 6 being male.

law enforcement and in other criminal justice occupations and so may be even more highly motivated to respond with the socially acceptable rather than their own personal opinion.

While a relationship between being a university athlete and a more tolerant view of IPV was not expected, it was significant and warrants further study to determine possible explanations for this relationship. It may be that the female athletes, because they may be generally more assertive, stronger psychologically and physically than women generally, find incidents of IPV more tolerant. While other explanations may be posited, this is a relationship that is interesting and worth further research as these women are not stereotypic female college students.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Study

As with any research project, there are limitations to this study which must be kept in mind when considering the applicability, validity and reliability of the results. 1) Due to time constraints, the sample was small and only contained students enrolled in Justice Administration courses, which may have served to bias the sample toward individuals interested in criminal justice and therefore more informed about IPV. The lack of significant findings with most of the demographic markers could be attributed to the size of the sample, similarities among students in Justice Administration courses along demographic characteristics not included in the analysis that did not allow for sufficient variation.. There is also the possibility, mention previously, that because of public education on IPV which seeks to promote low tolerance resulted in responses based on what the students perceived as "acceptable" rather than their own personal opinion. The may have been attenuated because the researcher was in the classroom

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during respondents' completion of the questionnaire, and so respondents "faked good"; the psychological phenomenon that involves "showing [oneself] in a better light" and that their responses were not completely true to their attitudes toward IPV (Tansy, 2011).

As a recommendation for further study, a longitudinal research design of administering the Attitudes toward Dating Violence survey to students durig their university orientation at the beginning of their college career and again before graduation to see how or if their attitudes change over might find a relationship that the cross-sectional design did not. Administering the questionnaire online might also serve to add another level of anonymity. Lastly, additional research should also be conducted to explore the relationship between being a university athlete and having more tolerant views toward IPV, with a larger sample of university athletes from other areas of study to see if the relationship exists on a larger scale.

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