

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - INTRODUCTION & GOVER ET AL. 2011 ARTICLE 1

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Novel Advancements in Domestic Violence Research.

We will begin with a discussion of the relationships between childhood maltreatment, low self-control, and dating violence, as reported in the Gover [? et al.'s ?] article entitled "The Influence of Childhood Maltreatment and Self-Control on Dating Violence-- A Comparison of College Students in the United States and in South Korea."

Existing research has shown that dating violence can take many forms, including physical violence and psychological abuse. It has also been noted that the risk factors of both victimization and perpetration of dating violence often overlap and that both males and females appear as perpetrators of violence within relationships. Unfortunately, the majority of the data on intimate partner violence has focused primarily on physical violence within the United States only.

When using a comparative research approach instead, possible predictors of psychological and physical abuse perpetration and victimization can be identified. Gover et al. provided one of the first studies to directly compare US and South Korea and dating violence experiences among young adults.

Exposure to violence as a child is a commonly-studied risk factor for dating violence often examined through social learning theory. This theory suggests that children's behaviors are discovered and learned through observations of their parents or guardians, and they're later replicated in their own lives.

With regard to partner violence, social learning theory predicts that perpetrators are more likely to have witnessed similar behavior from a role model in childhood. Additionally, perpetrators are believed to expect a higher level of rewards than costs from violence and typically hold attitudes that are approving or neutral toward partner violence.

Generally, the application of social learning theory across various settings has generated conflicting results regarding the relationship between childhood abuse and adult dating violence.

Another theory often used within the context of dating violence is self-control theory, which sees lack of self-control or low self-control in individuals as a contributing force to their offending. This theory has been used to understand both violence perpetration and victimization. Generally, research findings are supportive of the relationship between low self-control and relationship violence, both cross-culturally and within the United States.

Changes in the culture of dating in both the United States and South Korea over the last three to four decades have led to a decline in parental involvement in dating. And youth attitudes regarding sex, marriage, and obligation to family have become much more differentiated from those of older

generations. There has also been an increase in the average age of marriage in both countries, as well as an increase in the proportion of adults never married.

Although such similarities are present, the countries' dating and marital violence public policies differ. For example, South Korean policy focuses on family preservation and health, whereas the United States advocates victim safety and offender accountability.

The complex relationship between gender and dating violence has shown similar patterns in South Korea and the United States. Specifically, the most common type of violence in relationships was perpetrated by both males and females. Contrary to popular belief, the second most common type of violence was perpetrated by females and the least common by males.

The use of violence in women is believed to be more of a reactive response to dating violence than violence from men. And according to research by Luthra and Gidycz, experiencing partner violence victimization was the strongest predictor of female perpetration.

The Gover et al. study, the Family and Relationship Experiences and Attitudes Among College Students survey, was used to gather data. The survey consists of 167 questions that focus on dating violence, perpetration, and victimization, relationship with parents, exposure to violence during childhood, fear of crime, risk-taking behaviors, attitudes toward women, and demographics. The survey was administered to 1,399 South Korean students and 1,588 US students.

Four independent variables were used in the analysis-- the perpetration of psychological abuse, psychological abuse victimization, the perpetration of physical violence, and physical violence victimization. Three distinct childhood maltreatment variables were constructed to test social learning theory. The first variable focused on various types of potential childhood physical abuse, whereas the second and third variables assessed father-to-mother and mother-to-father violence.

Comparatively, the self-control measure was based on 23 additive scale items from the Grasmick et al. self-control scale. Finally, the variables found to influence one's risk for victimization and perpetration, such as age, family structure, gender, being in an exclusive dating relationship, and sexual risk taking, were included as control variables.

When looking at predictors of psychological abuse perpetration and victimization, findings show similarity between both samples. Specifically, the research shows limited support for social learning theory, but it does support self-control theory by finding that lower levels of self-control were positively and significantly related to psychological abuse perpetration and victimization among both samples.

Age was also found to be a predictor among South Korean students, but not the US sample. And risky sexual behavior was significantly and positively related with psychological abuse perpetration and victimization, and this was found in both samples.

When looking at predictors of physical violence perpetration and victimization, the results were again very similar for both samples. Specifically, mixed support was found for social learning theory, but self-control theory was supported as lower levels of self-control were positively and significantly related to physical violence perpetration and victimization in both samples.

In addition, being male, risky sexual behavior, and exclusive dating were positively related to perpetration and victimization in both countries. Finally, being female in the US sample had a greater effect on perpetration. And low self-control had a significantly greater impact on experiencing physical violence victimization in South Korea relative to the United States.

The most notable findings of the Gover et al. study showed that psychological abuse was more common than physical abuse in both of the samples. US students reported higher levels of partner violence than the South Korean students.

But predictors of psychological abuse and physical violence perpetration and victimization were highly consistent both within and between the samples. Witnessing parental violence was inconsistently related to intimate partner violence in adulthood across both samples.

And the research also strongly supports self-control theory, but found weak support for social learning theory and only partial support for the intergenerational transmission of violence hypothesis. And this was found for both samples. And the consistency in the outcomes between the types of violence and samples does ultimately indicate that these results are cross-culturally applicable.

These results have many implications for policy. First, the findings in the prevalence of partner violence between the samples may prompt policymakers and scholars to investigate the actual impact of public policy on private relationship behavior.

Additionally, psychological violence being higher than physical violence in both samples suggests the relationship conflict management initiatives may help prevent future physical violence for some. Finally, the results suggest that prevention-based public policy encouraging sex and relationship education may be a feasible method of normalizing healthy relationship behaviors and conflict management.