

COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF
ADOLESCENT DATING VIOLENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to examine college students' perceptions toward adolescent dating violence. The objective is to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences in knowledge and experience among criminology and criminal justice majors and non-criminology and criminal justice majors. Surveys were administered to 100 college students to measure knowledge and experience of adolescent dating violence. Survey responses of students who identified themselves as criminology and criminal justice majors were compared to responses of those students who did not consider themselves criminology and criminal justice majors. While there were some statistically significant differences between the two groups with regards to both knowledge and experience, there were not as many differences as the author

hypothesized. The findings of this study demonstrate shortcomings in both policy and education in both adolescent dating violence prevention and education.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This inquiry seeks to explore the prevalence of adolescent dating violence in a college population and analyze any statistically significant differences between students who identified themselves as criminology and criminal justice majors, and those who do not. While this study is narrow in scope, it is hoped that this research will serve as a catalyst for future researchers to perform similar studies on a broader basis.

As it will be presented and discussed, limited research has been conducted assessing college students' perceptions and experiences with adolescent dating violence. The main objectives of this research were a) to investigate the prevalence of adolescent dating violence experienced by college students; and b) explore the association of violence perpetrated and received by criminology and criminal justice and non-criminology and criminal justice degree-seeking students. It was hypothesized by the author that those students who are seeking degrees in criminology and criminal justice would have both more knowledge and more experience with issues surrounding adolescent dating violence. This research was both appropriate and relevant both in terms of the current societal environment and the existing lapse in the body of knowledge regarding these specific areas of concern.

For the purposes of this research, the following definitions will apply:

Dating violence is behavior used by one individual that represents an attempt to control, dominate or harm the dating partner physically, sexually or psychologically (Wolfe & Wekerle 2004).

Adolescent is the age between 13 and 19 years (Roget's II 2007).

A comparison of adolescent dating violence victimization and perpetration rates as it relates to college major has not yet been presented in the academic literature. The literature contained many studies done at the adolescent age of perpetration and victimization rates of dating violence. The literature also contained many studies of adolescent dating violence which attempt to establish correlational factors for both perpetration and victimization. These studies provide a look into the sheer size of the problem that adolescent dating violence is. However, one limitation that these studies all have in common is that many adolescents do not realize that they are in a relationship which is either verbally or physically violent.

It was the purpose of this study to perform research inquiry to determine adolescent dating violence perpetration and victimization prevalence among college students, in a reflective manner. Further this study also attempts to determine if college major, specifically those students who are criminal justice majors versus those who are not, has any correlation with the research findings. This purpose was accomplished by surveying university students enrolled in criminal justice courses to measure and compare responses as they relate to knowledge of adolescent dating violence as well as personal experience of adolescent dating violence.

Chapter 2 begins with an overview of the presence of adolescent dating violence citing many studies that have found shocking rates at which this violence is occurring. These studies cover a time span between the early 1990's until the writing of this paper. The chapter continues with theoretical variables pertaining to the perpetration of adolescent dating violence. In this chapter, some of the theories presented include social learning theory, interdependence theory, routine activities/ lifestyle theory and post-traumatic stress theory. A discussion is provided of the many sociodemographic variables which some of the academic literature has correlated with adolescent dating violence perpetration and victimization. The chapter concludes with existing research that addresses the relationship between adolescent and adult dating violence, prevention, and the lasting effects of adolescent dating violence.

In chapter 3, the author presents a methodology for this study, which was a quantitative analysis of the significance of knowledge-based differences and experiences of adolescent dating violence among university students who considered themselves criminology and criminal justice majors, and those who did not. Participants were asked to answer survey questions that addressed issues relevant to adolescent dating violence attitudes and beliefs, personal experience and familial experience with violence.

In chapter 4, the author details the analysis of the survey data with emphasis on knowledge and experience with adolescent dating violence among university students. The survey responses of criminology and criminal justice majors were compared with those who were not criminology and criminal justice majors for statistical significance.

In Chapter 5, the author discusses the conclusions reached from the findings of the data analyses and subsequent implications for adolescents. Recommendations are made for both policy and education. The author further discusses the possible shortcomings and limitations of the performed research as well as suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

What do we know about intimate partner violence as it affects our teen population? Who is the victim and who is the abuser in this age group? What are risk factors that can help identify future perpetrators of adolescent dating violence? What are the implications that adolescent violence will have on future relationships? Are individuals who are seeking a degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice more aware of this type of violence? Most of the work done in this country over the past two decades to eradicate partner violence has been focused on helping women and children flee from abusive partners (Sousa 1999; West & Rose 2000).

Abusive behaviors between unmarried courting couples were first reported in a study by Makepeace in 1981. Since then, studies in the literature have defined behaviors, populations, gender differences, ethnic impact and intervention programs (Close 2005). There is a notable lack of research regarding the prevalence of adolescent dating violence. This type of violence is often dismissed or not taken as a serious problem. However, according to Ehrensoft, Moffitt and Caspi (2004), partner violence is most prevalent during the period of adolescence to early adulthood. Further, about half of domestic violence crimes regardless of the victim's sex involve unmarried partners (Anonymous 2001). In an attempt to establish a theoretical framework for

understanding and preventing adolescent dating violence, research has moved forward in several fronts, including a focus on individual and interpersonal influences, as well as ecological contexts such as the home, school and community (Howard 2004).

Dating violence is “a very significant problem” because of its timing, possible immediate and long-term effects, and alarming prevalence (Chase, Treboux, & O’Leary 2002). Often teenagers do not have the life experience to see violence for what it really is. Surprisingly, they sometimes see it as a sign of being loved (Landfield 2006; Close 2005). Previous abuse may only be identified when the victim is older, or able to see the violence for what it really was. There have been several studies conducted which surveyed high school-age students to explore the prevalence of dating violence at this age (Yexley, Borowsky, & Ireland 2002; Arriaga & Foshee 2004; Callahan, Tollman & Saunders 2003; Wolfe, Scott, Wekerle & Pittman 2001; Avery-Leaf, Cascardi, O’Leary & Cano 1997).

2.2 Previous Studies/ Prevalence

Violence perpetrated by adolescents is a major problem in today’s society (Williams-Evans & Myers 2004). Although we more commonly hear about domestic violence among adults, up to 25 percent of domestic youths, age 12-21 experience violence in a relationship (Landfield 2006; McCloskey & Lichter 2003; BJS 2000; Simons, Lin & Gordon 1998). Some studies have reported that in many cases greater than 50 percent of adolescent dating relationships include violence (Gray & Foshee 1997; Jezi, Molidor & Wright 1996). In a survey of three Midwestern high schools,

15.7 percent of girls and 7.8 percent of boys reported being physically abused in relationships (Sousa 1999).

Research suggests that many adolescents experience an episode of dating violence by the age of 15 and that between nine and 46 percent of high school students are involved in some sort of physical dating violence (Gover 2004). Jezi, Molidor & White (1996) found that 96 percent of the high school students they surveyed had experienced what they deemed to be psychological abuse. In addition, these researchers found that 59 percent had been a victim of what they considered physical violence and 15 percent experienced some type of sexual violence in a dating relationship (Jezi, Molidor & White 1996).

In a study of dating violence victimization among students in grades 7-12 during 1994-1995, the 18-month prevalence of victimization from physical and psychological dating violence was estimated at 12 percent and 20 percent, respectively (Black et al 2003).

Rape research indicates that approximately 25 percent of women have been the victims of attempted or completed rape, and a large number of these rapes (57 percent) occurred in the context of a dating relationship (West & Rose 2000).

Chen and White (2004) conducted research and found that approximately 67 percent of victims of dating violence were physically attacked, nearly 50 percent of victims were injured and, of those, 10 percent suffered serious injuries. Exceeded only by unintentional injuries, homicide was the second-leading cause of death for youth ages 15 to 24 in 1998 (Yexley, Borowsky, & Ireland 2002).

Chase, Treboux, O'Leary & Strassberg (1998) found that 68 percent and 33 percent of high-risk females and males, respectively, reported being violent against their current, or most recent, dating partner. These researchers found that this prevalence rate is considerably higher than the 15 percent to 35 percent prevalence found among normative adolescents (e.g. those attending regular high school and not engaging in alcohol or drug use).

According to FBI statistics, over 1,000 Americans are killed annually by a boyfriend or girlfriend (Williams-Evans & Myers 2004). In addition, longitudinal research conducted in a life-span developmental framework has found that high-risk status in adolescents is a predictor of partner violence in early adulthood (Chase, Treboux & O'Leary 2002).

Often times teenagers do not report violent acts, and often times may not have the life experience to see violence for what it really is (Sousa 1999). Often, they see the violence as a sign of loving devotion and the perpetrator's remorse as intimacy (Landfield 2006; Sousa 1999). Teens also may be reluctant to seek help from adults, which indicates the true number of victims may be greatly underreported (Landfield 2006).

Because research shows that dating violence occurs at a fairly high rate and because early courtship patterns are often precursors for later marital abuse, the issue of relationship violence must be identified by all parties involved, and confronted at an early age (Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd & Sebastian 1991).

2.3 The Family Cycle of Violence

The dual social problems of family violence and violent adolescent behavior have captured the attention of researchers in the last few decades. Family violence is defined by the Texas Family Code as an act by a member of a family or household against another member of the family or household that is intended to result in physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault, or sexual assault that is a threat that reasonably places the member in fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault (Texas Family Code 2001). Violence between parents, as well as parental violence against children are considered types of family violence (Foshee, Baumann & Linder 1999).

According to Williams-Evans & Myers (2004), adolescents are not emotionally or cognitively prepared to deal with the necessities of surviving as an adolescent and balancing the many experiences in a high conflict household. There is a pressing concern that youth exposed to violence in the home will grow up to repeat it (McCloskey & Lichter 2003).

This concern stems in part from evidence consistent with the family cycle of violence (McCloskey & Lichter 2003). It is estimated that as many as 25 percent of adolescent dissonance exists from a marital or relationship conflict in the home (Williams-Evans & Myers 2004). In one study, adult men who batter their wives recollect their own father's abuse of their mothers more often than a control group of men (McCloskey & Lichter 2003).

Prior research suggests that adolescents whose parents are violent toward one another are more likely to perpetrate dating violence (Arriaga & Foshee 2004; McCloskey & Lichter 2003; Wolfe & Wekerle 2004; Prospero 2006). These youths that have experienced domestic violence are estimated to have more than 3.5 times greater risk of involvement in adult domestic violence (Coid, et al. 2001).

Child Protective Services reported nearly five of every 1,000 United States children were victims of physical maltreatment (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2000). Estimates are that another 10 million to 17 million children witness adult partner violence each year (Holden 1998). One out of ten adolescents from abusive homes reported perpetrating dating violence (Sousa 1999).

This risk of the abused becoming the abuser stems from developmental processes affected by maltreatment that interfere with or alter their ability to form healthy relationships with others (Wolfe & Wekerle 2004). As a result of these challenges, peer and social relationships among these maltreated youth are more likely to be accompanied by poor interpersonal adjustment (e.g. hostility, fear, and mistrust) and limited personal resources such as low self-esteem and distorted beliefs about relationships (Wolfe, Scott, Wekerle & Pittmon 2001). This then impedes their ability to form healthy, nonviolent relationships (Wolfe & Wekerle 2004).

2.4 Theoretical Background

2.4.1 Social Learning Theory

The most widely recognized explanation for dating violence claims that it is learned in the family of origin (Simons, Lin & Gordon 1998). Because young

adolescents do not have extensive experience in dating, they may learn how to behave in a dating situation mainly by observing others that are close to them, such as their parents or peers (Prospero 2006).

Social learning theory also suggests that adolescents learn to be violent toward their dating partners by observing the behavior of models who express violence (Bandura 1986). According to this theory, family members, peers and significant others play an important role in shaping an individual's violent response to situations (Bandura 1986). To model behavior, it first must be observed and attended to (Wolf & Foshee 2003). Second, the observer must remember the behavior (Wolf & Foshee 2003). Third, the observer must have the capabilities to perform the observed behavior (Wolf & Foshee 2003). Finally, rewarding and punishing consequences usually determine whether a behavior becomes modeled (Wolf & Foshee 2003).

Social learning theory views abusive and aggressive conflict resolution techniques as being learned and reinforced (Wolf & Foshee 2003). These behaviors are observed in the socialization process and directly modeled in later relationships with intimate partners (Chen & White 2004; McCloskey & Lichter 2003; Wolf & Foshee 2003). When feeling angry, the adolescent who was exposed to family violence is likely to react spontaneously on the basis of previous experience (Wolf & Foshee 2003). This happens often at the expense of more nonaggressive ways of resolving conflict (Wolfe & Wekerle 2004). Wolfe, Scott, Wekerle & Pittmon (2003) found that maltreatment is a significant risk factor for adolescent violence, however, it shows a different pattern for males and females.

2.4.2 Interdependence Theory

Interdependence theory, similar to the social learning theory, suggests that close others influence adolescent behaviors (Thibaut & Kelley 1959). This theory posits that interaction behaviors are strongly influenced by beliefs and expectations about what a relationship should be like, or a comparison level (Arriaga & Foshee 2004).

Behavioral standards for a dating relationship are likely to be influenced by one's own past experiences with dating relationships (Arriaga & Foshee 2004). Because many adolescents have not had extensive dating experiences, instead they are likely to form standards based on observations of close others such as parents and friends (Arriaga & Foshee 2004). These acceptable interaction behaviors can shape perpetration or victimization interactions (Arriaga & Foshee 2004).

2.4.3 Friend Influence

The concept that parents shape their children's behavior may seem obvious, however, peers may be an even more powerful source of influence (Arriaga & Foshee 2004; Sousa 1999; DeKeserdy & Kelly 1999). Prior research suggests that having friends in violent relationships may also increase the odds of dating violence (Arriaga & Foshee 2004; Sousa 1999; DeKeserdy & Kelly 1999; Sousa 1999). One study showed that 61 percent of adolescents reporting dating violence told only a friend (Sousa 1999).

Research has supported social learning theory as a framework for the development of adolescent dating violence (Arriaga & Foshee 2004; Swart, Stevens & Ricardo 2002; DeKeserdy & Kelly 1995). For example, Arriaga and Foshee (2004) found that adolescents were more likely to commit dating violence if their friends

experienced dating violence. They also found that only friend violence consistently predicted later dating violence perpetration and victimization (Arriaga & Foshee 2004).

Swart, Stevens & Ricardo (2002) found a relationship between witnessing friends engage in dating violence and adolescent dating violence. In addition, DeKeseredy & Kelly (1995) found that negative peer behavior was a better predictor for sexual aggression than parental behavior. This theory would both suggest an influential process whereby friends who experience dating violence also encourage or condone dating violence (Arriaga & Foshee 2004). Thus, this may be explained by the amount of time that adolescents spend with peers versus parents (Arriaga & Foshee 2004).

2.4.4 Social-Cognitive Mechanisms

Connections between exposure to violence and subsequent aggression toward others are further explained on the basis of social-cognitive mechanisms, such as self-efficacy, attitudes and information processing biases, which emphasize the belief that aggression is normal, justifiable and will increase the likelihood of a desired outcome (Dodge, et al 1994).

Theoretical models as well as survey research have emphasized the role of attitude and beliefs justifying relationship violence “under certain conditions” (Dodge, et al 1994; Wolfe & Wekerle 2004). It is likely that these attitudes justifying relationship violence begin in the family of origin (Wolfe & Wekerle 2004). Powerful peer forces also reinforce beliefs about attitudes justifying aggression as a viable and acceptable interpersonal strategy with dating partners.

2.4.5 Routine Activities/ Lifestyle Theory

Routine activities and lifestyle theories provide the context for understanding the social processes through which victimization is most likely to occur (Cohen & Felson 1979). According to this theory, the routine activities of modern life have led to the dispersion of activities away from the family and the household, thus many households are left without guardianship for extended periods of time (Cohen & Felson 1979). This theory fits in with the risky lifestyles approach by asserting that those individuals who engage in risk-taking behaviors (e.g. drinking or drug use) are at an increased risk of victimization because their daily activities place them in situations where guardianship is low, they appear to be a vulnerable target, and they are in the presence of motivated offenders (Gover 2004).

This theoretical process helps explain the association between alcohol and drugs and violent victimization (Chase, Treboux & O'Leary 2002). In terms of dating violence, the routine activities perspective would explain why negative emotions that influence risk taking place adolescents at a greater likelihood for violent victimization in dating relationships (Gover 2004). For example, the use of alcohol and drugs usually occurs in social settings and in the absence of capable guardians or authority figures (Warr & Stafford 1991). Therefore, the lack of adult guardianship coincides with increased vulnerability as adolescents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol become vulnerable to a motivated offender (e.g. a date) (Gover 2004).

2.4.6 Feminist Perspective

The feminist perspective suggests that men are given greater power in families as well as in society and therefore are given greater cultural approval of violence (Kantor 1993). A body of research has supported this perspective and found that gender role ideology may contribute to spousal abuse by males (Kantor 1993; Dasgupta 1999; Stark 1996). Studies have found that violence against women is related to traditional gender role expectations and hypermasculinity (e.g. attitudes supportive of male dominance) (Dasgupta 1999; Stark 1996).

A traditional gender role orientation for women may lead them to become victims of dating abuse. Women who adhere to traditional gender role ideology may be at a higher risk of being involved in violent relationships or hesitant to leave them (Chen & White 2004). This ideology of femininity may lead many women to appear nonaggressive or less aggressive (Chen & White 2004).

2.4.7 Post-traumatic Stress

Children who are witnesses to interparental violence combined with direct physical abuse within the family are at risk for the development of psychiatric disturbances such as post-traumatic stress disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, and separation anxiety disorder (Pelcovitz, Kaplan, DeRosa, Mandel & Salzinger 2000).

Developmental traumatology (DeBellis & Putnam 1994) asserts that trauma-related symptoms are a key factor of maltreatment history and subsequent maladaptive outcomes as a result of stress-induced changes in developing neurobiology. These maladaptive family events, when combined with chronic family stressors (e.g.

substance abuse, multiple home and partner changes, or neglect-related accidents) (Wolfe & Wekerle 2004), result in a continuous mobilization of a child's biological response system. This can lead to permanent structural and functional changes in the brain (DeBellis & Putnam 1994). Children that are affected, have some degree of ongoing trauma symptoms, which are activated when they are exposed to certain cues (Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt & Kenny 2003) .

These elevated trauma symptoms have been found among witnesses of parental conflict and violence (Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt & Kenny 2003). These post-traumatic stress symptoms include intrusive memories, numbness, distressing reminders, dissociative response, efforts to forget about the event, hypervigilance and reliving the event or events (Wolfe & Wekerle 2004). When this post-traumatic symptomatology is applied to dating violence, the unique triggers may interfere with acknowledging when "rough and tumble play" crosses the line to abusive behavior (Wolfe & Wekerle 2004). This is due to the confusing positive effects of abusive behavior in earlier stages and a potentially heightened tolerance of abuse among these victims (Wolfe & Wekerle 2004). This playful grabbing or otherwise restraining of a dating partner may also trigger these maltreatment-related memories, increasing the risk for elevated aggressive responses (Meiser-Stedman 2002). Their heightened vigilance for distress-relevant cues often leads to an overreaction when such cues are found, resulting in sometimes unnecessary violent reactions (Katz & Gottman 1991).

2.5 Risk Markers

By relying on data from the 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) analyzed the prevalence of physical dating violence victimization among high school students and its association with five risk behaviors (Black et al 2003). These risk behaviors include: sexual intercourse, attempted suicide, episodic heavy drinking and physical fighting (Black et al 2003). The results indicated that 8.9 percent of students reported physical dating violence victimization during the twelve months preceding the survey and that students reporting physical dating violence victimization were more likely to engage in four of the five risk behaviors (Black et al 2003).

Other risk indicators among adolescents who experience dating violence include adolescents who report sad, hopeless or depressed feelings, poorer self-esteem, substance abuse, multiple sex partners, and unprotected sex (Howard, Beck, Kerr & Shattuck 2005). These adolescents are more likely to report being a victim of dating violence (Howard, Beck, Kerr & Shattuck 2005).

The combination of maltreatment at home, mental health factors, early sexual behavior, and tobacco, alcohol and drug use cause children to inaccurately infer emotional reactions in others, thereby setting up interpersonal difficulties with peers and dating partners (Shields, Cicchetti & Ryan 1994).

2.5.1 Adversarial Sexual Beliefs

Regardless of ethnic background, age or gender, some individuals may endorse adversarial beliefs which, in turn, may play a role in dating violence (West & Rose

2000). Specifically, women and men may enter a relationship with the expectation that sexual relationships are fundamentally exploitative, that each party to them is manipulative, sly, cheating, and not to be trusted (West & Rose 2000). It is possible, however, that these sexual beliefs could either be a consequence of or a cause of violence between partners (West & Rose 2000).

2.5.2 Drug and Alcohol Consumption

Research consistently shows a high correlation of dating violence perpetration for those adolescents who are involved in illicit drug and alcohol consumption (Gover 2004; Coker, et al 2000). Alcohol abuse may lead to short-term or long-term cognitive impairment, which reduces the ability of the brain to inhibit dangerous impulses that affect judgment, decision making and awareness of the consequences of one's behavior (White 1997). These cognitive changes thus increase the risk of aggressive behavior.

Attending a school with comparatively high levels of cigarette and marijuana use was also linked with subsequent violence (Ellickson & McGuigan 2000). Earlier problem drinking was a common predictor of perpetration for both males and females (Chen & White 2002). Sousa (1999) conducted a study and found the percentages of adolescents in this study using an illicit drug, including inhalants, is 38 percent for eighth graders, 50 percent for tenth graders, and 56 percent for twelfth graders.

2.5.3 STD's

Teenage women's patterns of STD testing and diagnosis may be related to their experience of dating violence (Hollander 2005). One-third of sexually active Massachusetts women participating in the 1999 and 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Surveys

had either been sexually or physically hurt by a date (Hollander 2005). Some 33 percent had been tested for a STD, including HIV, and five percent had received a diagnosis (Hollander 2005). Compared with nonabused women, those reporting only sexual violence were more likely to have been tested for a STD (Hollander 2005).

Analysts suggest that women who are sexually abused by a date may have “singular incidents outside of relationships” that lead them to seek testing, whereas those experiencing only physical violence may be “chronically exposed to coercive sex” that they do not perceive as abusive (Hollander 2005).

2.6 Sociodemographic Variables

2.6.1 Ethnicity

According to Landfield (2006), socioeconomic status, class, income, or location is no exemption to the problem of adolescent dating violence. Racial background also does not appear to be a strong predictor of dating violence (Raice 2006). Simply because a certain ethnic or religious group appears to be non-violent, it does not mean that no violence is occurring (Raice 2006).

According to Raice (2006), when speaking of the Jewish community, “People think that Jewish men do not hit their partners. There is a stereotype that a Jewish man is a bookish, nerdy figure who would not be violent. But it’s just that. It’s only a stereotype” (Raice 2006).

Other stereotypes exist for African American male-female relationships. West and Rose (2000) found that among those studied, one-third of the participants endorsed antagonistic beliefs concerning black male-female relationships. In reality, all

backgrounds seem to be at risk for adolescent dating violence. As far as reporting is concerned, Hispanic girls appear more likely to report dating violence victimization than their peers (Howard & Wang 2003, Howard, Beck, Kerr & Shattuck 2005; Centers for Disease Control 2002).

There is, however, evidence that, because of their marginalized status, some ethnic groups are at an increased risk for violence (West & Rose 2000; National Center for Health Statistics 1997). For example, homicide committed by intimate partners is the leading cause of death for black women between the ages of 15 and 24 (National Center for Health Statistics 1997). According to West & Rose (2000), when social class is addressed, racial differences in dating violence disappear. Thus, social class variables tend to be related to dating violence, with low-income youth being more vulnerable to violence (West & Rose 2000).

2.6.2 Gender

White dating violence has received increased attention, the focus has been largely on the potential for physical and psychological harm to girls (Howard & Wang 2003; Molidor & Tolman 1998). To the extent that dating violence among adolescent boys has been examined, interest has been mostly in their role as perpetrators, with such behavior representing, perhaps, one facet of a more generalized tendency to engage in antisocial activities, aggression and intimidation (Howard & Wang 2003).

Although 85 percent of reported victims are female (Landfield 2006), this does not mean that males are not frequently victims to dating violence. Some dating

violence studies of adolescents suggest that victimization is more prevalent among females than males (Coker, et al 2000).

Other studies, however, indicate similar victimization rates between males and females (Molidor & Tolman 1998; O’Keefe 1997; Miller & White 2003; Wolf & Foshee 2003; Howard & Wang 2003). The Centers for Disease Control (May 19, 2006) reported that high school girls physically attacked their boyfriends at an almost identical rate that high school boys attacked their girlfriends. The girls’ attack rate, however, was the slightly higher rate (Centers for Disease Control 2003). This nationally representative survey was conducted by the Centers for Disease Control in 2003 on almost 15, 000 students in grades seven through twelve.

The most comprehensive research into dating violence worldwide (Straus 2004) is the University of New Hampshire’s Family Research Laboratory’s ongoing International Dating Violence Study – first covering 19 countries, then expanding to 32 – which finds the median rate of female-on-male dating violence (29.2 percent) is actually higher than the rate of male-on-female dating violence (24.7 percent).

According to Gover (2004), a common explanation used for this finding is that when females are performing violent acts, they are acting in self-defense. Some studies have found that a female’s perpetration is largely employed to defend herself while male’s violence, on the other hand, is more injurious and is more likely to be motivated by attempts to dominate or terrorize their partners (Chen & White 2004).

The sexual symmetry/ woman abuse debate is ongoing among researchers (Miller & White 2003). The case for sexual symmetry relies on research that shows

similar rates of relationship violence perpetration across gender and a common psychological profile for males and females engaged in violent behaviors (Miller & White 2003). Studies that produce similar rates of violence across gender typically use a version of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS). CTS based research has found similar or higher rates of female-perpetrated physical violence than male perpetrated physical violence among adolescents (Gray & Foshee 1997; Miller & White 2003).

For example, Morse (1995) found consistently higher rates of female-to-male than male-to-female partner violence. She also reports that girls were more likely than boys to engage in violence labeled severe in the CTS (kicking, hitting with the fist or an object, or the use of a weapon), and they were twice as likely to engage in violence that was nonreciprocal (Morse 1995). However, Morse (1995) does not suggest that partner violence is gender balanced. This is because her study highlights that young women were more likely to sustain injuries, require medical treatment and fear for their safety as a result of partner violence (Morse 1995).

While the Conflict Tactic Scale measures rates, it does not measure the consequences of violence, the contexts of violence, and the sequence of events in which it progresses, thus overlooking the finding that females experience more negative effects from partner violence than males (Miller & White 2003).

In a study of 3,735 high school students, being a recent victim or witness to violence at home was associated with violent behavior for females; however it was not strongly associated with violent behavior for males (Yexley, Borosky & Ireland 2002).

Research on gendered meanings of partner violence consistently shows that males minimize female-perpetrated partner violence (Miller & White 2003). Molidor and Tolman (1998) conducted a study and found that over half of the males in their sample reported their response to dating violence victimization was to laugh. A third reported ignoring it (Molidor & Tolman 1998). In contrast, a larger portion of girls reported fighting back, obeying their partner, or trying to talk to them (Molidor & Tolman 1998).

The literature also indicates that females are more comfortable than males reporting violence perpetration against their partners (Gover 2004). Males seem to be less inclined than females to report their own perpetration of violence against females because of social stigma attached (Gover 2004).

In those studies which have examined the relationship between gender and dating violence, several risk factors have been found for boys (Howard & Wang 2003). For example, physical dating violence among adolescent boys is associated with same-gender sexual partners, forced sex and having been threatened with physical violence (Wolfe & Wekerle 2004). In addition, adolescent males who date someone older, rather than the same age or younger, are more likely to experience dating violence (Howard & Wang 2003).

Jezi, Molidor & Wright (1996) examined the rates of victimization through psychological, sexual and physical abuse among 257 students in adolescent dating relationships. After completing a self-report questionnaire, it was determined that significantly more males than females reported experiencing physical abuse overall

(Jezi, Molidor & Wright 1996). Significantly more males than females also reported experiencing acts of moderate physical abuse (Jezi, Molidor & Wright 1996). This goes against the common notion that males are always the abusers and females are always the victims.

Several studies (Molidor & Tolman 1998; O'Keefe 1997; Miller & White 2003; Wolf & Foshee 2003; West & Rose 2000) have shown this is not the case. However this brings about two questions: are males more likely to identify abuse for what it really is? Are females more likely to not see it as abuse, but instead a sign of love or devotion?

Miller and White (2003) insist that though a large body of research shows that there is a gender parity in reported rates of adolescent partner violence, it is immature to conclude that partner violence is a gender-neutral phenomenon. In doing so, Miller and White (2003) assert, it would require treating gender as a sex category and looking only at the rates of perpetration, while disregarding the contexts surrounding partner violence.

2.6.3 Social Ties

In addition to the literature of psychological and health-related risk factors, research indicates the importance of religious institutions on adolescents' risk for dating violence. An early test of the influence of religion on dating behavior (Gover 2004) found higher rates of violence among non-Mormon college students compared to Mormon college students.

Similarly, students reporting more church attendance also reported less involvement in dating violence (Coker, et al 2000; Howard, Beck, Kerr & Shattuck 2005). The reason for this may be twofold. First, these youth regularly in attendance of church activities are less likely to participate in risk-taking activities that enhance their vulnerability (Coker, et al 2000). Second, youth who attend church or other religious institutions are engaging in conventional activities that are more likely to be structured and supervised by adults (Coker, et al 2000).

Family structure also was found to be an important factor in one's risk of experiencing dating violence (Chase, Treboux & O'Leary 2002; Coker et al 2000). Among a sample of adolescents attending a school dropout program, 71 percent of the females who reported involvement in dating violence were raised by a single mother (Chase, Treboux & O'Leary 2002).

Other research indicated that growing up in a home with a single parent was significantly related to experiencing dating violence (Gover 2004). After all, youth living in a single-parent household are more likely to be unsupervised during the day and evening hours. Therefore, one would expect that the effects of strong social ties would reduce the risks of victimization through enhanced guardianship (Gover 2004). Thus, youth living in two-parent households are at a reduced risk of dating violence victimization because their parents are more likely to supervise their activities and not let them engage in social situations without proper guardianship (Gover 2004).

2.7 Relationship to Adult Domestic Violence

2.7.1 Differences Between Adult Domestic Violence and Adolescent Dating Violence

There is some evidence that adolescent dating violence may have some factors which distinguish it from partner violence in adulthood (Gray & Foshee 1997; Miller & White 2003; O'Keefe 1997; Williams-Evans & Myers 2004). Gray and Foshee (1997) conducted a study which showed that 66 percent of students reported mutual dating violence and that those in the mutually violent relationships reported receiving and perpetrating significantly more violence than one-sided violent relationships. They went on to further assert that this may be a function of the age of the sample.

Although national surveys have not documented race differences in rates of partner victimization for women (Miller & White 2003), surveys of adolescents suggest that African American girls may have higher rates of partner violence perpetration than their counterparts in other racial groups (O'Keefe 1997).

Another notable difference between adult and adolescent partner violence is the developmental nature of adolescents (Sousa 1999). During this time, puberty occurs and romantic relationships become increasingly important. Research suggests that young women tend to be pushed into adult roles and expectations earlier than young men (Miller & White 2003), which suggests potential sites of gender conflict within relationships.

Peers are often the first responders to adolescent abuse (Sousa 1999). One study showed that 61 percent of adolescents reporting abuse stated that they told a friend, fewer than three percent told an authority figure, six percent told a family member and

30 percent told no one (Sousa 1999). Often times, teens are reluctant to seek help from adults (Sousa 1999; Close 2005). Frequently, teenage victims fear, rightly or wrongly, that if they tell someone about the abuse, they will be viewed as having done something wrong (Sousa 1999). They often times also fear that any new independence that they may have will be taken away and feelings of shame (Sousa 1999).

Helplessness may prevent many teens from seeking help from family members (Sousa 1999). Often times, when adolescents do seek help, adults typically minimize the seriousness and intensity of teenage relationships and fail to realize the violence that is occurring (Sousa 1999).

2.7.2 Similarities Between Adolescent Dating Violence and Adult Domestic Violence

Several similarities have been noted with regard to adult and adolescent dating violence (Gover 2004; Sousa 1999). Literature supports the conceptualization that individuals who date have similar characteristics as those who are married (Williams-Evans & Myers 2004). In marital relations, it is postulated that one out of six married couples experience some type of violence annually (Williams-Evans & Myers 2004).

Research has indicated an association between dating violence victimization and low self-esteem (Gover 2004). This is similar to literature on spousal abuse. Low self-esteem may reflect aspects of a victim's learned helplessness that prevents the adolescent, or adult, from leaving the relationship once the violence occurs.

Adolescent dating violence also mirrors adult domestic violence in that it exists on a continuum ranging from emotional and verbal abuse to rape and murder (Sousa 1999). The end of an abusive relationship is the most dangerous time for the victim,

perpetrators often threaten suicide or homicide (Sousa 1999). If they have access to a lethal weapon, this becomes a very serious threat (Sousa 1999).

2.8 Prevention

When adolescents hurt each other within the contexts of attraction and dating, questions emerge concerning the etiology and prevention of such actions (Close 2005). A variety of programs have been developed to prevent girls and young women from becoming the victims of violence in their dating relationships (Josephson & Proux 2006). Very few of the programs have been evaluated for their effectiveness (Josephson & Proux 2006) and even fewer have been created for the prevention of violence toward males.

Most health classes at public schools focus on physical health issues, however, these are appropriate forums to address mental, emotional and psychological health issues (Close 2005). Teaching students how to interact in healthy ways on a regular basis as a part of health education is a way of giving them skills to promote nonviolent conflict resolution, and send them toward healthy partnering behaviors (Close 2005).

Strategies for the prevention of domestic violence are changing to anticipate the needs of people in all stages of life (Wolfe & Jaffe 1999). Wolfe and Jaffe describe a three-pronged approach to identify opportunities for prevention along a “continuum of harm”:

- a) Primary prevention – to reduce the incidence before it occurs;
- b) Secondary prevention – to decrease the prevalence after early signs of the problem have been identified; and

c) Tertiary prevention – intervention after the problem has already caused harm

Dating violence among middle school and high school youth must be addressed by screening risk and offering anticipatory guidance during each health maintenance visit in order to prevent victimization of youth in dating and attraction relationships (Close 2005). In order to create a meaningful change in the incidence of dating violence and interpersonal abuse among adolescents, Close (2005) suggests that a strategic plan must be implemented that incorporates identification, intervention and a means to measure the outcome. There are many obstacles, however, to identification. This includes: denial of the problem, withholding history, peer acceptance of violence, misinterpretation of “love”, and fear of the aggressive partner (Close 2005).

2.9 Lasting Effects of Adolescent Dating Violence

Interest in the sequelae of adolescent violence has led researchers to examine the differential effects of being physically abused and witnessing physical abuse on the psychological adjustment of adolescents (Yexley, Borowsky & Ireland 2002).

Adolescent dating violence occurs at a life stage when romantic relationships are started and interactional styles that will serve in future relationships are learned (Yexley, Borowsky & Ireland 2002).

Studies exploring the effects of different experiences of violence, including family violence and dating violence, indicate that adolescents exposed to any type of violence are more likely to have psychological and social problems than are children who have no history of experiencing violence (Yexley, Borowsky & Ireland 2002). Research consistently indicates that adolescent dating violence is associated with

numerous negative social and psychological outcomes (Gover 2004). Its consequences include physical injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, lowered self-esteem and self-worth, psychosomatic reactions, depression and school performance disruptions (Chase, Treboux & O’Leary 2002).

Research has found that only being abused is more likely to be associated with poorer psychological and social adjustment than only witnessing abuse of others in the family (Stenberg, Lamb & Dawud-Noursi 1998). Additionally, research indicates that the combination of being abused and witnessing abuse is associated with greater externalizing and internalizing behaviors than either being abused or witnessing abuse alone (Yexley, Borowsky & Ireland 2002).

Research indicates that there are gender differences between the types of lasting effects that are present as a result of experiencing adolescent dating violence. For girls, increased levels of dating violence (severity, frequency, injury) were related to higher levels of post-traumatic stress and dissociation, even after controlling for demographic, family violence and social desirability variables (Callahan, Thomas & Saunders 2003). For boys, the levels of victimization were related to higher levels of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress, even after controlling for variables (Callahan, Tolman & Saunders 2003). Thus, this research indicates that victimization is related to overall lower levels of life satisfaction for these adolescents (Callahan, Tolman & Saunders 2003).

Regardless of gender, being abused in a relationship can shatter a teenager’s belief that they are a worthy, decent, and independent person who can cope with life in

a mature, self-assertive fashion (Sousa 1999). For the adolescent victim, the world becomes a frightening, confusing place. The victim's sense of ability to protect themselves is undermined. In the journey to make sense of the abusive relationship, the adolescent often takes responsibility of their victimization and may believe "If I am to blame for the abuse, then I can control it" (Sousa 1999; Landfield 2006). The abuser often reinforces this self blame.

As is noted in the literature, dating violence is a prevalent issue in society today (Ehrensoft, Moffitt & Caspi 2004; Chase, Treboux & O'Leary 2002; Yexley, Borowsky, & Ireland 2002; Arriaga & Foshee 2004; Callahan, Tollman & Saunders 2003; Wolfe, Scott, Wekerle & Pittman 2001; Avery-Leaf, Cascardi, O'Leary & Cano 1997). There are facets to adolescent dating violence that make it a unique situation and set it apart from adult domestic violence (Gray & Foshee 1997; Miller & White 2003; O'Keefe 1997; Williams-Evans & Myers 2004). Thus, it is vital that society is both informed about and aware of the existence and the sheer prevalence of this type of violence. As has also been noted in the previous literature, some adolescents do not see dating violence for what it is, at the time that it occurs (Landfield 2006; Close 2005). It is the purpose of this study to attempt to look at the prevalence of dating violence in a reflective manner. That is, by surveying college students about their experiences with dating violence while they were at the adolescent age. The researcher also seeks to determine the amount of knowledge that college students have about adolescent dating violence in general. The methods in which the author accomplished these objectives are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, topics will be discussed relevant to the manner in which the data for this study was collected, analyzed and evaluated. The central question of this study compares the knowledge and experience of adolescent dating violence with students who are criminology and criminal justice majors and students who are non-criminology and criminal justice majors. This was achieved by comparing means of questionnaire responses from university students who consider themselves criminology and criminal justice majors, and those who do not. A survey instrument was developed by the author to measure the knowledge and experience of adolescent dating violence among college students. The survey instrument was submitted and approved by IRB (The Institutional Review Board of Human Subjects) working under the University of Texas at Arlington's Office of Research Compliance. The criteria for survey participants, survey sample and the implementation of the survey instrument will be reviewed.

3.1 Sampling Techniques

This study employed a convenience sample to gather the cross-sectional data. Surveys were given to university students enrolled in criminology and criminal justice classes at The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). University students were selected from undergraduate classes within the Criminology and Criminal Justice program at UTA. Surveys included students in both upper (3000-4000) and lower

(1000-2000) level criminal justice courses. Surveys were presented to students in one undergraduate course in Fall 2006 and two undergraduate courses in Spring 2007.

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 (below) show the courses offered in the Criminology and Criminal Justice (CRCJ) department in the Fall 2006 and the Spring 2007 semesters, respectively.

Table 3.1 CRCJ courses offered in Fall 2006 at UTA

Course	Day Offered	Time Offered	Chosen
CRCJ 2334	MWF	10:00-10:50	X
	MWF	9:00-9:50	X
	TTr	8:00-9:20	X
	TTr	9:30-10:50	X
CRCJ 2340	T	7:00-9:50	X
CRCJ 3300	MWF	10:00-10:50	X
CRCJ 3336	MWF	9:00-9:50	X
	M	7:00-9:50	X
CRCJ 3337	W	7:00-9:50	X
CRCJ 3338	MW	1:00-2:20	X
	Th	7:00-9:50	X
CRCJ 3350	Th	7:00-9:50	X
	MWF	9:00-9:50	X
CRCJ 3370	TTr	8:00-9:20	X
	MW	5:30-6:50	X
CRCJ 3380	TTr	9:30-10:50	X
CRCJ 3390	MW	1:00-2:20	X
CRCJ 4301	MWF	11:00-11:50	X
	W	7:00-9:50	X
CRCJ 4332	TTr	12:30-1:50	X
CRCJ 4333	MWF	10:00-10:50	✓
CRCJ 4345	W	7:00-9:50	X
CRCJ 4350	TTr	11:00-12:50	X
CRCJ 4352	T	7:00-9:50	X
CRCJ 4380	MWF	11:00-11:50	X

Table 3.1 shows the undergraduate courses offered in the CRCJ department during the Fall 2006 semester at UTA. As indicated in the table, there were a total of 25 courses that met on the UTA campus during this semester. Of these courses, one course, CRCJ 4333, was chosen. This course was chosen because it was offered during

the time of implementation. Also, the professor agreed to administer the survey during class. Each class during this time period had an equal chance of being selected. All participants were assured of anonymity and were informed that their participation was on a strictly voluntary basis.

Table 3.2 CRCJ courses offered in Spring 2007 at UTA

Course	Day Offered	Time Offered	Chosen
CRCJ 2334	MWF	10:00-10:50	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	MWF	9:00-9:50	X
	TTr	12:30-1:50	X
	TTr	5:30-6:50	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CRCJ 2340	TTr	5:30-6:50	X
CRCJ 3300	MWF	11:00-11:50	X
CRCJ 3336	TTr	9:30-10:50	X
	TTr	5:30-6:50	X
CRCJ 3338	MWF	10:00-10:50	X
CRCJ 3350	MWF	10:00-10:50	X
CRCJ 3370	TTr	8:00-9:30	X
CRCJ 3380	TTr	3:30-4:50	X
CRCJ 3390	TTr	5:30-6:50	X
CRCJ 4301	MWF	9:00-9:50	X
CRCJ 4332	TTr	9:30-10:50	X
CRCJ 4345	W	7:00-9:50	X
CRCJ 4380	MWF	11:00-11:50	X
CRCJ 4388	MW	1:00-2:20	X
CRCJ 4389	MW	5:30-6:50	X

Table 3.2 shows the undergraduate courses offered in the CRCJ department during the Spring 2007 semester at UTA. As indicated in the table, there were a total of 19 courses that met on the UTA campus during this semester. Of these courses, two different sections in the course CRCJ 2334 were chosen. These courses were chosen because they were offered during the time of implementation. Also, the professors agreed to administer the survey during class. Each class during this semester had an equal chance of being selected. All participants were assured of anonymity and were

informed that their participation was on a strictly voluntary basis. The survey instrument utilized in this study is discussed in the following section.

3.2 Survey Instrument

A questionnaire was developed in order to measure knowledge-based and experience-based differences on issues relevant to dating violence at the adolescent age. The questions included in this survey were based largely on the existing literature in this topic area. The survey instrument included three category areas: “Level of Knowledge”, “Experience” and “Demographics”. Eleven close-ended questions were included regarding the level of knowledge of adolescent dating violence as it relates to seriousness of the problem, likelihood of victimization, perpetration and prevention. Fourteen close-ended questions were included regarding personal experience of adolescent dating violence as it relates to perpetration, victimization and familial experience.

Respondents were asked to rate each question appearing in the knowledge section, and parts of the experience section, on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (agree strongly) to 5 (disagree strongly). The scale moved from a positive response to a negative response with choices “2” through “4” having assigned values of Agree, Neutral and Disagree, respectively.

Respondents were asked to rate several questions appearing in the experience section on a five-point Likert scale according the personal experience of violence, from 1 (never) to 5 (more than 10 times).

The last section included demographic items which included variables such as gender, age, ethnicity and race, student status, type of household raised in and major field of study. Each demographical item provided either categorical or ordinal choices corresponding to the specific question.

The survey and appropriate forms were submitted to the IRB for evaluation. The researcher received approval from the IRB and Office of Research Compliance to execute the survey. The implementation of this survey is discussed below. Refer to the appendix to view the survey instrument.

3.3 Survey Implementation

The author obtained permission from three different university professors to implement the survey during their class time. The surveys were left for these professors in their boxes, and they administered the survey during their classes. The survey contained a disclaimer that participation in the survey was completely voluntary and should the participant wish to cease participation in the survey, they may do so at any time without adverse reaction. Upon completion of the surveys during each class, the instructor placed the instruments in an envelope and returned them to the Criminology and Criminal Justice office for the author to pick up. Surveys were administered to a total of three undergraduate classes, during the Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 semesters. The size of the sample used met the requirements set forth according to the concept of Cohen's power sampling. This will be discussed in detail in the following section.

3.4 Sample Size

The concept of power sampling was employed for the purpose of determining the statistically appropriate sample size. Power sampling, according to Cohen (1988), is an estimate of the number of participants needed in order to detect a correlation of a particular size. According to this principle, a sample size of at least forty-four participants is necessary in order to achieve an eight percent chance of obtaining a statistically significant correlation at the .05 level.

Two separate target populations were examined by using self-report survey research. The first population, university students who considered themselves criminology and criminal justice degree-seeking students, was comprised of a sample of 51 participants. The second population, university students who did not consider themselves criminology and criminal justice degree-seeking students, was comprised of a sample of 48 participants. There was one individual who chose not to answer this question, and therefore could not be placed in one of the two named categories. Thus, the total sample of 100 was obtained for this study. There was a 100% return rate on the surveys that were distributed. In accordance with Cohen's power sampling, the size of each sample set meets the minimum sample size necessary in order to obtain statistical significance. Once the surveys were returned to the researcher, the researcher then proceeded to code and analyze the data for statistical significance.

3.5 Analysis Procedure

The author compiled the completed surveys and analyzed the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The survey items were measured on

a Likert scale and then coded to reflect their respective ordinal and nominal values. The response choices for each demographical variable were coded to reflect their respective ordinal and categorical values. It was felt that an independent t-test was necessary to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists, given the nature of the variables. In this study, the differences the author wished to compare were the responses among criminology and criminal justice majors and non-criminology and criminal justice majors. The result of the analyses performed on the data is reviewed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Demographical Information

Of the surveys that were distributed, 100 university students chose to participate in the study and complete the surveys. A summary of this data is provided in Table 4.1. The survey participants consisted of 55% male students, 44% female students and 1% that chose not to respond to this question. The respondents' race/ ethnicity is as follows: 53% Caucasian, 17% African American, 15% Hispanic, 7% Asian, 6% other ethnic backgrounds, and 2% that chose not to respond to this question. With regard to the type of household the students were raised in 16% were raised in a single-parent home, 63% were raised in a traditional home with a biological father and a biological mother, 17% were raised in a traditional blended family, consisting of one biological parent and one step-parent, 0% were raised by a non-familial guardian and 4% chose not to respond to this question. Student status of respondents consisted of 8% freshmen, 23% sophomores, 38% juniors, 29% seniors, 1% graduate students, and 1% that chose not to respond to this question. Survey participants age was comprised of 17-20 years with 31%, 21-25 years with 53%, 26-30 years with 12%, 31-35 years with 1%, 36-40 years with 1%, 41+ years with 1%, and 1% who chose not to answer this question. Finally, with regards to degree sought, 51% were seeking a degree in criminology and

criminal justice, 48% were seeking a degree in a field other than criminology and criminal justice, and 1% chose not to respond to this question.

Table 4.1 Demographic information of respondents

Demographical Questions	Percentage (Frequencies)
Gender:	
Male	55% (55)
Female	44% (44)
Missing	1% (1)
Race/ Ethnicity:	
Caucasian	53% (53)
African American	17% (17)
Hispanic	15% (15)
Asian	7% (7)
Other	6% (6)
Missing	2% (2)
I am between the ages of:	
17-20 years	31% (31)
21-25 years	53% (53)
26-30 years	12% (12)
31-35 years	1% (1)
36-40 years	1% (1)
41+ years	1% (1)
Missing	1% (1)
Type of household raised in:	
Single-parent	16% (16)
Traditional family	63% (63)
Traditional blended family	17% (17)
Non-familial guardian	0% (0)
Missing	4% (4)
Student status:	
Freshman	8% (8)
Sophomore	23% (23)
Junior	38% (38)
Senior	29% (29)
Graduate	1% (1)
Missing	1% (1)
Are you a criminology and criminal justice major?	
Yes	51% (51)
No	48% (48)
Missing	1% (1)

For the purpose of this study, one demographic variable was studied which was the degree sought by the respondent. Consequently, the study was designed to

determine if there was a statistically significant difference between respondents in each of these groups. The groups consisted of criminology and criminal justice majors and non-criminology and criminal justice majors with regards to knowledge and experience of adolescent dating violence.

4.2 Knowledge of Adolescent Dating Violence

The demographical variables examined in this section will relate to the knowledge of adolescent dating violence among both groups of respondents. A complete list of means for the groups “criminology and criminal justice majors” (CRCJ) and “non-criminology and criminal justice majors” (non-CRCJ) is provided below in Table 4.2. The variables utilized to measure knowledge of adolescent dating violence have been reflected in the table.

Table 4.2 Means and P-Values regarding the significance of knowledge-based differences of criminology and criminal justice majors and non-criminology and criminal justice majors on issues regarding adolescent dating violence.

Variable	CRCJ majors mean	Non-CRCJ majors mean	P-Value
Dating violence occurs more often among adolescents than adults	3.08	3.17	.532
An adolescent relationship can only be considered abusive if physical violence is used.	4.41	4.09	.129
Individuals that were abused as children are more likely to inflict violence on their dating partners.	2.18	2.04	.366
The majority of perpetrators of dating violence at the adolescent age are males.	2.33	2.25	.629

Table 4.2 (continued)

Variable	CRCJ majors mean	Non-CRCJ majors mean	P-Value
Adolescents who are involved in violent relationships with their dating partners are more likely to experience violent relationships during adulthood.	2.14	2.10	.812
Students who are receiving a degree in criminology and criminal justice are less likely to engage in dating violence.	3.57	3.66	.576
Students who are seeking a degree in criminology and criminal justice are more aware of adolescent dating violence than those who are not criminology and criminal justice majors.	2.59	2.79	.237
Adolescent dating violence is not as serious as adult domestic violence.	4.39	4.19	.160
It is important that high schools implement educational programs to improve dating violence prevention.	1.86	2.21	.007**
There should be swift consequences for adolescents who inflict violence on their dating partners.	1.88	1.68	.045*
Dating violence is a more serious problem today than at any time during the past 100 years.	2.92	2.53	.010**

* Statistically significant at the .05 confidence level

** Statistically significant at the .01 confidence level

Of the eleven variables used to measure the respondents' knowledge of adolescent dating violence, two showed a statistically significant difference at the .01 level of confidence and one showed a statistically significant difference at the .05 level of confidence.

The variable "dating violence occurs more often among adolescents than adults," displayed a CRCJ mean of 3.08 and a non-CRCJ mean of 3.17. The t-test comparison (p-value) for this variable computed to .532, and the means for both groups indicate an overall neutral feeling toward this statement.

The following variable "an adolescent relationship can only be considered abusive if physical violence is used," returned a p-value of .129. The CRCJ students produced a mean of 4.41, while the non-CRCJ students produced a mean of 4.09. As shown in the table, it is evident that by the mean responses, there was a general overall disagreement with this statement.

The subsequent variable "individuals that were abused as children are more likely to inflict violence on their dating partners," produced a p-value of .366, with a CRCJ mean of 2.18 and a non-CRCJ mean of 2.04. These responses reflect a general overall agreement with this statement.

The following variable "the majority of perpetrators of dating violence at the adolescent age are male," displayed a mean of 2.33 for CRCJ and a mean of 2.25 for non-CRCJ. The p-value for this variable was .629, which indicated that there was no statistical difference, however both groups did seem to agree with this statement.

Next, the variable “adolescents who are involved in violent relationships with their dating partners are more likely to experience violent relationships during adulthood,” returned a p-value of .812. The CRCJ means were 2.14 and the non-CRCJ means were 2.10, which again indicate a moderate overall agreement between the two groups with this statement.

The subsequent variable “students who are receiving a degree in criminology and criminal justice are less likely to engage in dating violence,” displayed a mean of 3.57 for CRCJ majors and a mean of 3.66 for non-CRCJ majors. This statement exhibited a t-test comparison (p-value) of .576. As shown in table 4.2, overall the respondents of both groups had somewhat neutral feelings toward this statement.

The next variable “students who are receiving a degree in criminology and criminal justice are more aware of adolescent dating violence than those who are not criminology and criminal justice majors,” returned a p-value of .237. Mean responses were 2.59 for CRCJ majors and 2.79 for non-CRCJ majors. Both groups demonstrated some level of agreement with this statement.

“Adolescent dating violence is not as serious as adult domestic violence” presented a p-value of .160, with a mean of 4.39 for CRCJ majors and a mean of 4.19 for non-CRCJ majors. As shown in Table 4.2, this shows all respondents were in a high level of disagreement with this variable.

The next variable “it is important that high schools implement educational programs to improve dating violence prevention,” returned a p-value of .007, which was statistically significant at the .01 confidence level. The mean of CRCJ majors was 1.86,

where the mean for non-CRCJ majors was 2.21. This indicates that there is a strong correlation between degree sought and the knowledge possessed about dating violence prevention.

The following variable “there should be swift consequences for adolescents who inflict violence on their dating partners,” also demonstrated a statistically significant difference, this time at the .05 confidence level. The mean value for CRCJ majors was 1.88, while non-CRCJ majors reflected a mean of 1.68.

The final variable demonstrated a statistically significant difference at the .01 confidence level. The variable “dating violence is a more serious problem today than at any time during the past 100 years” returned a p-value of .010. The mean for CRCJ majors was 2.92, while the mean for non-CRCJ majors was 2.53.

4.3 Experience with Adolescent Dating Violence

The demographical variables examined in this section will relate to the experience of adolescent dating violence among both groups of respondents. A complete list of means for the groups “criminology and criminal justice majors” (CRCJ) and “non-criminology and criminal justice majors” (non-CRCJ) is provided below in Table 4.3. The variables utilized to measure knowledge of adolescent dating violence have been reflected in the table.

Table 4.3 Means and P-Values regarding the significance of experience-based differences of criminology and criminal justice majors and non-criminology and criminal justice majors on issues regarding adolescent dating violence.

Variables	CRCJ majors mean	Non-CRCJ majors mean	P-Value
I witnessed one of my parents curse at or belittle the other.	2.84	2.88	.881
I witnessed one of my parents hit or strike the other.	1.24	1.44	.253
My parents hit or struck me in a threatening manner.	1.80	1.67	.505
My parents regularly used violence to solve their problems.	4.49	4.44	.763
When I misbehaved, I was extremely fearful that my parent(s) would hit, strike or yell at me.	3.43	3.33	.646
I feel that the violence I experienced at home affected my actions when I started to date.	4.04	4.26	.227
When I was an adolescent I know someone who was in a violent relationship with a dating partner.	3.53	3.13	.080
I was in a relationship as an adolescent in which I hit or struck my partner.	1.02	1.06	.235
I was in a relationship as an adolescent in which my partner cursed at or belittled me.	1.71	1.67	.786
I was in a relationship as an adolescent in which I had a partner hit or strike me.	1.16	1.13	.472
The authorities were contacted when a violent episode occurred with an adolescent dating partner of mine.	1.08	1.13	.414

Table 4.3 (continued)

Variables	CRCJ majors mean	Non-CRCJ majors mean	P-Value
Because I have experienced dating violence before, I am more sensitive to it now.	3.44	4.07	.004**
In retrospect, I feel that I may not have realized that I was experiencing dating violence at a time when I was an adolescent.	3.65	4.11	.009**
I feel that I am to blame for any violence that has been inflicted on me throughout my life.	4.29	4.11	.317
I feel that my academic studies at UTA have increased my awareness of adolescent dating violence.	2.71	3.62	.000**

* Statistically significant at the .05 confidence level

** Statistically significant at the .01 confidence level

Of the fourteen variables used to measure respondent's experience with adolescent dating violence, three showed a statistically significant difference at the .01 confidence level and zero showed a statistically significant difference at the .05 confidence level.

The first variable "I witnessed one of my parents curse at or belittle the other", returned a p-value of .881. The mean response for CRCJ majors was 2.84, while non-CRCJ majors returned a mean response of 2.88. This shows that on average, college students in general, experiences this type of violence 1 to 3 times while adolescents.

The following variable "I witnessed one of my parents hit or strike the other", displayed a mean of 1.24 for CRCJ majors and a mean of 1.44 for non-CRCJ majors.

The p-value for this variable computed to .253. This shows an overall average experience of this type of violence as having never occurred.

The subsequent variable “my parents hit or struck me in a threatening manner”, returned a p-value of .505. The mean of CRCJ majors was 1.80, while non-CRCJ majors’ mean was 1.67. Again, this shows an overall rate of experience of this type of violence as having never occurred.

Next, the variable “my parents regularly used violence to solve their problems”, offered a p-value of .763. The mean value for CRCJ majors was 4.49 and the mean value for non-CRCJ majors was 4.44. This response shows a strong overall disagreement with this statement among the two groups.

“When I misbehaved, I was extremely fearful that my parent(s) would hit, strike or yell at me”, reflected a mean of 3.43 for CRCJ majors and a mean of 3.33 for non-CRCJ majors, with a t-test comparison of .646. This shows an overall neutral level of agreement with this statement.

The following variable “I feel that the violence I experienced at home affected my actions when I started to date”, returned a p-value of .227, with a mean of 4.04 for CRCJ majors and a mean of 4.26 for non-CRCJ majors. This shows an overall disagreement by both groups toward this statement.

Next, the variable “when I was an adolescent, I knew someone who was in a violent relationship with a dating partner”, displayed a p-value of .080, with a mean of 3.53 for CRCJ majors and a mean of 3.13 for non-CRCJ majors. These responses reflected an overall moderate response by both groups toward this question.

The subsequent variable “I was in a relationship as an adolescent in which I hit or struck my partner” showed a t-test comparison of .235. CRCJ majors displayed a mean of 1.02, while non-CRCJ majors displayed a mean of 1.06. This shows that among both groups, experience had never been had with this type of violence.

The variable “I was in a relationship as an adolescent in which my partner cursed at or belittled me” displayed a p-value of .786. The mean of CRCJ majors was 1.71, while the mean of non-CRCJ majors was 1.67.

The following variable “I was in a relationship as an adolescent in which I had a partner hit or strike me”, displayed a mean of 1.16 for CRCJ majors and a mean of 1.13 for non-CRCJ majors. The p-value offered for this variable was .472.

Next, the variable “the authorities were contacted when a violent episode occurred with an adolescent dating partner of mine”, returned a mean of 1.08 for CRCJ majors and a mean of 1.13 for non-CRCJ majors. The p-value was .414, which explains that there is no statistical significance between the two groups for this variable.

The first variable to display a statistically significant difference at the .01 level was the variable “because I have experienced dating violence before, I am more sensitive to it now”. The p-value returned for this variable was .004. Further, the means of this variable were 3.44 and 4.07, for CRCJ and non-CRCJ majors, respectively. This shows that there was a statistically significant difference among these two groups.

The second variable to display a statistically significant difference was “in retrospect, I feel that I may not have realized that I was experiencing dating violence at

a time when I was an adolescent”. The t-test comparison for this variable was .009, with a mean of 3.65 for CRCJ majors and a mean of 4.11 for non-CRCJ majors. This difference was statistically significant at the .01 confidence level and, as shown in Table 4.3, the group “non-CRCJ majors” had a higher level of disagreement with this statement than the group “CRCJ majors”.

The following variable “I feel that I am to blame for any violence that has been inflicted on me throughout my life”, reflected a p-value of .317. The mean of CRCJ majors was 4.29 and the mean of non-CRCJ majors was 4.11. This shows both groups were in a fairly high level of disagreement with this statement.

The final variable “I feel that my academic studies at UTA have increased my awareness of adolescent dating violence” offered a statistically significant difference at the .01 confidence level with a p-value of .000. The mean of CRCJ majors was 2.71 and the mean of non-CRCJ majors was 3.62. This shows that CRCJ majors were in a significantly more amount of agreement with this statement than students that considered themselves non-CRCJ majors.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The principal focus of this study was to examine the knowledge and experience of adolescent dating violence among college students. It was the author's goal to determine if those students who classified themselves as criminology and criminal justice majors had any statistically significant differences between those students who did not consider themselves criminology and criminal justice majors. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, the study revealed few statistically significant differences with regards to knowledge of adolescent dating violence, as well as experience with this type of violence. In this chapter, the author will discuss what these findings mean in regards to future implications they may have on policy and education.

5.1 Policy Implications

As previously stated in the literature, domestic violence, as well as dating violence is an increasing problem (Williams-Evans & Meyer 2004; Gover 2004; Jezi, Molidor & Wright 1996; Black et al 2003; & Yexley Borowsky & Ireland 2002). The government has made great strides in passing and enforcing laws to ensure the rights of the victimized and punishing the abusers. However, many of these laws are aimed at the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, occurring between adults. Although we more commonly hear about domestic violence among adults, up to 25 percent of domestic youths, age 12-21 experience violence in a relationship (Landfield 2006;

McCloskey & Lichter 2003; BJS 2000; Simons; Lin & Gordon 1998). Some studies have reported that in many cases greater than 50 percent of adolescent dating relationships include violence (Gray & Foshee 1997; Jezi, Molidor & Wright 1996). This is too large of an issue to be ignored. With these stunning numbers, policymakers must implement a system in which the abused teens can escape this type of violence, with the perpetrator being held responsible for his or her actions legally.

The variable in this research “there should be swift consequences for adolescents who inflict dating violence on their partners” indicated strong agreement among both criminology and criminal justice majors and non-criminology and criminal justice majors. Adolescents who inflict this type of violence on their partners should do so with the knowledge that this is a serious crime and they will be held accountable for their actions.

According to this research, it can be noted that the college population does have some knowledge of adolescent dating violence. Both criminology and criminal justice and non-criminology and criminal justice majors showed moderate to strong agreement with several statements about the seriousness of adolescent dating violence. The variable “adolescent dating violence is not as serious as adult domestic violence” returned means that indicated both groups of students surveyed strongly disagreed with this statement. The variable “dating violence is a more serious problem today than at any time during the past 100 years” also returned means that indicated an agreement by both groups of students surveyed. However, this is a limited population of college

students, and does not indicate knowledge of the general population, or those individuals without a college education.

Thus, it should be noted that policymakers must implement programs to educate the general public about adolescent dating violence. As previously discussed, adolescent dating violence is a large enough issue that it cannot be ignored. A public education campaign within communities would be beneficial in both educating adults and adolescents alike about adolescent dating violence. Adults in the general population must know that this is a very real issue occurring among adolescents in today's society. Adolescents must be able to distinguish what dating violence is, both physical and psychological. This would also be beneficial to the adolescents who are already victims, to provide a means of escape from the violence being inflicted on them.

Where do adolescents go to escape this type of abuse when it occurs? As stated in the literature, many teens are afraid to go to an adult and ask for help (Landfield 2006). Perhaps if adults are more aware of the existence of this type of violence, they will be able to discuss it with their teens. If the lines of communication are opened between adolescents and adults, the greater the likelihood will be that an adolescent will feel comfortable going to a trusted adult with their concerns. There must be a system in place where abused teens can go to flee this type of abuse. As will be further detailed, school counselors must play an integral role in this.

5.2 Education

How can adolescent dating violence be prevented? It all begins with education. Dating violence must not only be taught at the university level, but also the primary and

secondary levels in school. Teens must be educated about what dating violence is and in what contexts it may occur. Teens must also know how to escape it, should they experience it.

As noted in the literature, many teens do not see dating violence for what it is at the time that they experience it (Sousa 1999). School counselors and health teachers must add this very important aspect of violence to the curriculum being taught in schools. More teens need to be able to recognize dating violence when it occurs and not mistake it as something else (Sousa 1999). It is important that the different contexts of dating violence are made known to adolescents. Adolescents must be aware that the term “violence” does not only include physical acts of aggression, but also emotional, psychological and sexual. Further, students must also be able to know that they can go to their high school counselors for help and that they are not the only person who has ever been abused in a dating relationship.

It was expected by the author that there would be more differences between the two groups based on the nature of criminology and criminal justice curriculum. The variable in this study “students who are receiving a degree in criminology and criminal justice are more aware of adolescent dating violence than those who are not criminology and criminal justice majors” indicated some agreement by both groups of college students surveyed. Therefore, it was also expected by those surveyed, that college students who are pursuing a degree in this field would be more aware of and knowledgeable about adolescent dating violence. However, the research in this study indicated few statistical significances between the knowledge of criminology and

criminal justice majors and non-criminology and criminal justice majors in regards to adolescent dating violence. Both groups surveyed seemed to have a similar amount of knowledge regarding this topic.

Thus, it can be argued that students enrolled in criminology and criminal justice programs are not receiving any additional education on the patterns of adolescent dating violence. Because of the sheer nature of this degree these students are pursuing, students at this level should be educated more on this type of crime and the frequency at which it occurs. One could conclude that because there was no real difference in the knowledge of these two groups, criminology and criminal justice majors lacked education on this topic.

With regard to actual experience of adolescent dating violence, there were also few significant differences between students who identified themselves as criminology and criminal justice majors and those who did not. One of the questions of the researcher was to determine if students who were criminology and criminal justice majors had experienced more violence in their lives than other students, thus motivating them to pursue an education in this field. In accordance with the data collected in this study, this is not the case as there were no statistically significant differences between criminology and criminal justice majors and non-majors in both perpetration and victimization. These particular findings show that the criminology and criminal justice majors likely chose their field of study based on something other than previous experience with dating or domestic violence.

It is important to note the difference between perception and reality in a survey instrument. When knowledge is being measured, the response the researcher receives is what the subject perceives as reality. Moreover, what they perceive to be accurate is what they believe to be the truth. As has been previously noted, the populations surveyed in this study both indicated knowledge of adolescent dating violence. This knowledge they indicated is what they perceive as being the truth about this topic. Perception can also be greatly affected by misinformation about these topics. Because of the lack of education, for all age groups, any distortions between perception and reality regarding adolescent dating violence are present in this study.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Studies

In this study, the author has hoped to provoke an academic interest in the study of adolescent dating violence experience and knowledge among college students. Generalizability to all college students in this study is limited because of the small sample size and because of geographic location of the university students surveyed.

Given these limitations, there is ample room for future researchers to enhance this study controlling for variables such as race, ethnicity, and age. Future researchers may want to also use college education as the main variable, studying populations outside of university students, to determine if there are any statistically significant differences in knowledge and experience among those who have been educated in a college setting and those who have not.

This study has contributed to the body of knowledge by providing insight into the issue of adolescent dating violence in a reflective study of college students.

Adolescent dating violence is not a minor issue in today's society and in order for this problem to decrease, it will take cooperation from the entire community. Schools, policymakers, educators, parents and adolescents themselves must become more aware the prevalence and effects of this type of violence. Because of the very limited amount of literature that exists about this topic, it is the hope of the author to prompt others to continue this area of study.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY

Survey

College Students' Perceptions of Adolescent Dating Violence

This study is being conducted through the UTA Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice. It is aimed at measuring and comparing perceptions of adolescent dating violence among criminology and non-criminology students. This survey is absolutely voluntary and will be kept completely anonymous. Students are not required to participate and hold the right to terminate this survey at any point before its completion. The goal of this survey is to determine whether or not college students perceive adolescent dating violence as a serious problem. It is hopeful that this information will be beneficial to school policy makers in implementing programs in the schools for both awareness and support for adolescents in these abusive relationships. If you have any questions pertaining to your decision not to participate in this survey or any other inquiries regarding your rights, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (817) 272-2105. If you have any questions pertaining to the design, implementation or utility of this survey, please contact Kimberly Larsen at (817) 272-3318.

Student Consent

1. I understand that my participation in this research survey is completely voluntary.
2. I understand that I may stop participating in this survey at any time and doing so will not result in a penalty of any kind.
3. I understand that my personal identity will not be revealed and my responses will remain confidential.

For the purpose of this survey, “dating violence” is defined as behavior used by one individual that represents an attempt to control, dominate or harm the dating partner physically, sexually or psychologically.

For the purpose of this survey, “adolescent” is defined as the ages between 13 and 19 years, or high school age.

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by circling the corresponding number.

1. Dating violence occurs more often among adolescents than adults.
Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly
2. An adolescent relationship can only be considered abusive if physical violence is used.
Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly
3. The majority of the perpetrators of dating violence at the adolescent age are males.
Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly
4. Individuals that were abused as children are more likely to inflict violence on their dating partners.
Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly
5. Adolescents who are involved in violent relationships with their dating partners are more likely to experience violent relationships during adulthood.
Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly
6. Students who are seeking a degree in criminology and criminal justice are less likely to engage in dating violence.
Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly
7. Students who are seeking a degree in criminology and criminal justice are more aware of adolescent dating violence than those who are not criminology and criminal justice majors.
Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly
8. Adolescent dating violence is not as serious as domestic violence.
Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly
9. It is important that high schools implement educational programs to improve dating violence prevention.
Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly
10. There should be swift consequences for adolescents who inflict violence on their dating partners.
Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly

11. Dating violence is a more serious problem today than at any time during the past 100 years.

Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly

12. Where do you get your opinions on dating violence?

- (1) Media
- (2) Family members
- (3) Personal experience
- (4) Academic literature
- (5) Government statistics
- (6) Friends
- (7) Other: _____

During the course of my childhood: (Questions 13-17)

13. I witnessed one of my parents curse at or belittle the other.

(1) Never (2) 1-3 times (3) 4-6 times (4) 7-9 times (5) More than 10 times

14. I witnessed one of my parents hit or strike the other.

(1) Never (2) 1-3 times (3) 4-6 times (4) 7-9 times (5) More than 10 times

15. My parent(s) hit or struck me in a threatening manner.

(1) Never (2) 1-3 times (3) 4-6 times (4) 7-9 times (5) More than 10 times

16. My parents regularly used violence to resolve their problems.

Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly

17. When I misbehaved, I was extremely fearful that my parent(s) would hit, strike or yell at me.

Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by circling the corresponding number.

18. I feel that the violence I experienced at home affected my actions when I started to date.

Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly

19. When I was an adolescent I knew someone who was in a violent relationship with a dating partner.

Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly

20. I was in a relationship as an adolescent in which I hit or struck my partner.

(1) Never (2) 1-3 times (3) 4-6 times (4) 7-9 times (5) More than 10 times

21. I was in a relationship as an adolescent in which my partner cursed at or belittled me.

(1) Never (2) 1-3 times (3) 4-6 times (4) 7-9 times (5) More than 10 times

22. I was in a relationship as an adolescent in which I had a partner hit or strike me.

(1) Never (2) 1-3 times (3) 4-6 times (4) 7-9 times (5) More than 10 times

23. The authorities were contacted when a violent episode occurred with an adolescent dating partner of mine.

(1) Never (2) 1-3 times (3) 4-6 times (4) 7-9 times (5) More than 10 times

24. Because I have experienced dating violence before, I am more sensitive to it now.

Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly

25. In retrospect, I feel that I may not have realized then I was experiencing dating violence at a time I was an adolescent.

Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly

26. I feel that I am to blame for any violence that has been inflicted on me throughout my life.

Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly

27. I feel that my academic studies at UTA have increased my awareness of adolescent dating violence.

Agree Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree Strongly

Please circle the number corresponding to the statement that best fits your answer.

28. I am between the ages of:

- (1) 17-20 years
- (2) 21-25 years
- (3) 26-30 years
- (4) 31-35 years
- (5) 36-40 years
- (6) 41 + years

29. Race/ Ethnicity:

- (1) Caucasian (2) African American (3) Hispanic (4) Asian (5) Other

30. Gender:

- (1) Male (2) Female

31. Type of household raised in:

- (1) Single-parent
- (2) Traditional family (ex. Biological father and biological mother)
- (3) Traditional blended family (ex. Biological father and step-mother)
- (4) Non-familial guardian

32. Student status:

- (1) Freshman (2) Sophomore (3) Junior (4) Senior (5) Graduate

33. Are you a Criminology and Criminal Justice major?

(1) Yes (2) No

If no, what is your major field of study? _____

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