

## ABSTRACT

- Dating violence among teenage adolescents is a nationwide epidemic. Approximately 15.5 million children are exposed to domestic violence each year (McDonald, Jouriles, Ramisetty-Mikler, Caetano & Green, 2006).
- It is reported that one in ten youths are victims of physical violence from a romantic partner (National Institute of Justice, 2011).
- The present study aimed to examine the relationship between witnessing violence among two adults and being physically violent (e.g. slapping, scratching, physically twist the arm, bending fingers, pushed, grabbed, shoved, kicked, hit with a fist or an object that is hard) toward a boyfriend or girlfriend in the last 6 months among adolescents.
- The current study is a cross-sectional study that uses secondary data from the *Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships* longitudinal study. In particular, the study focused on the 1,515 participants from Wave 1 of the Start Strong study of Fall 2010.
- The data was collected through a self-report questionnaire among adolescents aged between 12 and 13 years.
- A series of chi-square analyses was conducted with boys and girls samples separately.
- The results reported a significant relationship between exposure to between witnessing violence among a woman and a man and engaging in physically violent behavior toward a boyfriend/girlfriend compared to participants who were not exposed to physical violence among a woman and a man.

## INTRODUCTION

### Significance of the Study

- It is important for social workers to understand the effects of witnessing domestic violence in order to prevent negative learned behavior such as teenage dating violence.

### Purpose of the Research

- To better understand the relationship between witnessing domestic violence and IPV among adolescents.

### Research Question

- What is the relationship between witnessing violence between two adults and being violent with a boyfriend/girlfriend in the last 6 months among teenagers?

### Hypothesis

- It is hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between experiencing domestic violence exposure between a man and woman, and exhibiting teenage dating physical violence (e.g. slapping, scratching, physically twist arm, bending fingers, pushed, grabbed, shoved, kicked, hit with a fist or an object that is hard) among teenagers.
- Further, the current study will examine the hypothesized relationships differ between boys and girls by analyzing the data separately with boys and girls.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Witnessing Domestic Violence and Gender Differences

- Each year approximately 15.5 million children are exposed to domestic violence and it is around 30% of children live in homes where intimate partner violence happens (McDonald et al., 2006).
- The study of McDonald et al. (2006) reported that partner violence occurred in around 21% of couples out of the total sample which included 1,615 married or cohabiting couples.
- Further, it is reported that about 14% of violence was male-to-female, whereas, about 18% was female-to-male violence (McDonald et al., 2006). Females are more likely to perpetrate violence than males.
- Also, Cho (2012) reported males were more likely to conduct severe intimate partner violence than females.
- 1 in 11 females have reported experiencing physical dating violence (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019).
- 1 in 15 males in high school reported experiencing physical dating violence (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019).

### Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

- Children who witness DV have an increased risk of problems, such as mental illness, substance use, delinquency, violence-related problems (e.g. aggressive and violent behavior) and impede a child's emotional regulatory function (Stevens et al., 2019; Rigterick et al., 2010).
- The Social Learning theory is the theoretical framework that guided this study to comprehend the impact of witnessing domestic violence among adults and teen dating violence among teenagers.

## METHODS

### Research Design and Data Collection Procedure

- The current study is a cross-sectional study that uses secondary data from the *Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships* longitudinal study.
- The current study will focus on the participants in wave 1 of the overall Start Strong study of Fall 2010.
- Amidst eight schools, teacher and student data was collected among four schools receiving TDV prevention/ healthy relationship programs and four comparison schools that did not receive program services.
- The data was collected during school hours by a trained field data collector. The students completed a self-administered questionnaire.

### Sample and Sampling Method

- The total sample included 1,517 participants. The average age of participants at wave 1 was 12 years' old.

### Measures

#### Witnessing Domestic Violence

- Witnessing domestic violence was measured through a two questions in the statistical analysis, the responses based off the 0-4 Likert scale were gathered and translated into a dichotomous variable of "true" or "not true" on witnessing domestic violence.

#### Teenage Dating Violence

- Teenage dating violence was measured using four items of "Scratched or slapped them", "Physically twisted their arm or bent back their fingers", "Pushed, grabbed, shoved, or kicked them", and "Hit them with your fist or with something else hard".
- The current study collected the answers of the 0-4 Likert scale and transformed the responses into a dichotomous variable of "yes" or "no".

Table 1  
Sample Characteristics

Characteristic	n	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	764	50.4
Female	751	49.6
<b>Age in years</b>		
12 years-old	771	67.9
13 years-old	364	32.1
<b>Race/ethnicity based on school rosters</b>		
White, non-Hispanic	346	22.8
Black, non-Hispanic	418	27.6
Hispanic	471	31.1
Other, multiple, or unknown	281	18.5
<b>Does your mother, or a woman who is like your mother, live in your house?</b>		
Yes	1,065	91.1
No	104	8.9
<b>How far in school has she gone?</b>		
Did not graduate from high school	117	10.9
Graduated from high school	183	17.1
Vocational or business school	6	0.6
Some college	120	11.2
Graduated from college	225	21.0
More than 4 years of college	133	12.4
Don't know	287	26.8
<b>Does your father, or a man who is like your father, live in your house?</b>		
Yes	840	72.1
No	325	27.9
<b>How far in school has he gone?</b>		
Did not graduate from high school	86	9.5
Graduated from high school	148	17.1
Vocational or business school	5	0.6
Some college	92	10.1
Graduated from college	183	20.2
More than 4 years of college	111	12.2
Don't know	283	31.2

## RESULTS

- A series of chi-square tests was calculated to examine the statistical significance of the relationship between witnessing two adults being physical violent each other and participants' physical violent behavioral toward a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Analyses were conducted with boys' and girls' samples separately.

### GIRLS RESULTS

#### Girls witnessing violence between a man to a woman

- There was a significant relationship between the variables ( $\chi^2(1) = 11.610, p < .001$ ), while Phi statistics found to have a weak relationship (.154). Girls who witnessed a man being violent to a woman (19%) have more likely to be physically violent toward boyfriend or girlfriend compared with participants who did not witness a man being violent to a woman (8.5%).

#### Girls witnessing violence between a woman to a man

- Based on the chi-square test, a significant association was found between the variables ( $\chi^2(1) = 19.80, p < .001$ ), while Phi statistics found to have a weak relationship (.198). Girls who witnessed a woman being violent to a man (23.2%) are two times more likely of being physically violent toward their boyfriend or girlfriend compared with participants who did not witness woman being violent to a woman (8.5%).

### BOYS RESULTS

#### Boys witnessing violence between a man to a woman

- There was a significant relationship between the variables ( $\chi^2(1) = 10.552, p < .001$ ), while Phi statistics found to have a weak relationship (.151). Boys who witnessed a man being violent to a woman (16%) are more likely to be physically violent toward boyfriend or girlfriend compared with participants who did not witness a man being violent to a woman (6.6%).

#### Boys witnessing violence between a woman to a man

- Results of the analysis supported a significant association between the variables ( $\chi^2(1) = 19.408, p = .000$ ), while Phi statistics found to have a moderate relationship (.204). Boys who witnessed a woman being violent to a man (20.1%) are more likely of being physically violent toward their boyfriend or girlfriend compared with participants who did not witness woman being violent to a woman (6.4%).

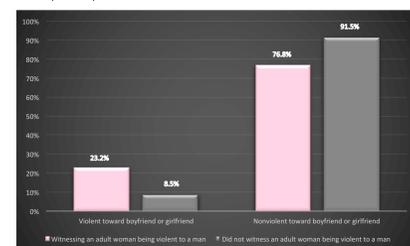


Figure 1. Girls witnessing an adult woman being violent to a man.

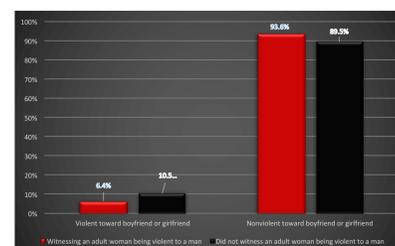


Figure 2. Boys witnessing violence between a woman to a man.

Table 2  
Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variables	n	%
<b>Independent Variables</b>		
Seen an adult woman being violent to a man		
True	365	26.1
Not True	1007	73.9
Seen an adult man bring violent to a woman		
True	488	35.8
Not True	874	64.2
<b>Dependent Variables</b>		
Physical violent behavior toward Boyfriend or Girlfriend		
Yes	114	11.7
No	562	88.3

Table 3  
Occurrence of Girls Witnessing a Woman Being Violent to a Man

	Girls with Physical Violent Behavior toward Boyfriend/Girlfriend		Girls with no Physical Violent Behavior toward Boyfriend/Girlfriend	
	n	%	n	%
Seen an adult woman being violent to a man				
True	32	23.2%	106	76.8%
Not True	30	8.5%	321	91.5%

Table 4  
Occurrence of Boys Witnessing an Adult Woman Being Violent to a Man

	Boys with Physical Violent Behavior toward Boyfriend/Girlfriend		Boys with no Physical Violent Behavior toward Boyfriend/Girlfriend	
	n	%	n	%
Seen an adult woman being violent to a man				
Not True	21	6.4%	305	93.6%
True	49	10.5%	416	89.5%

## DISCUSSION

### Summary of Findings

- Overall, the results from both genders were consistent with the study's hypothesis of having a significantly positive relationship between experiencing domestic violence exposure between two adults and exhibiting teenage dating physical violence.
- The key theory applied to the study is the Social Learning Theory, which also supports the major finding that witnessing domestic violence at a young age can affect the individual's perception of relationships.

### Implications for Practice & Policy

- It is important to implement a policy that brings awareness of IPV through psychoeducation and preventive interventions.

### Strengths and Limitations

- The large sample size and representativeness of the sample increase the generalizability of the findings from the study.
- The sample also consisted of various ethnicities and different socio-economic levels across the United States.
- The current study examined the relationship separately for boys and girls, as well as the violence between men and women's behaviors.
- There is a potential that the participants may obtain test fatigue given that the questionnaire is too long for a teenager.
- The questionnaire is not inclusive of the participant's gender.
- It utilized secondary data the current study fully relies on the constraints and documentation available from the original study.

## REFERENCES (Selected)

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- I want to thank my father for always inspiring me to achieve greatness. You believing in me has allowed me to push further than I could ever imagine.
- I cannot thank my mother enough for her endless love, support, homemade meals, and faith that she has provided throughout my life.
- Thank you to my fiancé, for being understanding, a huge encourager, and my refuge when I felt overwhelmed with stress. Thank you, my love, for always being there for me.
- A big thank you to the Aguirre family, who have been a safe haven throughout the past year. I truly don't know what I would do without your guidance, emotional support, and endless encouragement.
- To my Koin family, for their support and spiritual guidance during these past few years.
- Thank you to my friends, who were always lending a helping hand, providing a shoulder to cry on, understood my insane schedule, and provided me with non-stop laughter. I would not have been able to complete this process without every one of you.
- I truly cannot thank God enough for allowing me to finish this program, while providing me with all of you.